



The Website of Maria Bueno, Tennis Champion



MARIA ESTHER'S BIRTHDAY, Sao Paulo, 11 October 2011



Maria celebrated her birthday in some style on 11 October in Sao Paulo.

She kicked off with the tennis team (pictured right) at her home club, the Sociedade Harmonia de Tênis where the chef produced three birthday cakes, which she shared with friends, members and staff, and later, she had lunch with her family (pictured left).



"It was a wonderful day that I got to share with all the people who support me," said Maria Esther. "I really appreciate all the help they give me so this is a very small way to say thank you!"

TV Globo's special on Brazil's contribution to Formula I and stock car racing, which featured Maria Esther, was aired that night.

'Linha de Chegada' (or 'The Finish Line') was hosted by Reginaldo Leme who interviewed Maria Esther and stock car racer Max Wilson (pictured right), both of whom have had successful careers and understand the needs of training away from their respective sports in order to be able to perform fully in competition.

Max Wilson said: "The physics of tennis is very much part of the sport than in racing.

"I'm not a tennis player, but I try to improve my fitness as a tennis player because motorsport requires more than just driving. So, I'll be more prepared than I need for the races."



Born in Germany, Max Wilson grew up in the neighborhood of Interlagos and has always been passionate about speed.

To view the show > click [here](#).

"I was very pleased to be invited to participate in the show," Maria said.

"Viewers get to hear me commentating on tennis and many seem to want to know about my time playing and how it was. This show gave me a chance to explain what it was like for me to compete on the world stage and what it involved.

"It was great to have Max there too because here is a young driver who is going through a similar sacrifice to get to the top of his sport, and showing the parallel is still relevant today."

The interview is conducted in the beautiful gardens of the Harmonia Club with the show court in the background and looks very relaxed and fun for the Brazilian audience.

HARMONIA CLUB CELEBRATES 81 YEARS, Sao Paulo 9 October 2011

Sociedade Harmonia de Tênis, Maria Esther's home club, celebrated its 81st anniversary on 7-8 October with an array of events.



The celebrations kicked off with a gala dinner dance on Friday that saw 800 members enjoy a lavish feast followed by dancing to a live orchestra well into the night.

On Saturday, the tennis section staged a series of special events, including a Pro-Am followed by an all-day brunch with a wide variety of different foods and drink.

Alongside, a display of tennis memorabilia was on show in a presentation cabinet (pictured) in which the centre-piece was one of Maria Esther's famous dresses designed by Ted Tinling, the tennis couturier.

Maria gave a 30 minute talk on the changes the game has faced over the years that had attendees both fascinated and intrigued.

At the end there was a men's doubles exhibition match for which the players were dressed in long trousers in the old style and playing with wooden racquets and white balls.



They managed just four games before being forced off the court by torrential rain that had players and spectators running for cover in the marquee to enjoy more refreshments.

"It was a lovely day," said Maria.

"Very hot, around 36 degrees, and then it poured with rain but we had pretty well completed everything so it wasn't too bad.

"I did half an hour or so on all the changes in the game, particularly the way players have dressed over the past 100 years or so.



"The panel in the presentation case showed how it all started, and then there were my dresses and on to today's tennis fashion, which is very modern and different to the way I was outfitted.

"I think it all went down very well and I have had lots of good comments about it since, which is good!

"The club hosts these events so well for members and this occasion was really memorable and enjoyable for everyone involved."

HELPING TO LAUNCH BRASIL OPEN IN SAO PAULO, Sao Paulo, 5 October 2011



Maria has been active on her return to Brazil, filming a special for TV Globo due to be aired on her birthday and participating in the pre-event publicity to welcome the Brazil Open to Sao Paulo.



After 11 successful years in Costa do Sauipe, the Brasil Open is moving to the Complexo Desportivo Constâncio Vaz Guimarães from 11-19 February, 2012.

The ATP World Tour 250 clay-court tournament will transition from outdoors to indoors due to regular wet weather in Sao Paulo at that time of year.



Maria visited the Governor's mansion to present Geraldo Alckmin, the Governor of the State of São Paulo, with a tennis racket to commemorate the announcement to the media.

"We are all very excited that this event is coming to Sao Paulo," said Maria.

"It will open up the opportunity for more people to see some great tennis in some good facilities."

Ibirapuera Gymnasium will provide the main show court, while matches will also be played at Mauro Pinheiro Gymnasium, which will serve as the No 2 court.

"Bringing the Brasil Open to Sao Paulo is an important initiative of the city, the world's third largest city," said the Governor.

"The Brasil Open becomes one more of the already prestigious international events held in the city such as the Formula 1, Formula Indy and road running races. This is extremely important to the city of Sao Paulo, the state and the country."

Koch Tavares' initiative, in partnership with São Paulo's State Government and City Hall, marks a new era for the event.

When contested in Costa do Sauipe, the Brasil Open showcased some of the world's top players, including Gustavo Kuerten, 10-time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal, Nikolay Davydenko, Carlos Moya, Magnus Norman, Juan Carlos Ferrero, Nicolas Almagro and Thomaz Bellucci.

"Costa do Sauipe played an important role in the devolvement of Brazilian tennis," said Luis Felipe Tavares, tournament director and Koch Tavares CEO.

"The infrastructure we built there will be used for other events (tennis including) during the calendar year and our expectation is that Brasil Open will grow even more with this relocation."

Sao Paulo will also play host to the inaugural ATP Challenger Tour Finals from 16-20 November at Ibirapuera Gymnasium.

The seven players who have performed best on the ATP Challenger Tour this year will qualify for the event, together with one wild card entrant, Brazilian No 1 Thomaz Bellucci.

TWO NEW CHAMPIONS IS GOOD NEWS FOR TENNIS, New York, 16 September 2011



It was great to have two new champions at the US Open this year, not that I want to take away from the amazing performances by Rafa Nadal and Roger Federer, or Serena [Williams].

