

DUBAI OPEN  
Daniilidou survives a scare

AFP, Dubai

Eleni Daniilidou, the popular former top 20 player from Greece, made her second great escape in three days to earn herself the chance to bring down the favourite in the 1.5-million-dollar Dubai Open on Wednesday.

Daniilidou, who overcame the seventh-seeded Li Na from China in three sets in the first round, this time came from 1-3 down in the final set against Ai Sugiyama, the former top ten player from Japan, to reach the quarterfinals.

A see-sawing 5-7, 6-1, 7-5 win gained Daniilidou a likely meeting with defending champion Justine Henin, who has never lost in three tournaments in Dubai but who trails 1-2 in the head-to-head record with Daniilidou.

But for a while it looked as though she would not make it. Sugiyama, who recovered well from a late night scare against the Tunisian wild card Selima Sfar on Monday, enterprisingly found a way to deal with the high bouncing surface and breezy conditions on an outside court.

She increasingly took the ball earlier and attempted calculated risks with her drives, eliminating the problem of having to deal with awkward shoulder high balls and reducing the work she had to do in containing and defending.

But at 3-1, 30-15 on her serve Sugiyama was powerless to do anything about a Daniilidou net cord, and this piece of luck seemed to jolt the Greek player into more aggression.

Two good backhand cross court drives enabled her to break back and she broke again in the seventh game, even though Sugiyama this time had a lead of 40-15.

The forehand drive which the Japanese player over-hit at that point was costly.

Sugiyama nevertheless broke back herself for 5-5 to set up a tight finish, and to give an adrenalin-packed ride for the growing bunch of spectators.

In the penultimate game a double fault by Sugiyama at 30-0 gave Daniilidou the sniff of a chance which she took with a mixture of tenacious defending and counter-attacking. Asked to serve out for the match again, she did not falter a second time.

The sixth-seeded Patty Schnyder had to escape from difficulty too, beating Alicia Molik, the former top ten Australian, by 4-6, 6-2, 6-4 - but Molik had four break back points to reach 5-5 before the Swiss left-hander squeezed over the finish line.

**Tariqul traps**

**FROM PAGE 17**  
not out, Ehsanul 16 not out, extras 6, Talha 1-18, Nazmul 1-7, Sharifullah 1-10)  
**SYLHET:** First innings 200 all out in 66.5 overs.  
**RAJSHIAH:** First innings 354-8 in 108 overs (overnight 56-1 in 18 overs) (Rabui 2, Rafiqul 69, Forhad 17, Naeem 87, Anisur 70, Mashud 4, Mushfiqur 31, Hasanuzzaman 1, Mahbub 23 not out, Shafaq 0 not out, extras 50; Hasibul 3-56, Nabil 2-69, Golam Rahman 2-30, Kapali 1-33)  
**BARISAL:** First innings 272 all out in 99.1 overs.  
**KHULNA:** 209-8 in 88 overs (Islam 19, Imrul 47, Nahidul 8, Jamaluddin 4, Manjarul 41, Asadullah 4, Salim 12, Fahim 26, Humayun 17 not out, Mahmood 10 not out, extras 21; Tariqul 8-78)

**Tigers**

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The Tigers became the first team outside the Caribbean region to arrive for the World Cup when they landed in St. Johns.

They were welcomed by top local cricket officials from the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association and the ICC CWC 2007's local organising committee at the airport. Bangladesh's deputy High Commissioner in Canada Syed Masud Mahmood Khundoker was also present there.

Bangladesh and Bermuda will become the first two countries to play in an official ODI at the newly-built Sir Viv Richards Stadium in St.John's on February 25. The Tigers then meet Canada on February 28 before leaving for Barbados on March 1.

The brand new 13,000 seat, 21-million-dollar Sir Viv Richards Stadium boasts two grand stands with a permanent capacity of 10,000 fixed seats and an additional 3,000 on the grounds - with another eight thousand temporary seats to be added for the World Cup Super 8 matches to be played at the ground between March 27 and April 9.

**MU demand**

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the Lille hierarchy while the police will also be asked for their input into any inquiry.

