



PHOTO: AFP

Argentine players go on a victory parade after defeating Netherlands in the women's World Cup hockey final in Rosario on Saturday.

Argentina world champs

Hockey

AFP, Rosario

Argentina defeated reigning World, Olympic, European and world top-ranked Netherlands 3-1 to take their second women's field hockey World Cup here Saturday.

Argentina's first World Cup came in Perth, Australia in 2002.

A capacity crowd of 15,000 chanting, blue and white fans were interspersed with two small patches of orange-clad Dutch supporters.

Argentina star Luciana Aymar earned her 300th cap for Argentina tonight and Dutch skipper Jannette Schopman announced her retirement.

Carla Rebecchi put Netherlands heads down three minutes into the match, at the end of passes from the left from Luciana Aymar to Soledad Garcia to score into the empty goal from near the right post.

Noel Barrionuevo converted Argentina's first penalty corner four minutes later, getting a deflection off the left glove of Netherlands goalkeeper Joyce Sombroek to let Netherlands know they were in a deep hole with work to do to extract themselves.

Netherlands reacted by pressing Argentina high for very long periods, holding Argentina in their defensive half, gaining turnovers from Argentina's outlet

passes.

Argentina's defence group of Barrionuevo, Silvina D'Elia, Claudia Burkart and goalkeeper Belen Succi were outstanding as they worked Argentina out of Netherlands press with sharp, short passing interchanges.

Argentina crowded Netherlands in the circle preventing clear shots on goal by Kim Lammers, Marilyn Agliotti and Naomivan As.

Netherlands started the second half with a penalty corner and Succi confidently saved Maartje Paumen's flick low to her left.

Paumen silenced the crowd when she converted Netherlands second penalty corner high into the top of the net.

Netherlands continued their high press and Argentina broke out twice, forcing a passage into Netherlands circle and Rebecchi was there to take a rebound off the right post to score for Argentina in the middle of the second half.

Netherlands heads went down again, realising the enormity of the task to come back from 3-1 down in a final and the crowd knew it, raising the noise level another notch and stamping their feet.

The Netherlands press yielded three more penalty corners in the second half but Succi was the victor in the contest with the flicks by Paumen and Lammers.

In the final seconds of play the noise reached a crescendo and at the final whistle, Argentina players and coaching

staff made a human pile on the pitch then jumped and shouted in unison.

Netherlands coach Hermann Kruis congratulated Argentina and reflected on the two early goals to Argentina.

"Our performance in the first eight minutes was terrible. We know Argentina will start at full speed and we were not sharp enough when they scored but after that we played better and created some chances to score," Kruis said.

"We were not clever enough like Argentina to defend against their goals in our circle or to score goals in their circle."

Argentina coach Carlos Retegui agreed it was a close match.

"It was a very, very close match but Argentina took their chances and struck at the right moments by playing a very smart but exhausting, physical game and that is what makes us feel now that we are the best team in the world," Retegui said.

"We knew the Netherlands would apply a lot of pressure so it was clear that this pressure would leave certain zones of the pitch free and this is where we could counter attack and score goals by taking over these clear spaces," Retegui said.

Earlier, England beat Germany 2-0 to take the bronze medal, England's first World Cup medal, adding to their bronze medal from the women's Champions Trophy at Nottingham in July.

Alex Danson and Helen Richardson scored for England late in the first half.

Tweeting to be stricter

AFP, London

England cricket chiefs have vowed to get tough with players who "overstep the mark" on micro-blogging site Twitter following a string of controversies in recent weeks.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) managing director Hugh Morris told the BBC that officials were drawing up rules aimed at preventing a repeat of the kind of incidents that landed Kevin Pietersen and Dimitri Mascarenhas in hot water.

England star Pietersen was fined an undisclosed sum after posting a trade on Twitter in response to his omission from England's one-day squad.

Hampshire skipper Mascarenhas was ordered to pay 1,000 pounds by his county after lambasting national selector Geoff Miller on the site.

Morris said the ECB would seek to include rules about the use of Twitter in future player contracts.

"Twitter is potentially a really good medium for players to get closer to supporters, fans of the England team, people who look at them as role models, but with that freedom of speech comes responsibility and it needs to be used in that way," Morris told BBC's 5 Live's Sportsweek programme.

"Those two players in particular overstepped the mark and they've been punished for it," he added.

