

## Cricket at 2000 Olympic arena

AFP, Sydney

Sydney's Olympic Stadium was on Tuesday announced as the venue for a one-day cricket match early next year.

New South Wales cricket chief executive David Gilbert said a domestic limited-over match against South Australia would be staged at the home of the 2000 Olympics in February.

NSW, the defending champions, will give the 80,000-capacity stadium its cricket christening on Sunday, February 16 against South Australia.

Gilbert said he had expectations of a 20,000 crowd despite the fact that several top players would be missing because the match coincides with the World Cup in South Africa.

A drop-in pitch which will be inserted in January with the ground dimensions of 170 metres (yards) long and 128 metres wide had NSW and Australian captain Steve Waugh comparing it with the expansive Adelaide Oval.

Gilbert said it was inevitable that the ground would eventually be used for international one-day games though the Australian Cricket Board was contractually bound to play its Sydney fixtures at the Sydney Cricket Ground until the 2004-05 season.

"International cricket will come here sooner rather than later because how can you say no to 80,000 crowds and the income that produces for the game," Gilbert said.

He said the stadium appealed as a one-day rather than Test venue and stressed the SCG would remain NSW's spiritual home.

The stadium has recently had an 80 million dollar (42 million US) reconfiguration for Australian Football games and it has been named as the major venue for the Rugby World Cup in 2003.

## Andre counts the cost

REUTERS, Cincinnati

Andre Agassi claims he is being unfairly penalised by the ATP Tour for pulling out of tournaments.

The 32-year-old American was responding to the 80,000 dollars fine he received for his late withdrawal from the Canadian Masters in Toronto last week.

It was the second time this year Agassi had pulled out of a Masters Series tournament at the eleventh hour.

## Nasser Brearley!

FROM PAGE 13

fortune to command such names as Botham, Willis, Boycott, Gooch and Gower.

He was also helped statistically by avoiding the great West Indies sides of the late 1970s and early 80s, while Australia had been ravaged by defections to Kerry Packard's circus.

And while Hussain's own batting has faced criticism over recent seasons -- he is prone to open the face of the bat early in his innings and can lean back on the drive, while many do not see him as a number three -- his record speaks for itself.

After surviving a horror run which saw him average just 15 in 2000, he has hauled his Test average back over 37, through sheer willpower, bloody-mindedness and hard work on those insidious batting flaws.

Brearley, while a prolific player at county level, averaged just under 23 and never scored a Test hundred.

The Cambridge-educated Brearley's reputation as a great thinker and as Ian Botham's wise-owl mentor and motivator, particularly at Headingley in 1981, has long since entered English cricketing mythology.

Hussain, more the street fighter, has some way to go yet but may well join him there. And if he doesn't, well, his critics can just go hang.

## Martina match fit



AP, New York

Her ankle healing faster than expected after surgery, Martina Hingis asked Monday for wild-card entry into the U.S. Open, where she's been seeded No. 1 every year since 1997.

Hingis, who had an operation to repair ligament damage in her left ankle May 20, did not play in the French Open and Wimbledon -- the first Grand Slam tournaments she has missed since turning pro in 1994.

Her name was not included on the list of 104 entrants for the U.S. Open, announced last week. She was the 1997 Open champion and has won four other Grand Slam singles titles.

But on Monday, Octagon Management announced that Hingis has entered a pair of Open tournament in the next two weeks -- the Rogers AT&T Cup at Montreal, August 12-18, and the Pilot Pen event at New Haven, August 19-25.

She also requested an invitation for the Open, which begins August 26.

"We are very pleased to learn that Martina Hingis is healthy once again and beginning her return to competitive tennis," said Jim Curley, tournament director of the Open.

"We received her official request for a U.S. Open main draw singles wild-card from her management company on Monday morning. The USTA will announce the eight men and eight women who will receive main draw singles wild-card entries in the U.S. Open after our wild card



MARTINA HINGIS ... time to wake up

committee meets next week to review all requests."

