

Irani feels inspired

BBC, London

Ronnie Irani insists he can withstand the physical challenge of the final Test against India at The Oval starting on Thursday.

The Essex captain was called up for the first time since facing New Zealand three years ago on the day he made his comeback from a knee operation.

Irani took two for 35 in his county's one-day win over Lancashire.

And he is confident he will be able to withstand the rigours of a Test match if he wins the battle with Dominic Cork to replace Andy Flintoff as England press for a series win.

"It's quite remarkable that only 13 days after the operation I'm batting and bowling and it felt fine," Irani said.

"I'm confident of getting through five days of a Test match if I'm selected."

"Sunday was a good test for me in a one-day game with plenty of pressure against my old county and I came through that quite well."

England's other two doubts are poised for similar fitness tests today with Cork playing for Derbyshire in a floodlit match against Surrey.

And Marcus Trescothick, whose appearance in Saturday's C&G Trophy final against Yorkshire was his first since breaking a thumb six weeks ago, is set to feature for Somerset at Durham.

Chairman of selectors David Graveney confirmed that England had gambled in selecting three players whose fitness is in doubt.

"It has been a bit of a calculated risk selecting Ronnie and Marcus and it would be stupid to deny it's a risk," he said.

"But they have both given us positive reports about their progress and we will monitor them this week."

Sachin carves

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entertaining without sacrificing solidity.

Bradman and West Indian great Vivian Richards had remarked that Tendulkar's batting reminded them of their own.

Australia's champion leg-spinner Shane Warne realised there could be only one winner in a duel with the little master blaster.

Warne continued to be haunted by Tendulkar in his dreams after being mauled by the Indian on the 1998 tour of India.

Tendulkar admires Richards for his ability to play amazing shots and Gavaskar for sheer consistency.

"I've really admired Richards," said Tendulkar. "That's how I always wanted to play. I like to play shots and he (Richards) played shots throughout his life. I like the way he played shots - really remarkable."

"I also admire Gavaskar's consistency. These two are my batting heroes. As for behaviour, it was obviously my father."

Tendulkar has sometimes invited criticism for his failure to play match-winning knocks when India needed them most. Critics say this is one of the reasons for India not winning an away series for so long.

It is a sign of his greatness that he has grabbed the headlines as much for failures as for his successes.

Observers feel that Tendulkar has matured and is not as adventurous and risk-taking batsman as he was at the beginning of his career.

"Sachin, in the first half of his career, played breath-taking shots," said former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar.

"Now, he's more of a clinical run-getter. He's risk-free, amazingly consistent and mastered shots that don't come naturally to him, such as those behind the wicket."

Grand lady of tennis

US OPEN 2002 US OPEN

AP, New York

She is 45 now, the grande dame of tennis. Martina Navratilova is retired from the regular tour for eight years but still out there, still shaking things up.

Navratilova plays doubles now with a variety of partners and every so often, she gives the modern generation a peek at her old game, the one that produced a record 167 singles titles and 165 doubles crowns.

It was just that way at the US Open over the weekend, where she played women's doubles with Iroda Tulyaganova and mixed doubles with Leander Paes and won matches in both draws.

A daylong rain caused Navratilova's doubles matches to be postponed Sunday after her first two victories came less than 24 hours apart, a demanding schedule for a tennis senior citizen.

Tulyaganova is 20 years old, born in 1982, the year Navratilova started a string of six straight championships at Wimbledon, where she won the championship nine times. Paes is 29, born in 1973, the year Navratilova started on the Grand Slam circuit at 16.

The age differences make no difference to Navratilova.

"I don't think about it," she said. "You can't go based on what anyone else says or does. If I did, I would have never left Czechoslovakia. I would be there. You would never have heard of me. People have been putting limitations on me for a long time. First, I was too young, then I was



MARTINA NAVRATILOVA

too old. It was a very short period of time I was just right.

