

# Top players advance to next round at Wimbledon

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Fans gasped at the revival of Pete Sampras' 120 mph aces and went gaga over Andre Agassi's shaven torso on a day of tennis and titillation at Wimbledon.

And to everyone's relief, no one shouted anything cruel again at Steffi Graf.

The sun shone improbably for a third straight day Wednesday as the top seeds sailed unperturbed into the third round. Graf, the women's No. 1 and four-time champion, beat Clare Wood 6-2, 6-1. German compatriot Boris Becker, the three-time champion and No. 4 seed, downed Alexander Volkov 7-6 (7-3), 6-1, 6-3. And No. 6 Michael Stich, the 1991 champion, beat Sandon Stolle 4-6, 6-1, 7-5, 6-4.

Yet nothing was more stunning than the power Sampras showed in his quick recovery from a shoulder injury, and nothing excited the crowd more than Agassi posing unabashedly to reveal his newly sheared chest and belly during his victory.

Sampras, the No. 1 seed, served 17 aces with a top speed of 122 mph in beating a tough grass-court player, Jamie Morgan of Australia, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5), 6-4.

"I wasn't apprehensive today," Sampras said after his second match in two days without any pain in the tendon that had flared up last week and threatened to

keep him from playing Wimbledon. "I wasn't scared to really hit it at 120 miles per hour. I felt 100 percent fit and strong and felt that I may as well go for it. As it turned out, I served much better today than I did yesterday.

"I really don't think it's a problem anymore. I didn't feel it at all, and even more importantly, in my mind I feel there's no problem at all."

Sampras had been granted a delay of his first-round match until Tuesday, and he started off the tournament restraining his serve, going more for placement than power. He expected to have Wednesday off to rest his shoulder but didn't let the back-to-back matches bother him.

Even when he was in danger of dropping a set, trailing 5-4 with Morgan ready to serve twice in the second-set tiebreaker, Sampras seemed entirely at ease.

Morgan, who recently beat Stefan Edberg on grass in a tuneup tournament,

flubbed his first serve softly into the net. Sampras jumped on the short next one to drive a backhand perfectly down the line for a winner. Sampras made it 6-5 with a low backhand barely over the net cord that Morgan scooped up on a half-volley and knocked back into the net. Sampras then ended the set with a service winner that ticked off Morgan's outstretched racket.

In those three points, and in the set that followed, Sampras showed not only his health but his increasing confidence on grass as he seeks to improve on a semifinal finish last year — his best at Wimbledon. This was only his third match on Centre Court in five years, and he reveled in the experience.

"Centre Court, out of all the Grand Slams, is the most enjoyable and peaceful," he said. "Behind the court it's dark, so you can pick up the ball really easily. It's really a great court to play on. I feel my grass-court tennis is getting

better.

"This is the biggest tournament in the world. If you ask 90 percent of the players on the tour they will say Wimbledon is the one tournament they would like to win, and I'm one of those people."

The key to him winning, he said, is less in his serves than in his returns. He'll get his aces if he's healthy, but he'll have to improve on his ability to handle the low, hard, skidding serves of the top grass-court players.

"Look at the past champions," he said. "Agassi won it last year. His return of serve is the best in the game, and that's a good example of how important the return of serve is. I didn't lose my serve at all today, but could have lost the second-set tiebreaker. The return of serve, if I am going to win it here, that's the shot."

Agassi displayed that same return-of-serve prowess — and more — in his 5-7, 6-3, 6-2, 6-0 victory over Joao Cunha-Silva.

At the end of the second set, Agassi pulled off his shirt, exposing a newly shorn midsection almost as smooth as Cher's. The women in the crowd whooped loudly and Agassi hammed it up by raising his arms and turning around to model for them.

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— Pete Sampras

# Jordan picks up third straight NBA Finals MVP award

CHICAGO (AP) — A gracious but tired Michael Jordan received his third consecutive trophy and new car for being the most valuable player in the NBA Finals and said Wednesday he was looking forward to a summer without basketball.

"I have a great feeling that it's over with," said Jordan, who averaged an NBA Finals record 41 points over six games in leading the Chicago Bulls to their third straight championship.

"It's very relieving that I can get up and not think basketball," he said at a news conference where the award was presented.

Jordan was named the MVP after Sunday's clinching win over the Phoenix Suns.

Jordan is the first player ever to win three straight NBA Finals MVP awards and only the second player to win three in a career. Magic Johnson won the honor in 1980, 1982 and 1987 with the Los Angeles Lakers.

Jordan said mental fatigue bothered him this season, which followed his play with the gold-medal winning U.S. Olympic basketball team last summer. That effort came shortly after the Bulls' 1992 NBA victory.

"I feel without the Olympics,

I've got an adequate time to get away from the game," Jordan said.

With their 99-98 win Sunday, the Bulls became the first team in 27 years to win the NBA title three straight seasons.

Jordan said Wednesday he had expected the pressure to lessen after the team's second championship, in 1992, but the pressure "was even greater than I ever expected. It was a tough season."

"I must thank my family — my wife and my kids for dealing with me for eight straight months of frustration, ups and

downs, whatever — the Chicago Bulls ... the coaching staff, my teammates, everybody," Jordan said.

He also thanked fans and the city of Chicago.

The playoff pressure was compounded by an uproar over reports of Jordan's gambling habits; some observers suggested that Jordan, 30, wasn't enjoying the game anymore.

But the nine-year NBA veteran said he still expects to find fulfillment on the court.

"Basketball is my medicine, is my psychiatrist," he said. "It helps me solve a lot of problems

that I may have away from the game. And I think that's one of the blessings that I feel that I've been blessed with."

For Jordan's efforts in this year's finals, where he also averaged 8.5 rebounds and 6.3 assists per game, he received a large trophy and keys to a 1993 Eagle Vision TSi automobile from the Chrysler Corp.

"Now I've got so many cars I don't know what to do with them," he said, jokingly. "But I'm never going to turn them down when they're free."

He received cars for each of the past awards.

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