

Attacking is Wright

REUTERS, Nottingham

India coach John Wright says his batsmen must continue their natural attacking game so England can expect a second Test backlash from Sachin Tendulkar.

"I like to see our players playing their shots, because when we dominate we can take the game away from the opposition," Wright told a news conference on Wednesday at Trent Bridge.

He conceded that "some of the shots we play are easier to play in the sub-continent" but said his main concern was not rash shot selection but for the team to produce a better overall performance than in the heavy first test defeat.

"We're trying to build a team who play for each other and fights hard," he said on the eve of the second test.

India, regarded as one of world cricket's best batting units, lost the first of the four-match series by 170 runs after being dismissed cheaply in their first innings by an inexperienced England attack.

Tendulkar, the world's leading batsman, failed to reach 20 in both innings.

Captain Saurav Ganguly, though, said: "He is the best player in the world and a match winner. He does help us win games but he should be allowed to fail once in a while."

Asked if he felt Tendulkar was due a big innings, he smiled before replying quietly: "Yes."

Russian tennis stars in trouble

AFP, Cincinnati

Russian tennis stars Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Marat Safin have been questioned by the ATP about their relationship with a reputed Russian mob figure who is charged with helping fix Olympic figure skating results.

Kafelnikov defended Alimzhan Tokhtakhounov after his opening match here at the 2.95 million-dollar ATP Masters Series event and questioned the arrest of the man after Italian wiretaps provided evidence of corruption at February's Winter Games.

"If he had anything to do with it, why this kind of stuff wouldn't come up in the first place right after the event?" Kafelnikov said.

"It's like a big fairy tale. Always it's like Russians are seen as terrible. But it's not that way at all. Russia is a proud country with a great history."

Since 1964, Russian talent has won every Olympic pairs skating gold medal until the judging scandal in February at Salt Lake City resulted in two gold medals being awarded, one to a Canadian team that had originally been scored in second place.

Russian talent had also won six of seven ice dance crowns, but a French duo won this year in what purportedly was a deal struck between Russian and French judges with pressure applied from alleged Russian crime figure Tokhtakhounov.

Having four players cozy with a reputed mobster prompted ATP chief executive officer Mark Miles to discuss the matter with Safin and Kafelnikov, who both made first-round exits here.

"I don't have any reason to believe... that they have developed a particularly close relationship with him," Miles told the New York Times.

"I don't think it's a crime to know someone. But on the other hand it's something we want to know as much as we can about. So far, everything we have learned is reassuring."

Miles said he has had no indication that any line has been crossed which could threaten the credibility of ATP results involving Russian players.

Whether or not a player is giving full effort in every match is often a matter only the player knows for certain, and any question of "tanking" for specific results could undermine the integrity of the sport.



Briton Paula Radcliffe draps herself in a national flag after winning the 10000m race at the European Athletics Championships in Munich on August 6.

Radcliffe toast of Europe

Athletics

AFP, Munich

British distance running queen Paula Radcliffe pulverised the European 10,000 metres to win her second major title in the space of 10 days at the European Championships here on Tuesday.

Radcliffe left reigning champion Sonia O'Sullivan trailing by 46 seconds as she crossed the line in 30min 01.09sec, logging more than 12 seconds off the previous record set 16 years ago by Norway's Ingrid Kristiansen.

Almost immediately after winning, she said: "The aim was to duck under 30 minutes and my first reaction was disappointment. I pushed the pace and set off a little bit too fast to do it."

"After I did my lap of honour though everything began to sink in and I'm very pleased."

Only Wang Junxia, one of the Chinese athletes whose performances are now viewed with enormous suspicion, has run faster.

"When I was warming up, I knew I was in the sort of form to do something special," added Radcliffe.

"When I saw I had 12 minutes left in the race, I was saying to myself that in the context of a marathon that's not too long. But it was really, really hard in the last three laps."

"Setting the record was the best way to win the title."

Before the Commonwealth Games in Manchester, Radcliffe had won two world cross country titles and had triumphed in the marathon but she had never won a major track title.

She put that right by breaking the spirit of Kenya's Edith Masai in the 5,000 metres there and she did the

same here to O'Sullivan, who nevertheless set a national record of 30:47.59. Lyudmila Biktasheva of Russia took the bronze medal in 31:04.00.

Remarkably it was the first 10,000m Radcliffe had run since finishing fourth behind a trio of Ethiopians in the World Championships in Edmonton last year.

