

Never say never to Medvedev

NEW YORK, Sept 6 (Reuters) Andrei Medvedev may look to be a longshot against his old friend Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the fight for a quarterfinals berth at the US Open, but don't bet against him.

The unseeded Medvedev says nothing motivates him more than a side bet with his daily practice partner Kafelnikov, the third seed who is aiming for his third Grand Slam title and the world number one ranking at the open.

"We are playing for 50,000 dollars," Medvedev calculated about the difference in prize money between the round-of-16 and the quarterfinals. "But if we put 20 dollars before the match on the side, the match will be much more interesting."

Medvedev acknowledged Kafelnikov's brilliant form of late, but the Ukrainian said forget about the form charts when cash money is on the line.

"We play for money, that's all that matters between me and him when we are on the court," he said. "We can play a thousand sets for nothing, we will not get as motivated as if we play for 10 dollars. If the bet is more, which normally it is, you get even more motivated."

"We have bets every day, every single day. Sometimes I win, sometimes he wins. At the moment, I got his money. The next week, it can turn around."

Medvedev turned around his moribund career with a sensational run this spring at the French Open.

The Ukrainian, who turned 25 last week, knocked out Pete Sampras and 1997 champion Gustavo Kuerten on the way to the French final and captured the first two sets of the title match against Andre Agassi before being overtaken by the flashy American.

That rousing Roland Garros campaign appeared to revive Medvedev, whose ranking at the end of 1998 had sunk to 61, his lowest mark in eight years.

But after the French, Medvedev went back to sleep, failing to win more than one match in any tournament leading up to the Open.

"It was such a letdown after the French. I felt that my tank was empty, my spiritual tank," said Medvedev. "It was the dream for me to win the French Open. I was so close. Losing it, I had a letdown."

"Actually I was looking very much forward to playing the US Open because I knew I'd get my motivation back here."

Maybe yes, NO

ROME, Sept 6: Italian Fiona May, the former world champion long jumper, said yesterday it was 50/50 whether she would quit athletics following her controversial defeat in Seville last month, reports Reuters.

May, who was born in Britain but competes for Italy after marrying an Italian, was convinced she was denied another World Championship gold when Spaniard Nuria Montalvo won with a disputed jump on her last attempt in Seville.

After winning yesterday's Grand Prix event in Rieti, Italy, May said her fellow competitors and the crowd had convinced her she was the rightful world champion.

"The crowd gave me a huge boost tonight. In my view my performance here convinces me that I'm number one," she said. "The other competitors were very supportive too."

May won the competition with her first jump.

Asked whether she would compete next season she said: "I have one more competition and then I'll take a long holiday for maybe a month."

S'pore natant may lose SEA medal for doping

SINGAPORE, Sept 6: A 13-year-old swimmer from Singapore could lose her Southeast Asian Games gold medal over a positive drug test, a news report said Monday, reports AP.

Nicole Teo tested positive for the drug terbutaline — a stimulant banned by world swimming body FINA — because she was taking it as an asthma medication. The Straits Times newspaper quoted Teo's mother as saying.

FINA allows traces of terbutaline in urine as long as the drug is taken as an asthma inhalant and its use is declared at the time of testing.

Teo's mother told The Straits Times that her daughter mistakenly listed the name of another asthma drug, which she had previously used, before the test.

Teo won the SEA Games women's 200-metre breast stroke with a time of 2 minutes, 36.27 seconds.

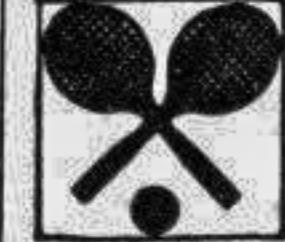
The Singapore National Olympic Council will still give Teo the reward of 10,000 Singapore dollars (US dollars 5,880) customarily given to all Singapore gold medalists from the games, the newspaper said.

The council has also explained the situation to SEA Games officials, who will meet in Bangkok on Wednesday to discuss Teo and two other athletes who failed drug tests at this year's games. They could decide to revoke Teo's medal.

"We have written mitigating letters to the authorities. I can assure you we have done everything we can to clarify the matter," Singapore's SEA Games chief-de-mission Tan Eng Liang told the newspaper.

The other two SEA Games athletes who failed drug tests were Thai shooter Somborn Vongveeranont and Indonesian Ni Made Wahyuni, who competed in the martial art pencak silat, according to reports.

Rain bothers biggies



NEW YORK, Sept 6: Top seed Martina Hingis overcame a long rain delay and third seed Venus Williams was aided by showers as both advanced to the US Open tennis quarterfinals on a downpour-disrupted Sunday, reports AFP.

Rain delayed the start for two hours and 40 minutes, halting play four more times and led to Mary Joe Fernandez slipping on a slick court and hurting her right quadriceps muscle in a 2-6, 6-1, 6-0 defeat. "That was terrible," Williams said. "At the beginning of the point, it was just a little wet. As we exchanged a few shots, it started raining much harder. Then she went down. That was unfortunate."

Australian Open champion Hingis had more trouble waiting out storms for hours than she did in beating 10th seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario 6-4, 7-5, extending her win streak over the Spaniard to 12 matches.

"A long day at the office today, a lot of waiting around," Hingis said. "You don't want to get too tired. You don't know what to expect. I had lunch at 6:00 when they told us we're the night match. I had some pasta but of course you don't want to eat a huge American portion."

The Swiss teen star had a Spanish feast, ousting Sanchez-Vicario from a Grand Slam for a sixth time. Hingis has won 13 sets in a row from Sanchez-Vicario.

Williams, seeking her first Grand Slam title, raised her game after an error-filled first set. It was her first singles match in four days after a walkover.

"I just was off. I couldn't seem to be able to get my rhythm," Williams said. "She started hitting some good shots, hitting some lines, pinpointing shots. I had to find a way to get back in it. After two rain delays, I finally started playing better."

Fernandez said she pondered asking to halt play before the point on which she was hurt but did not want to stop after earlier delays.

"I dragged my foot on the court a little bit, saw it was slick. But once you get started, you want to play," she said. "I thought maybe it was going to stop. It was too slippery."

Williams led 2-0 in the second set when drizzle turned to rain during a point. Fernandez planted her foot to stretch for a backhand and slid.

"In the middle of the point, it just started coming down much harder," Williams said. "Before it was only a few spots. After about six or seven strokes it was pretty wet. It was in the point

when all the damage came."

Play was halted a moment later, but the damage was done. Fernandez was sitting on the court holding her leg in pain as Williams grimaced.

Fernandez had the sore muscle taped when play resumed. But diminished mobility against the hard-hitting Williams was too much to overcome.

"Against Venus, you have to play 100 per cent," Fernandez said. "Venus was starting to pick up the pace and play a lot better. I was tentative. It was

look back at say, 'What if? It happened. Bad luck. That's the end of it,' she said. "These things happen. If it's the worst thing that happens to me in my lifetime, I will take it."

Williams' quarterfinal foe is Austrian 12th seed Barbara Schett while Hingis plays for a semifinal berth against German Anke Huber, who dodged raindrops to oust 15th seed Amelie Mauresmo of France 6-4, 6-4, to ensure her best showing in 10 tips here.

"It feels good," Huber said. "It's really nice. It's a great suc-

cess for me. I'm happy."

Huber, rated 27th, advanced despite a shaky effort after a rain delay came at match point.

Mauresmo saved one match point before the rain came, then returned and saved two more to hold before Huber served out in the first set.

"I have been down before," Williams said. "I would've actually found a way to come back. The rain delays did occur. I'm sure that helped some. I don't think she made the great shots she was making in the first set."

Fernandez, who has never won a Grand Slam title, refused to ponder what might have been on a dry day.

"You can't do that. We can't

definitely in the back of my mind. Definitely with my movement, it wasn't as sharp as it was in the beginning."

While the injury turned the tide, Williams did improve her play from 18 unforced errors and three broken service games in the first set.

Williams led 2-0 in the second set when drizzle turned to rain during a point. Fernandez planted her foot to stretch for a backhand and slid.

"I have been down before," Williams said. "I would've actually found a way to come back. The rain delays did occur. I'm sure that helped some. I don't think she made the great shots she was making in the first set."

Fernandez, who has never won a Grand Slam title, refused to ponder what might have been on a dry day.

"You can't do that. We can't

cess for me. I'm happy."

Huber, rated 27th, advanced despite a shaky effort after a rain delay came at match point.

Mauresmo saved one match point before the rain came, then returned and saved two more to hold before Huber served out in the first set.

"I have been down before," Williams said. "I would've actually found a way to come back. The rain delays did occur. I'm sure that helped some. I don't think she made the great shots she was making in the first set."

Fernandez, who has never won a Grand Slam title, refused to ponder what might have been on a dry day.

