

Pete to miss US Open

AFP, Washington

Former world number one Pete Sampras said he will pull out of this year's US Open and is likely to hang up his racket for good, according to American press reports on Monday.

"Not being at the Open this year, which I'm going to pull out of, and not playing Wimbledon hasn't made me miss it (tennis) enough to really start training, start practising, doing everything I have to do to be where I want to be," he said.

"This tells me it's a sign to say, 'It's probably time'. I miss it, but it's time probably to give up.

"I feel like if I wasn't going to play Wimbledon, then that was probably it for me, so that's the way it goes."

The 31-year-old, who won Wimbledon seven times in a record 14 Grand Slam wins, has not played since his US Open victory in New York last year.

One and only

FROM PAGE 13 "I don't know what it is but I just got very excited," she said.

"I came off the 50 turn and felt an adrenalin rush. I didn't see anyone around me and I just stayed very focused," explained Thompson, who took two years off the sport after the Sydney Olympics to begin medical school.

Popov, the 50m world record holder, achieved his first world title since 1998, and the first during his 12 years with the relay team.

Popov raced the final leg after teammates Andrei Kapralov, Ivan Usov and Denis Pimankov to clock a new championship record of 3min 14.06sec, ahead of the United States in 3:14.80.

"It's a nice sort of forgotten feeling," said the 30-year-old.

Popular Tigers

FROM PAGE 13 Australia said the players would hold a couple of cricket clinics with the children in the community.

Australia knocked Bangladesh over by an innings and 132 runs on Sunday, midway through the third day of the Test, to take a 1-0 lead in the two-Test series.

The team has been taking it easy, with a light gym session and some sightseeing around Darwin.

The players fly to Cairns on Wednesday morning for the second leg of the end series. The second Test starts at the Bundaberg Rumm Stadium on Friday.

Wasim

FROM PAGE 13 Wasim as a celebrated person has hurt Islam's religious sentiments," said the petitioner's lawyer Ansar Mahmood Bajwa.

"The ad still runs on international sports channels and should be stopped immediately."

Fed Cup

Belgium blank Slovakia

Tennis

Reuters, London

Kim Clijsters and Justine Henin-Hardene earned Belgium a semi-final showdown with the US after propelling their country to a 5-0 rout of holders Slovakia in the Fed Cup on Sunday.

Despite the absence of their top four players, a depleted American team whitewashed Italy 5-0.

An impressive France trounced five-times champions Spain 4-1 to set up a last-four date with Russia, who whitewashed Slovenia 5-0.

Slovakia limped out of the tournament after world number two Clijsters thrashed Janette Husarova 6-0, 6-1 in 40 minutes in Charleroi.

Klusener's reason to sue

Cricket

AGENCIES, undated

Most people react to being dropped from a side with a shrug and a few muttered oaths. But Lance Klusener has not taken the news of his omission from South Africa's touring side quite so philosophically -- he is planning to sue the South African board for loss of earnings.

Klusener's argument is that he turned down offers of work with English counties after being assured that he would be included in the squad. He claims that he was told that he would be rested for the tour to Bangladesh, but would return for the England trip.

"It's like your boss calling you on a Saturday night and saying 'Sorry, old chap, but you don't have to come to work on Monday. You're fired. How would you feel if it happened to you?' Klusener told the South African-based You magazine.

"Wouldn't you also be disappointed? Some people may think

it's sour grapes, but that's not true at all.

"It was a shock and a disappointment," Klusener admitted.

"I was here at home and immediately went to tell my wife.



LANCE KLUSENER

England would have been a highlight for me. I wanted to play at Lord's again. I played for South Africa with pride for eight years. I gavemyall."

And Klusener dismissed accusations

made by Graeme Smith, South Africa's captain, that the side was better off without him as he was not a team player.

"I'm a private person," Klusener explained.

"I hate being around lots of people. It saps my energy. Now people are saying 'I'm a miserable sod. Why is it if you don't want to be part of the crowd you're always seen as different?'"

While Smith has told reporters that he regrets making the comments, Klusener said that he had yet to receive an apology in person.

"Maybe he doesn't have my number. The whole thing between Graeme and I is a shame. I read what he said in the papers and I still don't know exactly what he meant."

Klusener's decision to take legal action is unlikely to endear him to the selectors and whatever the outcome of the court case, if it goes ahead, he will only gain financially if he wins. It is inconceivable that any court could force an organisation to pick a player, especially one whose record of late has hardly been outstanding.

Gibbs' confidence booster

Cricket

AFP, Arundel

Herschelle Gibbs was a relieved man after making 79 for South Africa against India A here on Sunday in what was the Proteas' last match before next week's first Test against England.

His innings brought to an end a run of low scores for the 29-year-old right-hander and afterwards Gibbs told reporters: "It's good to spend some time in the middle."

During the triangular one-day international series Gibbs made just one double figure score - 93 not out against Zimbabwe at Cardiff on July 5.

And in South Africa's opening first-class match, against Somerset which ended on Friday, Gibbs managed just four and 17.

"During the last few weeks my balance has not been good," Gibbs added. Asked what he's done to correct the problem, he replied: "I've been working on standing up straight."

Gibbs has had precious little batting time and after spending two hours 46 minutes at the crease on Sunday said: "It was good to get through the first half hour, 40 minutes and build an innings which I didn't do in the one-dayers."

"But form is temporary, one knock can change things. It's been a good few years since I've been

through a run of low scores. It happens to everybody and I'd rather not score runs before the Test series than during it."

However Gibbs said practice facilities at Edgbaston would help him guard against any feeling of over-confidence.

"You can go on your way with a hundred but the nets at Edgbaston will bring you back down to earth."



HERSCHELLE GIBBS

Gibbs put on 150 with opening partner and South Africa captain Graeme Smith, who also made 79.

The Western Province duo are set to open in Thursday's first Test at Edgbaston with Gibbs' long-standing international opening partner Gary Kirsten dropping down to number three.

Like Kirsten, Smith - at 22 South Africa's youngest-ever

captain - is a left-hander and Gibbs said: "Graeme is in good form. I see a lot of Gary in him, the way he grafts."

"I had a good opening relationship with Gary for four years, hopefully it will be the same with Graeme."

South Africa went down to a seven-wicket defeat against England in the triangular series final at Lord's on July 17 after being bowled out for a meagre 107.

"It was disappointing. Obviously, no-one likes to lose. It was one of our worst performances in a final," Gibbs admitted. "But that's behind us now and we're looking forward to the Test series."

Experienced Yorkshire quick Darren Gough and novice Lancashire paceman James Anderson took five wickets between them that day and were a constant threat throughout the series.

The pair are set to team-up again as members of England's Test attack and Gibbs said of 32-year-old Gough: "He always gives 100 percent and he's a great man to have in the team."

As for Anderson, at 20 English cricket's rising star, Gibbs commented: "Everything he touches turns to gold. He looks a good prospect."

Life's beautiful for Curtis

AFP, London

Ben Curtis, ranked 396th in the world last week, has opened up his future with Sunday's astonishing, one-stroke win in the British Open.

The 26-year-old is now eligible for every Open until he reaches the age of 66 - in 2043.

He can play in the next five Masters, United States Opens and US PGA championships - starting with next month's PGA in Rochester, New York, where he will play the first two rounds with Masters champion Mike Weir and US Open winner Jim Furyk.

He can also tee off in any event on the US Tour he chooses for the next five years, is exempt for the next 10 Players' Championships and this year's two remaining World Golf Championships events and their multi-million-dollar purses.

But he believes he can handle the pressure.

"I want to keep as normal as possible - I'm a normal guy with a lot of talent," he said.

"My life is going to change, but I'm looking forward to it. A lot of great challenges lie ahead of me. It's going to be awesome."

His career earnings on the US circuit at the start of this season amounted to 6,020 dollars, but the man from Kent, Ohio, is 700,000 pounds (1.113 million dollars) richer for one week's work in Kent, England.

All because of what Denmark's Thomas Bjorn did over the last four holes Sunday when he bogeyed the 15th, double-bogeyed the 16th after needing three attempts to get out of a greenside bunker, bogeyed the 17th by missing a five-foot putt and then parred the last to settle for a share of second place with Vijay Singh.

Curtis, preparing for a possible play-off, became the first man since Tom Watson in 1975 to win the Open at the first attempt.

He was also the lowest ranked player since John Daly won the 1991 US Open when ranked 168th to win a major.

"I came here just trying to play the best I could and I would have been happy just to make the cut," Curtis said.

"To win is unbelievable and I can't describe how I feel. I was so focused on what I was doing that I didn't really think about winning."

"I'm in great company. Right now many people are probably saying 'he doesn't really belong there', but I know I do and that's all that matters."

Gough having the last laugh

AFP, London

England paceman Darren Gough has hit back at the doubters who wrote him off as a Test bowler following his recall for the forthcoming first Test against South Africa at Edgbaston.

Gough's inclusion in the England squad for the Test, which starts on Thursday, came two years after his last five-day match.

After battling 18 months of injuries which have seen Gough's right knee operated on three times, medical experts advised the Yorkshireman to retire this year rather than continue to pound his troublesome knee.

But fast bowler Gough, 32, who has defied advice to prosper in England's recent one-day triangular tournament against South Africa and Zimbabwe before being picked for the Test squad, said: "To all those people who doubted me, bad luck. Proving them wrong has been my inspiration."

"I have proved that with determination and pride you can come back whatever the difficulties you face."

"I have always wanted to go my way, not to be told by others that it's time to pack it in."



BEN CURTIS

Mercedes Cup Coria's

Tennis

AFP, Stuttgart

Shy South American Guillermo Coria shook the sand off his shoes before settling into his new sports car for a drive around Centre Court after a title triumph at the 765,000-euro Mercedes Cup ATP Tennis tournament here on Sunday.

The second seed, now a power to be reckoned with on clay after defeating Spain's Tommy Robredo 6-2, 6-2, 6-1 for his second trophy in Germany in just over two months, was being extra careful with his silver-grey bonus prize, worth 50,000 euros (56,300 dollars).

Tournament winners of the event in this car-making capital are traditionally awarded a luxury car along with a cheque, which for Coria totalled 118,000 euros for his one-hour, 40-minute demolition of world number 20 Robredo.

The Argentine ace won six of the last seven games, coming back in the third set after dropping his serve for only the second time on a hot afternoon at the Weissenhof club.

After claiming victory on his second match point, it was only a matter of minutes before the world number seven was holding the keys to his new toy.

The car was driven out for the trophy presentation by two-time Olympic ice skating gold medalist Katarina Witt.

Coria made a sentimental play for the cameras, with the words "Danke Germany" written in black ink marker on his white jersey.

In early May, Coria won the Masters event in Hamburg shortly before reaching the Roland Garros

School kabadi

FROM PAGE 13 which were inconsequential for the semifinal berths.

Islamia High School came from behind to record a nailbiting 39-38 victory over Haider Ali High School. The winners trailed 18-16 at the breather.

In the other match, Nawabpur Government High School registered a close 30-34 win over Bir Shreshtha Noor Mohammad Rifles Public High School.

Nasser

FROM PAGE 13 immediate job at hand, Hussain emphasised the need for England to maintain their dominance over South Africa. "South Africa are there for the taking. They are down and we must nail them."

semi-finals, an event where he beat world number one Andre Agassi.

"It's a dream to win a car like this," said Coria, who now owns 28 wins and just five losses on clay this season.

"I just had another great day today, this has been a super week," he said of an effort where he lost only 11 games in his last four matches, including a 6-0, 6-0 result in the quarter-finals over holder Mikhail Youzhny.

Prodded during the trophy ceremony about his Argentine Davis Cup link, he said: "My heart is Argentine, but it's great to do so well in Germany."

Coria was only in danger twice on his way to the rout of Robredo, playing in his first final of the year, and owner of a lone trophy from

2001.

Both times, down a break, he instantly recovered. He won the first set in 33 minutes and claimed the second set as the Spaniard committed a dozen unforced errors. He was unstoppable in the third after losing serve to start.

"Guillermo is among the best on clay right now," said Robredo. "He doesn't give you a chance to get into the match. I'm really sorry that I didn't have a chance at the car."

Coria's victory came a dozen years after his coach Alberto Mancini lost the Stuttgart final to German Michael Stich in 1991.

A disappointed Robredo has been beaten in 2003 semi-finals at Dubai, Estoril and last week in Bastad.



PHOTO: AFP

Argentina's Guillermo Coria exults after defeating Spaniard Tommy Robredo in the Mercedes Cup final on Sunday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 35 Juror, 1 Suffers a recession? 5 'Now I get it!' 8 Psych 101 subjects 12 Profound 13 Public transport 14 Indian's wrap 15 'Hud!' Oscar winner 16 'The Rock' 18 Hardly intrepid 20 Unlikely to waver 21 Lovers recipe 23 Kingston Trio 24 Re mystic transmutation 28 Green-eyed monster 31 Wire measure 32 Director Forman 34 One of Elmo's playmates

Cryptogram puzzle grid with letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP

ZMGZVM PC SX UZULWMSMCW VPJM JMWKOFZ UCB LMVPHO HG SFKO, P HUX PWHU K G C B P S M C W P F S Saturday's Cryptquip: SINCE MY DAIRY TREAT IS IDENTICAL TO YOURS, I SUPPOSE THEY'RE ICE CREAM CLONES.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: W equals T The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals Q, 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.



PHOTO: STAR

Scene from the schools kabadi match between Haider Ali High School and Islamia High School at the outer stadium yesterday.