



INSIDE

POWERBOAT
VICTORY TEAM
EMERGE
WINNERS

Doha Reigning Class 1 World Powerboat Champion Arif Al Zafein of the Dubai Victory Team got the defence of his title under way in brilliant style winning the Qatar Grand Prix, the opening round of the 2008 series. **Page 58**

SOCCER
Al Ahli clinch
final berth

Abu Dhabi The Khalil brothers led Al Ahli to the finals of the President's Cup after combining to beat Al Shabab, the leaders of the league, 3-1 at Al Maktoum Stadium late on Friday night. Al Ahli, winners of the trophy six times, will face Al Wasl, the defending champions, at Zayed Sports City on April 14 in the final. **Page 58**

ENDURANCE
Al Subose posts
dramatic win

Abu Dhabi Mohammad Ahmad Ali Al Subose, one of the most promising riders in the UAE, scored a dramatic win in the 120-km Abu Dhabi International Cup. Ahmad finished third in yesterday's 120-km ride, but the top two riders were eliminated after their horses failed the final vet check. **Page 59**

Dementieva has the last laugh

OVERCOMES COMPATRIOT KUZNETSOVA'S CHALLENGE TO WIN TITLE ON DUBAI DEBUT



By ALARIC GOMES
Senior Reporter

Dubai The Barclays Dubai Tennis Championships had a new champion when 11th seed Elena Dementieva upset second seed and tournament favourite Svetlana Kuznetsova before an appreciative audience last night.

Making her Dubai debut, Dementieva took firm control of the match despite being down by a set to win 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Shaikh Ahmad Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum was the chief guest and presented the trophies in the presence of Shaikh Hasher Maktoum, Dubai Director of Information.

This was the ninth meeting between the two Russians with Kuznetsova leading 5-3 going into last night's final. The last time the two met was in the semifinal at New Haven last year which was also won by Kuznetsova when Dementieva retired in the third set.

Aiming for her 10th career title, Kuznetsova started off well as she took the first set 6-4 in 49 minutes. The set took a lot from both the players with each of them managing to hold their serve once each.

The second set was an

RESULTS

Women's singles final: Elena Dementieva (RUS) beat Svetlana Kuznetsova (RUS) 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.
Women's doubles final: Cara Black (ZIM) and Liezel Huber (US) beat Yan Zi and Zheng Jie (CHN) 7-5, 6-2.



engrossing one with Dementieva improving with each game to go clear 4-1. But Kuznetsova bid her time and came up with a break, only to see Dementieva take the set 6-3.

In the third set, Dementieva raced to an early 3-0 lead with a break in the second. But Kuznetsova came back with a break in the fifth only to lose her serve in the very next game for 5-2. Dementieva then broke her fellow countrywoman one last time to win the battle of Russia 6-2 in two hours and nine minutes.

"I would like to thank all the people of Dubai for coming out here and supporting me. I love Dubai," the new champion said.

See also Pages 60 and 61



KARL JEFFS/Gulf News

Charging in

Russian Elena Dementieva returns to compatriot Svetlana Kuznetsova during the singles final yesterday.

Black-Huber tango stuns Chinese duo

Win in straight sets against Yung-Jan and Chia-Jung to retain women's doubles crown

By ALARIC GOMES
Senior Reporter

Dubai Cara Black of Zimbabwe teamed up with American Liezel Huber to successfully defend the doubles title at the Barclays Dubai Tennis Championships yesterday.

Black and Huber defeated the Chinese pairing of Yung-Jan Chan and Chia-Jung Chuang 7-5, 6-2 and keep the trophy they won here last year.

Black and Huber took their time to get their rhythm, and once they got it there was no stopping them from powering to a straight sets win.

But that win was not easy and they top seeded duo sent out a strong warning that the Chinese were gaining ground at a very fast pace.

'Different proposition'

"It's a completely different proposition, playing against them compared to what they were a few years back," Black warned.

"The one thing that benefited us was that they were let down by their first serves. But don't underestimate the Chinese players," she said.

Meanwhile, Federico



MEGAN HIRONS/Gulf News

Teaming up

Cara Black (left) of Zimbabwe and Liezel Huber of the US in action against Chinese players Yung-Jan Chan and Chia-Jung Chuang in the doubles final yesterday.

Luzzi has become the fifth Italian player to be banned for betting on tennis since a worldwide investigation was instigated seven months ago, the ATP said

on Friday, according to a Reuters report from Rome.

In a statement, the men's governing body said the 28-year-old had been found

guilty of wagering on the outcome of matches from May 2004 and April 2007. He has been banned for 200 days and fined \$50,000 (Dh180,000).

Top England players on IPL wishlist

Pietersen and Flintoff very appealing to our owners, says Twenty20 league chairman Modi

By SIMON BRIGGS

The full scale of the threat to English cricket posed by the billion-dollar Indian Premier League was revealed to *The Daily Telegraph* on Friday when the man behind it said "the majority of the England players have been in contact with us".

Lalit Modi, Chairman of IPL, has stood by a deal with the England and Wales Cricket Board in which it was agreed that England players would not be used during its first season. But he confirmed that the agreement cannot hold.

He said: "We would very much like the English players to participate in our league. All our owners are determined to have them.

"I know a lot of our owners are in touch with the English players. I know that the players' agents have been in touch with me, and I've been telling them that we cannot do anything for the moment."

Leading England players such as Kevin Pietersen and Andrew Flintoff could attract huge fees similar to the £660,000 that the IPL's Hyderabad franchise promised Andrew Symonds for

just seven weeks' work. Pietersen said he would not be joining the IPL. "I know there is interest and, yes, there have been offers," he said, "but it's not something I'm particularly interested in. I love playing for England and there will be nothing that will lure me away from England just yet."

Patriotic stance

But Modi suggested Pietersen's patriotic stance might not be permanent.

"Both Pietersen and Flintoff are very appealing to our owners," he said. "I read Pietersen's statement

carefully, and it said, 'for now'. But I wouldn't like to get into a controversy and say who has asked us, and who hasn't asked us."

The IPL runs from April 18 to June 1 this year, clashing with the first two home Tests of the upcoming season. Should high-profile English players find themselves the targets for aggressive Indian bids, it could turn the national team into a battleground.

But Modi hopes to escape this scenario by finessing the timetables.

—*The Daily Telegraph*
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