Sam Stosur's run broke all sorts of records – longest match, longest tie-break and a winner who never got to play on [Arthur] Ashe [Stadium] in the lead-up to the final. Her composure against the three-time winner was a revelation and she hardly made a mistake.

She focused unbelievably well and refused to allow Serena to dictate to her in any way. From the very beginning of that final match, Sam looked like a champion and really deserved her win.

To me, it is disappointing to see Serena lose her cool again on such an important occasion. Whether or not the umpire's call was correct, there is no excuse for the tirade that followed.



We have to admire her commitment to coming back after a year of misfortune and the fact she could reach the final with so little match play shows what a great player she is, but she needs to act like a champion and to set an example.

Incidents such as the one in New York do the game no good.

I always believed in letting my emotions show and I think spectators like to see that, so I have some sympathy, but this was a step too far, in my opinion, while Serena's unwillingness to apologise just added insult to injury.



Novak Djokovic's win over Rafa was one of the best tennis matches I have ever seen and the standard of play was just amazing.

He was equally impressive against Roger [Federer] in the semis, coming back from match points down to win in five sets. Here is a player that knows how to use the crowd and how to win matches.

As for Rafa, he played himself into form and gave Andy Murray a bit of a master class in the semis but went two sets down against Djokovic before digging out the third set.

It looked like he would come back but then there was further controversy, this time in the calling of an injury time out by Djokovic when Nadal seemed to hold the

momentum in the fourth. It looked to many as if it was an attempt to break Rafa's rhythm, although it seemed to me that Djokovic always looked as if he would win that match.

It does raise the issue of the injury rule though, and while in my day, players were not allowed any sort of treatment and had to concede the match when injured or through cramp, which was pretty bad, nowadays it has gone too far in the other direction. Players now stop mid game to get treated and this is being used as a deliberate tactic to disrupt the flow of a match, which can't be right. I wish this would get looked at and soon.

The players made quite a fuss about not being protected from the poor conditions, and the scheduling of matches, which was particularly tough on the lower half of the men's draw, who had to play several days in a row.

There is a lot of talk about player power these days and it will be interesting to see how things develop over the coming weeks and months.

The US Open has always been rather controversial over its scheduling of the final weekend with Super Saturday catering for a prime time television audience. This results in the men's winning semi-finalists having to play the following day and this is the only Grand Slam that this happens.

The final was held over until the Monday for the fourth year running and this shows something is wrong.

Roger Federer pointed out that playing the opening round over the first three days just made the situation worse and put some players at a disadvantage.



We have never heard the likes of Rafa and Roger complaining about Grand Slam arrangements before. They have always been so respectful. I just hope the powers that be are listening to them.

It was a difficult US Open this year, starting out with the earthquake during the qualifying, the hurricane over the weekend before that cancelled the [Arthur Ashe] Kids Day and the two-day washout in the second week because of the tropical storm.

Somehow the organisers held it all together and got it done, which was pretty impressive.

The final weekend also saw the 10th Anniversary of 9/11 and all of us have terrible memories of that tragic day. I think they [USTA] honoured the victims and acknowledged the responders with taste and understanding.

It made us all remember that tennis is just a game after all.

THE LEGENDS GALA DINNER, New York, 12 September 2011



On the eve of US Open Finals Weekend, tennis champions, industry leaders and enthusiastic supporters of the game gathered at Cipriani Wall Street for The Legends Ball, including Maria Esther.

The event honours the greatest legends and supporters of the sport and raises funds to support the International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum in their mission to preserve tennis history and inspire its future.



Class of 2011 Hall of Famers Andre Agassi and Peachy Kellmeyer were honoured at the event, which included an array of tennis champions and Hall of Famers: Steffie Graf, Billie Jean King, Tracy Austin, Martina Navratilova, Chris Evert, Pam Shriver, Tony Trabert, Maria Esther Bueno, Vic Seixas, Stan Smith and Dick Savitt.

Additionally, some of the sport's most influential contributors attended, including Hall of Famers Donald Dell, Butch Buchholz and Russ Adams.

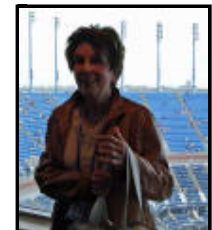
Also joining in the festivities was 2012 Hall of Fame nominee Jennifer Capriati.

The sportscaster Dick Enberg was presented with the Eugene L. Scott Award, a tribute to his 50 year career in sports broadcasting and long-time support of tennis while the Campbell Soup Company was presented the Joseph F. Cullman 3rd Award, in recognition of their years of support for tennis at all levels.

Visit www.tennisfame.com

MARIA ESTHER BUENO REFLECTS ON THE US OPEN SO FAR... NYC, 8 September 2011

It was the most unique build-up to start of a US Open imaginable, what with a rare earthquake up the east coast, followed by Hurricane Irene and now a two-day washout because of tropical storm Lee.



Then we had 18 or so drop-outs from the singles draws, which set a record for injuries and illness.

I experienced Hurricane Donna here in 1960 and we had to wait a whole week before we could complete the men's and women's finals at Forest Hills. It was awful hanging around waiting for the weather to clear and I didn't play at my best as a result.

It has been the record holder for waiting to complete a major event in any sport ever since, although this year the US Open may have a crack at beating it!

I also had a bad experience at Wimbledon in 1967 when it rained most of the first week and at the start of the second.

This is when I hurt my arm and effectively ended my career because I had to play singles, doubles and mixed – quarters and semis – all in one day which amounted to 120 games.

It's a little bit what the men still in the fourth round are facing today, although, if they are lucky, they will get to play one five-set match a day in the run up to Sunday's final.

We didn't dare say anything back then because we were frightened we would not be invited back again by the tournament organisers.

Nowadays, the players have people around them to encourage them to speak up and to support them with any issues they may have if things aren't 100% for them, and rightly so.

Yesterday [Wednesday] [Rafael] Nadal, [Andy] Roddick and [Andy] Murray protested at having been asked to play when it was clearly still wet and that cannot be right, however important it is to get the tennis going for everyone concerned – TV, spectators and sponsors and so on.

