



# DUBAI DUTY FREE BMW TENNIS OPEN



Sheikh Hasher Maktoum, Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, and Sheikh Saeed Al Maktoum watch the action on the first day yesterday. - GN photo

## Sanchez shocked by fiery Joao

Bates pulls a rabbit out of the hat with a rapidly improved victory against a jaded looking Bergstrom

### TENNIS

By Leslie Wilson Jr.

**Dubai**  
If the chair umpire encountered difficulties pronouncing Joao Cunha-Silva's name, then the popular Spaniard Emilio Sanchez had even greater problems reading the sprightly Portugal Davis Cup player's serve, as he made an unceremonious exit from the Dubai Duty Free/BMW Open tennis tournament yesterday and then said that he was sad to lose, understandably.

In fact Emilio echoed the sentiments of the many fans who followed his every shot through the three-setter with Joao only to see their hero fold up, almost willingly, in the final set 6-3, 4-6, 6-4.

"I did not deserve to win," Sanchez said without attempting to disguise his displeasure at being a first round casualty. "I had difficulty with my confidence and concentration, there was nothing wrong with my game," the distraught fifth seed of this ATP tour event said. Joao in contrast was quite literally over the moon with his performance. "It's one of my best victories," said the attacking Portuguese star who played a positive game plan of attack and attack.

Later in the evening, as the humidity dipped England's Jeremy Bates proceeded to pull a rabbit out of the hat with a rapidly improving win against a jaded looking Christian Bergstrom of Sweden, the man who put away Ivan Lendl at the Australian Open only a short while back.

Bergstrom looked the worse off for his heady exploits Down Under and caved in against Bates' concerted onslaught. Bates won 7-6, 6-1 but dismissed comments on the win being easy. "It was me out there struggling, even though I was

one set and 4-1 up. I haven't had a lot of good games and I was still quite tight," said the English No. 1.

However there was no cause for alarm for the other seeds on view in yesterday's first round action at the Aviation Club courts with No 3 seed Karel Novacek of the Czech Republic sidelining countryman Daniel Vacek 6-0, 7-5, while Russian Andrei Cherkasov, seeded sixth here warmed up slowly but surely to dump Michael Schapers of the Netherlands 4-6, 7-6, 6-2.

Sweden's Lars Jonsson had the easiest passage into round two when his Italian adversary Claudio Pistolesi retired with a back injury after trailing 1-6, 0-1, with 23 minutes into the game.

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The news of the day undoubtedly was the exist of Emilio. Though the Spaniard had come off best in his only previous clash with Joao, with Portuguese player, yesterday showed scant regard for his lowly ranking at 124, a good 93 places behind Emilio, with a performance of high character and remarkable single-mindedness.

Joao seemed headed for a straight forward win when he wrapped up the first set with the minimum break required early in the match. But, as he went on to say later, he was fully aware that Emilio was not likely to take this sort of treatment lying down. Joao needed to play as consistently if not even better as the Spaniard came charging back in the second set with a flurry of high backhand volleys that time and

again caught Joao on the wrong foot. Emilio broke Joao in the first game and then traded a break in the fourth before he really hit peak form in the 10th game, breaking the Portuguese to level sets.

Then came that drop in concentration that he had been talking about and in quick time Joao was once again calling the shots at 3-1 up. Emilio regrouped his game admirably to break his consistent rival who allowed little freedom on his pounding first serve. Emilio frequently ran around his backhand to pass Joao as he made a predetermined move to bustle his way at the net. A break in the sixth put Emilio on par at 3-3 and then came that fatal stutter in the seventh. Joao pounced upon the chance like bird of prey and served out the match at 6-4.

Joao later said that by attacking Emilio's strong backhand he prized open the higher rated Spaniard's game providing for the opportunity to dominate the net as he wished.

If the general standard of play on view yesterday was anything to go by, then the likes of Becker and Courier won't be missed. The big-serving Czech tournament opener between Novacek and Vacek set the mood for the day with the third seed mastering his countryman's big serve to win two straight but reasonably competitive sets.

Vacek missed the one chance he had to break Novacek in the second set at 4-3 up, perhaps troubled by the high bouncy and deep ground strokes that the third seed essayed from the sanctuary of the baseline. The break was not forthcoming and with it went the young Czech's chances.

For Novacek, a former top 10 player, this was a great start after a six-month sit-out. "I was happy to attain such a high level of concentration, particularly after a long lay-off," said the strapping Czech who won four his 10 career titles in '91.

But the man who got away with a



GIANTKILLER... Joao Cunha-Silva of Portugal plays a backhand shot on his way to victory over Spaniard Emilio Sanchez. - Picture by Sandeep Naik

sluggish early approach was the Russian sixth seed Cherkasov. He trailed by a set and when pushed into the tie-breaker in the second, defeat seemed more a possibility. But Cherkasov proved he was made of sterner stuff winning a tight shootout at 7-5. Obviously pumped up by his courageous show the Russian won the match at 6-2.

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### RESULTS

#### Singles (first round - seeding in brackets)

(5) Karel Novacek (Czech Republic) beat Daniel Vacek (Czech Republic) 6-0, 7-5; (6) Andrei Cherkasov (Russia) beat Michiel Schapers (Netherlands) 4-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-2; Karsten Braesch (Germany) beat Bart Wuyts (Belgium) 6-4, 6-2; Joao Cunha-Silva (Portugal) beat Emilio Sanchez (Spain) 6-3, 4-6, 6-4; Lars Jonsson (Sweden) beat Claudio Pistolesi (Italy) 6-1, 1-0 (retired); Jeremy Bates (England) beat Christian Bergstrom (Sweden) 7-6, 6-1; Lars Wahlgren (Sweden) beat Andrei Olhovski (Russia) 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.

Doubles (qualifying round) Buriilo/Kafelnikov beat Braasch/Karbacher 7-5, 6-3.

#### TODAY'S ORDER OF PLAY

1 p.m. J. Sanchez v Anders Jarryd; Nicholas Pereira v Thomas Muster; Marcos Gorriz v Black; Carl Uwe Steeb v Karbacher; Montana v Fabrice Santoro; Magnus Gustafsson v Tomas Carbonell; Dosedel v Gilbert Schaller  
7 p.m. Alexander Volkov v El Aynaoui  
Doubles: Garnett/Witsken v Connell/Galbraith; Bates/Black v Pearce/Talbot; Carbonell/Pereira v Sanchez/Sanchez; Montana Van Emburgh v Novacek/Steeb.

### Courier tops money list

**Monaco (Reuter)**

The top 20 men's money winners as issued by the Association of Tennis Professionals yesterday:

1. Jim Courier (U.S.) \$274,909
2. Stefan Edberg (Sweden) 165,518
3. Pete Sampras (U.S.) 108,327
4. Boris Becker (Germany) 83,107
5. Michael Stich (Germany) 68,727
6. Richey Reneberg (U.S.) 60,269
7. Laurie Warder (Australia) 60,205
8. Danie Visser (South Africa) 57,327
9. Christian Bergstrom (Sweden) 53,835
10. Paul Haarhuis (Netherlands) 49,215
11. Michael Chang (U.S.) 46,505
12. Brett Steven (New Zealand) 46,055
13. John Fitzgerald (Australia) 42,384
14. David Prinosil (Germany) 41,840
15. Alexander Volkov (Russia) 41,181
16. Jacco Eltingh (Netherlands) 40,190
17. Guy Forget (France) 38,665
18. Patrik Kuhnen (Germany) 38,211
19. G. Ivanisevic (Croatia) 38,100
20. Nicklas Kulti (Sweden) 37,370.

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