

Glamorgan pip Kent at the post

LONDON, Sept 21: Glamorgan won the English county cricket championship on Saturday for the first time for 28 years when they beat Somerset by 10 wickets at Taunton, reports Reuter.

After securing 527 in their first innings Glamorgan bowled out Somerset for 252 and then 285, polishing off the necessary 11 runs without fuss.

The maximum 24 points gained by Glamorgan meant nearest challengers Kent had to settle for second position despite beating Surrey by five wickets at Canterbury.

It was the end of a sad season for Kent who also finished runners-up in the Benson and Hedges Cup and the Sunday League.

But no one could deny Glamorgan who during the season lost considerable playing time because of bad weather. They seized their opportunities when they came.

The best was saved for last. From and overnight 353 for four they raced to 527 with Huge Morris hitting 165 to go with the 142 of Steve James and 86 by big-hitting Robert Croft.

They worked methodically through the Somerset batting for the second time with Darren Thomas taking five for 38, although Graham Rose (67) and Andy Caddick (56 not out) threatened to spoil the party with a 95-run eighth wicket partnership.

After Rose fell the door was wide open and James sealed the triumph with a boundary to give Glamorgan their third county title in all.

Seles rallies past Sanchez



TOKYO, Sept 21: Monica Seles, rebounding from 1-3 in the final set, finally overpowered Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (7-5) Sunday for her fourth consecutive championship in the Toyota Princess Cup tennis tournament, reports AP.

Sanchez-Vicario, who frustrated Seles with impressive retrieving, counter-punching, slices, drop shots and timely good serving, saved one match point at 4-5 in the final set and two more in the tiebreaker before finally losing on one of Seles' few successful drop shots.

It all came down to "just a little bit of luck on key shots, the same thing that brought Arantxa back into the match in the second set," said the top seed, who has lost only once to Sanchez-Vicario — in 1992 — in 15 meetings.

Seles had little trouble in the 23-minute first set against the Spanish No. 2 seed, who also lost to her in last year's final.

But Sanchez-Vicario started the second set by holding serve with the help of two winning drop shots and then immediately breaking Seles thanks to an accidental drop shot — a blocked serve return that landed just over the net. That saved a game point, and Seles then double faulted and missed a backhand.

Although she was broken twice herself in the second set, Sanchez-Vicario gained two more breaks, first by stretching Seles too far wide to use her two-handed backhand effectively, and then with backhand winner down the line and a net

charge that pressured Seles into an error.

Errors by Seles let Sanchez-Vicario take a 3-1 final-set lead.

Sanchez-Vicario said a line call against her on a ball that she thought was out at 0-30 in the next game made a big difference — "It would have been three break points" for a 4-1 lead.

Seles got the break back in the sixth game after six deuces



MONICA SELES

Louis clinches WBA crown

AACHEN, Germany, Sept 21: Louis del Valle of the United States became the new World Boxing Association (WBA) light-heavyweight champion Saturday when he stopped 34-year-old Dutch opponent Eddy Smulders for the vacant crown in the eighth round of a scheduled 12-round contest, reports AFP.

and four game points for Sanchez-Vicario. At the end, the Spaniard missed two backhands.

Leading 5-4, Seles set up her first match point with a spectacular, sharply angled backhand cross court that Sanchez-Vicario could only applaud. But the Spanish player got back to deuce with a forehand down the line and held serve on two errors by Seles.

In the tiebreaker, Seles took a 4-0 lead on three powerful winners and a miss by Sanchez-Vicario. She went to 5-2 when a shot popped up off the net cord, giving her an easy putaway.

But at 6-3, Sanchez-Vicario saved two more match points on an error by Seles and a backhand volley after forcing a short return.

Then Seles surprised her with a drop shot that she never came close to reaching.

Seles, who collected 79,000 dollars for the victory, said, "I was not happy with two parts of my game — my serve and my movement. But there is always a lot of pressure on you. Arantxa runs and gets everything and loops it back, and you have to start over."

This was Seles' seventh final this year. She has won three tournaments, lost three finals to Martina Hingis and one to Jana Novotna. In three Grand Slam tournaments, however, she has not advanced past the semifinals.

Sanchez-Vicario, who collected 36,000 dollars was in only her second final of the year. She reached the championship match at Eastbourne in June against Novotna but it was rained out.

Bayern going great guns

BONN, Sept 21: Champions Bayern Munich won 3-1 at troubled Cologne on Saturday for their fifth consecutive victory of the German season, reports Reuter.

Cologne coach Peter Neuturer had reportedly risked losing his job if the team lost but club president Klaus Hartmann said he would not be fired.

Bayern made a great start, going 2-0 in front with goals from striker Carsten Jancker and midfielder Christian Nerlinger in the 11th and 21st minutes.

Cologne reduced the arrears before their 48,000 fans in the 32nd through Rene Tretschok.

The second half was tighter and only a couple of brilliant saves from Bayern keeper Oliver Khan prevented the home side from equalising.

Cologne knew all hope was gone when substitute Mehmet Scholl scored a third goal for Bayern from close range just before the final whistle.

The leaders stretched their unbeaten run to seven matches with a 4-2 win at Karlsruhe on Friday.

FRANCE

Paris Saint Germain went top of the French First Division but only on goal difference over Metz after being held 1-1 at Le Havre.

Unbeaten Metz, who like PSG have 19 points, could go three points clear if they win away to third-placed Bastia today.

Marseille joined Bastia on 14 points with a comfortable 2-0 home victory over Chateauroux.



SO LONG PAL... Boris Becker says goodbye to his former German Davis Cup teammate Michael Stich after their match against Mexico in Essen on Sept 20. — AP/UNB photo

Last rites await legend



MUNICH, Sept 21: Boris Becker will have a chance to pay an emotional farewell to his fans in the lucrative Grand Slam Cup this week in what could be his last appearance in a major tournament, reports Reuter.

The former world number one, who has played very little tennis since making his farewell to Wimbledon last July, has accepted a wild card for the richest event in the sport starting on Tuesday.

The German was expected to play one last Grand Slam at the US Open but decided not to go after his manager and close friend Axel Mayer-Woelken died of liver cancer.

The three-time Wimbledon champion confirmed recently that he was moving towards the end of his career and said he would restrict himself to small tournaments.

The 29-year-old Becker, who warmed up for the Grand Slam Cup by helping Germany to an easy win over Mexico in a Davis Cup tie at the weekend, is widely tipped to take over from Niki Pilić as his country's Davis cap-

tain from next year.

But before that, he will experience this week, perhaps for the last time, the thrill of playing an important match before thousands of adoring home fans.

The Munich tournament, featuring the top four performers from all four Grand Slams and paying out an astonishing 1.5 million dollars to the winner, was created under controversial circumstances by Meyer-Woelken seven years ago.

Becker boycotted the inaugural edition in 1990, saying it was perverse to play for so much money. But he has since changed his mind about a tournament which has become an important date on the tennis calendar.

Last year, he won it for the first time, beating hard-hitting Croatia Goran Ivanisevic in the final.

Even if he looks certain to steal the show, Becker is far from being the only attraction in the star-studded tournament.

World number one Pete Sampras, who underlined his dominance by taking the Australian Open and Wimbledon

titles this year, will be there as always and eager to bounce back after his shock fourth-round defeat to Czech Petr Korda at the US Open.

There will also be new newcomers. Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten and Australian Patrick Rafter, who win the French and the US Opens respectively.

Kuerten, who has been struggling since bursting into the limelight on the Paris clay, is unlikely to shine on the quick surface of Munich's Olympia hale, notoriously unfriendly to baseliners, but Rafter may do well.

Another man who could use his heavy artillery to fatten his bank account is Briton Greg Rusedski who fell to Rafter in the US Open final.

Others looking set to make early exits. Felix Mantilla faces Pete Sampras in his opening match and could soon be left free to enjoy the Octoberfest which opened on Saturday in the Bavarian city.

With 100,000 dollars for just turning up, the Spaniard will have plenty of money to spend on a few beers and anything he chooses.

Top two's sterile show



LONDON, Sept 21: Top two Manchester United and Blackburn both drew 0-0 in the English Premier league on Saturday and with Chelsea and Arsenal meeting today it was Leicester City who claimed a rare share of the limelight by beating Leeds 1-0 away to move into third place, reports Reuter.

United were held to a goalless draw at Bolton and, on FA's designated World Fair Play Day, had England defender Gary Pallister sent off along with Bolton's Welsh international striker Nathna Blake for fighting in the first half.

In the corresponding fixture two seasons ago Bolton lost 6-0 en route to relegation but manager Colin Todd says the club has come a long way since then. "We are far better equipped to handle the Premiership now," said Todd. "These players have ability and I'm disappointed we couldn't score today."

The double sending-off came after 34 minutes of a generally even game when the two big men scuffled off the ball following one of several heavy challenges.

Todd did not try to defend Blake, saying: "If a player raises his hands then the referee has to take the necessary action."

Blackburn also ended the day with 10 men after French Defender Patrick Valery was red carded 10 minutes from time at Tottenham — the only moment of interest in dull encounter.

United top the table on 17 points, with Blackburn second

on 14 ahead of Leicester on goal difference. Arsenal and Chelsea both have 12 points.

Leicester, who performed admirably in their midweek 2-1 defeat at Atletico Madrid in the UEFA Cup, fully deserved their win at Leeds.

The only goal came via the head of skipper Steve Walsh in the 32nd minute and will have delighted manager Martin O'Neill who insists his main ambition for the season is to avoid relegation.

Newcastle, who did even better in midweek, beating Barcelona 3-2 in the Champi-

ons' League, looked to their defenders to hold off a rampant West Ham and claim a 1-0 win in London.

The defence, and particularly goalkeeper Shay Given, were on top form either side of John Barnes' vintage 20-metre curler in the 45th minute as Newcastle claimed their third win in four games.

Italian Francisco Baiano put derby ahead at Villa Park but two goals in two minutes — from Dwight Yorke and Julian Joachim — turned things round and continued Villa's recovery.

Everton claimed their second win of the season, 4-2 over Barnsley, with two from Gary Speed, and one each for debutant Danhy Dadamarteri and John Ostrler.

At Selhurst Park the landlords gave the tenants a lesson as Crystal Palace beat Wimbledon 1-0 with a goal by Italian Attilio Lombardo 10 minutes from time while Southampton had the better of things against Liverpool at the Dell but stay bottom after a 1-1 draw.

German target man Karlheinz Riedle headed Liverpool ahead against the run of play after 37 minutes.

But Southampton, who welcomed back broken arm victim Mattle Tissier for his first game of the season, levelled with a great individual goal by 20-year-old Kevin Davies moments after the break.

The day's other game between Sheffield Wednesday against Coventry at Hillsborough ended goalless.



Per Frandsen of Bolton is tackled by Manchester United's Andy Cole during their English Premier league match on Sept 20. The game ended goalless. — AP/UNB photo

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