The women's draw is very open, as it has been for the last two years, with no sure winner anywhere to be seen.

For one reason or another we lost the French and Wimbledon champions – Li Na and Petra Kvitova – and Kim Clijsters, the 2010 US Open champion wasn't here to defend her title.



If I were to pick a winner right now, after two days of rain, I would have to go with Serena [Williams] because she is so strong mentally, is getting stronger physically with each match and now has something else to fight for – her sister Venus, who withdrew because she has been diagnosed with a debilitating disease [Sjogrens Syndrome].

Serena herself has survived a lot too, with her cut foot and life-threatening illness that kept her out of the game for a year, so she has an added incentive now and seems to be playing better and better.

It's a different thing for the top men, who seem to be able to come through even when they aren't playing particularly well.

The top four are still there and all have a chance to win providing they can handle the situation of the rain, with long delays and difficult conditions.

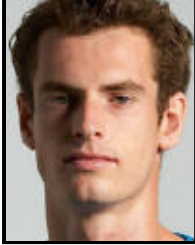
Roger Federer produced the most amazing performance against [Juan] Monaco, playing to perfection and losing only three games under the lights before the rain set in.



He is in the quarters and I don't know if all the rest he is getting is good or bad. He is probably suffering the least in terms of the waiting because he seems so laid back, but who knows...

[Novak] Djokovic had too much rest in Paris because of defaults, and paid the price as he lost his sharpness, going down to Roger in his first loss of the year.





From what others are saying [Andy] Murray has a good chance to win. He has shown he can focus and play well and certainly has all the ingredients to win here on the cement.

As for Rafa [Nadal], he doesn't seem as imposing as before and the players notice this and don't play the name anymore. He is looking a bit fragile to me but you can never count him out.

For sure, the next few days are going to be very interesting providing the rains stops and we some play.

MARIA ESTHER RECEIVES HER ITHF RING, New York, 7 September 2011

Brazilians came out of the woodwork when Maria Esther Bueno was presented with her official Hall of Fame ring by Christopher E. Clouser, Chairman of the International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum.



The presentation was made publicly on the mezzanine level of Arthur Ashe Stadium because of the inclement weather, in front of a TV Globo/Sport TV crew for transmission back to Brazil and hundreds of intrepid tennis fans.

In recognition of her success and contribution to the game, the tennis legend has already been honoured with the highest award in the game when she was inducted to the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1978.

In a special ceremony on 7 September at the US Open, this important achievement was celebrated once again with the presentation of a commemorative ring.

“Maria Bueno is one of the greatest champions of all time,” said Clouser.

“She has nineteen Grand Slam titles, including four US National singles titles and five doubles titles to her name, which is an outstanding lifetime achievement.

“She has been an inspiration to so many people over the years and it gives me great pleasure to present this Hall of Fame ring to Maria, as well as a great personal honour.”



The assembled crowd cheered and Maria smiled a beacon of Brazilian sunshine on a rainy day.

The newly developed, one-of-a-kind ring is being presented to Hall of Famers at tennis events around the world over the next several years to mark their achievement of Hall of Fame induction.

The personalised ring bears a green stone set in gold, complementing the Hall of Fame's brand colours, and is etched with the honouree's name and the Hall of Fame logo crest.

“I feel very honoured to receive this ring,” said Maria Bueno.

“It is very beautiful and represents the history of the game, which has been such an important part of my life, so to be recognised by the Hall of Fame is particularly special to me.”

Maria was cheered again by crowds gathered on the mezzanine and after the presentation was happy to pose for pictures with fans for half an hour afterwards.



“She is so beautiful,” said one fan.

“Such a beautiful player... I loved the way she played. It was so special to see her up here and she really deserves the recognition.”

Located in Newport, Rhode Island, the International Tennis Hall of Fame is a non-profit institution dedicated to preserving the history of tennis and honouring the game's greatest heroes.

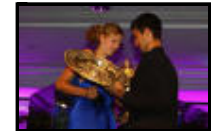
The ITHF has inducted 220 individuals from 19 different countries since 1955 and provides a landmark for tennis enthusiasts, offering an extensive museum that chronicles the history of the sport and its stars, historic grass tennis courts that date back to 1880 and are open to the public, an ATP World Tour tournament and the annual Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony in July, and numerous public events year-round.

To see a clip > [Click here](#)

To learn more on the ITHF, visit www.tennisfame.com

WIMBLEDON 2011 REFLECTIONS / 4 July 2011

Wimbledon is always good but this 125th edition will probably be remembered for the changing of the guard, with two new champions at the top of their games.



The All England Club runs a smooth operation that has been tested by the weather in past years but now, with the Centre Court roof, even that can't hold things up anymore.

They manage to maintain a mix of tradition and innovation so it all feels very familiar while new things get introduced. This year it was the new court 3 and 3-D television!

The winners were the best they could possibly be and completely deserved their wins.

After all the matches and media calls, Petra Kvitová and Novak Djokovic appeared at The Champions Dinner on Sunday night, beautifully dressed and looking glamorous. They presented themselves impeccably, and spoke well, although I think Petra was pretty nervous.

I don't think she yet understands what she has achieved and what it all means. She seems very natural off the court and friendly, plus she has a game that will take her far.

It is going to be fun following her progress over the coming weeks and months and I just hope that she doesn't fall away as some have done before to be remembered as a one-day wonder. I don't believe that will happen with this one though.

Djokovic, of course, totally understands what he has accomplished. It has been his dream since he was four years old and he already had two Australian titles to his account.

What I really liked about both of them was their humility on this most important occasion of their professional lives. There was no brashness and they were poised and friendly last night and, above all, patient with all the attention they were getting, which has not always been the case.



Clearly these two are very popular champions, judging from the way the crowd reacted to them over the weekend and then again last night, mostly because of the way they carry themselves both on and off the court, and also because they are a refreshing change.

They are both off to their respective countries today to face, most likely, enormous receptions and great celebrations. They deserve it.

It makes me think about the first time I won Wimbledon and the President of Brazil insisted I fly home, where I received a ticker-tape reception from the airport to my house. I rode the entire way on a fire engine and that was just the start of many incredible festivities!

I know that whatever they have lined up for Kvitova and Djokovic in the Czech Republic and Serbia, it will provide them with precious memories for life.

As Wimbledon closes for another year, I have to congratulate everyone for what they have achieved and look forward to seeing how the next Grand Slam unfolds in New York in a few weeks time.

During the 125th Championships at Wimbledon, Maria has been writing a blog for the [Tennis Today](#) website. Here are some extracts:

WIMBLEDON 2011 Week 2

After the second Monday's play, it is unusual to find the women's draw without the Williams sisters.



Expectation is always high with them. They come from no-where and win but this time it was not to be so. It was actually an impossible hill from them to climb and the new players of today seem all the more determined to beat them.

There seem to be so many new names in a draw that is now wide open. There is no one that dominates anymore so any of them really could win but, I suspect, Maria Sharapova now has a great chance of winning the title for the second time in her career.

Serena [Williams] was beaten by Marion Bartoli, who must be the most annoying player to play against because she is always jumping around between points and making shadow swings.

The two Queen's of the grunting made it through and Victoria Azarenka is now the top remaining seed.... Something has to be done about it as it is very tiresome for the spectators.

The world number one, Caroline Wozniacki, isn't going to win her first Grand Slam here now, having been defeated by Dominika Cibilkova in a long, competitive match that went down to the wire, 9-7 in the third. The Slovakian plays Sharapova in the quarters.

In the men's, [Rafa] Nadal must be relieved to have dispatched Juan Martin Del Potro before it got dark, although there was some talk about closing the roof and putting on the lights in order to get this last match finished.

It's a credit to the trainer who managed a miracle with Rafa's leg just before the first set tiebreak. He was walking so badly and it looked as if he might give up but whatever he did to him worked wonders.

Roger [Federer] wasn't too happy to be out on Court 1 because of the threat of rain but in the end he came through well enough. He wasn't as settled as he has been and he dropped a set to [Mikhail] Youzhny.

The youngster, [Bernard] Tomic is the surprise of the tournament. Having nearly lost in the first round of qualifying, he is on a wonderful run here and is being heralded as the next [Lleyton] Hewitt.



Andy Murray started the program on Centre in front of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, who earned themselves a standing ovation on arrival.

The Murray v [Richard] Gasquet contest did not live up to expectations although the first set was quite competitive. Once Andy won it in the tiebreak, I told Cliff Richard sitting next to me that it would be over in three and I was right.

What a let down Tuesday was. It was cool and grey and then we had a huge storm that stopped play everywhere except Centre and, once again this year, we were all grateful that at least one match was happening as the rain fell and the thunder and lighting shut down Wimbledon.

Sadly the tennis never really fired up on women's quarter finals day, although there certainly was plenty of excitement.

The big match, I suppose, was [Marion] Bartoli against [Sabine] Lisicki and Bartoli's batteries finally ran down.

To her credit though, she is a great fighter and she never gave up, even though she was also fighting fatigue and probably some sort of emotional reaction after beating Serena [Williams] yesterday.

The other one, [Sabine] Lisicki did incredibly well to come back after losing three match points in the second set. She came back strongly after losing that set and looked by far the better player on the day.

I also admire her courage returning from a terrible injury to her ankle that meant she had to learn how to walk again, let alone run like she does. I understand that sort of commitment, having come back from a few physical setbacks myself. You have to want to do it and she clearly does.

Another player who has faced a similar journey is Maria Sharapova, who is looking every bit this year's champion with every match she plays.

Her win over [Dominika] Cibulkova was quick and efficient because she never let this feisty player into the mix.

Interestingly, all the quarter-finalist this year are Eastern European, which is quite a swing away from the recent dominance of Americans, notably the Williams sisters.

It took the organisers a long time to switch the last quarter final from No 1 Court, where the third rain delay of the day prevented progress between [Victoria] Azarenka and [Tamira] Paszek, to Centre at 8pm.

Once the match got started properly, Azarenka really took charge and although Paszek fought back in the first, it really was just a matter of time. The Belarusian reached the semis for the first time in straight sets and on paper is now the favourite to win.

It must have a difficult day for both players and I was pleased to see in what good humour the match was played in. Paszek smiled a lot, Azarenka screeched - I prefer the smiling.

Wednesday was a day of surprises with more changing of the guard and the weather was good again – strange climate!

I am always sad when Roger [Federer] loses because he is such a great champion and such a class act but Jo-Wilfried Tsonga deserved his win, the way he played, out of his mind, for the three sets that mattered.

He came back from two sets down to win a thriller against Federer, who was actually playing pretty well.

Tsonga is a very colourful character and great for the game. He moves unbelievably well for such a big man and the crowd loves him. If Roger had to lose to anyone, better for him to do so to a popular, up-and-coming, player.

[Novak] Djokovic dropped a set and was in trouble in the third against the talented Australian youngster, Bernard Tomic, but he found his way through in four sets.

Tomic was lucky to survive the qualifying, where he faced match points, so he has been on an extraordinary run since and has shown everyone that he is one of the names of the future.

As for Djokovic, I think he is struggling a bit after his amazing, long, run of winning matches all year that was brought to an end by Roger in Paris. That was an incredible match and the fact he lost it may have put some doubts in his mind.

As for Murray, he is cruising but he will have to face Rafa Nadal] and that is the ultimate test, both mentally and physically, together with his home nation's expectations, which he seems to be handling pretty well.

Murray's opponent , [Feliciano] Lopez, wasn't there today. Perhaps the Spaniard was tired after all the drama he has had on the way to the quarters; or maybe it was because he has never come close to beating Murray in four previous occasions, so he posed no real threat.

To Murray, he was never a problem and he won in three, quite comfortable sets, rather like we all felt it would happen ahead of the match.

He now has to face Nadal, who did drop a set today, rather surprisingly, to Mardy Fish, who has also had a fantastic run at Wimbledon; especially as he decided to go home to see his dog and wife after losing in Paris and had no grass court match practice ahead of The Championships.

Nadal's injury scare apparently amounted to nothing and he certainly looks fit enough but it may be quite a different matter when he meets Murray on Friday in the other semi final.

Well, I'm disappointed in the women's semi finals today (Thursday), which never really got going.

In both matches, the players never played well at the same time and there were only a few points that generated excitement for the fans.

There was none of the drama that we saw earlier in the tournament when Venus [Williams] beat Kimiko Date-Krumm, or when [Marion] Bartoli overcame Serena [Williams], or when [Sabine] Lisicki out-played Bartoli.

Those matches showed women's tennis at its best but today, it didn't shine too well.

Perhaps it was the conditions or the occasion. Centre was chilly and breezy and the four semi-finalists were playing for a spot in the finals of the greatest championship in the world so maybe I should be more generous but, to me, it was very one-dimensional.

Maria Sharapova has been there before and was expected to win. Lisicki should have been a greater threat the way she played to get here but she wasn't the same player today. Sharapova won in two.

[Petra] Kvitova stormed away with the first set and then dropped the second to [Victoria] Azarenka in an equally one-sided turn-around. She proved the more dominant in the end and deserved her place in the final.

As a result, we have been spared the battle of the loudest screamers, which is a relief. Sharapova holds the record but Azarenka must be a close second.

I understand the BBC has come up with a gizmo to turn down the grunters on the radio and wish they could also apply it to on-court!

Everyone seems to think Sharapova is now the favourite but if Kvitova plays well against her, she could well take the Wimbledon title. Let's hope for a good contest to decide.

Men's semi-finals day was set against a perfect backdrop of fine weather and we were treated to some wonderful tennis.

Although there was little doubt as to the outcome of the first match between Novak Djokovic and Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, we saw some great play, particularly from Tsonga who attacked the net and changed things up sufficiently to win a set.

Unfortunately for him, all too often he fell into Djokovic's trap of pushing opponents back behind the baseline where he takes over complete control of the rallies.

I felt Djokovic was somewhat out of sorts because he looked a bit uncomfortable out there. Perhaps he had a lot of things on his mind, like the enormity of the situation and the number one world ranking hanging on the outcome.

He kept fighting though, especially when Tsonga was all over him and the crowd was clearly behind the Frenchman. They wanted to see five sets but Djokovic got it done in four despite the stiff opposition.

The second semi-final produced the best tennis I have ever seen Andy Murray play. He was flawless against Rafa Nadal for a little over a set, serving well and outplaying the Spaniard in every department.



He started the second strongly too but then missed a sitter that would have given him three break points and the doubts seem to set in, and his error count rocketed.

He said later that he was playing high risk tennis because, in the past, he has been too passive against the world number one. That turning point enabled Nadal back into the match and he is so mentally strong that only perfection will beat him.

Murray threatened him several times again but Nadal was relentless in his pursuit of his final place on Sunday.

Today (Saturday) I had the privilege of watching the Ladies Final from the Royal Box alongside many of my fellow champions and while there were several Czechs there, I don't think any of us thought that Petra Kvitova would have much of a chance against Maria Sharapova.

It is amazing to think that she has now followed Martina Navratilova] and Jana [Novotna] by taking the title for the first time in a final that had plenty of good tennis but will never go down as a classic.

I was amazed at the court coverage and angles both players made but unfortunately they also threw in too many double faults and unforced errors, probably a result of the occasion, so the audience was never truly gripped by the match.

It is really good to see someone new winning at Wimbledon and Kvitova has a great, lefty serve that does a lot of damage and opens up the court for her powerful and accurate ground strokes.

Like many of the modern players of today she is uncomfortable at the net because she can't volley well and if I was to give her and her team some advice, I would suggest they work on her volley so she has a more complete game.

I felt sorry for Maria who clearly was very disappointed. Her comeback after shoulder surgery has been quite something – winning Madrid, followed by a semi final place in Paris and now a finalist at Wimbledon.

She is another that doesn't volley if she can help it, and I have yet to see her hit a real smash rather than a drive volley. Until she adds these weapons to her game, she will be pushed around by this new generation of players like Kvitova, who drill the balls into the corners with amazing consistency.

What a great [men's] final!

And so it should have been, with the two best players in the world fighting it out for the Wimbledon Championships.

Novak Djokovic landed the world number one ranking when he won his semi-final match the other day and there was nothing that Rafael Nadal could do about that, but you could see how important it was to the Serb that he won the title to become the undisputed World Champion.

These two were the in-form players and have been playing well all year so it was completely appropriate that it came down to them out on Centre Court on Sunday, the last day.

Djokovic was unbelievable, the way he played perfect tennis under incredible pressure from Nadal.

Some of his shot-making was quite awesome and he seemed to find that extra shot to force an error out of Rafa, time and time again.

He went off a bit in the third set and, once again, Rafa took full advantage. For a while it looked like he might be able to pull it off, rather like he did against [Andy] Murray but Djokovic is an entirely different opponent.

The Serb did not lose his head or his focus and doubled his efforts at the start of the fourth, effectively slamming the door shut on Nadal's attempt to overtake him.

It is wonderful to see players like Djokovic and Nadal appreciate so much what Wimbledon represents.

It is always sad when the tennis is over for another year at Wimbledon. It is such a special place, so well run and so traditional that it is a pleasure to visit each year.

During the 125th Championships at Wimbledon, Maria has been writing a blog for the [Tennis Today](#) website. Here are some extracts:

WIMBLEDON 2011 Week 1



The first day of Wimbledon is always a bit chaotic – finding out how things have changed, checking on accreditation and guests and, of course, catching up with lots of people I haven't seen in a while.

The weather forecast is not good for the week but these days at least the Centre Court crowd is assured of some tennis.

We were spared the rain until around 5pm so the organisers got some of the first round matches played. That's a good thing because the first couple of days are critical at a Grand Slam. If they can clear those, they are in with a chance!

