

## Sania remains in 27th place

PTI, New Delhi

Despite being out of action since her early exit from the US Open Grand Slam tennis, Sania Mirza clung to 27th place in WTA ranking for their third consecutive week.

The Indian star, who is nursing a wrist injury and is doubtful for the Sunfeast Open WTA event beginning in Kolkata today, also maintained her doubles ranking to be at 18 spot in the latest rankings.

Sania has been drawn against US-based Sunitha Rao in the first round at Sunfeast Open.

Among the Indian men, Mahesh Bhupathi moved out of top-20 and stands at 21 spot in the doubles charts which saw his compatriot Leander Paes continue to be ranked 16th.

## Dravid wasn't

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based on my observation of whether I would be able to give it my very best, like I have always tried to.

"Finally, you have to be comfortable yourself that you will be giving it your best and not going through the motions, which will not be fair to the team."

The 34-year-old batsman, however, refused to comment on who should step into the skipper's shoes.

Veteran Sachin Tendulkar and the younger Mahendra Singh Dhoni have emerged as frontrunners for the job. The selectors will choose a new man at a meeting in Mumbai on Tuesday.

"I obviously will not like to comment on it and it is a decision best left to the selectors," said Dravid.

## Siddons

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him in South Africa.

"It apparently looks like we have to make a new start. We have some new candidates in line but everything is in preliminary stage," said a frustrated Lipu.

At this stage, the chance of Bangladesh touring New Zealand in December-January with a foreign coach looks remote.

## Roma

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Udinese went close to doubling their advantage in the 62nd minute only for Gyan Asamoah's half-volley to ricochet off the upright.

Napoli's 2-0 win over Sampdoria lifted them up five places into third

between Inter and Juve.

Sunday's late match between struggling Parma and mid-table Cagliari ended in a 1-1 stalemate.

On Saturday fifth-placed AC Milan were held to their second successive 1-1 draw with only Alessandro Nesta's late late equaliser avoided an embarrassing slip up at struggling Siena.

Siena, lying fourth from the foot of the table, took a 24th minute lead thanks to Massimo Maccarone, who pounced on some comedy defending as Nelson Dida fumbled an effort from Cristian Bucchi and then Kakha Kaladze tripped over the ball as he attempted to clear it.

That let in Maccarone although the former Middlesbrough player was lucky not to be caught up for offside as he slotted in from close range.

The Tuscany club were heading for valuable maximum points until Nesta popped up in the 91st minute to level from a volley after a move started by a free kick awarded when Leandro Grimi felled Clarence Seedorf.

Also on Saturday Lazio were held to a goalless draw by second

from bottom Empoli.

## Germany

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The Japanese defence became increasingly dogged as Germany pushed forward, with coach Silvia Neid bringing on 19-year-old sensation Fatmire Bajramaj to add penetration.

But it was only three minutes from the end that Lingor finally sealed victory by firing home a penalty after Martina Mueller was brought down inside the area.

In Chengdu, Kelly Smith scored twice to send England into the quarter-finals and end a nightmare tournament for Argentina, who conceded 18 goals and scored just one, reflecting the gulf between them and the best teams in the world.

The star striker pounced in the 64th and the 77th minute to bring her World Cup tally to four goals in three games and ensure England made the last eight for the first time since 1995.

The game got off to the worst possible start for Argentina when captain Eva Gonzalez scored an own goal in the ninth minute.

Jill Scott ponced barely 60 seconds later with a long-range effort to put England a well-deserved 2-0 up at half-time.

The South Americans then gave away two penalties and had Catalina Perez sent off - the first red card of the championships -- leaving them in all sorts of trouble.

Fara Williams converted the first penalty kick in the 50th minute, Smith scored her brace and then substitute Vicky Exley added another from the spoton 90 minutes.

