

Powell to try it in England

INTERNET, undated

Ricardo Powell, left out of West Indies' training squad for their tour to Zimbabwe, is to play in England this summer.

The all-rounder was not named in a provisional squad and will now play semi-professional cricket in England.

"After not being invited for the (training) camp I realised that I was not going to make the tour to Zimbabwe so that allowed me to activate a standby arrangement to play league cricket in England," Powell was quoted in The Observer on Sunday.

After missing out on the squad Powell turned down an opportunity to attend the Caribbean's newly opened cricket academy in Grenada.

He has offers from several English league teams, but has not chosen one yet, the newspaper said.

He could join Kent club side Lashings, who already boast a number of West Indian stars in their ranks including Brian Lara, Reon King, Jimmy Adams and Junior Murray.

Gough points finger at ICC

AFP, London

England fast bowler Darren Gough said Sunday that proposals in Lord Condon's report into cricket corruption will not stop match-fixing and only result in innocent players being treated like criminals.

"Once again cricket has over-reacted and got it wrong by trying to build high-security fences around international players," Gough told the News of the World.

"But I can assure you that no amount of external policing is going to stop match-fixing."

"The one per cent who are rotten will still find a way to cheat cricket."

"According to Lord Condon our lives should be made a misery by being under constant surveillance during Test matches and tours."

India not going

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The Australian Cricket Board had invited India for the indoor series following a remarkable Test series between the two countries in February-March, when India came from behind to win 2-1 and end Australia's 16-Test winning streak.

South Africa were Australia's opponents in the inaugural indoor series at the Colonial Stadium last year.

The BCCI had earlier this month accepted the invitation to play three one-day games, two in Melbourne's indoor Colonial Stadium and one in Brisbane.

The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) announced the draw for the regional Test Championship in Lahore on Friday and the BCCI has said India would travel to Karachi, the likely venue, to play a Test in Pakistan for the first time in 12 years.

The match will be a major breakthrough in cricketing relations between the two South Asian rivals after India repeatedly declined to play Pakistan in the past two years.

The Indian government has allowed the national side to play against Pakistan in multi-nation events like the World Cup and Asian championship, but refuses to sanction bilateral series between the two.

Sporting relations between India and Pakistan are at a low because of a political dispute over the disputed Himalayan state of Kashmir.

Indian government denied permission to the country's cricket team to play a Test series in Pakistan late last year and in a one-day series in Sharjah last month involving Pakistan.

But prospects of India playing in Pakistan have brightened after New Delhi last week invited Islamabad to hold peace talks.

Pybus

FROM PAGE 13

into the game with four front-line bowlers and the two all-rounders at the expense of a fifth specialist batsman.

That would mean moving Razzaq from number three in the batting order to opener, a position he was used in against Leicestershire, while relying on Azhar, Wasim and wicketkeeper Rashid Latif to grind out some useful runs lower down the order.

Pybus said: "It's going to be interesting. I would rather the selection was too hard than too easy."

Shoaib Akhtar's getting better and better. The guys are finding their form, admittedly a week-and-a-half late. But rather than us still trying to get the combinations right."

The Old Trafford pitch, however, may still change both teams' plans. Rain has only allowed one day's play there all season and was continuing to fall on Monday.

Venus, Amelie ambushed

Tennis

AFP, Paris

Defending champion Gustavo Kuerten eased into the second round of the French Open on Monday, ousting Argentine Guillermo Coria 6-1, 7-5, 6-4 in just over 100 minutes.

But if the man they call 'Guga' won on as expected two earthquakes hit the women's event, where two of the favourites - second seed Venus Williams and French fifth-seed Amelie Mauresmo - both packed their bags.

Olympic champion Williams of the United States came up short as she ran into an inspired Barbara Schett of Austria, who beat her 6-4, 6-4 in 1hr 31min after first spurning a trio of match points.

Mauresmo likewise failed to perform on the day as Jana Kandar of Germany knocked her out 6-3, 7-5 in 1hr 18min.

Kandar, ranked 56 in the world, trailed 1-5 in the second set but Mauresmo, who came here having won the Berlin title and reached the Rome final, inexplicably fell to pieces thereafter to bow out as she dropped serve to love.

Kandar now plays Italy's Rita Grande.

"I just couldn't find my rhythm out there," said a disbelieving Mauresmo as the enormity of her loss sank in.

Schett, who made the fourth round here 12 months ago, wore a huge smile as she came off court - and said she had been sure she could win.

"Of course I thought I could win. I beat top players in the past and it was a good opportunity to play her in the first round when she was more vulnerable."

"I was nervous but I tried not to show it and stay calm. I knew other chances would come. But I think Venus definitely didn't play her best tennis. I didn't play that aggressive I think. I just kept trying to get it back," said the 25-year-old from Innsbruck.

Williams thus has still to get past the last eight here in five visits to the tournament, which is celebrating its 100th year.

Earlier, Yugoslav Jelena Dokic got off to a scorching start as she opened the event by crushing Adriana Gersi of the Czech Republic 6-0, 6-0.

The 15th-seeded Dokic, who snapped up her first WTA Tour title in Rome eight days ago - at Mauresmo's expense - was in no mood to give her opponent any quarter as she sped through in just 39min against a hopelessly outclassed rival.

"It wasn't too much of a difficult match. I tried out everything and it worked fine," said Dokic.

Back among the men, top-seeded Brazilian Kuerten, who says he is fit enough to win a third title here in five years despite niggling

aching back and thigh ailments which wrecked his challenge at the Hamburg Masters, sped through the first set in just 27min as Coria seemed awestruck by the occasion.

But the Argentine, nicknamed 'Mini Moya' for his resemblance to Spanish 1998 titlist Carlos Moya, fought back gamely and made a match of it in the second before finally fading as the 24-year-old Kuerten stepped up his game and won as a Coria forehand return plopped into the net.

Kuerten, nicknamed 'Guga', will now face another Argentine in the shape of Agustin Calleri, who destroyed Dutchman John Van Loatum 6-3, 6-0, 6-4.

"It's a very good start for me but I wish today was the final," joked crowd favourite Kuerten, given an ovation at the end by the crowd on the Philippe Chatrier Centre Court.

Kuerten said just being in Paris



Austrian Barbara Schett celebrates after beating American Venus Williams in the first round of the French Open on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

was a wonderful feeling.

"Here's where I started my career, here's where everything began - where I started to beat the big players. Every time I come here it's something special."

Joining Kuerten in round two was 1996 champion and seventh seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov, who shrugged off poor recent form to

the 21-year-old Ferrero, who had been uncertain to play the tournament because of an abductor strain which forced him out of the World Team Cup in Dusseldorf, won 6-2, 6-2, 6-3.

British 11th seed Tim Henman also found his form to beat German qualifier Tomas Behrend 6-1, 6-4, 5-7, 6-0.

Law lesson for Surrey

Cricket

AFP, London

Australia batsman Stuart Law completed a magnificent 153 against county champions Surrey here Sunday but Essex were still in trouble after the third day's play at the Oval.

Law, 132 not out overnight, was last man out when he was caught and bowled by England leg-spinner Ian Salisbury, Essex making 300.

Worcestershire for whom Australia's Ashes absentee Andy Bichel made 76 in the first innings, declared on 256 for eight in the second innings. Gloucestershire, bowled out for 69 to four, still 98 runs short of avoiding an innings defeat.

Middlesex made 370 in their first innings and at the close at Lord's the home side were nine without loss needing 349 to win on the final day.

Resuming on 273 for six, they needed a solid effort from the tail to keep Nottinghamshire in their sights, after the visitors amassed 467 in their first innings.

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making 300.

Half-centuries from England batsmen Mark Butcher (72) and Mark Ramprakash (52) enabled Surrey to declare the second innings at 205 for six. Essex, left with a day and a quarter to make 404 to win or bat out to save the game, were 73 for nought at the close.

Meanwhile at Headington fast bowler Matthew Hoggard celebrated his recall to the England Test squad by taking five for 52, including a spell of three wickets in four balls, as Hampshire took control. Derbyshire 267 all out in reply to the visitors 464.

All his final three victims were

caught at second slip by Neil Johnson and the Zimbabwean claimed two more as Derbyshire struggled to 69 for four, still 98 runs short of avoiding an innings defeat.

Sussex are 10 runs ahead with four wickets in hand against Warwickshire at Hove. Home hopes of avoiding defeat rest with Richard Montgomery (96 not out) in a total of 151 for six after Sussex were bowled out for 208. West Indies' Vashist Drakes taking three for 61.

In the only National League match played, Durham defeated Lancashire by 24 runs at The Riverside to move to the top of the Second Division.

Lancashire's Sri Lanka off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan took two for 24 from his nine overs but was outshone by Durham opposite number Nicky Phillips (4-21).

Durham's 211 for six was far from impregnable and Lancashire openers Mike Atherton (62) and Glen Chapple (52) got the visitors off to a sound start. But once Phillips dismissed Chapple, Lancashire struggled.

There was no play Sunday in the day's other top-flight match between Kent and Glamorgan.

In the Second Division Nottinghamshire's Kevin Pietersen continued to hammer the Middlesex attack. His 65 not out in the second innings, followed the South African's 165 not out first time around.

Plea to Perec

AFP, Paris

French sports minister Marie-George Buffet on Sunday issued an impassioned plea to troubled French athletics star Marie-José Perec to return home.

Buffet said that she had not had news from the triple Olympic champion since the Guadeloupe-born Perec's sensational flight prior to the Sydney Olympics last September.

"Marie-José has to tell us simply if she wants to continue or if she wants to stop," Buffet told French television.

Members of the Australian cricket team are seen at ANZAC Cove in Gallipoli, western Turkey, on Monday. The Australians visited ANZAC Cove which is named after the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps whose soldiers came ashore on April 25, 1915, during the World War One, in Gallipoli peninsula.

PHOTO: INTERNET

India declare at 336/9

REUTERS, Mutare

Zimbabwe A were 33 for one, in reply to India's first innings total of 336 for nine declared, at the close on the first day of the three-day tour match in Mutare on Monday.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the first day of a three-day tour match between India and Zimbabwe A on Monday:

INDIA

Das c Taibu b Strang	4
Ramchand b Friend	13
Laxman b Mutendera	24
Tendulkar c and b Mutendera	11
Ganguly c Friend b Mutendera	12
Dravid not out	107
Dighe not out	67
Extras: (lb-4, w-3, nb-4)	11
Total: (For 5 wkt in 65 overs)	249
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-23, 3-45, 4-62, 5-71	

To bat: Z Khan, H Singh, D Mohanty, A Nehru

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Strang	10	3	22	1
Friend	21	6	66	1
Mutendera	16	2	69	3
Evans	2	0	9	0
Murphy	8	0	38	0
Viljoen	8	0	42	0

ZIMBABWE A: G Rennie, H Masakadza, D Ebrahim, C Wishart, C Evans, D Viljoen, T Taibu, T Friend, B Murphy, D Mutendera, B Strang

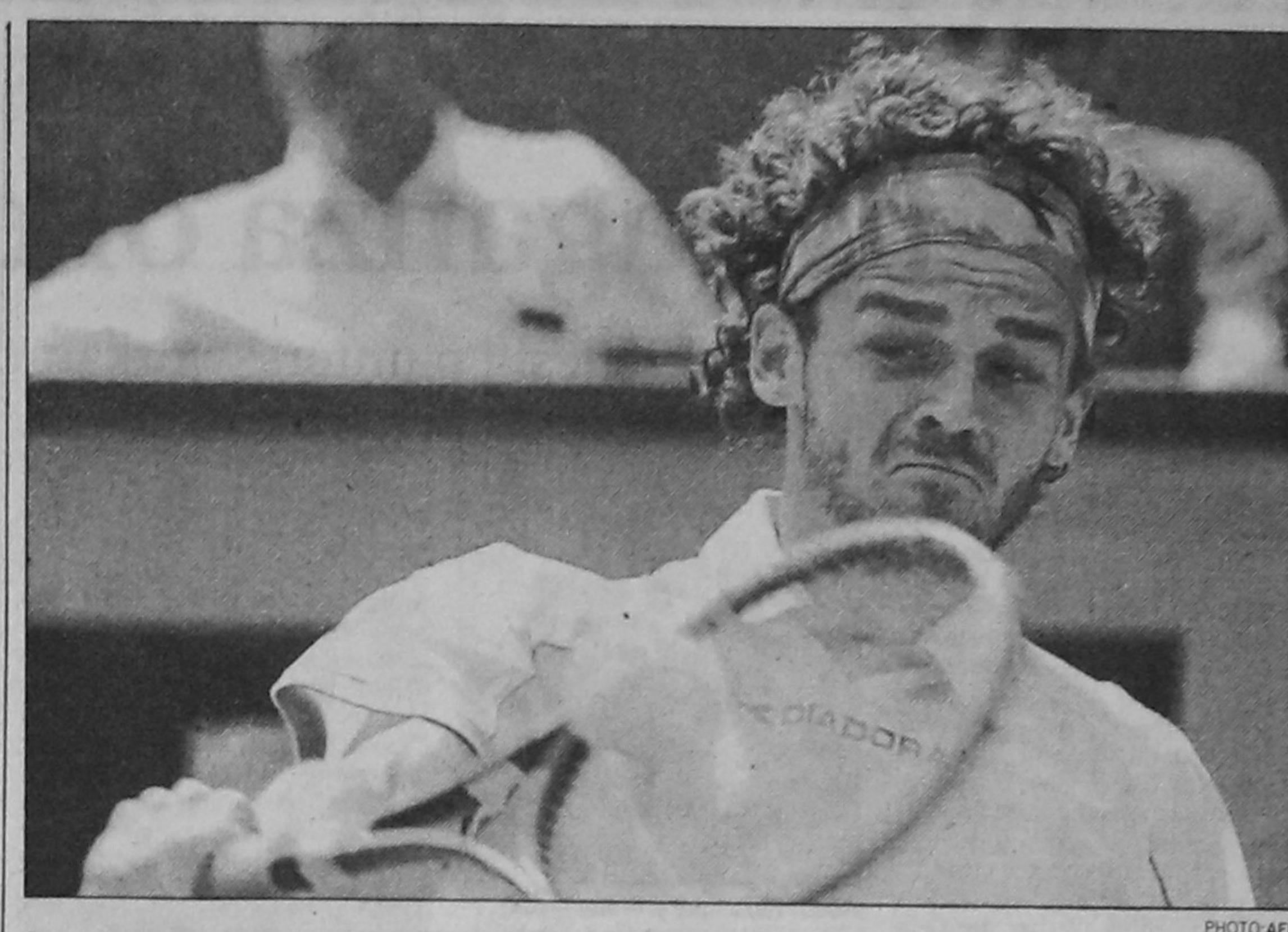


PHOTO: AFP

FRENCH OPEN DIARY

Tennis

AFP, Paris

French Open diary on the opening day of the tournament at the Roland Garros stadium here Monday:

CENTRE COURT GETS A NEW NAME

The legendary Roland Garros Centre Court has been christened the Philippe Chatrier Court, in memory of former French Tennis Federation president who died a few days after last year's tournament at the age of 72 after a long illness.

Chatrier headed the French federation from 1973-1993.

The entire stadium has received a facelift in preparations for the 100th year of the competition this year, these included the enlargement of court 3 and work to form the basement of the Tennis

"We are still waiting for