

Early exit for top guns

AFP, Auckland

Top two seeds Marat Safin and Goran Ivanisevic were ousted Thursday from quarterfinal and second round matches of the New Zealand Men's Open here.

British sixth-seed Greg Rusedski won his first ever match against second seed and Wimbledon champion Ivanisevic of Croatia, in a thrilling three-set quarter-final 6-2, 0-6, 6-3.

Safin, of Russia and the number one seed, lost his rain-affected second round singles match to unseeded Swede Jonas Bjorkman 3-6, 6-4, 3-6.

Bjorkman's delight lasted only a few hours though. He was back on court quickly to play his quarterfinal against unseeded Jerome Golmard of France, but lost in straight sets 3-6, 4-6.

Golmard will play unseeded Michel Kratochvil of Switzerland in one of Friday's semifinals.

Rusedski, who played his second-round and quarterfinal matches Thursday after rain washed out play Wednesday, will play fifth seed and 1996 winner here, Jiri Novak of the Czech Republic in the other semi-final.

The worn cap

FROM PAGE 13
really does, he needs to get another one," Harvey, one of Australia's greatest left-hand batsmen, told the Melbourne Herald-Sun.

"He is on camera all the time and it doesn't look the best.

The cap has been valued at more than 100,000 dollars (50,000 US) as a collector's item, but Waugh said money had nothing to do with it.

"There's no price tag on it. I would never sell it, it's something I would probably keep in the family or donate to a museum some day," he said.

"When I'm dead and buried, someone might sell it, but in my lifetime it'll never be sold.

"I think when the cap is worn out it will probably be a signal for me to leave and go -- we might go hand in hand."

Focus will be

FROM PAGE 13
quick -- Kafil Dev, Courtney Walsh, Wasim Akram and Curtly Ambrose.

Walsh holds the most record for most test wickets, 519, a mark that Muralitharan is keen to overtake.

Muralitharan, 29, made his test debut at the age of 20 against Allan Border's Australians in 1992.

The unorthodox off-spinner's career was thrown into doubt when he was called for throwing on two tours to Australia in 1995-96 and in 1999-2000.

His unusual action, however -- he has an abnormally flexible wrist and gives the illusion of throwing because he cannot fully straighten his bowling arm -- has since been cleared by the ICC.

In 2001, Muralitharan finished as the top wicket-taker with 80 wickets from 12 Tests, 22 wickets more than Warne who played in 13 tests.

Muralitharan has taken 51 wickets from seven tests at an average of 16.49 at Galle.

His best match figures at Galle were 13 for 171 to subject Shaun Pollock's South Africans to an innings defeat in 2000-01.

Naimur in thick

FROM PAGE 13
Bidyut b Hannan 7

Imran batting 17

Aminul b batting 6

Extras: (b-11, lb-9, w-2) 22

Total: (For 8 wkts in 125 overs)370

Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-126, 3-167, 4-227, 5-261, 6-296, 7-314, 8-363

Bowler O M R W

Shahnewaz 29 10 64 2

Sayem 15 4 61 1

Masud 18 1 49 1

Arif 15 3 48 1

Hannan 12 1 39 2

Mofizul 12 3 32 0

Monju 7 2 14 0

Kamal 16 2 41 1

Shafayet 1 0 22 0

'Learn from past failures'

Cricket

REUTERS, London

Nasser Hussain believes England must learn from their "shambolic" past World Cup failings to be competitive in next year's tournament in South Africa.

Speaking at a news conference at Heathrow Airport before his 15-man one-day squad departed for India, the England captain said: "Sides that have done well in World Cups have had a plan.

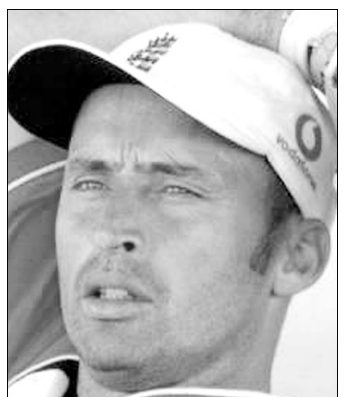
"They know what each player's role in that side is and they stick to it. We have not achieved this and, with the World Cup only a year away, we must start putting that right. We must be pro-active rather than reactive."

He said England had suffered from "shambolic planning" in the last two tournaments.

England play six one-day internationals in India, where they lost 1-0 in the recent three-test series. They then play one-day and test series in New Zealand in February and March.

Hussain said England, who lost

11 successive one-day games before destroying hapless Zimbabwe 5-0 last year, needed to show faith in their players over the



NASSER HUSSAIN

next 12 months, hence the retention of youngsters like Matthew Hoggard, James Foster and Richard Dawson who all impressed in India last month.

"Duncan (Fletcher) and I are trying to build a youthful, good-fielding, energetic one-day side," added Hussain on Thursday.

"This will be the nucleus because

we haven't got enough cricket to start messing around. The best sides going into the World Cup in previous years have had settled sides.

"We must continue the sort of mentality and team spirit and bonding that this group of lads created in Zimbabwe. Everyone who was out there saw the work ethic we put into nets, training and fielding. Everything gels together when you are winning.

"You can't experiment that much."

Looking ahead to India, Hussain said it was important for England to gain a "psychological hold" over a team they will meet in the group stages of the World Cup.

"It will be important not to be overawed by the occasion. There will be big crowds and it's important that we take early wickets, especially with Sachin Tendulkar and Saurav Ganguly being even more prolific in the one-day arena.

"We will be looking to compete and get a psychological hold."

The series starts on January 19 in Calcutta, followed by games in Cuttack, Madras, Kanpur, New Delhi and Bombay.

Kramnik to defend FIDE title

AFP, Moscow

Russian chess champion Vladimir Kramnik vowed Wednesday to take back the World Chess Federation (FIDE) title, despite being in dispute with the body over its World Championships which opened last month.

The "Braingames" world champion believes the federation made a travesty of the world title championship by changing the tournament to a knockout competition played under a foreshortened time control.

"The world champion should be chosen according to the traditional system and the element of chance should not be part of it", Kramnik said Wednesday.

"I will not be making any great concessions (to FIDE), it's not my style", Kramnik said as he received a chess "Oscar", as voted by the world's chess journalists.

Kramnik, and his mentor, Garry Kasparov, considered as the world's two greatest chess players, refused to take part in the FIDE world championship, which opened in Moscow last month.

The final, to take place this month, will be between Ukrainians Ruslan Ponomarev and Vassil Ivanchuk.

The two "K"s battled it out in a separate championship, also in Moscow, with a traditional chess match, which Kasparov won.

Kasparov reigned over the chess world for 16 years before being crushed by his former pupil, Kramnik in November 2000 in London.

It was this victory which earned Kramnik his "Oscar 2000".

Dechy derailed

AFP, Canberra

Nathalie Dechy hopes her mediocre form at this week's Canberra Women's Classic tennis tournament will result in her best performance at next week's Australian Open.

In the past two years, the Frenchwoman has recorded some of her top results in lead-up tournaments to the year's first grand slam but her good form goes out the window as soon as she lands in Melbourne.

After a disappointing 6-4, 5-7, 3-6 quarterfinal loss to American Lilia Osterloh Thursday, seventh-seed Dechy was looking at the positives.

"The funny thing is I always play well in the tournaments before (the Australian Open) and I always have trouble to play as well at the grand slam," she said.

"So this year I did in between and I hope I'll be much better for Melbourne."

Dechy struggled with a lower back injury during the third set and needed to receive on-court treatment.

"It's not an excuse for the match, it was just because I had a tough match the day before so I was feeling a bit sore in my back and my neck," Dechy said.

"I will go and see the physio this afternoon and do lots of treatment. I still have a doubles match tomorrow so it's going to be some more matches for the Australian Open and it will be perfect."

Osterloh, ranked 53rd, will face top seed Tamarine Tanasugarn of Thailand in Saturday's semifinals, a player she has never beaten.

Tanasugarn is the only remaining seed in the tournament after she ousted sixth-seed Patty Schnyder of Switzerland 6-2, 6-4.

Australian Amanda Grahame defeated Hungary's Petra Mandula 5-7, 6-1, 6-1 and will take on Israeli Anna Smashnova in the other semi-final.

Smashnova, who won in Auckland last week, beat Emelie Loit of France 6-3, 6-0 in the day's final match.

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Grande goes Down

AFP, Hobart

Spain's Anabel Medina Garrigues thrashed defending champion and Italian top seed Rita Grande at the Tasmanian International women's tennis tournament here Thursday.

Grande, who frustrates bigger hitters with her slices, top spin and angles, was swept away by Medina Garrigues, 6-2, 6-2.

In other matches, eighth-seeded Australian Nicole Pratt beat fifth-seeded American Meilen Tu 6-4, 7-6 on the first hot day of Hobart's miserable summer.

Seventh-seeded American Amy Frazier ousted Slovakian Janette Husarova 6-2, 5-7, 6-2 in another quarterfinal.

Talking with reporters, Arafat, who claimed to have played in the Second Division cricket in Dhaka, said he always thought of doing something for the development of the game. "Since I have been given this opportunity, I would try my best to contribute to the game," he said.

He also said that he would not mind taking suggestion from his predecessor Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

Rohana moves up

Golf

SPORTS REPORTER

Anura Rohana fired a four-under-par 68 to climb to the top of the leaderboard of the Partex 17th Bangladesh Amateur Golf Championship on Thursday.

The former champion from Sri Lanka finished the second day of the four-day meet at the Kurmitola Golf Club (KGC) with a gross score of 68, which is six shots better than four players who all ended up with 74 respectively.

Rohana, who won the coveted title two years ago, played almost flawless golf in the round. He had six birdies and only two bogies to lead frog overnight leader Bangladesh's Mohammad Milon.

Milon, the mild-mannered teenager from Dhaka, carded a two-over-par score.

Fellow-Bangladeshi Siddikur Rahman also managed to play two-over par and is four-over-par after two days. Currently he is in third place on 148.

Sanjeev Mehra of the Royal Calcutta Golf Club and Shahed Javed Khan of Pakistan stayed in contention sharing the fourth spot on 150. They are seven shots adrift from the halfway leader.

Among the notable performers was Shaffat Rahman of Bhatiary Golf and Country Club (BGCC). Playing with an eight handicap, he had the best net of 67. The next best net of 68 belonged to Rohana and Hafizur Rahman with a handicap of 18.

Roddick rolls on

Tennis

AFP, Sydney

Teenage American star Andy Roddick had to struggle mightily before beating Korean qualifier Lee Hyung-Taik 6-7, 6-3, 7-5 on Thursday to earn a place in the semifinals of the Sydney International tennis tournament.

Roddick, a 19-year-old who is one of the sport's brightest young hopefuls, rose from 160 to 16 in the rankings in 2001, winning three tournaments in his first full year on tour.

The third seed underlined his potential with an impressive comeback against 115th-ranked Lee, whose smooth and accurate groundstrokes were eventually worn down by the American's youthful power.

Lee matched Roddick shot for shot through the first set and the youngster threw his racket to the ground in frustration when he fell 3-6 behind in the tiebreaker.

Roddick gathered his composure, however, and broke for the first time at the start of the second set.

Lee injured his left thigh stretching in the third game of the second set -- and the injury had to be heavily strapped before he re-started. Roddick took the second set but the defiant Lee promptly broke and took a 3-0 lead in the third.

Roddick broke straight back and broke again but Lee refused to concede and got back on serve. Roddick broke again for 6-5 when the Korean spooned a forehand long and then served out for the match.

Roddick, who won in 43 minutes and dropped only four games against Bohdan Ulihrach on Wednesday, took 1 hour 58 minutes to complete this dramatic victory.

Lee, 26, has not qualified for next week's Australian Open and his only way into the first Grand Slam of the year would be if a main-draw wild card withdrew before Friday's draw -- and he was allocated it.

He opted not to contest the

Old foes to renew rivalry

AFP, Melbourne

Americans Venus Williams and Jennifer Capriati will resume their battle to be regarded as the top woman player in the world when the Australian Open starts on Monday at Melbourne Park.

The pair shared two Grand Slam titles apiece last season with Capriati triumphant in Australia and at the French Open and Williams victorious at Wimbledon and the US Open.

One of their leading rivals, Lindsay Davenport, has pulled out of the Australian Open with a knee injury, meaning she will lose the No. 1 ranking she currently holds.

Davenport, the 2000 Australian Open champion, injured her right knee at the WTA Tour championships in Munich in November and has not fully recovered.

But even in Davenport's absence, there are several other players with realistic claims to challenge the top pair, including former world No. 1 Martina Hingis, Venus's sister Serena, French player Amelie Mauresmo and the rising Belgian duo of Kim Clijsters and Justine Henin.

Venus Williams goes into the Open riding a 20-match winning streak after her victory in the Australian Women's Hardcourt Championships on the Gold Coast earlier this month.

She was in imperious form on the Gold Coast and will be chasing her third straight Grand Slam title in Melbourne.

Hingis, however, crushed Williams 6-1, 6-1 in the semifinals of last year's Australian Open, which she has yet to win.

"It would be nice, real nice (to win the Australian Open)," Williams said.

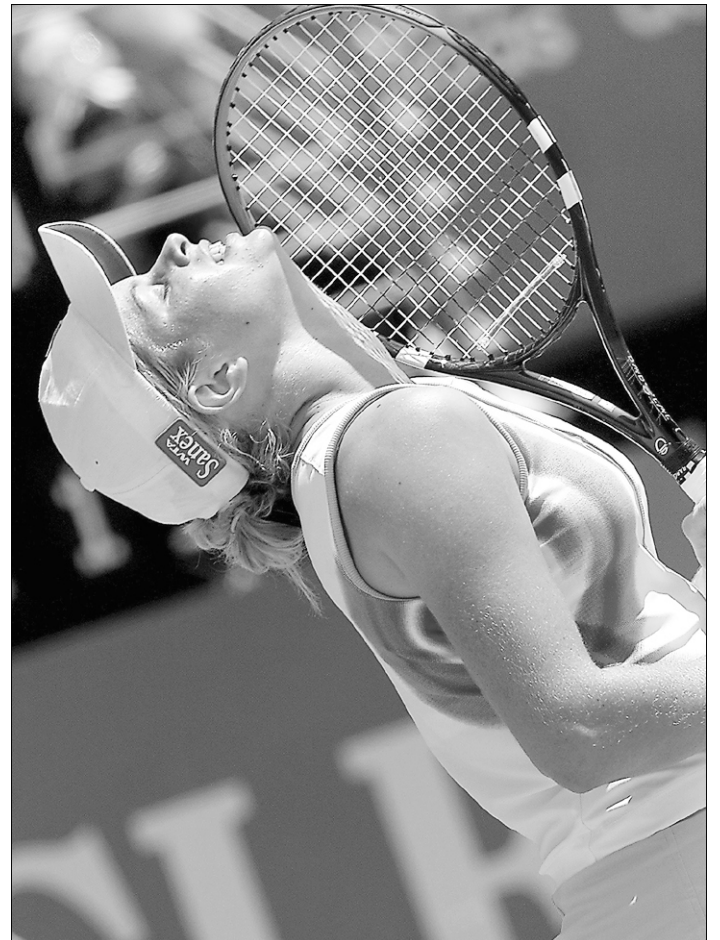
Capriati's preparations have been hampered by an injury to her right hip and a loss to qualifier Alexandra Stevenson in the Sydney International -- leaving the 25-year-old American short of match practice.

After two rounds, Zulfikar Rahman has the best net score of three-under-par, followed by Rohana, Asif Ibrahim and Shaffat Rahman. They each have a net score of 143 after two days of play.

The ladies' competition starts today. Eighteen players from the from the KGC, BGCC and Savar Golf Club will be action on the first day.

Following are gross scores after two days:

143-Anura Rohana; 146-Mohammad Milon; 148-Siddikur Rahman; 150-Sanjeev Mehra, Shahid Javed Khan; 151-Gurbaz Mann, Jaideep Patwardhan, Lalith Kumar, Vaqas Ahmed and 153-Chuda Bhandary.



Belgian Kim Clijsters expresses her despair after missing a shot against compatriot Justine Henin at the Sydney International on January 10.

Australian Open qualifying tournament because he was still in contention in Sydney.

Roddick now meets second-seeded Swiss player Roger Federer in Friday's semi-finals.

Federer fought his way to a 6-7, 7-6, 6-3 win over former world No. 1 Marcelo Rios of Chile, hammering down 12 aces in the 1 hour 50 minute arm wrestle.

Frenchman Nicolas Escude withdrew from the quarterfinals of the men's singles with a groin injury but big-serving Max Mirnyi of Belarus advanced.

Mirnyi outplayed Frenchman Julien Boutter 6-4, 6-2 in 75 minutes and now faces Juan Ignacio Chela of Argentina -- ensuring an unseeded player will make the men's final.

Chela is on the comeback trail

after serving a three-month suspension because he was still in contention in Sydney.

Escude was due to have played his quarterfinal against Chela on Thursday night but unseeded Chela was instead given a walkover into the semi-finals.

Defending champion Martina Hingis of Switzerland stayed on track for her second straight Sydney women's singles title with a clearcut 6-4, 6-2 win over seventh-seeded French player Sandrine Testud.

Hingis, the second seed and winner here in 1997 and 2001, took just 70 minutes to beat Testud for the 16th time in their 16 meetings.

She will now play third-seeded Kim Clijsters of Belgium -- who beat her fifth-seeded compatriot Justine Henin 7-6, 6-2 in 1 hour 24 minutes -- in Friday's semis.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Humorous
6 Of the flesh
12 Shine
13 Power
14 Noble, for short
15 Liv's pop
16 Diminish
17 (Prof.)
19 "not choose to run"
20 Affluent
22 Droop
24 Horde
27 Crony
29 "Serpico" author
32 Smoker's superstition
35 Academic
36 Never again?
37 Shoe width
38 Neighbor
40 Hearts' charts (Abbr.)
42 Latin abbr.
44 Cleave cohort

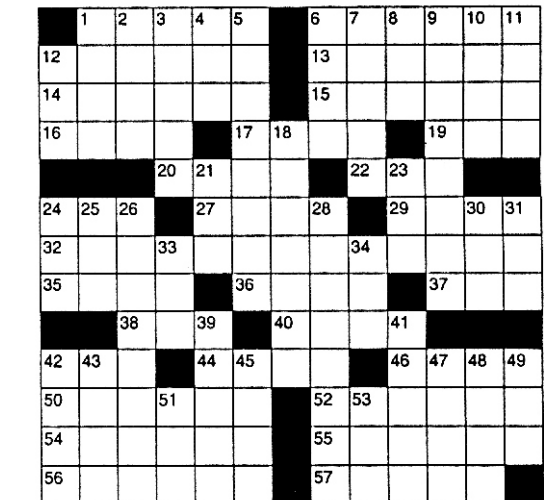
46 Ancient country
50 "60 Minutes" name
52 Carrying on game show
54 Claim
55 Puts forth
56 Play-ground array
57 Slowly, to run

4 Follower (Suffix)
5 Transport to Chat-tanooga
6 Expense
7 Popular
8 Holy fish?
9 Steer
10 Antiquated
11 Letter-man's rival
12 Handle clumsily
18 England-France link
21 Type of cube
23 Docs' org.

24 Silcom star's monogram
25 "Eureka!"
26 Veg served in florets
28 Holy fish?
30 Blackjack component
31 The woman
33 Greek letter
34 Ryan or Tilly
39 Feudal lord
41 Lucky number
42 Geological periods
43 Ring out
45 Uses henna
47 Tabloid info
48 Aware of
49 Booker T. and the —
51 "Waking Devine"
53 Downsize

Solution time: 27 mins.

Y E P O A T I D
O A I T O P I A L A C I M E
G R A I N D F I R E Y E A R
I N S I D E E O I N
L E D P R E M I E D
P R I E D D E B A R I E
L A B I S P U R O R I P
U R I P I Z O U E I S T
M E D I U S A S U E
M A Y A U S A T O D A Y
A G E S R O L L E O N I E
N O I N E E L L I S L E I S



CRYPTOQUIP
G X S O S R P U P M B V S
E Y F U G S O Q F E A K B Y U S G
G Y C P A M V G C Y F G R Y O O A
Q X S S O S C X Q E V I
Yesterday's Cryptquip: MY VERY FAVORITE SEAFOOD DISH ISN'T ON THE RESTAURANT MENU. IT SERVES NO PORPOISE.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: O equals R
The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, 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.

Agassi said he appreciated the chance to play in the heat to help him reacquaint himself with likely searing temperatures on the rubberised Rebound Ace hardcourt surface over the next fortnight.

"That's why we play here for a match like that because that's all the elements that you are looking for in your preparation," Agassi said.

"It was some quality tennis, some pressure situations, late in the second set I didn't close him out, and then I kept executing my game and got the right opportunities which I converted in the third.

"Today was a great step forward in my preparation. You can prepare for the heat, but psychologically you have to get out there and you've got to feel it and you've got to will yourself through it, so playing in today's heat was good for me."

Although Sampras has to negotiate rejuvenated Draper to reach the final, Agassi said he would enjoy playing his great rival in a decider just two days before the Open.

"For me, it's always an added benefit and it's always just a little bit more exciting and enjoyable to play against Pete in any match, especially a final."

Elsewhere, Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov took 69 minutes to dismiss Spain's Alex Corretja, winning 6-4, 6-2.

Kafelnikov lost to Draper on Wednesday, but his form improved dramatically on Thursday to set him up with a match against young Californian boom server Taylor Dent on Friday.

Dent, the US-born son of former Australian Davis Cup player Phil Dent, defeated eighth-ranked Haas, 7-6, 7-6.

While he has been hampered by a lower back injury, 20-year-old Dent said he had served at about 90 per cent capacity and was close to being able to play at full speed.

Mark Philippoussis was welcomed back to the scene of one of his worst indiscretions when he made his peace with tournament promoter Colin Stubs and played a match against fellow-Australian Richard Fromberg Thursday.