

Sharapova bows out

AFP, Montreal

Top seed Amelie Mauresmo of France and third seed Anastasia Myskina advanced to the quarterfinals of a 1.3 million-dollar WTA hardcourt tournament here Thursday but Russian teen Maria Sharapova was eliminated.

Mauresmo ousted Russia's Elena Bovina 6-2, 3-6, 6-2 to book a quarterfinal date against Croatia's Karolina Sprem, who defeated Sugiyama 6-3, 6-4, in another third-round match.

Russian beauty Maria Shara-pova, the sixth seed, was upset by compatriot Vera Zvonareva in three sets 4-6, 6-4, 6-4.

French Open champion Myskina breezed past American Chanda Rubin 6-4, 6-0 to reach the quarters. She said her Roland Garros win has given her more confidence on the tour.

Third seeded Mauresmo overcame a poor second set to beat Tamarine Tanasugarn of Thailand, 6-4, 1-6, 6-2 on Tuesday.

Indo-Pak team to take on World XI



CRICINFO, undated

A plan has been mooted to organise a series between a combined India-Pakistan XI and the Rest of the World. The matches, which would be jointly organised by the Citizens Council for a Better Tomorrow (CCBT) and 9 Yards Sports & Entertainment, is likely to comprise four one-dayers played around the world, in Mumbai, Kolkata, Manchester and Lahore.

The organisers hope that the series can be held either late this year or in the beginning of 2005. The two main stumbling blocks, which are yet to be overcome, are the permission from the respective cricket boards -- quite apart from the go-ahead from the International Cricket Council -- and squeezing the series into the packed international calendar.

However, Sanjay Jha of 9 Yards Sports & Entertainment was confident of overcoming these hurdles. The Indian Express quoted him as saying: "We are confident that the respective boards will give the green signal as we want to have the matches either in September after the Champions Trophy or January when the players will be free from their commitments to their respective countries.

"Though the players including Ricky Ponting and Adam Gilchrist, who will turn out for the Rest of the World, have agreed to play, we are still to get permission from the ICC and respective cricket boards."

Jha also confirmed that this will be called the Sadbhavana [meaning Goodwill] series. With the cream of international talent set to be on show, this event, if held, is definitely a mouthwatering prospect.

Kenya 360-4

AFP, Nairobi

Former Kenya cricket captain Maurice Odumbe resumed his batting and showed he was still in perfect form with an unbeaten 36 against Pakistan A in the first day of the four-day game at Nairobi's Sir Ali Muslim Club.

Odumbe, whose international future hangs in the balance, came to the crease when the home side were four wickets down and partnered Ravindu Shah to bring up the score to 360 for four at the close on Thursday.

But it was Shah who stole the limelight. The Kenyan innings were built around the right-hand batsman, who finished with a brilliant 170 not out.

With opening partner Kennedy Obuya, Shah put on 105 runs for the first wicket before Obuya was caught behind by the Pakistan wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal.

Akmal also took account of the Kenyan captain Steve Tikolo. Tikolo, on 80 was racing to his second century of the series when he was caught behind off the bowling of Junaid Zia who took two wickets in the match.

Kenya will resume their batting on Friday.

BU down Russel

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maximum points from three matches while Russel has seven points from four matches.

Brothers coach Naimuddin was satisfied with his boys' performance although they missed lot of scoring opportunities.

"We missed some easy chances otherwise the winning margin could've been wider. But they proved they are the best team at the moment," said the veteran Indian coach.

"I didn't want to take any risk against Russel that's why I put defender Rajani in his original position. Though I still believe he has lot of potential to serve the team up front."

Russel coach Wajed Gazi also believed that if his boys didn't spoil some good opportunities the result could've been different.

"Brothers is a strong side, no doubt. But my boys missed their chances," said Gazi.

Yellow cards: Sujon, Monwar and Titoo (Brothers), Burdeep Mohammed (Russel)

TEAMS
BROTHERS UNION: Ali, Jahangir, Sujon, Rajani, Nazrul, Arman, Abul (Tapu), Iqbal (Rikta), Monwar (Liton), Titoo, and Alfaz.

SHEIKH RUSSEL: Apel, Biplob, Narayan, Burdeep, Mintoo, Asif, Kamal, Asad (Apu), Jalal, Bulbul (Maruf) and Younnes.

Referee: Mansoor Azad

Eriksson lives

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Thompson who has been widely criticised for his handling of the incident.

