

Pak players warned

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan have warned players to behave or face stiff penalties after an incident involving vice-captain Mohammad Asif in their one-day series against Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi.

Asif was reprimanded by match referee Javagal Srinath for taunting Sri Lankan Mahela Jayawardene after dismissing him in the third and final match of the series on Tuesday. Pakistan won the series 2-1.

Asif, who went down the pitch and glared at Jayawardene, was fined 50 percent of his match fee. Srinath said the penalty was lenient because it was a first offence but that Asif's attitude would remain under observation.

"Asif unnecessarily crossed the line. Since the International Cricket Council (ICC) code of conduct is tough, players have been told to maintain discipline," team manager Talat Ali said.

"Players who do not will also face penalties from the Pakistan Cricket Board as it has decided to deal with disciplinary matters on its own," added Ali, who is also interim coach after the death of Bob Woolmer at the World Cup in Jamaica.

"We have suffered great losses through bans on the players in the recent past so players need to control themselves on and off the field."

The most recent example was Pakistan's inability to play all-rounder Shahid Afridi for the first two matches of the World Cup after he was slapped with a four-match ban during Pakistan's tour of South Africa in February.

Afridi threatened to hit an abusive spectator with his bat while walking back to the pavilion.

Former captain Inzamam-ul-Haq was banned for four matches after he refused to take the field in protest at ball-tampering allegations during the Oval Test against England in August last year.

The ban forced Inzamam to miss the Champions Trophy held in India in October. Without Inzamam, Pakistan won only one of their three matches.

Sidebottom ends six-year hiatus

AFP, Leeds

Ryan Sidebottom was included by England in their starting side for the second Test against West Indies here at Headingley on Friday, six years after making his one and only previous appearance at this level.

Nottinghamshire left-arm seamer Sidebottom, 29, made his Test debut against Pakistan at Lord's in 2001.

He replaced Matthew Hoggard after the Yorkshire swing bowler was ruled out of this match with a thigh injury sustained in the drawn opener of a four-Test series at Lord's.

Sidebottom, who began his first-class career at Headingley with Yorkshire before moving to Nottinghamshire in 2004, has since taken 221 first-class victims at 25 apiece since that solitary Test six years ago.

His inclusion for this match saw him edge out James Anderson for the third seamer spot in a four-man attack and gave England some variety in what would otherwise have been an all-right-arm pace line-up.

Sidebottom is the son of former Yorkshire seamer Arnie, who played one Test for England during the 1985 Ashes.

England also recalled captain Michael Vaughan, after 18 months out of Test cricket with a variety of injuries, in place of fellow batsman Owais Shah, twice dismissed for single-figure scores in the first Test.

Vaughan

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Fall of wickets: 1-38, 2-91.

To bat: Collingwood, Bell, Prior, Plunkett, Harmison, Sidebottom, Panes

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Powell	14	3	59	1
Collymore	13	1	44	0
Taylor	10	3	50	0
Bravo	11	1	29	0
Gayle	6	0	26	1

WEST INDIES: Chris Gayle, Daren Ganga, Devon Smith, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Sylvester Joseph, Runako Morton, Dwayne Bravo, Denesh Ramdin (wk), Daren Powell, Jerome Taylor, Corey Collymore

