

Forever Sunday

WIMBLEDON

AFP, London

Crowd favourite Tim Henman says its time to make it 'People's Sunday' every year at Wimbledon.

Henman was delighted with the support he got from a flag-bedecked Centre Court crowd who had queued all morning to secure their places after the Wimbledon organisers had opened their doors for only the third time in the competition's history.

This year they had little option after two entire days' play was lost to rain during the first week, and Henman says that maybe it's time to make Sunday play a fixture.

"I'm not in any way criticising the fans that come and support the other 13 days," he said after defeating Hicham Arazi of Morocco on four sets to reach the last 16.

"But when you give those people the opportunity and they've queued like that, they are obviously passionate about the game and supporting me, I think it's something that could be capitalized upon.

"When I'm chairman (of the All England club) I'll bring it in."

That may not be music though to the ears of the tradition-entrenched hierarchy at Wimbledon who have zealously preserved the middle Sunday of the tournament as a day of rest.

Only in 1991 and 1997 previously had such a thing happened and similar to this Sunday, they were a roaring success.

Putting a brave face on things Saturday, the present All England chairman Chris Gorringe said that Sunday play was good at times for Wimbledon "because it so often brings a different type of person to the Championships."

It introduced, he said, "a new type of person."

But he held out no prospect of regular Sunday play as is the case at the other Grand Slam events in Australia, France and the United States.

Not satisfied with tweaking the Wimbledon worthies over Sunday play, Henman said that other initiatives would be welcome, pointing at the example of Roland Garros in Paris.

"They have a 'kids' day' on Wednesdays and they get a phenomenal turnout," he said.

"I'm sure it's a good thing for the game over there. Perhaps this is something that we could use."

Serena better late

WIMBLEDON

AFP, London

Two-time defending champion Serena Williams believes she enters the second week at Wimbledon faster, fitter and stronger than this time last year.

After the top seed defeated big sister Venus for the second successive time in 2003, she went into a knee injury slump which kept her off the tour for eight months.

But the 22-year-old insists the worst of those times are behind her and that she is in the best physical shape she's been in for a long time.

"I'm feeling better. I was disappointed at the end of the first week here last year," said Serena after breezing past Spain's Magui Serna 6-4, 6-0 in less than an hour to make the last 16 on Sunday.

"This year I am feeling better because I have been through a lot physically. To be at this point where I am feeling so good for the

first time is a real positive for me."

Serena has dropped just four games in each of her three rounds so far as she stays on course for a quarterfinal clash with compatriot and old rival Jennifer Capriati.

"I was really satisfied with my movement on Sunday," explained the champion.

"She is a tricky player especially in the second set when she was hitting the slice. But I came to the net a bit more. I am getting better with each round."

Serena enjoyed a title-winning return to the tour in Miami in March but looked jaded when she lost to Capriati in the semi-finals in Rome and to the same opponent in the last eight at the French Open.

That was her earliest Grand Slam exit for three years.

"There has been some legitimate soreness in the knee as well as having the confidence to run.

"It was like 'OK, I'm not going to go as fast as I can, I'll just go a little slower and then I'll pick it up.' So that was a major factor."

Too tired to fire

FROM PAGE 13

quartet of Real Madrid superstars - Zidane, Luis Figo, Raul and David Beckham - have underperformed in Portugal following a season which began with their club making a stamina-sapping tour of Asia?

Zidane even voiced his belief that the matches in Thailand, Hong Kong and Japan, all organised to capitalise on the signing of Beckham, were a factor behind Real's capitulation at the end of a season which ended without a trophy.

This year, Real have scaled down their pre-season trips to a mini tour of Japan from July 27 to August 1 because the Spanish giants have to face the humiliation of having to qualify for the Champions League in August.

Real's internationals must report for training on July 12.

It appears a common misconception that the world's top clubs have a finely tuned fitness programme tailored to the individual needs of their players.

In fact, Beckham has complained since England's elimination that conditioning work at Real tailed off at

the end of the season as the hunt for trophies was called off.

"I don't think we've done as much conditioning work at Real Madrid as we used to do at Manchester United," he said.

"I didn't feel as fit in the second half of the season as I did in the first half."

Franz Beckenbauer, who won the World Cup as a coach and a player, called for domestic league programmes to be reduced.

"The best-known players came to the Euro already tired because of the length and the intensity of their championships.

"Players have to play so many games both for club and country and it can mount up to a maximum of around 80 matches," Beckenbauer told O Jogo newspaper at the weekend.

The tiredness theory bears even more weight when one looks at the ages of players who have shone. Wayne Rooney is 18, Cristiano Ronaldo 19, Arjen Robben is 20 and 22-year-old Milan Baros leads all scorers after the Czech Republic's 3-0 victory over Denmark in Sunday's last quarter-final.

