

# SPORT

GULF NEWS  
SUNDAY,  
★ MARCH 9, 2008

**SIDEBOTTOM HAT-TRICK PUTS ENGLAND IN CONTROL**  
CRICKET 61



**UNITED SUFFER A JOLT**  
SOCCER 62

**WILLIAMS SHINES IN 60 METRES**  
ATHLETICS 63



## INSIDE

### CRICKET

#### ICL GETS UNDER WAY IN CHANDIGARH TODAY

**Dubai** The Indian Cricket League (ICL), to be known as Edelweiss 20's Challenge, will begin at the Tau Devi Lal Cricket Stadium in Panchkula, Chandigarh today. Ahmedabad Rockets, led by Australian Damien Martyn, will take on Chandigarh Lions, captained by New Zealand allrounder Chris Cairns. Despite being busy with the opening of this event, Kapil Dev, chairman, executive board, ICL, took time off to fly into Dubai to be the guest of honour for a cricket tournament on Friday evening.

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### ENDURANCE

#### Abdullah posts maiden career win

**Abu Dhabi** Abdullah Thani Bin Huzaim, on 11-year-old grey gelding Omani Eman, scored his first career win at the open level when he won the Emirates Challenge 120-km endurance ride yesterday. Abdullah, who dominated for most of the 120-km event held at the Emirates International Endurance Village, however did have some fight in the final stage when Mohammad Rashid Saeed Khamis Al Subose, on Deen, put up a good show.

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# Gutsy Roddick rallies to Dubai title

COMES BACK FROM A SET DOWN TO BEAT LOPEZ AND BECOME FIRST AMERICAN TO WIN THE MEN'S EVENT



BY ALARIC GOMES  
Senior Reporter

**Dubai** World No 6 Andy Roddick became the first American to win the singles title at the Barclays Dubai Tennis Championships with a gutsy yet typical 6-7 (8), 6-4, 6-2 win over surprising finalist Feliciano Lopez of Spain last night.

The American, who had not lost a set or serve through the week here, was rattled by Lopez, who was not expected to be too tough an opponent considering Roddick's recent form. Roddick had won in San Jose two weeks ago while falling to Robin Soderling in the quarters last week in Memphis before arriving in Dubai for the first time ever.

Both players deserved to be finalists here — Roddick for his amazing show of power on serves and Lopez for taking three top-10 players en route to the final.

#### Different story

Going into the final, the American had 62 aces compared to the 45 sent down by Lopez. But last night it was a different story as Lopez had ten aces in each of the first two sets compared to 15 from the American.

Roddick accepted a cheque for \$300,000 (Dh1.

### RESULTS

Men's singles final: Andy Roddick (US) beat Feliciano Lopez (SPA) 6-7 (8), 6-4, 6-2.  
Men's doubles final: Mahesh Bhupathi/Mark Knowles beat Martin Damm/Pavel Vizner 7-5, 7-6 (7).



KARL JEFFS/Gulf News

#### August presence

Shaikh Ahmad Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum with champion Andy Roddick at the presentation ceremony.

“It is simply an amazing feeling to come here for the first time and finish off with a win.”

Andy Roddick  
World No 6



KARL JEFFS/Gulf News

#### Packing a punch

Andy Roddick of the US returns to Feliciano Lopez of Spain during the men's singles final of the Dubai tennis Championships yesterday. Roddick won 6-7 (8), 6-4, 6-2.

million) and received the winner's trophy from Shaikh Ahmad Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum. He also earned 300 ATP Ranking points. Shaikh Hasher Maktoum, Dubai Director of Information, and Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair, Speaker of the FNC, also attended the presentation ceremony.

This was the second Dubai final for Lopez after his first appearance in 2004 against Roger Federer. Lopez proved to be a worthy opponent in the final to the American as he held his nerve and mixed his game well to take the first set in the tie-breaker. After both players had

done well to go the whole length of the first set without losing their serves, it was Lopez showing his grit in the tie break to fight back from 1-4 down to win it 10-8. That set saw an amazing 19 aces, of which 10 were surprisingly against the Spaniard's name.

“It is simply an amazing feeling to come here for the first time and finish off with a win,” Roddick said after the final.

“He [Lopez] put me under a lot of pressure, espe-

cially after he took the first set tie-break. It has definitely been a tough match, but I have been pleased with the way I have beaten some of the top quality players on my way to the title here,” added the American champion.

Going into last night's final, Lopez had an amazing run in Dubai facing Roddick as his possible fourth, top-10 victim in a week. Ranked at a distant No 141, the Spaniard was the only unseeded player coming

through to the semifinals. Prior to this, only Frenchmen Jerome Golmard [beat Nicolas Kiefer in 1999] and Fabrice Santoro [beat Younes El Aynaoui in 2002] had won the title here as unseeded.

The second set was even-

ly matched with Roddick gifted a crucial break in the ninth for a 5-4 lead after Lopez committed a double fault and the American served out for the set 6-4 in 31 minutes.

Roddick broke his Spanish opponent in the very

first game and then held for a 2-0 lead and then once again in the seventh to make it 5-2 for the American, who served out for set and match. “It has been quite a while since I played so well,” stated Roddick.

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## Bhupathi and Knowles at the double

India-Bahamas duo edges Czech pairing to win Dubai title and lift second trophy in a week

BY ALARIC GOMES  
Senior Reporter

**Dubai** Fourth seeds Mahesh Bhupathi of India and Mark Knowles of the Bahamas picked up their second title in as many weeks with a 7-5, 7-6 (7) win over third seeds Martin Damm and Pavel Vizner at the Barclays Dubai Tennis Championships yesterday.

Both pairs were chasing their second ATP title of the season. Damm and Vizner won last month in Marseille, while Bhupathi and Knowles were fresh from their win in Memphis last weekend.

The match was the closest it could get with Bhupathi and Knowles gelling well to keep Damm and Vizner at bay. The Czechs had the first chance to break in the 11th game on Knowles' serve. But Knowles held and then broke on Vizner's serve to win the set 7-5 in 42 minutes.

The second set was even closer with the tie-break the only way out after some exciting tennis on centre court. The Czechs had the upper hand in the tie-breaker, but Bhupathi and Knowles complemented each other well to win 9-7. Bhupathi won the Dubai

### AILMENT

#### VIRUS KEY TO FEDEX SLUMP

Roger Federer could not figure out why he felt so sluggish at the start of this season. His doctors eventually gave him an explanation: He had mononucleosis.

“Roger found out he had mono, and didn't know it. He found out a couple of weeks ago.

That's probably what was wrong with him,” Federer's agent, Tony Godsick, said on Friday.

“He doesn't want to make any excuses and take anything away from anybody,” Godsick added.

—Reuters



KARL JEFFS/Gulf News

#### On the ball

Mahesh Bhupathi (right) and Mark Knowles of the Bahamas in action during the men's doubles final of the Dubai Tennis Championships yesterday.

title in 1998 and 2004, while Knowles previously triumphed here in 2002.

Bhupathi and Knowles have won their last eight matches in straight sets, and this was the 49th doubles title for Knowles, while Bhupathi picked up his 43rd career crown.

“At the moment, we are just trying to win as many matches as possible. We have not really been able to keep a tab on how many sets we have won so far,” Knowles said.

Wales had the best of the first half's final 10 minutes but Ireland's defence held firm — helped as the referee reversed a penalty against Ireland by awarding a yellow card against Wales scrumhalf Mike Phillips.

That gave Ireland the breathing space they needed to go into the break clinging onto their slim 6-3 lead.

Wales opened the scoring in the second half with a penalty from Jones that pulled the two sides even. Moments later the visi-

tors took the lead for the first time as Williams handed off Andrew Trimble to score the match's only try 11 minutes into the second half. A touchline conversion from Jones cemented a 13-6 lead.

O'Gara slotted his third kick after Wales flanker Martyn Williams was sin-binned for tripping Eoin Reddan.

A fourth O'Gara penalty closed the gap to just a point but Wales cemented their win with a penalty from James Hook.

## Wales edge past Ireland to secure triple crown

Win 16-12 and can clinch their second grand slam in four years if they beat France next week

**Dublin** (Reuters) A lone try from winger Shane Williams handed Wales a 16-12 win over Ireland and the triple crown after a tight Six Nations clash at Croke Park yesterday.

Unbeaten Wales, with four wins from four in the tournament, can clinch their second grand slam in four years if they beat France in Cardiff next Saturday.

Ireland opened the scoring with a penalty in front of the posts from flyhalf Ronan O'Gara who extend-

ed the home side's lead to six points mid-way through the first half with a second penalty against a stiff Dublin breeze and from a trickier angle.

#### Breathing space

The Irish put Wales under serious pressure after that with Shane Horgan grounding the ball just inches from the Welsh line but the visitors were quick to fight their way back into Irish territory, with flyhalf Stephen Jones slotting a penalty 25 minutes in.

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