



PHOTO: AFP

American Andy Roddick celebrates after beating Thomas Enqvist of Sweden at the Davis Cup World Group first-round tie on Friday.

Roddick rescues US

Tennis

AFP, Delray Beach

Andy Roddick posted a swift straight-set victory over Thomas Enqvist on Friday to pull the United States level at 1-1 with Sweden after the rainy first day of their Davis Cup World Group first-round tie.

Jonas Bjorkman had given Sweden the early advantage with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 7-5 win over Mardy Fish in the opening match of the tie.

But Roddick responded with a 6-4, 7-5, 6-2 triumph that left Enqvist visibly frustrated.

"I didn't really think about it so much," Roddick said of taking the court with his side down a match. "Obviously, they put us in a position that our backs were against the wall. But I just went out there and played."

Enqvist started out strong, leading 3-1 and then 4-2 in the first set, but couldn't hold on to the advantage.

In the second set, Enqvist had two break points against Roddick but couldn't convert them to put himself in position to serve for the set.

Trailing 5-2 in the third, Enqvist double faulted twice from 30-15 and

then netted a forehand to end the 1hr 58min match.

Roddick improved his Davis Cup record to 11-3 with the win over Enqvist.

For Bjorkman, experience and patience paid off in a match disrupted three times by rain.

In all, the five rain delays during the day meant the two opening singles matches took nearly nine hours to complete.

"I always perform good in Davis Cup," said Bjorkman, who is now 15-7 in Davis Cup singles action. "For me, it's such a great feeling to be part of the Swedish Davis Cup team. I'm always trying to do 110 percent out there."

Fish, 22, was honest about feeling like the inexperienced underdog in the match, despite the fact that he ranks nine spots ahead of Bjorkman in the world rankings.

"I don't know whether it was nerves or just inexperience in this type of situation," said Fish, who is now 1-3 in Davis Cup singles play. "I've been really good all week in practice - hitting the ball great, my forehand great. It just didn't click. "He's very experienced in these types of situations, and he's won big matches before."

Fish was on fire in the first set,

rarely giving Bjorkman an opening into the match.

But Bjorkman, 32, had faith that Fish would not be able to carry on at that level of play throughout the match.

"If he can do that for three sets or five sets, I will lift my hat and say, 'That's too good. I couldn't do anything, I got beaten by the better player.'"

"But at the same time, I knew that it's hard to keep that sort of way of tennis. I was just trying to find a game that would be a more effective to come back and win. Once I got the second set, I felt I was in the match again."

Fish wrapped up the first set on a controversial point - at 40-30 in the 10th game his forehand was first called long then changed to good, prompting the umpire to order the point replayed. Fish won it, but Bjorkman took charge in the next three sets.

Fish did save one match point on his own serve in the ninth game, then broke Bjorkman in the 10th.

But Fish surrendered his serve at 15-40 with a forehand wide in the 11th game to enable Bjorkman to take advantage of the second of two match points in the final game.

Deschamps keeps options open

Football

AFP, Paris

Monaco coach Didier Deschamps has said he would be willing to stay in the Principality, but only if the club has high ambitions.

Deschamps skipped France to success in both the 1998 World and Euro 2000 Cups and his managerial career at Monaco since 2001 has been impressive.

They currently top the French first division and produced one of the greatest-ever European performances on Tuesday when they beat Real Madrid 3-1 at home to qualify for the semifinals of the Champions League.

All indications had been that Deschamps would move next season to Italian giants Juventus with whom he played from 1994 to 1999, but Deschamps has hinted that may not be a done deal.

"I am waiting to see which direction Monaco are going in and I only hope that would allow me to develop things the way I would like to," he said following the Real triumph.

"Those in charge here know my intentions and the ball is now firmly in their court."

Monaco were in big financial difficulties at the start of the year with debts of 53 million euros and were nearly relegated to the second division because of their troubles.

But Prince Albert of Monaco said this week that the clubs are on the verge of securing the support of a major new investor.

The prince said he could not give more specific details, but hinted that

the new investor was resident of the tax haven on France's stylish Mediterranean coast.

