

Greg's career in doubt

AFP, London

Greg Rusedski's tennis future was in doubt Thursday after the British number two split from coach Sven Groeneveld for the second time.

The London Evening Standard reported that the cause of this latest split was Rusedski's inability to name a comeback date from an operation on his feet.

Canadian-born Rusedski, 29, has had operations on both feet in successive years and the former US Open finalist now seems set to miss Great Britain's Davis Cup tie away to Australia in February.

The absence of the big-serving left-hander would leave Great Britain dependent on Tim Henman to pull off what would be an upset victory.

Henman, the British number one, has a fitness battle of his own following right shoulder surgery.

However he remains optimistic about being ready for both the tie and the Australian Open, the first Grand Slam of the Year, which finishes 10 days before the Davis Cup match begins.

Brett afraid

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you're in a bit of a dilemma," Key said.

"You've got to make a choice of whether you're going to play the wailing game and look to leave (Glenn) McGrath which is what I sort of tried to do day or whether or not you're going to go after him and take some initiative."

"You'd rather get out that way than hanging around and nicking one. As long as you're being positive then you're going well."

Lee also defended the English batsmen, saying they were dismissed through good bowling rather than poor shot selection.

"There were a couple of loose shots but I think that comes down to Australia's pressure," he said.

"I think the way the quicks bowled and the way (Shane) Warne bowled too builds pressure."

"That's something we've been working on and we think that if we can tie the batsmen down then we can force them into playing a loose shot and that's what happened today."

Lee puts

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England went to lunch with a precarious 91 for three wickets, with the cave-in continuing in the second session.

Only 23-year-old right-hander Robert Key, in his fourth Test, found an answer to the Australian attack.

Exercising skilful shot selection, he assembled a valuable 47 (five fours, one six) in just over two hours before falling to a cutting delivery from rarely-used medium-pace Damien Martyn immediately before tea.

Key was bitterly disappointed he had been ousted by a part-time bowler.

"The specialist bowlers had been going at me at 95mph -- and then someone comes on sending them down at 60mph, and you think: 'I will smash a few out of the park here'."

"That's where I slipped up. That's where Steve Waugh is fairly clever. I was a bit gutted."

"Tres (Trescothick) turned round to me in the rooms and said: 'Gillespie, McGrath, Lee, Warne -- and then you get out to Martyn.'"

Lee picked up his third victim when he snapped up the out-of-form Craig White (two), who edged to Martyn at third slip.

McGrath accounted for Vaughan and veteran Alec Stewart (seven), while Gillespie picked up Silverwood (10) and Harmison (six).

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on opening day of the third Ashes Test between Australia and England at the WACA Ground on Friday:

ENGLAND: First innings				
Trescothick c Gilchrist b Lee	34			
Vaughan c Gilchrist b McGrath	34			
Butcher run out	9			
Hussain c Gilchrist b Lee	8			
Key b Martyn	47			
Stewart c Gilchrist b McGrath	7			
White c Martyn b Lee	2			
Tudor c Martyn b Warne	0			
Dawson not out	19			
Silverwood c Hayden b Gillespie	10			
Harmison b Gillespie	6			
Extras: (lb-2, nb-7)	9			
Total: (All out in 64.2 overs)	185			
Fall of wickets: 1-47, 2-69, 3-83, 4-101, 5-111, 6-121, 7-135, 8-156, 9-173				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
McGrath	17	5	30	2
Gillespie	17.2	8	43	2
Lee	20	1	78	3
Warne	9	0	32	1
Martyn	1	1	0	1

AUSTRALIA: First innings

Langer run out	19			
Hayden c Tudor b Harmison	30			
Ponting not out	43			
Martyn not out	20			
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, nb-8)	14			
Total: (For 2 wks in 23 overs)	126			
Fall of wickets: 1-31, 2-85				
To bat: Steve Waugh, Darren Lehmann, Adam Gilchrist, Shane Warne, Brett Lee, Jason Gillespie, Glenn McGrath				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Silverwood	4	0	29	0
Tudor	8	0	51	0
Harmison	8	2	26	1
White	3	1	14	0

Umpires: Steve Bucknor and Rudi Koertzen.



