

Kuerten sails,
Safin fails

INTERNET, Rome

Gustavo Kuerten appears ready to defend his French Open title later this month. Marat Safin continues to struggle as the Grand Slam event nears.

Kuerten rebounded from a tough first-round win with a convincing 6-1, 6-1 victory over American Michael Chang on Wednesday at the Tennis Masters Series.

Safin, the second seed, still showed signs of rust after suffering a back injury in March as Switzerland's Roger Federer pulled out a 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5) win over the second-seeded Russian.

Kuerten rallied for a three-set win over Croatian qualifier Ivan Ljubicic on Tuesday, but had no such problems against Chang, the 1989 French Open champion.

The 23-year-old Brazilian won the Tennis Masters Series event in Monte Carlo three weeks ago and two other claycourt tournaments at Buenos Aires and Acapulco. He won 26 straight matches on the surface earlier this year, a streak that ended with a loss to Australia's Lleyton Hewitt in a Davis Cup encounter in his hometown of Flinopolis two weeks ago.

Kuerten was runner-up here last year and a semifinalist in 1998. He will face No. 15 Franco Squillari on Thursday in a third-round encounter. Squillari dumped Frenchman Fabrice Santoro, 6-4, 6-0.

Gibbs

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Kallis, who missed the fourth international because of injury, was South Africa's most successful bowler, taking four for 22. Fellow fast bowlers Allan Donald and Makhaya Ntini took three for 41 and two for 47 respectively.

Two outstanding pieces of fielding by Gibbs stopped two promising partnerships. A direct hit from mid-wicket ran out Shivnarine Chanderpaul after he and Lara put on 43 for the fifth wicket.

Then Gibbs held a sensational diving catch at full stretch to his right off a scorching drive by Ridel Jacobs after a sixth wicket stand of 61.

It was only during the Lara-Jacobs stand that runs flowed freely, with 35 runs scored off 23 balls before Jacobs' dismissal, which came in the same over that Jacobs pulled a six off Ntini which landed on the roof of the Hall-Griffith stand at long-on.

The last five wickets tumbled for 22 runs.

Gibbs then thrashed the West Indian bowling, although he was dropped by wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs off Cameron Cuffy when he had 11 and was lucky to survive an appeal for a catch behind off West Indian captain and offspinner Carl Hooper when he had 72.

Gibbs went on to make 107 off 132 balls with 11 fours and three sixes before he went down the wicket and drove leg-spinner Dianan Ramnarine to Hooper at extra cover when only 18 were needed to win.

Boeta Dippenaar, in only his second international innings of the tour, followed an unbeaten 62 in the fourth match with 42 not out.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the fifth one-day international between West Indies and South Africa at the Kensington Oval on Wednesday:

WEST INDIES

	O	M	R	W
Pollock	10	2	23	0
Kallis	6.2	1	22	4
Ntini	10	1	48	2
Donald	10	0	41	3
Ontong	8	0	38	0
Kemp	5	0	24	0
SOUTH AFRICA				
Kirsten c Lara b Samuels	18			
Gibbs c Hooper b Ramnarine	107			
Kallis run out	18			
Dippenaar not out	42			
Rhodes not out	10			
Extras: (b-1, w-4, nb-2)	7			
Total: (For 3 wkt in 42 overs) 202				
Fall of wickets: 1-54, 2-103, 3-199				

Bowler O M R W
Pollock 10 2 23 0
Kallis 6.2 1 22 4
Ntini 10 1 48 2
Donald 10 0 41 3
Ontong 8 0 38 0
Kemp 5 0 24 0

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Kirsten c Lara b Samuels 18
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Extras: (b-1, w-4, nb-2) 7
Total: (For 3 wkt in 42 overs) 202

Fall of wickets: 1-54, 2-103, 3-199
Did not bat: M Boucher, S Pollock, J Kemp, J Ontong, M Ntini, A Donald

Bowler O M R W
Cuffy 7.4 1 44 0
Dillon 3 0 18 0
Hooper 8 0 35 0
Samuels 10 1 37 1
Ramnarine 10 0 48 1
Gayle 3 0 19 0

Result: South Africa won by seven wickets and took an unsatisfactory 4-1 lead in the 7-match series.

Man-of-the-match: Herschelle Gibbs.

Next match: Trinidad, May 12.

Sanath says no comment

Cricket

INTERNET, Bangalore

Sri Lankan skipper Sanath Jayasuriya declined to comment on the allegation that Australian fast bowler Glenn McGrath had racially abused him in the World Series Cup finals in 1995/96.



SANATH JAYASURIYA

use of a runner for Arjuna Ranatunga.

Things deteriorated further with Ian Healy and Ranatunga engaging in fracas, with Ian Healy making his famous 'okay, Porky' remark.

The visitors capitulated to 159 for eight in the stipulated 25 overs. The Sri Lankans so aggrieved with the sequence of events that they departed from the game's etiquette, by declining to shake hands with the Australians.

This whole controversy has put the spotlight on the persistent problem of racial abuse in cricket.

The issue is charged with emotion, as many of the coloured cricketing nations feel that the ICC has been apathetic on the matter.

There have been several accusations of racism over the years.

In the April 1988 Sharjah tournament India's Mohinder Amarnath complained of racist abuse from the New Zealand wicket-keeper Ian Smith.

During the 1989-90 tour down under, Arjuna Ranatunga stated that the Australian were frequently resorting to racist taunts.

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