"We have obviously received a lot of information from various sources but we would welcome any more detail from fans in the affected area because it is important we establish precisely what has happened," said United director of communications Phil Townsend.

Tuffey's return to the interna-



Daniela Hantuchova of Slovakia returns the ball to her opponent Maria Kirilenko of Russia at the Dubai Open yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Cup full of money

REUTERS, London



Reggae, rum and Caribbean charm will join the party at the cricket World Cup next month when the revenue generated from 51 matches will be as important to the tournament as the names of the eventual winners.

In the one-day game in general, sponsored sightcreens and out-fields are now commonplace and woe betide any player who speaks to the media without standing in front of a board emblazoned with adverts.

The traditionalists may lament the route the shorter form of the game has taken but without innovations such as day/night matches and fielding restrictions, crowds and television income would inevitably be lower.

Cricketer merchandising has also reached another level thanks to replica coloured kit which fans, used to sporting soccer or rugby jerseys, would rather wear than the non-distinguishable white team shirts of old.

The onset of Twenty20 cricket, a slogfest that fans can watch on their way home from work, further underlines cricket's obsession with attracting a younger audience, while even the players have started over-celebrating like soccer players.

It is all a far cry from the first World Cup in England in 1975, which was spawned partly out of fear that five-day Tests were too dull for the modern generation. It took place after only 18 one-day internationals had been played around the world.

West Indies won that first tournament and a repeat on April 28 in Barbados would not only herald joyous scenes across the Caribbean but also the ringing of cash tills and a greater interest in the game there.

"All things being equal West

Indies will produce the best World Cup ever," West Indies bowling great Wes Hall told Reuters. "In 2007 there is no Olympic Games, no football World Cup. So let's say that in 2007 it is cricket's time."

Since the golden days of the 1970s and 80s when West Indies ruled the world, they have failed to develop enough new talent with young Caribbean men choosing to play basketball and other sports because of their exposure to American television.

Through March and April though, the West Indian public will be unable to hide from a barrage of money-generating matches as the World Cup makes its elongated debut in the Americas.

The islands host 16 warm-up matches before the tournament proper gets underway, but even the group stages could be classed as practice games for the big teams with minor nations such as Bermuda and Canada supplying some of the opposition.

A super eight round-robin comes next with some matches expected to be a sell-out in terms of attendance, although critics also see it as a sell-out to hotel and other corporate interests.

Players were among those to denounce a similar format in the last two World Cups while even the 1996 and 1992 tournaments dragged on. The points system in the 2003 event was distorted by boycotts of matches in Kenya and Zimbabwe, meaning little-fancied Kenya reached the semifinals.

A row over visas has also led to criticism that profit is coming before cricket.

The reason for the visa is to ensure ease of travel within the region for all travellers, meaning they do not need documentation for each Caribbean country.

"This is the worst public relations nightmare that the Caribbean has ever created for itself," Josef Forstmayr, managing director of Round Hill Hotel and Villas in Jamaica, was quoted as saying on Cricinfo.

Some also fear the visa situation is affecting ticket sales, with the cheapest seat for the final in any case costing 100 dollars, but Barbados local organising committee head Stephen Alleyne said the worries were largely unfounded.

"Public sales have gone very, very well," he said. "Elsewhere in the Caribbean sales are improving, there are a few other matches which are sold out. The key matches are gone."

**Hayden toe**

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by an Australian in one-day internationals.

He had tests on Wednesday but will now have a further scan on Monday.

Hayden also had the dubious honour of setting another record - the highest score by a player on a losing team as New Zealand triumphed by one wicket in the final over.

He said: "I'm really disappointed, but the good news is we've got a bit of time, and time is the only thing that heals bone.

"It's been a pretty frustrating day. "I must admit when I got hit on the toe I knew it was broken, it just felt ordinary. I couldn't put any weight on it at all."

The Aussies, holders of the World Cup and favourites to win this time, have been hit by poor form and injuries of late.

Pace spearhead Brett Lee (ankle) is only 50-50 for the tournament, while key all-rounder Andrew Symonds (torn bicep) is expected to miss all the group games.

Batsman Michael Clarke has hip soreness - though is not expected to miss Australia's first match on March 14.

