



PROSQUASH



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NICOL'S PERCHED HAPPILY AT THE TOP

Peter Nicol, the first Briton to win the British Open title in the last 25 years, doesn't worry about having to live up to his new reputation as the numero uno of the game.

"I feel there is less pressure. Before, I was pushing myself constantly to be number one. But since then I've relaxed my attitudes a lot and am just enjoying myself. That doesn't mean I don't work hard. But I don't get angry on court any more in training or let little things bother me. If I have a bad training day it's just a bad day, it's not the end of the world."

Nicol was sure of winning the title because he didn't believe the hype round Jansher Khan. It was a feeling of being perfect that comes to few sports

persons. He was 'in the zone' as they say.

Nicol has dedicated his title to his mother, who died six years ago, just four months after he turned professional.

Nicol wants his triumph to inspire other Scots to emulate him. Nicol has roped in sponsors to refurbish his own Squash and Fitness Club in West Hill, in Aberdeen. Sponsors have agreed to support the schools during holidays for three years and Nicol is working with local schools to get them using the facilities during the term time.

He want to develop this club, using his name to attract people to bring youngsters into the sport.

The turnaround in Peter Nicol's game that culminated in his winning the British Open title came when he began improving his forehand down the line shot a year ago.

HOW TO PLAY THE FOREHAND 'CLINGER' LIKE PETER NICOL

1 If this shot is played accurately it clings to the wall during most of its return journey. "Then the opponent may only be able to scrape the racket on to the ball, creating a chance to attack his weak return," says Nicol.

2 The face of the racket is opened - "Tilting it back by about 45 degrees," according to Nicol's manager/coach Neil Harvey - to impart controlling backspin. By turning the edge of the racket inside the ball, from left to right, it also creates sidespin, which helps make the ball stick to the wall.

3 Shortening the stroke reduces the chances of error. Half turn the body away from the front wall, reduce the backswing, and increase the area before, during and after impact, in which the racket travels in a parallel plane.

4 The ball strikes the front wall a few inches from the left side wall, and hits it first in front of the service box. If the ball bounces in the service box it will be hard to volley and should finish to a good length.

5 Because Nicol is a left-hander his forehand clinger pressurises what may be the right-hander's less powerful side, the backhand.

BACKSWING

BEFORE IMPACT

FOLLOW-THROUGH



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creme de la creme of men's squash

Dunlop PSA
Rankings
as on 1-6-98

1. Peter Nicol (Scotland)
2. Jansher Khan (Pakistan)
3. Jonathan Power (Canada)
4. Rodney Eyles (Australia)
5. Ahmed Barada (Egypt)
6. Alex Gough (Wales)
7. Simon Parke (England)
9. Paul Johnson (England)
10. Anthony Hill (Australia)
83. Arjan Singh (India)
225. Akhil behl (India)



Peter Nicol

His British Open triumph has taken him to the pinnacle. Probably the fastest volleyer in the world, the Scot plays good width consistently, great length always, precise drops and adequate lobs. The closest to the copy book.



Jansher Khan

Lost his prime position to Nicol. But that doesn't detract from his qualities of a tactical genius, whose speed, balance, poise and control are among the best among players of his time. The lithe Pakistani been transformed from a bring retriever to a superb strokemaker



Jonathan Power

A shrewd reader of the opponent's brain, the Canadian can be a deadly deceptive player in front court. Has great racket skill to make his opponents look ordinary at times. He has infinite potential to hit the top if he can master his own temperament.



Rodney Eyles

The 1997 world champion from Australia is a complete player with the aggression of a bull fighter. He is unafraid of any shot and is ever willing for a bruising battle possessing an uncompromising attitude. Can kill from anywhere and his backhand drop is the best in the contemporary game.



Ahmed Barada

The heart of a lion has taken Barada to the top echelons. He's more a refined streetfighter than the classic player like his Egyptian predecessors. Quite fearless, he seems to do better with home crowd support, so may struggle in alien climes.



Alex Gough

The studious one on the circuit, he is also the most imaginative one. The greater the difficulty the greater his shotmaking. Though a late developer on the circuit, this Welshman is steadily developing the tenacious speed to test the best of them



Simon Parke

There's no better resilient player than this Yorkshireman who came back after a year's layoff for surgery and chemotherapy for testicular cancer. Never tiring of playing a rally, he can sustain his brilliance for long hours and is among the most tenacious on the circuit.



Del Harris

Among the few who vibes to the spectators, Harris can be a McEnroe on court with his powerful lunges, extraordinary splits and power racketwork. This Englishman can outstretch anyone and has the knack of producing any number of winners under pressure.



Paul Johnson

Number 20 at the start of the year, the England star has clawed up to number nine at the halfway stage. Came to the last eight of the British Open, losing to Jansher Khan.



Anthony Hill

Blends skill and squash understanding quite remarkably. His introspection makes the Aussie volcanic on court.



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Juneja, Uberoi in Indian juniors team

Ritwik Bhattacharya, Rohan and Gaurav Juneja and Bikram Uberoi with Parth Doshi as reserve will represent India at the World juniors squash at Princeton U.S. in August. The trials were held at Mumbai in June. Rohan topped the trials winning all his matches in Mumbai. Gaurav was second, Uberoi third and Doshi fourth.

