

Bacher sees bright future for cricket

JOHANNESBURG, May 10 (Internet report): Dr Ali Bacher, the managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCB) believes that despite the crisis in which the sport finds itself, there is still a bright future in store for world cricket.

Benson and Hedges Cup

Semis line-up completed



LONDON, May 10: A brilliant un-beaten 97 by former England captain Alec Stewart inspired Surrey to a seven run win over hosts Yorkshire in Tuesday's Benson and Hedges Cup quarterfinals, reports AFP.

much and from 129 for three the visitors slumped to 154 all out, with Schofield (four for 34) ripping the heart out of the Durham innings aided by tremendous catches from England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff and Indian star Saurav Ganguly for two of the wickets.

Australian batsman Ian Harvey was denied a maiden one-day century in cruel circumstances at Hove - but ended up smiling as his county scored a 29-run victory over Sussex.

Olympic flame ignited

ATHENS, May 10 (Internet report): The Olympic flame that will burn at this summer's Sydney Games was ignited at noon on Wednesday in the Greek town of Olympia, in a ceremony drawing on an ancient pagan ritual.

Watched by several thousand guests and tourists, a high priestess, played by Greek actress Thalia Prokopiou, and 20 of her acolytes, lit the Olympic torch from the sun's rays reflected on a concave mirror.

The ceremony took place in the stadium at Ancient Olympia, 280 kilometres southwest of Athens, where the Olympic Games originated in 776 BC.

At the climax of the ceremony, the actress-priestess walked solemnly through the austere, fallen Doric columns of the Temple of Zeus, and lit the flame near the ancient altar.

The flame was then carried to the slow beat of a drum to a runner, the first of more than 12,000 who will carry it in a five-month relay across Greece, the Pacific and Australia.

From the site in the western Peloponnese, the Olympic flame, which symbolises peace and life, will travel 1,695 kilometres and 475 nautical miles in Greece over the next 10 days.

The flame will travel through 102 cities and islands in Greece, carried by 650 relay runners before it is flown by special plane to Guam on 21 May.

Greek world high-jump champion Lambros Papakostas will be the first relay runner to receive the flame and Greek world triple-jump champion Voula Tsiamita will hand it over to Sydney Olympic Organisers on 20 May.

The handing over of the flame will take place at Athens' Panathinaikon Stadium, the site of the first modern Olympics more than 100 years ago.

According to the Athens News Agency, the first Australian to lay hands on the torch in Athens will be 11-year-old Sophie Gosper, the daughter of International Olympic Committee vice president Kevin Gosper.

Seeds proceed smoothly

BERLIN, May 10: Top seed and new world number one Martina Hingis eased into the third round of the German Open on Tuesday with a 6-2, 6-2 win over Swiss compatriot Emmanuelle Gagliardi, reports AFP.

Her victory took just under an hour, as Gagliardi failed to hold serve until 5-0 in the second set. She then broke Hingis for 5-2 but dropped her own serve for the seventh time.

Most of the other seeds in action advanced swiftly. Third seed and 1998 champion Conchita Martinez was on court for only 28 minutes as Austrian Sylvia Plischke won only three points in the first three games, and then retired with a strain after losing the first set 6-0.

Julie Halard-Decugis, Amanda Coetzer, Sylvija Talaja, Sabine Appelmans and Chanda Rubin were also winners, but 11th seeded Ai Sugiyama of Japan was upset by lucky loser Catalina Cristea. The Romanian, who replaced the injured Sylvia Farina, won 7-5, 3-6, 6-1.

Amelie Mauresmo, who reached the final as a qualifier two years ago, is returning from yet another injury break.

Last year she missed Wimbledon after spraining her ankle, and she missed tournaments later in the year because of an arm injury.

Last week she played a small event in Bol, Croatia after missing six weeks with a back injury, and surprised herself by reaching the final where she lost to 19-year-old Slovene Tina Pisnik.

