

Knight powers Warwicks

LONDON, Aug 31: Opener Nick Knight stroked a match-winning unbeaten 106 as Warwickshire Bears upset title chasers Worcestershire Royals in English cricket's National League First Division on Sunday, reports Reuters.

Knight, named earlier in the day in England's one-day squad for matches at the end of the forthcoming tour of South Africa, fired Warwickshire to a six-wicket victory in the 45 overs game at Worcester.

Facing Worcestershire's 205 for six, Warwickshire were 136 for four at one stage.

However, Knight, who made his runs from 128 balls, and the uncapped Michael Powell (45 not out), decisively turned the game Warwickshire's way in an unbroken fifth wicket partnership of 74.

The match marked the return from an ankle injury of South African fast bowler Allan Donald, who took three for 45 in his nine overs as Worcestershire built their total on Graeme Hick's 89 from 92 deliveries.

Despite their defeat, Worcestershire stay second in the table, two points behind Lancashire Lightning, with each team having three matches to play.

Third-placed Kent Spitfires sustained their outside title hopes with a convincing 82-run victory over Hampshire Hawks at Canterbury.

Kent, four points behind the leaders with only two games left, scored a modest 188 for seven but bundled Hampshire out for 106. England pace bowler Dean Headley taking four for 21.

Spearman recalled

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand, Aug 31: Top-order batsman Craig Spearman and offspinner Paul Wiseman have been recalled to the New Zealand cricket squad named today for their tour of India starting late next month, reports AFP.

Medium-fast bowlers Andrew Penn and Chris Drum, who have both played one-day internationals for New Zealand, have also been included in the squad of 15 in place of injured pair Geoff Allott and Simon Doull.

NEW ZEALAND: Stephen Fleming (captain), Matthew Bell, Matthew Horne, Craig Spearman, Nathan Astle, Craig McMillan, Chris Harris, Adam Parore, Dion Nash, Chris Cairns, Shayne O'Connor, Andrew Fann, Chris Drum, Paul Wiseman, Daniel Vettori.

Real on Keane's mind

MANCHESTER, England, Aug 31: Manchester United midfielder Roy Keane's lawyer has Tuesday rubbished reports from Spain that the European Champions' skipper has opened talks with Real Madrid, reports AFP.

Sports Daily As says world champions Real, managed by former Welsh boss John Toshack, see Keane, whose United contract expires at the end of the season, as an ideal replacement for injury-prone Argentinian star Fernando Redondo.

But Irish international Keane's lawyer Michael Kennedy insisted: "There is no truth in this whatsoever."

Keane has yet to agree a new deal with the Treble-winners despite lengthy talks, and is free to leave at the end of the season under the Bosman Ruling.

Kennedy admitted: "Yes, there is plenty of interest in Roy Keane but there is nothing to add to the statement he has already made."

"He cannot do anything or speak to anyone until January 1, even if he wants to."

Afro-Asian soccer Egypt seek a delay

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 31: Egypt have requested the postponement of their Afro-Asian Nations' Cup matches against Iran following the resignation of coach Mahmoud al-Gohari, reports AFP.

The African Nations Cup holders were scheduled to play in Tehran on October 27 and Cairo on November 17. African Football Confederation officials are backing the move.

Al-Gohari quit this month after the Pharaohs suffered a shock 5-1 loss to Saudi Arabia in a Confederations' Cup match in Mexico City and had three players sent off.

Meanwhile, the African Football Confederation (CAF) has rejected demands by ASEC and Esperance of Tunisia that they compete in the first World Club Championships.

Brazil will host the event from January 5-14 and ASEC believe they should represent Africa as holders of the African Champions' League title. Esperance base their case on being the only team to win the three CAF club competitions.

Williams: One-in-two

NEW YORK, Aug 31 (AFP): When it comes to sisterly togetherness, at least on the tennis court, too much can be a bad thing.

Sisters Venus and Serena Williams shop together and study together, but they would rather not face each other across the net if they don't have to. But at a Grand Slam tournament they'll make an exception.

US Open third seed Venus opened with a 6-1, 6-2 triumph over qualifier Tatiana Poutchek of Belarus while seventh seed and world number six Serena opens here Tuesday against fellow American Kimberly Po.

The Williams sisters, who rose from a California slum to tennis stardom, have sacrificed opportunities to rise even higher in the WTA rankings by playing in the same events.

"If it's a crime, I should be arrested," Venus Williams said. "What's confusing about it? We're both on a different wave length. Make your own evaluation. You're going to write what you want."



SERENA WILLIAMS

Venus said the fact she and Serena have not played in the same event since May is not a plan.

"No, not really. We have played some tournaments together," she said. "It just depends on where we go."

The sisters met in the Key Biscayne final in March, their first WTA Tour meeting, and Venus earned a 6-1, 4-6, 6-4 triumph after Serena had won two weeks earlier at Indian Wells.

Since a third-round loss at the French Open, 17-year-old Serena won the Manhattan Beach title and has worked on an injured shoulder.

Venus, 19, reached the final here in 1997 and the semifinals last year but has yet to claim a Grand Slam crown, a failure she calls "very disappointing."

A fourth-round French Open loss to Austrian Barbara

Schett, a possible quarterfinal foe here, also taught her a lesson.

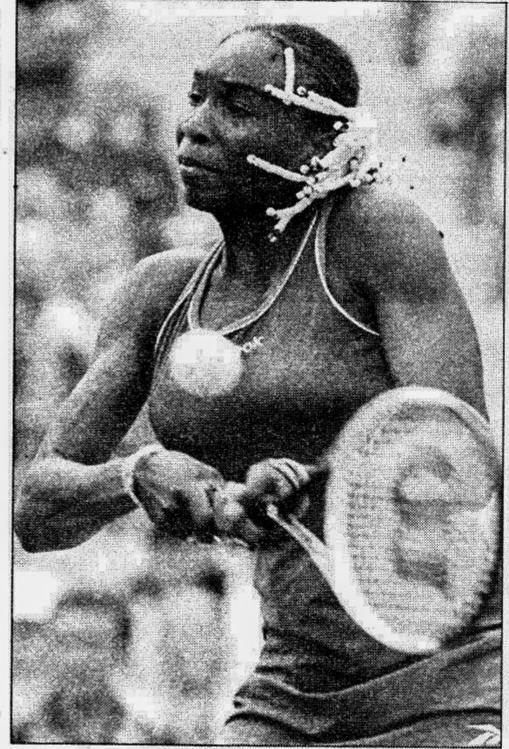
"I underestimated my opponent. I didn't take it seriously," Williams said. "You can't do that. I learned my lesson. I had to learn it the hard way, in a Grand Slam. I've learned my lesson. I'm definitely going to go into the next match as seriously as possible."

"I was feeling very good at the French until I was ousted. This year I'm feeling good at the US Open. At Wimbledon I was never able to play my best tennis. I don't know why. I was just off."

Venus lost 3 Wimbledon quarterfinal to Steffi Graf, a Stanford final to Lindsay Davenport and the San Diego final to Martina Hingis.

"I wasn't ready. I should have been ready," Williams said of her match with Hingis. "But I wasn't ready. This time I will have to be ready. I will be working hard."

Williams downed 1998 US Open champion Davenport Saturday for the New Haven title in her final Flushing Meadows



Venus Williams makes a backhand return during her US Open first round fixture against Tatiana Poutchek. —AFP photo

OPEN DIARY

NEW YORK, Aug 31 (AFP): Three months after she won the last of her 22 Grand Slam tournament titles, Steffi Graf has disappeared from the WTA Tour rankings.

At No 3 in the world, the 30-year-old German became the highest-ranked player ever to retire from professional play. She informed the WTA Tour on Saturday of her decision to remove herself from the rankings.

Margaret Smith Court in 1977, Chris Evert in 1990, Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere in 1994, Martina Navratilova in 1995 and Kimiko Date in 1996 all requested their names be removed from the rankings shortly after retiring.

NOW A ROUTINE
Nicolas Escude of France has raised the come-from-behind rally to an art form.

In the 1998 Australian Open, Escude rallied from two sets down to win three consecutive matches, the first time that has been done in the open era. En route to the quarterfinals, he defeated Magnus Larsson, Richey Reneberg and Nicolas Kiefer.

On Monday, Escude did it again, dropping the first two sets 4-6, 4-6 to Magnus Gustafsson before winning the next three 7-6, 6-2, 6-4 as the US Open began its two-week run at the National Tennis Centre.

Gustafsson had two match points in the third-set tiebreaker.

ATTENDANCE UP

The WTA Tour is becoming more popular.
Attendance for the 1999 tour has already surpassed 3 million, the first time that many people have watched women's tennis prior to the US Open.

With a record crowd of 74,236 at the Pilot Pen tournament in New Haven, Connecticut, last week, the WTA Tour 1999 attendance total is 3,026,491 in 42 tournaments. The attendance record of 3,675,094 was set last year.

UNLUCKY LOSER

Philip King of Long Beach, California, has yet to win a match in his two ATP Tour events. But he has a good reason.

By the luck of the draw, the 17-year-old right-hander had to play Pete Sampras, the world's top player and reigning Wimbledon champion, in his Mercedes-Benz Cup in Los Angeles in July. Then, playing in his first US Open, King's first-round opponent was 12th-seeded Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands, who won Wimbledon in 1996.

King received a wild-card entry into the US Open by winning the USTA National Boys' 18-and-under title in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He received a wild-card entry into the Mercedes-Benz Cup by winning the Boys' 18 title at the Easter Bowl.

Dutchman Richard Krajicek playing against American Philip King in the US Open. —AFP photo

tuneup.
"She wasn't playing her best tennis in that match. I don't think I was either, but she probably played not as well," Williams said. "She will probably want to raise the level of her game a little more."

Williams' father Richard predicts an all-Williams Open final and said he wants Venus to retire by age 22, a notion she does not share.

"No one can stay on the court with them," Richard Williams said. "I hope they sense it. I hope they feel winning a Grand Slam is important. If they do they'll do something about it. They shouldn't have a problem."

One victory the Williams sisters, who are black, have already achieved is bringing tennis to more minorities.

"We definitely have a large impact," Venus said. "Before, you never see that many black people at a tennis match. Today there were quite a few there. Two or three years ago that wasn't happening. People are watching what Serena and I do. I guess they want to be a part of it."

Louis Armstrong re-dedicated

NEW YORK, Aug 31: Jazz great Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Centre Jazz Orchestra headlined the re-dedication of Louis Armstrong Stadium at the US Open yesterday evening, reports Reuters.

The stadium, which was originally built for the 1964 World Fair and named the Singer Bowl, was renamed to honour Armstrong in 1973. The famed jazz artist lived in nearby Corona from 1943 until his death in 1971.

In 1978, the stadium replaced famed Forest Hills as the main stage of the US Open. When the new Arthur Ashe stadium took over top billing in 1997, Louis Armstrong Stadium underwent major renovations to be scaled down from about 20,000 seats to a more intimate 10,000-seat arena.

John McEnroe — a native of nearby Douglaston, Queens, who won all four of his US Open trophies on the Louis Armstrong Stadium court — received the biggest cheers from the crowd. Singer Tony Bennett, sitting courtside for the re-dedication, led a standing ovation for McEnroe.

The always entertaining and talkative McEnroe went through a number of masterpiece matches that took place at the stadium, with one match of his own standing out.

"Who could forget my 1979 final against my good buddy Vitas Gerulaitis. God rest his soul," said McEnroe of his first US Open victory. "He grew up in Howard Beach, Queens."

"When is the next time you're likely to see two kids from Queens in the final of the US Open?"

England's to do without Anderton

LONDON, Aug 31: Spurs winger Darren Anderton was Tuesday forced to pull out of England's Euro 2000 qualifiers against Luxembourg and Poland with an Achilles injury, reports AFP.

Anderton pulled out after an assessment by the England medical staff having joined up with the party Monday evening.

England coach Kevin Keegan also had doubts over the fitness of several other players including Chris Sutton (foot), Sol Campbell (Achilles), Rio Ferdinand (ankle) and Jamie Redknapp (Achilles).

England must beat Luxembourg at Wembley on Saturday and Poland in Warsaw four days later to rekindle their slim hopes of qualifying for next summer's European Championships.

Evander-Lennox rematch Nov 13

LAS VEGAS, Aug 31: More than five months after they met in a controversial heavyweight unification title fight, Evander Holyfield and Lennox Lewis will get together once again Tuesday to discuss their rematch, reports AP.