Playing in the tiny Louis II stadium, Monaco seldom pull in big crowds and are reliant to a great deal on outside investment to survive and compete with the bigger European sides.

Deschamps has been urged to stay at Monaco by non other than French legend Michel Platini who said that at 35 years old he was too



DIDIER DESCHAMPS

young and too inexperienced a coach to take on such a big job as Juventus.

And it is still uncertain over what current Juventus coach Marcello Lippi will do next.

Lippi, who has been linked with the Italian national side is under contract until June 2005 and he has said he will announce his future intentions shortly.

Schumi in charity soccer match

INTERNET REPORT, undated

Formula One champion driver Michael Schumacher is to star in a soccer match in Naples later this month.

A team made up of race aces past and present, including Riccardo Patrese, Max Biaggi, Ivan Capelli and Fernando Alonso, will take on a team of Italian MPs.

Proceeds of the April 30 match are to go to victims of the recent 'Nassiriya mission' killings in Iraq and also to a charity for children with leukaemia.

Mushtaq eyes

FROM PAGE 13 taking wickets," added Mushtaq who last year became the first bowler in five years to take 100 wickets in an English season (he finished with 103) as he spun Sussex towards their first ever County Championship (first-class) title.

Reflecting on the momentous series against India, Mushtaq said: "The second Test was very good from a Pakistan point of view because it showed the team could come back (after losing the first Test)."

"Playing against India is one of the best things that can happen to a player. It is something you will remember all your life," the former Somerset and Surrey bowler added.

"God willing, I shall get back in the Test team. Sometimes, even if you are not performing well, He can get you in the side and everyone needs that support," Mushtaq added.

Malik speaks

FROM PAGE 13 and pace bowler Ata-ur-Rehman and fined five other players for not cooperating with the inquiry.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) later lifted Rehman's ban after they were asked by the Lahore High Court to hear the player's appeal.

"I want the board to also hear my appeal. They gave Ata a chance, so why not me? I've not got a chance to give my side of the story," Malik said.

Malik, with 103 matches, is one of three Pakistan players to have played more than 100 Tests for Pakistan.

He scored 5,768 test runs and 7,170 runs in 283 one-dayers. His last appearance for Pakistan was in the 1999 World Cup against India in Manchester.

Zim in chaos

FROM PAGE 13 provincial games but asked ZCU chief executive Vince Hogg for permission to miss them and he agreed.

He said: "I had given them permission but I was overruled by the board."

Sri Lanka are set to tour Zimbabwe later this month.

And England have still to decide whether to go-ahead with a series there in October.

Streak and about 10 Zimbabwe players are set to meet with ZCU officials again on Tuesday to discuss the crisis.

Next it's Sami

FROM PAGE 13 "I've confidence in the ability of our back-up bowlers to give the Indians a hard time," said Miandad. "We believe we still have the bowling strength to bowl them out."

India, on their first full tour of Pakistan in over 14 years, won last month's one-day series 3-2 before winning the first Test in Multan by an innings and 52 runs, their first Test victory in Pakistan.

Premiership preview

Within Arsenal's grasp

Football

AFP, London

Arsene Wenger believes the Premiership title will be on its way back to Highbury if Arsenal can avoid defeat at Newcastle on Sunday.

The Gunners boss watched in awe on Friday as Thierry Henry produced a brilliant hat-trick to sink Liverpool and get his side's season back on track after the trauma of back-to-back FA Cup and Champions League defeats at the hands of Manchester United and Chelsea.

Regardless of the arithmetic, Wenger is convinced the 4-2 win has put his side within touching distance of the title.

"I feel no matter what happens we'll stay in command and if we get a positive result at Newcastle we'll be in a very strong position," Wenger said.

With Sami Hyypia heading Liverpool into the lead after only five minutes and Michael Owen then restoring their lead after Henry's equaliser, Liverpool certainly asked serious questions about Arsenal's resolve.

But they were answered in emphatic fashion by a stunning second-half display capped by Henry's sublime dribble for his second goal.

"We have answered some question-marks over ourselves," the French striker said. "People said we were dead and, in one sense, we were."

"We are exhausted but if no one had known we'd just played on Tuesday and Sunday, we looked like we'd had a rest for 10 days. It's about how much you want it."

"We let the FA Cup go and the Champions League go, but the Premiership is about the work of a season and we didn't want to let that go."

As consolation for their FA Cup and Champions League heart-break, Arsenal can now set their sights on completing an entire league season without losing a single game.

With Henry in the kind of form he displayed on Friday, few would bet against them.

"When Thierry is like that, no one can stop him," Arsenal skipper Patrick Vieira said.

"Even if his hamstring was a bit tired, he wanted to play to be with the team. This is the period where we all have to give a bit of ourselves."

All credit to him as he scored some really important goals for us."

Vieira looks set to miss Sunday's trip to the north east after Wenger confirmed he would start the match with both of his Brazilian central midfielders, Edu and Gilberto Silva.

"I got a knock on my knee and have started to feel my hamstring, but when you win, you feel a lot better," Vieira admitted.

"But I still want to play on Sunday, it's a big game for us and all of us will be ready. A few of us have some knocks but we will battle together to win the trophy. It's too big a game to miss. We all want to play as we know it can make the difference for us. We will fight until the end."

"I feared they would react like a wounded animal and they were simply stunning in the second half," Liverpool boss Gerard Houllier said, before admitting that he was hoping Newcastle, his side's main rivals in the chase for the fourth Champions League spot, would get similar treatment on Sunday.

"I told my players after the match that they don't have to play against an Arsenal like this every week. I just hope they do the same on Sunday."

Ranieri wants to stay

Football

REUTERS, London

Claudio Ranieri, whose star has risen at Chelsea since his side beat Arsenal to reach the semifinals of the Champions League, says he wants to stay at the club.

The 52-year-old Italian, whose job has been under threat since Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich bought Chelsea last July, said he had discussed his future with his bosses.

"We had a very good meeting and very soon we will know something," Ranieri said.

"I want to stay here... I have put all myself into this idea and now it is going well. Why would I want to change?" he said after a training session on Friday at the club's ground near Heathrow Airport.

Chelsea's wooing of other candidates for the coach's job became an open secret last month when England boss Sven-Goran Eriksson said he had had discussions with the London side but had decided to stay with the national team.

Ranieri's good humour under pressure has won him sympathy in the media, and his tears after Chelsea came from behind to beat Arsenal last Tuesday earned him pictures on the front and back pages of the newspapers.

Reports suggested Abramovich and chief executive Peter Kenyon were now backtracking on their plan to replace him.

Newspapers also reported his success had prompted interest from other European clubs, including his

native Roma and Real Madrid.

Ranieri said he would be interested to see how his team, who had gone 17 matches without beating Arsenal before Tuesday's 2-1 win, would react after the euphoria of victory.

"I'm very curious. We want to be a big team so we need to go through this period after a big victory, forget it all and continue to fight," he said.

Ranieri said it was vital to focus on the league which was a real measure of a club's character and quality.

"Champions League is a gamble. The league is not," he said, adding that neither Chelsea nor Monaco, whom they meet in the semi-finals later this month, should be installed as favourites.

Porto, who won the UEFA Cup



CLAUDIO RANIERI

Chelsea are seven points behind Arsenal in the Premier League and Ranieri said the pressure was on Arsenal not to lose the title. The north Londoners reacted to their midweek disappointment by beating Liverpool 4-2 on Friday.

last season, and Deportivo, with a great deal of Champions League experience, had 35 percent chances while Chelsea and Monaco had 15 each, he suggested.

Rebecca tells her side

Football

THE SUN, London

Rebecca Loos has lifted the lid on her affair with David Beckham and revealed his favourite sexual antics.

The Madrid temptress claims to have had a passionate fling with the England captain while his marriage to wife Victoria crumbled.

Rebecca, 26, told a former lover: "I brought fun and sex back into his life, two things he had been missing. He loved my body and I loved his."

Real Madrid star Becks, 28, has denied any affair and gone to great lengths to put on a united front with Victoria, 29.

Last night the ex-Spice Girl was preparing to fly to Madrid to be at his side as he faces further allegations of infidelity.

Rebecca has insisted their affair began last September 18 after the two had an evening out together in Madrid.

She told the close pal: "I thought I was falling in love with David. In the beginning our relationship was an emotional one. He would talk to me about his loneliness and the fact that he missed his children so much."

"He blamed Victoria for not bringing them to Spain and they had lots of rows about this."

"I always tried to keep neutral on it as I could understand both sides but eventually I started to feel angry for him."

"He used to talk to the children by phone and was always upset afterwards. He really is a very sensitive man and I think Victoria ignored the warning signs."

"David said it was as if Victoria had lost interest in him and the boys. She spent all day on her mobile sorting out her career."

"The marriage was in trouble before my affair with David so I am

not to blame for the breakdown of their relationship."

Rebecca, who was employed by management agency SFX, worked for Becks as a translator and personal assistant when he first moved to the Spanish capital.

Victoria stayed at the family home in Hertfordshire with Brooklyn, five, and Romeo, 19 months.

Rebecca told the pal: "It all started when Victoria refused to join David in Spain."

"She would tell him it wasn't all about what he wanted, that he wasn't single and he must think about what was best for the entire family."

"Victoria insisted it was better for Brooklyn if they stayed in England and better for her as she had her family to help with the children."

"David was understanding about her career but I think he became more and more resentful that he was left alone so much."

"I think eventually he decided that he might as well live like a single man."

"That's why he started going out more, and I watched him change. He became much more confident about being on his own and meeting new people."

Rebecca, who has freely admitted romping with both men and women, said Becks was "obsessed" by her bisexuality.

"He loved to hear me talk about all the girlfriends I had."

"I've pretty much done everything with other women and it would really turn him on."

Rebecca said the affair started after the couple went for dinner with friends at a Thai restaurant, where she suggested they play a saucy game. They then went on to the Ananda nightclub, before disappearing back to Becks' suite at the Santa Mauro Hotel.

Rebecca told the pal that on the first night they had been playing truth or dare at dinner with some other people from SFX and some of David

and Victoria's friends.

She went on: "It was pretty tame so I decided to spice things up a bit and was really filthy."

"I told them all about my bisexual fantasies. I could see Maria Louise, Victoria's oldest friend, looking at me disapprovingly but David was loving it and was desperate for me to tell him more."

"That night, when we went back to the hotel, he was very nervous but I wasn't. He really wasn't comfortable but despite that we had a fantastic



REBECCA LOOS

night.

"Sometimes we would talk about men too. He often talked about different men that he thought were attractive. I don't mean in a gay sense but I was shocked at how liberal he was."

Next night the pair met up at a bar and once again, according to Rebecca, went back to Becks' hotel and made love.

Within days rumours swept sporting circles that they had become close.

Their next meeting was on September 22 at Real Madrid star Ronaldo's birthday party - where Becks also met stunning Spanish supermodel Esther Canadas for the

first time.

Rebecca claimed she and Becks had one final encounter in December, when he asked her to meet him in the Hotel Fenix just before a Real home game.

The pair also bombarded each other with phone texts. But their relationship began to fall away after she discovered she was not the only woman he was sending raunchy messages to.

She said: "There was lots of gossip about other women. One day I confronted David about Esther Canadas and he owned up to me that he had been having flirty texting with her."

"I wasn't angry but it changed my view about my relationship with David. I realised that it was all a game to him and he just enjoyed it."

"I know there were other girls too - certainly he has more than one mobile phone."

The relationship really turned sour after Victoria started to get suspicious about the amount of time her husband spent with his pretty assistant.

Rebecca said: "Victoria didn't like me from the off. She's really jealous and insecure."

"I told her I was a lesbian, which is sort of true, thinking it would make her believe I wasn't after her husband."

"After she found out that David and I had become close I didn't stand a chance. I was sacked almost immediately."

Loos has reportedly signed a 300,000-pound deal with News of the World to reveal all about their alleged affair.

A spokesman for the Beckhams said they would not be commenting on the story.

Victoria has insisted their marriage is "fine" and will survive.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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