The rules would be in place before England depart for the Ashes tour of Australia this winter, Morris said.

"That will be part of our player contracts going forward. We've had some good discussions with the players' representatives over this over the last few weeks and that's exactly the type of way we will look to manage Twitter and other social networking sites going forward," Morris said.

"The specific wording is yet to be agreed between ourselves and the PCA (Professional Cricketers' Association) but certainly there will be some management around the use of Twitter.

"It's a good opportunity but it needs to be used in the right way."

Tennis to make debut at CWG

PTI, New Delhi

With some proven champions and emerging stars in its ranks, India can hope for a medal rush when tennis makes its debut at the Commonwealth Games next month.

Out of the five events in the competition, India will be outright favourites in the men's doubles and mixed doubles events with multiple Grand Slam winner Leander Paes featuring in both.

Somdev Devvarman, who is the face of Indian tennis in singles on the ATP circuit, and Sania Mirza, whose career graph has nosedived following injury and slump in form, has a lot at stake at the Games.

With top international stars such as Lleyton Hewitt, Samantha Stosur and Andy Murray pulling out for varied reasons, Somdev and Sania would be expected to last long in the event.

Rain defers Nadal quest

AFP, New York



Rain showers on Sunday forced postponement of the US Open men's final to Monday for the third year in a row, giving Novak Djokovic a much-needed rest day before he has to face top-ranked Rafael Nadal.

US Tennis Association officials waited about two hours beyond the scheduled start time of the championship match at Arthur Ashe Stadium before calling off play for the day under dismal skies with dreary downpours forecast until dawn.

Spanish left-hander Nadal, trying to complete a career Grand Slam by capturing his first title on the Flushing Meadows hardcourts, was hit by rain at the US Open for the third year in a row.

Djokovic, whose lone Grand Slam title came at the 2008 Australian Open, has never beaten Nadal in a final or at a Grand Slam event but is set to try again for the 1.7 million-dollar top prize at 4 pm local time.

Nadal can become the seventh man to complete the career Grand Slam, joining Roger Federer, Andre Agassi, Roy Emerson, Rod Laver, Don Budge and Fred Perry in having won US, French and Australian Opens and Wimbledon titles.

But the extra day of rest diminishes the fatigue factor that might have slowed Djokovic in the wake of an exhausting 5-7, 6-1, 5-7, 6-2, 7-5 Saturday semifinal victory over 16-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer.

"I don't know the rituals how to invite the rain, but yeah, an extra day would be great actually," Djokovic said after his victory over Federer.

"Definitely I will have to do a lot of recovery because it has been an exhausting match."

Last year, rain delayed the finish of a Nadal US Open quarterfinal against Chilean Fernando Gonzalez from Thursday to Saturday,

pushing the semifinals to Sunday and the men's final to Monday.

In 2008, rain halted a Saturday semifinal between Nadal and Britain's Andy Murray in the third set and postponed the finish of that match until Sunday and the men's final until Monday, something that had not happened since 1987.

Now Nadal has an extra day to wait and think about a match that could lift his legend to another level with the Grand Slam sweep. "It is for sure going to be an important match," Nadal said. "For sure this one is going to be something new."

Nadal owns a 14-7 career edge in their rivalry but has lost his past three matches against Djokovic, the most recent in London at last year's ATP Finals. He last beat the Serbian on hardcourts in a 2008 Beijing Olympics semifinal.

Nadal seeks his ninth career Slam crown and third in a row after taking the Wimbledon and French Open trophies.

No Spaniard has won the US Open title since Manuel Orantes in 1975. The only other Spanish man to win the US Open was Manuel Santana in 1965. No left-hander has won the US Open men's title since US southpaw John McEnroe in 1984.

Nadal has not dropped a set in the tournament and could become the first US Open men's champion not to drop a set in the tournament since Australian Neale Fraser half a century ago.

Nadal has lost only two service games in the tournament and could have the fewest broken serves of any US Open men's champion, a mark held by Andy Roddick in allowing only five during his 2003 title run.

Djokovic, who will pass Federer for the world number two ranking after the final, could become the first US Open champion to have saved a match point in the US Open since Andy Roddick in 2003. Djokovic rescued two to beat Federer.

Alonso rules at Monza

AFP, Monza



Fernando Alonso kept alive his world championship challenge with a near-flawless drive for an emotional and exciting victory in Sunday's Italian Grand Prix, his maiden race on home soil for Ferrari.

The 29-year-old Spaniard had said he needed a victory to maintain his bid for a third world title in his first season with the Italian 'scarlet scuderia'.

And he delivered a stirring performance to the tifosi in the grandstands of the old Autodromo Nazionale in a race that was nothing short of disastrous for championship leader Lewis Hamilton who retired on the opening lap.

Alonso lost a place after starting from his 19th pole position, but fought back and

aided by a dazzling Ferrari pit-stop was able to hold on to win ahead of second-placed defending champion Jenson Button of McLaren and Felipe Massa, in the second Ferrari.

It was his third win this season and the 24th victory of his career and, unlike his triumph in Germany in July, when Massa was asked to give way, was this time produced without the aid of any team orders at Ferrari.

Alonso now has 166 points and, in third place, is back within reach of the championship leaders.

Australian Mark Webber has taken over on top for Red Bull after finishing sixth. He is now on 187 points, five clear of luckless and pointless Hamilton.

"A fantastic weekend -- pit stops stupendi," Alonso was told on his triumphant slow-down lap.

"Fantastic, a fantastic weekend," responded the

Spaniard.

"One of the great wins of my career, so emotional and so special for me and for this team. For me it is there with my Spanish Grand Prix of 2006."

Indian teams

FROM PAGE 17
Bangalore captain Anil Kumble praised his team's bowlers for what he described as "a wonderful performance".

Earlier, the Redbacks made a slow start against the Lions, scoring only 65 for two at the halfway point of their innings.

But captain Michael Klinger and Callum Ferguson hammered 97 in a third-wicket partnership off only 58 balls as the Australians reached 178 for six. Klinger hit 78 off 48 balls and Ferguson made 47.

Despite a fine innings of 56 off 35 balls by captain Alviro Petersen, the Lions lost wickets at regular intervals and the pace of Shaun Tait in the closing overs proved too much for the South African team, who finished with 167 for eight. Tait took three for 36.

"In a cut-throat competition like the Champions League it's fantastic to make a winning start, but we have a tough road ahead with matches in Durban against Mumbai and Bangalore," admitted Klinger.

Mumbai Indians suffered a shock loss against the Lions in the tournament's opening match in Johannesburg Friday but are still expected to be strong contenders to be one of the two teams from Group B to qualify for the semifinals.

The tournament is contested by 10 teams split into two groups with the top two from each going through to the knock-out phase.

Nafees in

FROM PAGE 17

"I'm very much optimistic that this team will play good cricket in the series and can gain the much-needed confidence before the World Cup," said Rafique.

Pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza has been retained as captain for the series which will kick off on October 5 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

New Zealand will arrive in Dhaka on September 28.

The selected players have been asked to report tomorrow at Mirpur for training.

Queen Kim

FROM PAGE 17

Zvonareva who had won their last two encounters, including a three-set victory in the Wimbledon quarterfinals.

Games went with serve until 3-2 for Clijsters when a Zvonareva double fault and two unforced errors set up a break point for the Belgian which she took when the Russian hit a forehand marginally long.

Zvonareva tested Clijsters with some big-hitting down both flanks in the next game, but the second seed more than held her ground and her serve to lead 5-2.

The defending champion then piled on the pressure to break Zvonareva to love in the following game for a one-set lead.

Clijster won the first 10 points of the second set to jump out into a 3-0 lead with Zvonareva losing her cool and smashing her racquet in abject frustration.

Zvonareva finally broke a run of nine games in a row against her to get to 3-1, but she just could not live with the relentless pressure that Clijsters was applying with each rally.

The Russian did manage one break point in the following game, but Clijsters blasted that out of the way to take a 4-1 ahead.

A double fault from Zvonareva set up another break point which she saved with a timely ace, but Clijsters then hit a booming forehand winner and a second double fault from the Russian made it mission impossible for her.

'Irfan can't be excused'

Cricket

AFP, Leeds

Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi called for the review system to be introduced into one-day internationals but saved his strongest criticism for Mohammad Irfan after another loss to England.

In what turned out to be a tense finish, England won the second one-day international by four wickets with three balls to spare as they went 2-0 up in their five-match series against Pakistan.

But the result might have been different had not 7ft seamer Irfan, positioned at short fine leg, dropped a glance from Andrew Strauss when the England captain had made just 23.

It was a costly error with Strauss going on to make 126 as England, replying to Pakistan's 294 for eight, finished on 295 for six.

Strauss also appeared to be given another reprieve on 38 when wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal, changing direction and diving full length to his right, held what he thought was a one-handed catch off fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar.

But the decision review system (DRS), increasingly common in Test cricket, has yet to be introduced into the one-day international format and Pakistan were unable to challenge West Indian umpire Billy Doctrove's not out verdict.

Afridi, asked if DRS should feature in limited-overs internationals, replied: "It will be good in matches like this and big series like this. "It's important in cricket now. I know in Twenty20 you don't have much time but in

one-day cricket you would."

But Strauss said: "I wasn't sure it hit my glove. The umpires are there to make a decision."

Any thoughts about DRS in one-day cricket would have been stilled if Irfan had caught Strauss.

Poor fielding has plagued Pakistan for several years and Afridi's patience is clearly at an end.

"I'm really disappointed with this guy [Irfan]," he said. "Cricket is not all about just batting and bowling, nowadays fielding is very important. Maybe if he is good in the field I will give him a chance but otherwise I am not happy."

But Pakistan, with Kamran Akmal making 74 and Asad Shafiq a maiden fifty, at least ran England close.

"I'm quite happy, the boys put in some effort. We have three more games and definitely we will get a result [win]," Afridi added.

Pakistan supporters in a capacity 18,500 crowd got behind their side and there was no jeering by England fans.

Afridi said he hoped the support would be maintained during the remaining three matches of this series, which continues at The Oval on Friday before moving across London to Lord's a week on Sunday before finishing at Hampshire's Rose Bowl on September 22.

"It's a very great sign and we are expecting more fans in London and Hampshire as well. If we play cricket at this level, definitely the crowd will come and they will enjoy the game," he said.

Man-of-the-match Strauss has opted out of Twenty20 internationals and his worth as a one-day batsman has been questioned by several pundits.

Strauss seals Eng win

FROM PAGE 17

Bresnan was unable to score off a near yorker length first delivery but the second was an off-side wide and that left England needing five off five balls.

Bresnan's top-edged hook for four off the next ball, a bouncer, levelled the scores.

Then a single with Bresnan (unbeaten on 10) out by yards had Fawad Alam's throw hit the stumps, saw England to victory.

Kamran Akmal top-scored with 74 in Pakistan's 294 for eight as they tried to turn attention away from the spot-fixing scandal engulfing their tour.

He put on 122 with fellow opener Mohammad Hafeez (43) before Mohammad Yousuf (46) and Asad Shafiq (50) shared 74 for the third wicket.

Stuart Broad's 10 overs cost an expensive 81 runs but the seamer's four wickets helped

prevent Pakistan from reaching 300.

Strauss glanced Akhtar only for the 7ft tall Mohammad Irfan, positioned at short fine leg for that shot, to drop the catch.

And he'd made 38 when wicketkeeper Akmal, diving full length to his right, appealed for a catch off what appeared to be an inside edge but the decision went in Strauss's favour.

Trott after surviving an lbw appeal sweeping at Ajmal, he set off for a risky single and, having been sent back by Strauss, on 99, was run out by Akhtar's direct hit from short third man.

Strauss's 134-ball innings ended when he missed a sweep against Ajmal and was lbw to leave England 248 for four.

For Pakistan, Akmal, who made 53 on Friday, was even-

tually lbw to Paul Collingwood, although replays suggested he was outside off-stump.

Shafiq in only his third match at this level, drove off-spinner Graeme Swann for six over long-on on his way to a maiden ODI fifty off 57 balls.

But he then cut Broad to backward point where Bopara, despite colliding with Strauss, held the catch.

SCORES IN BRIEF
PAKISTAN: 294 for 8 (K Akmal 74, Hafeez 43, Yousuf 46, Shafiq 50, U Akmal 28; Broad 4-81)
ENGLAND: 295 for 6 (Strauss 126, Davies 26, Trott 53, Collingwood 19, Morgan 16, Bopara 16; Ajmal 2-52)
Result: England won by four wickets and led five-match series 2-0.
Man-of-the-match: Andrew Strauss.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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