Charge

FROM PAGE 13

Sprem faces a huge challenge next. She plays former champion and fifth seed Lindsay Davenport for a place in the semis.

Davenport carried the flag for the twenty-somethings, beating Russian 12th seed Vera Zvonareva 6-4, 6-4.

The 1999 champion, who has yet to lose a set in this year's tournament, is looking increasingly dangerous in a wide open bottom half of the draw.

In the top half of the draw, Tatiana Golovin and Silvia Farina-Elia both won their third round matches held over from Sunday because of rain.

France's Golovin finished off Emmanuelle Gagliardi to set up a fourth round against champion and top seed Serena Williams and Farina-Elia beat Virginia Ruano Pascual.

In the men's draw, top seed Roger Federer continues the defence of his title with a match against Ivo Karlovic.

Ponting leaves team to visit ill relative

REUTERS, Sydney

Australia captain Ricky Ponting was absent when the team assembled in Darwin on Monday ahead of the first Test with Sri Lanka, after flying home to visit a sick relative.

Cricketer Australia released a statement saying Ponting had returned to Tasmania because of a family illness but provided no other details.



TATIANA GOLOVIN

Recall surprises him

Cricket

AFP, Darwin

Stuart MacGill said he's surprised to be here for the Sri Lankan cricket series after taking a morale stand against touring Zimbabwe last April.

The leg-spinner thought his Test career was finished when he boycotted the Zimbabwe series, but he was a late inclusion in the Australian squad for the two-Test series against Sri Lanka.

Australia's two-Test series in Zimbabwe was subsequently cancelled last month because of the weakness of the opposition although they did play three one-dayers.

And as a result of the row the Zimbabwe Cricket Union agreed this month to suspend its Test matches for the remainder of 2004.

MacGill was named last week as a replacement for injured fast bowler Brad Williams.

"To be honest until I just read the team sheet I wasn't really sure of exactly who was in the squad," said MacGill, who broke a family holiday in Venice to answer the selectors' call.

MacGill expected that with leading leg-spinner Shane Warne declared fit, and left-arm spinner Simon Katich in the squad, he might struggle to get a game.

"I wouldn't be surprised if I just



STUART MacGILL

had a suntan after a couple of weeks (here), but you can't really complain about that can you?"

MacGill thought he may have burnt his bridges when he advised selectors prior to the announcement of the Test and one-day squads that he did not believe he

could tour Zimbabwe and maintain a clear conscience.

"I'd be lying if I said I never thought about that, because I think that was one of the considerations that I had to make," MacGill said here on Monday.

"But having weighed that up, I felt that I was still comfortable with my decision and from there I never thought about it again.

"From there I just sort of looked to get down to work as usual ... fortunately I've seen me get back to the Australian team."

MacGill, 33, has been playing for Nottinghamshire in English county cricket.

"I was never expecting to be here," he said.

There was some doubt here late Monday whether skipper Ricky Ponting will play on Thursday's opening day of the first Test.

Ponting flew to Tasmania on Monday to visit an ill family member.

A Cricket Australia (CA) spokesman said it was not known when Ponting would arrive in Darwin.

"He could be on a plane tomorrow or he might not be here at all," the spokesman said.

Mohammedan

FROM PAGE 13

Chittagong Abahani stumbled to their second draw when they shared points with Chittagong City Corporation Ekadash in a 1-1 draw.

Abahani have 11 points from five matches.

Anwar shot City Corporation into the lead in the 19th minute, putting pressure on Abahani, who got a late equaliser from substitute Mehdi Hasaan Ujjal in the second half.

In another match, Shatadal Club and Kallal Sangsad drew 1-1.

Today's matches: City Corporation v Kallol Sangha; BCIC Krira Sangsad v Shatadal Club and Agrabad Nawjoan v Abahani.

Pioneer soccer

SPORTS REPORTER

Mirpur Football Academy recorded a 3-1 victory against MSPCC in a south zone match of the Shinepukur Ceramic Pioneer Football League at the Mirpur outdoor stadium yesterday.

In another match of the same zone Bangladesh Sports and Islamabhad shared points after one-half draw.

Following are the results of other matches:

West zone (Dhanmondi Club ground):

Dhaka Mahanagar-2, Ramjan KF XI-0

Central zone (Basabo ground):

Nawabpur KC-1, Khilgaon Protogi-0

East zone (Dhupkhol ground):

Red Sun-0, Jatrabari KC-0

Kiwi coach & captain get on well

BBC ONLINE, undated

New Zealand Cricket chief executive Martin Snedden has rubbished claims of a split between coach John Bracewell and captain Stephen Fleming.

Former England skipper Michael Atherton claimed in a newspaper column there was a "power struggle" going on.

But Snedden said: "I think Atherton has got absolutely no basis whatsoever for those comments.

"They've got an excellent working relationship, they complement each other really well."

Snedden, who is in the UK for a meeting of the International Cricket Council, spent time with the team and said he had "engaged carefully around the team" on the issue.

However he did admit: "John is only six months into his first international assignment, so he's going to reflect on this afterwards.

"And I'm sure he'll take some lessons out of it, as will all of us."

Since former Gloucestershire coach Bracewell took over the job of coach, and head of selectors, in January, the Black Caps have won one Test and lost five.

However they had won nine of 11 one-day internationals before washed-out matches against England on Thursday and West Indies on Saturday.

They get another chance at the hosts in a day-night match on Tuesday.

Slips cost 'em

FROM PAGE 13

"I thought we looked comfortable in the first-half, but the second-half had barely started and we found ourselves a goal down," said the 34-year-old defender, who plays in Greece for Panathinaikos.

"After that our concentration lapsed and when that happens at this level you get punished.

No room for

FROM PAGE 13

score when he made 400 not out against England at Antigua.

But West Indies, who have been struggling in the five-day game they dominated for most of the 1970s and 1980s, lost the four-match series 3-0.

And when they could only manage a draw in their next Test, at home to minnows Bangladesh, Lara threatened to resign the captaincy.

But he insisted at the time he had done that to spark his side and stressed Sunday that there was no contest when it came to personal milestones or team success.

"There's a lot of chat about the world record and the 501 (Lara's world record first-class score made for Warwickshire against Durham in 1994).

"But what has always driven me is playing for West Indies. I've always enjoyed playing for West Indies, it's always been my dream.

"Being at a low ebb now, our cricket, it's given me that something more to continue. I want to see us get back to the top and whatever I achieve personally is not very important.

"I want to see this young team, in four of five years, really contesting against the big teams in the world.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 25 mins and a list of words to be found.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with a list of words to be found. Includes a solution time of 25 mins and a list of words to be found.

STRAWBERRIES & CREAM

WIMBLEDON

AFP/REUTERS, London

Sjeng Schalken and Vincent Spadea are two men happy to grind their matches out from the baseline and the two expect to do exactly the same in their fourth round match.

"I think everybody who is going to watch the match will have to take a picnic bag with them," said the Dutchman.

PUTTING A SPELL ON GRASS

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), which runs the sport in Britain, was left embarrassed and out of pocket at the Wimbledon warm-up event in Eastbourne. The word 'Wimbledon' was spelt 'Wimbeldon' on the front page of the official programme. The first run had to be shredded at a cost of 4,000 pounds.

DREAM DOUBLES MATCH

Jimmy Connors wants to join forces with one great rival John McEnroe and play a one million dollar doubles match in Las Vegas.

Their opponents would be Pete Sampras and a player of Sampras' choice -- preferably Las Vegas showman Andre Agassi.

"I'm counting on McEnroe to go out there and cover a good part of the court for me," said Connors.

PEOPLE'S SUNDAY NOT SO POPULAR

The Centre Court may have been packed out not everybody was so taken with People's Sunday with Court One barely a third full and the outside courts mostly empty. A total of 28,000 tickets were on sale, but the official attendance was 22,155.

CONNORS REMEMBERS SENIORSERVICE

Despite winning two Wimbledon titles, Jimmy Connors has no doubt about his career highlight as a singles player -- reaching the semi-finals of the US Open as a 39-year-old in 1991.

"To hear that kind of noise at a tennis match. If I would never have picked up a tennis racket for the rest of my life I could have walked away and never needed any more," said Connors.

YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS

John McEnroe says he knew he was right all along -- umpires really are "the pits of the world".

"Now perhaps people will understand why I used to rant at them so much," McEnroe said after a crucial tiebreak that ended with Venus Williams tumbling out of Wimbledon.

"Umpires of the world, you cannot be serious," he quipped in his Sunday Telegraph newspaper column.

"I have waited a long time to be able to take them to task and the shenanigans surrounding Venus Williams's defeat last week provided it."

SERENA IN THE FUTURE

Asked what she would be doing

in 20 years from now, twice Wimbledon champion Serena Williams sure had big ambitions.

"I would see my company Aneres (her name spelt backwards), we'd be really huge -- hopefully," she said.

"If it's blessed enough, we'd have a really solid company with my clothing line and hopefully have a few little Serenas running around -- two Serenas.

"Hopefully by then I would really have made my mark in the movies as well. I would say about -- I don't know how many films. Do a few different comedies, a few different scary films or whatever. I think it would be fun."

ADMIRING CASH

Pat Cash is the latest in a long line of former Wimbledon champions lost in admiration for Roger Federer's talent.

