

SL-England WC opener

LONDON. June 17: Defending champions Sri Lanka will meet host nation England at Lord's in the opening match of the 1999 World Cup of cricket, reports AP.

The draw for the World Cup, announced at its official launch at Lord's Tuesday, sees the two nations join India, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya in Group A.

The opening game is set for May 14.

In Group B, 1996 World Cup runners-up Australia open against Scotland on May 16, and are joined by the West Indies, Pakistan, New Zealand and Bangladesh in the group.

Bangladesh and Scotland are both first-timers in the World Cup, which will be staged over five weeks in England, Ireland, Scotland and the Netherlands. The tournament will have 42 matches and culminate with the final at Lord's on June 20.

Bangladesh and Scotland qualified after finishing in the top three of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Trophy held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in April.

Kenya, runners-up to Bangladesh in that tournament,

is final, qualify for their second consecutive World Cup.

The six teams in each group will play each other once on a round-robin basis, with the top

Hingis tops earners' list

ST PETERSBURG. Florida, June 17 (Reuters): Leading money winners in women's tennis this year as issued by the WTA Tour on Monday:

Player	Dollars
1. Hingis	1,590,891
2. Majoli	996,476
3. Davenport	606,141
4. Fernandez	551,027
5. Pierce	541,891
6. Coetzer	429,534
7. Zvereva	410,036
8. Seles	363,783
9. Vicario	326,183
10. Spirlea	302,180
11. Martinez	278,417
12. Novotna	274,310
13. Dragomir	252,295
14. Raymond	251,768
15. Graf	230,249
16. Fernandez	208,653
17. Huber	190,813
18. Arendt	173,979
19. Tauziat	170,738
20. McCarthy	169,337

three teams in each group advancing to the next stage, the "Super Six".

For the first time in World Cup competition, the top six qualifying teams will advance carrying points only from the matches they played against the other qualifying teams in their group.

This is to encourage teams to play their best possible team in every match because teams can no longer afford to lose in the qualifying rounds.

"We feel this format will provide the most exciting play between countries that rarely meet," said tournament director Terry Blake. "It's the best way of ensuring that every match is competitive."

"It means that, say, if Kenya beat the West Indies again (as it did in 1996) then the West Indies could be out of the competition," said David vs. Goliath."

There will be nine "Super Six" games, with the top three teams from Group A playing the three top Group B teams once each to determine the semifinalists.

The semis will be played between the first and fourth qualifiers at Old Trafford in Manchester on June 16, and between the second and third best teams at Edgbaston in Birmingham on June 17.

Pete faces tricky opener



WIMBLEDON. June 17: Pete Sampras, whose last two defeats have been to Swedish players, will face another Swede in the opening round of Wimbledon next week, reports AP.

The top-seeded Sampras, winner of three straight titles from 1993-95, drew Mikael Tillstrom as his first-round opponent in Tuesday's draw at the All England Club.

Tillstrom reached the third round at Wimbledon last year and is currently ranked No. 54. On paper at least, he should not pose too much of a threat to the world's top-ranked player.

But Sampras has been below par lately, losing in the third round at the French Open to Magnus Norman and falling to Jonas Bjorkman in the quarterfinals of last week's Queen's Club tournament.

If Sampras gets past Tillstrom, he should have a relatively easy path through the next rounds — until a possible quarterfinal showdown against fellow three time champion Boris Becker. The German is seeded No. 8 this year.

Second-seeded Goran Ivanisevic, No. 3 Yevgeny Kafelnikov and defending champion and No. 4 Richard Krajicek drew little-known opponents for the first round.

Ivanisevic will face Romania's Dinu Rescaru, Kafelnikov was paired against Spain's Juan Antonio Marin and Krajicek will play Germany's Marcello Craca.

The theoretical quarterfinal matchups are: Sampras vs. Becker and Kafelnikov vs. No. 5 Michael Chang in the top half, with Krajicek vs. No. 6 Thomas Muster and Ivanisevic vs. No. 7 Mark Philippoussis in the bottom half.

The draw threw up several intriguing first-round matches. The pick of the bunch is the pairing of Philippoussis and Britain's Greg Rusedski, two of the biggest servers in the game.

Philippoussis won the Queen's event, beating Ivanisevic in the final, and has emerged as one of the Wimbledon favorites. Rusedski got to the semifinals at Queen's and has a game perfectly suited for

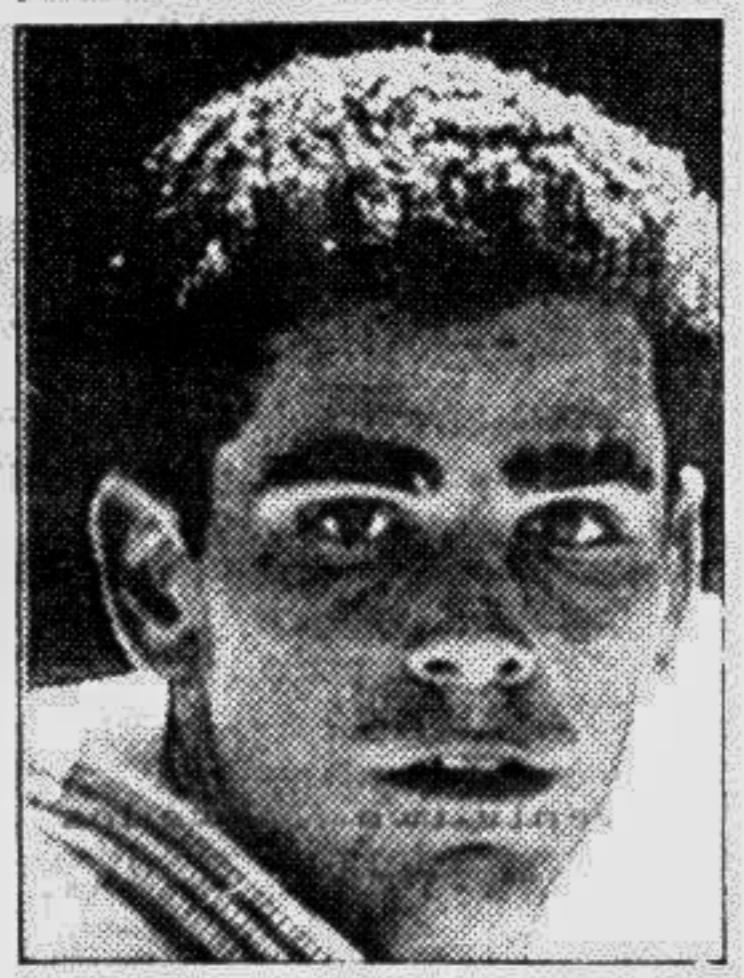
grass.

Also meeting in the first round are 1991 champion Michael Stich and 1993 finalist Jim Courier. Both are unseeded this year.

Chang could have trouble in his opening match against Australia's Todd Woodbridge.

And 1992 champion Andre Agassi, who has played sparingly all year and has dropped to No. 29 in the rankings, will open against Spain's Carlos Moya. Moya, the No. 9 seed, was runner-up at the Australian Open but has played poorly in recent months.

Gustavo Kuerten, the surprise French Open champion,



PETE SAMPRAS

WIMBLEDON SEEDINGS

LONDON. June 17 (Xinhua): Following are the seedings for the Wimbledon tennis championships announced on Monday:

Women's singles	Men's singles
1. Martina Hingis (SWT)	1. Pete Sampras (USA)
2. Monica Seles (US)	2. Goran Ivanisevic (CRO)
3. Jana Novotna (CZ)	3. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (RUS)
4. Iva Majoli (CRO)	4. Richard Krajicek (NED)
5. Lindsay Davenport (US)	5. Michael Chang (US)
6. Amanda Coetzer (RSA)	6. Thomas Muster (AUS)
7. Anke Huber (GER)	7. Mark Philippoussis (AUS)
8. Sanchez-Vicario (SPA)	8. Boris Becker (GER)
9. Mary Pierce (FRA)	9. Marcelo Rios (CHL)
10. Conchita Martinez (SPA)	10. Carlos Moya (SPA)
11. Mary-Joe Fernandez (US)	11. Gustavo Kuerten (BRZ)
12. Irina Spirlea (ROM)	12. Patrick Rafter (AUS)
13. Kimberley Po (US)	13. Andrei Medvedev (UKR)
14. Brenda Schultz (NED)	14. Tim Henman (GBR)
15. Ruxandra Dragomir (ROM)	15. Wayne Ferreira (RSA)
16. Barbara Paulus (AUS)	16. Petr Korda (CZ)

Saga of 'sultan of spin'



LONDON. June 17 (AP): Shane Warne admitted four years of international cricket and thousands of overs have taken their toll on him since the last Ashes tour in 1993.

The ace Australian leg-spinner, perhaps the hottest property of this decade, has struggled on the current tour despite taking 20 first-class wickets in four matches.

Warne had said before the current tour that this could be his last Ashes series in England.

It is four years and 2000 plus overs since he delivered the "ball of the century" to dismiss Mike Gatting four years ago, and Warne said the strenuous workload had made all the difference in the "Shane Warne of 1993" and the Warne of 1997.

"If you do the same thing everyday for four years it's going

to have a little psychological effect, a body effect," Warne said.

"Before 1993 I only had two years of playing Test cricket and hadn't bowled half as much."

Warne took only one wicket in Australia's nine-wicket loss to England in the first Test at Edgbaston, and the England batsmen — particularly double century maker Nasser Hussain and centurion Graham Thorpe — appeared to have little trouble against the Australian.

His first Test figures — one for 137 — were his third worse in 53 Tests for Australia since he made his debut against India in Sydney in 1992.

The problem as I see it is that everybody goes out there and expects me to bowl and get them drifting and turning, but you can only do that if the wicket enables you to turn the ball," he said.

"On first and second day wickets it doesn't turn as much and everybody writes you off."

"That's where people should look at the game a bit more and try to understand what's going on. I wouldn't read too much into it."

If you have five-day Test matches and there are foot marks you are going to see the

ball turning."

Warne also said the green tops prepared so far for the tourist matches have also blunted his ability to have an impact.

"When wickets that are prepared you are more likely to see more of the three and four wickets than the big sixes and sevens," Warne said of his match returns.

"I don't think I've had too many bad days in the last few years but I've had days where I haven't bowled as well," Warne admitted.

Chanderpaul's place in the West Indies 13 for the second Test against Sri Lanka at Arnos Vale in St Vincent on Friday goes to left-handed opening batsman Robert Samuels.

The West Indies' next international commitment is not until late October, when they tour Pakistan for a three-Test series.

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The West Indies 13: Courtney Walsh (captain), Sherwin Campbell, Stuart Williams, Floyd Reifer, Brian Lara, Carl Hooper, Roland Holder, Courtney Browne, Ian Bishop, Curly Ambrose, Franklin Rose, Mervyn Dillon, Robert Samuels.

He has muscle spasms in his neck," West Indies Cricket Board secretary Andrew Sealy said in a statement Monday.

"He needs to undergo intensive physical therapy with strengthening exercises of the neck and shoulder, combined with other modalities of physical therapy.

"According to Dr Sealy, Chanderpaul should be out of cricket for between seven to 14 days."

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