Why not Wali?

Mumbai's fast-improving Saket Wali moved the Mumbai high court protesting against the SRFI decision not to call him for the trials to pick the Indian juniors team for the World juniors in Princeton, U.S., in August. The division bench ruled against him as he did not fulfil the norms of the federation. Wali's plea is more for being allowed to take part in the individual event at no cost to the federation. When Indian athletes have been doing this at Olympics level, why not Wali? If there is a bitter lesson in this it is that current form does not count when it should. Wali, it is learnt, has been beating the players picked for India of late. He was ruled on form displayed over half a year ago.

Suchde, Uberoi claim titles

Indian juniors Bikram Uberoi and Siddharth Suchde claimed the boys under-19 and under-14 titles in the Sportexel Milo NSC junior squash circuit tournament at Penang in Malaysia. Uberoi beat Aaron Soya of Malaysia 3-1, while Suchde beat another Indian junior Sahil Vora 3-0. Suchde had earlier reached the final of the Milo Dunlop event. He is the India no.2 and bound to win the under-14 national title this season as the No. 1, Vishal Kapoor, is out of this age group. Suchde has won the inter-school title, the Little Masters, the Western India and the Pix titles. Coached by Rahmat Khan of late he has improved in stamina and speed about court.

Juniors flop in Malaysia

Eleven Indian juniors who went to the Milo Dunlop Malaysian Junior squash championship returned empty-handed. They were Karanpal Sethi, Rushab Vora, Auloke Mathur, Sahil Vora, Siddharth Suchde, Mihir Seth, Anurag Gill, Junaid Nathani, Mihir Kapoor, Bikram Uberoi and Supriya Balsekar. Nathani had a slightly better show reaching the under-16 final where he lost to Malaysia's Marcus Yeap. Suchde fought gallantly before losing to top seed So Pak Hei 4-9, 9-5, 9-6, 9-1 in the under-14 final.

Indians win Singapore Nationals

Udai Singh and Rohan Bhappu won the Singapore senior and junior national squash titles. Udai defeated Lim Jit Wei 9-5, 9-7, 3-9, 9-5 while Bhappu got the better of Ng Teng Kuan in the finals. Both are enjoy temporary resident status. Udai studied there while Bhappu's father, who flies for Singapore Airlines, is posted there. Bhappu had another feather in his cap when finishing third in the Sportexel Milo Malaysian Juniors under-19 Satellite tournament. He defeated the host country's Marcus Yap in straight games, 9-2, 9-0, 9-3. Bhappu defeated Parth Doshi in the last eight 8-10, 9-5, 9-5, 9-4 before losing to Vincent Cheung of Hong Kong in the semi-finals.

New Zealand player found dead

New Zealand's former junior girls champion Jade Wilson was found dead in Perth on May 13. Wilson, 21, won the world juniors title in 1995 and was to have played for the nation in the Commonwealth Games. Wilson also won the British and Scottish junior titles in 1995.

Squash and colour

The executive director of the Professional Squash Association has an interesting thing to say about squash and colour in these days of tele-viewing. In the PSA bulletin he writes: "The PSA, with the aid of Pro Active is creating new standards for the next generation of court colours. The primary standards call for court wall and floor surfaces to be in two tones of blue. The purpose of these recommendations is to move squash-playing surface from multiple contrasting colours to a two-tone court system in which the major contrast is with the ball. Both two tones of blue and two tones of green have merit but as a chrome green ball is still a TV possibility, green and yellow are closer together in the light spectrum and as many green surfaces stem from a historical link with the grass, the case for blue is stronger. Just as the game of snooker was reinvented for television with its array of coloured balls and tables, squash has to do so to capture the attention of the tele-mass, he feels.

PSA events at a glance

APRIL \$5500 Hashim Khan/BQA Pro Singles, Denver, U.S.: Julian Wellings beat Lee Beachill 3-1. **\$12,000 YTL Open, Kuala Lumpur:** Glenn Whitaker beat John Williams 17-16, 10-15, 15-9, 15-3. **\$6,000 Milo Open, Kuala Lumpur:** Zarak Jahan Khan beat Kenneth Low 15-11, 15-4, 10-15, 15-12. **\$79,000 British Open, Birmingham:** Peter Nicol beat Jansher Khan 17-16, 15-4, 15-5. **Women:** Michelle Martin beat Sarah Fitz-Gerald, 9-4, 9-2, 9-0.

MAY \$12,000 Mega Italia Open, Brescia: John White beat Amr Shabana 15-13, 15-10, 13-15, 15-8. **\$5,000 Starcar Open, Varese, Italy:** Daniel Forstund beat Reto Donatsch 3-0. **\$9,000 Pakistan circuit No. 2, Peshawar:** Thierry Lincou beat Mansoor Zaman 3-1. **\$12,000 Pakistan Circuit No. 1, Lahore:** Zarak Jahan Khan beat Thierry Lincou 15-11, 15-12, 7-15, 15-11. **\$8,000 Missouri Athletic Club Open, St Louis, U. S.:** Stephen Meads beat Marcus Berett 3-0.

Did you know ?

- That the national women's champion, **Mekhala Subedar**, is the niece of **Damayanti Tambe**, former women's badminton international?
- That the U.K. has **9,000 squash courts** and **100 courts** are built every year?

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