

Monday, 10 September, 2012

Sport

Murray gets US Open boost from Connery, Sir Alex



Murray and Sean Connery

(AFP) -- Britain's Andy Murray has extra inspiration for Monday's US Open final after meeting two of his most famous fans, Sir Sean Connery and Sir Alex Ferguson, and knowing they will be on hand to watch him.

Olympic champion Murray booked his spot in his fifth Grand Slam championship match with victory over Czech Tomas Berdych, then met football coaching legend Ferguson and the former James Bond.

"I'm a huge James Bond fan and I love football as well," Murray said. "Sir Alex is one of the most successful managers of all time and both of them are from Scotland. So to have them both here was very nice.

"They're going to be here for the final as well so I hope I can do it for them both."

Murray, a lanky 25-year-old Scotsman, had a somewhat awkward first meeting with Connery and Ferguson to say the least after withstanding wickedly windy conditions in his match, what he said were probably the toughest he has faced.

"It has been a strange day for sure," Murray said. Connery, best supporting actor Oscar winner from "The Untouchables" in 1987, and Ferguson, who has guided Manchester United since 1986, walked in with Murray's mother Judy and Murray rose and walked over to greet them.

"Thank you very much for coming," Murray said.

"Come on Judy, Judy, Judy," Connery said, extolling Murray's mother to come forward where he and Ferguson were standing.

"You smell of wine," Murray told Connery.

"He made me have wine," Judy Murray said. "He has just been telling me that Scotland invented the world."

"Been coming here the last three years to New York and I explained how Scotland invented the world," Ferguson said. "Today we invented the wind."

"Today they conquered the world," Connery cheered.

The icons and his mother then departed, leaving Murray to remark on how it felt to have such famous countrymen watching him play.

"To meet those two guys was cool," Murray said. "I had been in touch with them, we had traded messages and e-mails, but I had never met them before. Nice to have their support."

Murray's match was almost a stunt from a Bond movie, trying to hit a tennis ball with precision in conditions where tornados could be created.

"It was hard to control the ball. I just had to fight my way through," said Murray. "It was brutal."

Murray welcomed an extra day of rest with the final being delayed from Sunday.

"It will be nice to get a rest and to be able to practice and get my rhythm back," Murray said.

And what would it mean to be the first British man to win a Grand Slam title since 1936?

"It would mean a lot to me," he said. "I'll fight for every point. I want to leave everything on the court and I will do that on Monday."

Education

Cheaters not punished enough



(UPI) -- Academic cheating is on the rise in the United States, even among high-achievers, and experts say the failure to crack down on it only exacerbates the problem.

The New York Times notes cheating scandals have erupted at prestigious schools in recent months, including Harvard University, the Air Force Academy and Stuyvesant High School in New York City.

The newspaper also cites studies that reveal a majority of students violate academic ethics to some degree, and top students are no more immune than others. And the cheating is getting worse, experts say, because it's easier to do with the advent of the Internet and is more widely tolerated. Schools and parents have failed to lay down the law.

"I don't think there's any question that students have become more competitive, under more pressure, and, as a result, tend to excuse more from

themselves and other students, and that's abetted by the adults around them," Donald L. McCabe, a professor at the Rutgers University Business School and leading researcher on cheating, told the Times.

"There have always been struggling students who cheat to survive. But more and more, there are students at the top who cheat to thrive."

David M. Wasieleski of Duquesne University says students are "surprisingly unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating."

"The ethical muscles have atrophied," he said, in part because society prizes success regardless of how it is achieved.

"We want to be famous and successful, we think our colleagues are cutting corners, we'll be damned if we'll lose out to them, and some day, when we've made it, we'll be role models. But until then, give us a pass," he said is often the prevailing attitude.

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International

POOR US JOBS REPORT PUTS OBAMA ON BACK FOOT

(AFP) -- Mitt Romney used a terrible US jobs report to hammer President Barack Obama on the economy Friday, leaving the White House incumbent flat-footed on the defining issue of the 2012 race.

