



PHOTO: AFP

Swedish teenager Sarah Sjöström celebrates after winning the 100m butterfly title at the 13th FINA World Swimming Championships in Rome on Monday. She set new world mark clocking 56.06 sec.

## Records tumble in Rome

### Swimming

AFP, Rome

World records were again scattered like confetti but Aaron Peirsol didn't join the party Monday, the reigning world and Olympic title-holder crashing out in the World Championship semifinals of the 100m backstroke.

The American's fate, and that of South Korean Park Tae-hwan in the 200m freestyle, demonstrated the unpredictability of a world championships that has produced 11 world records through the first two days.

Five of those came on Monday, as swimmers continued to exploit the availability of high-tech suits that are to be banned from 2010.

But Peirsol, who races in a part-polyurethane Arena suit, said it was his own mistake that cost him a shot at a fourth straight 100m backstroke world title.

"We're all wearing suits," said Peirsol, who had won the title at the 2003, 2005 and 2007 world championships, as well as claiming Olympic gold in 2004 and 2008. He lowered the 100m backstroke world record earlier this month at the US trials.

"That was a huge miscalculation," Peirsol said of his fourth-placed finish in his semifinal. "I thought I was in a much better place in that race than I was."

"Usually I'm not that bad (at judging his pace), I wasn't completely reserving there, I just thought I was in a place that I wasn't in. That was my own fault."

Olympic superstar Michael Phelps made

it safely into the final of the 200m freestyle, but the world record-holder settled for winning his heat in the third-fastest time of the night.

Germany's Paul Biedermann, who eclipsed Ian Thorpe's iconic 400m freestyle world record on Sunday, was the top qualifier from the 200m free semis with a time of 1:43.65.

Phelps, who holds the world record of 1:42.96, won his heat in 1:45.23, and said the key to competing in Rome was shutting out the record chatter.

"You really have to race your race," he said. "People are swimming really fast right now."

"I think the basic thing is you have to swim your own race and you can't worry about what anybody else is doing."

Biedermann's time, however, clearly got Phelps's attention.

"He did 1:43?" Phelps said. "He has dropped a lot of time. Usually you don't see six seconds drop in a 400 in a year. I think he was in the final last year in the 200 free and he has dropped three seconds over the last year in that. So he's having a good meet, he's having a good year."

Biedermann has said he believes his polyurethane Jaked suit gives him extra seconds, but Phelps again refused to be drawn into the swimsuit controversy.

"I'm not here to talk about the suit. I'm here to swim in the World Championships," he said.

Instead Phelps, winner of an unprecedented eight gold medals at the Beijing Olympics, said he had to concentrate on getting ready for his first day of double-duty on Tuesday, when he'll race the heats and

semis of the 200m butterfly as well as the 200m free final.

The world record roll-call included two women who set world marks for the second time in as many days -- Swedish teenager Sarah Sjöström and American Ariana Kukors.

Sjöström clocked 56.06 to win the 100m butterfly title ahead of Australian Jessicah Schipper and China's Jiao Liuyang.

Kukors posted a stunning 2:06.15 to win the women's 200m individual medley.

Kukors had lowered the world mark to 2:07.03 in the semifinals -- already an impressive improvement on the previous mark of 2:08.45 held by Australian triple Olympic gold medalist Stephanie Rice.

Rice admitted she had no answer as she took silver ahead of Hungarian Katinka Hosszu.

Australian Brenton Rickard also had a world title to go with his world record in the men's 100m breaststroke. He won in 58.58sec to eclipse the mark that Japan's Kosuke Kitajima established en route to Olympic gold in Beijing. France's Hugues Duboscq was second and South Africa's Cameron Van Der Burgh third.

Serbian Milorad Cavic claimed a rare gold medal unaccompanied by a world record, winning the 50m freestyle in 22.67sec ahead of Australian Matthew Targett and Spain's Rafael Muñoz.

Two other world marks fell in semifinals, Olympic silver medalist Rebecca Soni breaking the 100m breaststroke mark with a time of 1:04.84, and Russian Anastasia Zueva leading the way into Tuesday's 100m backstroke final with a world mark of 58.48.

## Lance under Alberto attack

AFP, Madrid

Tour de France winner Alberto Contador on Monday launched a stinging attack on teammate Lance Armstrong, saying relations between the two were tense throughout the race.

"My relationship with Lance is non-existent. Even if he is a great champion, I have never had admiration for him and I never will," the Spaniard told a news conference in Madrid.

Contador won the Tour on Sunday with a comfortable lead over his rivals. His Astana teammate Armstrong, a seven-time Tour de France champion who came out of retirement for the 2009 event, came third.

"It was a delicate situation, tense, the two riders who had most weight on the team did not have an easy relationship and that puts the rest of the technical staff and the riders in an uncomfortable position," said the 26-year-old, who also won the Tour in 2007.

