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Appendix A : Adjectives/Adjective phrases Extracts

<u>28 February</u>	<u>17 April</u>
Four-time world champion who bagged seven WISPA titles	World No. 1 Four-time world champion
who has been the world number one ranked player since August 2006	<u>18 April</u>
<u>4 March</u>	Defending champion
World number one the raging favourite	The World No. 1
top seed	<u>19 April</u>
who has 41 WISPA titles	World No. 1
<u>5 March</u>	<u>21 July</u>
Four-time world champion	Four-time world champion
World No. 1	who has been the world No.1 since August in 2006
	who finished fourth in the 2006 Games in Melbourne
<u>6 March</u>	top seed
World No. 1	<u>23 July</u>
<u>7 March</u>	World No. 1
Malaysia's squash queen	who is gunning for her sixth consecutive title
World No. 1	<u>24 July</u>
the four-time world champion	Four-time world champion
top seed	who will be gunning for a sixth consecutive title since 2005
<u>8 March</u>	who has been the world No. 1 since August 2006
World No. 1	a very good player
*devastating form	the favourite
<u>18 March</u>	<u>25 July</u>
Malaysia's World No 1	World No. 1
who is gunning to win the title for the sixth time	Four-time world champion
<u>19 March</u>	<u>26 July</u>
Four-time world champion	World No. 1
the World No. 1	<u>29 July</u>
who is gunning for a sixth KL Open title	World No. 1
<u>20 March</u>	top seed
World No 1	who is gunning for her fourth consecutive Singapore Masters crown
four-time world champion	<u>30 July</u>
who is gunning for her sixth KL Open title	Defending champion
the 26-year-old	Four-time world champion
who bagged the Chennai Open early this month	<u>31 July</u>
the favourite	World number one
<u>21 March</u>	who were upset by Perry in the quarter-finals of the British Open in their last meeting in September
Four-time world champion	<u>1 August</u>
World No. 1	Four-time world champion
<u>16 April</u>	who is gunning for a fifth world title
Four-time world champion	who has been world number one since August 2006
who is ranked number one in the world since August 2006	<u>2 August</u>
	Malaysia's World No. 1
	who bagged her fourth consecutive Singapore Open title
	who will skip the Australian Open

<u>23 August</u>	<u>24 September</u>
Malaysian squash queen	Malaysian squash sensation
who is unbeaten thus far this year	who did not drop a single set in the tournament
who opens her campaign against a qualifier	top seeded
<u>26 August</u>	24 September
Defending women's champion	Adjectives
who is seeking to claim a sixth WISPA tournaments this season	Malaysian squash sensation
<u>27 August</u>	who did not drop a single set in the tournament
Birthday girl	top seeded
who turned 27	<u>23 October</u>
<u>28 August</u>	Five-time world champion
World number one	who is unbeaten this year
who is gunning for her fifth Hong Kong Open crown	who is unbeaten for her eighth WISPA title
Focused	<u>24 October</u>
<u>29 August</u>	Commonwealth Games champion
World Champion	fine form
the World No. 1	who is using the tournament as a warm-up to the Guangzhou Asian Games next month
<u>30 August</u>	<u>25 October</u>
World No. 1	Squash superstar
whose win yesterday marked her sixth WISPA title this year	the experienced
<u>17 September</u>	<u>26 October</u>
World number one	World No. 1
who is unbeaten this year	the best in the world
the world number one since 2006	<u>8 November</u>
who also bagged her seventh consecutive Asian title in Chennai in May	who bagged her eighth title in last month's Torneo Internacional Bincetenario in Mexico
The 27-year-old	top seeded
who has bagged 47 titles since turning pro in 2000	who won the title three consecutive time since 2006
<u>21 September</u>	<u>9 November</u>
World No. 1	World No. 1
who has been the World No. 1 since August in 2006	rarely troubled
whose best achievement on the WISPA circuit was winning all 10 tournaments she competed in 2008	<u>10 November</u>
who also won gold in the recent Delhi Commonwealth Games	World No. 1
<u>22 September</u>	who is gunning for her ninth WISPA title in Doha
Defending champion	hardly ruffled
ranked No. 1 in the world since August 2006	who admitted that she was still 'getting used to the court' yesterday
the 27-year-old	<u>11 November</u>
who is gunning for her fifth world title	World No. 1
who has bagged 47 WISPA titles since turning pro in 2000	<u>12 November</u>
<u>23 September</u>	Off guard, under pressure
World No. 1	<u>13 November</u>
simply too good, smashing form	Supreme

Appendix B: Icon Analysis

The following tables summarize the visuals used in the texts analyze the *contact* and *social distance* elements of the pictures.

<u>Icon 1</u> <u>8 March</u>	
	
<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
<p>This visual can be considered as a <i>demand</i> image, where we can see that Nicol is looking at the viewers as if demanding the viewers to share <i>some kind of imaginary relation</i> (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; 118)</p>	<p>The image is a medium shot image, signifying a close social relationship between Nicol and the viewers but a distant business interaction.</p>
<u>Icon 2</u> <u>20 March</u>	
	
<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
<p>There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.</p>	<p>The image is also a medium shot image, signifying a close social relationship between Nicol and the viewers but a distant business interaction. As we can see, no eye contact was made as Nicol is in her 'business' of the game, thus putting a distance between her and the viewers.</p>

Icon 3
21 March, 23 September



<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.	This image is a long shot image which signifies public distant and stranger relationship. This could possibly due to the situation Nicol is in, in the middle of the game.

Icon 4
16 & 17 April



<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.	This image is a medium close shot which signifies distant personal relationship. This again could possibly due to the situation she is in.

Icon 5
24 July



<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
<p>There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.</p>	<p>This image is a medium shot which signifies distant personal relationship. This again could possibly be due to the situation she is in.</p>

Icon 6
25 July



<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
<p>There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.</p>	<p>The image is also a medium shot image, signifying a close social relationship between Nicol and the viewers but a distant business interaction. As we can see, no eye contact was made as Nicol is in her business of the game, thus putting a distance between her and the viewers.</p>

Icon 7
29 July, 17 Sept



<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
<p>There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.</p>	<p>This image is a medium close shot which signifies distant personal relationship. This again could possibly due to the situation she is in.</p>

Icon 8
1 August



<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
<p>There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.</p>	<p>The image is also a medium shot image, signifying a close social relationship between Nicol and the viewers but a distant business interaction. As we can see, no eye contact was made as Nicol is in her business of the game, thus putting a distance between her and the viewers.</p>

Icon 9
2 August



Contact Description

There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.

Social Distance Description

This image is a long shot image which signifies public distant and stranger relationship. This could possibly due to the situation Nicol is in, in the middle of the game.

Icon 10
23 August



Contact Description

There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection

Social Distance Description

The image is also a medium shot image, signifying a close social relationship between Nicol and the viewers but a distant business interaction. As we can see, no eye contact was made as Nicol is in her business of the game, thus putting a distance between her and the viewers.

Icon 11
28 August



<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
<p>There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.</p>	<p>The image is also a medium shot image, signifying a close social relationship between Nicol and the viewers but a distant business interaction. As we can see, no eye contact was made as Nicol is in her business of the game, thus putting a distance between her and the viewers.</p>

Icon 12
30 August



<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
<p>There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.</p>	<p>This image is a medium close shot which signifies distant personal relationship. This again could possibly be due to the situation she is in.</p>

Icon 13
21 September



<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
<p>There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.</p>	<p>This image is a medium close shot which signifies distant personal relationship. This again could possibly due to the situation she is in.</p>

Icon 14
24 September



<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
<p>This visual can be considered as a <i>demand</i> image, where we can see that Nicol is looking at the viewers as if demanding the viewers to share <i>some kind of imaginary relation</i> (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; 118)</p>	<p>This image is a medium close shot which signifies distant personal relationship. This again could possibly due to the situation she is in.</p>

Icon 15
8 November & 13 November



<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.	This image is a close-up shot which signifies intimacy between Nicol and the viewers.

Icon 16
10 November



<i>Contact Description</i>	<i>Social Distance Description</i>
There is no eye contact involved in this image which signifies no establishment of connection between Nicol and the viewers.	This image is a close-up shot which signifies intimacy between Nicol and the viewers.

Appendix C: Coding Sheets

Coder's name :

Background :

Coding Sheet 1 – Depictions – Nouns/Noun Phrases

The following depictions of Nicol Ann David, were retrieved from *The Star*, the most circulated and the most widely read English-language daily in Malaysia, between March to November 2010 which was during her 9 major Women International Squash Player Association (WISPA) tournaments season 2010. Please code each depiction according to these following frames;

No.	Frames		Code
1	Personalization	Noor, 2012	A
2	Accomplishment	Kian, 2008	B
3	Localization	Noor, 2012	C

No.	Nouns/Noun Phrases	Coder's Coding
1.	Nicol David	
2.	The Penangite	
3.	Nicol	
4.	The Malaysian	
5.	The defending champion	
6.	The World No. 1	
7.	The world champion	
8.	The Malaysia	
9.	The top seed	
10.	The five-time world champion	
11.	The 27-year-old Malaysian	
12.	World No. 1	

Coding Sheet 2 – Depictions – Adjectives/Adjective Phrases

The following depictions of Nicol Ann David, were retrieved from *The Star*, the most circulated and the most widely read English-language daily in Malaysia, between March to November 2010 which was during her 9 major Women International Squash Player Association (WISPA) tournaments season 2010. Please code (A – I) each depiction according to these following frames outlined by Kian, 2008 in his framework of descriptive categories of framing athletes;

<i>framework of descriptive categories of framing athletes, Kian (2008)</i>	
A	Physical appearance/sexuality/attire
B	Athletic prowess/strengths
C	Athletic weakness/limitations
D	Positive skill level/accomplishments
E	Negative skill level/ failures
F	Family role/personal relationships
G	Psychological strengths/emotional strengths
H	Psychological weaknesses/emotional weaknesses
I	Humour




No	Depictions (Adjectives/Adjective Phrases)	Code
1	who is gunning to win the title for the sixth time	
2	who is gunning for a sixth KL Open title	
3	who is gunning for her sixth consecutive title	
4	who will be gunning for a sixth consecutive title since 2005	
5	who is gunning for her fourth consecutive Singapore Masters crown	
6	who is gunning for her fifth Hong Kong Open crown	
7	who is gunning for her ninth WISPA title in Doha	
8	who is gunning for her fifth world title	
9	who is seeking to claim a sixth WISPA tournaments this season	
10	who is unbeaten this year/ who is unbeaten thus far this year	
11	who is unbeaten for her eighth WISPA title	
12	who did not drop a single set in the tournament	
13	who opens her campaign against a qualifier	
14	who is using the tournament as a warm-up to the Guangzhou Asian Games next month	
15	the raging favourite/the favourite	
16	top seed/top seeded	
17	a very good player	
18	Focused	
19	simply too good	
20	smashing form	
21	fine form	
22	the experienced	
23	the best in the world	
24	hardly ruffled	
25	Supreme	
26	who will skip the Australian Open	
27	who admitted that she was still 'getting used to the court' yesterday	
28	devastating form	
29	Troubled	
30	off guard	
31	under pressure	
32	Four-time world champion	
33	defending champion	
34	Defending women's champion	
35	World Champion	
36	Five-time world champion	
37	Commonwealth Games champion	
38	Malaysia's squash queen	
39	Malaysian squash sensation	

40	Squash superstar	
41	who also won gold in the recent Delhi Commonwealth Games	
42	who won the title three consecutive time since 2006	
43	who bagged seven WISPA titles	
44	who bagged the Chennai Open early this month	
45	who bagged her fourth consecutive Singapore Open title	
46	who also bagged her seventh consecutive Asian title in Chennai in May	
47	who bagged her eighth title in last month's Torneo Internacional Bincetenario in Mexico	
48	who has bagged 47 titles since turning pro in 2000	
49	who has 41 WISPA titles	
50	who is ranked number one in the world since August 2006	
51	who has been the world No.1 since August in 2006	
52	the world number one since 2006/ranked No. 1 in the world since 2006	
53	who has been the world number one ranked player since August 2006	
54	the World No. 1/World No. 1/ World number one	
55	Malaysia's World No. 1	
56	whose win yesterday marked her sixth WISPA title this year	
57	whose best achievement on the WISPA circuit was winning all 10 tournaments she competed in 2008	
58	who finished fourth in the 2006 Games in Melbourne	
59	who were upset by Perry in the quarter-finals of the British Open in their last meeting in September	
60	The 26-year-old (<i>Nicol</i>)	
61	Birthday girl (<i>Nicol</i>)	
62	who turned 27	
63	The 27-year-old (<i>Nicol</i>)	

Coding Sheet 3 – Icons – Interaction Analysis




Based on the description of signifiers by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1999) below, please tick in the appropriate boxes interaction which represents each image.