The FA said it was appointing the chairmen of its two main boards, Dave Richards and Roger Burden, to "support (Thompson) in his role of leading the organisation during this period".

Eriksson's lucrative contract, extended before England were eliminated in the quarter-finals of Euro 2004 in Portugal, meant he could have been entitled to a compensation package deal worth 14 million pounds (25.5 million dollars).

England's next match is a friendly against Ukraine on August 18 at St James' Park.

They begin their qualifying campaign for the 2006 World Cup next to Austria and four days later play their second group match away to Poland.

Failure to get off to a winning start will intensify the pressure on both Eriksson and the FA.

Sachin no god

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produce a defining match-winning Test innings have been raised in the past. Very conscious of his place in cricket history, Tendulkar has said he wants to shed that tag.

In one-day cricket, however, there has never been any room for doubt. His 13,415 runs and 37 centuries are both world records.

Tendulkar has set such exalted standards in the shorter version of the game that anything less than a match-winning hundred from him is regarded as failure.

Even now, Tendulkar is less dominant only when compared with himself. In his prime in 1998, he scored 1,894 runs in 34 one-day matches at an average of 65.31 with nine centuries. In 18 games this year, he has made 730 runs at 42.94 with one century and five 50s.

Any team would be happy with such production from their one-day opener. Tendulkar says he still has the hunger but he has suffered from a spate of wear and tear injuries over the years, from a broken toe to a fractured finger to a damaged ankle.

His biggest problem has been a long-term back injury that has resurfaced several times since 1999.

But former India captain Sunil Gavaskar gave him his vote of confidence last month, saying "Tendulkar's best was yet to come."

Gavaskar holds the world record for Test centuries with 34. Tendulkar is just one behind.

FINAL: China v Japan

It doesn't get any bitter



AFP, Beijing

China and Japan come face to face Saturday to settle old scores in an Asian Cup final match that has been dragged through the political mud.

China are looking to lift the silverware for the first time while defending champions Japan are intent on keeping it out of their arch rival's hands.

While the players will be trying to focus on the football, the match has assumed political connotations with senior leaders from both countries chipping in with comments about the booing antics of Chinese fans.

Japan's team and national anthem has been heckled throughout the championship, with spectators pelted by plastic bottles as China bristles about Japan's war-time past.

Tokyo made a formal protest while China hit back with its own complaints over a gaffe that saw Taiwan identified as its own country in the Japanese Football Association's Asian Cup media guide.

Fears that the fans' behaviour could overshadow the finale have prompted tournament organisers to draft in more than 1,000 extra police to ensure there are no ugly scenes in the stadium.

It will be a grudge match in more ways than one.

While China's fans will be anxious to put one over their neighbour because of its war-time past, the team will want to overturn a record that has seen them lose to Japan on six of the last eight occasions.

This includes Japan's 3-2 semi-final triumph at the last Asian Cup in Lebanon four years ago, with Japan going on to take the title.

Chinese coach Arie Haan is facing injury problems that could leave him without captain and defensive lynchpin Li Weifeng and veteran striker Hao Haidong.

Both players are vital cogs in the Chinese machine, with Li instrumental in China only conceding three



PHOTO: AFP

FRIENDLY RIVALS! China's Dutch coach Ari Haan shakes hands with Japan's Brazilian boss Zico (R) with the Asia Cup in the foreground at a press conference in Beijing yesterday.

goals in the competition. Hao, meanwhile, is the talismanic front man who inspires the rest of his team.

"Besides Hao Haidong, Li Weifeng has broken ribs. According to the present situation, it will be very difficult for him to play on Saturday," Haan was quoted as saying by the Chinese press.

"As coach, I only have three substitutes, besides Li Weifeng and Hao H Haidong, Shao Jiayi is also injured. Given all of these injuries, I will have to make some difficult choices."

Japan coach Zico has his own selection worries and will have to do some juggling with midfielder Endo out of the reckoning because of his red card against Bahrain in their rollercoaster semi-final.

Meanwhile, Keiji Tamada who scored twice against Bahrain, is struggling with a bruised knee.

Zico, who lit up international football with Brazil during his heyday, has never lifted a trophy as a coach and wants his hands on the cup.

"Some coaches relax once they've got in the final, but that's not my style. If you're in the final, you have to win," he said.

"That's my mentality."

"I think that although the stands will be full of 66,000 Chinese fans, we will bring the attack to China. We have 11 fierce players who are going to do everything to win. This will be a very good match," he told Japanese press.

Midfield star Shunsuke Nakamura said Japan would try to exploit space out wide and get behind the Chinese defense.

"China's four back defenders are tall and can head the ball, but on the

wings they give you a lot of space, so I think we have to have the courage to play inside," he said.

With the political reverberations hanging heavy over the game, Haan urged his players to focus only on the job in hand.

"At this time, I hope my players don't think too much about these things," he said. "They want to direct all of their concentration to the football field to beat Japan and win the championship."

Zheng Zhi summed up the feelings in the Chinese camp.

"A game like this, the final match, everyone wants to play, everyone wants to play in the crucial matches, this is a historic match," he told reporters.

"More importantly it is against Japan. Everyone on this team wants to play, including myself, I really want to beat Japan."

WI wobble again



AFP, Derby

West Indies suffered another depressing day on their tour of England as they were bowled out for just 223 by Derbyshire on the first day of three.

In their final match before next week's third Test against England at Old Trafford -- West Indies have lost the first two by huge margins of over 200 runs each -- the tourists' innings lasted under 41 overs.

Their fielding display also inspired little confidence as Derbyshire reached 102 for two at stumps -- just 121 runs behind.

Admittedly West Indies were without rested captain Brian Lara and the three frontline pace bowlers who played in the second Test at Edgbaston but that alone could not excuse the performance of those on the field.

Lara, who has been facing calls to stand down as skipper was backed Thursday to continue by tour manager Tony Howard in a statement which also said the team was "fully focused on achieving better results".

But once again a lack of application cost West Indies and had Derbyshire

held their catches they might have been in an even worse position.

Dwayne Smith top scored with 55 but was put down three times in a West Indies innings where only three other batsmen made it past 30.

Derbyshire off-spinner Nathan Dumelow had a day to remember, taking career-best figures of five for 51.

The hosts gave a debut to 16-year-old Chris Paget, a pupil at Repton School in Derbyshire, who became the youngest to play for the county since 1967. Paget's day was spoilt when he had Smith dropped in his third over, the batsman instead falling to Dumelow.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at the close on the first day of the West Indies' three-day tour match against Derbyshire at Derby on Thursday:

WEST INDIES: First innings
Gayle b Havell 42
Joseph c Sutton b Havell 23
Devon c Gunter b Dumelow 31
Bravo c Sutton b Walker 3
Dwayne c Gunter b Dumelow 55
Jacobs c Gait b Dumelow 33
Sarwan lbw b Dumelow 6
Banks c Sutton b Dumelow 6
Baugh lbw b Gunter 5
Mohammed c Sutton b Gunter 4
Edwards not out 5

Extras: (lb-7, w-1, nb-2) 10

Total: (All out in 40.1 overs) 223

Fall of wkts: 1-52 2-85 3-103 4-109 5-159

6-182 7-209 8-219 9-214 10-223.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Havell	10	1	47	2
Walker	6	0	44	1
Gunter	9.1	0	68	2
Dumelow	12	3	51	5
Paget	3	1	6	0

DERBYSHIRE: First innings

Gait lbw b Dwayne	13
Stubbings not out	37
Adnan c Baugh b Gayle	31
Selwood not out	5
Extras: (lb-5, w-7, nb-4)	16
Total: (For two wkts 49 overs)	102

To bat: Bryant, Sutton, Gunter,

Dumelow, Walker, Havell, Paget.

Fall of wkts: 1-26, 2-80

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Edwards	8	1	28	0
Dwayne	9	2	19	1
Joseph	5	1	15	0
Gayle	9	4	14	1
Banks	12	6	19	0
Mohammed	6	4	2	0

Youths becoming

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that selectors do not want to risk a lengthy ban by playing him without first getting an all-clear from the ICC's technical committee on his action which was reported during the Asia Cup.

The Under-19 side's opening bowler Nazmul Hossain could fill in for Razzak if the 22-year-old spinner is not selected. Another name reportedly under consideration is that of experienced left-arm seamer Monjurul Islam.

The Tigers will start their training for the Champions Trophy on August 9. They will leave Dhaka on August 26 for London.

Bangladesh's first group match in the competition is against South Africa on September 12 and last against the West Indies on September 15.

Before those games, the Tigers are scheduled to play two practice matches each against Ireland and Scotland.