Australia's first game against seeded opposition comes against South Africa 10 days later.

Only for women!

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Zimbabwe, Papua New Guinea, Bermuda, Ireland, South Africa, Scotland and the Netherlands will all vie for the two available slots in the 2009 ICC Women's World Cup.

Defending champions and hosts Australia, India, England, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and the West Indies have all earned automatic qualification following their top-six finish in 2005 when the World Cup was held in South Africa.

"The decision proves that women's cricket is progressing in our country and through this event we would promote a softer and moderate image of Pakistan," said Shamsa Hashmi, secretary of the Pakistan Cricket Board women's wing.

Players would wear the standard international dress code, unlike earlier matches in Pakistan that have been played in strict Islamic baggy trousers and long shirts, she said.

But she added: "Males can come to watch only as part of families of those that are playing."

Male officials may also be allowed.

Pakistan held its first national women's championship two years ago.

The Pakistan women's team toured South Africa last month, losing the five-match series 4-0. The fifth match was rained off.

Hashmi said the Pakistani team would put on its best show against some experienced opponents.

Zimbabwe, making their debut, qualified from Africa, Papua New Guinea from East Asia-Pacific, Bermuda from the Americas, Scotland and the Netherlands from Europe.

The top teams will launch their preparations for the 2009 ICC Women's World Cup when Australia, India, England and New Zealand compete in a quadrangular series in Chennai, India, from February 25.

Betty Timmer, chairwoman of the ICC Women's Committee, said she was delighted with the interest shown by Pakistan in hosting the qualifiers.

**Tushar wary**

**FROM PAGE 17**  
Marshall Ayub, Nadif Chowdhury, Enamul Haque, Dollar Mahmud, Mohammad Sharif, Ziaur Rahman, Mosharrarf Hossain, Nazmul Hossain.

**ENGLAND A** (from): Michael Yardy (captain), Stuart Broad, Michael Carberry, Nick Compton, Steven Davies, Will Jefferson, Alex Gidman, James Kirtley, Alex Loudon, Graham Onions, Matthew Prior, Adil Rashid, Tom Smith and Tim Bresnan.

Young Kenya raring to go

AFP, Nairobi



Kenya, World Cup semifinalists in 2003, believe they are ready to return to the world stage after their success in the ICC World Cricket League tournament they hosted in January and February.

Cricketer standards in the country had fallen to the lowest level following three years of internal strife, forcing players to strike against the former cricket administration over dubious contracts and bonuses.

The fallout resulted in Kenya being stripped of its official one-day status that granted the country automatic qualification to the World Cup.

However, recent victory in the World Cricket League tournament featuring second-tier teams could provide the springboard to bounce back.

Kenya's coach Roger Harper, a member of the all-conquering West Indies team in the 70s and 80s, summarised his team's achievements in claiming the associate members title.

"Kenya is supposed to be the top associate country as far as cricket is concerned. But it doesn't mean anything unless you show it on the field and we have demonstrated that," said Harper after his team's convincing eight-wicket win over fellow World Cup qualifiers Scotland.

"I think it means a lot for the team, for Kenya as a whole."

This is a relatively younger team compared to the one that reached the World Cup semifinals in 2003 with only two of the players being over 30 years of age.

The Kenyan team will be without three great performers who formed the backbone of the side since the country qualified for their first World Cup in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in 1996.

They include former captain Maurice Odumbe, who was suspended from all cricket activities for five years in 2004, for his dalliance with Indian bookmakers and opener-cum-wicketkeeper Kennedy Otieno.

Medium fast bowler Martin Suji is also not in the team after failing to recover from a knee operation.

Their places have been taken by a group of promising young players.

Twenty-year-old Tanmay Mishra is not only proving to be a resourceful batsman but also one of the team's best fielders.

Having made his cricket debut as a member of the national under 15 team in 2001, the India-born Mishra has been heavily involved in the recent revival of the Kenyan cricket, culminating in the World Cricket League win.

His single-handed catch of Bangladeshi middle-order batsman Forhad Reza during the one-day international one-series in Nairobi and a similar dismissal of the Scottish opener David Watts

who smashed the fastest ever World Cup century.