Interaction	Signifier	
	Contact	(Yes)
(No)		no eye contact
Social distance	Close shot/close-up (head to shoulder)	
	medium close shot (waist and above)	
	medium shot (knees and above)	
	medium long shot (full figure)	
	long shot (full figure, ½ frame)	

Icons	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	Long shot
The Visuals extracted from the reports 	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Icons	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	Long shot
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Icons	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	Long shot
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Icons	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	Long shot
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Appendix D – Nouns and Adjectives Coding Summary

i) Nouns Coding Summary

No.	Frames		Code
1	Personalization	Noor, 2012	A
2	Accomplishment	Kian, 2008	B
3	Localization	Noor, 2012	C

No	Nouns/Noun Phrases	Coding		
		R	C1	C2
1.	Nicol David	A	A	A
2.	The Penangite	C	C	C
3.	Nicol	A	A	A
4.	The Malaysian	C	C	C
5.	The defending champion	B	B	B
6.	The World No. 1	B	B	B
7.	The world champion	B	B	B
8.	The Malaysia	C	C	C
9.	The top seed	B	B	B
10.	The five-time world champion	B	B	B
11.	The 27-year-old Malaysian	A	A	A
12.	World No. 1	B	B	B

ii) Adjectives Coding Summary

<i>framework of descriptive categories of framing athletes, Kian (2008)</i>	
A	Physical appearance/sexuality/attire
B	Athletic prowess/strengths
C	Athletic weakness/limitations
D	Positive skill level/accomplishments
E	Negative skill level/ failures
F	Family role/personal relationships
G	Psychological strengths/emotional strengths
H	Psychological weaknesses/emotional weaknesses
I	Humour

No	Adjectives/Adjective Phrases	Coding		
		R	C1	C2
1	who is gunning to win the title for the sixth time	B	B	B
2	who is gunning for a sixth KL Open title	B	B	B
3	who is gunning for her sixth consecutive title	B	D	B
4	who will be gunning for a sixth consecutive title since 2005	B	D	B
5	who is gunning for her fourth consecutive Singapore Masters crown	B	D	B
6	who is gunning for her fifth Hong Kong Open crown	B	D	B
7	who is gunning for her ninth WISPA title in Doha	B	D	B
8	who is gunning for her fifth world title	B	D	B
9	who is seeking to claim a sixth WISPA tournament this season	B	D	B
10	who is unbeaten this year/ who is unbeaten thus far this year	B	B	B
11	who is unbeaten for her eighth WISPA title	D	D	D
12	who did not drop a single set in the tournament	B	B	B
13	who opens her campaign against a qualifier	B	B	B
14	who is using the tournament as a warm-up to the Guangzhou Asian Games next month	B	B	B
15	the raging favourite/the favourite	D	D	D
16	top seed/top seeded	B	B	B
17	a very good player	B	B	B
18	Focused	G	G	G
19	simply too good	G	G	G
20	smashing form	B	B	B
21	fine form	B	B	B
22	the experienced	D	D	D
23	the best in the world	D	D	D
24	hardly ruffled	G	G	G
25	Supreme	D	D	D
26	who will skip the Australian Open	C	C	C
27	who admitted that she was still 'getting used to the court' yesterday	C	C	C
28	devastating form	H	H	H
29	Troubled	H	H	H
30	off guard	H	H	H
31	under pressure	H	H	H
32	Four-time world champion	D	D	D
33	defending champion	D	D	D
34	Defending women's champion	D	D	D
35	World Champion	D	D	D
36	Five-time world champion	D	D	D
37	Commonwealth Games champion	D	D	D
38	Malaysia's squash queen	D	D	D
39	Malaysian squash sensation	D	D	D
40	Squash superstar	D	D	D
41	who also won gold in the recent Delhi Commonwealth Games	D	D	D
42	who won the title three consecutive time since 2006	D	D	D
43	who bagged seven WISPA titles	D	D	D
44	who bagged the Chennai Open early this month	D	D	D
45	who bagged her fourth consecutive Singapore Open title	D	D	D
46	who also bagged her seventh consecutive Asian title in Chennai in May	D	D	D
47	who bagged her eighth title in last month's Torneo Internacional Bincetenario in Mexico	D	D	D
48	who has bagged 47 titles since turning pro in 2000	D	D	D
49	who has 41 WISPA titles	D	D	D
50	who is ranked number one in the world since August 2006	D	D	D

51	who has been the world No.1 since August in 2006	D	D	D
52	the world number one since 2006/ranked No. 1 in the world since 2006	D	D	D
53	who has been the world number one ranked player since August 2006	D	D	D
54	the World No. 1/World No. 1/ World number one	D	D	D
55	Malaysia's World No. 1	D	D	D
56	whose win yesterday marked her sixth WISPA title this year	D	D	D
57	whose best achievement on the WISPA circuit was winning all 10 tournaments she competed in 2008	D	D	D
58	who finished fourth in the 2006 Games in Melbourne	E	E	E
59	who were upset by Perry in the quarter-finals of the British Open in their last meeting in September	H	H	H
60	The 26-year-old	A	A	A
61	Birthday girl	A	A	A
62	who turned 27	A	A	A
63	The 27-year-old	A	A	A

Appendix E: Icons Coding Summary

Icon 1	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 2	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 3	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 4	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 5	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 6	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 7	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 8	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 9	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							

Icon 10	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 11	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 12	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 13	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 14	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 15	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							
Icon 16	Contact		Distance				
	Yes	No	Close Shot	Medium close shot	medium shot	medium long shot	long shot
Researcher							
Coder 1							
Coder 2							

Appendix F: The 45 news reports on Nicol Ann David in WISPA tournaments

2010

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/2/28/sports/5764715&sec=sports>

(1) Sunday February 28, 2010

Nicol faces not one but two tough hurdles in first outing

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: *Four-time world champion Nicol David* will face two nemeses in her first tournament of the year – the US\$53,000 Chennai Open from March 4-7.

The Penangite, who bagged seven Women's International Squash Players Association (WISPA) titles last year, will open her campaign against a qualifier in the first round.

However, *Nicol who has been the world number one ranked player since August, 2006, is expected to face her first nemesis – world number five and fifth seed Madeline Perry of Ireland in the quarter-finals.*

Perry created the biggest upset of her career by defeating *Nicol* 3-2 in the quarter-finals of the British Open last September.

Nicol will face yet another tough hurdle if she gets past Perry as her expected opponent in the semi-finals is fourth seed Alison Waters of England.

If *Nicol* gets past Waters she will face her number one nemesis and second seed Jenny Duncalf of England in the final.

Nicol twice lost to the world number three Duncalf in the last two tournaments of 2009.

Duncalf defeated *Nicol* in straight sets in the semi-finals of the Carol Weymuller Open in US last November.

The English player then edged *Nicol* 3-2 in the semi-finals of the Qatar Classic also in the same month.

It was the first time *Nicol* lost twice to Duncalf in their last 16 meetings since 2000.

The pressure will be on *Nicol* to live up to her billing as the No.1 ranked player *who has bagged 41 Wispa titles since turning pro in 2000.*

In preparation for this year's tournaments, *Nicol* had three weeks of training under former world champion Sarah Fitz-Gerald in Melbourne in January.

Nicol is currently training under her personal coach Liz Irving in Amsterdam.

In the men's category in Chennai, Malaysia's Ong Beng Hee is the top seed and will face Alan Clyne of Scotland in the first round.

World number 19th Beng Hee, who failed to bag a single Professional Squash Association (PSA) title last year, hopes to end his title drought this year in Chennai.

"Last year I failed to defend two titles – the KL and the Malaysian Opens. I hope to win the Chennai Open to end my lean spell since 2008," said Beng Hee, whose last PSA win was the Malaysian Open in July, 2008.

(2) Thursday March 4, 2010

Nicol treads with caution in Chennai

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: *World number one Nicol David* is hoping history will not repeat itself when she competes in her first Women's International Squash Players Association (WISPA) tournament of the year – the US\$53,000 Chennai Open – at the Indian Squash Academy beginning today.

Last year, Nicol's first tournament was the Kuala Lumpur Open and she was *the raging favourite*. Alas, she was upset by Natalie Grainger of the United States in the final.

If that is not bad enough, Nicol will also have to contend with nemesis Jenny Duncalf in the Chennai Open. Nicol is the *top seed* and England's Duncalf the second seed.

Duncalf beat Nicol twice last November – in the Carol Weymuller Open in the US and the Qatar Classic.

That's why Nicol is a little apprehensive going into the Chennai Open, although Grainger is not competing.

Nicol, who underwent a month's training under coach Liz Irving in Amsterdam, said it would be a tough battle for her against two players – Duncalf and Ireland's Madeline Perry – in Chennai.

The Penangite, who has 41 WISPA titles to her name since turning pro in 2000, had also lost to Perry in the quarter-finals of the prestigious British Open last September.

Nicol faces a qualifier in the first round and probably eighth seed Samantha Teran of Mexico in the quarter-finals.

She will then face her first stiff test against fourth seed Perry in the semi-finals.

If Nicol gets past Perry, the much-improved Duncalf is likely to be waiting for her in the title showdown.

Duncalf has third seed Rachael Grinham of Australia in her half.

Malaysia's Ong Beng Hee is the top seed in the men's category, followed by England's Jonathan Kemp.

The 30-year-old Beng Hee, ranked 19th in the world, will face Alan Clyne of Scotland in the first round. Another Malaysian, Mohd Asyraf Azan, will meet eighth seed Yann Perrin of France in the opening round.

(3) Friday March 5, 2010

Nicol through but Delia and Low crash out

KUALA LUMPUR: *Four-time world champion Nicol David* faced some resistance from qualifier Dipika Pallikal of India before qualifying for the quarter-finals of the Chennai Open squash championships yesterday.

World No. 1 Nicol won the first round match 11-6, 11-9, 11-5 in 30 minutes to set up a date with eighth seed Samantha Teran of Mexico for a place in the last four.

Teran, ranked 13th in the world, defeated qualifier Donna Urquhart of Australia 11-3, 3-11, 11-3, 11-4.

Two other Malaysians – Delia Arnold and Low Wee Wern – were shown the exit in the first round.

National number two Delia went down 6-11, 4-11, 11-9, 6-11 to third seed Rachael Grinham of Australia.

The 19-year-old Wee Wern, who beat veteran and team-mate Sharon Wee to reach the main draw, gave fifth seed Laura Massaro of England a run for her money before losing 2-11, 11-8, 11-3, 5-11, 7-11.

In the men's section, top seed Ong Beng Hee was given a scare by team-mate Ivan Yuen before prevailing 11-6, 3-11, 11-8, 3-11, 11-3 in 50 minutes in the first round.

The 30-year-old Beng Hee, ranked 19th in the world, said in telephone interview yesterday that he was disappointed with his performance.

“But I am glad that I won the match. Now I need to work much harder in the quarter-finals (against seventh seed Yann Perrin of France),” added Beng Hee.

The Frenchman ended Malaysian Mohd Asyraf Azan's run with an 11-6, 6-11, 11-9, 11-6 win.

(4) Saturday March 6, 2010

Nicol, Beng Hee march into the semis

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: *World No. 1 Nicol David* just needed 28 minutes to get the better of eighth seed Samantha Tean of Mexico to book her place in the semi-finals of the Chennai Open squash championships yesterday.

The Penangite, playing her first tournament of the year, registered a 11-9, 11-5, 12-10 win over the Mexican.

Nicol will face world No. 10 and the seventh seed Kasey Brown of Australia for a place in the final.

Brown ended the fine run of unseeded Jaclyn Hawkes on New Zealand, who upset world No. 7 and fourth seed Laura Massaro of England in the first round.

Brown, however, was made to slog for 69 minutes by the Kiwi player before winning 11-6, 8-11, 11-9, 11-4.



Good run: Ong Beng Hee will take on Egypt's Ali Anwar Reda in the semi-finals on Saturday.

Sixth seed Camille Serme of France created the biggest upset of the day by coming back from a set down to beat world No. 4 Rachael Grinham of Australia 4-11, 12-10, 11-3, 11-3 in 40 minutes.

The Frenchwoman will take on second seed Jenny Duncalf of England in the semi-finals.

Duncalf defeated compatriot Laura Massaro 12-10, 11-9, 11-9.

In the men's category, Ong Beng Hee also reached the semi-finals with a 11-5, 11-8, 11-8 win over seventh seed Yann Perrin of France.

Beng Hee, who is the top seed, will face Ali Anwar Reda of Egypt.

The 30-year-old Beng Hee said he played a lot better against Yann yesterday than in his first round match.

"Still working my way up. I relax too soon when I am up in points. I need to stay focus and give my best in the semis," said Beng Hee.

Quarter-final results

Men: Ong Beng Hee (Mas) bt Yann Perrin (Fra) 11-5, 11-8, 11-8;

Ali Anwar Reda (Egy) bt Alan Clyne (Sco) 9-11, 11-6, 11-7, 11-5;

Saurav Ghosal (Ind) bt Chris Simpson (Eng) 11-7, 11-7, 11-13, 11-7;

Jonathan Kemp (Eng) bt Laurence Delasaux (Eng) 11-9, 11-4, 11-7.

Women: Nicol David (Mas) bt Samantha Teran (Mex) 11-9, 11-5, 12-10;

Kasey Brown (Aus) bt Jaclyn Hawkes (Nzl) 11-6, 8-11, 11-9, 11-4;

Camille Serme (Fra) bt Racheal Grinham (Aus) 4-11, 12-10, 11-3, 11-3;

Jenny Duncalf (Eng) bt Laura Massaro (Eng) 12-10, 11-9, 11-9.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/3/7/sports/5813706&sec=sports>

(5) Sunday March 7, 2010

Nicol, Beng Hee book final berths at the Chennai Open

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: *Malaysia's squash queen Nicol David* chalked up an easy win over seventh seed Kasey Brown of Australia to reach the final of the Chennai Open squash championships yesterday.