"The leaders, the people that succeed, take chances. I'm certainly taking a chance, putting myself on the line. That's what life is about. I know I don't play as well as I used to but I still play pretty well."

When she played doubles at the Open in 2000, Navratilova became the only person to compete in this

tournament on each of its main stadium venues -- the West Side Tennis Club at Forest Hills, and both Louis Armstrong and Arthur Ashe stadiums at the National Tennis Center. She and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario won two matches that year and three more in last year's Open.

It's not the wins and losses that matter so much, Navratilova said. It's being able to get out there and hit the ball.

"People get too serious about this game," she said. "I've been saying that for 20 years. It is a game. It is a sport. We are so lucky to be here."

So Navratilova presses on, changing playing partners every so often, happy to still be part of the scene.

So far this season, her doubles partners have been Natasha Zvereva -- they won the title at Madrid -- Elena Likhovtseva, Lieke Huber, Jennifer Capriati and now Tulyaganova. The win at Madrid, her first in 7 1/2 years, gave her 166 doubles titles in her career and made Navratilova the oldest player to win a singles or doubles title on the tour.

What's more, she surfaced in singles again this summer, granted a wild card for the Wimbledon warmup at Eastbourne. She beat Tatiana Panova of Russia 6-1, 4-6, 6-2 before losing

Entering Agassi zone

US OPEN 2002 US OPEN

REUTERS, New York

The daunting spectre of Andre Agassi looms ahead. Jan-Michael Gambill is showing no nerves, though and cannot wait to rip into one of America's greatest tennis players.

The heartthrob from Spokane, Washington State, faces Agassi in a mouthwatering fourth-round clash here at the U.S. Open.

And although he is currently ranked outside the world's top 50, the man nicknamed Hollywood has no intention of following the script.

Agassi has lost just 16 games in three rounds of the tournament he won in 1994 and 1999. Gambill, though, has dropped only 11.

True, his first round match only lasted a set and a bit, but since then he has played with all the aggression of the wild cats he spends his spare time and money supporting and counts seeds Carlos Moya and Gaston Gaudio among his victims.

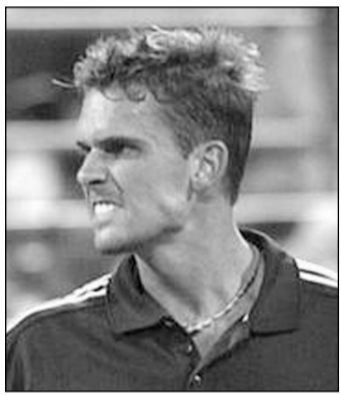
"If I can keep playing like this I am going to do well here," he said on court-side after wrapping up the 94 minute victory against eighth seed Moya.

Against Gaudio he was even more impressive, crushing the

Argentine 6-0, 6-2, 6-0.

While Agassi is a big test for the American, 25-year-old Gambill knows he is in just the right form to take the challenge.

"He has been playing great



JAN-MICHAEL GAMBILL

tennis, but you know, I've only been broken once, too," he said after disposing of the Argentine.

"I'm confident going into that match. I played Andre in the finals of LA a couple weeks ago. I know what he did to beat me that day. I know what I need to do to change, to at least give myself an opportunity to win against him."

"There's nobody out here on the

tour that I have more respect for on the court and/or off. He's a great guy. It's going to be a tough match. I'm excited about it."

Regardless of the fighting talk, Gambill admits to being intimidated by Agassi, one of only five men to have won all four grand slam titles at least once.

"He still can intimidate on the court. But I need to bring the presence that I've had in these matches out to that court and give it my all," Gambill said.

"I've been having fun playing this week, playing the best tennis I have all year. What better place to do it than at the U.S. Open?"

"Going into the matches against him that I've had. Last few times I didn't think I played great tennis from the baseline. Right now from the baseline, I'm playing great tennis, I think."

