



Russian star Maria Sharapova was stretched by Belgium's Justine Henin during their fourth round meeting of the French Open at the Roland Garros yesterday. Sharapova lost the rollercoaster round 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

Henin grinds out Sharapova

Four-time champion Justine Henin battled past fellow former world number one Maria Sharapova 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 to reach the French Open fourth round on Sunday after surviving a rollercoaster final set.

Henin, playing at Roland Garros for the first time since 2007, will face Australian seventh seed Samantha Stosur for a place in the quarterfinals after a trademark gutsy performance helped her recover from 0-2 down in the decider.

The 27-year-old Belgian, the champion in 2003, 2005, 2006 and 2007, also saved four break points in the third game before shattering the spirit of Sharapova, who was sent to her earliest French Open exit since her 2003 debut.

"Maria is a champion. You can't give her any opportunities. I am happy to get through," said Henin, the 22nd seed, after recording her seventh win in 10 meetings with the Russian.

"It was a real good test. The journey continues and I'm pleased to have a chance to win here at Roland Garros."

Henin admitted she had got off to a terrible start and that fighting off the four break points in the third game of the final set was crucial.

"I was on the back foot at the start. I had to react because things would have been very complicated if I had gone 3-0 down."

Sharapova agreed that the third game had been crucial in the destiny of the match.

"I had opportunities but it was frustrating not taking them," said Sharapova, who won the Stuttgart claycourt title in the run-up to Roland Garros after battling an elbow injury.

"I was a little too hesitant, but I know the things I need to do and I just want to get back on the court and work on them. At 40-0 in that third game, she did a great job of being solid and served her way out of it."

The pair had been level at a set apiece when play was suspended in darkness on Saturday.

Henin had romped into a 4-0 lead on her way to capturing the first set 6-2, but Sharapova then besieged the Belgian, breaking through in the eighth game to take the set 6-3 and level the tie.

It was the first time Henin, who missed the 2008 and 2009 tournaments due to her shock retirement, had dropped a set at Roland Garros since the fourth round in 2005.

On Sunday, Sharapova, a semifinalist in 2007, settled quicker, breaking in the first game before backing it up with a convincing hold to lead 2-0.

Henin, however, saved four break points in the third game and levelled at 2-2 courtesy of a loose Sharapova service game.

The determined Belgian broke again in the sixth game as Sharapova, whose Grand Slam title collection is still missing a French Open, ballooned a forehand high and wide into the chilly Paris breeze.

But the 23-year-old Russian is nothing if not a fighter and she retrieved the break in the seventh game when Henin, suddenly on the back foot, served up her ninth double fault of the tie.

Still, Sharapova was unable to build on her reply and she again handed the advantage back in the eighth game.

Henin then took the 2hr 10min match on a second match point when Sharapova's radar again deserted her and a wild backhand sailed wide.

Sharma seals India win

short googly from Ajantha Mendis to midwicket boundary. For the main part, he dealt in nudged singles as he used his wrists to ping the vacant spaces. He used the width of the crease well, going either fully back or leaning forward, to tackle the different lengths. Later, he unfurled the big shots: an inside-out hit, a pulled boundary and whippy on drive.

Unlike Kohli, Rohit took more risks. Some appeared almost needless, especially at the start. He rushed down the track for a slog against Thissara Perera, nearly hit Mendis for a catch to long-on and drove Suraj Randiv uppishly on a few occasions. However, he survived those iffy moments to settle down to play a few, typically, stylish hits. Two stood out for their skill and beauty: He sashayed down the track and lifted Randiv inside-out over covers. He then flicked Perera from just outside off stump wide of mid-on for a gorgeous boundary. He later pulled Dilhara Fernando and lofted Randiv for sixes and brought up his ton with a cut against Mendis. It was 47 for 2 when he had joined Kohli and he led India to a victory with nearly seven overs to spare.

If India had Rohit and Kohli, Sri Lanka's innings was all about Tiliakarane Dilshan and Angelo Mathews. Dilshan had laid the platform with an out-of-character 61 before Mathews showed characteristic maturity during his 75, which led Sri Lanka's charge.

It was yet another cool and collected innings from the rapidly-maturing Mathews. He was on 51 at the start of the batting. Powerplay and had only hit two boundaries until then. Amit Mishra slipped in couple of long-hops and Mathews pinged the midwicket boundary for a six and a four. The pitch and the situation had demanded that he play risk-free cricket and he duly obliged. For the main part, he drove, nudged and worked the angles to rotate strike. He used his height to get forward and smother the turn and his wrists to nudge spinning deliveries for singles. And it was only during the final assault that he brought out the big shots: the inside-out lofted drive over covers, the fierce pull and the slog sweeps were unfurled as he led Sri Lanka towards 250.