The other two titles on the opening day went to Yuriy Bilonog of Ukraine with 21.37 metres in the shot putt, improving on his sixth place in the world championships.

Spanish walker Francisco Fernandez won the 20-kilometre walk despite colliding with an official who wandered on to the road as he was about to enter the stadium.

"I don't understand how somebody was able to walk into me on the course," said Fernandez after finishing in a championship record 1hr 18min 37sec.

German long jumper Heike Drechsler kept alive her challenge for a record fifth consecutive European title but was unimpressive, finishing as the eighth-placed qualifier for Wednesday's final with a modest 6.41 metres.

British sprinter Dwain Chambers underlined his intention to erase his Commonwealth Games failure by blasting to a second-round 100 metres of 10.08sec as he goes in search of his first major title.

Chambers, who pulled up with cramp in the incident-packed 100m final in Manchester and saw Kim Collins of St Kitts and Nevis take the gold, is using vitamin-laden drinks to prevent the cramps.

They seemed to be working as the 24-year-old ran a superbly controlled second-round race.

Reigning champion Darren Campbell complained he was mentally and physically exhausted

after winning bronze and gold medals at the Commonwealth Games.

But he stormed through to win his second-round heat in 10.29sec, beating the Britons' main rival, Nigerian-born Francis Obikwelu of Portugal, into third.

British athletes have won the men's 100m title at the last four European Championships.

Triple jump world and Olympic champion Jonathan Edwards bruised his heel in qualifying, limiting him to a single jump of 16.99 metres but that proved enough.

A British team spokeswoman said 36-year-old Edwards was expected to compete in the final on Thursday when he has a fight on his hands to retain his title.

The silver medalist behind him at the Commonwealth Games, fellow Briton Phillips Idowu, jumped a massive 17.54m to lead all qualifiers.

Another young gun, Christian Olsson of Sweden, won the second pool in 17.01m.

In the 400 metres heats, the world championships silver medalist, the giant violin-playing Ingo Schultz of Germany, ran 45.79 to win his heat.

But Russia's Yuriy Borzakovsky, one of the world's most talented 800m runners, made his bizarre decision to run the one-lap event look even stranger by struggling. The 21-year-old eventually qualified as a fastest loser in a modest 46.28sec.

One of the favourites for the 1,500m, Mehdi Baala of France, strolled in to win his heat of the 1,500m in 3:46.71.

Commonwealth champion Michael East of Britain scraped through after finishing fifth in the second heat behind Spanish winner Reyes Estevez.

Hewitt fined

REUTERS, Cincinnati

World number one Lleyton Hewitt launched a furious tirade against the ATP, the organisers of men's tennis, after they requested an interview only minutes before his first round match in the \$2.95 million Cincinnati Masters on Tuesday.

The ATP said in a statement that they would be fining Hewitt either \$20,000 or half of his prize money for the event, whichever amount is greater.

After the match Hewitt said: "I'm a bit surprised I was able to keep any balls in court considering the crap that was going on before the match."

The 21-year-old, who has a reputation for reticence with the media, said the ATP's request for a televised interview with ESPN before his match against Robby Ginepri almost ruined his chances of winning the contest.

He went on to win 6-0, 6-0 in just 41 minutes.

"I have never, ever done an interview... before I play a match. So this crap is going on and in the end I wasn't going to walk on court, simple as that."

Despite Hewitt's claims that the interview was a last minute request, sources in the ATP say the player was asked as early as last Wednesday, during the Masters Series event in Toronto.

Hewitt refused to do the interview there and had two further chances to comply on Sunday and Monday, but declined.

Under ATP rules players must do interviews with the tournament's host broadcaster, in this case ESPN, as part of their commitments to the STARS programme.

India to host WTA Tour

AFP, Bangalore

India will in February host for the first time a WTA Tour event, the tournament's sponsors said Wednesday.

Globosport, a sports management company promoted by Indian tennis star Mahesh Bhupathi, said some of the world's best players were considering competing in the 140,000-dollar tournament.

"The event is going to be a permanent fixture on the WTA's calendar. A couple of players in the top 10 have been approached and are seriously considering the option of playing in India," the statement said.

WTA Tour Supervisor Angie Woolcock was in Bangalore Tuesday and will visit Hyderabad and New Delhi to determine the best venue for the event, the statement said.

Globosport official Vinay Shenoy said Bangalore, which hosted the 300,000-dollar ATP World Challenge Cup in February this year, may be chosen by the world tennis body.

"A couple of top players have been approached and are seriously considering the option of playing in India. Mahesh is in touch with Anna Koumnikova," he said.

"Once a venue is selected then the event will continue in the same venue for two years before shifting to another location within the country," Shenoy said.

Majoli falters

INTERNET, Helsinki

Second seed Iva Majoli of Croatia became the first upset victim at the \$140,000 Nordea Nordic Light Open on Tuesday.

Spain's Gala Leon Garcia eliminated Majoli, 6-2, 6-2, to reach the second round of this Tier IV event.

Leon Garcia beat Majoli for the second time this year, previously winning at the Sarasota claycourt event in April.

Top seed Silvia Farina Elia of Italy and fourth seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain crushed their respective first-round opponents on Tuesday.

Army boxing

PRESS RELEASE

The Momenshahi Area retained the title of the Annual Boxing Championship of Bangladesh Army which was concluded at the Ghatail Cantonment yesterday.

The winners clinched 3 gold, 6 silver and 1 bronze medals followed by the Comilla Area with 3 gold, 1 silver and 4 bronze medals.

Lance Corporal Md Nawab Ali of the Momenshahi Area was adjudged the best boxer of the meet.

Momenshahi Area Commander of the Bangladesh Army Major General Moeen U Ahmed witnessed the final day's events as chief guest and later gave away the prizes among the winners.

BANGLADESH-SL SCOREBOARD

FROM PAGE 13
Total: (All out in 47.2 overs) 200
Fall of wickets: 1-27, 2-45, 3-48, 4-48, 5-113, 6-132, 7-165, 8-184, 9-189

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|----------------------|-----|---|----|---|
| Pulasthi Gunaratne | 9 | 0 | 39 | 2 |
| Chamila Gamage | 7 | 0 | 43 | 1 |
| Hasantha Fernando | 8 | 1 | 18 | 1 |
| Muttiah Muralitharan | 9.2 | 1 | 24 | 3 |
| Upul Chandana | 9 | 0 | 45 | 1 |
| Russel Arnold | 5 | 0 | 30 | 1 |

Result: Sri Lanka won by 58 runs and sweep the series 3-0.
Man-of-the-match: Russel Arnold.
Man-of-the-series: Khaled Mashud.
Umpires: Steve Bucknor (West Indis) and Peter Manuel (Sri Lanka).

Sampras sends Canas packing

Tennis

AFP, Cincinnati

Pete Sampras staged a morale-boosting fight-back to defeat Argentina's Guillermo Canas 5-7, 7-6, 6-3 here Tuesday at the 2.94-million-dollar ATP Masters Series.

The American, who turns 31 next week, rose to 17-1 against players from Argentina, his only loss coming

last week's ATP Masters event in Toronto.

Sampras, playing Cincinnati for the 12th time with three titles claimed, stands 36-8 here. Three of his 11 career Masters Series titles have come here.

Canas boasted wins over five seeds last week on his way to the Canadian trophy, beating American Andy Roddick in the final.

World number one Lleyton Hewitt of Australia took out his frustrations at the ATP over what he

pressed him to fulfill an interview requirement which had been hanging for two days.

Though players rarely grant interviews before a match, the situation became so tense and tight that the reigning Wimbledon and US Open champion was asked to do his before his opening-round contest a week after a first-round loss in Toronto.

Taking the court without fulfilling the publicity requirement will cost him a fine of 20,000 dollars or half of his prize money for the week, whichever is greater, under ATP rules.

"I had done all of my commitments for the week and I never agreed to another interview," said Hewitt. "I got told I had to do one when I came in from practise."

"They were going to fine me if I didn't go out on the court. I said I'd do it five minutes before I walked out. But nothing got solved."

ATP officials said that Hewitt had been asked for nearly a week to do the pre-US Open interview for ESPN but had refused last week in Toronto and against on Sunday and Monday in Cincinnati.

Michael Chang, who won here in 1993 and 1994, knocked out third seed Tommy Haas of Germany 6-3, 6-2 to earn a 40th victory here.

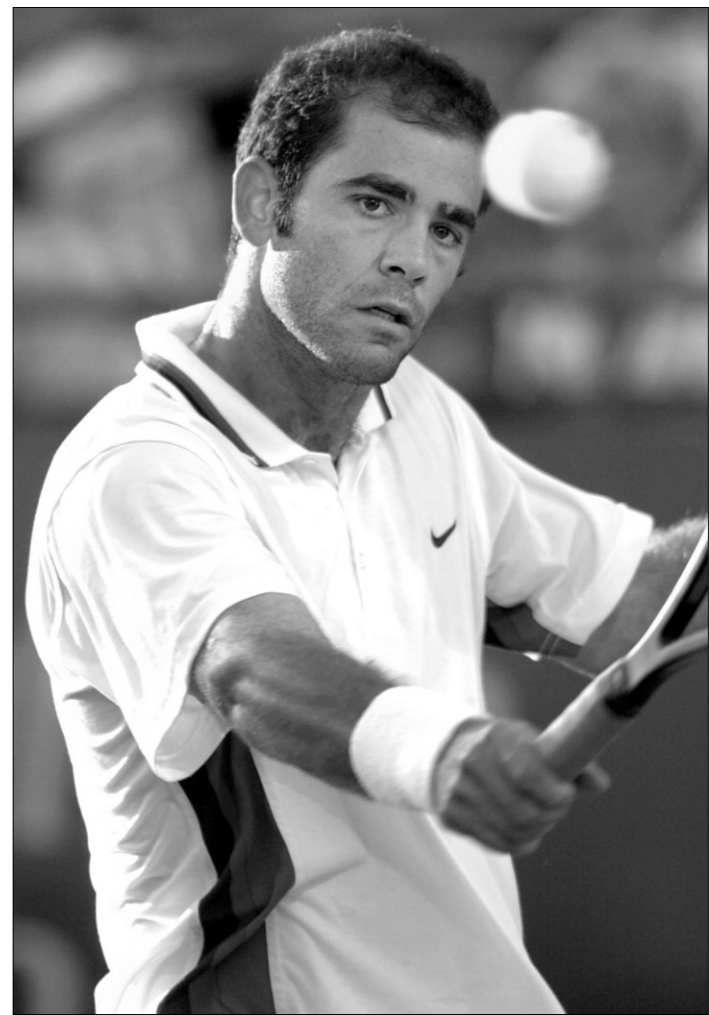
The 30-year-old American caught, playing for the 15th time at the tournament, collected his second win over Haas after a 1998 victory indoors at San Jose.

Haas lost a semi-final last week at the Masters in Toronto and had warned at that time that a long-running shoulder problem was his main worry and would determine his schedule heading into the US Open.

Britain's Tim Henman found out that defending champion Gustavo Kuerten is not yet on full form, ousting the Brazilian 6-3, 6-4 in one hour, 17 minutes.

Henman broke once in the opening set and began the second by putting the 25-year-old Kuerten in a 0-1 hole. Another break in the eighth game was followed by a Kuerten rally as he broke the fourth seed. But Henman advanced on an ace.

"Any win is a good win," said Henman. "Irrespective of the way he was feeling, it's great to beat someone of his calibre. With him being defending champion, it's a good start for me. I'll try to build from that."



American Pete Sampras plays a backhand against Argentine Guillermo Canas at the Tennis Masters Series in Cincinnati on August 6.

a decade ago against Gabriel Markus, who now coaches Wimbledon finalist David Nalbandian.

Sampras' mastery on the North American cement proved to be the difference against Canas, winner of

said was a last-minute television interview request Tuesday with a 6-0, 6-0 battering of unfortunate American qualifier Robby Ginepri.

The first "double bagel" of the top seed's career came at the end of a stressful morning, as ATP officials

Davenport survives a scare

Tennis

AFP, Los Angeles

Defending champion Lindsay Davenport survived a three set scare, defeating Russian teenager Elena Bovina 6-2, 6-7, 6-3 to advance to the third round of the \$85,000 dollar WTA Los Angeles Open on Tuesday.

Looking tired and rusty from a knee injury that kept her off the court for eight months, the 26-year-old American outlasted the tall, slender Bovina in the two hour, eight minute match in front of 1,300 spectators at the Manhattan Beach Country Club.

Davenport, the third seed, sounded more like a loser than a winner.

"I feel terrible," Davenport said. "I have more tape on my body than I ever have."

Davenport, who has 37 career singles titles, injured her right knee at the end of the 2001 season before undergoing arthroscopic surgery in January.

She also complained on

Tuesday of having a sore left wrist and a pulled groin.