Bangladesh players celebrate the fall of West Indies opener Wavell Hinds.

PHOTO: STAR

Akram in Test fold again

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Famed pacer Wasim Akram was included Friday in the Pakistan Test side selected for next month's tour of South Africa, but seasoned opener Saeed Anwar and wicketkeeper Moin Khan failed to gain places.

Pakistan Cricket Board chief selector Waseem Bari announced a 17-man one-day and 16-man Test squad for the tour, during which Pakistan will play five one-day games and two Tests.

"We have picked the best side to play a formidable South Africa and Wasim has been given a chance to perform in the Tests after considering conditions in South Africa," Bari told a press conference.

Akram, who opted out of Pakistan's Test series against Australia last month after saying he would concentrate on his one-day form, is currently playing in the side's one-day series in Zimbabwe. But earlier this month he changed his mind and announced his availability for tests in South Africa.

Akram has taken 414 wickets in 104 Test matches, but has played only six Tests for Pakistan in the last two years due to injury.

Anwar, who on Thursday was named in Pakistan's 30 probables

for next year's World Cup, was not named in either squad for the South African tour.

"Anwar has been given the full opportunity to stage a comeback in



WASIM AKRAM

SCHEDULE	
Dec 8:	1st ODI, Durban
Dec 11:	2nd ODI, Port Elizabeth
Dec 13:	3rd ODI, East London
Dec 16:	4th ODI, Paarl
Dec 18:	5th ODI, Cape Town
Dec 26-30:	1st Test, Durban
Jan 2-6:	2nd Test, Cape Town

the side but he did not play in the trial games and would have to prove himself to get into the World Cup side," Bari said.

"Our openers Saleem Elahi and Taufiq Umer are giving good starts

to Pakistan in Zimbabwe so we have continued with them."

Khan, a wicketkeeper and former captain, was also ignored.

"We have picked Latif in the one-day side and it's up to the team management in South Africa whether they play him or Kamran Akmal," Bari said.

Latif on Wednesday announced his retirement from Test cricket but said he would continue to play in one-day matches.

Pakistan, currently playing one-day series in Zimbabwe, will travel to South Africa next week.

The first of the one-day games will be played at Durban on December 8.

SQUADS

TEST: Waqar Younis (captain), Inzamamul Haq (vice captain), Taufiq Umar, Saleem Elahi, Younis Khan, Yousuf Youhana, Abdul Razaq, Wasim Akram, Kamran Akmal, Saqlan Mushtaq, Shoaib Akhtar, Mohammad Sami, Shahid Afridi, Faisal Iqbal, Mohammad Zahid and Hasan Raza.

ONE-DAY: Waqar Younis (captain), Inzamamul Haq (vice-captain), Taufiq Umar, Saleem Elahi, Younis Khan, Yousuf Youhana, Rashid Latif, Abdul Razaq, Wasim Akram, Kamran Akmal, Saqlan Mushtaq, Shoaib Akhtar, Mohammad Sami, Shahid Afridi, Faisal Iqbal, Mohammad Zahid and Misbahul Haq.

Astle signs for Derbyshire

AFP, London

New Zealand batsman Nathan Astle will play county cricket for Derbyshire during the next English season, the Second Division side confirmed Thursday.

Astle, 31, set a world record for the fastest double century in Test history, needing just 153 balls to reach the landmark against England at Christchurch in March.

He has scored over 3,000 Test runs and more than 5,000 in limited overs international cricket as well as being a handy useful medium pace bowler.

Astle is not expected to make his Derbyshire debut until June as New Zealand's tour of Sri Lanka finishes on May 31.

He joins Australian batsman Michael Di Venuto as one of Derbyshire's two permitted overseas players.

Derbyshire captain and England all-rounder Dominic Cork said of Astle: "As a quality international, Nathan will strengthen our existing England at Christchurch in March. He and Michael Di Venuto batting together will give a lot of opposition bowlers a real headache."

