

ITF speaks out

REUTERS, London

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) hit out at a French anti-doping agency on Monday after it announced two players had tested positive for drug use at the French Open last month.

The players were not named and the ITF -- the grand slam event's organising body -- immediately rounded on the Conseil de Prevention et de Lutte Contre le Dopage (CPLD) for releasing the information in what they described as a "premature" fashion.

"The ITF is surprised that the CPLD has disclosed that there are two positive results from anti-doping tests taken at 2002 Roland Garros," an ITF spokesman said.

Hopes pinned

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rain during last one-month as the players were at the gym for most of the time.

Cricket manager ASM Faruque praised Gloucester for his work. "I was present in few training sessions. I'm happy with the level of fitness and their positive attitude," said the former Bangladesh cricketer, who has been appointed cricket manager till the 2003 World Cup in South Africa.

Bangladesh will play two three-day practice matches before the first Test starts on July 21 at the P Sara Stadium in Colombo.

SQUAD

Khaled Mashud (captain), Habibul Bashar, Aminul Islam, Akram Khan, Al-Shahriar, Enamul Hoque, Ehsanul Haque, Hannan Sarkar, Mohammad Ashraful, Tushar Imran, Fahim Muntasir, Monjurul Islam, Tareq Aziz Khan, Alamgir Kabir and Talha Zubayer

Pak tri-series

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The Pakistan board announced last week it was considering shifting the series to Nairobi after Australia and New Zealand raised security concerns.

"We have also spoken to Kenyan cricket association officials in London and they appear enthusiastic about hosting the one-day series," board director Brigadier Munawar Rana said.

"However, a formal agreement with the Australian and New Zealand boards -- and also with the Kenyan cricket association -- is still to be signed.

"Basically, the series would be treated as our home series. But we will have to bear all essential expenses for hosting the series."

Pakistan has been forced to look for alternative neutral venues because of teams' reluctance to visit the country in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

Earlier this year, a two-Test Pakistan-West Indies series was switched to Sharjah while New Zealand cut short their tour in May after a bomb went off outside their hotel in Karachi.

The PCB says it has since suffered a revenue shortfall of some 20 million dollars.

Kenya hosted the ICC 'mini World Cup' knockout tournament two years ago.

Pakistan have announced a tentative schedule of August 25 to September 7 for the triangular series. Australia are also due to travel to Pakistan in October for a Test series although several of their players, including Shane Warne, have said they do not want to go.

Rana added: "Ideally we would have liked to play the tri-nation series in Pakistan, because it was supposed to be the showpiece event of our Test cricket Golden Jubilee year.

"It is obvious that our profits or revenues would definitely be reduced by having to play a home series at a neutral venue."

Pakistan celebrates the 50th anniversary of its team attaining Test status this winter.

Incredible feeling

Tennis

REUTERS, London

Euphoric champion Lleyton Hewitt has woken after a night of Wimbledon celebrations to declare "If I don't win another tournament again, it won't matter."

The Australian swapped his tracksuit for a tuxedo to celebrate his maiden grasscourt grand slam crown at the Wimbledon ball, just hours after crushing Argentine David Nalbandian 6-1, 6-3, 6-2 in the most one-sided final for 18 years.

The 21-year-old -- the first Australian to win Wimbledon since 1987 -- carried on partying at his southwest London base with "a few mates and a few beers".

"I slept pretty well last night for a couple of hours," he smiled as he glanced at newspaper headlines spread out before him at his breakfast table.

"It is starting to sink in now. Yesterday everything was a little bit unclear, it is a hard thing to describe.

"I've only just started believing it and realising it actually happened. You dream about winning this tournament. They don't come any bigger than Wimbledon.

"Pat Cash won it last in 1987. You don't know if you are going to get an opportunity to win it again. I am going to enjoy this for as long as I can.

"To be a member of the All England Club is great. I don't know if I will be wearing the club tie, though. I haven't worn a tie since I was at

school. "But now I will be able to come back here when I am 65 and sit in the members' stand and watch. It's great."

The world number one, who does not return home until after the



LLEYTON HEWITT

defence of his U.S. Open crown in September, spent the early hours on the phone to some friends and radio stations back home, and he is overwhelmed by the Australian reception.

"I haven't spoken to too many people, but the ones I have spoken to said the country has gone absolutely crazy.

"When you start your career you would love to win a grand slam, get to world number one and win the Davis Cup.

"Now I have won two grand slams and one is Wimbledon which is probably the biggest tournament in the world."

Although Hewitt says it would not

be "the end of the world" if he does not win another tournament, that scenario is an extremely unlikely one as he threatens to dominate the sport for years to come.

Certainly that is something the young Australian would love.

"To dominate tennis like Tiger Woods has dominated golf would be amazing," he said, referring to his sporting hero.

"But what he has done it just incredible. Sure, I have some pressure and expectation on me but it's nothing compared to him.

"I thrive on the pressure, though, I'm certainly not shy of it."

Hewitt feels there is plenty of room for improvement, which is not good news for anyone with any designs on the majors in the next few years.

"I have won all these big tournaments now but I still feel there are areas I can work on. There are definitely areas I can make better and add another dimension to."

That, and his best friend's lucky shirt, should see Hewitt safe for the foreseeable future.

Late last year Hewitt asked former school friend Haydn Eckerman to leave his job in his father's Adelaide property firm and travel the world with the tennis player.

"He didn't need much persuasion," smiled Hewitt. "Now he has got this shirt which he wore yesterday. He has worn it to 10 finals and I have won them all.

"He thinks it is a lucky shirt, although he says he may retire it now."



PHOTO: AFP

Spain's Oscar Freire celebrates after clinching the second stage of the Tour de France on July 8.

Lifebuoy football

BSS, Dhaka

A double strike by Safique Alam helped The Financial Express thrash Dinkal 4-0 in the Lifebuoy-Community Football Tournament at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Kriralok defeated news agency Abas by a solitary goal while Banglabazar Patrika blanked Bangladesh Television 2-0.

Sangram beat Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha 2-0 in the day's last encounter.

Wimbledon could be shifted

BBC, London

Wimbledon could shift to a week later in the calendar in order to give players more time to practice on grass, according to a report.

Players have long complained that the two-week break between the French Open and Wimbledon does not give them enough time to prepare for the grass-court season.

But the Daily Telegraph claims a new proposal, which involves changing the date of an American grass-court event, could solve the problem.

The Hall of Fame Championships in Newport, Rhode Island, has traditionally been played in the week after Wimbledon.

But it could be moved to the week after the French Open instead, which would enable Wimbledon to be moved back by seven days.

That would give players a three-week gap between the slow clay courts of the French Open and the quick grass of Wimbledon.

The paper claims the move could happen as early as 2005.

Wimbledon has indicated for several years that if the players made an official request they would seriously think about moving the tournament back.

That has not happened so far because of a number of reasons, the most significant being that players from North and South America do not want to add another week to the 11 they already spend away from home.

It was also thought that the United States Tennis Association would not be happy to lose a week of their season in the run-up to the US Open.

However, with an increasing number of American players flying back to the US in the week after the French Open, the plan to move the Newport grass-court tournament is receiving increasing support.

Balfour summons

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It is only six months, however, since batsman Jacques Rudolph was denied the chance of a Test debut against Australia in Melbourne, when Sonn intervened and insisted that his place go to Justin Ontong.

That decision was supported by the Sports Minister, who announced in February that he was considering legislation to ensure that all sports speeded up the process of transformation.

He claimed that sport had lagged behind the rest of South African society in eliminating the legacy of white minority rule.

But Omar Henry, the first non-white to play Test cricket for South Africa and now chairman of selectors, has backed the decision to abandon quotas.

"What we have done is taken on board two extremely important qualities -- honesty and trust," he has been quoted as saying.

Audley's political punches

Boxing

AFP, London

Olympic gold medalist Audley Harrison took time out Monday from preparing for his next professional fight to aim some blows at the British government's attitude towards sport.

His outburst was sparked by a return to the Crystal Palace national sports centre in south London, ahead of his sixth professional fight against Dominic Negus at Wembley Conference Centre on Wednesday.

Harrison trained at Crystal Palace prior to claiming super-heavyweight gold at the Sydney 2000 Olympics but was critical of the current conditions there.

He said: "Nothing's changed. It's like something out of the dark ages. I'm not criticising the people at Crystal Palace. They are trying but nothing's being done to the place since I was there two and a half

years ago.

"They are talking about pulling it down so they won't spend any money on it. It's a disgrace. Whoever's in charge need to pull their fingers out.

"Three years ago they said they were going to set up 10 network centres and a centre of excellence to rival Australia but as far as I can see nothing's got better."

Harrison once led British amateur boxers on a protest march to the Houses of Parliament in order to ensure they had funds ahead of the Sydney Olympics.

That funding has remained in place with amateur boxing guaranteed 13 million pounds (19 million dollars) through to the 2004 Games in Athens.

But Harrison said: "They have put extra money into athletes' pockets but the infrastructure is a joke. As a professional athlete you should have professional facilities. What's happening is disgusting."

"OK, Tim Henman can't win Wimbledon but we need to have

facilities to provide for people who will."

He also attacked the long-delayed rebuilding of a new national stadium at Wembley, saying: "I played in the last match at Wembley - a charity match - and it's still there. Why hasn't anything been done? It's a disgrace."

Harrison, unbeaten in his five previous professional fights, has been severely criticised for lacklustre displays against low calibre opponents.

But Negus, who hails from Bethnal Green, east London, a mecca for British boxing and has had 18 fights as a professional, should provide a sterner test.

"He's another step up for me. He comes forward and he knows how to handle himself," Harrison insisted. "He's an OK fighter who can look after himself but nothing worries me at all. I'm in good shape."



PHOTO: STAR

The Sri Lanka-bound Bangladesh cricket team that leaves for Colombo today.

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CRYPTOQUIP

Q P U C T T L T F Y Y U E R X K

E C G R F S R L L Q J Q L E .

U C T J Q A V E V F Z R F G Y C C K

E U S R C P G X R A F E Q Z R .

Yesterday's Cryptquip: ON MY TEAM, THE BASEBALL ALWAYS GETS LOST IN SHRUBBERY. WE'RE IN THE BUSH LEAGUE.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: E equals T

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.

Lennox's last bout

AFP, London

Britain's world heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis has again indicated he may be about to retire from boxing having achieved everything he wanted to in the sport.

The WBC, IBF and IBO champion has ruled out a fight with WBO champion Vladimir Klitschko, saying it would be a waste of his time.

Lewis, 36, proved himself the best in the world and entered the ranks of the greats by destroying Mike Tyson in Memphis last month.

"Vladimir Klitschko-he's not tough enough," said Lewis at Michael Watson's testimonial here late Monday.

"He's not ready for me yet. It would be a waste of my time to go and fight him-I would knock him out."

Lewis is not ready to announce his retirement yet, but he told Sky Sports: "I've already done everything that I really wanted to do in the sport of boxing, so I'm going to keep them guessing for a little while longer."

Schumacher in top gear

REUTERS, Silverstone

Michael Schumacher could secure his fifth Formula One world title with six races to spare after celebrating another Ferrari one-two triumph at the British Grand Prix.

On a wet and chaotic afternoon at Silverstone, the German beat Brazilian team mate Rubens Barrichello by 14.5 seconds to stretch his championship lead to 54 points with a maximum of 70 left to be won.

Colombian Juan Pablo Montoya was third, his Williams the only car not lapped by the Ferrari pair.

It was Schumacher's 60th career victory, his seventh success in 10 races this year and Ferrari's fourth one-two of a season they have completely dominated.

Schumacher can now claim a record-equaling fifth crown at the French Grand Prix in two weeks.

That would make him the quickest champion -- Briton Nigel Mansell had to wait until August when he won the title after 11 of 16 races in 1992.



MICHAEL SCHUMACHER

Failing that, he looks certain to be crowned before his own adoring fans at Hockenheim the following week.

"I am delighted because it was a very special race today," said the German, who admitted the rain had taken his team by surprise. "It was all or nothing at various moments.

"It is number 60 and Silverstone hasn't given me too many victories. And in terms of the championship it

is obviously ideal to finish again like that."

Schumacher's only other win in Britain came in 1998 a year before he crashed and broke his leg at Silverstone.

Schumacher took his fourth title last year with four races in hand, but he seemed unaware of just how close he was to another crown.

"Let's wait and see," he said. Barrichello could claim to be faster on the day, setting a race record lap of one minute 23.083 after going from the front row to the back of the field when his car stalled before the formation lap.

Barrichello said his position was the best he could have hoped for in the circumstances. "When I lined up at the back of the grid, I concentrated on staying very calm, because I knew I had the car to get past people and I was just hoping to get points," he said.

Montoya again failed to translate pole into victory but at least finished after three straight retirements. "It was a crazy race because of the changing weather conditions," the Colombian said. "The rain came and decided the race as we could not keep pace on our tyres."

Ralf Schumacher finished in eighth place after a fuel rig problem held him up in the pits and dropped him from fourth.

Canadian Jacques Villeneuve, the 1997 world champion with Williams and twice a winner at Silverstone, was fourth to end British American Racing's nightmare season in which they had been the only team yet to score any points.

In a double celebration for BAR, Villeneuve's French team mate Olivier Panis was fifth, ahead of the Sauber driven by German Nick Heidfeld.

Apart from Ferrari, BAR were the only team with two cars in the points and they too reaped the benefit of Bridgestone's wet weather tyres as well as having a helicopter above the track watching the weather.

"We had a helicopter pilot upwind throughout the race... and he told us where the window was to change tyres," said team boss David Richards.

The weather, with intermittent showers of varying intensity, led to multiple pitstops with drivers coming in together, fuel rigs failing and mechanics unprepared.

McLaren had the embarrassment of David Coulthard entering the pits to find air jacks blocking his position, while Renault's Jensen Button had to queue up behind his Italian teammate Jarno Trulli.



PHOTO: STAR

Monwar Hossain of Jessore (R) is on the attack against M Liton Hajda of Rajshahi during their bout of the 16th national junior boxing competition at the Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.