Our cricket: Impressions & expectations

Shamim Ashraf Chowdhury

It was an overcast day at the Simba Union Club Ground at that ever eluding opportunity to play among the big boys. It was a heart breaking job for me to describe what turned out to be one of the saddest days for cricket in this country.

Contrastingly, it was a moments, when one's heart was in one's mouth; but then the tenacity of the players seemed to have its influence on the game and Bangladesh emerged champions.

But we cannot rest on our time for the team to prepare themselves for this very demanding task.

good one.

The present cricket board has taken a very important and necessary step in appointing a great cricketer like Gordon Greenidge to be the coach of the national team. It has shown the Board's concern in preparing for the next ICC Trophy. Despite given the job for 3 years, it is in 3 months that he has the onerous task of preparing our boys for the most demanding tournament in their lives. The whole country of cricket lovers

Jansher playing

with fire

world champion Jansher Khan

could face disciplinary action

for making accusations that

"white officials" in charge of

squash have failed to get the

sport into the Olympics, reports

Jansher, the record eight-time

world champion, claims in

'Squash Player' magazine that

there is a conspiracy amongst

the top officials who, he

believes, do not want to see an

Asian win an Olympic gold and

are failing the game at all

missed by Professional Squash

Association (PSA) executive di-

rector John Nimick, who said

he was surprised Jansher has

never presented his concerns

about lack of Asian influence to

"The hi-tec PSA Super Series

and the explosion of television

coverage contradicts Jansher's

view that the PSA is doing

who, only three days ago, was banned for four weeks and fined

a thousand pounds for pulling

out of last month's Mahindra

International three days before

the Bombay tournament was

The PSA chief executive

Squash Federation is the body

recognised by the International

Olympic Committee rather

than the PSA, which chiefly

represents the players, and that

it is Australian players who

have the greater right to feel let

Australian squash players if

they got into the 2000 Olympics

in Sydney because they have

buffed by both the Sydney Or-

ganising Committee and by the

"However, they are being re-

The WSF, which has Tunku

Imran of Malaysia as president

and Hassan Musa of Pakistan

as a vice president, has sought

Olympic participation in

Barcelona, Atlanta and Sydney.

chief executive, says every

squash player in the world will

share Jansher's frustration

that the game cannot gain

Olympic recognition while

badminton, baseball and other

Games, the Asian Games and

the Pan American Games.

which are all important step-

Olympics, Wallbutton added.

"We have established our

sports have.

Ted Wallbutton, the WSF

several medal prospects.

He said: "It would benefit

down at this time.

Nimick could fine Jansher

nothing for the sport."

Nimick said on Saturday:

His comments were dis-

levels.

the PSA.

due to start.

LONDON, Jan 12: Pakistani

are eagerly waiting in anticipation and hope towards a suctions, one thing has struck me about Gordon, which is that he seems to have already formed a clear picture in his mind about how he is going to handle the situation. Like the brilliant cricketer he is, even a bit of his technical expertise rubbing off on our cricketers can do wonders for the boys. His openminded attitude has also caught my attention. He has invited advice from all types of persons connected with the game which includes, local coaches, umpires, officials, players etc and has noted how best all these advice can be co-related and channelised for optimum use.

But all is not smooth sailing for the new coach. Unfortunately. he has had to come up against club authorities who are reluctant to release players from the leagues to take part in the national coaching camp. There was a move undertaken by some, to reduce this year's league to one part only and forgo the super league to facilitate concentrated coaching at the national level. But that has fallen on deaf ears and a formula has been planned by Gordon Greenidge to release those players selected for the camps who have games on those specific days only and have them go back. This is a rather makeshift way of trying to over-come a very delicate situation. I earnestly hope that while trying to keep one foot on each boat. Bangladesh cricket does not slip through and drown!

Going back to our cricketers, I hope they realise the fact that they are now carrying the torch of hope and glory of millions of cricket crazy fans. There is no denying the fact that the cricketers have done a wonderful job so far in popularising the game which 25 years ago seemed to have been dying out. Take a little walk in your locality or a stroll in a park or even on one of those rare trips to the countryside, what catches one's eyes? Children all over are playing cricket with any item they can improvise into a bat. wicket or ball. It has replaced other games and the reason is that even the young ones realise that this is a game which has the scope of putting Bangladesh into the world sporting map.

Success at the ICC Trophy is not only a ticket to the World Cup but a chance to play at an international level even prior to the World Cup itself. Look at Kenya for instance, as soon as they finished the World Cup. they made an effort and were awarded a four-nation compe-

MELBOURNE, Jan

12: The big guns

will be merely

thinking of sur-

vival when they

tackle undistin-

guished first round opponents

at the Australian Open here

fifth Australian crown and

22nd Grand Slam title.

launches the first major tour-

nament of the year against Slo-

vakia's Janette Husarova,

ranked 79 in the world in the

Centre Court, former Wimble-

don champion Michael Stich.

seeded 15 this year, and defend-

nent. Spaniard Carlos Moya,

fend the crown he won from

world-ranked Patrik Fredriks-

Becker, seeded six this year,

ple of months ago.

year's French Open.

Steffi Graf, aiming for her

Monday, reports AFP.

tition consisting of some of the top cricket teams. One of things Bangladesh cricket needs is exposure. Our boys need to play against stronger teams, ideally, the Test teams. But due to their heavy schedules we may have to be happy with international second string team opposition.

Overseas tours are absolutely essential, because time and again there have been good results at home but very unwelcome ones abroad. Playing under different conditions will enable the players to adapt better not only to grounds but to weather, facilities and even food. So, the point I made before regarding exposure is even more emphasised when in the back of every ones mind there is that ultimate hope of attaining test

But first things first, what have we got in store at the next ICC Trophy? Well, by virtue of being there in the last World Cup. UAE. Kenya and Holland have proved that at the time of the previous qualifying rounds they were the best of the pack. I am sure they are making con-certed efforts to fight for those



GORDON GREENIDGE

coveted places in the next World Cup. Bangladesh may have that moral edge after beating UAE at the ACC Trophy final and also outplaying Kenya when they were on tour here, but rest assured, their preparations are going to be as arduous and meticulous as ours because they want to retain the places carved out by them previously. Kenya have a few players playing with state sides in South Africa, the Dutch have been associated with the English county scene for quite sometime and we don't

other teams which have improved enormously in the last few years. These include Scotland, Bermuda and Canada. Scotland I understand are hell bent on qualification and most of their players are associated with the English counties and are getting ideal cricketing education from the grassroots level. Bermuda is a full fledged member of the inter-island tournament and that means they are playing against all the countries that comprise the West Indies. The Bangladesh

cricket team had a chance to

play against Canada recently

on tour and the results speak

volumes about Canada's capa-

aware of. Add to that some

bilities. The reader at this point may be a little disheartened by what seems to be stormy seas ahead. But in my opinion it is much better to analyse the potential of the opposing teams rather than turning a blind eye and concentrating on self preparation only. The cricket authorities should try to gather as much information about the strength and weakness of all the teams and in no way underestimate the capabilities of some determined opponents.

Bangladesh traditionally has deeper roots of cricket than most of the other countries. I don't think I will be misstating facts by saying that the whole infrastructure of the game is much more established here than those in the other countries taking part in the ICC Trophy and can with a little effort reach the level of present Test playing countries. The game, as discussed earlier, has wonderful support from general sports lovers of the country. The country must come first, especially at this crucial juncture. Bangladesh is at the crossroads of its destiny with the game of cricket. It is up to everyone concerned with the game to dig in deep into their experience and bring out the best in terms of preparation, training, application and dedication. All things said and done, it is up to the players who will eventually be responsible for success or fail-

All the efforts of the Bangladesh Cricket Board, all the experience and expertise of Gordon Greenidge and all the support and enthusiasm of millions of cricket fans, should be channelised into the total performance of the players. They have got to believe in themselves, they have got to mentally and physically reach their peak by March 1997 and they have got to apply themselves to the task which I believe they are capable of.

I am confident that with application, dedication and determination Bangladeshi cricketers will succeed in fulfilling the long cherished dreams of this cricket crazy nation of ours.

Waqar ready to return

SYDNEY, Jan 12: Key fast bówler Wagar Younis will return from injury to the Pak-istan team which play the West Indies in a crucial World Series limited-over cricket match on Tuesday at the Sydney Cricket Ground, reports AP.

Pakistan manager Yawar Saeed said Sunday the Pakistan selectors would enjoy the luxury of picking from a fully-fit squad of 15 players for the first time on tour.

Pakistan's problems started even before the tour when experienced batsman Saleem Malik withdrew with an ankle injury. then dashing opener Saeed Anwar was stricken with a virus shortly after arrival and played just one game. Two batsman were sent out

to boost the squad but prior to their arrival, Pakistan was at one stage reduced to just 12 fit players as Waqar missed several of the most recent limitedover clashes with a sore right shoulder. "Waqar is OK now", said

Saeed. "Fortunately, all 15 are fit, so we will have a selection committee meeting tomorrow evening.

Pakistan enjoyed a rare day off from playing and training and went on a relaxing cruise of Sydney Harbor on Sunday. The squad will train Monday.

WC qualifiers

Namibia, Liberia locked in draw

WINDHOEK, Namibia, Jan 12: Namibia and Liberia held each other to a 0-0 tie in a World Cup qualifier Saturday characterised by good defence and lost golden opportunities for both teams, reports AP.

Liberia's Lone Stars had the better of the first half where Namibia were lucky to survive a number of shots at goal. The only time the ball touched the back of the net during the 90 minutes was in about the 22nd minute by a Namibian striker who was called off-side.

Liberian captain Aaron Pobleh, left winger Peter Doe and striker Zizi Robert, who turns out for Italy's second division side Castel del Grano. stood out for the Lone Stars.

It was Namibia's turn in the second half with some brilliant football from mid-fielders Silvester "Lolo" Goraseb and Ricardo Mannetti as well as overseas players Eliphas Shivute, from FC Duren, and Razundara Tijkuzu, of Werder Bremen. both German clubs. The Brave Warriors were unlucky not to score at least twice.

Liberia received two more yellow cards in the second period, one to Augustus Dunbar. who also plays for the Dutch club Ajax, and the other to Solomon Joe.

The teams will meet again later in the year in Ghana where Liberia is playing its home games due to the unrest in its own country.

South Africa hold Zambia

LUSAKA, Jan 12: South Africa won a vital away point in their World Cup qualifier against Zambia on Saturday. forcing a goalless draw, reports Reuter.

The African Champions now lead the table with four points. while top-ranked Zambia's dreams of a place in France next year might well have gone

with the draw. Zambia had the better of the chances, missing a number from close range.

The closest was a shot by

Denis Lota in the 34th minute that cannoned off the South African crossbar. Lota also missed a close-

range header in the second half after a period of intense home pressure but in the closing stages it was South Africa who finished stronger.

Midfielder John Moshoeu miskicked a shot with Zambian goalkeeper Davies Phiri beaten and striker Jerry Sikhosana also wasted two chances.

The result left Zambia with just one point from their first two games in the group.

Bruce & Co to stand in dock

WINCHESTER, England, Jan 12: Soccer stars, Bruce Grobbelaar. John Fashanu and Hans Segers go on trial this week on charges of conspiring to fix English Premier league matches in the most sensational case of its kind for more than 30 years.

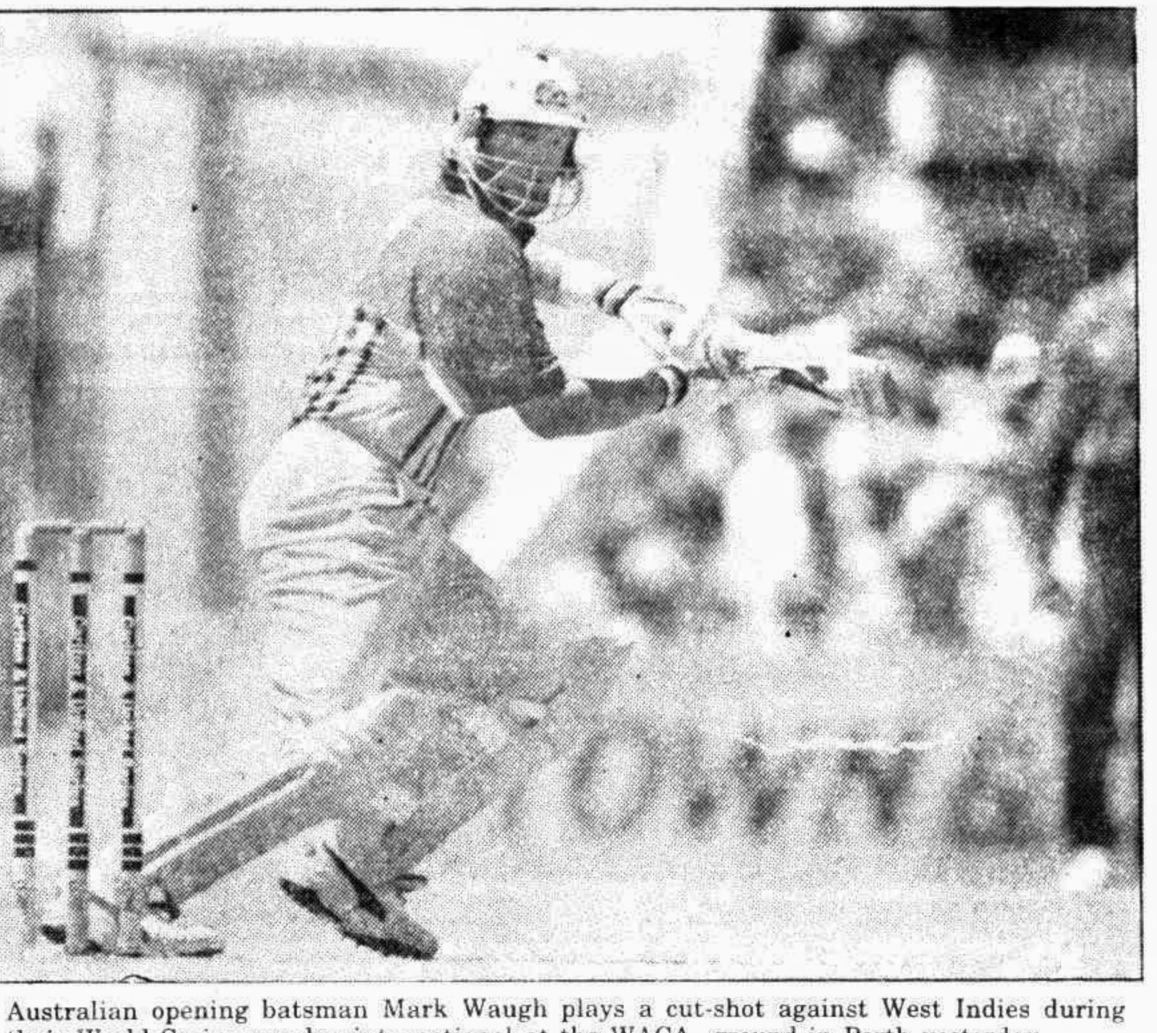
reports Reuter. Zimbabwean-born Grobbelaar — who won six league titles with Liverpool - fellow goalkeeper Segers and retired striker Fashanu, as well as Malaysian businessman Heng Suan Lim, all deny the charges.

The four will appear in the dock on Tuesday in the southern town of Winchester accused of conspiring together to give and accept gifts of money as inducements to influence the outcome of soccer matches improperly or as rewards for having done so.

"If convicted, they could face sentences of upto seven years in jail and unlimited fines. The four, as well as

Fashanu's wife Melissa Kassa-Mapsi were charged after an investigation into alleged match-fixing and corruption. The case generated huge media interest. Charges against Kassa-Mapsi were later withdrawn. The case is the first of its

kind since three players from Sheffield Wednesday - including two England internationals were imprisoned for four months in 1964 and banned from soccer for life from fixing a match on which they had laid bets.



their World Series one-day international at the WACA ground in Perth yesterday. - AFP/UNB photo

Lara leads Windies' Lazarus act

Aussies out in Australia



West Indies superbat Brian Lara guided his team to another dazzling

The left-hander smashed 90 from 140 balls as the tourists romped to 269 for six, with four balls to spare, after Australia made 267 for seven in a World Series clash at the WACA Ground here.

The Windies win knocks the home nation out of the finals of the triangular competition, in which Courtney Walsh's men will clash with Pakistan in the initial showdown in Sydney Saturday.

Lara's superb performance comes in the wake of centuries in his past two knocks in the contest — 102 against Australia a week earlier in Brisbane and 103 not out against Pakistan here Friday night. This was Australia's fifth

successive defeat in the contest and their 11th loss in their past 13 one-day games. The West Indies win gives

them a huge psychological advantage over Australia 13 days before the start of the crucial fourth Test of the five-match series for the Frank Worrell Trophy. Australia lead the series 2-1

but the West Indies still have a chance to take the trophy by winning in Adelaide and Perth. In Sunday's match, the West Indies looked doomed when

their fifth wicket crashed at 179 in the 41st over, leaving them needing 89 runs from 56 balls almost 10 an over. But Lara went on the ram

page as few players can, hoisting three huge sixes over the boundary, as well as cracking four fours.

Robert Samuels proved a valuable accomplice, thrashing 36 from 24 balls, with four fours and a six. Junior Murray and Sherwin

Campbell got the West Indies away to a promising start, posting 60 before the departure of Campbell for 15.

Murray, with six boundaries, went on to complete 56 from 67 balls — his third half-century in the contest. Left-hander Shivnarine

Chanderpaul weighed in with a valuable 49 from 53 balls. though he managed only a solitary boundary. In Australia's innings, open-

ing batsman Mark Waugh made light of a leg injury to top-score

with a characteristically flamboyant 92 — tantalisingly close to what would have been his 10th century in international limited over.

Waugh pulled his left hamstring while darting for a quick single after making 65 and was forced to use Stuart Law as a runner for the rest of his in-There was no early medical

report on this condition, but Waugh is considered doubtful for Australia's clash with Pakistan in Melbourne Thursday.



BRIAN LARA ... 90

STANDINGS Standings in the World Se ries one-day triangular tourney

after Sunday's Australia-West Indies match (tabulated under play, win,

loss and points): Country West Indies Pakistan

Australia Remaining qualifying games - West Indies vs Pakistan in Sydney Tuesday. Australia vs Pakistan in Melbourne Thurs-

best-of-Three finals - First in Sydney, January 18; Second in Melbourne, January 20: Third in Melbourne, January

Skipper Mark Taylor could have used some of Waugh's good fortune.

The out-of-touch left-hander had another disappointing outing, surviving for 55 deliveries but being limited to only 18 runs in yet another knock which failed to solve the team's major problem.

Just when he was promising to prise his way back to form. he chopped a ball from returning fast bowler Curtly Ambrose, spearing down the off side, into his stumps.

Taylor has now collected only 135 runs from seven innings in the current one-day series, for an average of just over

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Series Limited-over match between Australia and West Indies at The WACA Ground Sunday:

AUSTRALIA. Taylor b Ambrose M Waugh c Adams b Chanderpaul Law c and b Adams S Waugh c Griffith b Chanderpaul Moody c Adams b Hooper Bevan c Griffith b Ambrose Blewett run out Healy not our Warne not out Extras (lb-8, nb-9, w-7) Total: (for 7 wkts. 50 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-63; 2-92; 3-147: 4-148; 5-181; 6-217; 7-251 Grath

Did not bat: A Bichel, G. Mc-Bowling 53 Walsh Bishop 53 Ambrose Adams Hooper

Chanderpaul WEST INDIES Campbell e Taylor b Warne

Murray c Law b B ran Lara c Law b Warne Chanderpaul run out Adams c S Waugh b Moody Hooper c McGrath b Moody Samuels not out Griffith not out Extras: (b-1, lb-11, w-3) Total: (for 6 wkts, 49.2 overs)

Fall of wickets: 1-60: 2-80: 3-165: 4-165: 5-179: 6-265: Did not bat: I Bishop. C Ambrose, C Walsh Bowling

McGrath Bichel Warne 0 31 Bevan Moody Result: West Indies won by

four wickets.

Graf has already said she ex-

Hingis believes she would get

"I'm not playing at the top of

pects Hingis - whose parents

named her after Martina

Navratilova - succeed her on

better over the next two weeks.

my game," she said. "I've still

got a couple of things to im-

top of the world rankings.

five tough sets

Hingis having high time



vears.

Open).

Boosted by her victory at the Sydney International. Martina Hingis heads into the Australian Open with a conlidence that belies her tender

SYDNEY, Jan 12:

The Swiss tennis prodigy. just 16, is seeded fourth for the Open which starts on Monday at the National Tennis Centre in Melbourne, reports AP. Monica Seles, at 17 years 1

month in 1991, is the youngest Australian Open women's champion, but Hingis says she believes she has a chance of winning and is now much more at ease with the high-pressure atmosphere of the Grand Slam tournaments. "I feel much more comfort-

Hingis said after beating American Jennifer Capriati 6-1, 5-7 6-1 on Saturday to win her third WTA Tour tournament. "I also like to play in Australia. I think I have a pretty good draw (at the Australian

"I would like to win a Grand Slam tournament, that's my big

Hingis won her first career singles title at Filderstadt, Germany, in October, and a month later trounced Monica Seles 6-2, 6-0 to win the title at Oakland, California. She was also runner-up to Graf at the WTA Tour Championships in New York, losing in

prove." Hingis, at 16 years 4 months, will be attempting to become the youngest women's Grand Slam singles winner since Lottie Dod won Wimbledon in 1887

at age 15 years 10 months. Seles, absent from Melbourne this year through injury, won the 1990 French Open

at 16 years 6 months. Against Capriati, Hingis appeared in control when she led 6-1, 4-1 before the American

three break points for a 2-0 fi-Undaunted, Hingis showed admirable coolness, rescued the game and then went on to win

comfortably on her fourth "I started to play a little smarter. I just tried to move her

"It was the third set and she's probably still not used to how to deal with these things - for me it's now easier to handle all

Hingis faces Germany's Barbara Rittner in the first round

dream for this year. I think l have a good chance to make it." Hingis is expected to move to No. 4 in the world rankings following her Sydney win. She reached her first Grand Slam quarterfinal at the 1996 Australian Open and then beat world No. 1 Steffi Graf on her way to the final at the Italian Open. She also reached the US Open semifinals in August.



able at the Grand Slams.'

fought her way back and held nal set lead. match point. around," Hingis said.

> these things but she had a great match today."

at the Australian Open.

cessful performance and the Nairobi in Kenya, when the new coach's task becomes all Bangladesh cricket team took the more difficult and exacting. the field against Kenya in the But it is with a positive frame of 2nd quarter final of the ICC mind that he has approached Trophy in 1993. This was the the situation. During my recent last chance for them to book a interview with him on radio berth in the semifinals. Thirand also during our conversateen runs kept them away from

bright and sunny day at the Kilat Club ground in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia when we came up against world cuppers United Arab Emirates. The stakes were lesser this time. qualification for the Asia Cup. but success here would definitely bolster the morale of the cricketers. The comprehensive win against the UAE went a little way to re-dress the heart break of Kenya but positively, it pointed Bangladesh cricket in the right direction. Commentating in this match also had its

laurels; this was the first step towards the ultimate goal, qualification for the World Cup in England in 1999. Let us not be hilled into a false sense of security as the ACC Trophy and the ICC Trophy are leagues apart in terms of quality and standard of teams. There is very little

Bangladesh has been there or thereabouts when it came down to prove their worth against teams which have players who are on the fringe of international call. Playing against both Zimbabwe and the England A teams, we could have proved our worth by winning at least one game against each but here our cricketers' biggest drawback, temperament, was grossly exposed. Any pressure situation, and time and again Bangladeshi cricketers have faltered. Application, dedication, commitment, adaptability may sound like big words but adhering a little bit to all these can make a fair cricketer into a

The fact the Greenidge has been

know which new immigrant is suddenly going to be given the go ahead to play for the UAE. So, all these teams are capable of coming up with quality opposition which we may not be

mind is getting through to the "To be able to get to a final is

tional tennis. "I saw a few things he didn't do too good (in Sydney) but I

take the Spanish right-hander too lightly. But 29-year-old Becker fin-

'Spanish armada" of interna-Moya ousted Becker from the month.



world number one Pete Sampras here Saturday, faces Belgian qualifier Kris Goosens on Show Court Two. Graf, expected to win here without the threat of four-time winner Monica Seles, who has stayed at home with a broken finger, has had a far from ideal preparation for the sun-baked

in the Kooyong Classic over

hardcourts of Melbourne. The German superstar. zooming towards Margaret Court's career record 24 Grand Slam singles titles, missed the leadup Hopman Cup teams event in Perth over the New Year, citing sinus problem. She will head into the Melbourne Grand Slam with no match

preparation. But that doesn't unduly concern the 27-year-old accumulator of almost 20 million US dollars in tennis earnings. "Injuries haven't helped at

times, because I'm someone who likes to train a lot and at times I don't feel very well prepared. "But over the years I've learned that sometimes I don't have to be 100 per cent prepared to play well, but I'm well trained

place in the Commonwealth and ready to go." Becker speaks highly of Moya, a losing finalist to Briton Tim Henman at the ping stones towards the Sydney International Saturday, but the only thing on the

Aussie Open starts today

second round. a really good achievement for a so called clay-courter," Becker said of 20-year-old Moya, part of what's been termed the

also saw things that he did

first round of the Paris indoor last October, so Becker cannot

ished 1996 in grand style after a season racked by injuries. He lost to Sampras in the final of the ATP World Championship in Hannover before accounting for world number three Goran Ivanisevic in the Grand Slam Cup final in Munich last



Russian Anna Kournikova practises in Melbourne on January 12, a day before the Australian Open gets - AFP/UNB photo underway.