

## Australia sans Mark, Todd

SYDNEY, July 14: Australia go into their Davis Cup quarterfinal tie with the United States in Boston from Friday without Mark Philippoussis and doubles specialist Todd Woodbridge, reports AFP.

Philippoussis withdrew after tearing knee ligaments at Wimbledon when he was poised to beat eventual champion Pete Sampras.

Woodbridge pulled out Sunday citing a nagging right arm injury which has contributed to his loss of confidence.

That leaves double US Open champion Pat Rafter carrying a heavy responsibility.

Eighteen-year-old Lleyton Hewitt should take over from Philippoussis in the singles and Rafter or Sandon Stolle will team up with Mark Woodforde in the doubles.

"While Todd's withdrawal is a bit of a blow, as we haven't lost a Davis Cup doubles match in five years, I feel very confident that Pat or Sandon will get the job done with Mark," Australia captain John Newcombe said from Boston.

"Pat and Mark played against Croatia in '96 and they combined brilliantly. Another option is Pat and Sandon who were unbeaten at World Team Cup two months ago, and last year took out the Los Angeles title," he added.

Newcombe expects Sampras to play singles although the Wimbledon champion has said he will only line up in doubles for the Americans.

Either Jim Courier or Todd Martin would relinquish their singles standing, probably Martin as he lost to Rafter in the Wimbledon quarterfinals.

The Australians are fired up after the way the United States Tennis Association tried to gain a home advantage by laying a clay court. Rafter threatened to boycott the match unless a hardcourt was used and the International Tennis Federation ordered the Americans to drop their clay court plans.

The weekend tie was switched from Australia to allow the US to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the inaugural Davis Cup tie, played at the same Boston venue between the US and Britain.

The Boston winners face a semifinal in September against the winners of the Russia-Slovak Republic quarterfinal.

**Australia:** Pat Rafter, Mark Woodforde, Sandon Stolle, Lleyton Hewitt, Andrew Ilie.

## No to biennial Davis Cup

ROME, July 14: Pete Sampras' hopes of the Davis Cup being played only every two years were firmly dashed on Monday by new world tennis chief Francesco Ricci Bitti, reports AFP.

The Italian, voted in last week as president of the International Tennis Federation, dismissed the American's bid to change the annual tournament, which is often a thorn in the side of top players on the ATP Tour.

"I think that Sampras' project of a twice-yearly Davis Cup will remain just a project for Sampras," he said.

"You can't hold the Davis Cup every two years just to please Sampras, even if he is a great player."

As for ties with the ATP, Ricci Bitti added: "Relations have improved over the past year, and they can only improve further."

The Italian clearly intends to take a tougher line over the sport's development, saying that the ITF "has to be more managerial."

"The great days of the ITF are over. For us now, things are not going to be so easy. Professional tennis has gained a lot of credibility, but it needs more unity."

Describing his own election as ITF chief, he said: "It's as if I'd won Wimbledon without even being a seeded player. For an Italian, this is an Anglo-Saxon environment."

## Leading woman money earners

ST PETERSBURG, July 14 (Internet report): Top money-winners this year in women's tennis, according to WTA Tour:

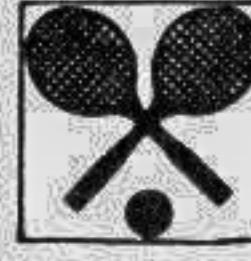
Player	Dollars
Hingis (Swi)	1,534,180
Graf (Ger)	1,189,667
Davenport (US)	1,160,263
V Williams (US)	886,582
S Williams (US)	662,671
Kournikova (Rus)	525,124
Novotna (Czech Rep)	525,029
Seles (US)	469,180
Sanchez-Vicario (Spa)	337,046
Zvereva (Belarus)	324,002
Pierce (Fra)	319,192
Mauresmo (Fra)	311,726
Likhovtseva (Rus)	302,657
Coetzer (S Africa)	286,257
Tsauri (US)	279,870
Harald-Decugis (Fra)	260,330
Schett (Aust)	251,995
Raymond (US)	242,885
Martinez (Spa)	230,389
Martinez (Spa)	229,292

## ATP rankings

PARIS, July 14 (AFP): Latest men's ATP rankings released on Monday:

Player	Points
Agassi (USA)	3684
Rafter (Aus)	3673
Sampras (USA)	3594
Kafelnikov (Rus)	3212
Kuerten (Bra)	2810
Hennan (Gbr)	2690
Krajicek (Ned)	2431
Martin (USA)	2323
Moya (Spa)	2313
Rusedski (Gbr)	2307
Rios (Chi)	2297
Philippoussis (Aus)	2295
Kucera (Svk)	2292
Corretja (Spa)	2183
Mantilla (Spa)	1842
Haas (Ger)	1779
Kiefer (Ger)	1673
Enqvist (Swe)	1607
Hrbaty (Svk)	1600
Johansson (Swe)	1437

## Chang returns to court



APTO, Calif., July 14 (AP): Children played in a sandbox a short distance away. Spectators munched on crab cakes and pasta salad, and wondered aloud whether they were allowed to cheer at tennis matches.

Michael Chang was back on the court Tuesday, but not at the French Open or the other tournaments at which he's built his reputation over the past decade.

Instead, he began his comeback in the hinterlands of tennis. He played his first match since May at a challenger tournament in a tiny sports club overlooking Monterey Bay.

Chang overcame a few unforced errors at the start of the second set to win 6-2, 7-6 over Wade McGuire, ranked 472nd in the world. It was his first match since losing in the first round of the French Open in late May.

"I feel right now I'm at a little bit of a crossroads, and I'll do what I have to do," Chang said. "And that means playing at a challenger."

Chang was No 2 in the world a couple of years ago and has won a singles title on the ATP men's tour every year since 1988, the longest streak of any active player. He has been ranked 18 million dollars.

Now he's trying to regain his

touch in a tournament at which banners promote sponsors such as the Natural Neurology Center and Aegis Assisted Living. The winner of this week's challenger tournament gets 7,200 dollars.

It would be similar to golf's Tiger Woods working back into shape on the Nike Tour.

Chang is not the first player to take this route. Andre Agassi played in a couple of challenger tournaments in 1997 as he began a comeback that culminated recently with the No 1 ranking in the world.

Chang won the first seven

points of Tuesday's match and needed just 38 minutes to capture the first set against McGuire. Chang dropped the first three games of the second set, but rallied to force the tiebreaker and finished off the match with an overhead winner.

"I was a little bit rusty," he said. "This was a great match for me, to get out there and play a lot of tough points. I don't think you can duplicate these matches in practice."

Chang had not played in a challenger event since 1987, two years before he became the youngest man to win Grand Slam title when he captured the French Open as a 17-year-old.

But this has been a difficult year for Chang. He has entered 14 ATP tour events and made it past the second round just once. After losing to Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the first round of the French Open, he was bothered by back spasms and decided to skip the grass court season.

Now ranked 59th, Chang hopes Tuesday's match will be the first step in a steady path toward the US Open.

"I feel like at this point, it's been a tough year for me, and to win matches is important," he said. "If you don't win matches, you lack confidence going up against the top players. It's that mental toughness and confidence I need."

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## Pete to play in doubles

BOSTON, July 14 (AP): Pete Sampras is ranked No 3 in the world and just played some of the best tennis of his life in dislodging Andre Agassi in the Wimbledon final.

But unless he has a dramatic change of heart, Sampras won't be playing singles in this weekend's Davis Cup quarterfinals against Australia.

Sampras and his Davis Cup teammates were together for the first time Monday in preparation for the matches at Longwood Cricket Club.

Despite a hot streak and entreaties from teammate Todd Martin, Sampras insisted that as a late arrival on a team that has earned a quarterfinal berth without him, his place is in doubles with partner Alex O'Brien.

"The last thing I want to do is jump on the bandwagon," he said.

Only injuries to Jim Courier of Martin, the current singles duo, could make him reconsider, Sampras said.

"Unless that happens, I don't think it's right," he said. "I think those guys deserve to play singles. It's their show."

Earlier this year, Sampras refused to play the Davis Cup, a move derided by players such as Courier. But after watching a tape of the United States beating Britain in dramatic fashion during the first round in April, Sampras had a change of heart.

"It was an inspiration to me," he said.

Knowing his about-face was a sensitive topic with his teammates, Sampras said he would only play doubles when he announced his willingness to join the team in June.

Since then, Martin has said he would step aside if coach Tom Gullikson decided to insert Sampras in his singles spot.

"I think Peter should be playing," Martin said. "I've told Tom I think we should have the best team on the court. If he thinks that I'm not part of that, that's fine with me."

Sampras, however, is not persuaded.

"I think Todd's a nice enough guy to step aside," Sampras said. "It's just not something I'm comfortable doing."

Gullikson said the team would meet this week to hash out Sampras' place on the team. "I don't want to force him to play," Gullikson said. "Unless the other four guys throw him onto the court, I don't think he'll play singles."

Courier thinks that the US team will be in good shape, no matter what's decided.

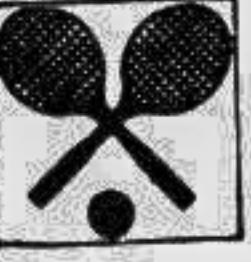
"Our job is to put a competitive team on the court," he said. "I think either way, we'll have a competitive team."



Jubilant Great Britain relay team of (L-R) Gwen Lewis, Georgina Harland and Stephanie Cook after their victory in the 39th Modern Pentathlon World Championships in Budapest

— AFP photo

## Stars falling from German sky



BONN, July 14 (Reuters/Internet): A glorious era is coming to an end for German tennis, with Steffi Graf to follow.

Graf, the greatest player of her generation, confirmed on Monday that this would be her final year on the WTA Tour.

The 30-year-old plans to

play one more major championship, the U.S. Open in September, before she ends her prolific career on the circuit.

Becker, who has been semi-retired for months, said after his last Wimbledon two weeks ago that he was quitting and would not play later this month in Stuttgart, where he had been expected to bid farewell in front of his home fans.

The booming serves and fighting spirit of Becker and the devastating forehand and remarkable athleticism of Graf triggered huge interest in Germany, which quickly became one of the key centres for sponsorship and tournament prize money.

With two of the men's Super Nine showcase events, the

Grand Slam Cup and the year-end ATP Tour world championship as well as five WTA Tour tournaments a year, Germany has everything tennis has to offer but a Grand Slam.

Replacements for the two are not obvious, especially in women's tennis where Graf, despite Anke Huber's efforts and occasional achievements, was the only genuine German star.

All sport has its highs and lows, Karsten Hansen, a leading figure in the youth training section of the German Tennis Federation (DTB), said earlier this month.

Graf and Becker were definitely a high point for German tennis and, although we are doing a lot on the youth circuit, in the end talent is the deciding factor."

Since they burst into the limelight as teenagers, Becker and Graf have enjoyed star status and the German tabloid press has constantly been watching them.

Becker managed that better than the soft-spoken Graf, who was hurt on several occasions by unwanted headlines, notably when her father, Peter, was jailed over tax evasion charges in 1995.

The images of Becker becoming the youngest Wimbledon men's champion at 17 years and seven months in 1985 or of young Graf winning the first of an amazing 22 grand slam titles two years later in Paris will stay among the most famous in the rich history of this sports-mad country.

The success and popularity of Becker and Graf triggered huge interest in Germany, which quickly became one of the key centres for sponsorship and tournament prize money.

"Tennis will always be a big part of my life," she promises

they are picking up successive boundaries in his next over.

Warwickshire experienced few problems but Wagh tossed his wicket away at the hands of Scotland World Cup star Gavin Hamilton after he had made 19 of the 47 on the board.

Hamilton bowled nothing more than a rank long hop but Wagh cut it hard straight to Greg Blewett at cover.

The scoring rate then dropped and it was new batsman Blewett who started to increase the momentum towards the interval.

He square-drove Craig White for four, pulled Michael Vaughan to the ropes and then greeted the introduction of Blewett with successive boundaries as the 100 came up in the 34th over.

Warwickshire reached 108 for one off 35 overs by the lunch interval - and after that the elements hit his hopes of continuing his comeback.

Only 14 balls were possible in the afternoon session as Warwickshire advanced to 114 for one with Knight unbeaten on 46 and David Hemp 36 not out.

Warwickshire had elected to bat and the visitors were guilty of pitching too short, particularly Gough's new-ball partner Chris Silverwood whose opening six-over spell cost 28 runs.

Knight, particularly, found the England prospect to his liking, pulling him for four and

Gough looked his usual busting self and went past the outside edge of Nick Knight and fellow Warwickshire opener Mark Waugh on a wicket which had more bounce than Saturday.