

Federer denies Paradorn

AFP, Bangkok Roger Federer dashed the home-town victory dream of fourth seed Paradorn Srichaphan 7-5, 2-6, 6-3 Saturday to blast into the final of the 550,000-dollar Thailand Open Saturday over Asia's tennis hero.



PHOTO: COURTESY

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman (2nd from R) hands over the trophy to the Stamford University team after the hosts won the inter-private university football tournament title with a 3-2 tie-break win against Asian University at the Army Stadium yesterday.

Stamford private varsity soccer champs

SPORTS REPORTER Stamford University lifted the first-ever Stamford Inter-Private University Football tournament title beating Asian University 3-2 in the tiebreaker at the Army Stadium yesterday.

PREVIEW: Premiership Reds face Chelsea test



REUTERS, London

Liverpool will discover how realistic their title ambitions are when they travel to buoyant Chelsea on Sunday. Jose Mourinho has yet to taste defeat in nine games at the Stamford Bridge helm and his team appears rapidly to have acquired their manager's occasionally breathtaking self-assurance.

"It is worrying that our away performances are so different from the games at Anfield and we have to work hard to change that," Benitez said. But insisted his overhaul of Liverpool should not be judged for another two or three months.

have the players needed to turn the club around after the loss of Owen and Gerrard. "We know what to do. We have the ideas," he said, adding: "The only thing is other teams can be more aggressive and you have to know what to do depending on the opposition."



RAFAEL BENITEZ



JOSE MOURINHO

"It is difficult because we have a lot of international games now." "If you have six weeks without all the international games and you train all the week perhaps you can see more things."

selects him for his league debut against Middlesbrough at Old Trafford. The 18-year-old's dazzling performance against Turkey's Fenerbahce in the Champions League was an indication of United's firepower with Alan Smith, Ruud van Nistelrooy and Louis Saha also vying for places in attack.

Indo-Pak

FROM PAGE 13 forces in international hockey but things are not as bad as has been projected," said Singh, one of four former Indian Olympians who were here as guests.

Politics only on Imran's mind



AFP, London

Imran Khan, the former cricket star, says he is putting all his energy into politics in his native Pakistan after his divorce from British socialite Jemima Goldsmith.

Afghans meet Myanmar today

SPORTS REPORTER

After a day's break, the Under-21 Challenge Cup invitational hockey tournament resumes today at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Pratishthan (BKSP).

Kamran kept as Moin's standby

REUTERS, Peshawar

Pakistan have called up wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal as a backup for Moin Khan for the second match of a triangular one-day series against Zimbabwe on Sunday.

TV row on

CRICINFO, undated

The confusion over the telecast rights for the India-Australia Test series shows no signs of ending. Just a day after the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced that Sony Entertainment Television would telecast the series live, Zee Telefilms moved the Supreme Court and asked it to stop this from happening, reported NDTV.

To complicate matters further, Prasar Bharati, the national broadcaster, stated that it would go to court as well to challenge the decision.

"Prasar Bharati had bid higher than Sony in the initial bids invited by the BCCI for telecast rights," KS Sarma, the chief executive of Prasar Bharati, told Press Trust of India.

"However, the BCCI favoured Sony. We will challenge the issue in Supreme Court." Prasar Bharati's bid amount was 704 crore rupees (around 153 million dollars), compared to Sony's 600 crore rupees (130 million dollars).

Sharapova storms into final

AFP, Seoul

Russia's Maria Sharapova, women's singles winner at Wimbledon this year, routed Anne Kremer of Luxembourg Saturday to advance to the final of the Korea Open WTA tournament here.

"I think I easily won the semifinal because of my good condition," Sharapova said. "Kremer couldn't keep up with me today."

Sharapova said she expects to win Sunday's final, where she will face Poland's Marta Domachowska, who defeated Abigail Spears of the United States 7-6, 6-1.

Langer ton in drawn tie

FROM PAGE 13 Lee struggled to make an impression on the slow pitch at the Brabourne Stadium, his two wickets in 21 overs costing 53 runs.

Australia's batting options. "At number three we have a few options. Clarke had an opportunity to open and he looked settled. He put forward a strong case."

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like McGrath, Lee, Watson, Clarke, Hauritz, Katich, and Hodge with their respective statistics.

Result: Match drawn. Total: (For 1 wkt in 54 overs) 207. Fall of wicket: 1-142.

Inzhaman

FROM PAGE 13 Seamers Edward Rainsford and Tawanda Mupariwa are hoping for a recall, with Muleki Nkala's place possibly under threat after conceding 47 from six overs in Multan.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS 36 Regions 1 Zinger 5 Wye follower 8 Post-christmas event 12 Toast topper 13 Work unit 14 New Haven colleague 15 — It Romantic? 16 Basic training site 18 Blackout criminals 20 Impressive setup 21 Meadow 22 Dander 23 "Psycho" setting 26 Forest bird 30 Early animal sanctuary 31 Enjoyment 32 Court 33 Hoffman film



CRYPTOQUIP T I S K A C T J S D Y M S I C K C W U X G A I M U V T Y A S X D W O A Y D W C P S D G R J C OTICR "YLC VTVCW PLTAMC." Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I'M VERY GOOD AT GROWING WHEAT AND BARLEY, SO WOULD YOU SAY I HAVE A GRAIN THUMB? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals P



PHOTO: AFP Russian star Maria Sharapova reaches for a return in her semifinal against Anne Kremer of Luxembourg in the Korean Open in Seoul yesterday. The Wimbledon champion won 6-0, 6-2.

Owen's place in peril?

REUTERS, London

England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson says striker Michael Owen must prove in training next week that he deserves to face Wales in a World Cup qualifier -- or risk losing his place.

