



Supermodel Bar Refaeli (L) and Spanish tennis superstar Rafael Nadal team up to play a Pro-Celebrity match during the Nike Primetime Knockout Tennis Event at Pier 54 in New York City on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Dissent earns Kohli penalty

CRICINFO

Virat Kohli, the Indian batsman, has been fined 15 per cent of his match fee for breaching the ICC Code of Conduct during his team's ODI against New Zealand in Dambulla on Wednesday.

Kohli pleaded guilty to a Level 1 offence and accepted the penalty imposed by match referee Alan Hurst after play concluded. He was found to have breached 2.1.3 of the code which relates to "showing dissent at an umpire's decision".

After being given out in the sixth over, Kohli stood his ground and looked at the umpire for a considerable time before eventually leaving the middle. The New Zealand team had finished celebrating and their 12th man had brought the team drinks by the time Kohli had walked past the non-striker on his way to the pavilion.

"Accepting umpires' decisions is part and parcel of playing cricket," Hurst said, "and on this occasion Virat clearly showed dissent when he had been given out." Since Kohli pleaded guilty to dissent and accepted the proposed sanction there was no need for a formal hearing.

The charge was brought by on-field umpires Asad Rauf and Asoka de Silva, third umpire Kumar Dharmasena and fourth official Gratian Lyanage.

Puma women's

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40,000 US dollars," said Bangladesh Football Federation general secretary Al Musabbir Sadi yesterday.

Sadi informed that they would sign a deal after everything related to the championship was finalised. The first-ever SAFF Women's Championship with the participation of all eight nations Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Afghanistan and Bhutan is scheduled to be held in December at Cox's Bazar.

Apart from sponsoring the hosts, Puma is likely to provide jerseys for the other participating nations.

FIFA consultant Roland Arnquist helped Bangladesh rope in Puma after the BFF had approached the world sports giant, said Sadi.

Ricky targets

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"We've built up a good base of fast-bowling stock. It holds us in very good stead." "We've got the pain of losing last time as well." Ponting, 35, was on the losing side when England regained the Ashes 2-1 in Britain last year and the star batsman has had an up and down time of it late, with Australia bowled out for just 88 by Pakistan in a three-wicket loss in the second Test at Headingley last month.

But, with Australia defending their World Cup title in Asia after the Ashes, Ponting said he was not about to call time on his brilliant career.

England

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having difficulty seeing the red ball out of the otherwise dark background.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 39 for 1 (Strauss 13, Cook 10 not out, Trott 8; Asif 1-17) PAKISTAN: Farhat, Hameed, Butt, Yousof, Ali, U Akmal, K Akmal, Aamer, Riaz, Ajmal, Asif Toss: Pakistan.

Umpires: Billy Bowden and Tony Hill.

Biggies progress

Tennis

AFP, New Haven

Top seed Marcos Baghdatis bounced back to beat Argentina's Juan Ignacio Chela 1-6, 6-3, 6-2 Wednesday to reach the quarterfinals of the Pilot Pen US Open hardcourt tune-up.

The Cypriot, who lost all three of his service games in the first set, rallied and broke Chela's serve four times in the final two sets.

Baghdatis, ranked 18th in the world, has now reached the quarterfinals in four of his five starts in the US Open series of events leading up to the final Grand Slam of the year, which starts on Monday in New York.

Women's top seed Caroline Wozniacki cruised into the quarterfinals with a 6-4, 6-1 victory over Dominika Cibulkova.

Wozniacki, who won a rain-delayed final in Montreal on Monday, was cheered on by American football players from nearby Yale University.

The Dane had visited a team workout last year. "That they all came and supported me today was just fun," she said. "We should make this a tradition."

Wozniacki, battling a sore back, trailed 4-3 in the opening set. But after receiving treatment she gave up only two points the rest of the set.

Wozniacki next faces seventh-seeded Italian

Flavia Pennetta, a 6-3, 6-2 winner over Olga Govortsova.

Russian fourth seed Elena Dementieva outlasted Ukraine's Kateryna Bondarenko 7-6, 6-7, 6-4, building match fitness for the US Open after tearing a left calf muscle in the French Open.

Next up for Dementieva will be French sixth seed Marion Bartoli, who ousted Australian Anastasia Rodionova 6-3, 6-1.