The fighters are scheduled to be in a news conference at the Las Vegas Hilton to formally announce the November 13 rematch.

Both will reportedly get about 15 million dollars for the rematch, which will be held at the UNLV campus arena.

Their first fight March 13 ended in a draw, despite the opinion of most ringside observers that Lewis won the fight. It sparked several investigations into the scoring, particularly that of the one judge who favoured Holyfield.

Holyfield owns the IBF and WBA heavyweight titles, while Lewis is the WEC champion.

Leading women money earners

ST PETERSBURG, Florida, Aug 31: Top money-earners this year in women's tennis, according to WTA Tour rankings, reports Reuters.

- 1 Martina Hingis \$1,784,180
- 2 Lindsay Davenport 1,345,763
- 3 Steffi Graf 1,193,367
- 4 Venus Williams 1,053,082
- 5 Serena Williams 749,171
- 6 Jana Novotna 561,624
- 7 Monica Seles 559,180
- 8 Anna Kournikova 548,624
- 9 Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario 398,721
- 10 Mary Pierce 392,592
- 11 Amanda Coetzer 352,970
- 12 Elena Likhovtseva 349,457
- 13 Natasha Zvereva 345,202
- 14 Amelie Mauresmo 325,426
- 15 Corina Morariu 310,930
- 16 Julie Halard-Decugis 308,295
- 17 Nathalie Tauziat 307,332
- 18 Conchita Martinez 287,292
- 19 Barbara Schett 282,885
- 20 Lisa Raymond 274,764

2 Lebanese lifters test positive

BEIRUT, Aug 31: Two Lebanese weightlifters competing in the Pan Arab Games in Amman have tested positive for drugs, Lebanon's Daily Star reported yesterday, reports Xinhua.

Foussel Zein and Mahmoud Shuqair were among six who were found to have used drugs, according to officials.

They were stripped of their silver and bronze respectively in the over 90 kilogram category.

The other weightlifters who tested positive were Assad Jaafar of Iraq, Ahmed Abdel Salam of Egypt, Bilal Abu Raguh of Jordan and Zahi Ammar of Algeria. They face a ban from the sport.

Drugs first made appearance in the Games two years ago in Lebanon when five Egyptians, two Saudis, and one each from Syria, Kuwait, Tunisia and Algeria tested positive.
This year's Pan Arab Games opened on August 11.



US men's 4x400m relay team member Michael Johnson in action in the final at Seville on August 29. The Americans won gold. —AFP photo

He defines athleticism

SEVILLE, Aug 31: (AP) The magic of Michael Johnson's 400-metre world record was the defining moment of the World Championships. There could be more magic in his future.

While Johnson, 31, has accomplished more than any track and field athlete during the '90s, his career is far from over. He still has some big goals, including dropping the 400 record below 43 seconds and winning an unprecedented second 200-400 double at the Sydney Olympics.

"I never put limits on myself," said Johnson, who shattered Butch Reynolds' 11-year-old 400 record of 43.29 seconds with an electrifying clocking of 43.18.

Johnson accomplished the record by running the first 200 in 21.0 and the second 200 in 22.2, a pattern that other 400 runners cannot match. For the average quarter-miler, the difference between the first half of the race and the second is two seconds.

"Getting to 300, he was very relaxed," coach Clyde Hart said. "Patience was very important. He showed that 31.6 was like a walk in the park."

"He looks like he can do anything he wants," 1992 Olympic coach Mel Rosen said of Johnson.

As long as injuries don't interfere. When Johnson is healthy, there doesn't appear to be a 200 or 400 runner who can cope with his remarkable combination of speed and power.

When he set the 200 record of 19.32 at the 1996 Olympics, slicing an astonishing .34 seconds off his previous mark.

There has been some clamour for a 150-metre match race between Johnson and Greene to determine the "world's fastest human." Johnson will have no part of it, not after his disastrous confrontation with Canada's Donovan Bailey in 1997, when he tore his right quadriceps muscle.

A Johnson-Greene show-

down over 200 metres probably will come next year at the US Olympic trials at Sacramento, Calif.

Johnson capped the World Championships with another milestone, anchoring the US 1600-meter relay team to victory for his ninth career gold medal at the worlds, the most by any athlete, one more than Carl Lewis.