"You can't do that. We can't

definitely in the back of my mind. Definitely with my movement, it wasn't as sharp as it was in the beginning."

While the injury turned the tide, Williams did improve her play from 18 unforced errors and three broken service games in the first set.

Williams led 2-0 in the second set when drizzle turned to rain during a point. Fernandez planted her foot to stretch for a backhand and slid.

"I have been down before," Williams said. "I would've actually found a way to come back. The rain delays did occur. I'm sure that helped some. I don't think she made the great shots she was making in the first set."

Fernandez, who has never won a Grand Slam title, refused to ponder what might have been on a dry day.

"You can't do that. We can't

cess for me. I'm happy."

Huber, rated 27th, advanced despite a shaky effort after a rain delay came at match point.

Mauresmo saved one match point before the rain came, then returned and saved two more to hold before Huber served out in the first set.

"I have been down before," Williams said. "I would've actually found a way to come back. The rain delays did occur. I'm sure that helped some. I don't think she made the great shots she was making in the first set."

Fernandez, who has never won a Grand Slam title, refused to ponder what might have been on a dry day.

"You can't do that. We can't

cess for me. I'm happy."

Huber, rated 27th, advanced despite a shaky effort after a rain delay came at match point.

Mauresmo saved one match point before the rain came, then returned and saved two more to hold before Huber served out in the first set.

"I have been down before," Williams said. "I would've actually found a way to come back. The rain delays did occur. I'm sure that helped some. I don't think she made the great shots she was making in the first set."

Fernandez, who has never won a Grand Slam title, refused to ponder what might have been on a dry day.

"You can't do that. We can't

cess for me. I'm happy."

Huber, rated 27th, advanced despite a shaky effort after a rain delay came at match point.

Mauresmo saved one match point before the rain came, then returned and saved two more to hold before Huber served out in the first set.

"I have been down before," Williams said. "I would've actually found a way to come back. The rain delays did occur. I'm sure that helped some. I don't think she made the great shots she was making in the first set."

Fernandez, who has never won a Grand Slam title, refused to ponder what might have been on a dry day.

"You can't do that. We can't

cess for me. I'm happy."

Huber, rated 27th, advanced despite a shaky effort after a rain delay came at match point.

Mauresmo saved one match point before the rain came, then returned and saved two more to hold before Huber served out in the first set.

"I have been down before," Williams said. "I would've actually found a way to come back. The rain delays did occur. I'm sure that helped some. I don't think she made the great shots she was making in the first set."

Fernandez, who has never won a Grand Slam title, refused to ponder what might have been on a dry day.

"You can't do that. We can't

cess for me. I'm happy."

Huber, rated 27th, advanced despite a shaky effort after a rain delay came at match point.

Mauresmo saved one match point before the rain came, then returned and saved two more to hold before Huber served out in the first set.

"I have been down before," Williams said. "I would've actually found a way to come back. The rain delays did occur. I'm sure that helped some. I don't think she made the great shots she was making in the first set."

Fernandez, who has never won a Grand Slam title, refused to ponder what might have been on a dry day.

"You can't do that. We can't

cess for me. I'm happy."

Huber, rated 27th, advanced despite a shaky effort after a rain delay came at match point.

Mauresmo saved one match point before the rain came, then returned and saved two more to hold before Huber served out in the first set.

"I have been down before," Williams said. "I would've actually found a way to come back. The rain delays did occur. I'm sure that helped some. I don't think she made the great shots she was making in the first set."

Fernandez, who has never won a Grand Slam title, refused to ponder what might have been on a dry day.

"You can't do that. We can't

cess for me. I'm happy."

Huber, rated 27th, advanced despite a shaky effort after a rain delay came at match point.

Mauresmo saved one match point before the rain came, then returned and saved two more to hold before Huber served out in the first set.

"I have been down before," Williams said. "I would've actually found a way to come back. The rain delays did occur. I'm sure that helped some. I don't think she made the great shots she was making in the first set."

Fernandez, who has never won a Grand Slam title, refused to ponder what might have been on a dry day.

"You can't do that. We can't

cess for me. I'm happy."

Huber, rated 27th, advanced despite a shaky effort after a rain delay came at match point.

Mauresmo saved one match point before the rain came, then returned and saved two more to hold before Huber served out in the first set.

"I have been down before," Williams said. "I would've actually found a way to come back. The rain delays did occur. I'm sure that helped some. I don't think she made the great shots she was making in the first set."</p