She had some very tough matches last week and the back is good, so I'm very satisfied about it. But now I'm getting sick with a cold," said the ninth seeded Frenchwoman after beating Bulgarian qualifier Pavlina Nola 6-3, 6-1.

"I'm always trying to avoid injury when I work with my physical coach, and we schedule what we have to do very well. But sometimes you get injured and can't do much about it. All I can do is stretch a lot and get a massage, and make a good schedule," she added.

Paes, Bhupathy part company NEW DELHI, May 10: India's hot-shot doubles pair of Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathy are unlikely to play together again following a dispute over Bhupathy's coach, news reports said Wednesday, reports AFP.

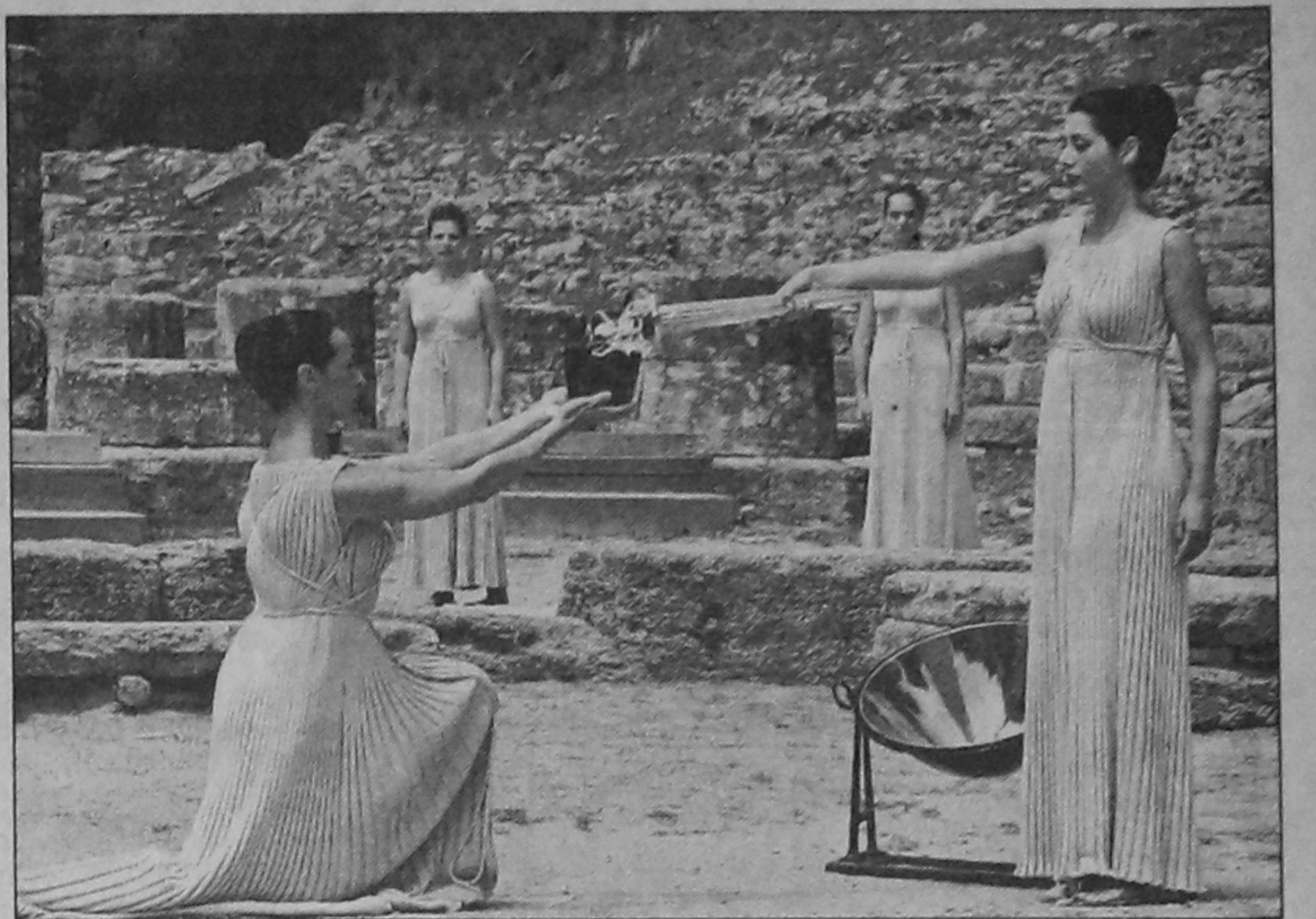
Paes and Bhupathy will not only skip the defence of their French Open and Wimbledon titles, there is also little possibility of their representing India in the Sydney Olympics and Davis Cup.

"Leander said he will not play with me if Enrico Piperno continues as my coach," Bhupathy, who returned to the circuit recently after a five-month absence due to a shoulder injury, told the Hindustan Times newspaper.

"I doubt whether he (Paes) wants to play together now. Plus the trust and respect for each other has been lost off court."

I wish I had a solution. Maybe we will realise soon enough that we were the best when we did play together," Bhupathy said.

Paes is likely to go into the French Open later this month with his new partner, Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands, with whom he shares an 11-match unbeaten streak.



Greek actress Thalia Prokopiou (R) lights the Olympic torch from the urn of a priestess at the temple of Hera in Olympia yesterday. The sacred flame will travel for the next ten days around Greece before being handed over for the 27th Olympic Games in Sydney.

Suspicion now making sense



JOHANNESBURG, May 10 (Internet report): Former South African cricket coach Bob Woolmer disclosed on Wednesday that former captain Hansie Cronje told a team meeting, called to discuss a possible bribe, that if the players took the money, "we could put it together and buy a house at Fancourt".

Woolmer's opinions on the scandal, which appear in a special article written for Wednesday's London Daily Telegraph, come just as two official investigations into cricket corruption have been delayed.

In South Africa, the King Commission's probe - which is investigating corruption in cricket - has yet to get underway. In Pakistan, Judge Malik Mohammad Qayyum's report, due to have been released on Tuesday, may now be kept under wraps for several weeks.

Cronje is at present in hiding at his own home in Fancourt, the exclusive golfing resort in George - an irony not lost on Woolmer. The disgraced SA skipper is expected to be invited to testify soon at the King Commission.

Cronje admitted that a bookmaker paid him \$200 US dollars for information but denied fixing a match.

Woolmer, who was South Africa's cricket coach during much of Hansie Cronje's term as captain, says he has changed his attitude towards the sacked skipper.

"Having defended Hansie vehemently for the first part of this rapidly unwinding scandal, I now feel betrayed, and my suspicions against him have hardened," said Woolmer.

Woolmer said that "recently colleagues have said he is money driven. I would add that he loves to get his own way, does not tolerate sloppiness and hates losing an argument. Only once in our association did he apologise for being out of order, and only when he was pressurised to do so."

Woolmer said he felt the King Commission should soon expose the truth, "but as the former national coach I am worried that there is a lot more to the Hansie Cronje scandal than meets the eye."

Woolmer said he had recently heard from more than one reliable source that one of the players mentioned by the police in India had had discussions with Ali Bacher, managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, on what happened. Bacher denied to the Telegraph, though, that the meeting amounted to any admission of guilt.

He also said that Cronje had some serious mood flare-ups. "As coach I was someone to whom he could turn to vent his frustrations. He hated poor preparation and would look for someone to take the can. Yet despite these moods, we got on well. They were few and far between over the five years."

Woolmer said he had to wonder whether Cronje started flirting with betting and match fixing during his tenure as coach.

"I desperately hope not. I believe it would be the end of any respect I have had for him," Woolmer said.

Referring to the team discussions in 1996 in Mumbai to discuss the offer of a bribe, Woolmer said he had heard a meeting was taking place without the coach. "This was something I hated because if you could not discuss things with (the coach), why have one at all?"

When he was told what the players were discussing, Woolmer said he "nearly went mad".

"I could not believe they were serious about the possibility of accepting money to influence the one-day international against India. They decided against the idea, but only after some debate."

The debate concerned a one-day match which had been up-graded from a benefit game to a full international.

Gianna new Greek Olympic organiser

ATHENS, May 10: Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki, the prime mover behind Athens' bid to land the 2004 Olympics, was Tuesday named president of the organising committee in place of Panayote Thomopoulos, who has resigned, Prime Minister Costas Simitis said, reports AFP.

The nomination of Angelopoulos-Daskalaki by Simitis was announced following an interministerial council meeting following criticism of the organisation for the event from the International Olympic Committee and its president Juan Antonio Samaranch.

Zimbabwe limber up well

LONDON, May 10 (AFP/Reuters): Zimbabwe warmed up for this month's first Test with England with a seven-wicket thrashing of Essex in a one-day match on Tuesday but said they were worried about the fitness of pace bowler Heath Streak.

Paul Strang and Murray Goodwin were the chief contributors to Zimbabwe's win at Chelmsford.

Strang, an accurate rather than hostile paceman, claimed four for 22 as the hosts were bowled out for 172.

Goodwin then scored the only half-century of the match, making 50 from 78 balls, including five boundaries before he was run out with the winning post in sight.

The tourists, with South African-born opener Neil Johnson scoring 41, eventually reached their target with 15.2 overs of their allotted 50 to spare.

The only alarm Zimbabwe suffered was when captain Andy Flower handed over the wicketkeeper's gloves to Alistair Campbell after suffering a blow to his thumb from a Strang delivery.

Flower left the field but later reappeared to score an unbeaten 41 in confident style.

"I got hit on the right thumb and left to have some ice put on it. But it is nothing to worry about," Flower said after the game.

Flower confessed he was more concerned about strike bowler Heath Streak, who is receiving treatment for a knee injury.

"He will not play in the four-day game against Essex which starts on Thursday and at this stage there must only be a 50-50 chance of him being available for the first Test," he added.

Essex's hopes of setting a testing challenge were soon ended following a lamentable failure by their top order.

None of the leading five batsmen managed to reach double figures as half the side were despatched to the pavilion before the 50 was raised.

Complete humiliation was avoided as a result of the efforts from the lower order with Danny Law, who made 41, and Graham Napier, whose 35 included two sixes, were the county's top scorers.

Both were eventually dismissed by spinner Dirk Viljoen, who finished with three for 36.

ESSEX SCOREBOARD

Table with columns: Player, O, M, R, W. Includes Prichard, Campbell, Olonga, Grayson, Robinson, Strang, Peters, Viljoen, Napier, Mason, Hyam, Cowan, Anderson, Extras, Fall of wickets, Bowler, O, M, R, W.

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Comilla Export Processing Zone Project. Station Club, Comilla-3500. No. Comilla/PD/2000/66. Dated: 26-04-2000.

Enlistment Notice

Sealed tenders are invited from transport repairing workshops for enlistment to execute repairing works of transports of Comilla Export Processing Zone Project, Stations Club, Comilla. Such repairing firms as have experience of repairing Govt transports only can apply.

Project Director Comilla Export Processing Zone Project

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Directorate of Technical Education. Shikkha Bhaban, 16, Abdul Ghani Road, Dhaka-1000.

Tender Notice

Tenders in sealed envelopes in two-envelope system are invited from bonafide suppliers/dealers/agents for supplying computers under a project titled 'Modernisation of Existing 20 (twenty) Polytechnic Institutes and Setting up of 15 (fifteen) new Polytechnic Institutes under the Directorate of Technical Education under Ministry of Education. Technical offer in 1 (one) envelope and financial offer in another envelope will have to be submitted. 2.5% of the total quoted cost as the earnest money in the forms of Bank Draft/Pay Order (refundable) from any approved schedule bank to the undersigned will have to be submitted with tender.

Project Director Existing 20 Polytechnic Institutes and Setting up of 15 New Polytechnic Institutes

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Investment Board. Prime Minister's Office. Jeeban Bima Tower, 10 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.

Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are invited from bonafide trading/supplier firms for purchase of 6 (six) computers & 4 (four) laser printers for use at Investment Board. Tender should be dropped in tender box kept in front of the office chamber of the undersigned at Jeeban Bima Tower, 20th Floor, 10 Dilkusha Commercial Area, on 11-05-2000 by 12-00 noon, and the tender box will be opened on the same day at 12-30 pm in presence (if any) of the attending tenderers.

Secretary Investment Board. Phone: 9562414

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Investment Board. Prime Minister's Office. Jeeban Bima Tower, 10 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka. Memo No. IB/CSB/Store-30/98-99/166. Dated: 4-5-2000.

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Patrick sent packing

ROME, May 10: Defending champion Gustavo Kuerten and second seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov made winning starts to the Masters Series event here on Tuesday, but there was an upset for the loser of last year's final, Patrick Rafter, reports AFP.

Kuerten crushed Frenchman Jerome Golmard 6-4, 6-1 before a deluge halted play for more than three hours, while Kafelnikov squeaked home 6-3, 2-6, 7-5 against Italian wild card entry Andrea Gaudenzi in the night match.

There was no room for crowd favourite Rafter as he struggled in the heavy conditions before losing 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 to Ullrich Bohdan of the Czech Republic.

Rafter, seeded 12th, was the first seed to bow out of the 2.95 million-dollar tournament on the red clay of the Foro Italico - but he was soon followed by Britain's Greg Rusedski and later by former winner Marcelo Rios of Chile.

Rafter looked to be heading for victory before getting into trouble in the second set and badly losing his length in the third. He was not the only serve and volley player in trouble, though.

He saved a first match point with a cross-court drive after a protracted rally and was spared another when Bohdan double-faulted. But the Czech was third time lucky with a forehand winner to book his place in the next round.

Dismissing a right shoulder problem which had been troubling him, he said: "I went amiss. I was serving very well in the first set and a half, and it was hard to keep that standard of serving up."

"It was just a matter of time before his return game would sort of take over in those conditions... I've always said that in order for me to do very well on clay, the weather has to be good, the weather has to be hot, it has to be flying and the balls have to be light."

And you have to be playing well and get the breaks... when the conditions are like this, I'm always a little sceptical of how I'm going to do."

Kuerten had no such trouble in his match, finding his feet in the first set and routing his opponent in the second as the Frenchman's serve went to pieces.

It was a double celebration for Kuerten, winner of the 1997 French Open, as he was finally able to play without the back pain, caused by an inflamed disc, which has recently plagued the Brazilian.

"Now it's completely different," he said. "Now I feel no pain. Today, I played as well as I have been for the past two or three weeks, but feeling much more comfortable is a completely different feeling."

"It's been more than three months since I was last on court without any pain. Today, I was relaxed and trying my shots. If I missed it was okay - I just tried to think about the next point and not about any pain going away."

Kafelnikov looked to be facing defeat in his centre court match - trailing 5-2 and 15-30 to Gaudenzi in the third set before rallying to victory.

"The match was there to be won and I lost it," Gaudenzi lamented afterwards. "It feels like being hit in the face by a stone."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes solutions for some words like 'Lion King', 'Jam', 'Peel', 'Review', 'Charge', 'Hernando', 'WPS', 'Kale's', 'Admitting', 'Customers', '50/50', 'Pair', 'Cocquet', 'Factory', 'Kitten's', 'Ten', 'Verdi', 'Mongrol', 'Laminated', 'Writer', 'Buscaglia', 'Spacecraft', 'Cynthus', 'Whitney's', 'Lion King', 'Jam', 'Peel', 'Review', 'Charge', 'Hernando', 'WPS', 'Kale's', 'Admitting', 'Customers', '50/50', 'Pair', 'Cocquet', 'Factory', 'Kitten's', 'Ten', 'Verdi', 'Mongrol', 'Laminated', 'Writer', 'Buscaglia', 'Spacecraft', 'Cynthus', 'Whitney's'.

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