

Surrey cruise to the top

LONDON, May 31 (Internet report): Surrey survived the loss of Mark Butcher before a run was on the board to cruise past Hampshire's limp total of 94 under The Oval floodlights to go top of the National League Division Two.

While Surrey lead the way just ahead of Nottinghamshire on run rate, the visitors flop up the table having lost all four of their matches.

Once Butcher had cut Alan Mullally hard to Shaun Udal at point, Al Brown and Ian Ward effectively put the result beyond doubt with a brisk stand of 63.

Brown eventually went when he hooked Dimitri Mascarenhas to long-leg. But Ward, the dominant partner, pressed on until Shane Warne produced a perfect leg break to undo him.

Until then the Australian had seemed ill at ease on a moist wicket far more suited for seam bowling.

Graham Thorpe and Surrey captain Adam Hoolioake reached their target off the first ball of the 22nd over, the latter sweeping Warne backward of square to the boundary.

Earlier, the Surrey pace pair of Alex Tudor and Martin Bicknell expertly exploited the seam and uneven bounce of a difficult batting wicket.

Tudor picked up four cheap wickets and the man-of-the-match award.

Hampshire won the toss and chose to bat in natural light. But by the fourth over they were already six for three - with Derek Kenway, Adrian Aymes and Jason Loney back in the pavilion.

Captain Robbi Smith was more resilient, but with wickets falling at the other end his stubborn 20 could do nothing to pull Hampshire towards a respectable total.

Giles White, John Stephenson and Mascarenhas stayed only briefly before Smith found a more effective ally in Warne (34), who chose a lost cause to post his highest Hampshire score in any competition.

Warne rode his luck but survived entertainingly, in particular with last man in Simon Francis.

He perished when cutting Ben Hoolioake blisteringly hard to Ian Salisbury at cover. Salisbury knocked the ball up and dived backwards to catch at the second attempt.

Magura cricket

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, May 31: Dilip Smriti Sangsadd and Jeon Cricket Club won their respective matches in the Econo Cricket League at the Magura Stadium today.

Dilip Smriti defeated Lutash Sangha by 17 runs while Jeon outplayed Sky Heart (junior) by 8 wickets in the rain interrupted second match of the day.

BRIEF SCORES

DILIP SMRITI SANGSADD: 125 for eight in 25 overs (Roni 17, Zovon 16, Papon 13, Habib 2, 13, Tauhidul 1/14, Shisham 1/18).

LUTASH SANGHA: 108 all out in 23.4 overs (Mehedi 20, Sohel 14, Shisham 12, Jayanta 3/11, Romel 2/25, Shadhan 1/11).

Result: Dilip Smriti Sangsadd won by 17 runs.

SKY HEART (JUNIOR): 57 for nine in the stipulated 10 overs (Mejbah 8, Titor 6, Ovi 6, Rajib 3/7, Mahidul 2/4, Rahat 2/6).

JEON CRICKET CLUB: 59 for two in 7 overs (Mina) 22-not out, Shaknur 9, Rajib 7, Ovi 1/7, Mamun 1/7.

Result: Jeon Cricket Club won by eight wickets.

Manoj's tape of no value ?

NEW DELHI, May 31: The secretly taped conversations provided by Manoj Prabhakar relating to match-fixing scandal may have created ripple in enthusiasts of the game, but many lawyers remain unmoved - both on its legal as well as circumstantial value, reports PTI.

"It is a public entertainment of an ignorant public by the press," said noted lawyer P N Lekhi dismissing the entire recorded conversations.

He said this evidence did not give even a single ingredient provided in Indian penal code to constitute an offence.

Senior Advocate Rajiv Dhawan was more critical.

"It is a piece of evidence that is heresy upon audio tape," he said and added tap-recorded evidence had to be contemporaneous, authentic and untampered to be admissible as secondary evidence in Indian courts.

"There is no question of the tapes being contemporaneous as they are recorded six years after the actual event," he said.

Meanwhile, the CBI, which is investigating the match-fixing scandal in cricket, has begun examining the transcripts available on a website of players and the video tape of Prabhakar, agency sources said here yesterday.

The transcripts of noted cricket commentator Narottam Puri, former Indian cricket team manager Ajit Wadekar, monster batsman of yesteryears Sunil Gavaskar, former cricketers Navjot Singh Sidhu and Kieran More and senior Maharashtra police officer Rakesh Maria were being examined by the agency, the sources said.

The conversation of these persons was shown to media on weekend and later incorporated in their website which the agency has downloaded.

Aussies not interested

SYDNEY, May 31 (Internet report): The Australian Cricket Board (ACB) said captain Steve Waugh was aware of speculation of a possible rival tour being formed in Asia but said it was confident Australian players would not be tempted by it.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported on Wednesday ACB chief executive Mal Speed had spoken to Waugh about the matter and Waugh said he had heard few details of the proposed rebel competition.

"These things do come up from time to time and we are just watching to see how things develop," ACB spokesman Brendan McClements said.

McClements said the ACB had all senior players under rolling contracts, with some signed two years ahead.

"We have a good relationship with the players these days. So at this stage we do not see it as a major issue," McClements said.

The group reportedly considering the rebel competition move is Indian pay television channel Zee TV, which is bidding for the rights to broadcast the 2003 and 2007 World Cups. The International Cricket Council is due to give a decision on the rights at its meeting on June 21-22 in London.

The Australian newspaper reported on Wednesday that Zee TV, one of three bidders for the World Cup rights, said its bid was the biggest of the three, valued at more than 600 million US dollars.

Windies' tour of England

Hinds in the spotlight

UNDATED, May 31 (Reuters/Internet): The West Indies arrive in England today for a three-month tour with their latest batting star promising he is "up for the challenge."

Jamaican Wavell Hinds was voted man-of-the-series after scoring 340 runs in the three-Test series against Pakistan which finished earlier this week, with the West Indies coming out on top 1-0 after a dramatic one-wicket win in Antigua.

"It's a great feeling knowing you are man-of-the-series. After all the hard work put in since training camp, you can see the returns," said 23-year-old Hinds.

Hinds, Ramnaresh Sarwan and Chris Gayle have all been given their chance following an unhappy tour to New Zealand last winter, which prompted Brian Lara to give up the captaincy.

"It is a challenge of life and that's what it is all about. Cricket is a game for big men. It is a tough challenge and I am up for it," Hinds added.

The abiding memory for the batsman was provided by his innings in the drawn second Test in Bridgetown, Barbados, where he drove and pulled the Pakistan attack with disdain to all parts of the field on the way to his career-best maiden Test century of 165.

Expertly blending aggression with defence as he faced 234 balls and batted 351 minutes, Hinds struck 24 fours, dismissing suggestions he was weak against spin bowling.

"After the (recent) one-day series (against Pakistan and Zimbabwe in the Caribbean), there was a lot of speculation about me playing spin," Hinds said.

Mission 'Winning Abroad'

BRIDGETOWN, May 31 (Reuters): West Indies cricket captain Jimmy Adams is leading his revitalised side to England determined to end their losing streak in overseas tours.

"We want to win. Whatever it takes to win, we want to do," Adams told the Caribbean News Agency (CANA) in Barbados after the dramatic 1-0 series triumph at home over Pakistan.

The squad includes 10 men who have never played international cricket in England, but Adams believes the win over Pakistan has shown them what to expect.

"If we'd lost, then you're talking about really doing a lot of work psychologically to get things together for the England series. The win was very important. It has been a fillip for the whole group," he said.

"Games like that stretch you to the limit mentally. I think that is good for our cricket, good to get the kids stretching themselves."

"I'm not into making any predictions but I can say as we begin, we are aware of it (the run of overseas defeats) and we are committed to turning that around," he said.

The squad, with batsman Brian Lara back in the fold after a self-imposed absence, left the Caribbean on Tuesday evening for their three-month tour of England.

The side have lost their last three overseas Test series, 3-0 to Pakistan, 5-0 in South Africa and 2-0 against New Zealand.

Coach Roger Harper said the return of Lara, who missed the home series against Zimbabwe and Pakistan, would boost the team.

"I think Brian Lara would strengthen anything in the world and we are looking forward to him performing at his best."

Harper expected a tough tour and added that "the English conditions will be trying at the best of times."

"We have some players on the team who have not had the experience of playing in England and we expect England to be very competitive."

"All in all, we think it is going to be a tough tour but we are expecting to perform to a very high standard. We want to be as competitive as possible from ball one," he said.

Harper said the 16-man squad was confident after the nail-biting series win against Pakistan.

They worked hard all season and on Monday they got their just rewards," he said.

Adams, who has not captained the temperamental Lara previously, said he was looking forward to it and insisted the left-handed batsman would not disrupt the side's cohesion.

Lara, who had originally told the West Indies Cricket



Bangladesh captain Aminul Islam plays a front foot defensive shot yesterday. — Star photo

"But thanks to the coaches, (and by) doing a lot of hard work, a lot of extra work after the guys have left, it has come good."

He puts his success down to "doing the best things, sticking to the basics and trying to do them more often than not."

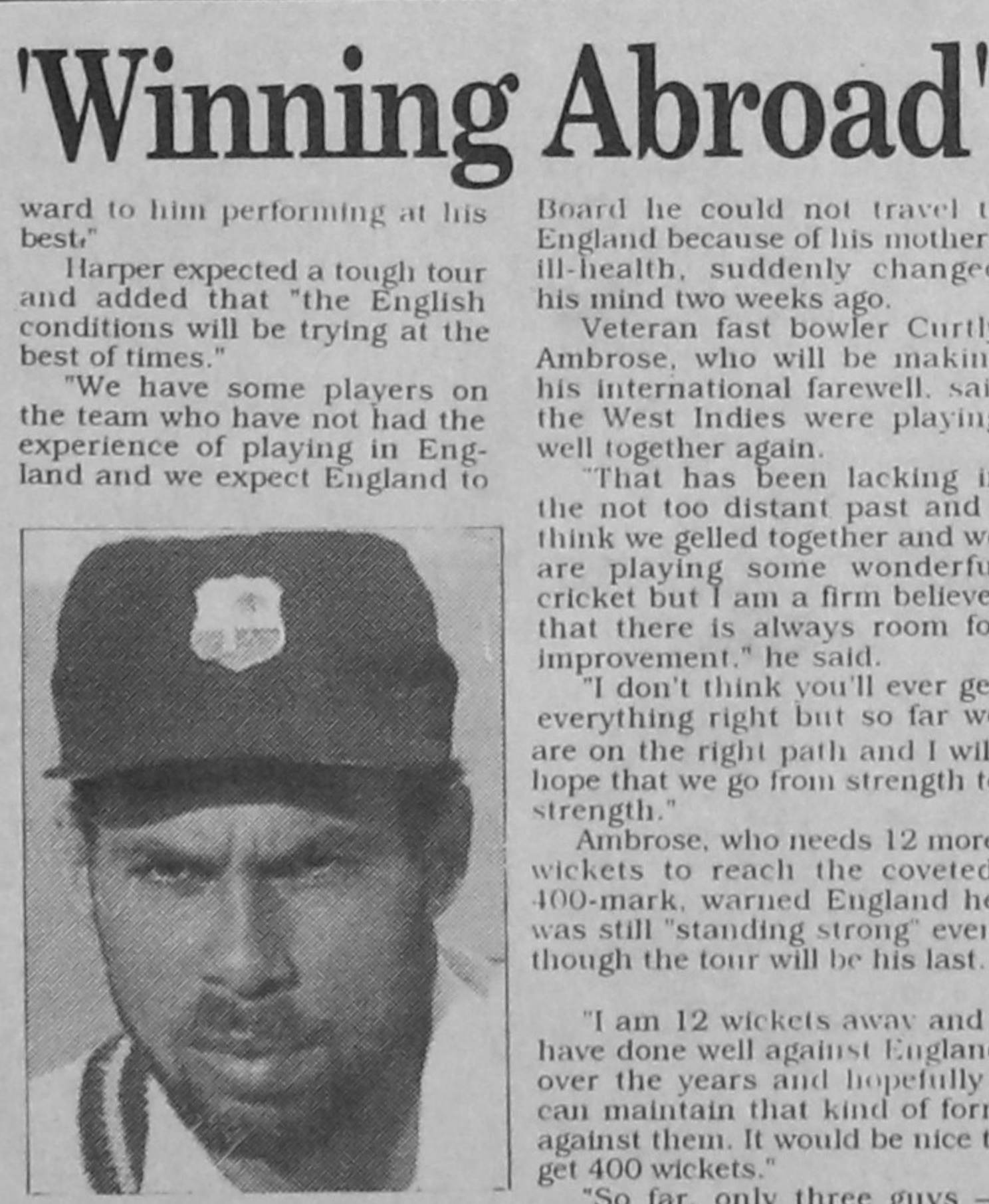
But, Lara's return leaves the tour selectors with a dilemma.

Hinds has filled Lara's number three slot successfully but they now have to come up with a revised batting order to accommodate both.

"It was good to be batting at number three for the West Indies, which is a premier position in the batting order."

"It was a tough task at times, and I just had to hang in there when the going got tough and stick it out," Hinds went on.

ITINERARY			
Date	Match	Venue	
June 2-4	Worcestershire	Worcester	
June 6-8	Glamorgan	Cardiff	
June 10-12	Zimbabwe	Arundel	
June 15-19	1st Test	Edgbaston	
June 21-24	New Zealand A	Chelmsford	
June 25	Hampshire	Southampton	
June 29-Jul 3	2nd Test	Lord's	
July 4	New Zealand A	Bristol (D/N)	
July 6	West Indies v Zimbabwe	Bristol (D/N)	
July 9	England West Indies	Lord's	
July 11	West Indies v Zimbabwe	Canterbury	
July 15	England v West Indies	Chester-le-Street	
July 16	West Indies v Zimbabwe	Chester-le-Street	
July 20	England v West Indies	Trent Bridge	
July 22	Final	Lord's	
July 24-26	* Northamptonshire/Yorkshire	Leicester	
July 28-30	Leicestershire	Leicester	
August 3-7	3rd Test	Old Trafford	
Aug 9-11	Derbyshire	Derby	
Aug 13	Scotland	Tittow Glasgow	
Aug 17-21	4th Test	Headingley	
Aug 23-26	* Somerset or Nottinghamshire	the	
Aug 31-Sept 4	5th Test	The Foster's Oval	
	*versus Yorkshire at Leeds if Northamptonshire in NatWest quarter finals +versus Nottinghamshire at Nottingham, if Somerset in NatWest final.		



JIMMY ADAMS

board he could not travel to England because of his mother's ill-health, suddenly changed his mind two weeks ago.

Veteran fast bowler Curtly Ambrose, who will be making his international farewell, said the West Indies were playing well together again.

"That has been lacking in the not too distant past and I think we gelled together and we are playing some wonderful cricket but I am a firm believer that there is always room for improvement," he said.

"I don't think you'll ever get everything right but so far we are on the right path and I will hope that we go from strength to strength."

Ambrose, who needs 12 more wickets to reach the coveted 400-mark, warned England he was still "standing strong" even though the tour will be his last.

"I am 12 wickets away and I have done well against England over the years and hopefully I can maintain that kind of form against them. It would be nice to get 400 wickets."

"So far only three guys - Courtney Walsh (449), Kapil Dev (434) and Sir Richard Hadlee (431) - have done that in Test cricket. Wasim Akram, great bowler that he is, is almost there (398) as well, so if I do get there it will be a nice feeling."

The West Indies play five Tests in England and a triangular one-day series against the hosts and Zimbabwe.

SQUAD

Jimmy Adams (captain), Sherwin Campbell, Adrian Griffith, Wavell Hinds, Chris Gayle, Shivnarine Chandernagor, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Ridley Jacobs, Brian Lara, Curtly Ambrose, Courtney Walsh, Mahendra Nagamootoo, Franklin Rose, Reon King, Nixon McLean, Corey Collymore.

Where have the tapes gone?

NEW DELHI, May 31: Mystery over the missing tapes, allegedly containing conversation between some cricketers and bookies, deepened as the Mumbai crime branch has denied possessing anything of this sort to the CBI, even as a senior police officer admitted having the record of the conversation during the 1997 Titan Cup, reports PTI.

However, the reply was a surprise to the CBI as the then additional commissioner of police in Mumbai Rakesh Maria had said in a secretly filmed conversation for a website that Mumbai police was in possession of tapes of a conversation between some bookies.

When asked what happened to the tapes, Maria said, "It is here. It is match-fixing." Maria also confirmed that the voices had come clearly in these tapes.

However, he regretted that the case was not followed up professionally. "One did not believe it... that it could happen. And that's probably the mistake that we made, that I rushed into it like a cricketer more than as a police officer, this cannot be happening."

The senior cop named some Indian cricket players who figured during the conversation.

Meanwhile, CBI sources suspect that some political pressure might be applied on Mumbai police to tamper with the proof and not hand over the tapes to the CBI.

Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) yesterday sought time-bound investigation into the cricket match-fixing scandal, so that it puts an end to the allegations and counter-allegations that are being made against cricketers.

"The investigations should first focus on current players. The game of cricket is important and as it has become a way of life for a large number of people, therefore, the investigations should be time-bound," party spokesman Venkatesh Naidu told reporters here yesterday.

He agreed with former cricketer Sunil Gavaskar that those found guilty of match-fixing should have their records erased as involvement in such a scandal is a blemish on the game.

Russians are coming?

PARIS, May 31 (AFP): First it was Alex Metreveli and Olga Morozova. Then Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Anna Kournikova. Now Russia has begun to produce a series of promising young tennis players, especially on the women's side.

As the rain fell at the French Open on Tuesday, rising stars Anastasia Myskina and Lina Krasnoroutskaya took time out to chat to the media, even though much of their wisdom was lost across the language barrier.

Myskina insisted she gives money to her sponsor, rather than the other way around, while Krasnoroutskaya, 16, was bemused by a question about her youth and apparent innocence.

"I don't understand," she responded with bewilderment.

Myskina, 18, was quick to interject. "She just look like this. She is not," she said.

The pair were equally perplexed by questions about which sport in which it is easiest to make money.

"Funny question," said Krasnoroutskaya. "It's really, really hard," said Myskina. "Not tennis. I'm sure not tennis."

Myskina also was confused about who, exactly, her sponsor is. "I don't know the name," she said. "It's a small bank."

The pair was, however, certain that tennis is enjoying immense popularity in their homeland right now - sort of.

"Tennis is very popular in Russia right now," said Krasnoroutskaya. "There are so many Russian players who are playing well, like Kafelnikov, Kournikova, (Elena) Likhovtseva - its probably even more popular than soccer."

Kournikova, a glamorous star despite never having won a tournament, is a motivator for many of the young Russian players.

"She is the reason," said Krasnoroutskaya. "She's very beautiful. She plays tennis very well. All the girls say: 'I want to be like Anna.'"

Why then, they were asked, did there appear to be only a handful of spectators at the recent Fed Cup matches in Moscow?

"There were a lot of people there, maybe you didn't see them, but they were there. I saw them," Krasnoroutskaya said.

Myskina, however, knew where the missing fans were.

"In the restaurant," she said.

Myskina, whose first coach was the mother of rising Russian star Marat Safin, said the pair weren't taking tennis too seriously just yet, as both still have to complete their schooling.

"I'm in school every day when I'm home," said Krasnoroutskaya. "It's really hard."

Myskina, however, disagreed. "We have fun really," she said.

Both girls were, however, in accord about the popularity of new Russian idol Safin, the winner of tournaments in Barcelona and Palma and a finalist earlier this month in Hamburg.

"Very, very, very," said Krasnoroutskaya. "Much popular," agreed Myskina.



Russian Anna Kournikova makes a backhand return against Canadian Vanessa Webb during their French Open first round encounter in Paris yesterday. — AFP photo

Dominique outlasts Lindsay

PARIS, May 31: Dominique Van Roost won a battle of the walking wounded on Wednesday to send second-seeded American Lindsay Davenport tumbling out of the first round of the French Open women's singles, reports AFP.

Van Roost, who needed treatment for a forearm injury during the match, stunned Davenport, who was hampered by a back injury, 6-7, 6-4, 6-3.

The Belgian celebrated her 27th birthday with one of the biggest wins of her career. She has not made it past the third round here in eight previous appearances at Roland Garros.

Van Roost's win over the Australian Open champion earned her a second-round meeting with 17-year-old Spanish qualifier Marta Marrero.

The teenager, playing in her first Grand Slam event, surprised experienced Romanian Irina Spilaea 6-3, 6-4.

Van Roost broke Davenport's serve three times in the first set - but the American broke back each time and then rolled through the tiebreaker to take the set in 59min.

Van Roost won the second set 6-4 as she moved the sluggish and error-prone Davenport around the court. She continued to control the decisive set to win in 12hr 18min.

Davenport, who has never won the Roland Garros title, quit the Italian Open with a

back injury that also caused her to skip last week's Madrid WTA Tour event. She underwent treatment at court-side during the second set but played on.

Van Roost burst into tears at court-side after the match.

In the men's event, third-seeded Swede Magnus Norman, the leader of the ATP Champions Race, breezed past French qualifier Thierry Guardiola 6-4, 6-4, 6-0 in his opening match.

Seventh-seeded Thomas Enqvist was another early Swedish winner - racing to a 6-2, 6-0, 6-0 win over Christophe Rochus of Belgium in just 66min while Germany's Tommy Haas advanced when the talented but temperamental Chilean Marcelo Rios quit after Haas had won the first two sets 6-3, 6-2.

Rios was hampered by a

long-standing leg injury and said: "My legs don't respond like they used to. I'm not strong enough. If you aren't feeling 100 per cent there is no point in playing."

Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia, the 14th seed, also progressed with a quickfire 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 win over Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman while Spanish clay court specialist Albert Costa eased past former Wimbledon finalist Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia 6-3, 6-3, 6-0.

Two-time US Open champion Pat Rafter of Australia, continuing his comeback from a shoulder injury, repeatedly rushed the net as he downed Italian slow court expert Gianluca Pozzi 6-3, 6-1, 6-1 in just 1hr 35min.

Rafter was a semifinalist here back in 1997.

Marc Rosset of Switzerland, the former Olympic gold medalist, was another first-round winner, beating Byron Black of Zimbabwe 7-5, 7-5, 6-0, while rising Argentine star Gaston Gaudio beat Arnaud Di Pasquale of France 6-2, 6-3, 6-2.

Play started on schedule after the heavy rain that washed out play on Tuesday disappeared.

A total of 21 courts - rather than the usual 16 - were in use with 80 matches scheduled instead of 64. If all goes to plan, the backlog caused by the washout will be made up by Thursday evening.

Norman and Enqvist breeze into second round



HAIL THE BIG MAN: The Bangladesh team acknowledging a six hit by Akram Khan against India yesterday. — Star photo by Amran Hossain

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	36 Rowdy disorder	DOWN	20 4-Down's co-star
1 Dressed	37 Doctrine	1 IOU	22 October
5 Tool sets	38 Under the weather	2 Source of wealth	24 Singer's jewelry
9 Try the Tokay	39 Inter-viewer	3 Sheltered part	25 End of a Web site
12 Goller's target	40 Paula	4 "Artists and Models" actor	26 Mimic address
13 Suffix for 11-Down	41 Faux — count	5 Chopping sprees	27 Bottom line
14 Candle	42 Vivacity	6 Vading bird	29 "Go, team, go!"
15 Inventor's starting point	43 Zsa Zsa's sister	7 Tails accessory	30 Lead-in to "got it" or "had it"
16 Shreds	44 Had on	8 "Mayday!"	31 Rep's rival
17 "Calvin and Hobbes" bully	45 Cartoonist Chast	9 No different	35 British or Turkish
18 Adolescents	46 Pennsylvania port	10 Stravinsky or Sikorsky	36 Threw wide
19 Blonde shade	47 Indivisible	11 Take a quick look	39 0
20 Quick wit	55 Curve		40 Revlon rival
21 Witty rejoinder	56 Membership		41 Fog
23 Rd			43 Con, country-style
25 Cheese on a cracker, e.g.			45 Earring locale
28 Oppressively hot			46 Vicinity
32 Phantom's bailiwick			47 Barber-shop call
33 Want real bad			49 "Char-lotte" —
34 Courage and fortitude			

Solution time: 22 mins.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

SEW JADE COAT
TITO DRUMBEAT
TITO AT THE VILLA
REPORTER HANG
PABLO PERU
LOAN ABOUT TEE
LUNG TITO EGG

CRYPTOQUIP

VQLWKC Q ZDKC NQZL

WK QFUWZ NWZZ

MEUHZG FEV Q MFUWKC

WK GDEU MVHF

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHAT MIGHT BE A REALLY GOOD BIRTHDAY GIFT FOR A WITCH? A CHARM BRACELET.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: W equals I

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals Q, 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.