Roland Garros extension plan protested

AFP, Paris

Plans to extend the legendary Roland Garros temple of French tennis came under fire Friday from environmentalists, furious that the blueprint could shave off a large part of the Bois de Boulogne wood in the west of the city.

Green Party deputies in the Paris city council said they were wholly opposed to the plans which they fear amount to the "privatisation of the Bois de Boulogne".

On Thursday, at the draw for the Davis Cup final which France are hosting against Russia across town at the indoor Bercy stadium, Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë said he backed a major extension which will include the construction of a new 12,000 capacity stadium with a sliding roof.

Rain regularly interrupts the French Open at the claycourt venue in late May-early June and the roof would enable some play to continue.

The Greens said in a statement they are horrified by the potential "amputation of 6.5 hectares of the Bois de Boulogne and yet the city hall has committed itself to adding 30 hectares of green areas to Paris by Match 2007."

The party also said that the wood is a protected area which does not permit new construction and is "designed for walking in."

Smith out

FROM PAGE 13
SRI LANKA: Sanath Jayasuriya, Marvan Atapattu, Kumar Sangakkara, Russel Arnold, Mahela Jayawardene, Aravinda de Silva, Chaminda Vaas, Upal Chandana, Hasantha Fernando, Dilhara Fernando, Pulasthi Gunaradne.
Umpires: I Howell and R Tiffin.

101 'undesirables'

FROM PAGE 13
like 50 new cricket ovals in poor and mostly non-white areas. One sticking point could still be Zimbabwe, where ICC head Malcom Speed is currently leading a team to check that venues will be safe for players.

Although the ICC insists it is not interested in politics, Zimbabwe's decision to refuse entry to two British reporters wanting to join Speed's trip points to tough times ahead.

Asked if he would accept Zimbabwe's right to refuse entry to cricket journalists during the World Cup, an emphatic Bacher said: "No."

But he added: "I am confident as I can be that these obstacles will be removed."

Zimbabwe will not be the only fly in the ointment. In September, the ICC's Champions Trophy looked to be in jeopardy after India said it could be forced to field a second-string team because of tough rules on sponsorship.

Some of the world's top players -- many of whom like Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly command highly lucrative personal endorsements -- threatened to pull out.

The deadlock had started when the ICC, in an attempt to protect tournament sponsors from 'ambush marketing' campaigns from rival companies, demanded players freeze their private sponsorships for the tournament.

Following player protests around the world -- Australia, England and South Africa were among several teams who delayed signing their contracts -- the ICC pledged to take their views into account in future sponsorship negotiations.

Bacher clearly expects some last-minute haggling but thinks sponsorship squabbles will be resolved.

"I'm confident Sachin will be here, the best players will come here," he said.

Safin draws first blood

Tennis

AFP, Paris

Marat Safin drew first blood for Russia on Friday in the Davis Cup final here Friday, beating Paul-Henri Mathieu of France 6-4, 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Mathieu, just 20 and playing his first ever Davis Cup match, was a surprise call-up on Thursday after French skipper Guy Forget elected not to risk Arnaud Clement, suffering from wrist tendinitis.

Former world number one Safin, currently ranked three on the ATP computer, went into the encounter in

contrast with a 15-12 record in the competition -- albeit a rather miserable 9-10 in singles play.

But the temperamental 22-year-old from Moscow shrugged off the distraction of a partisan crowd -- and a second set lapse -- to win through in 3hr 08min against the man who had beaten him in the Kremlin Cup final in their only previous meeting in Moscow in early October.

Safin came through on his second match point with his 19th ace -- after double-faulting on his first in first serving out for the match.

A double-handed backhand down the line pulled Mathieu back to 3-5, the ball speeding past a Safin looking at that moment every bit as

statuesque as the watching former Russian president Boris Yeltsin.

But second time round Safin stood firm, raised his game and struck a ferocious serve past his rival.

"Thanks a lot to our president for coming," said a relieved but delighted Safin as he savoured a crucial victory.