For good measure, he hit six sixes in his 111. Davison, now 36 years old and with years of experience playing with Victoria and South Australia, is back as captain and he's a man who relishes an occasion.

Three years ago, in the first first-class match against the USA for more than fifty years, he created history by taking 17 for 137, the best since Jim Laker in 1956 and hitting 84 as Canada won by 104 runs.

Davison has plenty of experience to call upon including George Codrington and fellow 40-year-old Anderson Cummins who played five Tests and 71 one daysers for the West Indies before he switched allegiance.

Cummins has been a controversial choice and took just five wickets in five matches in the WCL in Kenya.

Cummins is not the only foreign-born player in the Canada squad; of the 15 players, 10 were born abroad, mostly the Caribbean or the sub-continent.

Of the foreign legion, 25-year-old wicket-keeper/batsman Ashish Bagai, born in New Delhi, could prove to be their star. He was player-of-the-tournament at the WCL, making two centuries, and will be Davison's vice-captain in

the West Indies.

Canada have plenty of experience on the sidelines with coach Andy Pick having spent many years with Nottinghamshire on the English county circuit.

"If we get everything right on a given day against England or New Zealand, we could win. The realistic target must be to get through to the second round," said Pick.

**Barca rule**

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coach Frank Rijkaard, which has seen the Cameroon striker dropped for tonight's Champions League clash with Liverpool.

"It is a shared position between him and the coach," Soriano said.

"He has been sick for five months and everybody wants him to be back when he is totally recovered."

Soriano poured cold water on speculation Brazil superstar Ronaldinho could join AC Milan, after the Italians went public in their admiration for the two-time former world player of the year.

"It is like a joke. Every month, someone says something about Ronaldinho," Soriano said.

"He is happy with us and we are happy with him and I am convinced he will finish his career here."

"If I was leading their campaign I would definitely have my captain in the last three games heading into the World Cup," he said.

The Australian newspaper labelled the series loss "depressing" and "humiliating", while the Sydney Morning Herald said it was "a run-away road-train barreling through the bedroom wall of Australia's World Cup planners".

Sydney's Daily Telegraph showed the depth of concern at Australia's "pop-gun bowling attack" when it called for the return of Shane Warne, who has not played international one-day cricket since 2003.

England: Peaking at the right

**FROM PAGE 17**  
not slump to 33 for four in the first final when Glenn McGrath relieved Ian Bell.

Now England are as entitled as anyone else to make the most of dropped catches. But they cannot expect so many gifts in the Caribbean.

Similarly, a coach is allowed to be lucky too. For much of the past four years Duncan Fletcher has appeared far less sure-footed in the one-day game than the Test arena.

However, thanks as much to a combination of absence and injury as inspired selection, England appear to have settled on a one-day team.

In a tournament where, given current trends, bat is likely to dominate ball, England have a trio of improving quicks in James Anderson, Liam Plunkett and Sajid Mahmood.

Anderson though has a back

problem and fellow seamer Jon Lewis an ankle injury.

Monty Panesar, contrary to those who thought the left-armed Test specialist, has proved an effective one-day spin bowler while the World Cup could see off-spinner Jamie Dalrymple step up from his support-ing role.

If, as England hope, dynamic batsman Kevin Pietersen is fit again after a rib injury, then the optimistic mood is understandable although the decision to take only one specialist 'keeper in Paul Nixon could backfire.

Of more pressing concern is England's top order. Omitting Mal Loye, one of the few naturally attacking England openers in Marcus Trescothick's absence, means the side lack an option possessed by the leading contenders.

Loye's exit has come about because of the decision to include

captain Michael Vaughan. After a year out with a knee problem, recent hamstring trouble saw the Yorkshire batsman play in just three of the Australia one-dayers.

Vaughan has never scored a one-day international hundred and fielding is not his strongest point.

There is also no fitness test that can mirror being in the field for 50 overs and, even though rules on replacements are less strict than in previous World Cups, England appear to be running the risk of disruption for a questionable benefit.

And what message does it send to Andrew Flintoff, who led the team to their one-day success in Australia, with the all-rounder not yet confirmed as England captain in the event of Vaughan's withdrawal?