"It is tough going from no tennis to the Fed Cup, then the semis in Stanford and the semis in San Diego. My body is not used to it," said Davenport.

"In the second set she (Bovina) started to go for her shots and she was getting them in more. I wasn't able to put her away."

Bovina, 19, lost the first four games of the first set. But Bovina, ranked 76th in the world, played better in the second set, forcing a tiebreaker which she won easily.

Davenport closed out the match with a forehand winner in the ninth game of the third set.

The Los Angeles Open is Davenport's third WTA tournament since coming back. She lost in straight sets last week in San Diego to Venus Williams in the semi-finals.

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The 21-year-old from Slovenia advanced to the third round and levelled her career WTA match record against Clijsters to 1-1.

"This is my biggest win. She's No. 6 in the world," said Srebotnik. "This proves I can play and beat the top 10 girls."

Srebotnik meets Italy's Rita Grande in the third round.

At match point with the score 5-4, Clijsters was unable to return Srebotnik's serve.

"I played great," Srebotnik said. "I played better than her on the crucial points. You have to believe you can do it."

Clijsters, the runner-up in the French Open last year, was coming off a quarter-final loss last week in San Diego to Venus Williams.

Clijsters blamed Tuesday's loss on fatigue.

"I'm getting tired," she said. "I need a few days off. I made a lot of mistakes with my backhand."

Srebotnik lost the only previous time the two played a WTA singles match in Luxembourg. But she beat Clijsters when they were both juniors.

India need star act

FROM PAGE 13

"We have no worries about his form."

On the bowling front India, despite impressive new-ball work from left-armers Zaheer Khan and Ashish Nehra, still looked a class performer light.

In the absence of Test-retired pace spearhead Javagal Srinath and with world-class off-spinner Harbhajan Singh omitted despite a dry pitch, Ajit Agarkar's gentle medium-pace was a poor substitute.

England twice got away after

seeing off the opening duo but thoughts of dropping Agarkar were complicated by his second innings hundred - his maiden Test century.

And if there is moisture in the pitch with conditions overcast, Agarkar's bowling could yet prosper.

Even so, it is hard to see how Harbhajan could be sidelined again.

For England, the routine problem of being unable to field their chosen XI because of injury has arisen again.

Paceman Simon Jones, who had a lively debut at Lord's, is out with a

side strain while fast bowlers Darren Gough and Andrew Caddick remain injured.

The gap in the England attack is set to be filled either by the uncapped Steve Harmison or the recalled Alex Tudor although all-rounder Dominic Cork remains an option.

Meanwhile Graham Thorpe's withdrawal from all cricket in the wake of bitter divorce proceedings has created a vacancy in the batting order.

It will be filled by England debutant and Kent opener Robert Key with Mark Butcher dropping down to his favoured position of number three.

Once more England will take the field with a weakened side.

But, as India found out at Lord's, talent may be good but it is not enough in itself.

England's resilience must be matched if India are to draw level.

SQUADS
ENGLAND: Michael Vaughan, Robert Key, Mark Butcher, Nasser Hussain (captain), John Crawley, Alec Stewart, Andy Flintoff, Craig White, Dominic Cork, Alex Tudor, Ashley Giles, Matthew Hoggard, Stephen Harmison.

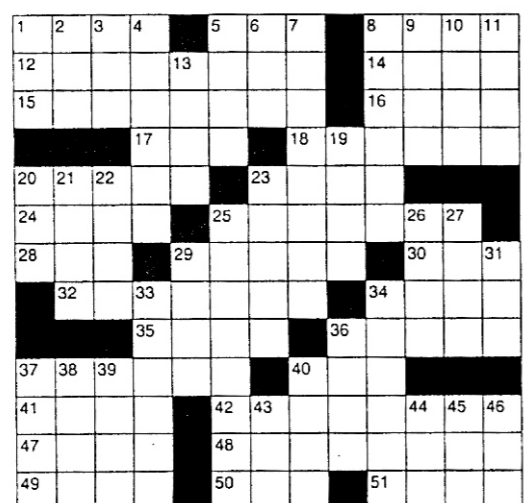
INDIA: Virender Sehwag, Wasim Jaffer, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly (captain), VVS Laxman, Ajay Ratna, Ajit Agarkar, Anil Kumble, Ashish Nehra, Zaheer Khan, Dinesh Mongia, Tinu Yohannan.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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