Faced with stiff competition at Real Madrid from Raul, Ronaldo and Fernando Morientes, Owen has mainly been limited to cameo appearances since leaving Liverpool in August.

"Of course, I've been thinking about Michael Owen's situation because he's been sitting on the bench a lot now," Eriksson told reporters on Friday.

"But I won't decide what to do until the practice sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Training is the most important thing. You can see straight away how they are -- if they are down, if they are on good form and if they are sharp."

Eriksson is expected to choose two strikers from three hopefuls to face Wales in Saturday's Group Six qualifier in Manchester.

With 27 goals in 63 England appearances, Owen has been a first choice striker since bursting on to the scene at the 1998 World Cup and has been made vice-captain

under Eriksson. "As a manager you should try to be loyal to the players...but at some point, if I have a player sitting on the bench in the squad who is better than someone who normally plays, I have no doubts."

"It's not like I have favourites." Summing up Owen's plight, Eriksson said: "It's not good for him, it's not good for me, or for England if he plays too little football at the moment..."



MICHAEL OWEN

"Of course, it's tough for him, he's never been used to sitting on the bench, not for England or for Liverpool." One place up front looks destined for Wayne Rooney. Jermain Defoe, in sparkling form for Tottenham Hotspur, has also been a

serious contender since scoring on his first England start in last month's 2-1 qualifying win in Poland. Asked if the Spurs striker had a chance of playing against Wales, Eriksson said: "Of course."

Concern over Owen's fitness reflects an unwritten rule that sidelined players lack sharpness on their return to action. Eriksson, whose team face Azerbaijan in another World Cup qualifier in Baku on October 13, has selection headaches elsewhere in the team.

With Rio Ferdinand back from suspension and Sol Campbell back having returned after injury, Eriksson's 2002 World Cup central defensive pairing is available to take over from John Terry and Ledley King.

"These are extremely good problems to have," said the Swede. Eriksson said left back Wayne Bridge is a doubt, while midfielders Kieron Dyer (hamstring) and Steven Gerrard (foot) are injured, forcing a re-shuffle in the middle. Nicky Butt would be a candidate for the central midfield role alongside Frank Lampard, while Joe Cole was one for the left side, said Eriksson, who names his squad on Sunday.

WORLD FOOTBALL BRIEFS

AFP, London

England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson believes Wayne Rooney could swoop the FIFA World Player of the Year award at the age of just 18.

The Swede is part of the panel which will draw up a list of 30 candidates to be published next week and he is convinced that the 18-year-old Manchester United striker could be a threat to favourites Thierry Henry and Ronaldinho.

"I have had to select a list of 30 players and I should be very surprised if Wayne Rooney is not on that list," said the Swede. "At Euro 2004, he was one of the best players, if not the best. Is he a genuine candidate? I think so. But suddenly when you talk to those terms, the competition is very high."

WES SET TO LEAVE OLD TRAFFORD

AFP, London

Manchester United are prepared to part company with central defender Wes Brown after he rejected a new contract.

The much-injured 24-year-old is out of contract next summer and his demands for a substantial increase in salary were rejected by the club. "We've made the boy an offer and he's turned it down. It's his decision," United boss Sir Alex Ferguson to The Guardian newspaper.

Ferguson said he would prefer if England international Brown stayed at Old Trafford but that "if he wants to look elsewhere that's up to him." If the situation remains unchanged, Brown would be free to seek a change of club during the winter transfer window.

WENGER BRUSHES ASIDE BUST-UP

AFP, London

Arsene Wenger on Friday attempted to play down a furious bust-up between Arsenal skipper Patrick Vieira and right-back Lauren after the English side's 1-1 Champions League draw with Norwegian side Rosenborg in Trondheim.

Players and staff tried to contain the scuffle, which led to police being called and Vieira, 28, and Cameroon international Lauren, 27, being ordered to sit as far apart as possible on the team coach.

Arsenal had initially claimed the incident had been blown out of all proportion but Wenger confirmed Friday that there had been what he termed a "minor disagreement."

But the Frenchman said he would not be taking any disciplinary action against the two players and claimed that their argument was a sign that his players cared passionately about their performances rather than dressing room disharmony. Refusing to elaborate further, Wenger added: "If I ask what was going on in a disagreement in your family do you come and say it? No. You have to respect what is happening inside the team and keep it inside the team."

MU RISK CLUB V COUNTRY ROW

AFP, London

Manchester United have refused to release Ryan Giggs for the build-up to Wales's World Cup qualifier against England until Tuesday, 24 hours after they are due to begin

their preparations. The winger had been expected to arrive in Cardiff on Monday but United have exercised their right not to release the player until four days before an international, meaning he will not now join up with his teammates until late on Tuesday.

Wales play England at Old Trafford on Saturday October 9 in a match that could be decisive for their chances of qualifying for Germany 2006.

A United spokesman said the club was simply acting to ensure Giggs was properly rested after the Premiership match against Middlesbrough on Sunday and manager Sir Alex Ferguson justified the decision by saying: "We are doing nothing that is not exactly what the rule states."

Kadeer moves to Gloucs

AFP, London

England A batsman Kadeer Ali has left his English county Worcestershire for neighbouring Gloucestershire in a bid to secure regular first XI cricket and boost his chances of promotion to the full Test side.

The 21-year-old, a cousin of England bowler Kabir Ali, turned down the offer of a new two-year contract at Worcester, where he was displaced from the side by Stephen Moore. Gloucestershire player-coach Mark Alleyne said he expected great things from the youngster. "He has great talent and I intend to create an environment in which he can exploit fully his talent," he said.