Rudolph defies SL

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fours and a six to Muralitharan, whom he once hit for 14 in an over.

He was out trying to hit the off-spinner out of the ground once more as Kumar Sangakkara brought off a well-judged catch at mid wicket.

If Muralitharan could neither strike at regular intervals nor stem the flow of runs, left-arm spinner

Sanath Jayasuriya did both as he picked up two important wickets in the second session.

He removed captain Graeme Smith (23) lbw and then induced an edge from Mark Boucher (six). Smith, who opens the batting, came in at number five because of a viral infection.

Left-arm seamer Chaminda Vaas and part-time off-spinner Tillakaratne Dilshan took a wicket each after the second new ball was taken in the last session.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the third day of the first Test between Sri Lanka and South Africa at the Galle International Stadium on Friday:

SRI LANKA: First innings 486 (Jayawardene 237, Vaas 69, Sangakkara 58, Kaluwitharana 33; Pollock 4-48, Hayward 3-81)

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (over-nine hit 82-0)

Dippenaar run out	46
Van Jaarsveld c Samaraweera b Muralitharan	37
Rudolph not out	85
Kallis c Sangakkara b Muralitharan	59
Smith lbw b Jayasuriya	23
Boucher c Kaluwitharana b Jayasuriya	6
Pollock c Sangakkara b Vaas	25
Klusener c Jayawardene b Dilshan	2
Boje not out	31
Extras: (b-14, lb-8, nb-10, w-1)	33
Total: (For seven wkts in 124 overs)	347

Fall of wkts: 1-84, 2-96, 3-168, 4-213, 5-225, 6-287, 7-295

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	22	9	45	1
Maharof	19	9	42	0
Muralitharan	39	8	112	2
Chandana	18	0	68	0
Jayasuriya	20	9	34	2
Dilshan	6	0	24	1

Toss: Sri Lanka

Umpires: David Shepherd (ENG) and Daryl Harper (AUS)

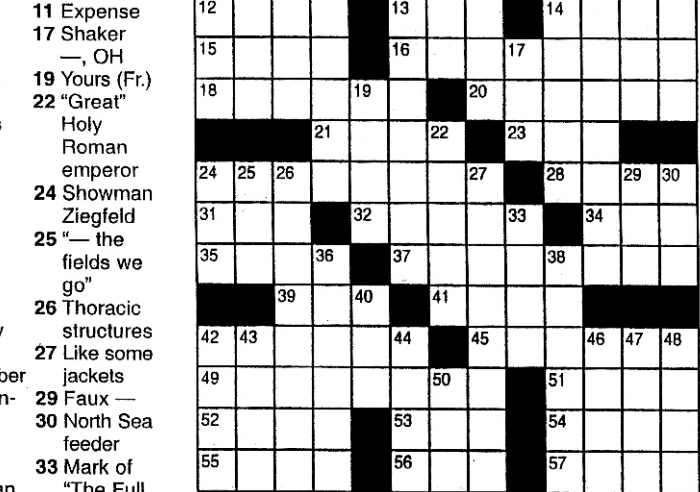
TV umpire: Tyrone Wijewardene (SRI)

Match referee: Clive Lloyd (WIS)

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Toast topper
5 Singer Sumac
8 With (Fr.)
12 Predicate part
13 Years and years and years and ...
14 "The Adventures of -- and Ois"
15 Hertz rival
16 "Darn it!"
18 Straight
20 Finally
21 D-Day town
23 Sun. speech
24 "Indeed!"
28 Recording
31 Wahine's gift
32 Go — tailspin
34 Whale group
35 Scepter toppers
37 "Oh, my!"
39 Recyclable item

DOWN
1 Office shape
2 Jeans-maker
3 Hilbert's delente
4 Underwent
5 From January through December
6 Do lawn-work
7 Handle (Lat.)
8 Talisman
9 Wakefield, for one
10 Benevolent order
11 Expense
17 Shaker —, OH
19 Yours (Fr.)
22 "Great" Holy Roman emperor
24 Showman
4 Preoccupancy excessively
49 "Gosh!"
51 Academic one
52 Unoriginal
53 Reply (Abbr.)
54 Wrong
55 Colonial sewer
56 Astronaut
57 Highway section



CRYPTOQUIP
E N H G Z O H A V K G X V
L A P X G S B K Q U B P X G Z
O Q T , W N ' Z W R X S N W T H
L Z B B H U Z T Z A A K K R T Z E B .
Saturday's Cryptquip: PAPA WAS A REALLY HUGE FAN OF NEW ORLEANS PARTIES. HE RENAMED HIMSELF MARTY GRAU.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: T equals B
The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, 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.

