

Bryans on a par with Woodies

American twins Bob and Mike Bryan equalled Mark Woodforde and Todd Woodbridge's record of 11 Grand Slam men's doubles titles on Saturday when they captured their second Wimbledon crown. The Bryans clinched a 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/2) win over Sweden's Robert Lindstedt and Horia Tecau of Romania to add to their victory in 2006. They had also lost three previous finals at the All England Club. Their Grand Slam haul also includes five Australian Opens, three US and one at Roland Garros.

-- AFP



Delightfully Djokovic

Novak Djokovic of Serbia smashes a forehand return to Spain's Rafael Nadal during their high-octane Wimbledon final at the All England Tennis Club yesterday. Djokovic overcame Nadal to win the coveted trophy in four sets. PHOTO: AFP

AP, Wimbledon



Novak Djokovic won his first Wimbledon title Sunday, backing up his soon-to-be No. 1 ranking by beating defending champion Rafael Nadal 6-4, 6-1, 1-6, 6-3.

Djokovic, who was already guaranteed to take over the top ranking from the Spaniard on Monday, extended his mastery over Nadal this season with a fifth straight head-to-head victory.

After shaking hands with Nadal at the net, Djokovic walked back out on court and crouched down. He pulled a blade or two of grass out of the manicured lawn and put it in his mouth.

"It's really hard to describe this with any words except the best day of my life, most special day of my life," said Djokovic, who tossed three of his rackets into the crowd before accepting the championship trophy. "This is my favourite tournament, the tournament I always dreamed of winning. The first tennis tournament I ever watched in my life."

Djokovic assured himself of the No. 1 ranking just by reaching the final. He opened the season with 41 straight wins, including the Australian Open title, but his 43-match winning streak dating to December came to an end against Roger Federer in the French Open semifinals.

The win over Nadal improved Djokovic's record in 2011 to 48-1, with five victories coming against the Spaniard in finals - two on hard courts, two on clay and now one on grass. Sunday's win was the first grass-court title of his career.

Serbian President Boris Tadic was in the Royal Box along

with several former champions to watch the match on Centre Court, and when Nadal sent a backhand long on match point, Djokovic turned to face them and dropped to the turf, laying on his back with his arms spread wide.

During the match, it was Djokovic's incredible movement and precise shot placement that gave him the first two sets. His play dipped in the third, but it returned in the fourth to secure him a third Grand Slam title.

Djokovic consistently landed shots while taking advantage of any slight miscues from Nadal. The first and biggest of the first set came in the final game, when Djokovic hit a forehand winner down the line.

Nadal followed that with a pair of unforced errors, and the second-seeded Serb won the set on the first break point of the match.

Djokovic dominated the second set, breaking Nadal twice while holding serve easily. It wasn't until the second game of the third set that Nadal finally managed to do something with Djokovic's serve, breaking for a 2-0 lead when the Serb dumped a backhand into the net.

Nadal broke again and eventually won the set, and the two traded service breaks early in the fourth. But after Djokovic held to 4-3 in the final set with four straight points, Nadal double-faulted for the first time. He lost the next two points and soon was broken again when he sent a backhand long.

Nadal had won 20 straight matches at the All England Club, including the 2008 and '10 titles. He missed the 2009 tournament because of injury, but was playing in his fifth Wimbledon final in six years.

Hopeless it was, but fruitful now: Kamal



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president AHM Mustafa Kamal said yesterday that a hopeless situation was turned into a fruitful outcome when the ICC presidency rotation system was deferred till October.

In a long press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium after his return in the afternoon from Hong Kong where he attended the ICC annual conference, Kamal admitted that his initial standpoint to support the motion of disbanding the rotation policy was a "strategic move".

"When the resolution via circular came up, it didn't sit well with me and I wasn't really prepared for it. It was a strategic move to vote in favour. Why didn't I discuss it with my board? Well there wasn't much time and I also knew that it would be discussed in Hong Kong," he explained.

The June 29 discussion of the five-day long ICC annual conference was centred on the rotation issue. Kamal found South Africa who, unexpectedly and belatedly, became the crucial swing vote that eventually led to the adjournment as Pakistan had always opposed the scrapping and Sri Lanka abstained from voting from the initial circular.

"I went in with only one supporter (Pakistan). Sri Lanka didn't vote from the first instance but while I was defending my case, South Africa came to my support. They were the fourth vote that really helped to bring it in our favour," he explained.

Apart from Kamal's clarification that he did indeed vote in favour initially, he also confirmed that it wasn't done to bargain with the BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) but as a measure to bring the ICC presidency, ultimately, to Bangladesh.

Though the amendment is reported to replace the current rotational system with an open candidature, Kamal

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Super Cup from Friday

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation re-confirmed that the Grameenphone Super Cup will start from July 8, though the national football team is expected to play the round 2 of the World Cup pre-qualifiers against Lebanon this month.

Keeping the possible encounter against Lebanon in mind, the tournament committee may change the format of the double-league system group matches to provide some time to the national team before their away match on July 23.

All however depends on the outcome of yesterday's round 1 away match against Pakistan, where Bangladesh had a bright chance to move into round 2 on virtue of their emphatic first-leg 3-0 win on June 29.

"We are re-confirming that the Grameenphone

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Paceman Nazmul Hossain is about to bowl during the Tigers' first day of training at the GP-BCB Academy ground in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

MATCH-FIXING INVESTIGATION

It all comes down to fines!



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh League champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society are likely to get off the hook by paying only fines for their alleged involvement in match-fixing.

The Bangladesh League Committee headed by BFF senior vice-president Abdus Salam Murshedy is set to submit the probe report to his president today and it was learnt the committee could not find any conclusive evidence that Rahmatganj intentionally threw away a 2-0 lead to eventually lose a crucial Bangladesh League match against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club 5-2.

However, Murshedy refused to disclose anything about their final report that was prepared after a long hearing over two weeks.

"We will hand over our report to the BFF president tomorrow. We will also hold a press briefing on Tuesday in this regard," said the former national striker without disclosing anything about their findings.

A full eight-member league committee launched the investigation on the basis of the match fixing allegation between the two sides and quizzed the club officials and the players, even summoning Muktijoddha Sangsad coach Maruful Haque after his comments regarding match fixing published in different national dailies.

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