

AUSSIE OPEN
AT A GLANCE

MELBOURNE, Jan 21 (AP): Highlights of Tuesday's 9th day of the US dlr 7.6 million Australian Open tennis championships:

WEATHER—Very hot. Afternoon temperature was 102 degrees (39C).

RESULTS—Men's Singles. Quarterfinals: No. 2 Michael Chang beat Marcelo Rios 7-5, 6-1, 6-4. Carlos Moya beat No. 14 Felix Mantilla 7-5, 6-2, 6-7, (5-7), 6-2.

WOMEN'S SINGLES, QUARTERFINALS: No. 12 Amanda Coetzer beat Kimberly Po 6-4, 6-1. Mary Pierce beat No. 16 Sabine Appelmans 1-6, 6-4, 6-4.

STAT OF THE DAY—17 degrees (30F)—the difference in air temperature between the 22 (72F) on centre court with the roof closed and the outside (102F).

QUOTE OF THE DAY—"I thought it was better for the game, I thought it was better for the players and I thought it was better for the public," tournament referee Peter Bellerger on his controversial decision to close the retractable centre court roof because of the extreme heat.

Suspended
Peter sought

MANNHEIM, Germany, Jan 21: Lawyers for the father of world tennis star Steffi Graf asked for a suspended sentence Monday in his trial for massive tax evasion on her earnings, reports AFP.

Peter Graf, who managed his daughter's financial affairs, has already spent 15 months in custody pending the trial.

He faces a sentence of up to 10 years' jail on the charges, but the defence said that he should receive no more than two years suspended. The prosecution has requested six years and nine months.

A verdict is expected in the case on Friday.

Graf, 58, can expect the time he has spent in custody to be taken into account.

Graf and the family's tax adviser Joachim Eckhardt are accused of evading tax of over 19 million marks (12 million dollars) by failing to declare 42 million marks through the use of front companies.

Yardley likes
Lankan style

COLOMBO, Jan 21: Sri Lanka's new cricket coach Bruce Yardley said Tuesday there was an enormous pool of young talent in the island nation which won the World Cup cricket last year, reports AP.

He wouldn't like to change the snubbing style of batting by Sri Lankan players. Yardley told a news conference a day after his arrival from Australia.

Yardley, who had played 33 Test matches for Australia, succeeds Davenall "Dav" Whatmore, another Australian, who resigned in September.

Whatmore will take up coaching England's Lancashire county.

"I'm not going to be silly enough to change things like the batting styles of Aravinda de Silva and others. They are champions already," he said.

Yardley, 49, also said openers Sanath Jayasuriya and Romesh Kaluwitharane had changed the whole concept of the game with their explosive batting. "Before that, one-day cricket was getting quite boring."

An off spinner in his time, Yardley has signed a two and a half year contract to coach Sri Lanka.

"What matters is the natural flair the player. We must not kill the free spirit of the cricketer," said Yardley.

Rhodes gets
the nod

JOHANNESBURG, Jan 21: South Africa have called up Natal players Jonty Rhodes and Pat Symcox and all-rounder Brian McMillan. Shaun Pollock, Dave Richardson, Pat Symcox, Lance Klusener, Paul Adams, Allan Donald.

The triangular series starts Thursday when South Africa face India in Bloemfontein.

The South Africa A side to play India in a day-night game in Petermaritzburg on January 30, has been revamped to include 29-year-old eastern province batsman Louis Koen and Border's Mark Boucher has been brought in as keeper.

TEAM

Andrew Hudson, Gary Kirsten, Jacques Kallis, Adam Bachar, Daryll Cullinan, Hansie Cronje (captain), Jonty Rhodes, Brian McMillan, Shaun Pollock, Dave Richardson, Pat Symcox, Lance Klusener, Paul Adams, Allan Donald.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Premier Division cricket league:

Abahani vs Biman (DS)

First Division cricket league:

Dhanamondi Club vs City Club (DCS)

Gopibagh FA vs Sadharan Bima KS (CCG)

Acme Second Division cricket league:

Khelaghar SKS vs Mill Barrack CC (DCS, West)

Kathalbagan GCC vs Uddi Club (DCG)

DOHS vs Amorjyoti Club (T&G ground)

East End Club vs Young Pegasus Club (MOS)

Nabin Sangha vs Spread Eagles (Uttara)

Coetzer cruises into semis

From Tawfiq Aziz Khan



MELBOURNE, Jan 21: Amanda Coetzer, the tiny tyrant from South Africa, stormed into the ladies' singles semifinals 6-4, 6-1 in 66 minutes on Centre Court this afternoon.