Olympic champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov, having suffered the heartbreak of losing finals in 1994 and 1995 in Moscow, was bidding to send his country 2-0 clear in the second match of the day against Sebastien Grosjean, a star of last year's French win over Australia.

France have won the competition nine times and are playing their third final in four seasons whereas the Russians have never won the famous "salad bowl" trophy.

The final is taking place amid tight security with some 300 police on hand.

VIP guests included, from the world of politics, French President Jacques Chirac and his Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, as well as Yeltsin, who watched intently as the action unfolded.

Chirac had made time for Friday's opening singles while former premier Lionel Jospin has pencilled in the Saturday doubles. Raffarin has cleared some of his schedule for the denouement on Sunday.

Keen tennis fan Yeltsin, a personal friend of Kafelnikov, was to watch the whole three days play.

French football stars Thierry Henry, Robert Pires, Patrick Vieira and Sylvain Wilford of Arsenal had also managed to secure invites.

At the official presentation of the two squads French singer Julien Clerc sang the Marseillaise with Russian baritone Vitaly Romanov performing the Russian national anthem Patriotiskaya Pesn.

Both sets of fans then tried lustily to out-do each other in the decibel count -- despite the 1,500 or so visiting fans being outnumbered by some seven to one.

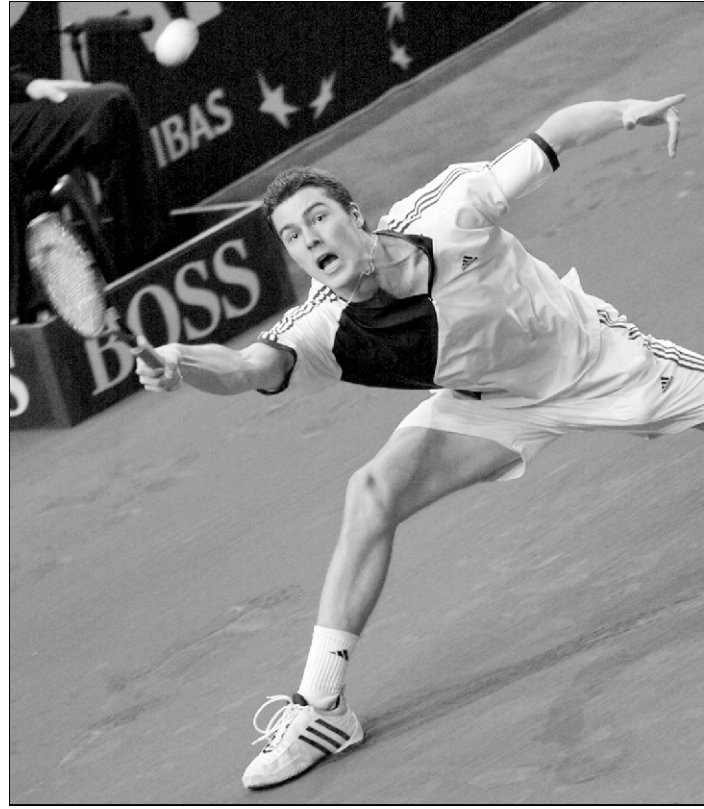


PHOTO: AFP

Russia's Marat Safin plays a forehand against Paul-Henri Mathieu of France at the Davis Cup final yesterday.

Germany rebound

Tennis

AFP, Perth

Germany bounced back from the disappointment of defeat against Argentina to secure a comfortable 3-0 win over Scotland at the women's hockey World Cup here Friday.

The Germans, unlucky to have gone down to Argentina on Thursday, had too much class for a Scottish side looking for another upset following their shock defeat of New Zealand.

Heike Latzsch demolished the Scot's defence single-handedly, helping to create three goals in five minutes in the middle of the first half. Latzsch set up two goals, running Scotland's defence ragged, weaving through five defenders to pass infield to Julia Boie to deflect into goal then driving in a penalty corner.

Latzsch helped with the third goal, gaining a free hit outside the circle, allowing Fanny Rinne to drive a free hit into the circle for Nadine Ernsting-Krienke to deflect into goal.

Germany coach Peter Lemmen was far from happy with his side's display however.