The Republican nominee seized on weak employment data to reclaim momentum on the campaign trail and double down on Obama, whose speech at the Democratic National Convention the previous night was criticized for lacking vigor.

Romney flew into the battleground farming state of Iowa just ahead of Obama, but then moved on to New Hampshire, where he twisted the knife on his opponent.

"This president has not taken responsibility for what has been a failure of his economic policies," Romney told around 4,000 people who filled a small baseball stadium in Nashua, New Hampshire's second city.

The poor job numbers gave him the opportunity to wrest back the conversation after three days dominated by the Democrats' jamboree, which Romney said failed to deliver any new plans that could turn around the fortunes of US families.

"Instead it was a whole new series of promises. He didn't deliver on the last ones, why should we expect him to deliver on these? He is out of ideas, he's out of excuses," Romney said of Obama's pitch for a second term.

As Democrats left Charlotte, the North Carolina city that hosted their gala, a mood that was previously buoyant thanks to stirring speeches by First Lady Michelle Obama and former president Bill Clinton suffered a reality check. Friday's report from the Labor Department, which revealed that just 96,000 jobs were created last month, was the cause of their woe.

And although the unemployment rate dropped to 8.1 percent in August, from 8.3 percent previously, the reduction was caused by a shrinking Labor force caused by despairing Americans who chose to abandon their search for work.

"If President Obama were re-elected, we would have four more years of the last four years, and the American people are going to say no to that," Rom-



Obama asked Americans to give him four more years in the White House, arguing that Romney and Ryan would damage the finances of middle class families and return to blustering and blundering abroad

ney told a 2,600-strong crowd crammed into a gymnasium in Orange City, Iowa.

The dismal job numbers cast a shadow over the president's post-convention tour of New Hampshire, Iowa and Florida.

Obama and Romney later crossed paths. The president and vice president Joe Biden flew in separate planes from New Hampshire to Iowa, which they won in 2008 but where they now face a tight fight against Romney and his running mate Paul Ryan.

Opinion polls have the candidates running neck and neck, with the November 6 election result likely to be decided by voters in half a dozen swing states.

Iowa and New Hampshire have only 10 of the 270 electoral votes between them that a candidate needs to win the White House, with the tight nature of this year's race underscored by Obama and Romney's decision to campaign there.

Obama admitted that the rate of job creation was a setback.

"We know it's not good enough," he said. "We need to create more jobs faster. We need to fill the hole left by this recession faster."

"We need to come out of this crisis stronger than when we went in. And there's a lot more that we can do," he told 6,000 people in the town of Portsmouth, in New Hampshire.

Many observers expressed disappointment with Obama's convention address late Thursday, seen as something of a rehash of his standard campaign offering, and light on specifics as

to how his second term would be more successful than the first in bringing unemployment down.

Obama's aides, however, defended his appearance.

"He did exactly what he came to do last night which is bring the choice and focus to the American people, lay out the path forward," spokeswoman Jen Psaki told reporters traveling with the campaign.

"For three days of this convention you could feel palpable enthusiasm in the convention hall," Psaki said, adding that Obama had been energized by his daughters cheering "Go get them baby" before his speech.

Obama asked Americans to give him four more years in the White House, arguing that Romney and Ryan would damage the finances of middle class families and return to "blustering and blundering" abroad.

But he seemed to anticipate the disappointing jobs number in his speech, warning: "It will take more than a few years for us to solve challenges that have built up over decades."

The 51-year-old president confronted the deflated hopes spawned when he was elected America's first black president in 2008 that he would lead an era of transformation and bridge the country's now-gaping partisan divide.

Four years later, he urged people to stay the course and let him try again.

"If you turn away now -- if you buy into the cynicism that the change we fought for isn't possible -- well, change will not happen," Obama said.

Gone to Sleep



Parents of freshmen students sleep on mats laid out on the floor of a gymnasium at Huazhong Normal University in Wuhan, China. (REUTERS)