

Golden League starts Marion means business

OSLO, July 1 (AP): Marion Jones has made quite an impression on Bissett Games fans. And with good reason. "I came here and won in 1997. I came here and won in '98 and I came and won here in '99," Jones said Wednesday after her latest victory. "If people don't know me by now, they will not know me."

The American star began her quest for the one million dollar Golden League jackpot, winning the 200 metres in 22.13 seconds. "The time wasn't as fast as we all would have liked, but a win is a win," Jones said. "It was rather chilly, but the conditions were the same for everybody. ... The race for the jackpot started well."

The Golden League comprises the most important one-day meetings in Oslo, Rome, Monaco, Zurich, Brussels, Berlin and Paris. A one million dollar jackpot will be shared among those athletes who win Golden League events in all seven meets.

Jones won both her two previous 100-metre races at Bissett, the storied venue where 51 world records have been broken since 1924.

But the 200 is her favourite distance. She had a winning time of 22.10 in the US Championships last week. 0.29 off her seasonal best. Last year, she ran 21.62, the second fastest time in history.

Beverly McDonald of Jamaica was second in 22.51, and Zhanna Pintusevich-Block of Ukraine finished third in 22.66.

Last year, Jones shared the jackpot with Ethiopia's Haile Gebrselassie and Hicham El Guerrouj of Morocco. But she is not sure what to do with the money.



MARION JONES

"I still haven't used any. Do you want some of it?" she joked. Jones is always happy to compete at Bissett Stadium. Besides the Norwegians, she is by far the most popular athlete.

"This is my third year here, and the crowd never disappoints me. They're loud, enthusiastic and knowledgeable," she said.

Gebrselassie, the world's top distance runner, failed in an attempt to break the 5,000 record he set last year in Helsinki, Finland. He won the race, which did not count toward the Golden League, in 12:53.92.

It was more than 14 seconds off his world record, but the first sub-13 at Bissett. Said Aoutia of Morocco set the previous Bissett mark of 13:00.40 in 1985.

"It was rather cool and windy, so we changed our plan," Gebrselassie said. "The pacemakers were OK. We didn't run fast enough for two or three laps. But it's something special to run the first sub-13 ever on this track."

Wilson Kipketer, the Kenyan-born athlete competing for Denmark, ran a season-best 1:43.11 in the men's 800. He missed most of last season because of malaria.

The king is back, but only almost, Kipketer said. Three women also set season bests, with Gabriela Szabo of Romania winning the 3,000 in 8:27.21. Tanja Damaske taking the javelin with a German-record toss of 65.47 metres (214 feet, 9 1-2 inches), and Deon Hemmings of Jamaica winning the 400 in 53.48.

"It's good, but not the best," Szabo said. "I'm only at the beginning of the year. But I've had a very good training for this season, so my expectations are high."

World champion Allen Johnson of the United States won the 110 hurdles in 13.14, missing another world seasonal best by 0.03. Johnson equalled the Bissett Stadium record he set two years ago.

"The time is OK," Johnson said. "This win shows to people who wrote me off, that after my injury problems I'm back. I'm not dead. My strongest part was the finish and that's good. I'm happy that I equaled my stadium record. That's something special."

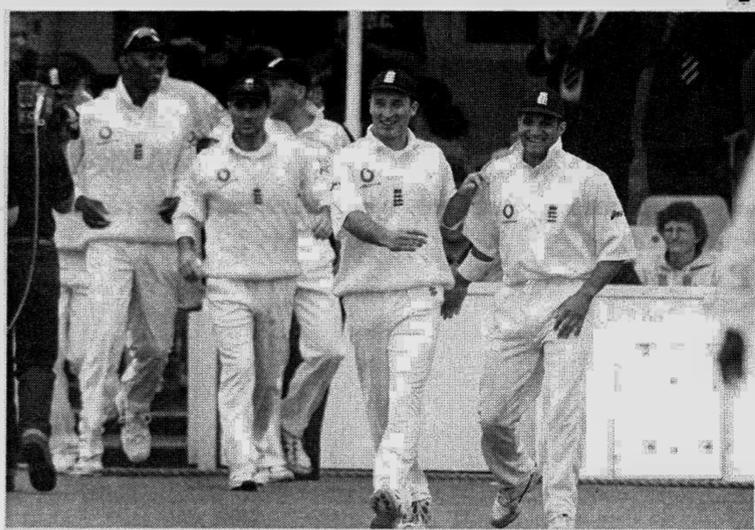
Pat, Mark the heartbreakers

LONDON, July 1 (AFP): Australians Pat Rafter and Mark Philippoussis broke around 40,000 hearts at Wimbledon on Wednesday.

And, for once, it was nothing to do with their good looks. First Rafter, the number two seed, hammered the legendary Boris Becker into early retirement with a three-set demolition of the Wimbledon darling on Centre Court.

Then seventh seed Philippoussis broke the resolve of home favourite Greg Rusedski on Court One in four sets to clinch a double for the men from Down Under.

They are now on course for the first all-Australian Wimbledon men's final since John Newcombe beat Ken Rosewall in 1970 — and a repeat of the 1998 US Open final won by Rafter.



NEW BEGINNING: England new captain Nasser Hussain (2nd from R) leads his men on to the field for the first time at Edgbaston yesterday. —AFP photo

Hussain for individual brilliance

LONDON, July 1 (Internet report): Nasser Hussain launched a new era under his captaincy by virtually dismissing the Team England approach — instead putting fresh emphasis on the individual for Thursday's opening Test against New Zealand at Edgbaston.

Predecessor Alec Stewart was a firm advocate of the team philosophy brought in by England and Wales Cricket Board chairman Lord MacLaurin, fostering team spirit and togetherness at every available opportunity.

But Hussain outlined his new philosophy as he prepared for his first outing as England's 72nd Test captain, one based around the needs of the individual and focusing on personal performance to benefit the team.

Instead of compulsory team practices, Hussain is a firm believer in allowing each individual player to prepare as he sees fit, insisting there are plenty of other opportunities to foster team spirit.

"I've just tried to place emphasis on personal performance," stressed Hussain. "I'm a big believer in Team England and all that and it's been great over the last three or four years, but if I can do anything I'd like to allow people to prepare in their own way."

"Whether it's Read or Habib or Thorpe or Stewart, or whoever. If they want to do their own preparation and it works for them then I'm not too bothered. "Everyone at this high level should know their own game and I'm all in favour of allowing them to work on that and when we get together and do

fielding drills or have chats, that's when team spirit comes into it, but personal performance is the most important thing."

Yet although he is keen to put the responsibility on the individual, Hussain is equally anxious that too much emphasis is not put on his own contribution as both player and captain — insisting the other 10 members of the team will play equally significant roles over the next five days.

"I'm not naive and I know a lot of the talk will be about me and my captaincy, but there are more important things than that," he stressed.

"I'm excited on a personal level to lead my country but it's how you build-up the other 10 people and how excited you make them, or how much less excited you make certain characters to perform at their best."

"It's also the result of the game and more importantly the series which will determine how I'll be judged and not the excitement of the next five days."

He confessed to being "pleased" with the way the squad have reacted to his captaincy, which encompasses greater powers than any of his predecessors, including deciding on the final XI — a responsibility which was taken in consultation with the selectors under previous regimes.

He explained: "The last couple of days have been exactly how I expected really. There have been the serious moments and the odd bit of nicety-taking, people saying 'I've changed now I'm captain'."

"There has been the general banter, but I've been very pleased at the way they've listened when I've spoken."

But, perhaps mindful that the last eight England captains have begun with a defeat, Hussain was careful to spare a thought for predecessor Stewart, who is still clearly upset at the drawn-out manner of his departure.

"Alec is probably the most professional bloke I've played with in terms of his preparation and practice and everything and Alec will be doing everything possible to ensure he is right," predicted Hussain, who made his Test debut alongside Stewart in Jamaica nine years ago.

"He's going back to just opening the batting and if that fires Alec up with a point to prove that's fine. It's worked for me before and it's really up to Alec how he goes out of it."

"He's been absolutely brilliant these last couple of days, exactly how you'd expect him to be. Whether he has a point to prove to the media or the committee or whoever, he just wants to get out there and get runs."

When I was 14, when he won here at 17 (in 1985) that was the vivid memory that I had of Wimbledon. Then he won it again (in 1986) and repeated that and that's not easy for a young guy."

Sampras thought he had seen the last of Becker, who won three Wimbledon titles in all, when he beat the German in the 1997 quarter-finals and Becker waved a long goodbye to the Centre Court.

This time, however, Becker is adamant he won't be back and Sampras, like many others, will miss him.