Francesca Schiavone, the French runner-up and former Roland Garros Champion, had a fight on her hands with the talented Jelena Dokic, the Serbian-turned-Australian, but won through in three sets.

They had to wait around 45 minutes after the rain arrived as the roof was closed, and you could tell the crowd was just waiting for Murray and willing this one to be over!

Murray also had his hands full with the Spaniard Daniel Gimeno-Traver, who didn't look at all Spanish to me but grew up with Andy on the courts of Barcelona.

With a lot of matches cancelled because of the weather, the matches that were completed went pretty well according to plan.

A couple of seeds fell on the women's side – [Shahar] Peer and [Ekaterina] Makarova; and Thomaz Bellucci, my compatriot from Brazil, on the men's.

A better day today (Tuesday), weather-wise, but very windy and, for me, chilly!

Again it made for difficult conditions for the players but at least it didn't rain – the wind took care of that!

I watched Roger [Federer] on Centre and thought he was hitting the ball well and although it went to the tiebreak in the first set, he was just cruising along and always looked as if he would win it.

It was the same for Serena [Williams]; it was like they both wanted to use the time to get some good court time.

Wimbledon got a full day's play which must be a huge relief to the referee. He moved Maria Sharapova's match to Centre against fellow Russian Anna Chakvetadze, which delighted the crowd.

It should have been a close match but Sharapova was far sharper in the conditions and won rather easily 6-2 6-1.

After all her problems, it is good to see her back in good form. The same can be said for Serena, who is looking stronger with each match she plays and is going to be serious contender.

Actually the women's draw is wide open and there are many players who are all in with a chance, in my opinion, although we lost two seeds today, rather surprisingly, Sam Stosur and Jelena Jankovic.

As far as the men are concerned, the top four are real contenders with my outsiders being [Andy] Roddick, [Jo-Wilfried] Tsonga and [Juan Martin] Del Potro.

The new Court 3 looks great – not as big as the old Court 2 but sunken with a good feel to it. Let's hope it doesn't inherit the old 'graveyard' label because no-body liked to play on there.

Unfortunately, it was where Jankovic lost in three to Maria Jose Martinez Sanchez and then Marin Cilic lost to [Ivan] Ljubicic.

It also saw the repeat of Wimbledon's longest match between John Isner and Nicolas Mahut but this time the American came through in three sets just as it was getting dark. I bet he was relieved not to have to start again tomorrow!

How great is that roof on Centre? A lot of today(Wednesday) would have been very boring without that single match going under the roof. Poor people outside waiting for the rain to stop...

What a match it was too - two of the oldest players on the tour showing the kids how it is done.

I'm really impressed with Kamiko Date-Krum, who just doesn't give up, very impressive at 40.

She played so well at the start but couldn't put Venus [Williams], who is 31, away in that first set until she eventually managed it in the tiebreak.

She came out like a dragon and when she dropped her lead of 5-2, I really thought she would be going out like a lizard, but she didn't!

Against any other player, Date would have been in the dressing room hours earlier but she had to deal with Venus, someone who doesn't know the meaning of losing. To her it is incomprehensible.

The Japanese did everything in her power to put Venus away and the American was mostly playing catch-up until it really mattered. After nearly three hours, Venus found her way through to win 8-6 in the third.

The Duchess of Cornwall, who is a huge tennis fan, was in the Royal Box today and she didn't miss a point of that match. She led the standing ovation for both players – justly deserved, a great match.



By the time Rafa took to the court, it had stopped raining but the roof remained closed. I'm not sure why, as the sun came out and it is shining all the brighter into the evening.

Nadal had no trouble as expected, coming through against [Ryan] Sweeting from the States rather comfortably in straight sets.

Nobody can complain about women's tennis from the matches we have seen so far!

Serena and Venus [Williams] have featured in some real drama and, today (Thursday), it was Na Li's turn although she was unable to survive against [Sabine] Lisiki from Germany.

There has been some really good tennis and, as I said, loads of drama which has had everyone on the edge of their seats.

These three players share something in common – they have all come back from injury: Serena after a year away from the tour, and Venus something like 6 months, while Lisiki was for 5 months; and you could see how much winning meant to all three of them – they cried!

As far as Serena is concerned, there is always some drama. Today it was about playing out on Court 3 and while she tried hard to downplay her displeasure at being relegated there, she clearly was unhappy.

She was saying that Wimbledon like to put her and Venus out on Court 2 when they would never think of scheduling [Rafa] Nadal or [Novak] Djokovic out there and the sisters have won more titles than most in both singles and doubles.

Of course, the organisers deny there is any kind of sexist discrimination, saying it's a treat for the fans to see them out there.

Interestingly, [Andy] Murray was asked a similar question yesterday about being sent over to Court 1 and he deflected any controversy by saying he didn't care where he plays, he just concentrates on winning his match... good answer!

Today, the roof remained closed despite very little rain outside. In fact it has been closed all day for the first time ever, I believe. I'm not sure why unless they wanted to be assured that Roger [Federer] got his match played today, late.

Of course, with the roof shut, they can turn on the lights!

One of my outsiders to win the men's singles fell today (Friday) – Andy Roddick, surprisingly beaten in straight sets by Feliciano Lopez.

This opens up [Andy] Murray's draw a bit, if he can get past Richard Gasquet who has yet to drop a set at these Championships.

But my other two outsiders are still alive.

[Jo-Wilfried] Tsonga came through a real battle yesterday against the talented [Grigor] Dimitrov, and Juan Martin Del Potro is quietly moving towards [Rafa] Nadal if he can beat Gilles Simon in the match held over this evening.

Rafa's match against [Gilles] Muller is also unfinished so who knows how this will all pan out.

The rain is becoming annoying now as it is messing with the schedule and it's hard to know what to wear. When the sun is out it gets warm but then it clouds over and chills down.

For the players, it is hard to stop a match overnight and to come back the next day because you have to start all over and you don't have the full match to work things out again.

Andy Murray's campaign continues and he once again had to play with the roof closed, this time against Ivan Llubicic, who can be really difficult.

Murray had it in the bag in the fourth set but then played his flashy half-volley between the legs shot and his concentration seemed to lapse. It can hurt you to get jokey.

That, or Llubicic felt like I would have done – insulted at the showboating. He certainly got better after that and the set went into the tiebreaker.

For Murray it was a good test and the timing is working out for him as he now gets to rest for two days. He should improve with each round from here on in.

He will have to play well against Gasquet though, and he might think about getting a good shave, now that he has some time off.

Probably the match we have all been waiting for (Saturday) was between Federer and [David] Nalbandian because, ever since the juniors, the Argentine has been giving the Swiss lots of problems but that was not the case today.

Roger won the first two sets in a little over an hour, signalling how well he is playing here on the grass, while Nalbandian has been off the tour through injury and illness and not quite up to his best again yet.

[Rafael] Nadal must be very relieved to beat the same player – Gilles Muller - he lost to on the same court – No 1 Court - in 2005.

He had to battle through two tiebreak sets, one yesterday and the other today, which could have gone either way, before dominating to win the third easily to love.

Serena and Venus [Williams] are improving with every match and now winning them pretty fast, which is all the more remarkable because they have both been off the tour for a long time – Serena over a year and Venus since the Australian Open in January.

It's just a pity that Serena keeps complaining about the scheduling because, like it or not, the sisters are not among the top seeds this year, despite being the biggest names at Wimbledon in terms of titles won, and they came here needing to prove themselves.

And it's not as if they have been playing on outside field courts because they have been on Courts 2 and 3 where the fans could see and enjoy them. Not everyone has tickets to Centre and Court 1.

We all know that eventually both Serena and Venus will end up on Centre if they keep on winning and Serena, in fact, was there today so she must be happy now.

I also support trying to stop the grunting on court because it is getting really out of hand and it isn't even scientifically proven that it actually helps your game. In fact, it probably tires out players more than they realise.

I really admire [Novak] Djokovic, who was brave enough to make huge changes to his serve a year ago and is now playing the tennis of his life.

As well as working on his game, he has adopted a strict gluten free diet and matured as a player. He isn't trying to be cute anymore by playing to the gallery but stays focused and he has shown how good he now is by reaching No 2 in the world.

In fact, Djokovic is poised to take the top spot if he can reach the final because Nadal has huge points to defend and can't earn anymore here. It's just the way the ATP rankings work.

So, it is now looking a bit like Paris a few weeks back, with the top four players in the world fighting it out towards the end of next week at Wimbledon, as they did at Roland Garros.

OPENING OF NEW CLAY COURTS AT BECKENHAM - 18 June 2011



As always, Beckenham Cricket Club's tennis section put on a great show to open the three new artificial clay courts on the Saturday before the start of Wimbledon.

The dignitaries included Maria, the Major and Mayoress of Bromley (Councillor David and Mrs Joan McBride) and Colonel Bob Stewart, the MP for Beckenham who was the first British Commander of United Nations Forces during the Bosnian War.

Maria was asked by Sue Thomas, Chairman of the Tennis Section, to hand out gifts to the visiting dignitaries and certificates to the players, umpire and ball persons of the exhibition match.

"Once again the weather nearly sabotaged the day – we had a dreadful storm about an hour before this was all about to start and the courts were flooded," said Maria.



"They had to work hard to make the court playable and it was still incredibly windy but the rain held off and everything went according to plan!

"Gary Le Pa and James Oni, both former Beckenham club tournament champions, did very well to show everyone how the court plays in very difficult conditions.





“The best part, probably, was the marvellous tea that followed! Beckenham is renowned for its Saturday teas and this was the best!”

Over a hundred people enjoyed the occasion, which included an opportunity to view the club’s collection of tennis and cricket memorabilia laid out in the Maria Bueno Lounge.

“I’m really proud of my lounge and very touched at how well club members look after it,” said Maria.

“I have always been made to feel very welcome when I come back to Beckenham and I’m so glad that everything went so well today.”

ATTENDING THE PRE-WIMBLEDON PARTY - 16 June 2011

Maria dropped in on the WTA Pre-Wimbledon Player Party on Thursday where the current stars of the women’s game rub shoulders with London society and the media.



Hosted by Sir Richard Branson and the Women's Tennis Association, the party was held at the Roof Gardens in Kensington and it was quite a fashion experience.

The players were wearing exclusive gowns that British designers, with the support of the British Fashion Council, had created for them for the occasion, including:

Maria Sharapova in a red dress by McQueen; and

- World number one Caroline Wozniacki in a one-shouldered black dress by Stella McCartney
- French Open champ Li Na in a Delaroche print by Giles Deacon
- Serena Williams dressed in Burberry
- Vera Zvonareva by Hussein Chalayan
- Li Na by Giles Deacon
- Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova by David Koma
- Ana Ivanovic by Matthew Williamson
- Jelena Jankovic by Vivienne Westwood
- Samantha Stosur by Mary Katrantzou
- Heather Watson by Mulberry
- Laura Robson by Temperley
- Andrea Petkovic by Richard Nicoll

Nicholas Kirkwood provided shoes for the occasion.

“It was an amazing collection of modern fashion, I must say,” said Maria.

“Wimbledon has always had links with fashion and it was interesting to see what the latest designers are doing these days.

“London is the height of fashion, especially at this time of year when the best is on show at Royal Ascot and the Henley Regatta as well as at Wimbledon.

“It is such a pity the weather isn’t co-operating but it doesn’t seem to deter anyone from attending these events.

“There was a terrible thunder storm at the Player Party and I hate to think what happened to all those people who were outside when it rained... I hope there weren’t too many ruined outfits!”

The party was held on the 6th floor where one and a half acres of themed gardens are situated one hundred feet above Kensington High Street.

First established in the 1930s, it wasn't until 1986 that The Roof Gardens was awarded 'Grade II Star' listed status by English Heritage, marking the building as one of special architectural and historic interest.

The following year in 1987, The Tudor, Spanish and English Woodland Gardens received a major facelift and didn't reopen until spring 1992.

In 2001 an additional floor was added to the Clubhouse to accommodate the restaurant and all the venues were in use for the Player Party which is reported to have gone on well past midnight.

CELEBRITY TENNIS RE-LAUNCHES WITH A CLINIC - 15 June 2011



It's been a bit rough in economic terms for corporate entertainment in the UK because of the recent recession but it seems things might be picking up a bit and Celebrity Tennis, the company that promotes corporate events centred on senior tennis personalities, has just re-launched itself with a new website and a new marketing director – Sheila O'Reilly.

Sheila organised a Players' Clinic with John Lloyd at Woodfield Grove Tennis Club in Streatham, one of the several clubs that Maria has been awarded with Honorary Membership.

After the two-hour clinic there was a candlelit dinner for the 20 participants, coaches and helpers, which Maria was happy to attend.

"It was a good evening and John did a good job as always," said Maria. "The food was wonderful – home cooked lasagne, which everyone enjoyed! It was just a pity the weather wasn't better for those on court."

NADAL MAKES IT 6 IN A ROW AT ROLAND GARROS / 4-5 June 2011



Maria gives her usual, perceptive take on the winners of the French Championships in Paris:

"Roland Garros highlighted, once again, the current difference between the men's and women's games in tennis ranking terms – while the top women players lost, making way for two surprising finalists, the top four men in the world played off in the semi finals, true to form.

Li Na (or is it Na Li as they say in China?) was a finalist in Australia and had a rather indifferent season after that but in Paris she overcame the odds, round after round, beating players like Petra Kvitova, Victoria Azarenka and Maria Sharapova, and taking them all out in straight sets.

She met [Francesca] Schiavone in the final, last year's winner - and I don't really think anyone gave her much of a chance to achieve the double - but she also overcame a poor lead-in to prove everyone wrong! Great game, isn't it?

The final nearly went to three sets and for a while there I thought Schiavone would pull it off but Li Na played an awesome tie-break, winning the title to love and becoming the first Asian player to win a Grand Slam.

On the men's side, Roger Federer proved again what an accomplished clay court player he is. I don't think he dropped a set on his way to the final and the way he played in the semis against Novak Djokovic was simply amazing. Djoko was on a 41-match winning streak and about to equal Bjorn Borg's record 42 games-in -row when he was out-classed by Federer.

There was no shame in it and it is interesting that the last match Djokovic lost before his winning run was to the Swiss who is, after, one of the best players ever.

I just think it is a shame that [Fabio] Fognini retired in the quarters, without hitting a ball, because it robbed Djokovic of his chance of equalling the record. It also put Novak at a bit of a disadvantage because he didn't play a match for four days as a result; but he has been magnificent in defeat and the monkey is now off his back.

[Rafael] Nadal played through a bad patch, taking some time to adjust to the Babolat balls which, I understand, were harder than the Dunlop's played with in the lead-up to Paris, and didn't take spin well. Like all great champions, Rafa found a way to win and while he dropped sets along the way, he got just better and better.

Against Andy Murray, he had to dig really deep to win through in three sets but it took him nearly four hours!

He looked a little out of sorts at the start of the final, going 0-3 down in very little time but he steadied himself and again found the way to dominate Federer, who hung in himself and managed to snatch a set out of the blue after the brief rain delay.

Rafa played really well in the fourth as Roger faded and you could tell how much winning the title for the sixth time meant to him when he finally won the match. He looked rather shell-shocked to have come through against all the odds!"

GRAND CHAMPIONS VISIT HARMONIA / 26-29 May 2011

After a difficult period involving shoulder surgery and recuperation, Maria is back working on TV Globo/Sport TV and fulfilling her role as colour commentator at the Grand Champions Brasil in Sao Paulo.



Enjoying the company of the visiting senior pros – Thomas Enqvist, Yevgeny Kafelnikov, Andres Gomez, Carlos Moya, Thomas Muster and Flavio Saretta – Maria not only commentated on the matches but participated in the clinic for sponsors and VIPs and the social events.

Although she couldn't play, Maria was able to offer advice and encouragement, which was appreciated by all the participants.

"It was great to have this event at my club [Sociedade Harmonia de Tênis] and to see it so well attended," said Maria.

"We had terrific attendance over the four days, which was via invitation only to members and special guests from nearby clubs.

"The club did an excellent job hosting the event, offering guests a reception every day and running lots of events alongside the senior tournament, such as clinics, a Pro/Am and a parallel junior competition.



“There were so many entries for the Pro/Am that they had to hold a qualifying event over the weekend before, while there were separate clinics for the kids and the special guests and sponsors and the top juniors got to play in their own tournament, which was good experience for them.”



Spain’s Carlos Moya defeated two-time winner Thomas Enqvist to win his first ever ATP Champions Tour tournament.

Moya, who had trailed Enqvist 3-5 in their head-to-head on the ATP World Tour, found a level of play that Enqvist could not live with to triumph 7-6(0) 6-3.

“I am very happy to win my first tournament on the Champions Tour here in Sao Paulo, a city that I haven’t been to before,” said Moya. I was amazed with the city and the public. I’ve played in many places around the world and this is one of the most beautiful clubs I’ve been to.”

Maria explains the uniqueness of senior’s tennis: “It is a blend of competition and entertainment played in a relaxed, fun atmosphere. The players look like they are really enjoying themselves and spectators get to see some good tennis!”

SHOULDER SURGERY / 16 February 2011

After the US Open, Maria realised that her shoulder would need some major treatment.

“My shoulder got really bad as a result of an old injury I sustained back in 2006 when I dislocated it,” she told her website recently.

“I finally had to do something about it so I went to see Doctor Alberto Miazaki, who is the top shoulder guy in Sao Paul and he did an incredible job with his team in repairing my shoulder.



“It involved five-and-a-half hours of key-hole surgery on 16 February that I apparently took more out of him than it did with me!

“It has been very successful but involves a long recovery – at least 6 months before I can even think about hitting a ball again...

”I can’t wait!”



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