The conditions demanded such an approach: The medium-pacers got movement and also exploited the two-paced nature of the wicket and the spinners found generous turn to keep the batsmen quiet. Not only Mathews but Dilshan also adopted a sensible approach, though perhaps it might have been dictated by his recent run of poor form.

It wasn't the Dilshan that we have come to know. He hit his first boundary off his 35th ball and it wasn't until his 50th delivery that he chose to rush down the track to play a big shot. It was his abstinence against the new ball that really stood out, though. There weren't many flamboyant on-the-up hits, dashes down the track or attempts to force the pace. He did try to play couple of aggressive shots against the new ball but, when he found that he was mis-timing them, he quickly changed tack and started to work the angles.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SRI LANKA: 242 all out in 49.5 overs (Mathews 75, Dilshan 61, Perera 32, Kapudegera 20; Dinda 2-44, Ojha 2-44, Jadeja 2-49)
INDIA: 243 for 3 in 43.3 overs (Sharma 101 not out, Kohli 82, Raina 24 not out; Kulasekera 1-34)
Result: India win by seven wickets.
Man-of-the-match: Rohit Sharma.
Toss: Sri Lanka.
Umpires: Brian Jerling and Russell Tiffin.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian FM Joydeep Dutta took solo lead in the Six Seasons International Chess Tournament at the close of the 12th round at the Convention Hall of Narayanganj Club yesterday.

Joydeep beat FM Abdul Malek to topple the Bangladeshi player, who stayed at the top with 7.5 points before the start of the day's round.

Enkhtuul Altanulzii of Mongolia was in third position with seven points after beating WFM Shamima Akter Liza.

FM Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon drew against Pakistani Mishraz Nida Siddiqui.

GRAMEEN-DANONE NATIONS CUP

The Grameen-Danone Nations Cup football tournament got underway yesterday at six district headquarters with Al Amin striking a hat-trick on the opening day.

The young boy struck five goals as Barisal overwhelmed Barguna 6-1 at the Barisal venue.

A total of 28 games were played on the day and 21 teams won their respective matches while five matches ended in a goalless draw at different venues.

GIRLS SCHOOL CRICKET

Quamrun claimed five wickets to help Agrani Girls School and College to an exciting 14-run win over Vigarunnisa School and College A side in the 3rd Girls School cricket tournament at the Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex ground in Dhanmondi yesterday.

Vigarunnisa were skittled out for 73 in 19.2 overs in face of brilliant bowling from Quamrun, who conceded only 13 runs on way to claim five wickets after Agrani scored 87 in the stipulated 20 overs.

In the day's other matches, the B side of Vigarunnisa (0-55) thumped Rahmatullah Model High School (9-52) by 10 wickets at the Azampur Girls School and College ground.

At the same venue, Per Gendaria Non-Government Junior and High School (5-45) defeated AASPG High School (44 all out) by five wickets.

MANIKGANJ CRICKET

Our Correspondent adds: Green Valley Club defeated Provat Sangha by 126 runs in the Col (ret'd) Malek Smriti First Division Cricket League at the Shaheed Miraz-Tapan Stadium yesterday.

Battling first, Green Valley Club were all out for 190 in 39.4 overs with Shahin making 44 runs.

Provat Sangha were bundled out for only 64 runs in 23.1 overs.

Liton picked up four wickets while Kuntal took three.

This was Green Valley Club's third win from seven matches.

COOLINE RUGBY

Sonargaon Seven Star emerged champions of the Cooline AC Rugby Tournament with an easy 17-12 win over Bangladesh J-Sports in the final at the Paltan Maidan yesterday.

The champions dominated the first half 12-7.

Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Youth and Sports Ministry Jahid Ahsan Rasel distributed prizes among the winners while Bangladesh Rugby Association general secretary Mousum Ali was present on the occasion.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Anderson	31	6	78	4
Bresnan	24	5	76	1
Finn	25	5	100	4
Swann	11	6	19	0
Trott	2	0	7	0

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Anderson	20	6	66	1
Bresnan	20	5	88	1
Finn	16	4	66	2
Swann	25	4	80	0
Trott	4	0	16	1

97 per cent WC tickets sold

AFP, Cape Town

The opening and final matches for South Africa's World Cup are sold out with ticket sales nearing 97 per cent, world football body FIFA said on Saturday.

"The sale of 2010 FIFA World Cup tickets has seen the highest demand since the start of the last sales phase on 15 April 2010 in the past 30 hours," FIFA said in a statement.

"Since 09h00 (0700 GMT) on Friday 28 May, a total of 100,000 tickets have been sold."

By 1200 GMT on Saturday, tickets at 14 matches were no longer available including the final, semifinals and South Africa's three group games which included the opener with Mexico on June 11.

"We are getting very close to a 97 per cent average attendance, something which corresponds to the figures of Germany in 2006," said FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke, adding that the body was happy with response from fans.

Technical problems on Friday saw Valcke apologise to fans who camped out for the last 160,000 tickets which included 90,000 new releases. A total of 2.88 million tickets were put on sale for the 64 match tournament, the first to be held in Africa.

Shakil signs

FROM PAGE 17 six points finished 87th and 97th respectively.

In the day's round, Sagar drew against GM Varga Zoltan of Hungary, Razib drew against Indian WGM Soumya Swaminathan, Javed lost to Indian IM Debashis Das, Parag lost to GM Pogorelov Ruslan of Ukraine, Debaraj drew against Indian IM Prathamesh Sunil Mokul and Chapal drew against Indian Panigrahi Manoj Kumar.

Brazil

FROM PAGE 17 Argentina became most people's favourites for the tournament. Until, at least, the news came out that Maradona had tested positive for banned stimulant ephedrine. Broken by the loss of their leader, Argentina faded against Bulgaria in their last group game and now faced the challenge of Romania in the second round.

The Romanians had won a group that included the hosts and Colombia, Pele's pick to win the tournament. But Colombia, for all their pretty passing moves, fell to the wiles of Gheorghe Hagi in their opener and then catastrophically lost to the USA in their next, putting them out. Harrowing, defender Andras Escobar paid for an own goal with his life, shot by gangsters on his return to Medellin. It was an incident that cast a shadow over Colombian football for years to come.

Jack Charlton's Republic of Ireland continued to delight the neutrals by beating Italy in New York after a tremendous goal from Ray Houghton. However, they met a rather damp end to their campaign in the second round when a mistake by Italia 90 hero Packie Bonner handed progress to the Dutch.

TO BE CONTINUED

Hamilton shines as Red Bulls collide

AFP, Istanbul



Lewis Hamilton claimed his first victory of the season and the 12th of his career on Sunday when he led McLaren teammate, fellow-Briton and defending champion Jenson Button home in a dramatic one-two for McLaren at the Turkish Grand Prix.

The 2008 world champion claimed his first win since last year's Singapore Grand Prix thanks to a solid and committed drive that enabled him to take full advantage of a bizarre and unexpected collision between the two Red Bull drivers after 40 of the 58 laps.

Mark Webber was leading with Red Bull teammate Sebastian Vettel second when the young German made an ill-judged passing move and steered right into the Australian's car, sending both off the circuit.

Webber, 33, the drivers' championship leader, managed to recover and re-join in third place, but the impetuous Vettel's race was over as he crashed out -- the incident gifting Hamilton, then third, and Button,

fourth, the leading positions.

It was the McLaren team's first one-two since the 2007 Italian Grand Prix when Hamilton came home second behind two-times champion Spaniard Fernando Alonso, his then single-season teammate.

German Michael Schumacher, 41, the seven-times champion, came home fourth for Mercedes behind Webber with his teammate and compatriot Nico Rosberg fifth and Pol Robert Kubica sixth for Renault.

Brazilian Felipe Massa came home seventh for Ferrari ahead of Alonso in a disappointing result for the Italian team as they celebrated their 800th Grand Prix.

German Adrian Sutil was ninth for Force India and Japanese Kamui Kobayashi picked up the final point and the Sauber team's first this season in 10th place.

Hamilton's win lifted him up to third in the drivers' title race behind Webber, who continues to lead on 93 points with Button second on 88. Vettel has 78. In the constructors' championship, McLaren leap-frogged to the top ahead of Red Bull on 172 points to 171.

Roger's still better: Nadal

AFP, Paris



Four-time champion Rafael Nadal swept into the French Open fourth round here on Saturday but insists he still has a long way to go before he can be compared to world number one Roger Federer.

The Swiss maestro completed his Grand Slam trophy collection by winning at Roland Garros last summer and Nadal says his own achievements simply do not match up.

"If someone says I'm better than Roger, I think they know nothing about tennis," Nadal said after beating former world number one Lleyton Hewitt 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 to join Federer in the fourth round.

"You see his titles, you see my titles. There's

no comparison.

"It's difficult to compare Roger with me right now. He has 16 Grand Slams, I have six. Roger's records might be impossible to beat."

Despite Federer's more tightly-packed trophy cabinet, Nadal has a 14-7 head-to-head record against his rival and has won six of their last seven encounters.