Russian eighth seed Nadia Petrova also advanced, defeating American Bethanie Mattek-Sands 6-3, 6-2 to book a date with Aussie second seed Samantha Stosur.

Maria Kirilenko and Dinara Safina booked an all-Russian quarterfinal. Kirilenko beat Switzerland's Tímea Bacszinsky 6-3, 6-1 and Safina downed Slovakia's Daniela Hantuchova 7-6, 7-6.

The day's men's action began with completion of three rain-disrupted second-round matches.

Ukraine's seventh-seeded Alexandr Dolgoplov downed American James Blake 6-4, 6-2, but when he returned to the court for a third-round clash he was toppled by Serbian Viktor Troicki 6-7, 7-6, 6-2.

Troicki had completed a two-set victory over Finland's Jarkko Nieminen earlier in the day.

Russian Teymuraz Gabashvili beat fifth-seeded Andrey Golubev of Kazakhstan 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 to reach the quarterfinals.

Gay gunning for glory

Semenya set for Diamond debut

Athletics

APP, Brussels

South African Caster Semenya will make her debut on the Diamond League stage at the series-ending meet here on Friday which will see American sprinter Tyson Gay going for glory in the 100m.

The 19-year-old Semenya has run and won three races since being cleared to compete last month by the IAAF, the sport's governing body, following a controversial investigation into her gender that saw her sidelined for 11 months.

The world 800m champion easily won two minor races in Finland and also claimed first place at last weekend's World Challenge meet in Berlin, clocking a time of 1m 59.90sec.

It was her first sub-2min time since returning to the track. She has yet to match the 1:55.45 time that won her the world title last year.

"I've really missed the competition. I kept on training but it was annoying to stay at home, and not run any races. To return after a long break is not easy," admitted Semenya, who was on Wednesday named in South Africa's Commonwealth Games squad.

"There are not many races left that I can do and I want to take it step by step. I'm still lacking some speed but I was very pleased that I got already under two minutes in Berlin. With a time like that, you're right back at the top."

Semenya said an attempt on the world record of 1:53.28 set by Jarmila Kratochvilova in Munich in 1983 was not yet on the cards.

"I am not in the right place right now to be thinking about improving the world record," she said. "But it's a dream of mine. If you train hard and want to do everything for your sport, then it should be a goal in the future."

Latecomer Semenya will not, however, be in the race to walk away with prize money of 40,000 dollars for topping her discipline over the season.

Maria exudes confidence

Tennis

REUTERS, New York

Maria Sharapova, who has shot back up the rankings after a shoulder injury that almost ended her career, feels she is hitting her stride and has a chance to capture her second US Open title in four years.

After suffering a shoulder injury in 2008 that required surgery, the three-time Grand Slam winner spent several months on the sidelines and dropped as far as 126th in the rankings.

But Sharapova is now ranked 16th in the world heading into the Aug. 30-Sept. 12 tournament and said reaching the finals of two straight tournaments in recent weeks has convinced her she can snap a Grand Slam drought nearing three years.

"I feel like I'm getting there," Sharapova, who pulled out of the WTA tournament in Montreal last week with a heel injury, told this news agency.

"I've had great successful memories in New York as well as tough ones. Having to miss it two

years ago because of my shoulder and then coming back last year with pressure... well that wasn't easy."

Sharapova has not won a Grand Slam title since she triumphed at the Australian Open in 2008. Eight months after the victory, the 23-year-old had right shoulder surgery and was slow to find the form that once vaulted her to the number-one ranking.

She lost in the August finals to Victoria Azarenka at the Stanford Classic and to defending US Open champion Kim Clijsters at the Cincinnati Open but is heartened by recent victories over top players.

Until late July, Sharapova had not beaten a player this season ranked in the top 25, but in the past month has topped world number six Elena Dementieva and two-time Grand Slam victor Svetlana Kuznetsova.

Sharapova is counting on her recent form to help erase the memories from last year's US Open where she struggled with a reconstructed service motion and was upset by US teenager Melanie Oudin in the third round.

ECB reveals SL & India fixtures

CRICINFO

England will play seven Tests, 10 ODIs and two Twenty20 internationals next summer against Sri Lanka and India which will include the first Test staged at the Rose Bowl.