"It's an honour," Johnson said. "It's a testament to what I've tried to do in my career: to be consistent and go into every championships on the top of my game and go in to win."

He now has won four straight 400 world titles, three relay gold medals and two 200 championships.

The remarkable Johnson also has three Olympic gold medals, ran on the US team that set the world 1600 relay record last year, and owns the world indoor record for 400 meters.

In addition, he won the 200-400 double at the 1995 US Championships, the first man to accomplish that feat since 1899, and he repeated in 1996; he was unbeaten in the 400 from 1989 to 1997, a span of 58 finals; and he was the first to be ranked No 1 in the world in both the 200 and 400, having achieved that five times since 1990.

"He's superhuman, he's phenomenal," US long jumper Erick Walder said.

Johnson has two more races remaining this season, at Brussels, Belgium, on Friday, and at Rieti, Italy, on Sunday.

Then, he will return to Dallas and rest for a while, before preparing for the 2000 Olympics.

"Michael comes back fast," Hart said. "He's never much out of shape."

Draper's difficult decision

NEW YORK, Aug 31: After losing a first-round match at the US Open, Australian Scott Draper admitted that playing tennis so soon after the death of his wife was just too difficult, reports Reuters.

Draper's wife, Kellie, the daughter of his coach John Grieg, died of complications from cystic fibrosis back home in Australia on July 19. This is only the second tournament Draper has played since rejoining the tour. He also lost in the first round at Washington to Italian Gianluca Pozzi.

"I don't know what I want right now, whether I want to play tennis, whatever," said the emotional 25-year-old. "It's just a period that I need just to settle down, think about things, where I want to be, where I want to go."

Draper, who reached the semifinals at Adelaide in January and Delray Beach in May,

admitted the decision to return to the tour just weeks after suffering such a tremendous loss did not come easily. He contemplated other choices, but came to the conclusion that trying to play was the right move.

"Believe me, I didn't want to come," Draper said. "My heart didn't want to come. I think that you can't walk away. You're not going to get anywhere in life just walking away from things."

"I think one of the things I like to think, that anything that comes along in life for me, I can handle. I think that was a decision that did it."

Nevertheless, a homebody by nature, Draper can picture a life outside of tennis very easily.

"I guess what I'm saying is if I found a job right now at home that paid pretty well I'd enjoy it," Draper said. "Tennis is a great sport. It brings a lot of great things, but it may not bring happiness."

It was no secret that Draper found paying attention to the

match against the 80th-ranked Paul Goldstein an arduous task.

"It's sort of like a natural feeling to want to do well no matter what you're going through," Draper said. "But when the crunch time comes, you're out on the court, it's just difficult to concentrate."

Draper's one concern after the 6-3, 6-1, 6-0, was to make sure that his opponent knew he wasn't taking the match lightly.

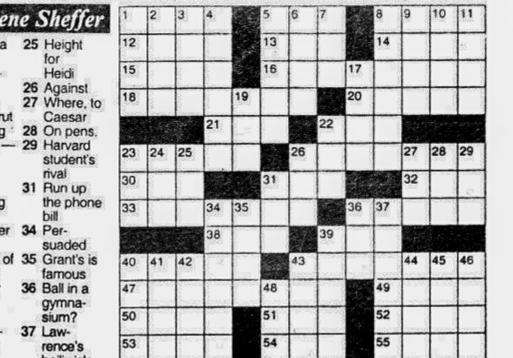
"I just wanted to make it known to him that I wasn't playing with any disrespect to him," Draper said.

Married only since December 1997, Draper has always found life on the tour a "little overwhelming, preferring a more 'simple life, being in one place, having a normal lifestyle."

Draper is entered in the Asian tournaments this fall, but he said he was not sure if he had it in him to make the trip.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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CRYPTOQUIP

D'E CQKWV OCMMI Y BCTDHW
SCBW CV Y SDHH RYV
MCHH YOYI DQ DK TWRBWN

NC DVRHDVWE
Yesterday's Cryptogram: DO YOU EVER WONDER WHY BARNS ARE NOISY? IT'S BECAUSE THE COWS HAVE HORNS.
Today's Cryptogram clue: Y equals A

The Cryptogram 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 with an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.