"Federer is the most complete performer in the game today," Cash said of the reigning champion, echoing the praise heaped on the Swiss reigning champion by John McEnroe and Goran Ivanisevic.

"Aside from taking a length of rope and looping the end around his ankles, getting the better of him is unquestionably the most difficult task in tennis," Cash said.

The only weakness Cash could see in the Federer game was his backhand slice.

Federer, asked for his reaction to Cash's comments, said: "If he gives me compliments, that's OK. If he doesn't say something that nice, that's OK. But I don't take it seriously."

Windies win in style

Cricket

AFP, Nottingham

West Indies cruised to a seven-wicket NatWest Series one-day international win against England at Trent Bridge here Sunday.

Needing just 148 for victory, in the first match of the tournament not to be a no-result washout, West Indies reached their target with more than 160 overs to spare.

Opener Chris Gayle was 60 not out and West Indies captain Brian Lara 32 not out, the left-handed pair sharing an unbroken stand of 55 in 45 balls.

But victory was set up by a bowling display that saw West Indies dismiss England for 147, the home side's lowest one-day international total at Trent Bridge and the lowest on the ground by a side batting first.

Medium-pace Dwayne Bravo did most damage with career-best one-day figures of three for 26 but all the seamers chipped in after Lara won the toss.

His youthful pace attack showed no sign of nerves but Lara insisted he was not surprised by the way they coped with the pressure of a big crowd.

Man-of-the-match Bravo said of his performance, "I was not surprised. I knew I had the ability to do it."

England captain Michael Vaughan had no excuses, insisting the loss had not been crucial to the outcome.

Only Andrew Strauss (43) and

one-day debutant Graint Jones (35), who put on 82 in 90 balls, made significant scores as the rest of England's batting collapsed against disciplined pace bowling.

England, with such a low total to defend, opted for all-out attack. But they missed a chance when Shivnarine Chanderpaul, on three, was dropped by Strauss at fourth slip off Darren Gough in the seventh over.

Gough had more bad luck when he saw Gayle, on nine, edge a cut to second slip where Marcus Trescothick dropped the chance with West Indies 29 without loss in the 11th over.

Gayle made the most of his reprieve, powering his way to a 56-ball fifty and West Indies to a bonus point win.

TRIANGULAR TABLE

REUTERS, London

Standings in the one-day triangular series after Sunday's match between England and West Indies at Trent Bridge (tabulate under played, won, lost, no result, bonus points, total points):

Table with columns: WI, NZ, Eng, Points, Bonus, Total. WI: 2, 1, 0, 1, 9. NZ: 2, 0, 0, 2, 6. Eng: 2, 0, 1, 1, 3.

(Points system: win with bonus point 6, win without bonus point 5, tie or no result 3, loss, but not conceding bonus point 1 and loss, conceding bonus point 0)

Earlier England still had more than 11 overs remaining when they lost their last wicket to beat their previous lowest Trent Bridge one-day score of 157 against Pakistan in 1987.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the NatWest Series one-day international between England and the West Indies at Trent Bridge on Sunday:

ENGLAND: 147 all out in 38.2 overs (Strauss 43, Jones 35; Bravo 3-26, Bradshaw 2-32, Rampaul 2-34, Lawson 2-36)

WEST INDIES

Gayle not out 60

Chanderpaul b McGrath 20

Smith c Trescothick b Anderson 6

Sarwan c Trescothick b Anderson 13

Lara not out 32

Extras: (b-1, lb-3, w-13) 17

Total: (For 33 wickets in 32.2 overs) 148

Fall of wickets: 1-62, 2-71, 3-93

Did not bat: Bravo, Powell, Jacobs, Bradshaw, Rampaul, Lawson

Bowler O M R W

Gough 9 0 33 0

Harmison 10 2 29 0

Anderson 7.2 0 39 2

Clarke 4 0 30 0

McGrath 2 0 13 1

Result: West Indies won by seven wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Dwayne Bravo.

US gives self-rule to Iraq

FROM PAGE 1

The first hurdle is the January elections to choose a 275-member transitional National Assembly tasked with not only drawing up a permanent constitution to put to the vote in October 2005, but also guiding the government.

This first stage is especially perilous because security must be assured not only on polling day but throughout the entire process to ensure a fair campaign.

But an even harder task will be to draw up a permanent constitution acceptable to all of Iraq's multitude of religious and ethnic groups.

The majority Shia, led by their spiritual chief Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, have already said they do not want the Governing Council's interim charter, in force until the end of 2005, to form the basis of a permanent constitution.

Militants had conducted a campaign of car bombings, kidnappings and other violence that killed hundreds of Iraqis in recent weeks and was designed to disrupt the transfer,