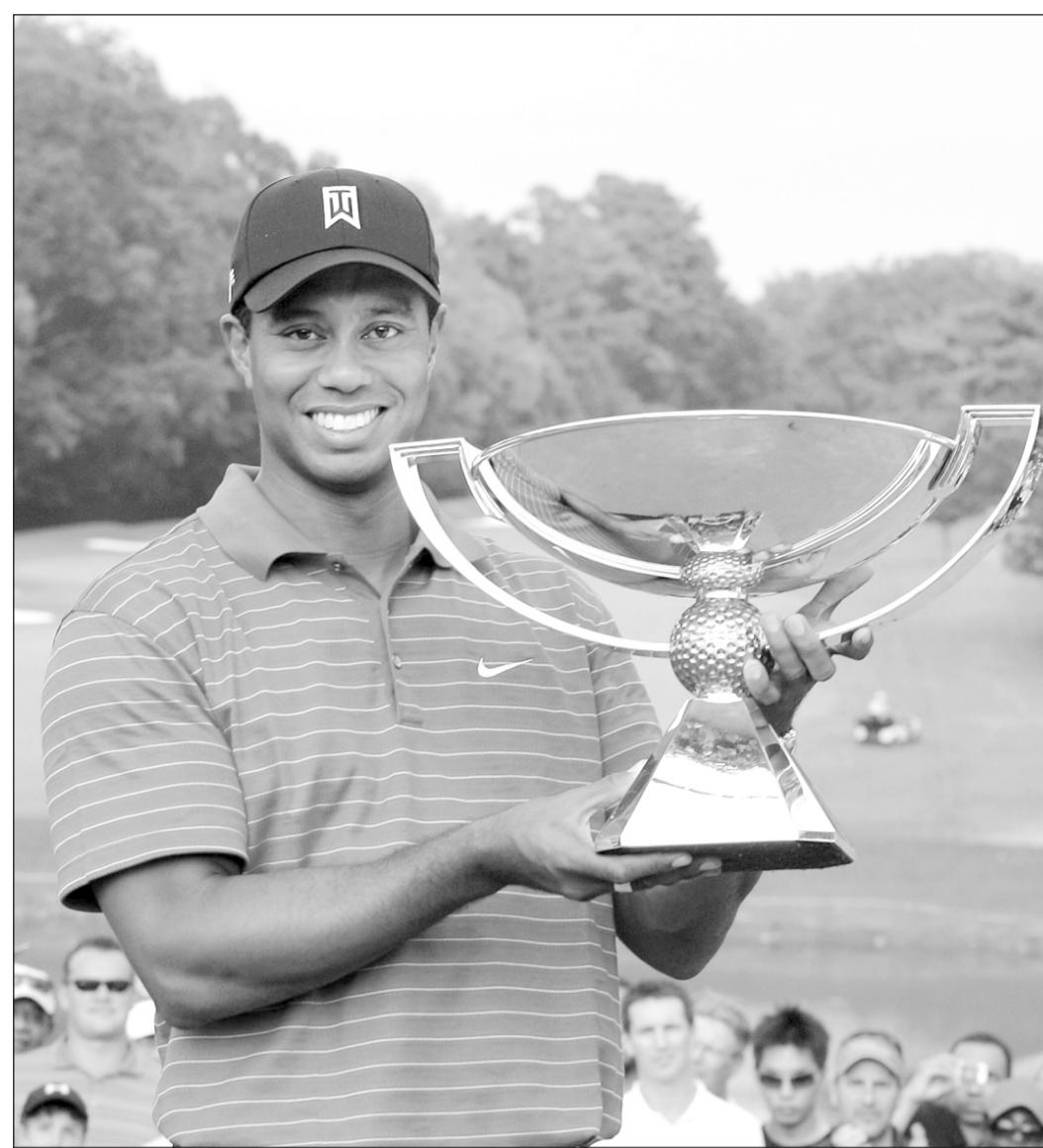


PHOTO: AFP

US golfer Tiger Woods holds the FedEx Cup trophy after the final round of the Tour Championship at East Lake Golf Club in Atlanta on Sunday.

## Easy win for Woods



Golf

AFP, Atlanta

Tiger Woods easily fended off his challengers to capture the 2007 Tour Championship by eight strokes and collect 11.2 million dollars in prize and bonus money on Sunday.

Woods, who has won four of his past five tournaments, fired a four-under 66 for his 61st career PGA Tour victory on Sunday.

The 13-time major winner became the first player in PGA Tour history to win seven or more events in a season four different times. He is now one win away from equaling Arnold Palmer (62) for fourth on the all-time win list.

"I really played some good golf and got on a birdie run there in the middle of the round and basically put it away," Woods said.

Woods not only collected the 1.2 million-dollar tournament winner's cheque but also the 10 million-dollar bonus as the inaugural FedEx Cup points champion.

The 10 million dollars will be paid as an annuity into his retirement account for Woods, who finished with a 23-under total of 257.

Asked if he can remember another time, even back to juniors when he won two trophies in a single tournament, Woods said, "

don't ever remember doing it."

After a modest start, Woods birdied the sixth hole then caught fire on the back nine to finish with six birdies and two bogeys at the East Lake Golf Club.

Woods started the day with a three-shot cushion over playing partner Mark Calcavecchia.

Masters champion Zach Johnson, who fired a course record 60 on Saturday, shot 68 to finish in a tie for second with Calcavecchia who fired a 71 for 265.

Woods is now an impressive 41-3 when holding the lead going into the final round of a PGA event but oddly enough Woods' brilliant record as a frontrunner wasn't crafted at the East Lake Golf Club.

Woods was hoping to erase memories of two Sunday collapses at East Lake in 2000 and 2004, when he lost third-round leads. It has only happened three times in his PGA Tour career.

Woods also became the first player to win the Tour Championship a second time and his 257 is the lowest score in Tour Championship history.

Woods shot 33 on the front nine and Calcavecchia made the turn at 34 as he failed to capitalize on several opportunities early to close the gap on Woods.

Calcavecchia said he doesn't see any flaws in Woods' game.

"A pretty easy 66," Calcavecchia said. "He sets up his

game by driving it so well. When he bombs it down there his distance control is so good and his short irons are good and he controls his spin. And he is the best ever, best ever putter, period."

Woods got off to a slow start at East Lake, posting a bogey on the second hole and then scrambling to save par on the par-four 387-yard number three. He rallied to make birdie on the sixth, eighth and ninth holes.

Woods seemed to settle into form on the fifth hole with the help of a solid tee shot that travelled 309 yards. At 520 yards, the fifth is one of the longest par-fours in PGA Tour history.

He had another superb tee shot on the 200-yard par-three sixth, landing his ball just two feet from the pin for his first birdie of the day.

By this time Woods was sticking to his formula of taking birdie opportunities and avoiding bogeys as he did through the first three rounds of the tournament, leaving the course in tatters with rounds of 64-63-64.

Tougher pin placements and firmer greens translated into higher scores for most of the field Sunday.

Woods hit nine of 14 fairways, 14 of 18 greens and needed 28 putts on the day.

The top 30 players in FedEx Cup points secure a return trip to Georgia next year to compete in the Masters at Augusta National.

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## Work cut out for Spaniards

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tough nuts to crack because they defend very well. We know they will look to draw the game and we have to destroy them."

Group C rivals Lazio, returning to the competition after a three-year absence, travel to Greek champions Olympiakos.

Expectations are also high at Barcelona who fell to eventual runners-up Liverpool in the knockout stages last year.

A goalless draw at Osasuna on Sunday night was hardly the ideal warm-up to meet six-time French champions Lyon who hammered Metz 5-1.

Barca with one of Europe's top strike forces in former Arsenal striker Thierry Henry, Eto'o,

Ronaldinho and Messi host Lyon, with Group E rivals VfB Stuttgart travelling to Scottish side Rangers. Sevilla face a tough task in their

inaugural tie as they travel to Highbury to meet Premier League leaders Arsenal on Wednesday.

In the past seven seasons Arsene Wenger's side have never failed to get out of the group stages.

But Sevilla showed they are in fine shape with an impressive 4-1 home win over Recreativo Huelva on Sunday which maintained their 100 percent start to the season.

Sevilla also have the added incentive of paying tribute to Antonio Puerta, the 22-year-old defender who tragically died following his side's 4-1 Liga win over Getafe on August.

Valencia, fourth in La Liga last season, are third so far after two wins from three.

They reached the quarterfinals last year but fell to Chelsea and have high hopes as they travel to Group B rivals Schalke 04 on Tuesday.

Sevilla face a tough task in their

Bundesliga after just one win and four draws following five games.

Group B rivals Chelsea host Norwegian side Rosenborg as two of the three Premier League teams begin their campaigns in Portugal.

Liverpool open their bid to reach a third final in four years at FC Porto in Group A on Tuesday, as Turkish side Besiktas travel to struggling French outfit Marseille.

Manchester United will be looking for their 100th victory in the competition as they travel to Sporting Lisbon in Group F on Wednesday with two of the Portuguese clubs former players Cristiano Ronaldo and Nani.

Holders AC Milan, meanwhile,

begin their title defence at the San Siro, Rui Costa spent 7 excellent years at the club after a three season spell at Benfica.

The former Portuguese international, who decided in 2004 to focus on his club career, has 94 caps for his country.

He left Milan in 2006 after working out a mutual contract termination deal with the Rossoneri in order to return to the club with whom he dreams of ending his career - Benfica.

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