He compared their relationship to that of Formula One drivers Fernando Alonso and Lewis Hamilton during their contentious season at McLaren in 2007.

But "we knew that if we kept cool heads, there would be no big problem," he said.

## Weather

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him. Again, our boys have had recent success as well. Swann's bowled well against West Indies and Monty Panesar is back on the scene as well. Facing him in the nets, he's been top drawer. It's probably going to be one of those toils ... and go down to the wire."

The Australians, however, are taking nothing for granted regarding the Edgbaston surface, having famously been duped into bowling first at the ground four years ago in a match England won by two runs. Despite recent comments from Steve Rouse, the Edgbaston curator, stating that recent rain had left the pitch "like jelly", Tim Nielsen, the Australia coach, said his side would reserve judgment on the make-up of their bowling attack until they had closely inspected the surface first-hand.

"We'll have a look at the conditions when we get to Edgbaston and work it out," Nielsen said. "We're hearing that the wicket isn't very progressed in its preparation. We'll have a look at what the weather is doing."

Local bookmakers have installed the draw as the most likely result in the match.

## Perez

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Akram, one of the greatest exponents of reverse-swing, also said ball tampering would not be of much help to the bowlers. "(Even) If it's legalised, I don't think it's going to reverse-swing with the new ball. The ball has to be at least 25 to 30 overs old. So, it's just a joke to start off with."

Another of Donald's contemporaries, Indian fast bowler Javagal Srinath, was also against legalising ball tampering. "It is a crime as per the rules of the game and it should not be encouraged," he told the Hindu.

## Akram

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## On the front

FROM PAGE 17

For the 2007 World Cup, China financed stadia in Antigua, Grenada and Jamaica while Taiwan backed the venues at St Vincent and St Kitts.

On Sunday, Windsor Park in Dominica, upgraded at a cost of 17 million dollars, became cricket's latest international venue when the West Indies played Bangladesh.

The ground, which was levelled out of a rubbish dump, accommodates state-of-the-art facilities and 10,000 seats and was a gift from the Chinese government at the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two nations.

## No nappy

FROM PAGE 17

saddened, "I think the future of the sport is healthy."

The American admitted that he perhaps never thought he'd see the day his mark was broken.

"When I was done, I felt I'd put up some numbers no one would touch. But little did I know Roger would surpass me in seven years," Sampras said.

"Records are made to be broken. I believe in that. I also can't do anything about it. My days are over but I'm content with my 14 titles."

"I'm still amazed at what Roger has been able to do. It's incredible."

## WIPA hits back at Lloyd, Holding

### Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The West Indies Players' Association (WIPA) has strongly defended itself against criticism from former cricketers Clive Lloyd and Michael Holding. Speaking to Cricinfo last week, Lloyd had said WIPA was "not trying to achieve anything but strengthen their bank balance" while Holding had wondered if some WIPA officials were "trying to settle personal grudges with the board".

In a statement on its website, WIPA called Lloyd's charges "most unfortunate, wrong and misleading" and said Holding had "produced no evidence to substantiate his charges" and was "expressing his personal belief".

The players' body also hit back at Lloyd for terming the players who went on strike "greedy". WIPA said many of its members had rejected lucrative contracts with the unsanctioned ICL and pointed out that Lloyd and other leading players of his generation had

signed up with the Kerry Packer's rebel World Series Cricket (WSC), which had forced the West Indies board to field second-string sides for several series.

"The reports of that time of upheaval in West Indies cricket indicate that Clive Lloyd, as West Indies captain, played a pivotal role in influencing other West Indian players like Michael Holding, Deryck Murray and Joel Garner to join him in the WSC. Unlike the IPL in which Chris Gayle and others are involved and which is recognised by the ICC, WSC was not sanctioned by this body. Lloyd and his team blazed the path for better remuneration for players by participating in the WSC."

"WIPA does not think that Mr Lloyd and others did so for greed."

The dispute between WIPA and the board intensified when 13 leading West Indian players boycotted the Test series against Bangladesh earlier this month. The players ended their strike and made themselves available for international selection last week after the appointment of an arbitrator to resolve the impasse through mediation.

## Nat'l rugby

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka DSA and Munshiganj DSA won their respective matches of the Diamond Melamine 1st National Rugby Competition at the Outer Stadium ground on Tuesday.

Dhaka DSA crushed Bagerhat DSA by 24-03 points (1st half 19-00), while Munshiganj DSA defeated Gaibandha DSA by 13-03 points (1st half 05-03).

Narail DSA will play against Bagerhat DSA and Chittagong DSA will play Munshiganj DSA today.

## Massa

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Doctors brought Massa, last year's championship runner-up, out of an artificial coma on Monday and also took him off a respirator.

