

Gibbs gearing

FROM PAGE 13
before the runs came.
"Gary and I have put a few together, and I think our partnership is growing into a really strong one."

Gibbs and Kirsten set up South Africa's highest one-day score of 363 for three with a first wicket stand of 153 off 115 balls.

Gibbs audaciously square drove a delivery from fast bowler Travis Friend over the backward point boundary in scoring one of his two sixes.

"There was bound to be a bit of swing with the new ball, and if the ball's there to be hit we're going to hit it," Gibbs said of the shot. "With a right arm bowler swinging it away, it's more or less a free hit. It's a matter of choosing the right one to hit."

Shame on

FROM PAGE 13
Shame! Shame! Even the BTV news bulletin couldn't provide anything about the records.

One of the game's greatest playmakers, Sachin Tendulkar of India was about to break this record of Pakistani Mushtaqe Mohammad once. But he couldn't. Tendulkar fell short of 12 runs from that record mark and came back to the pavilion weeping. But our Ashraf smiled instead of weeping. Only pity is that our commentators did not know -- Sohel Sultan Zulkar Nain Kabir Steve (Through e-mail)

Britain

FROM PAGE 13
opponents in Albacete.

Juan Carlos Ferrero got the home side off to a sure-footed start on Friday as he beat Ogorodov 7-5, 6-2, 6-4.

Corretja followed that up with a 6-0, 6-2, 6-7, 6-0 success against Kutsenko.

Argentina brushed Belarus aside to secure top flight action next year.

Franco Squillari and Gaston Gaudio got the South Americans off to the best possible start with wins over Vladimir Voltchkov and Max Mirny before Guillermo Canas and Luis Lobo beat Voltchkov and Mirny in the doubles for an unassailable 3-0 lead.

The Czech Republic came back from an opening match defeat to beat Romania and reach the World Group.

Bohdan Uhlirach lost his opener to Adrian Voinea in five sets but beat Gabriel Trifu on Sunday to give the Czechs victory.

Slovakia joined the Czechs, beating Chile while Morocco and Belgium were tied at 2-2 with one match to play.

The remaining world group qualifier between the United States and India will be played on October 12-14.

Masur sounds Hewitt alarm

Tennis

AFP, Sydney



PHOTO: INTERNET

Australia's Lleyton Hewitt (R) is embraced by teammate Pat Rafter after his win over Sweden's Thomas Johansson in their Davis Cup semifinal in Sydney.

France would need something exceptional to vanquish red-hot Lleyton Hewitt in the Davis Cup final in November, Australian coach Wally Masur said Monday.

French captain Guy Forget fired the first shots in the psychological battle leading up to the November 30 to December 2 event in Melbourne when he declared that the US Open champion was "not very powerful, doesn't serve very strong and we have weapons to worry him."

Masur said Forget was just reassuring his players before they took on an Australian team led by inform Hewitt and world No. 4 Patrick Rafter.

"There is no value in saying that Lleyton's unbeatable," Masur said Monday.

"The French guys know that to beat Lleyton in Davis Cup takes something exceptional."

Masur said he did not know how the French could sink his gun singles pairing of world No.3 Hewitt and Rafter.

"We have got the number three and four on current form, I don't know how you overcome this -- the players in the French team have got to figure that one out," he said.

"They are a good one-two punch. If you beat Pat who is a serve and volleyer you've got to come out and beat Lleyton who doesn't miss a shot from the back of the court, you've got to be pretty bloody good -- (Gustavo) Kuerten could not do that."

Hewitt beat world No.1 Kuerten in Australia's quarter-final victory in Brazil last April.

Unity is strength

Tennis

AFP, Sydney

required surgery last December.

Team members were questioned about how they felt about a return by Philippoussis to the team after Lleyton Hewitt carried them to their first home final since 1986.

"He hasn't played a tie since the last year's first round in Switzerland," US Open champion Hewitt said of calls to reinstall Philippoussis.

"To have gone through all the stuff that we've gone through as a team, and those who haven't played matches, it would be very hard to break up a team that's so close at the moment," said 20-year-old Hewitt on Monday.

"I think any of the guys were to miss out on playing in a Davis Cup final, knowing what they've gone through the whole year, they would be extremely disappointed.

"If Mark is playing well enough

and puts his hand up for selection, there's no reason why he's not going to be included in the squad and we'll see what happens."

Team captain John Fitzgerald said Philippoussis's first task would be to get back on to the tennis court.

"He's had a rough trot these last six months and I just hope he can really get back to be healthy," said Fitzgerald.

"You always want a player of his calibre available (but) we do have a team that has played very well together over the last couple of ties and it's a big thing to be in a Davis Cup final."

Philippoussis, 25 in November, has had a on-off relationship with Australia's Davis cup team, not always declaring his availability in the past, but he was instrumental in Australia's victory over France in the final two years ago in Nice.

He's been to beat one big hitter but now there are too many of them. Their average game beats her average game. Their great game beats her great game."

Of her own prospects, Navratilova believes she is very close to winning her 166th career doubles title following her return to the tour at last year's Wimbledon.

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"I'm not doing this to bask in the limelight. When I walked away, I didn't really need to hit another tennis ball the rest of my life," she said. "But when you're around it you want it. The passion never goes away."

Navratilova insists she is still deadly serious about her tennis.

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DAVIS CUP RESULTS

AFP, Paris

Davis Cup collated results Sunday:

World Group
Semifinals
Netherlands 2 France 3 - France qualify for final

Australia 4 Sweden 1
Final
Australia v France, November 30 to December 2

World group qualifiers
Argentina 5 Belarus 0
Belgium 2 Morocco 3
Czech Republic 3 Romania 2
Ecuador 1 Great Britain 4
Italy 2 Croatia 3
Slovakia 3 Chile 2
Spain 4 Uzbekistan 0 (last reverse singles scrapped)

USA v India - postponed until October 12-14

World Group match winners play in World Group, losers relegated to Zonal Group One

Euro-African zone
Group I
Relegation clashes
Austria 4 Ukraine 1
Zimbabwe 3 Slovenia 2

Group II
Promotion matches
Greece 3 Denmark 2
Luxembourg 1 Israel 4

American Zone
Group I
Relegation clashes
Mexico 2 Peru 1
Asia-Oceania zone
Group I
Relegation clash
China 1 Indonesia 4

Group II
Promotion match
Lebanon v Taiwan - postponed to November 1-3



JELENA DOKIC

Dokic feels great

Tennis

AFP, Tokyo

Teenage sensation Jelena Dokic is getting closer to full bloom after a recent birthday freed her from World Tennis Association (WTA) rules which restrict the number of games played by younger competitors.

"I become 18 this year and the limitation is gone so I can play a lot of tournaments," Dokic said after winning her second career title out of three finals on Sunday. "I think it has helped me, definitely."

The WTA allows 14-year-olds to play up to only seven tour events a year, a 15-year-old player a maximum of eight, a 16-year-old ten, and 17-year-olds 13.

"It's not good when you are on and off, playing one week and having one month off. Getting physically fitter... has definitely helped me. I feel the difference, especially this year," Dokic said.



Shaughnessy mauls Majoli

AFP, Quebec

Top-seeded American Meghann Shaughnessy overpowered fourth-seeded Croatian Iva Majoli 6-1, 6-3 here Sunday to capture the title in the 170,000-dollar Quebec Challenge tournament.

Shaughnessy, 22, said she was pleased with most aspects of her game, her power on returns and her attack as well as her serve leaving Majoli little room to maneuver.

She captured her first title of the season and the second of her career. Her only previous crown in October 2000, when she defeated Iroda Tulyaganova of Uzbekistan to win the Heineken Open hardcourt title in Shanghai, China.

Shaughnessy encountered more resistance in the quarter-finals on Friday, when she needed three sets -- all going to tiebreakers -- to beat Alexandra Stevenson. Against Majoli she was in control from the start, and had no need of the kind of rally that saw her erase a deficit in the first-set tiebreaker en route to her straight set win over third seed Anne Kremer in the semi-finals on Saturday.

"Their beatable at home," said Forget, brushing aside the fact that France have never won a Davis Cup tie in their four previous trips down under. Australia have a 10-3 win record against the French.

"My role will be to keep the players under pressure so that they arrive in Australia on a collective high and to prepare them in a more precise manner."

France booked their second Davis Cup final in three years here

Forget Lleyton

Tennis

AFP, Rotterdam

France coach Guy Forget on Sunday dismissed the threat posed by Australian young gun Lleyton Hewitt in their Davis Cup final against Australia in Melbourne next November.

"He's not very powerful, doesn't serve very strong and we have weapons to worry him," said Forget of newly-crowned US Open champion Hewitt who powered Australia into the Davis Cup final with a four-set victory over Sweden's Thomas Johansson in Sydney on Sunday.

Forget said the fact that Nicholas Escude, 25, beat Hewitt, 20, at Wimbledon this year was confidence-boosting for the French as they bid to avenge their loss at home in Nice to the Aussies in 1999.

"Their beatable at home," said Forget, brushing aside the fact that France have never won a Davis Cup tie in their four previous trips down under. Australia have a 10-3 win record against the French.

"My role will be to keep the players under pressure so that they arrive in Australia on a collective high and to prepare them in a more precise manner."

It will be Australia's third successive Cup final, having beaten France in Nice in 1999 and losing to Spain in Barcelona last year.

Australia will be hosting their first Davis Cup final since beating Sweden 3-2 on grass at

Melbourne's Kooyong stadium in 1986.

The Australians have won the title 27 times and will be playing in their 46th final.

Eight-times winners France are in their 14th final and their fifth in the past 20 years. Their last win came in 1996 in Sweden.

Wang Nan wins Japan Open TT

AFP, Kobe

China's world champion Wang Nan defended her title for a third consecutive victory in the women's singles at the \$10,000-dollar Japan Open table tennis tournament on Monday.

The Sydney Olympic dual champion, who defeated Lin Ling 12-14, 11-6, 11-4, 11-8, 11-4 in an all-Chinese semi-final earlier in the day, went on to win the final with a 7-11, 11-7, 6-11, 11-6, 11-9, 11-4 win over South Korean Kim Kyun-Ah.

It was the third title on the ITTF Pro Tour for the 22-year-old Chinese top seed this season, following her victories at the China Open in June and the Korea Open last week.

It was also her 13th title on the tour, including her triumph at the 1998 Pro Tour Finals.



PHOTO: INTERNET
Martina Navratilova (L) leads a moment of silence for victims of attacks on the United States prior to the final of the Toyota Princess Cup.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