The Malaysian world No. 1 won 11-2, 11-4, 11-4.

Nicol, the four-time world champion and playing in her first tournament of the year will face her nemesis and second seed Jenny Duncalf of England in the final.

World No. 3 Duncalf defeated sixth seed Camille Serme of France 11-6, 11-9, 11-8 in the other semi-final.

Top seed *Nicol* will be going into the final to avenge her two defeats to Duncalf in the last two Women's International Squash Players Association (WISPA) tournaments last year.

The English woman upset *Nicol* in the semi-finals of the Carol Weymuller Open in US and also the Qatar Classic last November.

In the men's event, Malaysia's top-seeded Ong Beng Hee, also reached the final with a hard fought 9-11, 11-8, 11-7, 7-11, 12-10 win over third seed Ali Anwar Reda of Egypt.

Beng Hee will face Saurav Ghosal if India in the final. The 30-year-old Beng Hee said in a telephone interview yesterday that he struggled to beat Ali.

"It was not one of my best performances because we were playing on a glass court. Earlier, we played on a normal court.

"I hope to raise my game in the final against Saurav to end my title drought," said Beng Hee, who last won a Professional Squash Association (PSA) tournament at the Malaysian Open in 2008.

(6) Monday March 8, 2010

Nicol, Beng Hee bag grand double for Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR: *World No. 1* Nicol David started her year with a bang by scoring an emphatic win over Jenny Duncalf for her first title in 2010 at the Chennai Open squash championships yesterday.

Ong Beng Hee made it a grand double for Malaysia by taking the men's title.

Nicol exacted sweet revenge over Duncalf in her 11-6, 11-4, 11-6 win at the Indian Squash Academy yesterday. The English girl had beaten Nicol in the semi-final of the Carol Weymuller Open in US and the Qatar Classic last November.



There was no chance of Duncalf pulling off another win yesterday as Nicol was in *devastating form* and needed only 25 minutes to lift the title.

Beng Hee ended his lean title spell by downing Jonathan Kemp of England 14-12, 11-9, 11-9 in 47 minutes in the men's final.

It was his first title since winning the Malaysian Open in 2008.

World No. 19 Beng Hee produced an error-free game and mixing the pace of his shots to trouble the second-seeded Kemp.



Second best: England's Jenny Duncalf had no answer to Nicol David's game in the Chennai Open final Sunday.

The win should serve as a big boost for Beng Hee, who now has the services of coach Jamshed Gul to further refine his game ahead of the CIMB KL Open from March 15-20 in Kuala Lumpur.

(7) Thursday March 18, 2010

Nicol gets a little stretch from Hawkes before advancing

KUALA LUMPUR: *Malaysia's world No. 1 Nicol David* faced some resistance from Jaclyn Hawkes of New Zealand before advancing to the quarter-finals of the Kuala Lumpur Open.

Nicol, who is gunning to win the title for a sixth time, won the first-round match 11-7, 11-8, 11-2 in 37 minutes yesterday. She will play against world No. 10 and eighth seed Kasey Brown of Australia. Brown defeated qualifier Sarah Kippax of England 11-6, 11-4, 11-3 in 33 minutes.

Nicol, who bagged the Chennai Open early this month, did not have much of a problem in the first set. But in the second set, Hawkes took an 8-5 lead and *Nicol* produced some exciting squash to level the score before winning the set. Hawkes could not cope with the fast game played by *Nicol* in the third set.

Nicol, a four-time world champion, said that she was happy to win the first-round match in straight sets.

"Hawkes took control of the second set and I had to come back to take in charge of the game. I came out strong in the third set to easily beat her," she said.

Nicol, who has won 41 Women's International Squash Players Association (WISPA) titles since turning professional in 2000, added that she was looking forward to playing against Brown in the quarter-finals.

"I defeated Brown 3-0 in the semi-finals in the Chennai Open and hope to play well again tomorrow. I also hope to see more spectators turning up to watch me play at the concourse of Berjaya Times Square," she said.

Malaysia's wildcard entry Delia Arnold put up a stiff fight against world No. 5 and third seed Alison Waters of England before going down 11-7, 16-14, 3-11, 9-11, 9-11 in 75 minutes.

World No. 29 Delia shocked Waters by winning the first two sets. But the Kuala Lumpur lass, who suffered a cut on her knee when leading 13-12 in the second set, could not get the better of Waters when leading 9-8 in the fourth set.

Delia, the national No. 2, said that it was just hard luck that she lost the match.

"I did not know how to cope with the pressure and hope to learn from that. I also need to play a lot more with the top 10 players to further improve my game," she said.

Waters will play against unseeded Samantha Teran of Mexico for a place in the semi-finals.

Competitions in the KL Open move to the Berjaya Times Square in KL and the first match of the day begins at 2pm.

(8) Friday March 19, 2010

Nicol David wards off Kasey's challenge

KUALA LUMPUR: *Four-time world champion Nicol David* warded off a strong challenge from Kasey Brown before securing a place in the semi-finals of the Kuala Lumpur Open.

The world No. 1 defeated the eighth seeded Australian 12-10, 14-12, 11-1 in a 43-minute quarter-final match yesterday.

Nicol will meet world No. 4 and third seed Alison Waters of England for a place in the final. Waters, who will celebrate her 26th birthday today, was stretched to the limit by unseeded Samantha Teran of Mexico before prevailing 11-5, 11-2, 8-11, 11-13, 12-10 in 60 minutes.

Nicol said that she had to work very hard to beat Brown.

"I knew Brown would go all to get me and she gave me a good fight in the first two sets. I was glad to win in straight sets. I have to further raise my game against Waters in the semi-finals. She is another tough opponent," said Nicol, *who is gunning for a sixth KL Open title*.

Nicol has never lost to Waters in their last nine meetings.

World No. 3 and second seed Jenny Duncalf of England was lucky to reach the semi-finals after her opponent and compatriot, Laura Massaro, retired in the fourth set even though she had match point at 11-10.

Duncalf, who defeated Nicol in two tournament last November, won the first set 11-7 but lost the next two at 4-11, 10-12.

The sixth seed Massaro stretched to retrieve the ball in the fourth set when she hit into Duncalf and injured her ankle. She received treatment but could not continue to play and conceded a walkover.

Duncalf will play against world No. 6 and fourth seed Omneya Abdel Kawy of Egypt in the semi-finals. Omneya advanced with a 12-10, 7-11, 11-5, 11-7 win over fifth seed Madeline Perry of Ireland.

Omneya, who will feature in the semi-finals of the KL Open for the first time, said that she was looking forward to the match against Duncalf.

"I came close of beating her in the final of Soho Square Open in Egypt last November," said the Egyptian.

The semi-final matches of the championships today begin at 4.30pm and Nicol is expected to play at 7.30pm.

(9) Saturday March 20, 2010

Nicol in final as Beng Hee, Azlan fall to Egyptians

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: *World No. 1 Nicol David* sailed into the final of the women's event of the CIMB Kuala Lumpur Open at the Berjaya Times Square here yesterday.

However, Mohd Azlan Iskandar and Ong Beng Hee fell victims to the Egyptian curse in the men's semi-finals.

World No. 18 Azlan fell to second seed Karim Darwish 6-11, 6-11, 7-11 in 48 minutes while world No. 19 Beng Hee went down 5-11, 11-8, 6-11, 7-11 to top seed and world No. 1 Ramy Ashour in 44 minutes.

Luckily, Nicol saved the day for Malaysia.



In command: Nicol David makes a return against Alison Waters of England during the semi-finals of the KL Open at Berjaya Times Square yesterday. — GLENN GUAN/The Star

Four-time world champion Nicol, who is gunning for her sixth KL Open title, turned party-poopers when she ruined Alison Waters' birthday wish.

The England national champion, who turned 26 yesterday, had high hopes of getting the better of Nicol to reach the final.

Instead, Nicol took just 35 minutes to dispose of Waters 11-3, 11-7, 11-5.

Nicol will take on fourth seed Omneya Abdel Kawy of Egypt in today's final (4pm).

World No. 6 Kawy upset world No. 3 and second seed Jenny Duncalf of England 11-3, 11-8, 11-9 in 37 minutes.

The 26-year-old Nicol, who bagged the Chennai Open early this month, said it was not an easy win despite the scoreline.

"We played some long rallies and I really had to work hard to get the points against the experienced Waters. I stayed focus and did not allow her to control the match from the first set," said Nicol.

"I'll have to raise my game another notch in the final against Kawy. I beat her 3-0 in the final of the Hong Kong Open last year but I expect a stronger challenge from her this time."

The Kawy-Duncalf semi-final was disrupted by electrical problems.

Kawy was leading 8-7 in the second set when some of the bulbs blew due to overheating.

The match was resumed 20 minutes later and Kawy went on to win the set 11-8.

Kawy, who will be playing her first final in the KL Open, admitted that it would be difficult to beat Nicol.

“Although she will start as *the favourite*, I hope to give my best in the final,” said Kawy.

The men’s final will be an all-Egyptian affair between two former world junior champions – Darwish and Ashour.

In the first semi-final, the Kuching-born Azlan admitted that he made some tactical errors against Darwish.

“I played a negative game. I played too defensively,” said Azlan, a two-time KL Open champion (2003, 2006).

“Darwish is good player and it was a good learning experience for me. I really have to train harder to further improve my game.”

Darwish, who will be featuring in his first final in the KL Open, said he was looking forward to getting the better of Ashour again after beating him 3-2 in the semi-finals of the Qatar Classic last November.

Beng Hee acknowledged that Ashour was simply too good for him “although I played my best squash”.

Ashour too expects a tough showdown against his compatriot.

“Darwish and I know each other’s game very well. I want to win the final for my dad (Mohamed Ashour), who is here to support me.”

Semi-finals MEN

Ramy Ashour (Egy) bt Ong Beng Hee (Mas) 11- 5, 8-11, 11-6, 11-7; Karim Darwish (Egy) bt Mohd Azlan Iskandar (Mas) 11-6, 11-6, 11-7.

WOMEN

Nicol David (Mas) bt Alison Waters (Eng) 11-3, 11-7, 11-5; Omneya Abdel Kawy (Egy) bt Jenny Duncalf (Eng) 11-3, 11-8, 11-9

(10) Sunday March 21, 2010

Nicol stamps her class to win record sixth KL Open title

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: *Four-time world champion Nicol David* was in *smashing form* as she just needed 31 minutes to beat World No. 6 and fourth seed Omneya Abdel Kawy of Egypt in the final to bag a record sixth CIMB Kuala Lumpur Open title at the Berjaya Times Square yesterday.

World No. 1 Nicol, who won the KL Open title in 2000, 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2008, won 11-4, 11-2, 13-11.

Last year *Nicol* lost to Natalie Grainger of US in the final.

It was Nicol's second consecutive Womens International Squash Players Association (WISPA) title. Early this month, she bagged the Chennai Open in India.

To date *Nicol* has bagged 42 Wispa titles since turning pro in 2000. For her efforts *Nicol* pocketed US\$8,550 while Kawy took home US\$6,075.



Triumphant: Nicol making a return to Omneya Abdel Kawy during the final of the KL Open at the Berjaya Times Square Saturday. —AZMAN GHANI / The Star

Nicol cheered on by a big crowd, did not have any problems winning the first two sets. However, Kawy, a former world junior champion, surprised *Nicol* by taking a 5-1 lead in the third set.

The Penangite narrowed the score to 4-7 before she went on to take a 10-7 lead.

Nicol failed to get the match point as the Egyptian fought back to get three points to level at 10-10 for deuce.

The Malaysian again had match point at 11-10 but Kawy never gave up and levelled the score at 11-11. But *Nicol* showed why she is the world's best player by securing the next two points for victory.

Nicol said that it was fantastic to win the KL Open for the sixth time without dropping a set in the tournament.

"Kawy is a strong contender, however, she had trouble in the first two sets. But she pushed me really hard in the third set," said *Nicol*.



For the album: CIMB group chief executive officer Datuk Seri Nazir Razak (second from left) and his wife Datin Seri Azlina Azziz posing with Ashour (left) and Nicol (second from right) as Squash Racquets Association of Malaysia (SRAM) president Datuk A. Sani Karim looks on Saturday. — Bernama

I knew she got nothing to lose but I have to work very hard in the third set as I had to come back twice (from 1-5 and 4-7) to win the match.

World champion Ramy Ashour of Egypt lived up to his billing by defeating compatriot and World No. 5 and second seed Karim Darwish 11-8, 11-8, 11-9 in 41 minutes in the men's final.

It was Ashour's first ever title in Malaysia. In his first outing in the Malaysian Open in 2004, he lost in the semi-finals. He played in the 2006 KL Open but last in the quarter-finals.

"I am happy to get the better of Darwish as he beat me 3-2 in the final of the Qatar Classic last November.

"This is my first title in Malaysia and I dedicate the win to my dad (Mohamed Ashour), who is here to support me," said Ashour.

Victory earned Ashour US\$7,600 while Darwish took home US\$5,200.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/4/16/sports/6065030&sec=sports>

(11) Friday April 16, 2010

Hakka dance inspires Nicol to opening win

KUALA LUMPUR: *Four-time world champion Nicol David* started her defence of the Cayman Islands Open title with an easy win over Jaclyn Hawkes of New Zealand at Grand Cayman on Wednesday.

The Penangite, who is ranked number one in the world since August, 2006, won 11-3, 11-5, 11-3 in just 24 minutes and she will play against seventh seed Camille Serme of France in the quarter-finals.

World No. 11 Serme defeated local player Marlene West 14-12, 11-4, 11-5 in the first round.

There was a Hakka performance just before the match between Nicol and Hawkes.



Nicol David

“The Hakka was fascinating, I have never seen one close up before, it was exciting and it got me going,” Nicol was quoted in the website www.squashsite.co.uk.

“I was also inspired by the big crowd who turn up to watch me in action.”

The Malaysian will be gunning for her third Wispa title this year. She started the year by winning the Chennai Open in February and she bagged the Kuala Lumpur Open last month.

Qualifier Sarah Kippax of England upset World No. 13 and eight seed Samantha Teran of Mexico 11-9, 11-13, 12-10, 7-11, 12-10 to reach the quarter-finals.

World No. 21 Kippax will meet former world champion and third seed Rachael Grinham of Australia for a place in the semi-finals.

The 33-year-old Grinham, who is ranked fifth in the world, eliminated qualifier Manuela Manetta of Italy 11-7, 11-4, 11-6.

Results

First round: Nicol David (Mas) bt Jaclyn Hawkes (Nzl) 11-3, 11-5, 11-3; Camille Serme (Fra) bt Marlene West (Cay) 14-12, 11-4, 11-5; Rachael Grinham (Aus) bt Manuela Manetta (Ita) 11-7, 11-4, 11-6; Sarah Kippax (Eng) bt Samantha Teran (Mex) 11-9, 11-13, 12-10, 7-11, 12-10.

(12) Saturday April 17, 2010

Grinham is next for Nicol

KUALA LUMPUR: *World No. 1 Nicol David* had to work hard to get the better of seventh seed Camille Serme of France to qualify for the semi-finals of the Cayman Islands Open at the Grand Cayman on Thursday.

The defending champion won 11-4, 11-7, 11-6 in 33 minutes to set up a repeat semi-final match against former world champion Rachael Grinham of Australia.

The third seeded Grinham warded off a strong challenge from qualifier Sarah Kippax of England, coming back from a set down to win 8-11, 11-7, 11-9, 11-9 in 45 minutes.



Nicol David

Four-time world champion Nicol will be playing against Grinham, who is currently ranked fifth in the world, for the 29th time in the Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) since 2000.

In 28 previous meetings, Nicol has emerged as the winner 22 times. The last meeting was in the Cayman Islands Open last year.

Second seed Jenny Duncalf of England will meet fourth seed Madeline Perry of Ireland in the other semi-finals.

Quarter-finals: Nicol David (Mas) bt Camille Serme (Fra) 11-4, 11-7, 11-6; Rachael Grinham (Aus) bt Sarah Kippax (Eng) 8-11, 11-7, 11-9, 11-9; Madeline Perry (Irl) bt Kasey Brown (Aus) 3-11, 11-6, 12-10, 11-7; Jenny Duncalf (Eng) bt Isabelle Stoehr (Fra) 11-5, 11-8, 11-8.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/4/18/sports/6080414&sec=sports>

(13) Sunday April 18, 2010

Nicol beats Grinham to reach Cayman Islands final

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: *Defending champion* Nicol David beat former world champion and third seed Rachael Grinham of Australia 11-5, 11-7, 11-9 to reach the final of the US\$55,300 Cayman Islands Open at the Grand Cayman on Friday.

The world No. 1 will face her nemesis Jenny Duncalf of England in the final.

Duncalf had beaten Nicol twice last November – in the semi-finals of the Carol Weymuller Open and Qatar Classic.

Nicol, however, is unbeaten this year and has won the first two Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) tournaments – the Chennai Open and Kuala Lumpur Open.

She has also yet to drop a set in the 11 matches she has played thus far this year.

Nicol's win over Grinham in the Cayman Islands Open was her 23rd in 29 meetings since 2000.

"I know that when Rachael gets a chance to play her shots, they'll go in. So, I have to play mine first," Nicol was quoted as saying on www.squashsite.co.uk.

"She always pushes me to raise my game when we play, it's always a good show. I just have to keep my focus and play the right shots at the right time."

Even Nicol's coach, Liz Irving, was impressed with *the world No. 1's* 30-minute demolition of Grinham. "That was a clinical display," said Irving.

Duncalf, the world No. 2, claimed her first appearance in the final after overcoming fourth seed Madeline Perry of Ireland 11-8, 11-8, 11-5 in 42 minutes.

"It's good to go one better here than last time (having reached the semi-finals last year) – you always want improvement but it would be nice to go two better (against Nicol)," said Duncalf.

Nicol, who will be facing Duncalf for the 13th time in her career, bounced back from her November setbacks to beat the Englishwoman in straight sets in the Chennai Open in March.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/4/19/sports/6082868&sec=sports>

(14) Monday April 19, 2010

Nicol tames Duncalf to retain Cayman Islands Open crown

By SHAMSHUL FITRI

PETALING JAYA: *World No. 1 Nicol David* bagged her third straight title for the year when she retained her Cayman Islands Open crown on Saturday.

Nicol took just 32 minutes to subdue world No. 2 Jenny Duncalf of England 11-8, 11-8, 11-4 at the Camana Bay in Grand Cayman.

Having won the Chennai Open and CIMB KL Open in March, Nicol has now captured 44 titles on the Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) Tour since 2000.

In Saturday's final, Duncalf matched Nicol point for point in the first game to trail 8-9 before the Penangite upped her game a notch to win 11-8.

The second game was dominated by long rallies until the score stood at 9-8 before the world champion surged home.

The third game saw Nicol quick off the mark to lead 5-1. However, the Englishwoman, who beat Nicol in two semi-finals (Carol Weymuller Open and Qatar Classic in November) last year, hauled in a couple of points to make it 6-3.

However, three consecutive shots into the tin by Duncalf allowed Nicol to end the match 11-4 and claim the title for the second time.

"It's always tough against Jenny," Nicol was quoted as saying on the website www.squashsite.co.uk.

"The first game was really tight and it felt more like a 3-2 win rather than a 3-0."

She praised the organisers for doing a good job and hoped to return next year to defend her title.

"And, if my body is still well, I'll definitely be here for the World Open in 2012," she said.

Next up for Nicol is the Asian Squash Championships in Chennai from May 1-8, when she will be gunning for a historic seventh consecutive Asian title since 1998.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/7/21/sports/6701182&sec=sports>

(15) Wednesday July 21, 2010

Nine tournaments in six months for Nicol

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: Four-time world champion Nicol David is bracing for a hectic schedule in the second half of the year.

And the Penangite's main concern is to stay physically fit and mentally strong to feature in nine tournaments in six months.

Nicol, who will turn 27 on Aug 26, will start the second-half of the year by featuring in the CIMB Malaysian Open, which begins today.

The first round will be played at the National Squash Centre in Bukit Jalil and matches from the quarter-final stage will be held at the concourse of the Curve in Mutiara Damansara.

Her other tournaments for the year are the Singapore Masters (July 26-31), Hong Kong Open (Aug 23-29), World Open in Egypt (Sept 15-22), New Delhi Commonwealth Games (Oct 3-14), Mexico Open (Oct 19-24), Qatar Classics (Nov 5-12), Guangzhou Asian Games (Nov 18-25) and women's world team championship in New Zealand (Nov 29-Dec 4).

Nicol, who has been the world No. 1 since August in 2006, will be gunning for a record sixth consecutive Malaysian Open title since 2005.

Nicol said that it was going to be a real challenge for her to do well in all the nine tournaments.

"I will have to train much harder to make sure I am physically fit and mentally strong to give my best in the tournaments," she said.

"All the other players are making steady progress this year and I need to bring my game one level higher to maintain my winning streak and world ranking."

Nicol started the year with a bang by winning the first three Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) titles – the Chennai Open and Kuala Lumpur Open in March and the Cayman Islands Open in April.

In May, she retained the Asian title in Chennai. And last Saturday, she bagged her first national title in a championship, which was held after a lapse of 13 years.

Nicol added that her top priority this year was to nail an elusive Commonwealth Games gold medal.

"This is the only gold medal that I have yet to win," said Nicol, who finished fourth in the 2006 Games in Melbourne.

In the Malaysian Open, top seed Nicol will open her campaign against a qualifier in a half that has seventh seed Madeline Perry of Ireland and fourth seed Alison Waters of England. Nicol is tipped to play against world No. 2 and second seed Jenny Duncalf of England in the final.

Nicol said that she would face strong challenges, especially from Waters and Duncalf, who both have turned the tables on her before.

The other Malaysian player in the main draw is Low Wee Wern, who will face sixth seed Natalie

Grainger of the United States in the opening round.

In the men's competition, Malaysia have three players in the main draw.

World No. 19 and fifth seed Ong Beng Hee, will face a qualifier in the first round. And Beng Hee, a three-time champion, is expected to meet World No. 14 and top seed Mohamed Shorbagy of Egypt in quarter-finals.

National number three Mohd Nafiizwan Adnan, who received a wildcard entry, will meet seventh seed Tarek Momen of Egypt in the first round.

World No. 18 and fourth seed Mohd Azlan Iskandar, who won the national title last Saturday, will start against Campbell Grayson of New Zealand. Azlan, who won the tournament in 2004 and 2007, is the same half of the draw with World No. 16 and second seed Cameron Pilley of Australia.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/7/23/sports/6720824&sec=sports>

(16) Friday July 23, 2010

Nicol makes short work of Serme

KUALA LUMPUR: World No. 1 Nicol David made short work of French woman Camille Serme to reach the semi-finals of the CIMB Malaysian Open squash championships at the Curve in Mutiara Damansara last night.

The Penangite, who is gunning for her sixth consecutive title, won 11-4, 11-4, 11-8 in just 29 minutes. Nicol will face fourth seed Alison Waters of England in the semi-finals.

Waters, who was out of action since April because of a neck injury, defeated fifth seed Omneya Abdel Kawy of Egypt 11-5, 11-3, 3-11, 11-4 in 36 minutes.

Nicol last played Waters in the Kuala Lumpur Open in March and the Malaysian won the semi-final match in straight sets.

Nicol said that she played a good match against Serme on the glass court.

“I started off strongly and stayed focus throughout the match. I am happy with my performance against Serme,” said Nicol.

Asked about her semi-final match against Waters, Nicol said playing the English player has always been tough.

“She definitely will go all out against me and I have to bring my game one level higher to get the better of her,” said Nicol.

Wild card entry Low Wee Wern’s fine run came to end yesterday when she lost 5-11, 6-11, 3-11 to second seed Jenny Duncalf of England in 35 minutes.

World No. 26 Wee Wern created the biggest upset of her career on Wednesday when she packed off former world No.1 Natalie Grainger of America in the first round.

But yesterday Wee Wern, who will turn 20 on Saturday, failed to give her best in the match against Duncalf.

Wee Wern said that she only had 30 minutes of training on the glass court in the morning and found it hard to get adjusted.

“I made several errors in the match. I need to play more on glass court to get use to it.

“Duncalf was just too good for me. However, it was a good experience playing with Duncalf. Overall, I am satisfied with my performance to reach the quarter-finals,” said Wee Wern, who will be playing in the qualifying rounds of the Singapore Masters next week.

Duncalf will meet qualifier Raneem El Weleily of Egypt for a place in the final. Weleily continue her giant killing feat by upsetting world No. 8 and eighth seed Laura Massaro of England 11-7, 7-11, 7-11, 11-4, 13-11 in the quarter-finals yesterday.

In the first round, Weleily, the world No. 14, stunned world No. 3 and third seed Rachael Grinham of Australia.

(17) Saturday July 24, 2010

Nicol digs deep into reserves to win place in final

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: Four-time world champion Nicol David had to dig deep into her reserves to get the better of Alison Waters of England to advance to the final of the CIMB Malaysian Open at The Curve in Mutiara Damansara yesterday.

The Penangite, who will be gunning for a sixth consecutive title since 2005, beat the fourth seeded Waters 14-12, 12-10, 6-11, 11-7 in a 64-minute semi-final match.

Nicol was trailing 7-10 in the second set but she played magnificent squash to level the score 10-10 before going on to win 12-10. However, she lost the third set 6-11 before sealing the match in the fourth set.

It was the first time Nicol, who has been the world No. 1 since August, 2006, lost a set in a tournament this year.



Hard-earned victory: Malaysia's Nicol David being given a run for her money by England's Alison Waters during their CIMB Malaysian Open semi-final yesterday. Nicol won 14-12, 12-10, 6-11, 11-7. — GLENN GUAN / The Star

Nicol will play against world No. 2 and second seed Jenny Duncalf of England in the final.

Duncalf ended the run of qualifier Raneem El Weleily of Egypt in the other semi-final, winning the match 11-8, 11-5, 8-11, 12-10.

Weleily stunned world No. 3 and third seed Rachael Grinham of Australia in the first round and went on to beat world No. 8 and eighth seed Laura Massaro of England in the quarter-finals.

Nicol has played against Duncalf 18 times in Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) tournaments and was beaten only twice by the Englishwoman – in the semi-finals of back-to-back tournaments last November, the Carol Weymuller Open in New York and the Qatar Classics.

But Nicol avenged those defeats this year in the final of the Chennai Open in March and also the Cayman Islands Open in April.

Nicol conceded that Waters played exceptionally well to make her slog for a place in the final.

“My matches against Waters have always been close ones.

“This was one real tough match and I dropped a set for the first time in the tournament,” she said.

The Malaysian added that she would face yet another tough encounter against another English player in the final.

“The match against Waters was a good learning experience and I will use it to give my best against Duncalf,” said Nicol.

European champion Duncalf said that Weleily gave her a tough time, especially in the third and fourth sets.

“She has improved a lot this year. I was leading 5-1 in the fourth set but she fought back to collect six points (7-5),” she said.

On the final, Duncalf said that Nicol was all round a very good player and it will definitely be tough for her to wrest the title.

“Nicol beat me twice in straight sets this year and she will be the favourite in the final,” said Duncalf.

Results:

Men: Tarek Momen (Egy) bt Mohamed El Shorbagy (Egy) 8-11, 13-11, 2-11, 11-4, 12-10; Mohd Azlan Iskandar (Mas) bt Farhan Mehboob (Pak) 11-7, 11-7, 11-7.

Women: Nicol David (Mas) bt Alison Waters (Eng) 14-12, 12-10, 6-11, 11-7; Jenny Duncalf (Eng) bt Raneem El Weleily (Egy) 11-8, 11-5, 8-11, 12-10.

(18) Sunday July 25, 2010

Squash: Nicol gets the better of Duncalf after slogging it out in a thrilling five-set final

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: World No. 1 Nicol David played one of her toughest matches to get the better of Jenny Duncalf of England in a thrilling five-set women's final in the CIMB Malaysian Open squash championships at The Curve in Mutiara Damansara yesterday.

Nicol was made to slog for 72 minutes before prevailing 11-6, 6-11, 11-7, 10-12, 11-5 over the world No. 2 to claim the title for a record sixth consecutive time since 2005.

For her efforts, Nicol received US\$8,122 while Duncalf pocketed US\$5,771.

Nicol's triumph followed Mohd Azlan Iskandar's success in winning the men's title. And it was the second time that Malaysia won both titles after 2008 when Nicol and Ong Beng Hee emerged as the champions.

By winning the Malaysian Open, Nicol has now defeated Duncalf 17 times in 19 meetings in Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) tournaments since 2000.



Just an accident: Jenny Duncalf collides with Nicol David during the final match of the CIMB Malaysian Open Squash Championship at The Curve in Mutiara Damansara Saturday. Nicol David was crowned champion after a five-set thriller.

It was also Nicol's fourth consecutive Wispa titles this year. She started her season by winning the Chennai Open in March and went on to bag titles in the Kuala Lumpur Open title in the same month and in the Cayman Islands Open in April.

To date, Nicol has won 45 Wispa titles since turning pro in 2000.

Four-time world champion Nicol had to work really hard against Duncalf yesterday and she also endured anxious moments.

Nicol held match point 10-9 in the fourth set but Duncalf levelled the score and won in deuce to force a decider. However, Duncalf made errors to allow Nicol to claim the title.

Nicol said that she was delighted to pull through in one of her toughest matches in a final this year.

"I had a tough match against world No. 4 Alison (Waters of England) and knew that I could expect another torrid time against another English player, Duncalf," she said.

"Duncalf went all out against me and I knew that the match would go to five sets. However, I was very

fortunate that Duncalf made some errors in the fifth set to hand me victory.”

There will be no break in competition for Nicol as she sets out next to play in the Singapore Masters starting on Wednesday.

Duncalf said that she was disappointed for blowing away her final match.

“I played well to take Nicol to the five sets but it was unfortunate that I made silly errors in the decider,” said Duncalf, whose next tournament is the Australian Open next month.

Final Results

Men: **Mohd Azlan Iskandar (Mas)** bt Tarek Momen (Egy) 11-5, 11-6, 11-8.

Women: **Nicol David (Mas)** bt Jenny Duncalf (Eng) 11-6, 6-11, 11-7, 10-12, 11-5.

(19) Monday July 26, 2010

Nicol sees Waters and Duncalf as her biggest rivals

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: World No. 1 Nicol David sees English players Jenny Duncalf and Alison Waters as the big threat to her quest for more honours this year, especially in two major events – the World Open in Egypt in September and the New Delhi Commonwealth Games in October.

Nicol ran into tough matches against the duo en route to winning the just concluded CIMB Malaysia Open championships for a sixth consecutive time.

The Penangite had to dig deep into her reserves to get the better of world No. 4 Waters in four sets in the semi-finals on Friday.

And it was the first time this year that Nicol had dropped in a Women International Squash Players Association (Wispa) tournament.

In the final the next day, Nicol was pushed all the way by world No. 2 Duncalf, who played some excellent squash before losing her ground in the fifth set.

Duncalf had upsets Nicol in the two consecutive tournaments last November – in the semi-finals of the Carol Weymuller Open in New York and the Qatar Classic.

Nicol said that both Duncalf and Waters had made tremendous progress in their game and duo would be the players to watch this season.

“My top priority this year is to defend the World Open and win my first Commonwealth Games gold medal,” she said.

“Both these players will definitely be going all out to get the better of me. I have to further raise my game to continue giving my best.”

Nicol will be gunning for a fifth world title after the successes in 2005, 2006, 2008 and 2009. In the Commonwealth Games series, she was placed fourth in the last edition in Melbourne in 2006.

Her next assignment is the Singapore Masters, which begin on Wednesday. Nicol is aiming to win the title for a fourth consecutive time and she opens her campaign against world No. 15 Raneem El Weleily of Egypt.

In the Malaysian Open, Weleily came through from the qualifying tournament to chalk up two upsets.

She eliminated world No. 3 Rachael Grinham of Australia in the first round and world No. 14 Laura Massaro of England in the quarter-finals before bowing out against Duncalf.

In the same half as Nicol in the Singapore Masters are seventh seed Kasey Brown of Australia and fourth seed Omneya Abdel Kawy of Egypt. The other half has second seed Rachael Grinham and third seed Waters.

Two other Malaysian women, Delia Arnold and Low Wee Wern, will have to earn their places in the main draw from a qualifying tournament.

(20) Thursday July 29, 2010

Early scare for top seed Nicol

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: World No. 1 Nicol David survived an early scare from Raneem El Weleily of Egypt before reaching the quarter-finals of the US\$53,000 CIMB Singapore Masters at the Kallang Squash Centre yesterday.

The Penangite, who is gunning for her fourth consecutive Singapore Masters crown, came back from a set down to win 8-11, 11-5, 11-7, 11-4 in 42 minutes.



Safely through: Nicol David will take on Australian Kasey Brown in the CIMB Singapore Masters last night Thursday.

Weleily, who has been showing steady progress, stunned world No. 3 Rachael Grinham of Australia in the first round of the Malaysian Open last week.

Nicol will now face world No. 9 and seventh seed Kasey Brown of Australia for a place in the semi-finals today.

Brown was made to play four games by Jaclyn Hawkes of New Zealand before prevailing 11-3, 12-14, 11-6, 11-7 in 55 minutes.

Two other Malaysian players – Low Wee Wern and Delia Arnold, who qualified from the qualifying rounds – went down fighting in the first round.

National No. 2 Delia put up a tough fight against fifth seed Natalie Grainger of the US before going down 11-7, 11-8, 2-11, 7-11, 2-11.

Former world No. 1 Grainger, who lost to Wee Wern in the first round of the Malaysian Open last week, will face world No. 3 and second seed Rachael Grinham of Australia in the quarter-finals.

Former world champion Grinham, meanwhile, cruised to an 11-3, 11-2, 11-3 win over wild card entry Pamela Chua.

World No. 22 Delia said that she was satisfied with her overall performance despite losing to Grainger in

the first round.

“I started off well by winning the first two sets to put the pressure on Grainger. However, I failed to maintain my game and lost the other three sets,” said Delia.

The 20-year-old Wee Wern also took a set off world No. 7 and sixth seed Madeline Perry of Ireland before going down 10-12, 11-5, 1-11, 5-11 in 36 minutes.

Perry will face qualifier Annie Au of Hong Kong for a place in the semi-finals.

World No. 17 Annie created the biggest upset of the day, coming back from a set down to beat world No. 6 and fourth seed Omneya Abdel Kawy of Egypt 7-11, 11-7, 4-11, 11-9, 11-9 in 46 minutes.

(21) Friday July 30, 2010

Nicol gets her chance to avenge British Open defeat by Perry

By AFTAR SINGH

SINGAPORE: Defending champion Nicol David will get a chance to avenge her British Open defeat by Madeline Perry in the semi-finals of the US\$53,000 CIMB Singapore Women's Masters squash championship at the Kallang Leisure Park here today.

In yesterday's quarter-finals, Nicol made short work of seventh seed Kasey Brown of Australia, winning 11-7, 11-5, 11-6 in 40 minutes. Perry, on the other hand, recovered from a set down to beat Annie Au of Hong Kong 9-11, 12-10, 11-9, 11-4.

The other semi-final will be between third seed Alison Waters of England and second seed Rachael Grinham of Australia.

Waters sent France's Camille Serme packing with a 12-10, 11-3, 9-11, 11-6 win while Grinham outclassed American Natalie Grainger 11-5, 11-3, 11-7 in just 20 minutes.

Four-time world champion Nicol said her performance against Brown was much better than her first round win over Raneem El Weleily of Egypt.

"I played well and my composure was also much better. I took control of the match. Kasey also made some errors," said Nicol.

"The court is quite bouncy and I need to be careful with my shots in the semi-finals," added Nicol.

In her last meeting with Perry in the British Open last September, Nicol was beaten 3-2 in the quarter-finals despite taking a two-set lead.

Asked about her chances against Perry, Nicol said: "I have learned from the defeat in the British Open. I have been training much harder since then. And this time it will be different because I am well prepared and will go all out against her. I think it will be an interesting match tomorrow," said Nicol.

Perry said that she was happy with her performance in Singapore.

"I'm looking forward to meeting Nicol again. I am getting better in every tournament and believe that I can create another upset against Nicol," said Perry.

(22) Saturday July 31, 2010

Vengeance is Nicol's as she overcomes Perry to reach squash final

By AFTAR SINGH

SINGAPORE: World number one Nicol David exacted sweet revenge over sixth seed Madeline Perry of Ireland to qualify for the final of the CIMB Singapore Women's Masters squash championship at the Kallang Leisure Park here yesterday.

The Malaysian, who was upset by Perry in the quarter-finals of the British Open in their last meeting in September, was made to sweat for 50 minutes before prevailing 11-7, 3-11, 11-4, 11-6.

Nicol, who is gunning for her fourth straight Singapore Masters title, will face third seed Alison Waters of England in today's final.

Waters upset second seed Rachael Grinham of Australia 11-4, 5-11, 11-5, 11-13, 11-4 in a gruelling 58-minute battle.

Nicol started off well to clinch the first set against Perry. The top seed, however, made a number of errors in the second to allow her opponent to draw level.

The pressure was on Nicol but she upped the ante to clinch the next two sets to reach the final again.

"I lost my focus in the second set. I had to raise my game in the third and fourth to win the match. I am relieved to have beaten her," said Nicol.

Nicol has never lost to Waters in 14 meetings, but she was stretched to the limit by the Englishwoman in last week's Malaysian Open before winning 14-12, 12-10, 6-11, 11-7 in a 64-minute semi-final match.

"I have to raise my game in the final as she will be going all-out against me," said Nicol, who has won four titles this season.

As for Waters, she was annoyed with herself for allowing Grinham to fight back despite taking a 10-8 lead in the fourth set. Grinham, the 2007 world champion, eventually won 13-11 to force a decider. Fortunately for Waters, she came out firing in the fifth set to win 11-4.

"I lost the fourth set because I made too many errors. But I'm happy that I dominated the fifth set with a fast attacking game," said Waters.

On the final, Waters said: "It's going to be tough.

"I have to work really hard to get the better of her."

(23) Sunday August 1, 2010

Nicol edges Waters in Singapore final for her fifth title

By AFTAR SINGH

SINGAPORE: Four-time world champion Nicol David was stretched to the limit by third seed Alison Waters of England before winning her fourth straight CIMB Singapore Women's Masters squash title at the Kallang Leisure Park here yesterday.

The Penangite won 18-16, 11-9, 12-10 in a gruelling 63-minute battle.

It was a ding-dong battle in the opening set. Waters had set point six times – 10-9, 12-11, 13-12, 14-13, 15-14, 16-15 – but just could not produce the crucial point to finish it off. In the end, Nicol won 18-16 in a match that lasted 27 minutes.

In the next set, Nicol took a comfortable 8-4 lead but Waters fought back to level 8-8 and then took a 9-8 lead. Waters again fumbled to allow Nicol to take a 2-0 lead.

It was the same old story in the third set. The English champion led 10-9 but fizzled out as Nicol grabbed the three points to clinch the title. With the win, Nicol has now won all her 16 head-to-head clashes with Waters.



Malaysian pride: CIMB Singapore Women's Masters squash champion Nicol David (right) and runners-up Alison Waters of England posing with their trophies at the Kallang Leisure Park yesterday. Nicol won 18-16, 11-9, 12-10.

The Malaysian admitted that she was lucky to win the first set.

“The first set was the toughest. It was like a five-set match. I had to step up my game to win the set,” said Nicol, who pocketed US\$8,550.

“Alison continued to play some tight shots in the second and third sets as she wanted to win badly.

“I had to work really hard and was glad to win in straight sets,” said Nicol.