That meeting is scheduled for August 13.

Wild cards are reserved for players whose rankings do not ordinarily allow them entry into the main draw and are awarded at the discretion of the tournament. In Hingis' case, she did not enter based on doubts about her health but her top-10 ranking would have qualified her for the tournament.

In Zurich, Hingis' manager, Mario Widmer, said Hingis' recovery from the surgery had been faster than anticipated.

"Martina's condition has improved enormously," he said. "It's fairly certain that she will be back in Montreal next week and also ready for New Haven."

However, Widmer said, Hingis' participation in the tournaments was still "not definite."

In January, Hingis reached the

Australian Open final, where she lost to Jennifer Capriati.

Hingis' condition, which included pain in her left knee and hip, worsened after that and the surgery on one torn ligament and three loose ones followed. While she was sidelined, the former No. 1 ranked player dropped to No. 8.

Dr. Heinz Buehlmann, who operated on Hingis, said at the time she would need 6-to-8 weeks of rest before resuming tennis.

"This injury is complex," he told the Blick newspaper. "But I think the chances for recovery are good. In about three weeks she will be able to start light water training and careful cycling."

Since returning to training Hingis has been practicing on a soft, rubberized court to ease the impact on the ankle, and also has been biking, roller-blading and swimming.

## Srinath signs for Leics

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian fast bowler Javagal Srinath, who retired from Test cricket in June, has signed a one-month contract with English county side Leicestershire in a bid to stay in contention for next year's World Cup.

The 32-year-old from Bangalore was overlooked for last month's one-day triangular series involving Sri Lanka and hosts England and has also not been included in a list of 20 probables for the September ICC Champions Trophy tournament in Colombo.

"I thought I would be picked for the ICC Trophy," Srinath told Reuters on Tuesday.

"But the moment I came to know the doors had closed for me, I thought I would get some match practice and keep myself fit."

He starts his Leicestershire assignment on August 19.

Srinath, who has taken 276 wickets at 28.78 in 204 one-day internationals, has not played competitive cricket since the Test series in West Indies in May, which India lost 2-1.

He announced his retirement from Tests soon after returning from the Caribbean but said he was available for one-dayers.

"I would like to play the World Cup in South Africa next year, but there is still some time before that," Srinath said.

## Lewis thinking of retirement?

AFP, London

World heavyweight boxing champion Lennox Lewis is close to retirement, according to a report in Britain's Observer newspaper here Sunday.

In an interview Briton Lewis, who knocked out Mike Tyson earlier this year, said: "I said Lennox Lewis is on a mission. Well, right now it's mission complete, in the sense that I've got rid of all the misfits, and I'm the best fighter on the planet. What else is there for me to prove?"

Lewis has a mandatory challenger for the International Boxing Federation title, America's Chris Byrd.

Ukrainian Vladimir Klitschko is another contender with a third bout against Evander Holyfield or even a re-match with Tyson still a possibility.

And Lewis did not completely rule out a return to the ring.

"If they want me to fight those guys, they're gonna have to pay me money just to get me back into training. From now on it's strictly a business decision," the multi-millionaire explained.

## Model Martyn

FROM PAGE 13

had been chosen ahead of glamour batsman-wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist, the Australian Test vice-captain, because Gilchrist was already over-committed.

"I suppose the feeling may have been that people get sick of seeing Adam Gilchrist's face everywhere in the world, so they have changed it around a little bit and given me a go, which is fantastic for me," he said.

The move comes ahead of a hectic Australian summer schedule (winter in the northern hemisphere) which also includes an Ashes series against England and next year's World Cup defence in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Martyn has made a stunning return to international cricket.

He averages 50.29 runs an innings from his 25 Test matches, and 39.28 at a strike rate of 78.68 from his 97 one-day internationals.

The international one-day series starts on December 13 with Australia taking on England in Sydney.

## England even

FROM PAGE 13

under Hussain, won both the bowling and batting battles in the series opener.