"I would like to point out that although he's recovering, this is not the end of the story, he is still in a life-threatening condition," Bazzo said.

"Of course, the danger is decreasing by the day."

## Sharapova struggles

### Tennis

AP, Stanford

Maria Sharapova shook off some inconsistent play to beat Ai Sugiyama, 6-4, 6-7, 6-1, in the first round of the \$700,000 WTA Premier Bank of the West Classic on Monday night.

The 62nd-ranked Sharapova, working her way back from right shoulder surgery, avoided losing her first match in a tournament since Oct. 8, 2007, in Moscow to Victoria Azarenka. She has not lost a first round match since Aug. 11, 2003 to Elena Likhovtseva in Toronto.

Sharapova recovered from a 4-0 deficit in the first set, but

then allowed a 5-2 lead in the second set to get away before dominating the third set.

"I had a pretty slow start and made a good effort to get back in the first set," Sharapova said. "I thought it was a good second set and I had a chance to close out the match, but unfortunately it didn't happen. In the third set I didn't do too many things wrong. I really stepped it up and was steady."

Sugiyama and Sharapova were scheduled to meet in Montreal last July before the former world No. 1 withdrew with her injury and sat out the next nine months.

"She stepped up and was more aggressive," Sugiyama said. "I was fighting every single point. In the third set, my knee

started to hurt a little bit and I couldn't move as well as I did the first two sets. My energy went down and that's a shame."

Sharapova has won 12 of her 16 matches this year, and is 44-8 since the beginning of 2008.

Fourth-ranked and third-seeded Elena Dementieva spent most of her off time at home in Moscow, leaving the marathon loss to Serena Williams in the semifinals at Wimbledon far behind.

"When I'm not playing tennis I don't think about it," Dementieva said after beating 54th-ranked Anne Keothavong, 6-1, 6-4. "I spent quiet time with my family."

The time off from Russia gave Dementieva problems in the second set. She was up 5-1 and then struggled to hold off the feisty Keothavong, who's looking to reach her first career WTA Tour final after 17 ITF championships.

"For the first round it was a good match," Dementieva said. "I was playing well, but I hope to have a practice and work on some things."

Dementieva, making her debut at this event, played her first match since dropping the longest semifinal women's match ever played at Wimbledon, 6-7, 7-5, 8-6. She held match point at 5-4 in the third set.

"It's not something that ticks me off," Dementieva said of the setback. "It was a good experience and a good match. I was just disappointed in the way I lost."

In other first-round matches, fifth-seeded Nadia Petrova defeated Bethanie Mattek-Sands, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3; seventh-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska beat Sorana Cirstea, 6-0, 6-1; and Monica Niculescu beat Meghann Shaughnessy, 6-1, 6-0.

"I felt very good, even with the weather it was very hot but everything worked," Radwanska said. "I'm very happy that I played such a good match and I just played two sets and I am still fresh and ready to play another match."



PHOTO: AFP

Maria Sharapova of Russia serves to Ai Sugiyama of Japan during the Bank of the West Classic at Stanford University on Monday.

## Crouch seals Spurs move

### Football

AFP, London

England international striker Peter Crouch was reunited with Harry Redknapp at English Premier League side Tottenham Hotspur on Monday after completing his much-anticipated move there from rivals Portsmouth.

The 28-year-old former Liverpool star - who played for Redknapp at Portsmouth and will also team up with former Pompey strike partner Jermain Defoe - signed for an undisclosed fee, though Spurs had been looking to sign him for around 10 million pounds while Portsmouth had wanted 15 million pounds.

Crouch, who began his career at Spurs as a trainee, has also played for Southampton and Aston Villa, agreed personal terms - believed to be a five-year contract worth 70,000 pounds a week - and passed a medical with Spurs on Monday and will see him play for 62-year-old Redknapp for the third time having also played for him at Southampton.

According to Portsmouth's website Crouch's departure sale was purely down to financial necessity, though, they will sorely miss his goals as he top scored for the 2008 FA Cup winners with 16 last term.

"His (Crouch) sale was necessitated by the club's commitment to repay scheduled debts while we are in a transitional period of completing the takeover," said a spokesman on the club's website.

Portsmouth announced on July 21 they have agreed in principle to a takeover by United Arab Emirates tycoon Sulaiman Al Fahim - the brainchild behind last year's takeover of Manchester City - after the 32-year-old passed the Premier League's fit and proper person test.

The statement also states that the club will now look to "add fresh faces to the first-team squad as soon as possible."

Crouch, scorer of 16 goals in his 34 international appearances, had preferred to go to Spurs rather than another Premier League club Sunderland, who made a

12 million pound approach for him last week.

Crouch's arrival at Spurs is likely to see Darren Bent leave for Sunderland.

## New players

FROM PAGE 17

(505) wickets than any other bowler, will lend experience to the hosts' bowling attack in the absence of veteran seamer Chaminda Vaas.