It was her 46th Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) title since turning pro in 2000.

The Singapore Masters was Nicol's fifth title this year.

She started the year by winning the Chennai Open (March) followed by the Kuala Lumpur Open (March), the Cayman Islands Open (April) and the Malaysian Open last month.

Waters, who received US\$6,075 for her efforts, was not too disheartened by the defeat.

“My game has improved a lot this year. Now, I hope to get the better of Nicol in the Hong Kong Open in three weeks' time,” said Waters.

(24) Monday August 2, 2010

Alison hopes to score first win over Nicol in next meeting

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: The warning signs are there. World No. 4 Alison Waters of England is getting closer to beating Malaysia's World No. 1 Nicol David and she hopes to do it at the Hong Kong Open from Aug 23-29.

Waters has made steady progress in her game and proved it by taking Nicol to the brink in the CIMB Singapore Women's Masters final on Saturday.

Waters, England's national women's champion, played well to dominated the first set and was on match point six times before losing 16-18.

She gave a torrid time to Nicol in the second and third sets before losing 9-11, 10-12 respectively.



One tough opponent: Alison Waters going for a shot during the CIMB Singapore Masters final against Nicol David on Saturday. She gave Nicol a good fight before bowing out.

The English player also made Nicol sweat for victory in the semi-finals of the CIMB Malaysian Open two weeks ago.

Waters said that her game is gradually improving and she believes that she would beat Nicol for the first time in 16 meetings in the forthcoming Hong Kong Open.

"I am getting closer to end my losing streak against Nicol. I came close to bagging my first win over Nicol in the Singapore Masters but lost because of my errors.

"Nicol was just lucky in the Singapore Masters while I made silly mistakes during crucial points."

Waters added that she just needs to improve her mental strength to register a first win over Nicol.

Waters will be playing in the Australian Open next week before she competes in the Hong Kong Open.

Nicol, who bagged her fourth consecutive Singapore Open title said that Waters is her main rival in all the tournaments.

"I had to watch out for Waters who has improved a lot. She is the player I have to be wary of in the Hong Kong Open," said Nicol, who will skip the Australian Open.

Nicol added that her top priority this year is to retain the world title in Egypt in September and also to win the elusive gold medal in the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi in October.

Nicol said that she that it was very unfortunate that the prestigious British Open would not be held this

year.

“The British Open was the first major title I won in 2005 since turning pro in 2000. And I was looking forward to playing in the championship which I won three times,” said Nicol.

The British Open, which is the oldest squash championships in the world, will not be held this year because the organisers want to make some changes to make it more competitive next year.

(25) Monday August 23, 2010

Nicol faces potential banana skins in quest for fifth World Open title

By LIM TEIK HUAT

PETALING JAYA: Potential banana skins await Malaysian squash queen Nicol David in her bid to equal Australian Sarah Fitz-Gerald's record of five World Open titles in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, next month.

The defending champion, who is unbeaten thus far this year, faces tricky challengers in her path to the final of the tournament scheduled for Sept 15-22.



Not easy: Nicol David will face some of the world's top players in her quest for her fifth World Open title in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, next month.

Nicol must be at the top of her game as two-time world junior champion Raneem El Weleily, four-time World Open runner-up Natalie Grinham and Alison Waters are in her half of the draw.

Nicol, who opens her campaign against a qualifier, needs to overcome Egyptian Raneem to set up a projected quarter-final date with eighth seeded Grinham, who is making a comeback following a 10-month break after giving birth to her son.

Coincidentally, last year's World Open final defeat by Nicol was the last appearance on the Wispa Tour for the naturalised Holland player.

If Nicol advances to the last four, it will not get any tougher than facing a rival in England's national champion Waters.

The fourth seeded Waters took Nicol to the brink at the Malaysian Open and Singapore Masters recently.

England's Jenny Duncalf is the second seed and favoured to meet Nicol in the final but must overcome likely opposition from Egypt's former world junior champion Omneya Abdel Kawy in the quarter-finals and either 2007 world champion Rachael Grinham of Australia or Ireland's Madeline Perry in the last four.

Malaysian No. 2 Low Wee Wern plays Natalie Grinham in the first round and will be looking to spring an upset.

Delia Arnold, the third ranked Malaysian, also faces an uphill task against the in-form Perry in the opening round.

(26) Thursday August 26, 2010

Nicol saves the blushes for Malaysia in the opening round

PETALING JAYA: Defending women's champion Nicol David was the only Malaysian to survive the first round of the Hong Kong Open squash championships last night.

Nicol was hardly tested in her opening match against Sarah Kippax of England and needed just 22 minutes to carve out a 11-1, 11-5, 11-4 win.

Nicol, who is seeking to claim a sixth title in Women's International Squash Players (Wispa) tournaments this season, should have no problem to march on as she takes on former Asian Games gold medallist Rebecca Chiu of Hong Kong today.

The seasoned Hong Kong campaigner overcame Tania Bailey of England 7-11, 11-6, 11-8, 12-10 yesterday.

Malaysian qualifier Siti Munirah Jusoh made a swift exit, going down 5-11, 4-11, 6-11 in 17 minutes to former world junior champion Omneya Abdel Kawy of Egypt.

Third seed Rachael Grinham of Australia was too strong for Malaysian No. 3 Delia Arnold, taking just 25 minutes to win 11-3, 11-5, 11-3.

Malaysian interest in the men's competition ended with both Mohd Azlan Iskandar and Ong Beng Hee failing to get the better of higher ranked opponents.

Asian champion Azlan fell 8-11, 6-11, 9-11 to world No. 9 Daryl Selby. It was his second consecutive defeat by the Englishman after suffering a narrow defeat in the second round of the World Open in Kuwait last November.

Second ranked Malaysian Beng Hee put up a fighting display before going down 6-11, 7-11, 12-14 to world No. 16 Cameron Pilley of Australia in 62 minutes.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/8/27/sports/6931393&sec=sports>

(27) Friday August 27, 2010

Birthday girl Nicol steps into the last eight in Hong Kong

PETALING JAYA: Birthday girl Nicol David moved a step closer to a fifth Hong Kong Open squash title when she defeated local lass Rebecca Chiu in a second-round match yesterday.

The world No. 1, who turned 27, had little trouble beating the former Asian Games gold medallist 11-6, 11-8, 9-11, 11-9.

Nicol appeared on course to chalk up a straight-game win but Rebecca pulled the rug from under her feet in the third game. Rebecca also challenged Nicol strongly in the decider and drew level at 9-all before conceding defeat.

“A close battle on Rebecca’s home court,” posted Nicol on her Twitter site. “Thanks everyone for the birthday wishes.”

In the quarter-finals today, Nicol will play against Laura Massaro of England, who advanced with an easy 11-3, 11-6, 11-0 win over qualifier Lisa Camilleri of Australia.

The other quarter-final in the same half of the draw is between Australia’s Rachael Grinham and Ireland’s Madeline Perry.

World No. 2 Jenny Duncalf defeated Vanessa Atkinson of Holland 11-7, 11-9, 11-6 yesterday to set up a match against Australia’s Kasey Brown, who beat compatriot Donna Urquhart 7-11, 11-7, 11-2, 11-6.

Egyptian Omneya Abdel Kawy will be up against Alison Waters to complete the quarter-final match-ups.

(28) Saturday August 28, 2010

Squash: Focused Nicol wins and faces Grinham in semis

PETALING JAYA: World number one Nicol David survived a scare before reaching the semi-finals of the Hong Kong Open squash championships yesterday.

The Malaysian, who is gunning for her fifth Hong Kong Open crown, dropped the opening set to England's Laura Massaro before fighting back to seal a 7-11, 11-4, 11-4, 11-4 win in 36 minutes.

"(I) had to stay focused throughout the match to beat Laura," posted Nicol on her Twitter site. "Rachael Grinham next in the semis."

Australian Grinham proved too strong for Ireland's Madeline Perry, winning 12-10, 14-12, 11-5.

World number two Jenny Duncalf of England also booked her place in the last four. Duncalf was forced to slog for 79 minutes by Kasey Brown of Australia before winning 10-12, 11-7, 11-9, 11-13, 11-7.



Nicol David

Duncalf will face compatriot Alison Waters in the semi-finals. Waters came back from a first set deficit to beat Egyptian Omneya Abdel Kawy 9-11, 11-1, 14-12, 11-6.

In the men's event, title-holder Amr Shabana of Egypt was sent packing by France's Gregory Gaultier in the quarter-finals. Gaultier won 11-9, 8-11, 11-5, 11-8 to set up a semi-final date with Peter Barker of England.

Men: Peter Barker (Eng) bt Nick Matthew (Eng) 3-11, 11-8, 11-5, 11-5; Gregory Gaultier (Fra) bt Amr Shabana (Egy) 11-9, 8-11, 11-5, 11-8; Karim Darwish (Egy) bt Thierry Lincou (Fra) 11-9, 11-3, 11-9; Ramy Ashour (Egy) bt James Wilstrop (Eng) 11-5, 11-8, 11-9.

Women: Nicol David (Mas) bt Laura Massaro (Eng) 7-11, 11-4, 11-4, 11-4; Rachael Grinham (Aus) bt Madeline Perry (Irl) 12-10, 14-12, 11-5; Alison Waters (Eng) bt Omneya Abdel Kawy (Egy) 9-11, 11-1, 14-12, 11-6; Jenny Duncalf (Eng) bt Kasey Brown (Aus) 10-12, 11-7, 11-9, 11-13, 11-7..

(29) Sunday August 29, 2010

Nicol trounces Grinham to set up final date with Duncalf

PETALING JAYA: World champion Nicol David inched closer to her fifth successive Hong Kong Open squash championships crown after defeating Rachel Grinham of Australia in the semi-finals yesterday.

Playing in the glass court in the heart of Plaza Hollywood shopping mall in Kowloon, the world No. 1 Nicol edged Grinham in straight games, 11-9, 11-9, 11-5, in just 35 minutes.

Grinham was poised to take the first game when she held a 9-8 lead over Nicol, but the Penangite quickly closed the door on Grinham with guile to seal the game 11-9.

In the second game, Grinham was quickly off the mark to lead 3-2 and then raced to a 9-8 over Nicol. But again, Nicol denied the Australian to score the final three points for a another 11-9 win.

The writing was on the wall for Grinham in the third game when Nicol held an early 5-2 lead, but Grinham clawed back to level 5-5.

Nicol changed gear to reel in five points for a 11-5 victory.

“Won against Rachael after being pushed hard especially in the first two games that could go either way,” posted Nicol on her Twitter site. “Glad to be in the final again.”

Awaiting Nicol in the final today will be England’s Jenny Duncalf, who defeated compatriot Alison Waters 11-4, 11-4, 11-7 in the other semi-final.

Duncalf, the current world No. 2, has a 2-12 record against Nicol. She overcame Nicol in back-to-back tournaments in the Carol Weymuller US Open and the Qatar Classic in November last year.

Meanwhile, in the men’s competition, Gregory Gaultier of France took the first berth in the final when he defeated Peter Barker of England 11-7, 11-3, 11-5.

Gaultier, who will be looking to break his jinx of finishing runner-up for three consecutive years since 2007, will face Egyptian Ramy Ashour in the final. Ashour defeated compatriot Karim Darwish 11-5, 1-11, 11-9, 11-7 to reach the final.

(30) Monday August 30, 2010

Nicol beats Duncalf for fifth Hong Kong title

PETALING JAYA: World No. 1 Nicol David gave a five-star performance to clinch a fifth Hong Kong Open squash championship title when she defeated Jenny Duncalf of England in the final yesterday.

Nicol, whose win yesterday marked her sixth Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) title this year, beat the world No. 2 11-6, 12-10, 12-10 in 40 minutes.

Duncalf, who gave Nicol a tough time in their last meeting in the Malaysian Open final last month, was quickly off the blocks to take a 3-0 lead in the first game and pinned Nicol at the back of the court to stretch her lead to 5-2.



World No. 1 Nicol David won her sixth title of the year after bagging the Hong Kong Open crown yesterday.

However, Nicol managed to turn the table around and grabbed six consecutive points to lead 8-5.

Duncalf then nicked a point to make it 8-6, but from then on the Penangite took a strong command of the game to win it 11-6.

The second game saw both players keeping pace with each other with Nicol taking the lead at 10-9. Duncalf stole a point to draw level on 10-10 but Nicol made no mistakes and finished off the game 12-10.

The match looked set to go into a four-game contest when Duncalf was poised to take the third game on 10-7.

However, Nicol, unwilling to give away the game, staged a comeback and reeled in five consecutive points to seal the match 12-10.

“(I) didn't want to let it go in this match and got a 3-0 win against Jenny in the final,” Nicol reflected in a post on her Twitter site after the match. “A great tournament overall.”

In the men's competition, Gregory Gaultier of France was once again denied the title when he lost to Ramy Ashour of Egypt in the final.

World No. 5 Gaultier, who had lost in all three previous finals since 2007, was beaten 12-10, 9-11, 9-11, 11-9, 9-11 in a 90-minute match by the by the world No. 2.

(31) Friday September 17, 2010

Nicol aims to win her fifth World Squash Open crown

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: World number one Nicol David is on the roll.

The Malaysian, who is unbeaten this year, will be gunning for her seventh title this season in the US\$147,000 women's World Open squash tournament, which begins tomorrow in Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt.

Nicol, the world number one since August 2006, has won all her sixth Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) titles this season.