"I think I hopefully can match up against him and give him a match. At the same time I'm going to go out there with just a clear head, I'm not going to think about it being Andre Agassi out there."

"If he out-foxes me again, more power to him. I'm going to go out with a clear mind, have a good time, not worry about who is on the other side."

Unstoppable Serena

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hearing her earlier comments were convinced she already had spoken about it.

Serena's father, Richard Williams, made it clear earlier that he fears for his daughter's safety because Stormeyer's arrests have not resulted in major jail time.

"I don't think Serena takes it seriously enough," he said. "This guy could have gotten in and hurt Serena. I'm extremely concerned about it."

Williams arrived in the morning and spent the day on the grounds.

"Just my luck. I got out here around nine. I was thinking I could be done by 12 and have the rest of the day. Unfortunately it didn't work out that way," she said. "I got to save money, didn't do any shopping. There's always a positive side."

Williams said she is more competitive in practice workouts against older sister Venus, the defending US Open champion who beat

After wearing a skin-tight black "cat-suit" for the first two rounds, Williams has worn a "Pink Panther" outfit the past two matches, with a pink top and matching shoes, headband and wristbands plus black skirt. But expect a "cat-suit" comeback.

"I have to get back in the cat suit. People miss it too much," she said. "It was cold. I wanted to wear the skirt. But I have to get back in the cat suit."

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Serena in last year's final here but lost to her in this year's Wimbledon and French Open final.

"We really are intense. It brings out the best of us," Serena Williams said. "I'm holding my own a little more in practice. My return is getting better and better, almost where it was at Wimbledon. I'm almost where I want to be this week."

Seven interrupted matches will be completed Monday. Britain's Greg Rusedski led 13-time Grand Slam winner Pete Sampras 5-4. Third seed Tommy Haas of Germany led Swede Thomas Enqvist 6-4. Brazil's Gustavo Kuerten led Chile's Nicolas Massu 6-1.

Four other matches, including British fifth seed Tim Henman's against Juan Ignacio Chela of Argentina, never began. They will join eight others on Monday's schedule for a star-packed Labor Day holiday tennis spectacle.

Next for Williams is either Belgian eighth seed Justine Henin or 11th-seeded Slovakian Daniela Hantuchova, who led 6-1, 1-2 and 40-30 when play was halted one point later than she would have liked.

Police on their toes

REUTERS, New York

Police and bomb squads evacuated the International Food Court at the U.S. Open after a suspicious package was left unattended.

With the anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Centre just 10 days away, jittery security personnel cordoned off the area crowded with spectators who were trying to escape the rain.

Bomb disposal experts were brought in to examine the cooler that was eventually found to contain donuts and water.

The package was taken to the lost property area, where it would be left for the owner.

Police said, that it was not the first time this year that suspicious packages have been found and disposed.

"It's just like the airport, no unattended baggage," said U.S. Open worker John Cline.

There was some question as to how the package found it's way through the screening stations set up at all entrances.

MSC's penalty

FROM PAGE 13
Abdullah, Hasan, Titu (Anwar), Joy (Faisal), Monwar, Saisu, Nakib (Farhad) and Kanchan.

Badda Jagarani: Rafique, Anupom, Kingshuk, Shamim, Prince (Taleb), Shamsheer, Bakhtiar, Mintu, Shamim, Amin Rana (Anwar) and Uzal.

Referee: Golam Mostafa.

Uttara lead

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and Friendship Welfare Society beat Diastriprotibandhi Daba Dal 3-1 respectively.

However, there were draws between Purabi KC and Bangladesh Deaf Sports Association, Madaripur Chess Club and Fighter (Blue) and Promise Co-operative with Dhaka Chess Academy respectively.

The fourth round starts today at 3 pm.

Aussies amerce

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Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-12, 3-13, 4-17, 5-17, 6-17, 7-53, 8-62, 9-83, 10-84.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
McGrath	8	5	8	3
Gillespie	10	2	40	3
Lee	7	1	15	1
Watson	7.3	2	13	2
Uttara	3	0	4	1

AUSTRALIA
Gilchrist lbw M. Suji
Hayden not out
Maher c Obuyang Angara
Bevan not out
Extras: (w-3)
Total: (For 2 wickets in 17 overs) 85

Did not bat: Ponting, Martyn, Watson, Warne, Gillespie, Lee, McGrath, Symonds
Fall of wickets: 1-38, 2-60
Bowler O M R W
M. Suji 8 1 25 1
Angara 7 1 46 1
Kamande 1 0 4 0
Obuya 1 0 10 0
Result: Australia won by eight wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Glenn McGrath.
Umpires: Nadeem Ghauri (Pak) and R. Tiffin (Zim).
TV Umpire: Asad Rauf (Pak).
Match referee: M Procter (Rsa).

EGM on Sept 4

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Sporting Club, Dhanmondi Club president Khairul Anwar Piaru and Dhaka City BNP general secretary Abdus Salam, who is also the president of Bangladesh Amateur Athletics Federation (BAAF).

Although Helal and Piaru had been the most active campaigners, the latest arrival of a politically blessed Salam gave a new twist to the fight for this post.

Bachchu meanwhile is not very sure whether Sultan would make him his running mate. He might even vie for the post of a member in the executive committee if he does not get a response from Sultan.

Jaffna goes

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happy the Tigers and government were beginning peace talks in two weeks in neutral Thailand.

"We have to wait and see. At the moment it all looks good. The success of it depends on the political decisions the leaders make," he said.

The son of a wealthy confectioner from the central hill town of Kandy, Muralitharan last visited Jaffna as a child in 1981.

Muralitharan, the world's best bowler according to the latest ratings, has taken 430 Test wickets.

He spent a day travelling to Jaffna on the A-9 highway, which opened earlier this year as part of the confidence-building measures between Tigers and government.

At one checkpoint a group of blushing women LTTE soldiers rushed over to Muralitharan's vehicle.

So many people wanted to meet him that authorities had to keep checkpoints open past their closing times to allow him through.

Cricket is immensely popular in Sri Lanka, and the country's win in 1996 World Cup was one of the few events that united the whole island.



MOP LAKE: Workers desperately try to squeeze the surface water at the National Tennis Centre after a day of downpours at the US Open on Sunday.

Roof over US Open?

US OPEN 2002 US OPEN

REUTERS, New York

The U.S. Open could follow the lead of the Australian Open and install a retractable roof over its main court, the tournament's chief executive said after Sunday's schedule was all but washed out.

"We love that retractable roof," Arlen Kantarian said after a day of downpours at the Grand Slam event at Flushing Meadows.

"We have looked at it...no promises here but we do love that roof."

"You know, it is something that can be looked at not just for Arthur Ashe stadium court but also for Grandstand court and Louis Armstrong (court). That would give us three arenas that we could use for a lot more things."

"Certainly it is something down the road that we have never ruled out."

Just one match was completed on Sunday as heavy rain lashed New York, Serena Williams polish-

ing off Daja Bedanova in 41 minutes.

In an unprecedented move, the United States Tennis Association allowed ground pass holders access to the Arthur Ashe court -- the main show court -- to watch the top seed after many ticket holders had left because of the rain.

Williams did not begin her match until almost six hours after the scheduled start time.

All other day session matches were interrupted by the rain and will be completed on Monday. For the first time since 1998 the entire night session was cancelled.

Ticket holders for that night session will be offered tickets for next year's tournament, in line with official policy.

But, depending on how the weather continues and any new scheduling demands, they could be compensated this year, Kantarian said.

"We are trying to be as fan-friendly as possible."

"If there are certain scheduling changes then there could be oppor-

tunities to honour commitments," he said.

"Right now there are no plans to have Louis Armstrong night sessions, but I cannot say that definitely will not happen. It may be an opportunity to clear a backlog."