Jones added real zest to a disciplined attack led by the fast-maturing Matthew Hoggard and Andrew Flintoff, while Ashish Nehra, Zaheer Khan and Anil Kumble failed to match them.

Three Englishmen also scored centuries, the biggest by the captain.

Significantly, India's only three-figure man came in the unlikely shape of Ajit Agarkar, whose Test average before the game languished at just over seven runs a visit.

His performance -- he was included for his medium-pace bowling rather than his batting -- put his much-vaunted teammates to shame, particularly Sachin Tendulkar, who failed to reach 20 in either innings.

Ganguly was as disappointing, while Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag and Vangipurappu Laxman all got starts but failed to push on.

One of these, however, seems certain to deliver a backlash in Nottingham, Tendulkar serving up a big century in his final warm-up game against Worcestershire.

Ganguly's other dilemma may be how to assimilate Harbhajan Singh's off-spin.

Sadly missed at Lord's, Singh seems certain to play. Yet the only bowler who seriously underperformed in the first Test was Agarkar. It would take a brave set of selectors to ditch a man after his maiden century.

## Mac v Becker vintage match



AP, New York

John McEnroe and Boris Becker will play an exhibition match before the U.S. Open women's final.

The winner of the September 7 match will earn 50,000 dollars for a charity of his choice.

The 43-year-old McEnroe -- who won four U.S. Open titles -- and the 34-year-old Becker -- who won one -- were scheduled to play last year in Flushing Meadows, but the German withdrew because of an ankle injury.

The two will play a best-of-three-sets match, with a 10-point tiebreaker in the third set, if necessary.

"I was so disappointed last year," Becker said Monday. "It is time to get back on the court and show the real Boris."

McEnroe thinks he has already seen him.

"I can't wait to take on Boris, especially after he pulled out of our match last year," McEnroe said. "It is something I have wanted for a year. It will be a very challenging match for me."

With a spice of gamesmanship, he added, "I don't think it was his ankle or bad feet. I think it was a case of cold feet."

Turning to Becker, he grinned and said, "Just to pump things up a little."



PHOTO: AFP

German tennis great Boris Becker examines a racket developed by himself in Munich on August 4. The Catapult 10 racket was being displayed at an international sports fair, which was held over August 4-6, in the German city.

## Safin succumbs



AP, Cincinnati

Marat Safin had it figured -- a No. 1 ranking in the world, a Grand Slam title or two, a breakthrough year for his up-and-coming career.

The 22-year-old Russian hasn't gotten any of it, and the frustration is showing.

Safin imploded in the first round of the Masters Series Cincinnati, kicking the clockwork, screaming in disgust and finally leaving the court in dejection.

Unseeded Greg Rusedski simply got out of the way and let the world's second-ranked player beat himself Monday night. Rusedski's 7-6, 6-2 victory that left the 2000 U.S. Open champion at a loss.

"I don't have any special shot to play against these guys to beat them," Safin said. "That's what I'm feeling now -- I can't beat them. It's terrible. Right now, I've got nothing."

Safin's self-destruction set up the biggest upset on the first day of the \$2.95 million tournament north of Cincinnati.

No. 5 Yevgeny Kafelnikov and No. 10 Roger Federer also lost, and No. 6 Andre Agassi needed three sets on a sweltering afternoon to move on.

Germany's Rainer Schuettler beat Kafelnikov 6-3, 6-2, and Croatia's Ivan Ljubicic edged Federer 2-6, 6-4, 6-3. Agassi broke Morocco's Youssef El Aynaoui in the third game of their match, then held on for a 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 victory.

Playing the featured evening match on Centre Court, Safin lost his composure after getting ahead

5-2 in the first-set tiebreaker. He threw his head back and screamed after missing a forehand that would have brought him to set point.

He unraveled from there.

"It means you have no confidence," Safin said. "You miss a shot and everything is turning around, everything is going against you. It means you're in bad shape, you're in a bad mood and you're not playing well."

He was in a bad mood the rest of the way. Rusedski broke his serve to open the second set, and Safin became particularly annoyed



MARAT SAFIN

after he lost the first point of the next game.

He walked to the court-side clock and kicked it, sending a loud thud across the court.

"You can see sometimes he gets upset on the court, but then he can come back," said Rusedski, who had 16 unforced errors to Safin's 30. "He can go up and down a little bit."

## John Player sails to Male

PRESS RELEASE

The upcoming arrival of the 'John Player' and her crew in Male, the capital city of the Maldives, will mark the successful completion of the first leg of the 2002 Spirit of Enterprise journey, says a press release.

Dubai, increasingly positioning itself as the trading capital of the Middle East, provided the ideal backdrop to kick off the 2002 Spirit of Enterprise. The city's landscape is ample testimony to the importance of the sea in daily life. Few could argue that Dubai's existence is closely intertwined with the presence of the sea blending seemingly with the desert. From its foundation on the edges of the

Creek, a 10km long water inlet, this trading stronghold has grown out of its natural borders.

The city, however, is not just a merchant trading port. With the Dubai Dry Docks coming into their own, 20 years ago, the city has also become one of the forces to be reckoned in maritime construction. Tankers and wooden dhows alike now call in at Dubai regularly in order to find craftsmen and the necessary shelter to mend their ships.

It is precisely for this reason that Dubai was picked out by the captain to carry out extensive refurbishment of the John Player while the boat was wintering in the region -- a move the Captain said was a tribute to the city's diverse maritime indus-

try. The wooden flooring of the boat, the part most exposed to the elements, was completely rebuilt anew in record time.

In addition to mechanical and technological upgrades, the hull was completely repainted to give the John Player a stunning new image. The rigging also had to be reviewed, incorporating synthetic fabric instead of the cotton traditionally used in square sail design. As the captain describes it.

Sailing down the Arabian Sea and through the Indian Ocean to the Maldives, teamwork has become a key element on the boat in order to complete the simplest of tasks such as tacking.

This first leg of the 2002 Spirit of Enterprise provided the Captain and crew of the John Player with the opportunity to test the new boat in real-sailing conditions.

For the captain and crew of the John Player, the stop in the Maldives will provide them with an opportunity to tie up again with age-old traditions, re-supplying en route to the Far East.

The John Player a 140ft mahogany and teak Brigantine set sail from Dubai, UAE on July 23, 2002 en route to Hong Kong on the maiden trip of her new World Adventure. With a theme of Spirit of Enterprise, the captain and crew aim to explore how maritime history has contributed to the economic success of each of the destinations along the route.

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

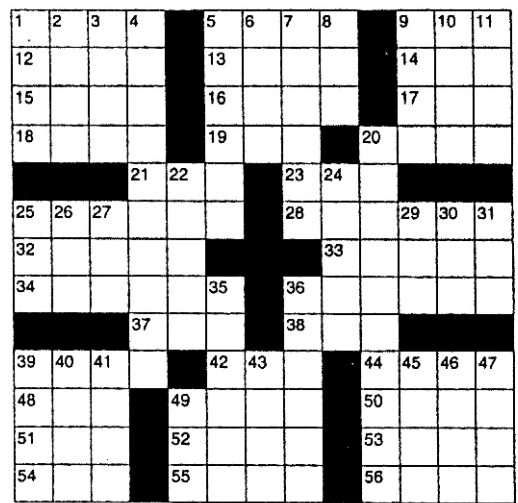
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CRYPTOQUIP

R P Y K S B Q L I U M S L I A E  
X I L H U M S I F A I F F S B Q H P M  
A G P M K V I X I B R I E R K I  
F P G I E L E W S B V L P W  
Yesterday's Cryptogram: IF YOU FEEL LIKE TREKKING THROUGH THE DESERT, BE SURE YOU BRING A THIRST-AID KIT.  
Today's Cryptogram Clue: L equals R

The Cryptogram 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.