The 24-year-old Mallorca man, however, believes that is indicative of nothing more than the Spaniard's famed ability on clay.

"I am number two in the world for five years now," he said.

"I think I am a good number two. Sure, I can beat him, number two can beat number one. I can beat him, but I beat him a lot of times on clay. I've played with him more times on clay than on the rest of the surfaces."

Malik mercy blasted

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Former players Sunday lashed out at Pakistan cricket authorities for lifting a one-year ban on ex-captain Shoaib Malik, saying it would set a bad example.

A one-man arbitration panel set up by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Saturday accepted Malik's appeal against a one-year playing ban imposed for breach of discipline during foreign tours last year.

Retired judge Irfan Qadir on Saturday halved the original two million rupees (35,000 dollars) fine, paving the way for Malik's return to international cricket.

Former paceman Sarfraz Nawaz said the overturning did not bode well for the future of the game.

"The PCB has taken a coward's stance," Nawaz told AFP. "It's a decision taken under political pressure and will damage Pakistan cricket in the future."

Malik and allrounder Rana Navedul Hasan were banned for one year and fined two million rupees each for breaches of discipline during Pakistan's tours of United Arab

Emirates, New Zealand and Australia between November and February.

The pair were among seven players who were fined and banned for indiscipline.

Another former captain and ex-chief selector Amir Sohail said the PCB had been too quick to act.

"The PCB has taken a hasty decision," said Sohail, who resigned as director of the national cricket academy after differences with PCB chairman Ijaz Butt last year.

"To hide its own incompetence, the PCB targeted the players and after pressures from outside they abruptly lifted the ban."

Another former chief selector Abdul Qadir said Malik's ban overturn will encourage bad behaviour.

"By lifting the ban on Malik, the PCB has succumbed to political pressures," said Qadir, a former leg-spinner. "If the Board had taken a strong decision, it should have stuck to it come what may, but their decision will now encourage the players to violate discipline and get away with it."

The PCB has denied Malik's ban overturn was politically motivated, saying the decision "was taken after Malik's behaviour was monitored for three

Jatrabari sneak past Wanderers

SPORTS REPORTER

Jatrabari Kira Chakra recorded their second victory in the Senior Division Football League when they handed a solitary goal defeat to Dhaka Wanderers Club at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

After a barren first half, Shahadat Tapu separated the sides in the 68th minute and took his side to the top along with holders Youngmens Fakirpool Club with seven points each.

Winning's

FROM PAGE 17 efforts during the whole of the tournament," added Fabiano, who has formed a potent strike partnership with Robinho since 2007.

Brazil, who topped the South American qualifying group, are in Group G -- the group of 'death' -- along with 2006 semifinalists Portugal, Ivory Coast and North Korea, who they play first up on June 15.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	46 Church council	3 Color quality	25 Pealed
1 Toward the	50 "Speak up!"	4 Puts a hex on	26 Director Kazan
4 Cisterns	55 Lawyers' org.	5 "Simps-sons"	27 Society newbies
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12 Cattle call?	57 Franc replace-	6 Tit for —	29 Works with
13 October birthstone	58 Old hand	7 Eventual cul-	30 Via, briefly
14 Holly-wood clashers	59 Odds' mates	8 Nocturnal nipper	31 Con
15 Hostel	60 Part of	9 Past	35 "War and Peace"
16 Complete	Miss Muffet's meal	10 Thee	38 Cleveland NFLers
18 Lieu	61 Storm center	17 Zero	40 Aviate
20 Chest protector?		19 German composer	42 — Beta Kappa
21 Nitwit	DOWN	Franz	45 Mulligan, for one
24 Enticed	1 Writer Kingsley	22 Norway's capital	47 Church section
28 Where sailors go	2 Type choice	23 Lollapalooza	48 Do as I tell you
32 Wild wind			49 Social engagement
33 Blond shade			50 Have bills
34 Viewpoint			51 Coffee vessel
36 Pen point			52 Bill's co-adventurer
37 KFC additive			53 "Wha'dja say?"
39 On "E"			54 Anger
41 Commandeer			
43 Up to			
44 Surprise cries			

Solution time: 21 mins.

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GLUON <td>TEEN<td></td></td>	TEEN <td></td>	
EEC <td>OBSTACLES<td></td></td>	OBSTACLES <td></td>	
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CRYPTOQUIP

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IUUFGBV EWB SI MBS OILBV

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GIVA? R WOIGD ONEM.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IN THIS FILM, THE

MAIN FEMALE ARGUER IN THE COURT CASE IS

PROBABLY CALLED THE PLEADING LADY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals D