MCC-N. Sankar Memorial tennis: Upsets mark last 8

Chennai, Aug 14:

Unseeded players stole the show with dramatic upset victories in the singles quarterfinals of the MCC-N. Sankar Memorial National Junior Under-18 Clay Court Tennis Championship at the Madras Cricket Club courts in Chepauk.

In the boys' singles event, local lad Niyanth Melavidayal Badrinarayanan caused a major upset by knocking out top seed Prakaash Sarran of Karnataka in straight sets, 6-4, 7-6(3). In another striking upset, Telangana's Srivaant Reddy Mummadi dominated fifth seed Shivtej Balaprasad Shirfule of Maharashtra, surrendering just a single game in a commanding 6-1, 6-0 victory.

Elsewhere in the boys' quarter-finals, fourth seed Rohith Hari Balaji Gobinath of Tamil Nadu cruised past Madhya Pradesh's Kanishk Khathuria with a comfortable 6-2, 6-2 win. Sixth seed Om Ramesh Patel of Gujarat had to dig deep after dropping the opening set, battling back to defeat 13th seed Sharan Somasi of Karnataka 2-6, 6-1, 6-3.

The girls' singles quarter-finals witnessed a thriller as ninth seed Aahan of Odisha outlasted third seed Akansha Ghosh of West Bengal in a marathon three-set encounter. Aahan held her nerve in the decisive moments to seal a memorable 7-6(3), 5-7, 7-5 victory.

In contrast, the top seeds held strong across the remaining girls' matches. Top-seeded Diya Ramesh of Tamil Nadu powered past fellow state player Vasundra Balajee 6-4, 6-1, while second seed Deepshika Vinayagamurthy dispatched Andhra Pradesh's Harsha Oruganti without breaking a sweat, taking the match 6-1, 6-0. Fourth seed Savitha Bhuvaneswaran completed the semi-final lineup for Tamil Nadu by overcoming seventh seed Tanusshri Sathesh 7-6(3), 6-1.

Meanwhile, top combinations proved their mettle in the boys' doubles quarter-finals. The top-seeded pair of Om Ramesh Patel and Prakaash Sarran safely advanced with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Sangram Bhadury and Aryaveer. Fourth seed Rohith Hari Balaji paired with Srikar Doni to hand a convincing 6-1, 6-2 defeat to Kanishk Khathuria and Mohd. Shees.

In other doubles action, the ninth-seeded tandem of Prateek Sheoran and Kushagra Arora posted a 6-2, 6-4 victory over fifth seeds Shivtej Balaprasad and Parjanya Adury, while 13th seeds Sharan Somasi and Lakshya Vardhan Naidu ended the run of Tamil Nadu duo Nithik Sivakumar and Rehaan Theodore with a 6-1, 6-4 win.

Bob's Banter

Robert Clements

Listen to the brook..!

Within my daughter's property in the Pocono Mountains flows a tiny brook.

It is not one of those grand rivers that announces itself from a distance. It does not roar, crash against rocks, or demand that tourists photograph it. It simply slips quietly through the woods, content to flow without applause.

To hear it, you have to get very close.

Even then, closeness is not enough. You must shut out the rustling leaves, the calling birds, the children shouting behind you, and, most difficult of all, the thoughts raging inside your head.

This morning, just before I got ready to write, I decided to visit the brook. The children of both my daughters followed me through the woods. There were four of them, stepping over fallen branches, pushing through heavy undergrowth and ducking beneath trees.

"Where are we going?" one asked.

"To hear the brook," I said.

They looked puzzled. They had seen water before. It came from taps, showers, swimming pools, and bottles. Why should anyone march through a forest merely to hear it?

Finally, we reached the brook.

"Can you hear it gurgling as it flows?" I asked.

All four stared at me.

Perhaps they thought their grandfather had brought them into the wilderness to introduce them to an invisible friend.

"Listen!" I whispered.

They tried.

For a few seconds there was silence. Then three decided that listening to water required far too much effort. There were games to play, races to run, and adventures waiting elsewhere. They hurried back.

But my eldest grandson remained.

He became still.

Then he smiled at me.

He had heard it.

We sat together beside that little brook, saying nothing. The water moved gently over stones, around roots and beneath leaves. It had no speech to deliver, no opinion to impose, and no advertisement to interrupt it.

Yet it seemed to say everything.

For a while, the forest grew quiet. Or perhaps it was we who grew quiet. The worries in my mind stopped shouting. The plans waiting to be made stepped aside. The problems demanding immediate attention suddenly discovered they could wait.

Peace had not arrived from somewhere else. It had always been there, flowing beside us. We had simply been too noisy to notice it.

That little brook taught me that God's most comforting voice may not come like thunder. Sometimes it comes as a whisper beneath the confusion of our lives.

We complain that we cannot hear Him. But perhaps heaven is not silent. Perhaps our minds are just too loud.

Somewhere near each of us, a brook is still flowing, waiting to be heard.

Hush! Go closer. Become still. And listen..!

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Japan surfers dominate Shore Temple Classic

Chennai, Aug 14:

It was another day of high quality surfing in the Shore Temple Classic QS 2000 and Pro Junior World Surf League (WSL) Qualifying Series at Mahabalipuram Beach, with the competition intensifying across the Men's and Women's QS 2000 and the Women's Pro Junior divisions, with Japanese stars continuing their dominance and Indian surfers battling hard in the waters. .

In the Men's QS 2000, Japan continued its strong run, with Ryuichi Inoue (JPN) producing the highest score of the Round of 32 with 13.17, while Taro Matsuno (JPN) narrowly won his heat with 12.33, edging Korea's Kanoa Hee-Jae (KOR) by just 0.03 points.

Tenshi Iwami (JPN) also secured a closely fought heat win with 11.53, finishing just 0.06 points ahead of compatriot Ren Okano (JPN). India's Kishore Kumar (IND) put up a strong fight in round 32, scoring 10.00 to finish second in his heat and advance to the round of 16.

The Round of 16 saw Japan's Shohei Kato (JPN) deliver one of the day's standout performances with a 14.50, the highest score of the round. Ikko Watanabe (JPN) followed with 12.73, while Tenshi Iwami (JPN) scored 13.90 to win Heat 3. Korea's Kanoa Hee-Jae (KOR) also advanced after posting 11.50 to edge Japan's Yuma Nagasawa (JPN).

India's Kishore Kumar narrowly missed out on advancing to the quarter-finals after scoring 9.13 in his Round of 16 heat.

In the Women's QS 2000, Japan dominated the Round of 16, with Mirai Ikeda (JPN) posting the highest score of 13.60, followed by Sara Wakita (JPN) with 13.17. Shino Matsuda (JPN) scored 11.40, while Arisa Ishii (JPN) recorded 11.20 to advance. India's Sugar Banarse (IND) and Kamali P (IND) battled strongly in their respective heats, while Kamali narrowly missed advancing after scoring 5.10.

The Women's Pro Junior Quarter Finals also produced impressive performances as Japan's young surfers continued to lead the field.

Anri Matsuno (JPN) posted the highest score of the round with an outstanding 14.00, while Mirai Ikeda (JPN) scored 12.67 to win her quarter-final. Hinano Shimizu (JPN) advanced with 10.34. Thailand's Isabel Higgs (THA) secured a closely contested heat with 8.26, edging Japan's Rita Suzuki (JPN). India's Kamali P (IND) put up a determined performance in her quarterfinal, scoring 5.73. With the competition now reaching the business end, the surfers will be battling for valuable Asia region ranking points and crucial international experience. The remaining rounds are expected to deliver more high-intensity action as the field narrows towards the finals

Rs. 8 cr synthetic track for athletes unveiled

Chennai, Aug. 14:

Chennai athletes will have access to upgraded training facilities with the inauguration of Rs. 8 crore synthetic athletics track at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium integrated sports complex on Thursday.

Public Works and Sports Development Minister Aadhav Arjuna inaugurated the renovated track, which has been upgraded to provide training facilities on par with national and international standards. The project was taken up through the Tamil Nadu Sports Development Authority.

The State is simultaneously expanding athletics infrastructure in other districts. New synthetic tracks are being developed in Ramanathapuram, Salem and Cuddalore at an estimated cost of Rs.38.24 crore, while similar facilities are already operational in nine districts, including Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Tirunelveli, Tiruvannamalai, Nilgiris, Erode and Thanjavur.

In the last three months, sports facilities worth Rs.31 crore have been opened in 10 districts. These include athletics throwing centres, synthetic hockey grounds, para-sports arenas, Chief Minister's Youth Sports Centres and swimming pools.

Youth Welfare and Sports Development Secretary Sandeep Nanduri, Tamil Nadu Sports Development Authority Member Secretary J. Meghanatha Reddy and other senior officials attended the inauguration.