Football

AFP, London

Sven-Goran Eriksson may have been cleared in the sex scandal that has rocked the Football Association (FA), but British papers warned Friday the knives will quickly be out for the Swede should England falter in their 2006 World Cup qualifiers.

The FA on Thursday found that Eriksson had "no case to answer" over charges he misled them over his affair with FA secretary Faria Alam, 38.

"Pole axed" was the back page headline in the Sun, Britain's biggest-selling daily tabloid, which predicted that Eriksson would be sacked if England lost either of next month's 2006 World Cup qualifiers against Austria and Poland.

The Sun said that 56-year-old Eriksson's England career was "hanging by a thread," adding that England's exit from Euro 2004 at the quarter-final stage had not helped the Swede's future prospects.

It argued that the FA board "have decided that if they cannot get him (Eriksson) for a sex scandal they will get

him for rubbish football".

"Sven has a result... at last!" trumpeted the Daily Mirror, adding: "Eriksson knows any slip-ups will leave him wide open to further calls for him to be axed."

The Daily Mail called it a "hollow victory" for Eriksson. "There will be no margin for error in his handling of the national football team."

"Sven survives, Faria cashes in

and English football is the loser... again," headlined The Independent.

The paper rounded on FA chairman Geoff Thompson, who, it said, "benefits from what seems to be nothing less than a meltdown in basic working morality."

Thompson speedily approved the denial issued by the FA that Eriksson had an affair with Alam, "the cause of deep embarrassment which in a more worldly society would have been avoided by a simple device: no comment," it said.

The FA was forced to publish a humiliating retraction in which it confirmed chief executive Mark Palios also had an affair with Alam.

Both Palios and FA communications director Colin Gibson, who tried to broker a deal with Sunday tabloid the News of the World in which he would provide details of Eriksson's relationship with Alam provided Palios' name was kept out of the paper, have since resigned.

"Eriksson faces another kind of pressure," added The Independent. "He cannot afford a single slip in the qualifying campaign for World Cup 2006. He may be protected by a huge contract, but there is a point where performance is required and any strict analysis of his recent efforts shows a desperate shortfall in vision and authority."

"The FA must hold its collective breath for a few more days at least," it warned in reference to likely details to be revealed by Alam over the workings of English football's governing body.

Alam, who also resigned from the FA, is set to sell her story to a TV channel and two newspapers for at

least 500,000 pounds.

"The end of the affair is just the start of embarrassment for the FA," warned The Guardian.

"For Sven-Goran Eriksson, who has already ended the story of his built-up shoes outside Ulrika Jonsson's bedroom, there may be much worse embarrassment to come," the papers said.

The broadsheet cautioned that "antipathy towards Eriksson is common knowledge now and it will colour future reactions to him and the results he achieves."

"One bad result in 2006 World Cup qualifying will reignite resentment and have some FA figures wondering if there is any way to berid of him," it said.

Under the sober headline 'Eriksson has no case to answer', the broadsheet Times asked Alam's publicist Max Clifford - a well-known fixer in British media circles - who had the most to fear from her revelations.

Clifford replied: "Certainly not Sven. She thinks very highly of him and does not wish to have revenge on him... She is very unhappy at the way the FA have looked after her."

Eriksson was branded "Teflon Man" by the tabloid Daily Express which claimed that no allegations ever stuck to the Swede.

It commented that "never before has the FA reached such an incredible situation with their incumbent England coach."

Elsewhere, the broadsheet Daily Telegraph summed up the feelings of many bewildered fans: "Eriksson ... uttered a phrase that serves as a perfect headline for the whole fiasco: 'This is nonsense.'"

Van Nistelrooy out for a month



AFP, London

Alex Ferguson's plans for the new season were thrown into turmoil Thursday with the news that Manchester United striker Ruud van Nistelrooy will miss the next month because of a hernia.

The 28-year-old Dutch striker, United's top scorer last season, will undergo surgery next week in a bid to cure the problem.

He played for his country at Euro 2004, scoring four goals, but was banned for two international matches by UEFA for insulting the referee after the Netherlands lost 2-1 to hosts Portugal in