Toss: England

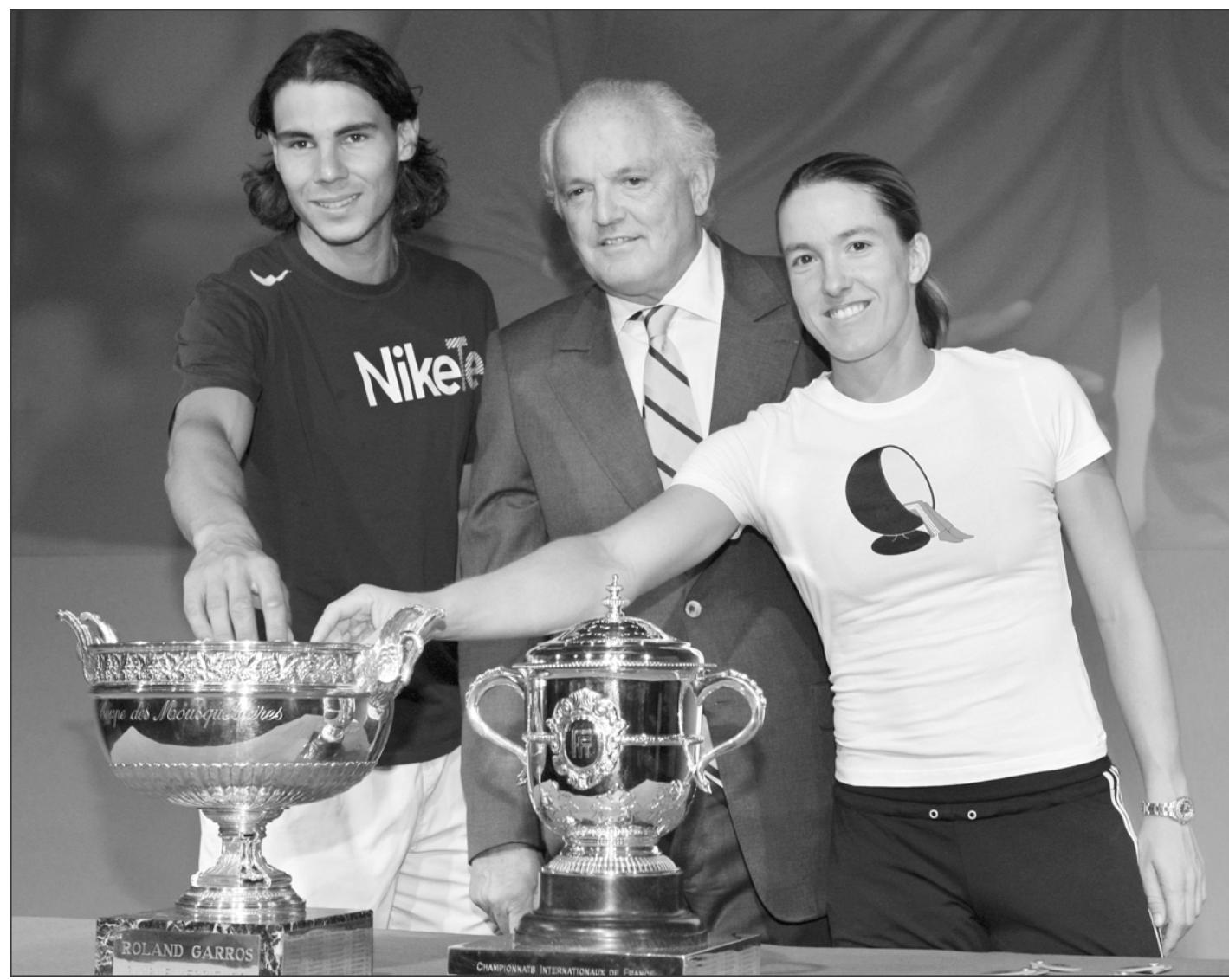
Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (RSA) and Asad Rauf (PAK)

Match referee: Alan Hurst (AUS)



Did U Know?

Joe Darling of Australia was the first left-handed batsman to make a century in Test in 1897/98, thus ending a sequence of 43 tons by right-handers.



(L-R) Spaniard Rafael Nadal, president of the French Tennis Federation Christian Bimes and Belgian Justine Henin taking part in the French Open draw at Roland Garros in Paris yesterday.

FRENCH OPEN DRAW Federer ensured easy passage

Tennis

AFP, Paris

Roger Federer won the opening skirmishes of his French Open battle with double defending champion Rafael Nadal on Friday when the world number one was handed the easier of early round draws. Federer, bidding to win a first ever Roland Garros title and hoping to become only the third man in history to hold all four Grand Slams, will face his first serious test here in the fourth round where former 2003 champion Juan Carlos Ferrero may wait.

He will open his campaign against America's Michael Russell, the world number 71, before facing either a qualifier or Frenchman Thierry Ascione in the second round.

Another qualifier or Potito Starace of Italy will be a third round opponent.

By contrast, Nadal, hoping to follow in the footsteps of Bjorn Borg by winning three French Opens in a row, faces highly-rated Argentinian teenager Juan Martin del Potro in his opener before a second round clash with either a qualifier or Russia's Temuraz Gabashvili.

