

Brilliant Cancellara claims 2nd stage win

COMPIEGNE, France (Reuters) – A late burst of speed gave overall leader Fabian Cancellara a dazzling victory in the third stage of the Tour de France on Tuesday.

The Swiss rider of the CSC team, who took the yellow jersey when he won the prologue in London last weekend, added some panache to the longest stage of this year's race when he broke away from the bunch 300 metres from the finish line.

He showed no mercy to the four fugitives of the day, who finished empty handed after a 230 km breakaway near the start of the 236.5 km stage that ended in the last straight.

Cancellara, who began the day with his hand bandaged after being involved in Monday's massive pile-up in Ghent, caught sprinters Erik Zabel and Danilo Napolitano cold.

German Zabel of the Milram team and Italian Napolitano, who rides for Lampre, finished

second and third. German Andreas Klöden of Astana and Briton David Millar of Saunier Duval retained their second and third places overall.

"It was a really long stage," said Cancellara. "When I saw the four riders ahead were doing good, I had the feeling I had to work to keep my jersey."

"I knew there were some cobblestones at the very end of the stage and I knew I could attack. It's so nice to win here in Compiègne, right where Paris-Roubaix starts."

Cancellara, a time-trial specialist, won the queen of the classic races last year.

France's Nicolas Vogondy and Mathieu Ladagnous, of the Francaise des Jeux and Agritubel teams respectively, gave the peloton the slip six kilometres after the start.

Though riding at a snail's pace, the duo opened a 16-minute gap with the sprinters'

teams unable to collaborate.

About 60 km from the finish, Ladagnous team manager Marc Madiot told his rider through the ear-piece system: "Okay, training is over now. You've been riding at 30 kph, now I want you to speed up to 50 kph."

Vogondy and Ladagnous were joined with 40 km remaining by Belgian Frederik Willems of the Liquigas team and Frenchman Stephane Auge of Cofidis.

Auge, who was first to the top of the fourth-category Blerancourt hill, took the climbers' polka-dot jersey from Millar.

COMPIEGNE, FRANCE: Fabian Cancellara (R) of Switzerland and the CSC Team celebrates as he beats Eric Zabel (M) of Germany and Team Milram during Stage Three of the Tour de France



View from the stands

The rise and rise of Rafael Nadal



By **TERENCE SHANAHAN**
Epoch Times UK Staff

On what was possibly the wettest Wimbledon ever seen the brotly brigade was at full stretch. The joys of long summer days were drenched from memory in SW-amp 19 but the men's final on Sun-day relieved the disappointment. Beneath bright skies the fans relished the unfolding of a thrilling encounter.

The remarkable Roger Federer proved once again that his powers are superhuman by beating the explosive might of the young Spaniard Rafael Nadal 7-6 4-6 7-6 2-6 6-2.

Now five times winner of the Wimbledon title and equalling Bjorn Borg's

record, the Swiss genius had to call heavily upon his assisting powers to overcome the fierce charge of Nadal who is now commonly known as, "raging bull".

The end came when Federer delivered a smash to end the Nadal charge and fell to the comfort of the grass cushion, overcome with earthly emotion. On this showing Nadal showed increasing ability to master his grass court performance, and will present Federer with a greater challenge at next year's Wimbledon.

It's reported that the injured Andy Murray was greatly impressed by the finalist's superb display of discipline and mental toughness, making him wish he could get straight out onto the practise court. The British No. 1 is five years younger than Federer and one year junior to Nadal. Andy told BBC Sport, "If I get anywhere close to their level, then I'll be a great player. I don't know if I can make it, but watching that final just makes me want to try harder."

England's cricketers struggle to raise their game against a West Indies side that was recently described as "a disgrace" by Sir Vivian Richards

during the recent Test series. After a poor showing in the World Cup the Windies are the only major team ranked below England in the table.

Now in the one-day series they have been able to muster a formidable genuine wicket

Has Hamilton's fantastic run of success come to an end now that the opposition has hit back?

taking attack. Ravi Rampaul, Daren Powell, and Fidal Edwards gave a display that was more in line with traditional Caribbean fast bowling.

With new captain Paul Collingwood and Duncan Fletcher's replacement Peter Moores at the helm, England was comprehensively beaten at Edgbaston and Trent Bridge. They squandered a 1-0 lead to lose the series, and they obviously need more time with a very inexperienced squad to build and, hopefully, find the right blend. Marcus Trescothick has been included in the

provisional 30 man squad for September's inaugural Twenty20 World Championships. His inclusion will give England an opening bat that is presently playing great cricket for Somerset.

After finishing "only" third in last weekend's British Grand Prix the 22-year-old Englishman Lewis Hamilton is determined to make amends at next week's German Grand Prix. Hamilton had started from pole position, but this time handling problems on his McLaren saw him finish third behind winner Kimi Raikkonen and team-mate Fernando Alonso. Hamilton told the *Independent*, "I never thought of giving up and just kept pushing, because you never know what might happen," he said. "They could come together or run into back markers... The team tells you to wind the engine down but you still keep pushing yourself to compensate for that."

Has Hamilton's fantastic run of success come to an end now that the opposition has hit back? McLaren have promised him a faster car for the German Grand Prix and this may be a defining period in this remarkable young man's race to success.

Gerrard warns Liverpool over slow start

LONDON (Reuters) – Captain Steven Gerrard has warned Liverpool they cannot afford another slow start to the season if they are to bid for the Premier League title.

Though they have finished third behind Chelsea and Manchester United in the last two seasons, the Reds were never seriously in contention for their first championship success since 1990 in either campaign.

"I've heard it said before that you can't win the league in the first 10 games, but you can lose it. That's definitely been true in our case," Gerrard told *www.liverpoolfc.tv* on Tuesday.

"In the last two years we've lost any chance of challenging in the first 10 games.

"You can't give teams like United and Chelsea the kind of head starts we have. This year it's essential we get off to a flyer, or at the very least stay with

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them far longer than we've done in the past."

In 2005-06 just a few weeks after being crowned European champions, Liverpool won only two of their first eight league matches – but ended the season strongly winning their last nine league games. However they still finished nine

points behind champions Chelsea and a point behind second-placed United.

Last season they won only three of their opening nine league matches – but recovered well later in the season to finish third again. However they were 21 points behind champions United and 15 points behind runners-up Chelsea.

Liverpool's ambitions have been boosted following the takeover in March by US sports tycoons George Gillett and Tom Hicks. The pair are making plans for a new stadium at Stanley Park and have provided transfer funds for manager Rafael Benitez.

Liverpool's bank balance was also boosted by the £21.8 million they earned from reaching the Champions League final for the second time in three years.

Last week, the Merseysid-

ers paid a club record fee of 36 million euros for Spanish striker Fernando Torres from Atletico Madrid, with the prospect of more players to come.

"Since I've been in the first team I can't remember us making such a major statement of intent in the transfer market as this," said Gerrard, whose club have now gone 17 years since winning their 18th championship title – still the all-time English record.

"In recent years it's only really been Manchester United and Chelsea buying players (that cost) around £20 million, so it's great to see us able to compete for players of that kind of value.

"We've all been looking for that extra step to close the gap and attract the kind of players United and Chelsea are able to afford ... that's what's so exciting."

Bellamy leaves Liverpool for West Ham

LONDON (Reuters) – Striker Craig Bellamy has joined West Ham United from fellow English premier league side Liverpool for £7.5 million.

The 27-year-old Wales captain signed a five-year deal.

West Ham, who narrowly escaped relegation last season, have been busy in the transfer market with Scott Parker also joining in June from Newcas-

tle United for £7 million.

"I had a great experience at Liverpool and I believe West Ham will benefit this year, because I know I am a better player for it," Bellamy told the team's official website.

"I've signed a five-year contract here and I will be here for the long term. I've moved around a bit in recent years and now I want to settle."

It is the third time in two years that Bellamy has been sold in July. In 2005 he joined Blackburn Rovers from Newcastle United for £5 million.

After an impressive season, scoring 13 league goals, he then moved to Liverpool in 2006 for £6 million.

However, with Fernando Torres joining Liverpool last week from Atletico Madrid for a club-record 36 million

euros (£24 million), Bellamy's chances of a regular starting place in the Liverpool attack would be limited.

Liverpool, who finished third in the premier league last season, already have a strike force boasting England giant Peter Crouch, Dutchman Dirk Kuyt and Ukrainian Andriy Voronin who joined from German side Bayer Leverkusen.

Reggina say Bianchi set to join Man City

MILAN (Reuters) – Reggina striker Rolando Bianchi is poised to become Sven-Goran Eriksson's first signing at Manchester City, the Italian club said on Tuesday.

The 24-year-old scored 18 league goals last season as the Serie A side avoided relegation despite an 11-point penalty for their role in Italy's match-fixing scandal.

"We have reached a preliminary agreement with Manchester City for the permanent transfer of Rolando Bianchi... in a 13 million euro (£8.8 million) transfer deal," Reggina president Pasquale Foti was quoted as saying by British and Italian media.

"The deal will be completed on Wednesday," he added. No one at Reggina was available to comment when contacted by Reuters but Manchester City denied they had agreed a fee.

Former England manager Eriksson was named City manager last Friday after a year out of the game following England's defeat by Portugal in the 2006 World Cup quarter-final in Germany.

He was appointed after former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra bought enough shares to complete a takeover of the club. Eriksson is no stranger to Italy having coached Lazio to a scudetto in 2000 and managed AS Roma, Fiorentina and Sampdoria.



Rolando Bianchi of Italy celebrates scoring their third goal in the last few minutes of the game during the UEFA U21s Championship 2006 match between Italy and Denmark

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