

Chelsea player-manager Gianluca Vialli is pursued by an Oldham Athletic player in their FA Cup third round encounter. Vialli struck twice as Chelsea advanced with a 2-0 win on January 2.

## Forest out of FA race



LONDON, Jan 3 (Reuters/Internet): Nottingham Forest crashed out of the FA Cup at home to Portsmouth on Saturday in a third round hit up by minor league Rushden and Diamonds holding mighty Premiership hopefuls Leeds to a 0-0 draw.

Forest, the former European Cup winners but currently Premier League tail-enders, lost to a 17th minute Steve Claridge goal.

The afternoon was otherwise short of genuine giant-killing exploits as top sides had narrow escapes.

But the 6,500 crowd at Rushden went home happy.

"Today was what the FA Cup is all about, the giants against the minnows on their patch," said Leeds manager David O'Leary whose opposite number Brian Talbot was his team mate in Arsenal's 1979 FA Cup winning side.

Rushden and Diamonds even clipped the bar in the first minute off a corner.

Premier League Charlton Athletic went out, losing 2-0 at Blackburn Rovers in a top-flight clash.

Second division leaders Fulham came within seconds of their second cup upset of the season against Southampton while third division Swansea were just three minutes away from an astonishing win over West Ham at Upton Park.

Swansea led 1-0 until Julian Dicks equalised in the 67th.

"You must never lose your sense of humour but it was a strange goal," said Fulham boss Kevin Keegan of Norwegian Egil Ostenstad's 89th minute equaliser at The Dell. Steve Hayward had put Fulham ahead

in the ninth minute. The equaliser was a scrappy affair, hooked in while Ostenstad -- celebrating his 26th birthday -- was on the floor.

Yeovil, two places below Rushden and Diamonds in the Football Conference, led third division leaders Cardiff 1-0 until Cliff Roberts equalised in the 84th minute.

Everton, who last won the cup in 1995, scored twice in the last two minutes to beat first division Bristol City 2-0. The Ivory Coast's Ibrahim Bakayoko scored both goals.

First division Crystal Palace, now guided by former England manager Terry Venables, missed an opportunity at Newcastle United, who had goalkeeper Shay Given sent off in the 14th minute for a handball outside the area.

Palace, who scored through Lee Bradbury in the 18th

minute, stayed 1-0 up to half time but goals from Gary Speed in the 48th and England captain Alan Shearer in the 69th kept last season's losing finalists on course.

Holders Arsenal play at Preston North End on Monday. League leaders Aston Villa were held for 45 minutes by the lowest club in the league, Hull City, until Stan Collymore broke the ice in first half stoppage time. They won 3-0.

Chelsea, second in the league, won 2-0 at second division Oldham Athletic, their Italian player-manager Gianluca Vialli enjoying a rare outing by scoring twice.

Tottenham Hotspur beat first division Watford 5-2, with six of the goals coming in a stirring first half that saw Spurs go a goal down at home after 40 seconds to White Hart Lane reject Richard Johnson.

Coventry meanwhile smashed seven past second division strugglers Macclesfield. The one-sided victory came a decade on from Coventry making the headlines as the last top flight club to lose to non-league opponents, a 2-1 defeat by Sutton United.

Rushden, a team of full-time professionals with league ambitions, offered the alluring prospect of a major upset and lived up to expectations by forcing a corner after 30 seconds and then shaving the bar afterwards.

Leeds were reduced to 10 men in the 74th minute when Jonathan Woodgate picked up a second yellow card, raising the expectations of the 6,500 strong home crowd whose side had done more than enough by then to trouble the visitors.

"It was always going to be tough after that," said O'Leary.

minute, stayed 1-0 up to half time but goals from Gary Speed in the 48th and England captain Alan Shearer in the 69th kept last season's losing finalists on course.

Holders Arsenal play at Preston North End on Monday. League leaders Aston Villa were held for 45 minutes by the lowest club in the league, Hull City, until Stan Collymore broke the ice in first half stoppage time. They won 3-0.

Chelsea, second in the league, won 2-0 at second division Oldham Athletic, their Italian player-manager Gianluca Vialli enjoying a rare outing by scoring twice.

Tottenham Hotspur beat first division Watford 5-2, with six of the goals coming in a stirring first half that saw Spurs go a goal down at home after 40 seconds to White Hart Lane reject Richard Johnson.

Coventry meanwhile smashed seven past second division strugglers Macclesfield. The one-sided victory came a decade on from Coventry making the headlines as the last top flight club to lose to non-league opponents, a 2-1 defeat by Sutton United.

Rushden, a team of full-time professionals with league ambitions, offered the alluring prospect of a major upset and lived up to expectations by forcing a corner after 30 seconds and then shaving the bar afterwards.

Leeds were reduced to 10 men in the 74th minute when Jonathan Woodgate picked up a second yellow card, raising the expectations of the 6,500 strong home crowd whose side had done more than enough by then to trouble the visitors.

"It was always going to be tough after that," said O'Leary.

Rushden, a team of full-time professionals with league ambitions, offered the alluring prospect of a major upset and lived up to expectations by forcing a corner after 30 seconds and then shaving the bar afterwards.

Leeds were reduced to 10 men in the 74th minute when Jonathan Woodgate picked up a second yellow card, raising the expectations of the 6,500 strong home crowd whose side had done more than enough by then to trouble the visitors.

"It was always going to be tough after that," said O'Leary.

Rushden, a team of full-time professionals with league ambitions, offered the alluring prospect of a major upset and lived up to expectations by forcing a corner after 30 seconds and then shaving the bar afterwards.

Leeds were reduced to 10 men in the 74th minute when Jonathan Woodgate picked up a second yellow card, raising the expectations of the 6,500 strong home crowd whose side had done more than enough by then to trouble the visitors.

"It was always going to be tough after that," said O'Leary.

Rushden, a team of full-time professionals with league ambitions, offered the alluring prospect of a major upset and lived up to expectations by forcing a corner after 30 seconds and then shaving the bar afterwards.

Leeds were reduced to 10 men in the 74th minute when Jonathan Woodgate picked up a second yellow card, raising the expectations of the 6,500 strong home crowd whose side had done more than enough by then to trouble the visitors.

"It was always going to be tough after that," said O'Leary.

Rushden, a team of full-time professionals with league ambitions, offered the alluring prospect of a major upset and lived up to expectations by forcing a corner after 30 seconds and then shaving the bar afterwards.

Leeds were reduced to 10 men in the 74th minute when Jonathan Woodgate picked up a second yellow card, raising the expectations of the 6,500 strong home crowd whose side had done more than enough by then to trouble the visitors.

"It was always going to be tough after that," said O'Leary.

Rushden, a team of full-time professionals with league ambitions, offered the alluring prospect of a major upset and lived up to expectations by forcing a corner after 30 seconds and then shaving the bar afterwards.

Leeds were reduced to 10 men in the 74th minute when Jonathan Woodgate picked up a second yellow card, raising the expectations of the 6,500 strong home crowd whose side had done more than enough by then to trouble the visitors.

"It was always going to be tough after that," said O'Leary.

Rushden, a team of full-time professionals with league ambitions, offered the alluring prospect of a major upset and lived up to expectations by forcing a corner after 30 seconds and then shaving the bar afterwards.

Leeds were reduced to 10 men in the 74th minute when Jonathan Woodgate picked up a second yellow card, raising the expectations of the 6,500 strong home crowd whose side had done more than enough by then to trouble the visitors.

"It was always going to be tough after that," said O'Leary.

Rushden, a team of full-time professionals with league ambitions, offered the alluring prospect of a major upset and lived up to expectations by forcing a corner after 30 seconds and then shaving the bar afterwards.

Leeds were reduced to 10 men in the 74th minute when Jonathan Woodgate picked up a second yellow card, raising the expectations of the 6,500 strong home crowd whose side had done more than enough by then to trouble the visitors.

"It was always going to be tough after that," said O'Leary.

Rushden, a team of full-time professionals with league ambitions, offered the alluring prospect of a major upset and lived up to expectations by forcing a corner after 30 seconds and then shaving the bar afterwards.

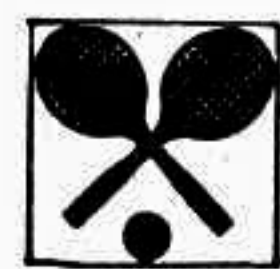
Leeds were reduced to 10 men in the 74th minute when Jonathan Woodgate picked up a second yellow card, raising the expectations of the 6,500 strong home crowd whose side had done more than enough by then to trouble the visitors.

"It was always going to be tough after that," said O'Leary.

Rushden, a team of full-time professionals with league ambitions, offered the alluring prospect of a major upset and lived up to expectations by forcing a corner after 30 seconds and then shaving the bar afterwards.

Leeds were reduced to 10 men in the 74th minute when Jonathan Woodgate picked up a second yellow card, raising the expectations of the 6,500 strong home crowd whose side had done more than enough by then to trouble the visitors.

"It was always going to be tough after that," said O'Leary.



BONN, Jan 3 (Reuters/Internet): Former Wimbledon champion Boris Becker, branding the system governing men's tennis as "sick," called at the weekend for more matches between star players and fewer tournaments on the ATP tour.

"What happened at the end of last season must not happen again. That was damaging for tennis," Becker told the Berliner Tagesspiegel newspaper in reference to the withdrawal of several top players before the ATP championship final.

"All these withdrawals show that the ATP must slim down. Fewer tournaments would mean higher quality," he said, just a day after world number one Pete Sampras pulled out of the forthcoming Australian Open complaining of exhaustion.

Becker also said more matches between top-ranking players would help lure back dwindling crowds.

"You have to make sure there are more duels between top players. You can't wait until August before Pete Sampras plays a particular top-10 player. That indicates that the

system is literally sick," he said.

Becker, who is in semi-retirement and has taken a job with the German Tennis Federation, made his comments against the backdrop of a sharp drop in the sport's popularity in Germany.

No worthy successors have emerged to either Becker or Steffi Graf, who has been struggling to come back from chronic injury problems.

World number two Marcelo Rios also hit out at the men's circuit as "boring and unfair", and said the ATP's ranking system put top players at a disadvantage.

The Chilean also railed against attempts to repackage men's tennis and curb the kind maverick of behaviour which has earned him a reputation as the sport's bad boy.

The ATP tour, reacting to criticism of its ranking system, plans to introduce a new system in 2000 which would wipe the slate clean at the start of the year.

The player with the most points would then be declared world champion at the end of the season.

## Calling Michael Chang!

SYDNEY, Jan 3 Organisers of the Australian Open leadup tennis event the Kooyong Classic have approached Michael Chang to fill the vacancy caused by the shock withdrawal of Pete Sampras, reports AFP.

Colin Stubbs, promoter of the Kooyong Classic, said Chang, a two-time winner of the event, was the original alternate player outside the eight-man field and he would be talking with the American over the next few days.

The Kooyong Classic, a round-robin event guaranteeing each player three matches on the rebound ace hardcourt surface, the same used for the Australian Open, has attracted a high-calibre field from January 13-16.

The tournament features Andre Agassi, Thomas Enqvist, Tim Henman, Goran Ivanisevic, Mark Philippoussis, Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Petr Korda.

## Chess qualifiers begins Jan 10

Metropolis qualifying chess competition, organised by Bangladesh Chess Federation, will begin here from January 10, reports APB.

Sixteen top finishers of the meet will be able to compete in the primary round of the 25th National Championship.

Participants have been asked to enlist their names with an entry fee of Tk 50 by January 8.

## Mary Joe's target

AUCKLAND, Jan 3: Former world number four Mary Joe Fernandez said today she was looking at the Auckland Classic as a 'springboard' back to form from a wrist injury last year, reports AFP.

"I only played eight tournaments last year and I need a lot of matches to get back into form. This tournament is very much a springboard for me to get going again," she said.

The world number 77 is drawn to face seventh seed and world number 35 Chanda Rubin in her first round match Monday.

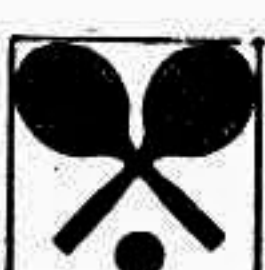
The 27-year-old two-time Australian Open finalist and one-time finalist at the French Open, said her match against Rubin would be tough.

"She is a dangerous player and has a really big forehand. I will have to play my way if I am to win the match," Fernandez said.

Defending champion Dominique van Roost said she was pleased to have avoided Fernandez first up.

"I really didn't want to play her in the first round because she is very tough," Van Roost said.

"It is going to be hard even without playing her first up because the cutoff is quite low and the quality of the players here has improved again."



PERTH, Jan 3 (AFP/AP): Women's world number one tennis player Lindsay Davenport has thrown her support behind fellow American Pete Sampras' decision to miss this month's Australian Open.

Australian Open tournament director Paul McNamee on Saturday announced Sampras' decision to take a break from the game after receiving the news from the player's agent Jeff Schwartz that he was too tired to line up for the year's first Grand Slam event.

World number one Sampras pleaded fatigue after an exhausting end-of-season campaign to retain his top ranking.

The decision means Sampras could lose the coveted top ranking after the Australian Open, with Spain's Carlos Moya and Australia's Pat Rafter the leading contenders to take over the crown.

Davenport said today that she understood the reasons for Sampras' decision, and that he was within his rights to withdraw from the tournament, which starts in Melbourne on January 18.

"The first minute I heard it, I was really shocked and couldn't believe it," Davenport said of Sampras, expected to return to tournament play in late February.

But the more you think about it, the more you can understand it.

"He has played on the Tour probably eight or 10 years now, has been number one for six years and put in such an effort for the last six months of last year."

"In tennis you play from January until November and sometimes you have to force

longer time and play where I only enjoy to play," Davenport said of her own schedule.

Rafter says the absence of Sampras will give others a chance to claim their first Grand Slam and indirectly give him a boost towards being No 1 by the end of 1999.

"I would like to think I can be No 1 by the end of the year hopefully," said Rafter, who begins the year ranked fourth. "It might give me a little bit more of a chance ... him missing from the Open just makes it a little more promising."

In Adelaide for the Australian men's hardcourt championships, Rafter said Sunday the 27-year-old American had a heavy 1998 when he altered his usual schedule to play seven tournaments in seven weeks in Europe to ensure he held onto the top ranking for a record sixth year in succession.

But he said he was surprised that Sampras, who won 61 of 78 matches last year, would pass up the opportunity to equal Australian Roy Emerson's record of 12 Grand Slam titles.

"It just opens up the door for a lot of other players to win it. Rafter said, "He's obviously very tired, he's had a very heavy year last year and he doesn't like to play too much. We've all seen that before so he's struggling with that."

"He's had those sort of problems for a long time, when he does play a lot of tennis he does seem to break down a bit."

I'm going to play some less tournaments, go home for a



LINDSAY DAVENPORT

yourself to have a break, and he needed one because he was clearly fatigued."

Davenport, in Perth for the Hopman Cup tournament, said she was well aware that playing too many tournaments could lead to burn out.

"I'm going to play some less tournaments, go home for a

## S Africans down Aussies

PERTH, Jan 3: Wayne Ferreira beat US Open finalist Mark Philippoussis in straight sets Sunday as South Africa disappointed a sellout crowd of 8,400 with a 2-1 win over Australia in the Hopman Cup, reports AP.

Amanda Coetzer took just 47 minutes to banish 15-year-old Jelena Dokic 6-1, 6-0 and Ferreira followed that up with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Philippoussis. With the tie decided, Australia claimed the mixed doubles by winning 6-2, 6-3.

Ferreira dropped only five points on serve in the first set and faced only one anxious moment in the match as he turned aside the challenge of Philippoussis with some blistering returns and precision passes.

The South African gained the first break to lead 3-2 when Philippoussis netted a weak backhand, and a double fault gave him another break for 5-2. Philippoussis was at fault again early in the second set when he netted the ball to give Ferreira a 2-1 lead, and the South African broke a fourth time for the match.

His only tense moment came at 4-3 in the second set when Philippoussis held break point and had a chance to level the score, but Ferreira followed up a fine serve with a fierce overhead winner.

"The first match is always a little difficult, we had an exhibition in Cape Town and I got two matches in there, and I think that was the key. It helped so much," said Ferreira.

Dokic, the world's top-ranked junior, held two break points in the opening game. She also held game points in five of the first eight games, but her fearless challenge fell away sharply after that and she earned just seven points in the last five games.

"I mixed the ball up and gave her some variety, and may be that put her off guard a little bit," said Coetzer. "And I'm sure she was nervous."

"But the good thing is that she's so young and has so much time to learn, and she definitely has a lot of potential. She's already proving herself in the junior ranks and she has a great future."

## Gold Coast tennis didn't start

GOLD COAST, Australia, Jan 3: Weekend rain played havoc with first-round matches scheduled for Sunday at the Australian women's hardcourt tennis championships, reports AP.

The tournament, which features former Australian Open winner Mary Pierce of France, was to have started Sunday but rain Friday and Saturday upset qualifying rounds and meant the main draw had to be rescheduled.

## Hewitt returns

ADELAIDE, Jan 3 A year ago, Lleyton Hewitt's world tennis ranking was 550. Now ranked 100, Hewitt is about to launch his defence of the title which rocketed him from obscurity, reports AP.

The 17-year-old said Sunday he would approach the Australian men's hardcourt championships at Memorial Drive with the same attitude he had when he became the lowest-ranked player to win an ATP tournament last year.

Then, he claimed the title by beating countryman Mark Woodforde, former world No. 1 Andre Agassi and fellow Australian Jason Stoltenberg.

This time, he meets seventh-seed Nicolas Pietrangeli in his first match Monday, and could face US Open champion Pat Rafter, a better-prepared Stoltenberg, Swede star Thomas Enqvist or American Michael Chang in one of the toughest fields for years.

Four former hardcourt titleholders -- Hewitt, Todd Woodbridge (1997), Jim Courier (1995) and Woodforde (1988-89) -- are in the main draw.

Top seed Rafter is returning to the court after a two-month layoff to heal an ongoing knee injury. He will play a qualifier in his first singles match on Tuesday.

In the singles draw Monday, second seed Enqvist will play Woodforde, third seed Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten will meet Frenchman Jerome Golmard and Stoltenberg faces Frenchman Arnaud Di Pasquale.

## Davenport defends Sampras

PERTH, Jan 3 (AFP/AP): Women's world number one tennis player Lindsay Davenport has thrown her support behind fellow American Pete Sampras' decision to miss this month's Australian Open.

Australian Open tournament director Paul McNamee on Saturday announced Sampras' decision to take a break from the game after receiving the news from the player's agent Jeff Schwartz that he was too tired to line up for the year's first Grand Slam event.

World number one Sampras pleaded fatigue after an exhausting end-of-season campaign to retain his top ranking.

The decision means Sampras could lose the coveted top ranking after the Australian Open, with Spain's Carlos Moya and Australia's Pat Rafter the leading contenders to take over the crown.

Davenport said today that she understood the reasons for Sampras' decision, and that he was within his rights to withdraw from the tournament, which starts in Melbourne on January 18.

"The first minute I heard it, I was really shocked and couldn't believe it," Davenport said of Sampras, expected to return to tournament play in late February.

But the more you think about it, the more you can understand it.

I'm going to play some less tournaments, go home for a

yourself to have a break, and he needed one because he was clearly fatigued."

Davenport, in Perth for the Hopman Cup tournament, said she was well aware that playing too many tournaments could lead to burn out.

"I'm going to play some less tournaments, go home for a

yourself to have a break, and he needed one because he was clearly fatigued."

Davenport, in Perth for the Hopman Cup tournament, said she was well aware that playing too many tournaments could lead to burn out.

"I'm going to play some less tournaments, go home for a

yourself to have a break, and he needed one because he was clearly fatigued."

Davenport, in Perth for the Hopman Cup tournament, said she was well aware that playing too many tournaments could lead to burn out.

"I'm going to play some less tournaments, go home for a

yourself to have a break, and he needed one because he was clearly fatigued."

Davenport, in Perth for the Hopman Cup tournament, said she was well aware that playing too many tournaments could lead to burn out.

"I'm going to play some less tournaments, go home for a

yourself to have a break, and he needed one because he was clearly fatigued."

Davenport, in Perth for the Hopman Cup tournament, said she was well aware that playing too many tournaments could lead to burn out.

"I'm going to play some less tournaments, go home for a

yourself to have a break, and he needed one because he was clearly fatigued."

Davenport, in Perth for the Hopman Cup tournament, said she was well aware that playing too many tournaments could lead to burn out.

"I'm going to play some less tournaments, go home for a

yourself to have a break, and he needed one because he was clearly fatigued."

Davenport, in Perth for the Hopman Cup tournament, said she was well aware that playing too many tournaments could lead to burn out.

"I'm going to play some less tournaments, go home for a

yourself to have a break, and he needed one because he was clearly fatigued."

Davenport, in Perth for the Hopman Cup tournament, said she was well aware that playing too many tournaments could lead to burn out.

"I'm going to play some less tournaments, go home for a

longer time and play where I only enjoy to play," Davenport said of her own schedule.

Rafter says the absence of Sampras will give others a chance to claim their first Grand Slam and indirectly give him a boost towards being No 1 by the end of 1999.

"I would like to think I can be No 1 by the end of the year hopefully," said Rafter, who begins the year ranked fourth. "It might give me a little bit more of a chance ... him missing from the Open just makes it a little more promising."

In Adelaide for the Australian men's hardcourt championships, Rafter said Sunday the 27-year-old American had a heavy 1998 when he altered his usual schedule to play seven tournaments in seven weeks in Europe to ensure he held onto the top ranking for a record sixth year in succession.

But he said he was surprised that Sampras, who won 61 of 78 matches last year, would pass up the opportunity to equal Australian Roy Emerson's record of 12 Grand Slam titles.

Davenport said today that she understood the reasons for Sampras' decision, and that he was within his rights to withdraw from the tournament, which starts in Melbourne on January 18.

"The first minute I heard it, I was really shocked and couldn't believe it," Davenport said of Sampras, expected to return to tournament play in late February.

But the more you think about it, the more you can understand it.

I'm going to play some less tournaments, go home for a

yourself to have