Hampshire's home ground will host the third Test against Sri Lanka in June following matches at Cardiff and Lord's. There will then be a one-off Twenty20 at Bristol before five ODIs complete Sri Lanka's tour, according to the schedule released by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

It is a similar pattern for India's visit but they will take part in a four-Test series with matches at Lord's, Trent Bridge, Edgbaston and The Oval followed by the one-day leg.

The summer will be slightly less hectic than this year with three fewer ODIs than in 2010. The players will also have a lengthy break following the conclusion of the World Cup with the first Test of the season starting on May 26 at Lord's. The international programme will finish on September 16 with the final ODI against India at Cardiff.

"With India currently the number one ranked Test side in the ICC rankings and Sri Lanka in third place, England supporters can expect to see two exciting Test series against high quality opposition," David Collier, the ECB chief executive, said. "Both teams will also provide a tough challenge for England in the shorter forms of the game in what promises to be a highly competitive and entertaining summer of international cricket all round."

SL IN ENGLAND

May 26-30 -- 1st Test, Cardiff June 3-7 -- 2nd Test, Lord's June 16-20 -- 3rd Test, Rose Bowl

June 25 -- T20I, Bristol June 28 -- 1st ODI, The Oval July 1 -- 2nd ODI, Headingley July 3 -- 3rd ODI, Chester-le-Street

July 6 -- 4th ODI, Trent Bridge July 9 -- 5th ODI, Old Trafford INDIAN ENGLAND

July 21-25 -- 1st Test, Lord's July 29-August 2 -- 2nd Test, Trent Bridge

Aug 10-14 -- 3rd Test, Edgbaston Aug 18-22 -- 4th Test, The Oval Aug 31 -- T20I, Old Trafford

Sept 3 -- 1st ODI, Chester-le-Street Sept 6 -- 2nd ODI, Rose Bowl Sept 9 -- 3rd ODI, The Oval

Sept 11 -- 4th ODI, Lord's Sept 16 -- 5th ODI, Cardiff

Abahani rope

FROM PAGE 17

The coach is likely to arrive in the capital on the third week of September, said

Satyajit Das Rupu, football manager of Abahani.

Last season, Argentine trainer Diego Alvaro worked with the Sky Blues after his compatriot Diego Andres Cruciani coached the Dhanmondi-based outfit during the second edition of the Bangladesh League.

Rupu also informed that four Ghanaian footballers including defender Samad Yusuf and striker Awudu Ibrahim were coming in the next week while three Nigerian footballers were scheduled to arrive here in the first week of September.

A different world for Cannavaro

Football

THE NATIONAL

Fabio Cannavaro has been there, done that, got the T-shirt, and the winner's medal to go with it.

In a career now entering its 19th year, he has captained his country to World Cup success, been named the best player on the planet, won titles in Spain and Italy, seen the club he captained be tarnished by match-fixing, and even been tested, tried and exonerated from doping charges.

It would be easy to think he has seen everything the game has to offer, but not so. This has been a month of firsts for the great Italian centre-back.

His first experience of Ramadan in the Middle East, for a start.

And, as a consequence, the first time he has regularly turned up to training for a 9.30pm start, with the temperature still hovering near 40°C.

Tonight will mark his first club match outside of European football's biggest leagues, and the contrast could not possibly be more stark.

Al Ahli, his new team, are kicking off the season at the Pro League's most secluded club, Al Dhafra, which is nearer the border with Saudi Arabia than his new home in Dubai.

The Stadio delle Alpi, the former home of Juventus, it is not.

However, he is unlikely to be fazed. Despite all he has achieved in the sport, Cannavaro is famously grounded or "no Big Time

Charlie", as Malky Thomson, one of Ahli's coaches, puts it.

After being introduced to the game by his banking-clerk father, Cannavaro served as a ballboy for Napoli, his hometown club who later gave him his break.

He will be 37 next month, but he retains his boyish enthusiasm for the game.

"I started playing football in the streets," he said at the press conference to mark his arrival as Ahli's new captain.

"For me, my passion is just to play the game, it doesn't matter if no one comes to the

1983, AC Milan, the Italian giants, signed Luther Blissett for £1 million from Watford, a modest, community-centric English club. Blissett's dream move quickly soured. In one low moment, he mused: "No matter how much money you have, you can't seem to get Rice Krispies".

Ahli have their own man to look after any Rice Krispie whims, or otherwise, that Cannavaro might have, in the form of Jehad Muntasser, a multilingual former Libya international.

Muntasser is nominally the assistant to Ahli's sporting director, but he has become the equivalent of the club's relocation consultant since arriving in the summer.

It has been his task to find a suitable school for Cannavaro's three children, Christian, 11, Martina, eight, and Andrea, five, to make sure the sponsored BMW is pulling, and to track down a home within the club's generous relocation budget.

"It is easy with him because he is a nice person," Muntasser, whose own playing career was largely spent in the Italian leagues, said. "He is adapting very well to the reality of football here."

The reality is undoubtedly a lower standard of play than Cannavaro, who retired from international duty after this summer's World Cup, has experienced before.

Yet he has been happy to muck in. "Ahli's players have been so used to players coming here, experienced pros, that it has just become another part of their system," said Roy Aitken, Ahli's assistant coach.



FABIO CANNAVARO

stadium to watch."

It is an attitude which might serve him well tonight.

Ahli are stopping at nothing to right the wrongs of a miserable season last time out. The capture of Cannavaro was their biggest statement of intent, and the club are doing all they can to get their money's worth.

Given his standing in the game, Ahli might have been forgiven for thinking Cannavaro was big enough to look after himself after landing in Dubai.

Clubs often do. Back in

FLOOD CHARITY

Pak-SA T20 in Dubai

Cricket

CRICINFO

South Africa and Pakistan will play an extra Twenty20 in Dubai to raise funds for victims of the floods that have devastated Pakistan over the last month.

The match is scheduled to take place before the first Twenty20 between the two sides in Abu Dhabi that kicks off the series of two Tests and five ODIs from October 27. The entire series is being played in Abu Dhabi and Dubai because of ongoing security concerns in Pakistan.

"The floods have been a real tragedy and this is our own way of trying to help out the victims in the country," Gerald Majola, Cricket South Africa's (CSA) chief executive, told Cricinfo. "It will be an extra game, probably two days before the first T20 that starts the series and all proceeds will go to victims of the floods."

The match is the first tangible result of the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) efforts to raise funds for a natural disaster the UN believes to be among the worst in living memory. Over 1,500 deaths have been recorded and it is estimated nearly 20 million people have been affected after record rainfall in north-western parts of the country. Roughly one-fifth of the country's landmass stands submerged. Though initially sluggish, aid has begun to flow in, with over 800 million US dollars pledged so far.

Other boards have also indicated an interest in helping out. Zimbabwe have already expressed their commitment to tour Pakistan and play in fund-raising games, though details

have not been finalised. The West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) has also offered their assistance, possibly when Pakistan tour the Caribbean next year.

"We feel hurt as we have watched on television and followed on the internet, the magnitude of the destruction and devastation caused to the people of Pakistan, by the recent floods," said Julian Hunte, president of WICB. "The WICB and the PCB have had a long and fruitful relationship for many years and we want to assure them that they have our full support in this dark time."

"In an effort to see how best we can assist, the WICB will contact the PCB hierarchy to examine how we can work together," he said. "The Pakistani cricketers are due to visit the West Indies next year for a full tour, under the ICC Future Tours Programme, so this visit will offer an opportunity to assist in a meaningful way."

The PCB is also keen on arranging a game in England during Pakistan's ongoing tour but nothing concrete has emerged yet. Instead, players from England and Pakistan have contributed their match fees to the cause and the sides are also expected to attend several fund-raising dinners.

PCB officials claimed that New Zealand had also offered to visit Pakistan to play a series to help flood victims but this was swiftly denied by Justin Vaughan, chief executive NZC. Vaughan did express the hope "that cricket could play a part in alleviating some of the suffering that is going on there." Pakistan are scheduled to tour New Zealand at the end of the year, leaving open the possibility of the two boards arranging a game for the cause.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP

OA R GBGBCWQH NH CQUNI
WQZOIV FN XQGNCDNVQ, O
VBDDNVQ O'X GRUU FKRF
FKQ GKRIZOIZ NA FKQ ZNBHX.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN SLUGGER GEHRIG AND SINGER RAWLS RESIDED IN APARTMENTS, DID PEOPLE DEEM THEM LOU-TENANTS?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals T