

Sampras upset in French again

By Jocelyn Noveck
The Associated Press

PARIS —Failing yet again to win the one Grand Slam title that eludes him, Pete Sampras lost in the second round in the French Open today to 100th-ranked Andrei Medvedev, 7-5, 1-6, 6-4, 6-3.

The result was eerily similar to Sampras' loss last year in the same round on the same court, when he fell to the 97th-ranked player, Ramon Delgado of Paraguay.

All day, Sampras appeared off his game, missing big shots he usually makes effortlessly — even his feet-in-the air overhead — and hitting easy shots into the net.

On a steamy afternoon in Paris, urged on by a sympathetic crowd, Sampras looked helpless against an onslaught of accurate groundstrokes by Medvedev, a Ukrainian who once was ranked as high as fourth in the world.

Sampras seemed to be suffering from the effects of his five-set, first-round match, which took 4 1/2 hours. Medvedev, on the other hand, breezed through his first match in three easy sets.

But afterwards, a deeply disappointed Sampras said he hadn't been tired — he just wasn't playing well.

"I felt fine. I could have gone five sets if necessary," he said. But he added: "I'm just struggling. It just isn't happening."

"It'll be a very tough next four or five days," he said.

But asked if he would just give

up his exhausting quest for victory at Roland Garros, Sampras was adamant. "I would never do that," he said, emphasizing the word "never."

"I'm never going to give up."

Medvedev paid tribute to Sampras, calling him "the greatest player on earth that ever picked up a tennis racket."

"But this is not his best surface," he said.

In the first set today, the turning point came at 5-5, Sampras serving, when the Ukrainian broke him at love for 6-5, then held serve to win the set with a passing shot that brushed the line.

In the second, Sampras' game returned. He quickly broke for a 2-0 lead with a passing shot that resembled the old Sampras.

Sampras won that set 6-1, but in the third, trouble returned when he was serving at 4-5. He double-faulted for love-30, and then two points later, Medvedev ripped a backhand return down the line that Sampras couldn't touch, for 15-40. Sampras hit a forehand volley long to lose the set.

In the fourth set, Medvedev rolled to his fifth straight game and a 3-0 lead before Sampras was finally able to hold at 3-1.

At 4-2, Sampras failed to convert on two break points. In the last three points of the match, the American couldn't handle Medvedev's serve, putting a forehand into the net to end his 10th try for the French Open title.

It was the fourth time Sampras had gone out in the second round at Roland Garros.

In other action today, Jennifer Capriati, who reached the semifinals here nine years ago before off-court troubles derailed her career, advanced to the third round over fellow American Lilia Osterloh.

Capriati flashed a huge smile after her 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 victory.

It's been a good few weeks for Capriati, who recently won her first event in six years.

At 14, she was the youngest player to be ranked in the top 10, but her career fizzled due to personal problems.

Also advancing were two other American women: Lindsay Davenport survived a three-set scare from the promising 16-year-old Justine Henin of Belgium, and Monica Seles won in straight sets. Steffi Graf and Anna Kournikova also advanced easily.

Elsewhere on the men's side, the popular Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten won in four sets, continuing a confident run at the tournament he won two years ago.

Kuerten, who's having a great season on clay, beat Guillermo Canas of Argentina, 6-2, 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.

Davenport faced a surprise challenge from Henin — a former French junior champion who last week won the first WTA event she'd ever played in — but hung on for a 6-3, 2-6, 7-5 win.

United's 'miracle' win inspires British press

By Stephen Wade
The Associated Press

LONDON — A miracle? That's how at least one British newspaper described Manchester United's improbable 2-1 victory over Bayern Munich in the final of the European Champions Cup.

"The tabloid Daily Mail termed it 'football's equivalent of turning water into wine' and judged the game 'the most dramatic night ever for British football' as substitutes Teddy Sheringham and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer scored in second-half injury time.

There was no shortage of hyperbole as another tabloid, The Daily Mirror, described the Wednesday triumph in a banner front-page headline as "The greatest 2 minutes in the history of sport."

"Football? Bloody Hell" read a headline in The Sun, quoting the first words from United coach Alex Ferguson after the team's first European Champions Cup title in 31 years.

"King of Europe" said The Express, calling the victory the "most dramatic comeback in football history."

The quick-to-attack tabloids have been the fiercest critics of English soccer's recent lack of

success.

The game went into decline after all English clubs were banned from European soccer for five years when 39 people died in 1985 at Heysel Stadium in Brussels in rioting caused by English hooligans.

On Thursday, the same tabloids declared English soccer the best in Europe. The French sports daily L'Equipe added, "God is English."

In large type, the Daily Mail set off a quote from Sir Bobby Charlton, the leader of the last Man United team to win the Champions Cup (1968).

"After so long in the wilderness, we have something to show for being the best," Charlton said.

The tabloids also put a predictable anti-German, jingoistic spin on several headlines, conjuring up images from World War II that always seem to surface when England plays Germany in any match.

"Our Subs Sink Germans" bellowed The Sun.

"Two subs sent on, torpedoes away," added the Daily Mail.

Not to be outdone, the Daily Star's front page blared "Hun-believable." Inside, the newspaper added: "Super-Subs Sink Krauts."

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