

Nadal retains top spot

AFP, Paris

Rafael Nadal will finish as the world's number one for the second time in three years, the ATP announced on Thursday, just three days after the Spaniard won the US Open to complete a career Grand Slam.

The 24-year-old is the ninth player in the history of the world rankings to finish on top of the pile at least twice.

He and Roger Federer are the only players since 2000 to clinch the year-end No. 1 ranking in the week after the US Open. Federer did it in 2004 and 2006.

"It has been an incredible season - one of my best ever, if not the best," said Nadal.

"Winning the US Open together with Roland Garros and Wimbledon, as well as the three back-to-back Masters in Europe, was not easy. I worked very hard to get back to the top and it feels really good to know I will end the year as No. 1."

On Monday, Nadal became the seventh man in history to achieve a career Grand Slam as he earned his first US Open title.

He is also the first player to win three straight Grand Slam titles in the same year since Rod Laver won all four in 1969.

Flintoff to launch a TV career

ANI, London

England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff, who has announced his retirement from all formats of cricket because of a long-standing knee injury, will now launch a TV career.

Flintoff has a big money deal to appear in an ITV adventure series, where he will be competing with sport stars like Mike Tyson and Joe Calzaghe.

"Freddie is keen to move into TV, but without feeling like he has retired," The Sun quoted a source, as saying.

"He will learn to box, be sent into extreme climates and learn snow survival. His most dangerous challenge will be walking on the wings of an aircraft," he added.

From his debut in 1998, Flintoff became an integral player for England, and has both captained and vice-captained the team.

However, he suffered regular injuries throughout his international career, often due to his heavy frame and bowling action.

During the period 2007-09, he played in only 13 of England's 36 Test matches, but nevertheless remained a core member of the England squad, being selected whenever available.

The 32-year-old had announced his retirement from Test cricket at the conclusion of the 2009 Ashes series in August, but had kept himself available in ODI and Twenty20 matches.

Abahani

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but this time I am a regular player and I'm more pleased than the first win," said striker Alfaz Ahmed, whose solitary goal took Abahani to the final.

Stand-in-captain Nazrul Islam believes the squad at the moment is stronger than the squad that won the Bangladesh League last season.

Evidence

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Scotland Yard that they would return at any time for further questioning.

But, Asif and Amir have also replied to notices issued to them by the ICC after it felt they had a case to answer.

Scotland Yard's announcement comes a day after ICC president Sharad Pawar said the police investigation was "likely to end soon".

Rokibul

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him in the squad.

Despite the likes of Rokibul and other national players called up in the side, most of them would miss the first phase due to the five-match ODI series against New Zealand next month.

SQUAD

Mohammad Ashraf, Shuvogoto Hom, Mehrob Hossain, Arifat Sunny, Nadif Chowdhury, Marshall Ayub, S h a m s u r R a h m a n, Mohammad Sharif, Talha Jubair, Tareq Aziz, Nazmul Hossain Milon, Mohammad Sharifullah, Ilyas Sunny, Uttam Kumar, Rony Talukdar, Mohammad Rafique, Imon Ahmed, Anamul Haque, Mosharrif Hossain, Rokibul Hasan Rocky, Nadimuddin Mintu, Nur Hossain, Nazmul Hossain, Mohammad Parvez, M o h a m m a d A z i m, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mahub Alam, Rokibul Hasan, Shahadat Hossain, Saikat Ali.



PHOTO: AFP

Mumbai Indians Kieron Pollard plays a stroke during the Champions League Twenty20 League match against Guyana at the Kingsmead Stadium in Durban on Thursday.

Pollard propels Mumbai

AFP, Durban



Kieron Pollard's power hitting took the Mumbai Indians to their first win in the Champions League Twenty20 tournament when they Guyana by 31 runs at Kingsmead on Thursday.

The big West Indian hit nine sixes and one four as he smashed an unbeaten 72 off 30 balls as Mumbai posted 184 for four in their 20 overs.

Despite a fine innings by captain Ramnaresh Sarwan, who hit 46 off 38 balls, Guyana were restricted to 151 for six in reply.

The win gave Mumbai an outside chance of reaching the semifinals, but they will have to gain a convincing victory over fellow Indian Premier League team Royal Challengers Bangalore in their final Group B match at the same ground on Sunday.

Even they will have to rely on results from other games going in their favour.

"We can get better. Our bowling and fielding is still not our best," said Mumbai captain Sachin Tendulkar. But he looked forward to playing against Bangalore.

"It's going to be a terrific contest," he said. It was Guyana's second heavy defeat in two matches.

Notts win county title



AFP, London

Australia's Adam Voges and New Zealand's Andre Adams both had starring roles as Nottinghamshire won English cricket's County Championship on Thursday.

A dramatic final day in the domestic first-class competition saw Nottinghamshire hold off Somerset who drew their last game at Durham.

The bonus points Nottinghamshire secured in their drawn match at Lancashire were enough to see the Midlands club win their sixth Championship title and first since 2005.

Somerset's second-placed finish left the west county county -- whose past players have included Ian Botham, Vivian Richards and Joel Garner -- still searching for the first Championship pennant in the club's 135-year history.

Nottinghamshire spent the bulk of the first three days of their four-day match in Manchester off the field as rain threatened to ruin their title hopes.

But they clawed back Somerset's six points advantage on Thursday by securing maximum batting bonus points, thanks mainly to a hundred from Voges.

They then took the three wickets for the bowling bonus points they needed to finish top of the table, with New Zealand seamer Adams taking two for three in 10 balls and giving Nottinghamshire the title when he had West Indies star Shivnarine Chanderpaul caught for a duck at slip by Samit Patel.

Both Nottinghamshire and Somerset finished on 214 points but Nottinghamshire took the First Division title after winning seven matches to their rivals' six.

Adams ended the season as the First Division's leading wicket-taker with 68 at 22.17.

Nottinghamshire captain Chris Read was pleased his side got the points they required without a contrived declaration.

"The vast majority just said let's go out and bash 400 and take three wickets," former England wicketkeeper Read told Sky Sports.

"Andre Adams, I can't heap enough praise on him, and whenever Ryan's been with us, he's been an asset."

Marcus Trescothick, the dejected Somerset captain, made no attempt to hide his disappointment.

"It's terrible and it's something that will live with us for a long, long time to know we were so close."

It was the second time this season that Somerset had lost out on a trophy in a tight finish after they were beaten by Hampshire in the Twenty20 final on wickets lost after the scores were tied.

"Twenty20 finals day still haunts me even though we're six weeks away from it," former England opening batsman Trescothick added.

"But with this being the elusive trophy for the club it is going to hurt, no doubt about it."

Yorkshire, who were also in contention heading into the final round of matches, finished third after losing to Kent, who still ended up being relegated, by four wickets at Headingley.

Somerset have one last chance to win a trophy in 2010 when they face Warwickshire in the 40-over final at Lord's on Saturday.

Pollard was promoted to number three in the Mumbai batting order after Tendulkar (48) and Shikhar Dhawan (39) put on 82 for the first wicket, using up 10.5 overs.

Pollard started watchfully and with five overs to go Mumbai had scored a modest 99 for three.

But he went on a ferocious assault as the last five overs produced 85 runs, with the Kingsmead boundaries proving too short to contain him.

One massive hit travelled 128m according to tracking equipment used by the television production team at the ground.

Pollard launched his attack with two sixes in the 16th over bowled by Chris Barnwell then wrecked the figures of leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo, who took three for 18 in his first three overs but conceded 16 runs in his fourth and final over.

"He played brilliantly and took the game away from us," said Sarwan.

SCORES IN BRIEF

MUMBAI: 184-4 in 20 overs (Tendulkar 48, Dhawan 39, Pollard 72 not out; Bishoo 3-34)

GUYANA: 153-6 in 20 overs (Sarwan 46, Deonarine 27, Barnwell 24; Bravo 2-18, Harbhajan 2-33).

Result: Mumbai won by 31 runs.

ICC slams Hill comments

AFP, Wellington

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has rebuked New Zealand umpire Tony Hill for publicly airing his belief that Pakistan players deliberately bowled no-balls, a report said Friday.

Hill and compatriot Billy Bowden officiated in Pakistan's Test against England at Lord's last month, which is at the centre of newspaper allegations of a betting scam in which no-balls were bowled to order.

Hill told Wellington's Dominion Post this week that he suspected Pakistan bowlers sent down no-balls on purpose against England last month but did not link the tactic to corruption.

Radio New Zealand on Friday said the ICC had reprimanded Hill over his comments and told him not to discuss the matter further until investigations were complete.

The ICC has suspended Pakistan captain Salman Butt and bowlers Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer as it investigates the corruption claims, first published in Britain's News of the World newspaper.

Hill told the Dominion Post that during the match he and Bowden discussed the possibility that Aamer and Asif were deliberately bowling no-balls by overstepping the crease.

But he said they thought it was simply a tactic to unsettle in-form England batsman Jonathan Trott, rather than anything to do with betting.

Dashara coast past DFC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Dashara Naba Jagaran Sangsadd defeated Diamond Friends Club 2-0 in the Hafizul Islam Khan Uttu Smriti First Division Football League at the Shaheed Miraz-Tapan Stadium here yesterday.

Sanjay opened the scoring in the 44th minute while Rajib added a second eight minutes later.

This victory took Dashara to 11 points from seven matches while Diamond Friends Club remained point-less from six outings.

Century Association will face Sonali Atit Club today.

Rudisha's triumphant return

AFP, Kilgoris

Kenya's world 800m record holder David Rudisha on Friday made a triumphant return to his hometown of Kilgoris in western Kenya where he was crowned a Masai warrior.

This sleepy town of 3000 people, bordering the famous Masai Mara National Reserve came to a standstill when Rudisha, who broke the 800 metres world record twice last month, landed in a police helicopter, which had brought him from the capital, Nairobi.

"I am very happy to be back home among my people. It has been a while and after a long and busy season, it is gratifying to come home and take a rest," said an excited Rudisha.

The town residents lined the streets to cheer the 21-year-old athlete, who was driven into the town in an open-vehicle convoy, accompanied by his Maasai age-mates, dressed in red-checked blankets, who graduated to become warriors or morans, while he was away competing overseas.

'England will move on'



AFP, London

Andrew Flintoff predicted England would have no trouble winning the Ashes in Australia "quite convincingly" without him, soon after announcing his retirement from all cricket.

The 32-year-old all-rounder finally admitted defeat in his longstanding battle against a knee injury that had already forced him into quitting the Test format and meant he had not played any major cricket whatsoever since helping England regain the Ashes at The Oval last year.

For all Flintoff was the central figure in England's 2005 Ashes triumph, his display, a brilliant fast bowling spell in last year's second Test against Australia apart, had been tailing off in the closing stages of his career.

And England, in the more than a year since he has been most recently out of international cricket, have drawn a Test series in South Africa, defeated Australia in the World Twenty20 final and in a home one-day series, while besting Bangladesh home and away.

England are also on the verge of completing a 'treble' over Pakistan, whom they lead 2-0 in a five-match one-day campaign after Test and Twenty20 series wins this season.

"I think the England side will be fine," said Flintoff after announcing his retirement on Thursday.

"They've beaten Pakistan comprehensively.

There's a big winter coming up.

"They've played for a long time without me. I think you'll find professional sport moves on very, very quickly. That's what England have done.

"I expect England to go to Australia this winter and beat Australia quite convincingly," added Flintoff, England's captain when they were hammered 5-0 on their last tour 'Down Under' in 2006/07.

TOUR OF INDIA

Litmus test for Hauritz



CRICINFO

Nathan Hauritz is preparing for the greatest challenge of his career as he gets ready to face Sachin Tendulkar and his batting colleagues at home early next month. The Australians fly out on Sunday for the two-Test series in India and Hauritz said he was not daunted by the prospect of leading Australia's spin attack.

Although he has taken Tendulkar's wicket in a Test in India - on debut in Mumbai in 2004 - Hauritz was filling in for Shane Warne and the expectations were lower. As the No. 1 slow bowler, Hauritz must now play a key role in negating Tendulkar, VVS Laxman, Virender Sehwag and their teammates, and he said it was the biggest test of his career.

"I'd say so definitely," Hauritz told AAP. "Playing against India in India in those conditions. The wickets where we are playing are not normally the traditional spin-friendly ones, but Tendulkar and those sort of guys, it will be a great challenge."

The first Test is in Mohali starting on October 1, before the teams move to Bangalore to complete the short series. Hauritz has not played since June due to a foot injury but he has

Earlier, Flintoff, an aggressive seamer and big-hitting batsman, said he'd retired on medical grounds ending any hope he might turn out for state side Queensland in Australia's domestic Twenty20 competition.

"The decision to end my career came yesterday (Wednesday) after consultation with medical advisers.

"Having been told that my body would no longer stand up to the rigours of cricket, I had no alternative but to retire."

For all Flintoff's great deeds on behalf of England, it was clear some of his former teammates regarded persistent talk about his possible return as an irritating distraction.

Meanwhile his repeated insistence he didn't like the spotlight away from the game was in contrast to the frequency with which he turned up to just about every endorsement opportunity that came his way.

But there was no denying his importance to the England team in the years of his pomp, an importance in no way reflected by career statistics which, as Flintoff has acknowledged, left him some way short of being classed as one of cricket's 'greats'.

England captain Andrew Strauss, acknowledging Flintoff's contribution, said: "He was always the ultimate impact cricketer, somebody who on so many occasions stepped up to the plate."

"He would put his body on the line on flat wickets when other bowlers were maybe starting to struggle. Because of the way he bowled, and what he put into it, it was probably not as easy for him to get seven-fors and eight-fors," the opening batsman added. "But if you talked to other players around the world, they would always say Andrew was one of the bowlers they least wanted to face -- because he could be so hostile."

"We are all striving to gain the respect of our peers," Strauss said. "Andrew certainly did that."

the support of the captain Ricky Ponting to remain the first-choice spinner ahead of Steven Smith, who debuted in England.

Smith is also in the squad for this trip and, if conditions suit, Australia might consider playing him alongside Hauritz. However, there is no doubt the Australians would expect more from the senior man Hauritz, who took his first two five-wicket Test hauls during the home series against Pakistan last summer.

"The main thing is to know my game really well," Hauritz said. "It's going to be tough enough bowling against those players, but at the end of the day they are human and they do make mistakes. I've seen enough of Tendulkar's career through the last 20 years to know how he plays and what he likes to play to spin."

"I'm going to have my individual plans against those guys and if they don't work I've definitely got plan B and plan C to go from there. It can be quite tough to bowl over there because the wickets can be very good to bat on and the outfield can be very fast."

The two matches are Australia's last Tests before the Ashes, which begins in Brisbane just over a month after the Test squad members head home. The games are followed by three one-day internationals in India and the Australians also have three ODIs at home against Sri Lanka ahead of the Ashes.

Opponents eulogise Freddie



AFP, Sydney

Australian fast bowler Brett Lee on Friday praised former rival Andrew Flintoff, who in the defining image of the 2005 Ashes series slung a consoling arm around the distraught Aussie paceman.

Lee said Flintoff may have jokingly whispered to him "one-one you Aussie bastard" when the photo was taken at the end of the Edgbaston Test, during which Lee fell agonisingly short of batting his side to victory.

"That might have been thrown in there. It's for general viewing so I couldn't really make those comments here tonight," Lee told reporters in Sydney.

"Probably one of the most special moments in my career was that 2005 Ashes series and certainly that epic battle that we had at Edgbaston.

"Even though we lost, I'd still put that down as one of my favourite games, purely the way it was played in and the sportsmanship that was

onshow."

Flintoff ended his cricketing career on Thursday after medical advice that his right knee required a third operation.

Lee described the 32-year-old as "that lovable character."

"Not real lovable though when he's bowling 95 miles an hour at your ribs, I can testify to that," Lee said.

"He's just a guy that has just given his all, who's been great for world cricket, and his sportsmanship is just second to none."

"He's an absolute beauty."

Former Australian Test vice-captain Adam Gilchrist said he felt his own retirement was a day for celebration, as he praised Flintoff's grit and passion to win the Ashes.

"To hear someone say they're sad and disappointed tells me that it's been cut a bit shorter than he would have liked," Gilchrist told reporters.

"England owe him a lot because (in) 2005 where he just at all costs, was going to deliver those Ashes for his country."

"I don't think his body ever really recovered from that, the sustained pressure that he put on himself and endured."



PHOTO: AFP

Kenya's world 800m record-holder David Rudisha celebrates as he arrives his hometown of Kilgoris in western Kenya yesterday where he was crowned a Masai warrior.

Eng restrict Pakistan

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bowling particularly from Anderson.

Anderson struck first when he had Mohammad Hafeez caught behind in the second over, and Kamran Akmal soon followed when he was bowled by Bresnan.

Mohammad Yousuf could not make an impression and Umar Akmal lost his composure after clashing with Bresnan.

Akmal appeared to elbow Bresnan as the bowler was walking back to his mark and when Bresnan bowled him a bouncer shortly afterwards his wild hook was top-edged to Graeme Swann in the deep. Shahid Afridi's dismissal

summed up Pakistan's tour as he was run out in bizarre circumstances.

The captain was running to the non-striker's end when a throw from Swann deflected off his bat onto the stumps and he was run out for 34 just as he was preparing to attack the bowling in the last ten overs.

England made one change from the side that won at Headingley on Sunday with Luke Wright coming in for Paul Collingwood who is suffering from a virus and were looking to wrap up the five-match series after winning the first two matches in Durham and Leeds.

Pakistan dropped Mohammad Irfan who was criticised by Afridi after the

Headingley game and brought in Razaq.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 241 (Asad 40, Fawad 64, Afridi 34, Razaq 31; Bresnan 3-51, Anderson 3-26)

Bukola, Dami

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training and subsequently missed Bangladesh League matches over a row of unpaid wages with Mohammedan.

It is believed that Muktiyoddha's newly appointed coach Maruful Haque, who coached Mohammedan last season, had played a key role in bringing Bukola and Emanuel to the freedom fighters' outfit.