Her opponent, the unassuming and unseeded American Kimberly Po, only 2 days older than Amanda, playing in her first quarterfinal of a Grand Slam since turning pro in 1991, found the going rough and tough against an opponent who scored the biggest upset in the ladies' singles only 48 hours before.

For Amanda, it was a repeat performance for her in 1996 she lost to Anke Huber in the semifinals here. But the way this 25-year-old number 12 seed is playing none should be surprised if she reaches the finals — and who knows may lift the title also. It is time that this talented player, who has been around for ten years in professional circuit, should have a break.

AP adds: Coetzer and Carlos Moya escaped the searing heat by scoring their victories indoors. And when the heat retreated, Michael Chang provided his own.

Chang wore down Marcelo Riso 7-5, 6-1, 6-4 to reach the Australian Open semifinals Tuesday, after Coetzer and Moya became the first and only match winners so far in a Grand Slam tournament with the stadium roof closed because of extreme heat.

By the time Chang played at night, outside temperatures had cooled from 39 degrees (102F) in the shade — and up to 60 degrees (140F) on court — to the low 20s (low 70s F), and the Centre Court roof was open.

But No. 2 seed Chang, a finalist here last year, acted as his own pressure-cooker, pounding back shot after shot against the ninth-seeded Chilean.

Mary Pierce, the 1995 champion, also got to play in the evening cool, but had to come back from 0-3 in the final set to beat No. 16 Sabine Appelmans 1-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Pierce, who has slipped to 22nd in the rankings from No. 3 early in 1995, had plenty of help from Appelmans. The Belgian double faulted three times in the final set's fourth game and once in the sixth as Pierce battled back to 3-3. Six of Appelmans' 11 double faults came in the final set. Another one ended the second set.

"I think it was mostly nerves," Appelmans said.

She said she missed her best chance when she failed to convert two break points at 15-40 in the second set's seventh game, missing an easy putaway of a drop shot at 30-40.

But now, "I'm so glad it's over," was a little nervous all day about being in her first Grand Slam quarterfinal, she said.

Pierce kept Appelmans on the run with heavy groundstrokes, but her quest for winners led to numerous errors, too. Appelmans saved two match points at 4-5 before netting a drop shot while trying to save the third.

At the start, Pierce said, she didn't have much energy, but later manager to get her feet moving and become more aggressive.

"Days like these are the ones that count the most, when you feel like nothing is going well, when you don't feel very good and you're not playing good, to fight for every point until the end," she added.

She next meets the 12th-seeded Coetzer, who ousted No. 1 Steffi Graf on Sunday.

Moya, who played his first four Grand Slam tournaments last year, never getting past the second round, reached the men's semifinals with a 7-5, 6-2, 6-7 (5-7), 6-2 victory over Spanish compatriot Felix Mantilla, seeded 14th.

Both matches were played in air conditioned temperatures in the mid-20s (mid-70s F) on Centre Court, while doubles matches and all boys' and girls' matches went on outside in saune-like conditions.

The roof can be closed any time for rain, but the decision to shut out the heat applied only to today's day session. The cooler weather that arrived at night was expected to last several days.

"I would have preferred to play outside," said Coetzer, who trained in the Florida heat for Melbourne's conditions. "I love playing out in the sunshine. But it was probably a bit of a break for both of us not to be in the heat and the wind."

And, she added, her preparations already had paid off in her victory over Graf, who ran out of energy from the effects of the heat and an infected toe.

"All my training and hard work were not quite in vain," she said.

Even without the heat, Coetzer wore down Po by running down every shot and waiting for her to miss.

"She moves you around with spin and slice and keeps it a little out of your range," said Po, who never had advanced past the third round in 18 previous Grand Slam tournaments.

"I'm a little angry because I made so many errors, but she makes you do that. That's her game."

Coetzer did not quarrel with the rule that referee Peter Bellerger could decide to close the roof in temperatures of 35 degrees (95F) or more once the tournament had reached the quarterfinals. All played on the 15,000-seat Centre Court. Before that, fairness is an issue since some matches are played on outside courts that don't have retractable roofs.

But Michael Chang's coach, his brother Carl, said the roof

"I'm in the semifinals. I beat him and the first question is about the roof," said Moya, who upset defending champion Boris Becker in the first round. "I was going to play anyway if it was snowing, raining or 60 degrees Celsius (or 140 Fahrenheit)."

As for the match, "I had to play my best tennis here and for the first time had to take more risks," said Moya, the first Spaniard to make the semifinals in the Australian since Andres Gimeno lost to Rod Laver in the 1969 final.

"I went to the net. I took more risks with my forehand because if I played as I played lately, I was not going to beat him," said Moya, who ventured to the net 42 times, twice as often as Mantilla, and won two-thirds of those approaches.

Referee Bellerger, explaining his decision to close the



Spaniard Carlos Moya exults after defeating compatriot Felix Mantilla in the quarterfinals of the Australian Open yesterday. Tournament giant-killer Moya, won 7-5, 6-2, 6-7 and 6-2. — AFP/UNB photo

cladding had changed the conditions of the tournament.

"If you happen to have put in the training, and the work so that you can cope with the heat, then you should have the chance to be rewarded," he said.

Mantilla said he also had come to Melbourne "prepared to play under the conditions that the tournament should be played under."

Keeping the roof open probably would not have made much difference against the fit Moya, he said, but "I'm very disappointed on the way that I was treated."

He said he had warmed up mostly in the wind and sun on Centre Court before the roof was closed. Moya practiced next, under the roof.

Moya, meanwhile, wanted to talk about the match.

hander said he remembered losing a match in Stuttgart, Germany, two years ago after succumbing to the heat.

"I think I lost that match for the weather, only for the weather, because I was thinking all the time, 'It's so hot, it's so hot, I cannot play,'" said Costa.

"Today I was thinking 'it's normal.' In Spain sometimes in the summer it's like this, and we are practicing."

Ferreira said he wasn't troubled by the heat.

"I wasn't out there long enough," he said.

GERMAN ABSENCE

German players are the most notable absentees from the quarterfinal lineup at the Australian Open.

When qualifier Jens Knippschild bowed out Saturday, it was the third time in four years that no German man had made it to the fourth round.

Then, when four-time champion Steffi Graf and last year's runner-up Anke Huber bowed out of the women's singles, the Germans were left high and dry.

AUTOGRAF MAN

Three years ago, a Slovak youngster by the name of Dominik Hrbaty asked Pete Sampras for his autograph during the French Open in Paris.

On Monday, the Bratislava 19-year-old came close to sending the world No. 1 packing at the Australian Open, eventually falling in five sets.

"All the big players (autographs) I have at home," Hrbaty, whose last name means "hunchback" in Slovakian, told reporters.

"I have Becker, I have Ivankovic, many players I have there. Next time I hope he (Sampras) asks me for my autograph."

SPANISH LESSON

Armed with past experience, Albert Costa set up an Australian Open quarterfinal showdown with top seed Pete Sampras — joining compatriots Carlos Moya and Felix Mantilla in the last eight.

Costa survived the oppressive heat to advance when South African Wayne Ferreira withdrew with a thigh injury in their fourth-round match.

The Barcelona-based right-

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Klinsmann
keeps mum

GLASGOW, Jan 21: Jurgen Klinsmann arrived in Scotland on Monday for two friendlies but the Bayern Munich striker refused to say where he would like to play his soccer next season, reports Reuter.

First, Klinsmann, now 32, wants to leading Bayern to the German league and cup double.

"At the end of my first season with Munich we lifted a European trophy (UEFA Cup) and that was followed by Germany winning Euro '96," said Klinsmann, "it wouldn't be a bad way to complete the year with a double for Bayern and it is still possible."

"But it is not right to comment on next season, there has been a lot of speculation."

"I had a few problems in the first part of the season but I guess that is normal too. I have a few possibilities at the end of the season."

"I can stay at Bayern if I want to, I can leave if I want to. My aim is to play a real good second half to the season for Bayern, with the Bundesliga resuming on February 15."

"We are still leading the title race and can win the cup as well. Those are two big aims for me and afterwards I will decide."

Bayern play Raith Rovers today and Glasgow Celtic on Wednesday.

Kaiser's tips for China

BEIJING, Jan 21: Chinese football will never reach the top international flight without importing top foreign coaches and players, German footballing great Franz Beckenbauer said here Monday, reports AFP.

Beckenbauer, in Beijing to promote a Chinese translation of his autobiography, had no doubt where he stood in the debate raging in China's footballing circles over the necessity of overseas imports.

"It is the only way to lift the standard," the Bayern Munich president said.

"Getting foreign coaches and players to come to China is a must if they want to develop ability and the quality of football in this country," he added.

The foreign legion in China's football league has recently become the target of the Beijing propaganda machine's increasingly strident calls for everything to be done with "Chinese characteristics."

China's professional championship, launched in 1994, has become a huge success with packed stadiums each week, high television ratings, and huge sponsorship revenues.

The Chinese Football Association (CFA) decided in 1994 that foreign players would be allowed to boost standards.

The hiring of foreign players certainly serves professional league interests, but will not serve China's national soccer ambitions as far as competitions like the World Cup are concerned," the official China daily said in a recent commentary.

"What we should keep in mind is the fact that the future of Chinese soccer lies in Chinese hands, rather than of foreign coaches and players," the English-language newspaper added.

AC won't let Baggio go

MILAN, Jan 21: Struggling Italian champions AC Milan said on Monday they were determined to keep striker Roberto Baggio until 1998, reports Reuter.

"Baggio will stay with us in the future," vice-president Adriano Galliani said. "Only the coach can decide if Baggio plays the whole match or not. But Baggio's contract runs till 1998 and we want him to stay with us."

On Sunday, against Cagliari, he played very well. He's always a champion."

Last week, Napoli's general director Ottavio Bianchi invited Baggio to move there, but the player said he had no plans for the moment to leave Milan.

Italian media has said that Baggio has a frosty relationship with Arrigo Sacchi, Milan's new coach and former national team manager.

Galliani denied reports last week that Milan were interested in Lazio defender Alessandro Nesta. "He's a very good defender but we've never made an offer for him," Galliani said.

Costa Rica's nat'l soccer coach sacked

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, Jan 21: Less than two months before they play their first game in the final round of World Cup qualifying, Costa Rica are without a coach, reports AP.

The Costa Rican Football Federation's executive committee on Monday fired Brazilian manager Valdeir Vieira for poor management and a dispute with his former employer, first-division club team Alajuelense.

Under Vieira, Costa Rica qualified for the final round of CONCACAF World Cup qualifying, referred to commonly as "the hexagonal," with a Dec 21 victory over Trinidad and Tobago. They finished only one point behind the United States in their four-team semifinal group.

They joint Mexico, Jamaica, El Salvador, the United States and Canada in the six-team league round which will send the top three finishers to the 1998 World Cup finals in France.



Brazilian soccer star Ronaldo (C) together with Liberian George Weah (R) and England's Alan Shearer pose with their trophies at FIFA's gala ceremony awards held in Lisbon on Jan 20. — AFP/UNB photo

Ronaldo outpoints rivals



LISBON, Jan 21: Barcelona's young Brazilian star Ronaldo, who has taken the Spanish league by storm in his first season, was crowned FIFA world player-of-the-year on Monday, reports Reuter.

The 20-year-old received more than double the points of his nearest rival, last year's winner George Weah of AC Milan, in a poll of more than 100 international soccer coaches.

England captain Alan Shearer of Newcastle was third in the run-off which featured three of the soccer world's top marksmen.

The Brazilian, top-scorer in the Spanish league with 15 goals this season, received 329 points under the poll's system of voting, against 140 for Weah and 123 for Shearer.

The award, the sixth time it has been made, was presented to Ronaldo at a glittering ceremony later on Monday in Lisbon's Belem Cultural Centre.

Ronaldo is the second Brazilian to win the award after Romario was acclaimed the world's best player in 1994. Other past winners are Italy's Roberto Baggio, Dutchman Marco van Basten and Lothar Matthaus of Germany.

The Brazilian, regarded by many as the most exciting player to emerge since Argentina's Diego Maradona, is so highly prized by Barcelona that they recently bound him to the club for 10 years with a multi-million dollar contract.

Dubbed as the "extra-terrestrial" by soccer-mad Spanish fans, the shaven haired Ronaldo made an explosive start to the season with Barcelona.

He likes nothing better than to latch on to the ball in mid-field and head for goal, his extraordinary balance and strength enabling him to appear to bounce off defenders.

His modesty has also won him admirers beyond the massed ranks of Barcelona supporters.

"I am young and I still have a lot to learn," he told a news conference after the award ceremony. When they handed me the trophy, I remembered when I was young and how I wanted to be the best player in the world."

handed over a one million escudo (6,000 dollars) cheque to be donated to a society for the protection of children.

The Liberian nearly did not make the trip to Lisbon because he faces a court action for damages in Portugal after Porto defender Jorge Costa's nose was broken in an incident at the end

The biggest ovation of the night was for Liberia's George Weah, whose attendance at the ceremony was in doubt up to the last moment.

Weah received a special FIFA award for fair-play and the audience burst into prolonged applause when the African star

of a bad-tempered European Cup league match between the Portuguese champions and AC Milan last November.

Weah, who says he was severely provoked by Costa, feared legal problems and a hostile reception in Lisbon and FIFA were unable to confirm his presence until only hours before the ceremony was due to begin.

"The (fair play) award is an honour not just for Liberia but for the whole of the African continent," Weah said.

Bebeto vents his wrath

SEVILLE, Spain, Jan 21: World Cup striker Beбето has hit out at the management of Sevilla after reaching agreement to leave the troubled Spanish club and join Brazil's Vitoria de Bahia for a 4.125 million dollars fee, reports Reuter.

"It's shameful ... I feel cheated, the club hasn't fulfilled any of what they promised me," said the Brazilian of his two months at Sevilla, who are fighting to avoid relegation and are immersed in a boardroom struggle.

Liatti, McRae stay on course

At the end of Leg 1 of the Rally of Monte Carlo — the opening round of the 1997 FIA World Rally Championship — Piero Liatti and Colin McRae are sitting comfortably in third and fourth positions respectively on their debut competitive outing in the all-new Subaru Impreza 555 WRX97, says a press release.

True to tradition, however, this notoriously unpredictable event that takes the competitors up into the French mountains is causing much trepidation; tyre selection being at the centre of discussions as conditions constantly change from 100 per cent asphalt to snow and slush. Having started in the glamorous Mediterranean resort of Monte Carlo on Sunday morning for one super special stage, the crews then headed north, into France, for Monday's five stages totalling 132 competitive kilometres.

Now heading the 555 Subaru World Rally Team assault with two stage wins to his credit, Piero Liatti has had a trouble-free run and suffered only from one miscalculation on tyres earlier on in the day. We were unsure which to use as the first stage was wet with a bit of snow, but the second had a mixture of compacted and melting snow. Both of these require very specialised tyres, but because you are not allowed change between the two stages, you have to make compromise and we selected tyres more suited for snow — we should have gone more for wider wets, said Piero. "There is still a long way to go yet and anything can happen to anyone — I am happy. After all, we are only 24 seconds off the lead," added the Italian.

By comparison, Colin McRae and his new co-driver, Nicky

FACT-FILE

LONDON, Jan 21 (Reuter): Following are profiles of Ronaldo, Alan Shearer and George Weah:

RONALDO

Age: 20

Height: 183 cm

Weight: 77 kg

Date of birth: September 22, 1976

Nationality: Brazilian

Current club side: Barcelona (Spain)

Career path: Social Ramos Club, Sao Cristovao, Cruzeiro (all Brazil), PSV Eindhoven (Netherlands) 1994-1996. Joined Barcelona in July 1996.

International caps