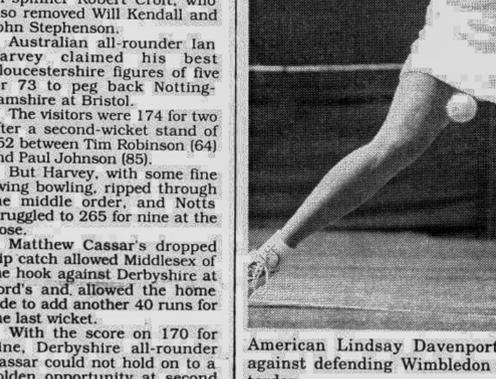
"He's meant a lot to the game. He's meant a lot to this tournament. He's meant a lot to me because he's the one guy I can look back on my career and say that was a rivalry I'll never forget," said the American.

"It was fun to be part of it."

Dokic named in Aussie Fed Cup squad

SYDNEY, July 1: Teenage prodigy Jelena Dokic was named today in the Australian team for this month's Fed Cup World Group play-offs in the Netherlands, reports Reuters.

Dokic was chosen alongside Catherine Barclay, Alicia Molik and Nicole Pratt for the eight-nation qualifying tournament in Amsterdam from July 21-24.



American Lindsay Davenport about to play a backhand against Wimbledon champion Jana Novotna yesterday. —AFP photo

SL tour ACB feels content

COLOMBO, July 1: Australian cricket officials said today they were satisfied with security for the World Cup champions tour of Sri Lanka next month, reports Reuters.

"We have spoken with the security officials and they have assured us that everything is alright and I am very happy about it," Richard Watson, operations general manager of the Australian Cricket Board (ACB), told a news conference.

Watson was one of three ACB officials who arrived in Sri Lanka last Sunday to discuss conditions ahead of Australia's tour starting on August 22.

At the 1996 World Cup, Australia and West Indies forfeited their matches against Sri Lanka in Colombo, citing security fears after a bomb blast in the capital by Tamil Tiger rebels fighting for a separate homeland in the country's north and east.

Australia's tour includes games in Colombo, the southern town of Galle and also in the hill capital of Kandy where rebel suicide bombers blasted Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist shrine, killing 16 people in January last year.

"I can assure you that the selectors will send the best Australian team to Sri Lanka," Watson said, adding that no player has so far made himself unavailable.

During the recent World Cup in England, Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne was fined and given a suspended two-match ban for scathing comments in his British newspaper column about Sri Lanka captain Arjuna Ranatunga.

Watson said whether Warne would be part of the tour depended on the decision he took about his international future, which he is currently considering.

"If he decides to continue, he has also made statements that he will be available for Sri Lanka," Watson added.

"As world champions we have a lot to live up to. We are very competitive, we want to win," said team manager Steve Bernard, one of the three visiting officials.

Australia open their tour with a triangular limited-over tournament also involving the host country and India. The rest of the itinerary includes a three-Test series against Sri Lanka.

Pete's tribute

LONDON, July 1 (AFP): Departing Wimbledon legend Boris Becker won lavish praise on Wednesday from the man he claims owns the keys to Centre Court, five-time winner Pete Sampras.

"Wimbledon and Boris always went together," said the American who has appeared in two less Wimbledon singles finals than Becker but won two more titles.

"This is where he made his mark in the game and he's certainly very popular here."

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India-Pak ties at stake?

NEW DELHI, July 1 (Reuters/AP/Internet): India may sever cricketing ties with Pakistan over the continuing Kashmir dispute, a leading official said on Wednesday.

Cricket can't remain in isolation. The sentiments of the people have to be respected," Raj Singh Dungarpur, Indian Cricket Board president, was quoted as saying by the Press Trust of India.

He said the issue would be discussed at a meeting of the board's working committee in mid-July.

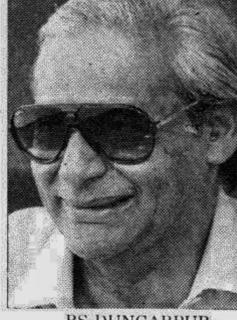
The call for ending cricketing ties with Pakistan was first made on Tuesday by former India captain Kapil Dev after a visit to military hospitals in the conflict-hit Kashmir region where India is fighting guerrillas.

India says the guerrillas are mainly Pakistanis. Islamabad says they are "freedom fighters" against Indian rule in Kashmir.

The two nations have fought two of their three wars since independence from Britain in 1947 over Kashmir.

Kapil Dev said India should not even play against Pakistan on neutral territory and suggested this year's Sahara Cup one-day series in Toronto should be scrapped.

Political conflicts have often cast their shadow on cricketing links between the two



RS DUNGARPUR

neighbours. Earlier this year Pakistan played two tests in India, their first visit for 12 years.

India's victory in the second match to square the series came on a New Delhi pitch which had to be repaired after it was vandalised by Hindu Shiv Sena party extremists a few weeks earlier.

Meanwhile in Melbourne, Australia's Cricket Board is monitoring the Kashmir conflict between Pakistan and India with the three countries due to meet in a limited-overs tournament early next year.

India and Pakistan will both play three-match Test series in Australia in the southern hemisphere summer and then the three nations will play in a one-day series early in 2000.

ACB chief executive Mal Speed is due back Monday from a trip to inspect security plans for Australia's September tour of Sri Lanka.

A board spokesman declined to speculate on what the ACB might do if cricket relations between Pakistan and India were broken.

Tim's titanic triumph

LONDON, July 1 (AFP/AP): Britain's Tim Henman broke the biggest heart in men's tennis on Wednesday when he

outlasted American Jim Courier in a thrilling five-set encounter on Centre Court.

The sixth seed saved three match points to reach the quarterfinals at Wimbledon for the fourth successive year with a 4-6, 7-5, 7-5, 6-7 (5/7), 9-7 victory.

Henman, who lost an epic Davis Cup match against Courier in April, now faces Frenchman Cedric Pioline in the last eight.

When the 24-year-old from Oxfordshire finally performed the coup de grace with a stunning drop volley after four-and-a-half hours it was just reward for a courageous display.

Henman held for 6-6 and made the decisive breakthrough in the 15th game, breaking Courier with a stretch, forehand volley from mid-court. On the previous point, Henman hit a volley that landed near the baseline. Courier argued that the ball was long, getting a warning for verbal abuse.

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Scud hums home comforts

LONDON, July 1 (Reuters/Internet): Australia's Mark Philippoussis ended Greg Rusedski's Wimbledon dreams on Wednesday and revealed home comforts

16,000 kilometres from home have created a perfect environment for success.

Philippoussis, the seventh seed, secured his first victory over the Briton 2-6, 7-6, 6-3, 6-1 and the fourth round result set Philippoussis up for a quarter-final meeting with top-seed and defending champion Pete Sampras.

Rusedski, the ninth seed, enjoyed a dream start after the match between two of the game's biggest servers was held over from Monday because of rain.

But as Philippoussis, nicknamed scud, grew in confidence from the second set tie-break — which he won 7-4, Rusedski's game fell apart.

He had on-court treatment in the fourth set for a thigh problem and, as he began serving more doubtful faults than aces, there was no way back for the tour's fastest server.

Philippoussis's serve was in good working order after the opening set. Coach Pat Cash

claims his pupil is generating 15 per cent extra power after Philippoussis loosened the stringing tension on his racket.

Twenty five aces hurtled past Rusedski, taking Philippoussis's tournament total past the

"It's just great. It feels like home. We watch videos, I manage to relax a lot, and it's good when it's raining, too."

"We go back home, watch on television, and if there's going to be any play, we jump in the car."

Cash won Wimbledon in 1987 and 22-year-old Philippoussis said: "I remember him winning. In fact, I remember going out with my father after the match to practise my volleys."

"I missed a lot of volleys at the start of the grass-court season this year, and it was getting me frustrated, but Cash said: 'Don't worry — it'll come. With every match, my volleys are improving.'"

Philippoussis was beaten by Sampras in the quarter-finals at Wimbledon last year.

"People expect him to beat me again, so it's good going into a match like that."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer. 1 Com-mented. 2 "fair in love...". 3 Matinee. 4 Hinge (on). 5 Skunk's defense. 6 Greet the villain. 7 One o'clock, to. 8 Cigar type. 9 Roughly. 10 Queue. 11 Shea. 12 Ultimate. 13 Undivided. 14 Clarinetist's need. 15 Temporary suspension. 16 Not in the pink. 17 Nothing. 18 Nursery item. 19 Brunch. 20 Oxford, e.g. 21 Dialect's mister. 22 "Flying Down to...". 23 Shade provider. 24 Lift. 25 Morsel. 26 Polish. 27 Bill's partner. 28 Storm center. 29 Servants' garb. 30 Upon (prefix). 31 Added piquancy. 32 Reception problem. 33 California city. 34 Fellow. 35 Move like the Blob. 36 "Mondo Cane" theme. 37 Unwanted e-mail. 38 Plata's partner.

CRYPTOQUIP. W D P K X R Y F B P F F B Y A X D W A T Q Y R B P T R N F F U Z W Y Z P R Y M W R K. Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF A MOUNTAIN CLIMBER SHOULD TUMBLE OFF A HILL, HE'D BE CRESTFALLEN. Today's Cryptquip clue: K equals G. The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.