Britain's surprise 2004 semi-finalist Tim Henman could be a third round opponent, with 2004 champion Gaston Gaudio or former world number one Lleyton Hewitt, the last man to beat Nadal before the Spaniard won his record-breaking epic.

Meanwhile, women's top seed

and defending champion Justin Henin, who is seeking her third consecutive title and fourth in the last five years, opens her campaign against Russian world number 67 Elena Vesnina.

The Belgian world number one is seeded to meet 2002 champion Serena Williams in the quarterfinals.

Second seeded Russian Maria Sharapova, who has never got beyond the quarter-finals in Paris, faces experienced Frenchwoman Emilie Loit in the first round with the best home hope Amelie Mauresmo, a potential last eight opponent, taking on Laura Granville of the second round.

"I went to the final saying to myself: 'I'm going to see what happens'. In Hamburg, that wasn't the case. I was certain I was going to beat him and I was sure of the way I was going to play him. It was very important for me mentally.

"I am happy with my clay season. I have played enough matches and I am ready physically and mentally."

Amongst Federer's possible quarterfinal opponents are Spain's Tommy Robredo, twice a last eight player here, former world number one Marat Safin of Russia and Italy's Filippo Volandri who knocked the world number one out of the Rome Masters in the second round.

That defeat prompted Federer to split with coach Tony Roche.

American third seed Andy Roddick, who has never survived beyond the third round, opens against Russia's Igor Andreev, the last man to beat Nadal before the Spaniard won his record-breaking epic.

The French Open gets underway on Sunday.

Williams, Henin on crash course

Tennis

AFP, Paris

10 for the first time since late 2005, their progress will be closely monitored.

Henin, who turns 25 next week, admits that in terms of physique she is no match for Williams who is only nine months older but considerably bulkier. But she insists that she has other advantages.

"I have this image of being a girl not as tall as the others, not as strong as the others," she said.

"But I have a great sensibility, which makes me perhaps a bit more fragile, but also much stronger than others on some occasions."

Henin says that she is finally over the emotional strain that accompanied the break up of her marriage earlier this year, a drama that caused her to miss the Australian Open.

And she says that she has found a new inner contentment that she hopes will take her to more Grand Slam success over the next few years.

"I'm a very happy person, I'm lucky, I'm in good health and that's important for me and I have a wonderful team around me," she said.

Both have had their ups and downs since then, but with Henin now atop the world rankings and a resurgent Serena winning the Australian Open and back in the top

thing as a revenge against life."

Williams insists she has no bad memories from the bitter 2003 defeat to Henin and after a 2006 ruined by injuries and lack of commitment, she appears to be back to her bruising best and determined to win the French Open for the second time.

"I definitely feel that I've had a rebound," she said of her season so far.

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"Now it's their turn to cry."

The Italian press were universal in their praise of Milan's seventh European crown with La Gazzetta Dello Sport printing their traditionally pink front page in the red and black of the Rossoneri. "Hooray!!!!!!" ran the headline, the exclamation marks making the point in no uncertain terms.

The Milan president, Silvio Berlusconi, who has witnessed five Champions League wins during his 21-year ownership of the club, claimed a chunk of the credit. Despite having tried to persuade Ancelotti to start with Alberto Gilardino instead of Filippo Inzaghi, Berlusconi said: "I told Inzaghi he would score two goals and I was right... It is particularly wonderful to win this, as we have gone some way to wiping away the pain of Istanbul, which was still weighing heavily upon us."

Milan's Champions League win against Liverpool is proof that they have been "the best club in the world over the last 20 years", according to their captain, Paolo Maldini. The 38-year-old defender lifted the trophy for the second time as captain and for the fifth time in his remarkable career after the 2-1 win against Liverpool in Athens on Wednesday night and considers the achievement further evidence that his team are the best on the planet.

"This club has provided me with a lot of amazing emotions and this is another example," he said. "We've been the best team in Italy, Europe and the world over the last 20 years and the cycle hasn't ended yet. We've got something different to other clubs. We've had this special mentality for some time."

Although Maldini's claims of domestic dominance are questionable, the Rossoneri's all-time European record is second only to the nine-times winners Real Madrid. In the past two decades Milan have won the trophy five times, been runners-up three times and reached the semifinals nine times.

Carlo Ancelotti, himself a four-times winner, twice each as Milan player and coach, claimed this to be his sweetest success, given a trying start to the season in which at one point his side were thrown out of the Champions League as part of their punishment for the Calcipoli match-fixing scandal.

Wenger told Spanish newspaper Marca: "Cesc is going to spend the next year with Arsenal."

Fabregas started with Barcelona before joining Arsenal four years ago and seeing his development accelerate.

"It is our greatest victory," he said. "We've done something extraordinary. I tried to get the best out of every player but motivating them wasn't difficult. This win was born last November, which was the toughest

Cesc staying put

Football

INTERNET, undated

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger insists Cesc Fabregas will be at the Emirates Stadium next season.

Fabregas has been the subject of speculation in the Spanish media about a move to Real Madrid, but Wenger is confident the 20-year-old will be at the heart of the Gunners' midfield for the next Barclays Premiership campaign.

Wenger told Spanish newspaper Marca: "Cesc is going to spend the next year with Arsenal."

Fabregas started with Barcelona before joining Arsenal four years ago and seeing his development accelerate.

The Spain international has been

Sharapova in last four

AFP, Istanbul

Russian top seed Maria Sharapova reached the semifinals of the 200,000-dollar WTA Istanbul tournament with a hard-won victory over Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska Thursday.

The world number two beat the seventh-seeded Pole 6-2, 3-6, 6-0, but a shoulder injury that had kept her away from the courts since March appeared to still strain her performance, just days before the French Open.

"My shoulder is still aching a little bit. Let's see how I will do tomorrow," she said of Friday's semifinal against France's Aravane Rezai, whom she described as "a young player who has nothing to lose against me."

The die-hard Radwanska, 18, mounted a spirited challenge against Sharapova in the second set, breaking her three times and eventually winning 6-3.

Sharapova came back in the third set but she had to fight hard for each point as Radwanska never let up the pressure.

"My opponent was really very tough," Sharapova said. "There were lots of ups and downs in the game."

Rezai, who ousted fourth-seeded Venus Williams, continued her winning series Thursday, defeating another American player, Meghan Shaughnessy, 1-6, 6-4.

In the other semifinal Friday, second-seeded Elena Dementieva of Russia will face the number five, Ukrainian Alona Bondarenko.

Dementieva struggled in her quarterfinal match against Catalina Castano of Colombia, but eventually prevailed 1-6, 6-4.

Bondarenko reached the semis without putting up a fight as her rival, third-seed Patty Schnyder of Switzerland pulled out of the tournament because of a right thigh injury ahead of the match.

"I decided to withdraw from the tournament after the pain in my right thigh muscle increased during the night and continued this morning," Schnyder said.

The 32-year-old Lyon captain joined the club in 2001 from Vasco de Gama on an initial five-year deal.

The deadball specialist has played a part in all Lyon's six titles under managers Jacques Santini, Paul Le Guen and existing boss Gerardo Houllier and was named the French league's best player in 2005-2006.

Capped 39 times for his country Juninho has turned out 259 times for Lyon, scoring 77 goals, 32 from free-kicks.

Sonn remains

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decade. All our thoughts are with his family and wife Sandra at this difficult time."

Son's career in cricket administration has been as controversial as it has been long. In January 2002, as president of the UCB, he caused a public rumpus by overruling the selection of Jacques Rudolph for the New Year Test against Australia, opting instead for Rudolph's black room-mate, Justin Ontong.

Collier insisted England were "locked in" to their current programme until 2011 because of agreements already in place with other boards.

England are due to host an Ashes

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Bill Johnston, a member of Don Bradman's 1948 "Invincibles" cricket team, has died at the age of 85, Cricket Australia said Friday.

Johnston, a left-arm medium-pace bowler from Victoria, played 40 Tests for Australia between 1947 and 1955, taking 160 wickets at 23.91.

Cricket Australia said he died in a Sydney nursing home late Thursday.

His death leaves five surviving members of the 1948 squad that toured England unbeaten – Arthur Morris, Neil Harvey, Sam Loxton, Bill