Vaas retired from Test cricket after the Pakistan series, but was ignored for the one-dayers despite insisting he would play limited-overs cricket till the 2011 World Cup.

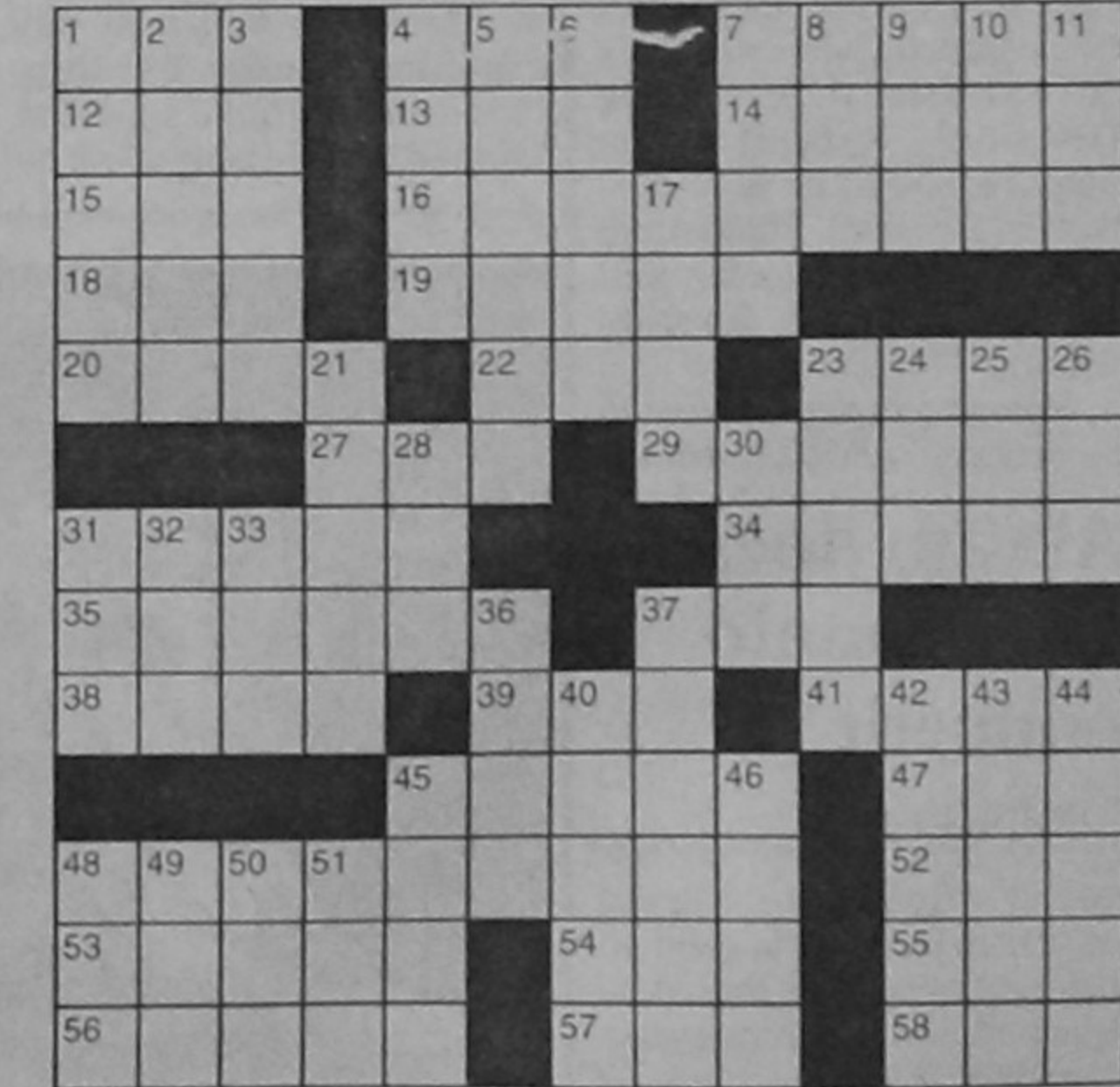
Middle-order batsman Thilan Samaraweera returns to the one-day arena after four years, but dashing Tillakaratne Dilshan will miss the series after sustaining finger and eye injuries during the third Test.

Upul Tharanga is expected to open the innings with veteran Sanath Jayasuriya.

The rivals will also play a Twenty20 international in Colombo on August 12 after the one-dayers end.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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## CRYPTOQUIP

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MW VTMSCADIDZ NIZ  
WLTDNHMIS, KJB LJBXZ WNK  
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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SUPPOSE THERE WAS A LEGAL AGREEMENT ABOUT TYING SOMEBODY UP. WOULD THAT BE A BINDING CONTRACT?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals F