

SPORTS

Trailblazers Hire Brian Wheeler As Play-by-Play Voice

The Portland Trailblazers have announced that they have selected NBA broadcaster Brian Wheeler as the club's new radio play-by-play announcer.

"Brian Wheeler is recognized around the NBA as a rising star with a very bright future, and we are very pleased that his future will be with the Trailblazers," said Harry Hutt, Portland's senior vice president of marketing operations. "Brian mirrors the energetic, talented team we

have on the floor and will be a great fit for our fans."

The 36 year-old Wheeler comes to the Trailblazers from the Sacramento Kings, where he served the last three years as one of the club's play-by-play broadcasters and hosted their pre-and post game and half-time shows. He also conducted his own nightly talk show, "Wheels After Work," as well as the club's weekly program "Kings Talk." In addition, Wheeler has been the play-by-play voice of the

WNBA's Sacramento Monarchs during their first two years of existence.

"This is the happiest day of my professional life," said Wheeler. "I'm grateful to Paul Allen, Bob Whitsitt, Harry Hutt, and the entire Trailblazers organization for giving me a wonderful opportunity."

I am honored to follow in the footsteps of the legendary Bill Schonely, and it is more than a dream come true for me."



TENNIS GLANCE

By ROBBIE MENDELSON

Pete Sampras beat Goran Ivanisevic, 6-7 (2-7), 7-6 (11-9), 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 to win his fifth men's singles championship, tying him with Bjorn Borg for the most men's singles titles in modern history.

Jana Novotna, who was "third time lucky" in beating Nathalie Tauziat, 6-4, 7-6 (7-2), for the women's singles championship. Novotna also captured the women's doubles title with Martina Hingis.

The Dutch duo of Jacco Eltingh and Paul Haarhuis, who stopped Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde's quest for a sixth straight men's doubles title with a 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-3), 5-7, 10-8 championship victory.

Max Mirnyi and Serena Williams each won their first Grand Slam titles, beating fifth-seeded Mahesh Bhupathi and Mirjana Lucic, 6-4, 6-4, for the mixed doubles championship.

Roger Federer of Switzerland beat Irakli Labadze of Georgia for the boys singles championship. Federer also took the boys doubles title with Olivier Rochus.

Katerina Srebotnik of Slovenia took the girls singles title over Kim Clijsters of Belgium.

Eva Dyrberg of Denmark and Jelena Kostanic of Croatia captured the girls doubles championship.

Gene Mayer and Tim Wilkison took the men's over 35 doubles title.

Marty Riessen and Sherwood Stewart won the men's over 45

doubles title.

Pam Shriver, with 22 Grand Slam doubles titles, took the over 35 women's doubles title with partner Elizabeth Smylie.

SPEAKING

"Now I guess I'm out of my slump." - Pete Sampras, on his uncharacteristically ordinary play during the first half of the year.

"Winning Wimbledon means everything really. It's what I've been working for for many, many years." - Jana Novotna, after winning the women's singles championship.

"It's the worst moment in my life. ... Now I have to be motivated to play tennis again. I don't know how long it's going to take." - Goran Ivanisevic, on losing the singles title.

"It was a long, long weekend." - Pete Sampras, after his match with Thomas Enqvist was scheduled for Friday, suspended by rain Saturday, and finally, completed on Monday after a nearly three-hour rain delay.

"Everyone says she's going to be the new No. 1 in the world, but I think she has to change her attitude. A player shouldn't go off the court in the position she was in without shaking hands." - Virginia Ruano-Pascual, on the sudden departure by Serena Williams, after Williams, who retired from their match, failed to acknowledge her opponent.

"I forgot." - Serena Williams, by way of explanation. Novotna at Wimbledon.



BROWNE WINS GREATER HARTFORD OPEN

By DONNA TOMMELLEO

Larry Mize's four-stroke lead in the Greater Hartford Open began to unravel in the thick woods that line the 15th hole.

By the time he reached No. 18, it was nearly complete. Olin Browne's 40-foot birdie chip on the first play-off hole sealed it.

"No lead is safe out there," Mize said Sunday. "The last four holes, a lot can happen. Unfortunately, it did to me today."

Mize birdied Nos. 11-14 and was 18-under when he reached the par-4, 296-yard 15th. He shanked a 5-iron into the woods, and after several minutes of searching for his ball, emerged bloody and scratched.

"You don't want to be in there. I didn't check for ticks," he said.

He took an unplayable lie, teed it up again and finished with a double-bogey 6. He then missed a 1-foot par putt on No. 16.

By the time he reached the final

hole, Mize was clinging to a one-stroke lead over Browne and defending champion Stewart Cink. But his approach shot rolled off the back of the green and his chip left him with about a 15-foot par putt that he narrowly missed. He finished with a 1-under 69.

Mize said he was between clubs on the 189-yard approach and chose a 4-iron over a 5-iron.

"I flushed it. I pulled the wrong club," Mize said.

Browne, playing one group ahead of Mize, sensed an opening when Mize finished the disastrous 15th.

"As soon as he doubled 15, I started thinking birdies," Browne said.

Browne, the sixth first-time winner on tour this year, finished with a 67 that was marked by four birdies and a double-bogey on the 462-yard, par-4 10th. His birdie at No. 16 put at 14-under.

"I had a good week and I played well all four days and I think that's what it takes. You can't have a skittish

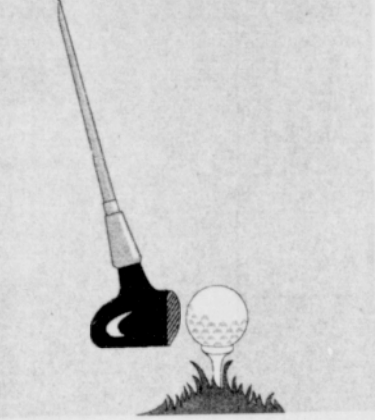
round out here, the guys are so good," he said.

Cink, who also shot a 67, was 13-under when he birdied the signature 17th hole to reserve his spot for the playoff.

Browne's approach shot on the 444-yard, par-4 18th, which was used as the playoff hole, rolled across the green and into the left fringe about pin high. Mize, winless on tour since 1993, reached the green in three and could only watch at that point. Cink, bidding to become the first repeat GHO winner, had an opportunity to tie, but his 15-foot birdie putt rolled wide.

Mize began the day at 13-under, tied for the lead with Scott Hoch and Grant Waite.

Duffy Waldorf and Fred Funk had final-round 66s and finished at 267, tied with Doug Tewell, who had a 67, and one shot out of the playoff. Hoch had a 71 and finished tied with David Duval, who had a 69, at 268. Waite shot a 75 and finished at 272.



Vijay Singh shot a 62 Sunday to tie the course record and finish at 10-under. His 28 on the back nine broke the record of 29 set in 1995 by Fuzzy Zoeller and Mike Brisky. Singh's round included six birdies and an eagle on the par-5 13th.

Despite his swoon, Mize maintained a bit of optimism as he, Browne and Cink all set the GHO 72-hole scoring record of 14-under 266.

RELUCTANT GRIFFEY WINS HR DERBY

By TOM WITHERS

Ken Griffey Jr. didn't change his signature style, wearing his cap backward as usual. He did change his mind, however.

Griffey, who less than an hour before the All-Star Home Run Derby began was still insisting he would skip this year's competition, won the glamour event by beating Cleveland's Jim Thome in the final.

Griffey reversed his decision after being booed by a Coors Field record crowd of 51,231 while accepting a trophy for being the All-Star game's top vote-getter, named on more than 4.2 million ballots.

"I don't like to get booed. I don't think anybody does," said Griffey, who hit 19 homers in the three rounds and beat Thome 3-2 in the final round. "This is not a time to get booed, the All-Star game. If they want to see me do the home run competition, the fans, there were 4 million reasons why I did it."

As for Mark McGwire, his performance was a surprise, too.

Baseball's home-run leader managed just four home runs and failed to get past the first round. McGwire came to Denver with 37 homers, and many figured if he didn't win the title, he would certainly test the laws

of gravity 5,280 feet above sea level.

But except for a 510-foot shot to dead center - the longest of the day - McGwire looked more like a singles hitter than the game's most feared hitter.

"I like the ball middle in, and the pitches were middle away," McGwire said. "So, sorry everybody."

Thome, who choked last year in front of the hometown fans at Jacobs Field by failing to hit one homer, hit eight in both the first and second rounds.

"This was great just to be in it," he said. "I hope they ask me back."

Early Monday afternoon, Griffey was insisting he would pass up the chance to rocket balls through the thin Colorado air. He reluctantly entered last year's event in Cleveland despite getting just a few hours rest after the Mariners played a late Sunday night game.

With his Seattle Mariners cap turned around, Griffey dug into the dirt as his name was announced to loud boos.

"I figured there would be a few, but not like that," he said.

But when he was introduced as the final AL entrant, he received a warm ovation, and by the time he walked to the plate for his first round, many in the crowd were standing.

After connecting eight times to advance, he slowly walked back to the AL dugout, tipped his cap to the fans and hugged his 4-year-old son, Trey.

Then it was McGwire's turn. He hit two weak grounders before driving one over the wall in straightaway center, hitting a sign just below the Rockpile section of seats. The announced estimated distance of 510 feet surpassed the unofficial stadium record, a 496-foot shot hit by Mike Piazza last year.

Thome, Baltimore's Rafael Palmeiro, Colorado's Vinny Castilla and Houston's Moises Alou all finished the first round with seven homers, but Alou was eliminated because he has less regular-season homers than the others.

Atlanta's Javy Lopez and Seattle's Alex Rodriguez had five homers each. Detroit's Damian Easley led

off the event and managed just two homers, one more than the Braves' Chipper Jones.

Before Monday's workouts, McGwire, who along with Griffey and the Cubs' Sammy Sosa, will spend the second half chasing Roger Maris' record of 61 homers in a season, said he still can't believe he's mentioned along with some of the game's great long-ball hitters.

"It still blows me away, it really does," he said. "Considering that when I was a kid, all I wanted to do was pitch. It wasn't until my sophomore year in college that I turned into a hitter, never knowing I'd get a chance to go to the big leagues."

"The next thing you know, they're talking about my name along with Babe Ruth, Maris, Mantle down the line. It's overwhelming. I don't think it will really hit me until I'm retired."

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World Cup ratings lag

Television ratings for the World Cup showed some improvement in the quarterfinals, but still trail the numbers from 1994.

ABC averaged a 3.4 overnight rating for its three quarterfinal games, the highest ratings for any game not involving the U.S. team. Each ratings point represents 980,000 households.

In 1994, when the excitement of the World Cup being played in the United States helped boost rat-

ings, ABC averaged a 4.0 national rating for three quarterfinals.

ABC got a 3.9 for Brazil-Denmark on Friday and, on Saturday, a 3.0 for Argentina-Netherlands and a 3.3 for Croatia-Germany.

Those numbers will drop when national ratings are released Thursday.

ABC's highest rating this year is a 3.5 for the United States-Iran and the highest non-U.S. rating is the 2.3 for Nigeria-Denmark.



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