"However, we are not planning this at the moment."

Organisers must now compensate all ticket holders for the evening session. They will be offered tickets for next year's event.

Greg Rusedski had just relinquished a break of serve in the first set of his match against Pete Sampras when they were called off court during the day session.

The Briton led 5-4 in the opening set while third-seeded German Tommy Haas had just won the first set of his match against Thomas Enqvist of Sweden.

These matches will resume on Monday.

Officials can overcome any backlog by playing into the evening on the outside floodlit courts as well as the showcourts at Flushing Meadows.

'Rot in hell Mick!'

Football

AFP, London

Manchester United's controversial captain Roy Keane took his personal battle with Ireland manager Mick McCarthy to new lows here Sunday by admitting he hoped he would 'rot in hell'.

The 31-year-old was sent home before the World Cup finals after he launched a foul mouthed tirade of abuse at McCarthy after the manager had called a meeting to allow the players to air any grievances they had over the preparations for the tournament. Keane, whose aggressive reputation again came into the spotlight on Saturday when he was sent-off for elbowing former Ireland team-mate Jason McAteer in the 1-1 draw with Sunderland, told the Observer Sport Monthly that McCarthy had provoked him into his outburst by calling the meeting.

McCarthy for his part was furious that having persuaded Keane to stay with the squad the day before after he had threatened to walk out, over the kit not turning up and the hardness of the training pitch, had then criticised the whole set-up in an interview with the Irish Times.

Contrary to several reports, including two off-the-record interviews given by players present at the meeting, Keane denies having lost his cool despite the fact he says McCarthy accused him of faking an injury to avoid playing the second leg of the final qualifier against Iran in Tehran.

"We are at a meal and a meeting is called for half-seven, and none of the staff are having their lunch, just the players."

"I'm going, 'Okay this is it, showtime,'" he told the Observer.

"People say I blew my top but I didn't... it was a controlled outburst, if that is possible."

"When he said the whole thing about faking an injury, that was it. I've played too much when I've had injuries."

"For McCarthy to come out with that I just said, 'You're a liar, you're a liar.' You spoke to my manager, you know I wasn't faking."

Keane denies that his animosity to McCarthy dated back to the time

out in the most vehement terms.

"Not in a million years."

"I hope I don't come across as bitter and twisted but that man can rot in hell for all I care."

"I don't feel any guilt about saying that at all because he deserves it. He deserves it."

"Fim. F tosser." Keane admits he was also disappointed he did not receive support from two other senior members of the squad, Staunton, who took over the captaincy, and Niall Quinn, both of whom played with McCarthy in the 1990 World Cup finals when Ireland reached the quarter-finals.

"For Quinn and Staunton to sit in that press conference (held shortly after the row with McCarthy).

"I mean I know they have to back Mick but even if it was a day later. But not 15 minutes. I'm thinking, what planet are you on? Players should stick together."

"To tell you the truth, I can live with what Mick had to say, but I was more hurt by the players."

Keane dismisses the laid-back attitude of the Irish camp and their willingness to just have a few drinks after a defeat.

"That's them (the players). I won't have it. I don't think I was put on the planet to go through the mill like that, and then to be a yes man like the rest of them."

Keane admitted to watching all England's matches but none of Ireland's matches save the second-half and extra-time of their second round match with Spain (they lost on penalties).

"I was going through all sorts of emotions."

"Sympathy for the players, hurt because I think they would have won if the manager had done his job properly."



ROY KEANE

in 1992 on a tour of the USA when he was told off by then manager Jack Charlton and McCarthy, who was captain at the time, for keeping the rest of the squad hanging around while he and Steve Staunton drank a few pints of beer in a bar.

"Nah nah, no way."

"In fact he (McCarthy) said to me on the bus (Keane had told him to 'f off') 'I'll get you back some day'. When he got the manager's job, a few of the lads were going (saying) 'That's you finished Roy' (McCarthy actually made him captain)."