Nicol: Will be gunning for her seventh title of this season.

She started the year by winning the Chennai Open in March.

She then went on to win the Kuala Lumpur Open (March), Cayman Islands Open (April), Malaysian Open (July), Singapore Masters (July) and Hong Kong Open (August).

Nicol, who also bagged her seventh consecutive Asian title in Chennai in May, will be aiming to equal Australia's Sarah Fitz-Gerard's record of five World Open titles. Nicol was the champion in 2005, 2006, 2008 and 2009.

The 27-year-old Nicol, who has bagged 47 titles since turning pro in 2000, underwent three weeks of solid training in Amsterdam under coach Liz Irving in preparation for the tournament.

The tournament is a draw of 32 players and Nicol will open her campaign against a qualifier.

Barring any upsets, Nicol is expected to face world number two Jenny Duncalf of England in the final.

"Equalling Sarah's record would certainly be an amazing accomplishment for me, especially knowing that she has done it all in the squash world and she really is a true champion," Nicol was quoted on www.wispa.net

"But at the moment, my main focus is working on a performance base and the results will follow accordingly."

Two other Malaysians Low Wee Wern and Delia Arnold will also feature in the main draw.

World number 20 Wee Wern, who is in the top half of the draw, will open her campaign against world number 13 Natalie Grinham of Holland in the first round.

Delia, ranked 23rd in the world, is in the bottom half of the draw. She, however, will face a tough task of clearing the first round as she is down to play world number five Madeline Perry of Ireland.

The final is scheduled on Sept 22.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/9/21/sports/7069934&sec=sports>

(32) Tuesday September 21, 2010

Nicol marches into last eight of World Open

KUALA LUMPUR: World No. 1 Nicol David just needed 30 minutes to pack off 11th seed Raneem El Weleily of Egypt to reach the quarter-finals of the US\$147,000 women's World Open squash tournament in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt on Sunday.

Nicol, who is gunning for a fifth world title, won 11-7, 11-7, 11-7 against the former world junior champion.



Friendly affair: World number one Nicol David (right) will take on compatriot Low Wee Wern in the quarter-finals.

Nicol will face her compatriot and world No. 20 Low Wee Wern for a place in the semi-finals.

"I was trying to stay composed," Nicol was quoted on www.squashsite.co.uk.

"I know that with being in Egypt and playing Raneem I expect her to come up with everything.

"And also there was the home crowd, so I was trying to make sure my focus was right.

"Raneem has really developed her game a lot, and that her shots can work really well. I knew she was going for it and I had to be careful."

Wee Wern has never beaten Nicol, who has been world number one since August, 2006.

Wee Wern said that it would be uphill task for her to get the better of Nicol.

"Overall, I am happy with my performance after creating two upsets to reach the quarter-finals for the first time in the World Open," she said.

The 20-year-old Penangite continued her giant killing act by coming back from a set down to beat Isabelle Stoehr, the former world number ten from France, 8-11, 11-7, 11-5, 11-8 in the second round.

In the first round Wee Wern, the three-time Asian junior champion, upset four-time World Open runners-up Natalie Grinham of Holland on Saturday.

Kasey Brown of Australia also created an upset by beating world No. 5 Madeline Perry of Ireland 11-7, 9-11, 11-8, 11-8 in 100 minutes.

The 10th seed Brown will meet fourth seed Omneya Abdel Kawy of Egypt in the quarter-finals.

England's top two players also reached the last eight.

Third seed Alison Waters overcame Annie Au of Hong Kong 11-2, 11-7, 14-12 to set up a date with 2004 world champion Vanessa Atkinson of Holland.

The 14th seed Atkinson came back from two set down to upset sixth seed Natalie Grainger of US 2-11, 9-11, 13-11, 13-11, 11-9 in 47 minutes.

Second seed Jenny Duncalf of England defeated Engy Kheirallah of Egypt 11-9, 11-9, 11-2 and will take on ninth seed Camille Serme of France for a place in the semi-finals.

Serme took one hour to beat eighth seed Laura Massaro of England 11-6, 8-11, 12-10, 3-11, 11-6.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/9/22/sports/7076890&sec=sports>

(33) Wednesday September 22, 2010

Squash: Easy victory for Nicol By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: Defending champion Nicol David outclassed Malaysian team-mate Low Wee Wern to reach the semi-finals of the US\$ 147,000 women's World Open squash tournament in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt on Monday.

Nicol ranked No. 1 in the world since August, 2006, won 11-2, 11-5, 11-2 in 27 minutes.

The 27-year-old Nicol, who is gunning for her fifth world title, will face nemesis and third seed Alison Waters of England for a place in the final.

"It's always hard when you are playing against your team-mate. But it's the quarter-final of the World Open and you have to try and play your best squash," Nicol was quoted on the website www.squashsite.co.uk.

"I feel as fit as I have ever been, and maybe I am faster to the ball which enables me to do more things."

If Nicol had an easy match, the same cannot be said for Waters.

The English No. 2 was not at her best even though she ended the run of 2004 world champion Vanessa Atkinson of Holland with a five-set win.

Waters came back from a set down to win 9-11, 11-4, 11-7, 10-12, 11-8 in 56 minutes.

Waters could have wrapped up the match in the fourth set after taking a comfortable 10-5 lead but she allowed Atkinson to chalk up seven successive points to win 12-10.

In the decider, Waters took a handsome 10-4 lead but again Atkinson managed to collect four points before losing out at 8-11.

"She showed her class in the fourth set," said Waters. "She wasn't going to let me win it easily at all. I got a bit tense, but a win is a win. She's a great player."

Although Nicol has never lost to Waters in their last 15 meetings, she is expecting a torrid time from the English lass who gave the Malaysian a real challenge of her life in the final of the Singapore Masters in July.

"I have to be disciplined against her. I'm sure tomorrow will be another hard one," said Nicol, who has bagged 47 Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) titles since turning pro in 2000.

Ninth seed Camille Serme of France created the biggest win of her career by stunning world No. 2 and

second seed Jenny Duncalf of England 8-11, 11-7, 7-11, 11-2, 11-5 to qualify for the semi-finals.

Serme, ranked ninth in the world, will face fourth seed Omenya Abdel Kawy of Egypt for a place in the final.

Omenya also warded off a strong challenge from 10th seed Kasey Brown of Australia before prevailing 11-8, 14-12, 6-11, 11-5 in 55 minutes.

Serme and Omenya have met twice and their outings stand at 1-1. In the last meetings, Omenya won in straight sets in the quarter-finals of the Hong Kong Open in 2009.

(34) Thursday September 23, 2010

Nicol brushes aside Omneya for fifth World Open crown

By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: World No. 1 Nicol David captured a record-equalling fifth women's World Open squash title in grand style in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, yesterday.

The Penangite was simply too good for fourth seed Omneya Abdel Kawy of Egypt in the final, romping home 11-5, 11-8, 11-6 as the Egyptian failed to put up much resistance despite the huge home support.

Nicol had also captured the world title in 2005, 2006, 2008 and 2009.



Last hurdle: Nicol David easily overcame Omneya Abdel Kawy (left) of Egypt to win a record-equalling fifth World Open title in Sharm El Sheikh Wednesday.

"I am happy to win my fifth world title. I never expected to win it in straight sets," Nicol was quoted on squashsite.co.uk.

Her five world titles equal that achieved by Australian Sarah Fitz-Gerald, who triumphed in 1996, 1997, 1998, 2001 and 2002.

Yesterday's triumph was Nicol's 13th win over Omneya in 14 outings in Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) tournaments.

Nicol has been in smashing form in the World Open, winning all her five matches without dropping a single set.

With this victory, Nicol now has won a total of 48 Wispa titles since turning pro in 2000.

It was Nicol's seventh consecutive Wispa title this year.

She started the year by winning the Chennai Open in March.

Her other wins this year were in the KL Open (March), Cayman Islands Open (April), the Malaysian Open (July), Singapore Masters (July) and the Hong Kong Open (August).

The World Open win could not have been more timely as Nicol bids to bag her first gold medal in the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi next month.

Nicol has only won a silver medal in the Games, partnering Ong Beng Hee in the mixed doubles event in the 2002 Manchester Games.

Judging by her imperious form in Sharm El Sheikh, Nicol should have no problem ending her long wait

for the Commonwealth Games gold medal.

At the last Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006, Nicol could only finish fourth.

On Tuesday, Nicol had eliminated third seed Alison Waters of England 14-12, 11-2, 11-6 in 38 minutes in the semi-finals.

Omneya, meanwhile, became the first Egyptian woman to reach the World Open final when she beat Frenchwoman Camille Serme 11-4, 11-7, 11-6 in just 26 minutes.

Results

Semi-finals: Nicol David (Mas) bt Alison Waters (Eng) 14-12, 11-2, 11-6; Omneya Abdel Kawy (Egy) bt Camille Serme (Fra) 11-4, 11-7, 11-6.

Final: Nicol David (Mas) bt Omneya Abdel Kawy (Egy) 11-5, 11-8, 11-6.

(35) Friday September 24, 2010

Nicol's next target is the Commonwealth Games gold By AFTAR SINGH

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian squash sensation Nicol David is already widely considered as one of the greatest woman players the world has ever seen.

And she affirmed her status as the world No. 1 – a position she has held since August 2006 – by equalling Australian Sarah Fitz-Gerald's record of five World Open titles in Egypt on Wednesday.

Nicol, however, can achieve squash immortality next year by becoming the first woman player to win six world titles. No woman player has ever won more than five titles since the inaugural World Open in 1976.

On Wednesday, Nicol needed just 30 minutes to subdue fourth seed Omneya Abdel Kawy of Egypt 11-5, 11-8, 11-6 in the final in Sharm El Sheikh for her fifth world title.



Short work: Nicol David won her fifth World Open title in just 30 minutes on Wednesday

“My focus was strong throughout the tournament,” Nicol, who did not drop a single set in the tournament, was quoted as saying on the website squashplayer.co.uk.

“I really wanted this. I didn't want to let it slip. It's amazing that I can do something that Sarah has done, because she's such a great player.”

What is impressive about Nicol's achievement is that she has won all the five finals she has played in – 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009 and this year.

Fitz-Gerald, however, played in six finals and lost once. The Australian won the World Open crown in 1996, 1997, 1998, 2001 and 2002. Her only loss was in 1995.

So, it is only natural for Nicol to set her sights on a historic sixth World Open title next year.

But, never one to look too far ahead, Nicol has a more pressing mission to accomplish – win the elusive gold medal in the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi, starting on Oct 3.

She won a silver medal in the mixed doubles with Ong Beng Hee in the Manchester Games in 2002.

Nicol was top seeded for the 2006 Melbourne Games but endured a disappointing outing, finishing fourth in the individual event.

Judging by the way she obliterated her rivals in Egypt, it would take a foolish man to bet against her filling her trophy cabinet with that elusive Commonwealth Games gold medal next month.

(36) Saturday October 23, 2010

A stroll for Nicol but Azlan and Beng Hee crash in Mexico

KUALA LUMPUR: Five-time world champion Nicol David was hardly troubled despite playing at a high altitude (9,000-feet above sea level) to beat qualifier Ivonne Diaz of Mexico in the first round of the US\$65,000 Torneo Bicentenario Open squash tournament in Mexico on Thursday.

The world No. 1 won 11-4, 11-5, 11-5 in 26 minutes to set up a quarter-final date with eighth seed Jaclyn Hawkes of New Zealand.

The world No. 13 Kiwi player was just as merciless, eliminating qualifier Karina Heredia of Mexico 11-2, 11-2, 11-0 in just 20 minutes.

Nicol, who is unbeaten this year, is expected to extend her winning streak against Hawkes to seven since turning pro in 2000.

Nicol, who is gunning for her eighth Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) title, is playing in Mexico for the first time.

"All the players arrived here early to get used to the altitude. It's great to play in such a public and stunning setting and I am sure this event will motivate Mexicans to play squash," Nicol said of the glass court set up in a public area on the website www.squashsite.co.uk.

Fourth seed Madeline Perry of Ireland also reached the quarter-finals with a 11-9, 11-6, 13-11 win over Annie Au of Hong Kong.

Perry will take on sixth seed Raneem El Weleily of Egypt for a place in the semi-finals.

Seventh seed Samantha Teran is the only Mexican player to clear the first hurdle and she will now face third seed Rachael Grinham of Australia.

Second seed Jenny Duncalf of England also made the quarter-finals with an 11-8, 11-7, 11-5 win over compatriot Emma Beddoes.

Meanwhile, Malaysia's challenge in the El Gouna International in Egypt ended with the defeats of Mohd Azlan Iskandar and Ong Beng Hee to their Egyptian rivals in the second round on Thursday.

Azlan lost to third seed Karim Darwish 11-8, 8-11, 3-11, 1-11 while Beng Hee crashed 6-11, 6-11, 8-11 to second seed Amr Shabana.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/10/24/sports/7287986&sec=sports>

(37) Sunday October 24, 2010

Nicol cruises into Mexican International semis

PETALING JAYA: Commonwealth Games champion Nicol David brushed aside Jaclyn Hawkes of New Zealand in quick fashion to move into the semi-finals of the Mexican Bicentennial International Championship in Toluca on Friday.

Hawkes fought hard but Nicol showed fine form to win 11-8, 11-2, 11-6 in 24 minutes.

It was the fastest quarter-final match to be decided and Nicol, who is using the tournament as a warm-up to the Guangzhou Asian Games next month, will take on Egyptian Raneem El Weleily for a place in the final.

The world junior champion defeated sixth seed Madeline Perry of Ireland 11-8, 11-8, 11-9 to advance.

Second seed Jenny Duncalf, the silver medallist at the recent Delhi Commonwealth Games, was also sent packing in the quarter-finals. The England player lost to Australia's Kasey Brown 11-5, 12-14, 11-6, 8-11, 11-3.

In the semi-finals, Brown will play against fellow Australian Rachael Grinham, who beat Mexican Samantha Teran 11-9, 11-3, 11-8.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/10/25/sports/7290524&sec=sports>

(38) Monday October 25, 2010

Nicol sets up showdown with Grinham

PETALING JAYA: Squash superstar Nicol David booked her place in the final of the Mexican Bicentennial International Championship in Toluca with a composed win over young Egyptian Raneem El Weleily on Saturday.

The Egyptian led 5-2 in the first set but the experienced Nicol did not panic and steadily turned up the pressure on her opponent who is the world junior champion.

Nicol managed to level at 10-all and from then on had the upper hand to carve out a 12-10, 11-6, 11-6 win in 31 minutes.

The world No. 1, who has not lost a match in 12 months, will play against third seed Rachael Grinham of Australia in the final. Grinham defeated compatriot Kasey Brown 8-11, 11-2, 11-8, 9-11, 11-9 in the other semi-final.

"It was good to get through in three games. I expected at least four as Raneem is so talented. The first was a bonus as she started well," said Nicol.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/10/26/sports/7295543&sec=sports>

(39) Tuesday October 26, 2010

Nicol wins eighth consecutive Wispa title

KUALA LUMPUR: World No. 1 Nicol David chalked up her eight consecutive Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) title when she defeated third seed Rachael Grinham of Australia in straight sets in the final of the Torneo Bicentario International in Mexico on Sunday.

The five-time world champion won 12-10, 11-4, 11-5 in 35 minutes. In her first appearance in the tournament, the 27-year-old Malaysian also won the three other matches without dropping a set.

"It was important to win the first set as I know how dangerous Rachael can be. I just had to keep getting her shots back," Nicol was quoted in the website www.squashsite.co.uk.

"I am happy to win in straight sets. It has been great to have so many Mexican fans here, and I want to thank everyone who has been involved in the event as it is fantastic – the setting, the crowds and everything."

Grinham said: "Nicol has proved that she is the best in the world. So all you can do is to try and make her work as hard as possible to beat you."

With the win, Nicol now has won a total of 49th Wispa titles since turning pro in 2000.

The Penangite, who has been the world No. 1 since August in 2006, started the year by bagging the Chennai Open in March.

Nicols, whose best achievement on the Wispa circuit was winning all 10 tournaments she competed in 2008, went on to win the KL Open (March), Cayman Islands Open (April), Malaysian Open (July), Singapore Masters (July), Hong Kong Open (August) and World Open (September).

Nicol, who also won gold in the recent Delhi Commonwealth Games, will feature in the Qatar Classics next month (Nov 5-12) before she heads for Guangzhou to defend the Asian Games title (Nov 18-25).

(40) Monday November 8, 2010

A ninth title should give Nicol timely Asian Games boost

By SHAMSHUL FITRI

PETALING JAYA: Nicol David will be gunning for her ninth Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) title of the year when she competes in the Qatar Classic in Doha today.

The world No. 1, who bagged her eighth title in last month's Torneo Internacional Bicentenario in Mexico, will open her campaign against Emma Beddoes of England.

Top seeded Nicol, who won the title three consecutive times since 2006, will be seeking to regain the title after losing to current world No. 2 Jenny Duncalf of England in the semi-finals last November.

Nicol's loss in Doha was her second by Duncalf, who also beat the Penangite in the Carol Weymuller Open in the United States a week earlier.



On a roll: Malaysia's Nicol David holding the gold medal she won at last month's New Delhi Commonwealth Games. She will be out to win her third Asiad title in Guangzhou this month.

However, Nicol has since set the record straight and has not lost to Duncalf in five meetings thus far this year, including in the final of the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi last month.

Besides looking to reclaim the title, Nicol is bidding for a timely boost ahead of the Asian Games in Guangzhou, where she is seeking to bag her third Asiad gold medal.

Others in the fray for the US\$74,000 Qatar Classic are Egypt's Omneya Abdel Kawy (world No. 4), Australians Rachael Grinham (No. 5) and Kasey Brown (No. 7) and England's Laura Massaro (No. 9).

Duncalf, the second seed in the tournament this year, will face a qualifier in the first round today.

(41) Tuesday November 9, 2010

Nicol shows no mercy

PETALING JAYA: World No. 1 Nicol David served notice of her intention to regain the Qatar Classic squash title by disposing of England's Emma Beddoes in the first round in Doha yesterday.

Nicol needed 30 minutes to pack off Beddoes 11-6, 11-4, 12-10 as she began her quest to get her hands on the title she relinquished last year when she lost to world No. 2 Jenny Duncalf.

Nicol was rarely troubled in the first two games, sending Beddoes scrambling all over the court with her nifty shots.

"I was doing court sprints in the first two games," said Beddoes, who felt that she was trying too hard to make something happen.

The world No. 23 took a calmer approach in the third game, controlled the rallies and had game point at 10-7.

But Nicol, chasing her ninth Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) title of the year, stepped up a gear to reel in the next five points for victory.

"I was happy with the way I played in the third game. It's a pity I had to meet her in the first round," quipped Beddoes.

Nicol said she was relieved to finish off the match in three games.

"She became more confident in the third, got into the rhythm and started playing some shots," Nicol was quoted as saying on www.squashsite.co.uk.

"She could have easily taken the last game ... so I was happy to have won in three."

Nicol will face Donna Urquhart of Australia in the second round.

Urquhart downed Holland's Milou Van Der Heidjen 11-3, 11-7, 11-4 in just 18 minutes yesterday.

(42) Wednesday November 10, 2010

A walk in the park for Nicol



PETALING JAYA: It took Nicol David only 23 minutes to get past Australian Donna Urquhart in the second round of the Qatar Classic squash tournament in Doha yesterday.

World No. 1 Nicol packed off Urquhart in three straight games – 11-5, 11-4, 11-4.

Nicol, who is gunning for her ninth Women’s International Squash Players Association (Wispa) title in Doha, was simply a class above the Australian.

Even in the third game, when she was trailing 1-4 against world No. 17 Urquhart, Nicol was hardly ruffled. She simply stepped up a gear and reeled in 10 consecutive points to nick the match in style to book a spot in the quarter-finals.

Nicol, who admitted that she was still “getting used to the court” yesterday, said she played a lot better than in the first round against Emma Beddoes of England.

“Donna didn’t play her best today. She made a lot of errors in the second (game) and it gave me a bit of an edge,” Nicol was quoted as saying on www.squashsite.co.uk.

“But she can be dangerous if you let her play her shots. The main thing is I’m feeling good and am looking forward to the next round.”

Her quarter-final opponent will be another Australian, Kasey Brown, who slogged for 67 minutes to down Holland’s Vanessa Atkinson 11-9, 7-11, 13-11, 5-11, 11-6.

Meanwhile, in a late first round match on Monday night, defending champion Jenny Duncalf of England made short work of compatriot Lauren Selby to win 11-3, 11-4, 11-2.

World No. 2 Duncalf is all fired up to retain the title she snatched after defeating Nicol in the semi-finals.

Duncalf will also be aiming to avenge her loss to Nicol in the gold medal match of the New Delhi Commonwealth Games last month.

(43) Thursday November 11, 2010

Nicol made to slog World No. 1 to face giant-killer El Tayeb in the semis

PETALING JAYA: Nicol David had to slog for 40 minutes before getting past Australian Kasey Brown 11-6, 12-10, 11-7 in the quarter-finals of the Qatar Classic squash tournament in Doha yesterday.

World No. 1 Nicol asserted her dominance in the first game to take a 5-0 lead but Brown worked hard to narrow the gap to 6-7.

Nicol then reeled in four straight points to take the first game.



Downed: Joelle King was beaten by Nour El Tayeb in the quarter-finals of the Qatar Classic yesterday.

The second game saw world No. 7 Brown matching Nicol point for point until 4-4 before Nicol shifted a gear to lead 8-5.

Nicol then held game point at 10-8, but Brown refused to yield and drew level at 10-10.

A glaring mistake by Brown, when she lobbed the ball out of the court, gave Nicol the upperhand and the Penangite romped home 12-10.

The third game saw Nicol opting for longer rallies to open up her chances to win points and it worked to great effect as she sealed victory 11-7.

“I know all the girls will raise their game when they play against me ... so from my first rally, my aim is to take their confidence away,” Nicol was quoted as saying on www.squashsite.co.uk.

“I was working very hard to take the ball away from Kasey. But she was very accurate and forced some errors out of me.”

Up next for the world champion in today’s semi-finals is Egypt’s Nour El Tayeb, who continued her giant-killing act yesterday by downing 13th seed Joelle King of New Zealand 11-8, 7-11, 11-9, 11-6.

The world No. 35 Egyptian had created the biggest upset of the tournament when she beat third seed and world No. 4 Omneya Abdel Kawy in straight games in the first round. She then got the better of compatriot Nour El Sherbini in the second round on Tuesday.

“Tomorrow (today), when I play Nicol, the pressure is off me and I’ll try to enjoy myself and see how good the world No. 1 really is,” said El Tayeb.

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/11/12/sports/7416247&sec=sports>

(44) Friday November 12, 2010

Nicol earns fourth final appearance in Qatar Classic squash tournament

KUALA LUMPUR: Nicol David edged past Egypt's Nour El Tayeb yesterday to earn her fourth final appearance in the Qatar Classic squash tournament in Doha.

However, the world No. 1 was somewhat caught *off-guard* when she dropped a game - her first in the tournament thus far - to the unheralded Egyptian en route to winning 11-7, 11-2, 5-11, 11-6 in the semi-finals yesterday.

Nicol, who was the champion in Doha in 2006, 2007 and 2008, looked set for a comprehensive win over El Tayeb after taking the first two games in convincing fashion.

However, El Tayeb, who scalped world No. 4 Omneya Abdel Kawy on the way to reaching the semi-finals, was determined to not bow out without a fight.



No pushover: Egypt's Nour El Tayeb surprisingly took a game off Nicol in the semifinals.

El Tayeb gave Nicol a run for her money in the third game, putting Nicol under pressure to lead 7-2.

A well-worked rally and dropshots from the Egyptian eventually earned her an 11-5 win.

Nicol, however, upped a gear in the fourth game, winning 11-6 to take the match in 45 minutes.

"I was expecting her to put up a strong fight and I was prepared to run to the four corners of the court," said Nicol.

"After the third game, I had to regroup and pick up my game in the fourth. It was my first time playing her, so I tried answering the question she was asking."

On Wednesday, El Tayeb, after her win over New Zealand's Joelle King in the quarter-finals, remarked that she will "see how good the No. 1 is" in their semi-final.

"Yes, I did believe I could beat her today," said El Tayeb, after her loss yesterday. "I think I'm on the right track and the tournament has been good to me.

"But more importantly, I put Nicol David, the world No. 1, *under pressure*."

<http://thestar.com.my/sports/story.asp?file=/2010/11/13/sports/7423955&sec=sports>

(45) Saturday November 13, 2010

Nicol downs Grinham to reclaim title she lost last year

By SHAMSHUL FITRI

KUALA LUMPUR: Nicol David reigned supreme in the final of the Qatar Classic squash tournament yesterday when she brushed off the challenge of Australia's Rachael Grinham to reclaim the title she lost last year.

Nicol took the match 11-5, 11-8, 11-9 in 34 minutes to bag her 51st title in the Women's International Squash Players Association (Wispa) tour.

In last year's tournament, Nicol lost her title to England's Jenny Duncalf in the semi-finals. Duncalf eventually won the title after beating Grinham.

In the first game of yesterday's final, both Nicol and Grinham started cautiously.



File picture of Nicol David

Grinham, who scalped Duncalf in the semi-finals on Thursday, tried to break Nicol down with her cross-court drop shots which worked to great effect against Duncalf. Nicol, however, had an answer for every shot.

At 6-3, the Penangite was dictating the rallies and was soon holding the match ball at 10-3. Grinham then caught Nicol with a couple of drop shots to make it 10-5, but the Aussie gave the game away at 11-5 when she hit the tin.

The rhythm of play was almost the same in the second game.

Both players attempted drop shots to nick points but the error-prone Grinham gave away some cheap points for Nicol to lead 5-4.

The Aussie then upped a gear to match Nicol point-for-point and a series of long rallies allowed Grinham to draw level at 8-8.

Nicol replied with another long rally to lead 9-8 and a drop shot gave her the match point at 10-8. Once again, Grinham hit the tin and gave the game to Nicol.

Grinham showed more intent in the third game when she led 4-1 but just when she looked like nailing it at 9-4, Nicol calmly fought her way back to draw level at 9-9. Grinham then hit the tin to give Nicol match point and the world No. 1 finished her opponent off with a beautiful forehand drop.

"It's great to win again in Qatar," said Nicol after the match. "I didn't like losing here last year."

Nicol will next head to Guangzhou for the Asian Games to defend her individual gold medal and help Malaysia grab a medal in the team competition.