"We had a safe win in an unsafe game in which we played very badly," a grumpy Lemmen said. "We had difficulty executing easy technical skills like stopping the ball," he said.

In other matches Friday, Ireland ran out of luck when they were thumped 6-0 by the Netherlands.

Mintje Donners started the rout on 13 minutes, taking a tap to the left from the battery and driving in along the carpet past Angela Platt, Ireland's goalkeeper.

Five more goals followed, including, four in seven minutes, to Miek van Geenhuizen, Fatima Moreira de Melo, Macha van der Vaart (playing her 100th game for Netherlands), Aniek van Hees, and Ageeth Boongaard.

Netherlands will take heart from the form of their strikers and because Australia only managed a 2-1 win over Ireland.

"In the first half we played well but we were not fast enough, but we did better in the second half taking free hits faster," said Dutch coach Marc Lammers.

"Australia, Argentina and Spain are playing well so we have to win against them to be assured of a place in the semi-finals," Lammers added.

In earlier Pool B matches, Spain trounced the USA 4-1 thanks to a six-minute goal blitz.

After a scoreless first half, Spain took the lead on 40 minutes through a penalty corner by Erdoitza Goikoetxea.

The Spaniards then put the Americans to the sword with a devastating rush of scoring, Nuria Canon, Silvia Munoz and Luci Lopez netting in the 47th, 50th and 53rd minutes.

Kate Barber had scored a consolation goal in the 52nd minute, but there was no way back for the Americans in the Pool B.

Spain coach Jack Holtman said his side had been confident of eventually breaking down their opponents.

"We applied a lot of pressure on USA in the first half and the team was patient, waiting for the goals to come," Holtman said. "We made a lot of changes in the way we play and it made the team more powerful because we applied the pressure from the midfield rather than in the

forwards," he added.

In the earlier match, South Africa and Japan played a 1-1 draw.

World Open squash Pak players denied visas

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's Squash Federation on Thursday slammed as "disrespectful" Belgium's refusal to issue visas to five of its squash players and an official who were to attend next week's World Open squash tournament there.

"It's disrespectful to Pakistan's contribution to the game of squash and we are dejected," Pakistan Squash Federation secretary, Wing Commander Sajid Waheed, told AFP.

He said that after "shabby" treatment over the past month embassy staff on Wednesday told the team they would not be cleared for travel to Belgium, where the 160,000-dollar World Open begins in Antwerp next Wednesday.

"We are disappointed over our treatment and refusal of visas, which have almost killed our chances of representing the country at the World Open," he said, adding that they would appeal the decision following embassy procedures on Friday.

"We have conveyed our disappointment to the World Squash Federation (WSF) and Players Squash Association (PSA)," he said.

The Belgian embassy was unable to provide an immediate comment.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	1 Of Mensa caliber	6 Gas thief's gizmo	12 J.P.'s client, perhaps	13 Chant	14 Elk	15 Clark Kent's paper	16 Prior nights	17 Arizona city	19 Double curve	20 Informally comfy	22 Ironic	24 Columbus sch.	27 Stewart's "It's a Wonderful Life" wife	29 Notion	32 "It's mine now!"	35 Magician	36 Reveille's opposite	37 Existed	38 Watch pocket	40 Refinery residue	42 Football filler	44 Canyon sound	46 Met melody	50 Less	52 Gypsy	54 Mrs. Priam	55 Winter weasel	56 Honor	57 Starts a card game	18 "Non-sense!"	21 Slick figure?	23 Sartorial woe	3 On a pen-sion (Abbr.)	25 "Barney Miller" cast member	26 Legal right to use another's property	28 Strongly regretted	30 Historic period	31 Pompous sort	33 "I" strain	34 Tikkanen of hockey	39 Bathy-sphere pioneer	41 Greek letter	42 Rue the run	43 Nunsen	45 Pull an all-nighter	47 Bar attachment	48 B & Bs	49 Nay	canceler	51 Payable	53 Tramacr contents
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Solution time: 27 mins.

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AVASIT	LEA	PIRY
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