

From U.S.'s outfield to Afghanistan

By Pfc. Terri Rorke
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — After saving up nearly 10,000 pounds of donated equipment in the past eight months, a shipment was made for the children of Afghanistan to enjoy one of America's favorite games — baseball.

A Boy Scout from Pleasant Grove, Utah, Benjamin Inks, began the project in late 2002 and collected donations from all over the United States.

His final donation includes more than 323 bats, 541 baseballs, 288 softballs, 182 baseball caps, among many other things, including shin guards, catcher's mitts and vests, water bottles, gloves and jerseys.

Thirteen-year-old Inks watched an ABC *World News Now* broadcast in Oct. 2002 showing Afghan boys playing baseball without the proper equipment. "Mom, they're not wearing any protective gear! If they're going to learn an American game, they ought to have the equipment they need," said Inks to his mother, Kim.

That is when he decided his Eagle Scout Project would be to collect enough baseball equipment to outfit five Afghan little league teams. But his goal grew when the outpouring of donations from businesses and groups across the U.S. gave more than enough for five teams. The project was then called Operation Home Run.

Not only did people donate baseball equipment, but also many other people donated things to fill any space in the boxes already coming here. Hygiene kits, newborn kits and school supplies were donated from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Jump ropes and cookies from the Girl Scouts, more than 200 souvenir American flags

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Photo by Spc. Debralee P. Crankshaw

Branching out...

An Afghan contractor sets rebar for the foundation of the new Bowie Building Annex, where the old gym was located. The Bowie Building Annex will be one story with more than 10 offices and a walkway connecting the buildings. The project began Saturday and is expected to be completed in the middle of August on a 60 day contract. The building will be 40 by 100 feet and be used by resource management, base engineering, logistics and the linguist manager with two conference rooms. According to Maj. Erwin Blancaflor, chief of plans and design, San Francisco team, 416th Facility Engineer Command, the expansion is due to the current location being too small to house all personnel and sections.

EOD unit prepares for mission

By Pfc. Christina Carde
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — As the threat level on Bagram continues to decrease due to force protection measures, encountering unexploded ordnance or stepping on land mines are perhaps the furthest things from troops' minds. However, for some soldiers, thinking about UXOs is what they get paid to do.

Even though the 705th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, Fort Polk, La., destroyed hundreds of thousands of UXOs during their eight-month deployment here, their predecessors said there is still a lot of work to be done.

"We've been here for about 10 days and can already tell there's a lot of work to do, both on Bagram and in other areas around Afghanistan," said 1st Sgt. Gilbert Rodriguez, first sergeant, 797th Ordnance Co. (EOD), Fort Sam Houston, Texas. "As you look around the air base, you can see a lot of fields with fences still around them that haven't been cleared yet, and we may still have to do further digging in areas that have already been cleared."

With the 705th barely back in the States, the 797th has already begun their mission of making Afghanistan a safer place.

"We are ... a 15-man unit ... broken up

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf salutes following a news conference with President Bush at Camp David Tuesday. Musharraf's wife Sehba is standing to his left.

Musharraf: We are after al-Qaida

CAMP DAVID, Md. — Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf Tuesday said al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden may be “shifting sides” along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, and Pakistani authorities have launched a massive hunt in remote border tribal areas.

“If at all any al-Qaida operative is hiding in this region, we are after them,” Musharraf said at a joint news conference with President Bush at Camp David.

“Now, whether Osama bin Laden is here or across the border, your guess, sir, will be as good as mine,” he told a reporter. “So, I wouldn’t like to venture into a guess. But the possibility of his maybe shifting sides on the border is very much there.”

Musharraf said the region being searched is the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), a mountainous territory covering about 10,500 square miles in northwest Pakistan along the Afghan border.

Six British troops killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD — Six British military police were killed Tuesday in the deadliest incident for coalition forces since major combat was declared over in Iraq, British Defense Secretary Geoffrey Hoon said.

Another eight were injured in a separate attack in the same area, he said.

Both attacks took place near the city of Amarah, about 120 miles north of Basra, Iraq’s second-largest city, a ministry spokesman told CNN.

Hoon said the soldiers killed were mem-

bers of the Royal Military Police who were training local Iraqi police in al-Majar al-Kabir, a village just outside Amarah in southern Iraq.

Eight British troops were injured — one on the ground and seven in the helicopter, he said.

The British military is investigating whether the two attacks are related.

Sources: U.S. planned to kill bin Laden before 9/11

WASHINGTON — When President Bush took office in Jan. 2001, the White House was told that Predator drones had recently spotted Osama bin Laden as many as three times and officials were urged to arm the unmanned planes with missiles to kill the al-Qaida leader. But the administration failed to get drones back into the Afghan skies until after the September 11 attacks later that year, current and former U.S. officials say.

Top administration officials discussed the mission to kill bin Laden as late as one week before the suicide attacks on New York and Washington, but they had not yet resolved a debate over whether the CIA or Pentagon should operate the armed Predators and whether the missiles would be sufficiently lethal, officials told The Associated Press.

In the month before that meeting, the Pentagon and CIA successfully tested an armed Predator on at least three occasions — including once when it destroyed a mock-up home resembling an Afghan structure bin Laden supposedly used, the officials said.

Israel rounds up 154 Palestinians

JERUSALEM — In what it said was a response to recent suicide attacks, the Israeli army overnight rounded up 154 Palestinians in the West Bank, 130 of them in the West Bank city of Hebron and suspected of having ties to Hamas, the Israel Defense Forces said Tuesday.

All were detained overnight.

The raids come as Hamas — the Palestinian militant group whose military wing has claimed responsibility for many of the recent terror attacks against Israelis — holds cease-

fire talks with Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas.

More shuttle video released

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — NASA on Tuesday released almost 10 hours of videotape and 92 photographs taken on the final flight of the space shuttle Columbia, which broke apart with the loss of the entire crew during re-entry on Feb. 1.

The videotapes and film were among 84,000 pounds of debris recovered in a three-month search. Out of 337 videotapes, 28 had usable footage, according to NASA.

An earlier videotape, showing some of the seven astronauts minutes before the deadly accident, was released a couple of weeks after the accident.

NASA had delivered other videotapes to the National Transportation Safety Board, which can salvage videos that have been damaged in accidents.

Iraqis want their satellite TV

BAGHDAD — After years of all-Saddam-most-of-the-time, “Tom and Jerry” and the Arabic version of “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” come as quite a change for Iraqi TV viewers.

Liberated from 35 years of stilted official TV devoted to the glorification of Saddam Hussein, Iraqis are snatching up satellite dishes by the thousands and cartoons, fitness programs, movies and commercials are flooding Iraqi living rooms.

These days, in fact, when a favorite show comes on, Iraqis on rooftops yell to neighbors to alert them.

The new freedom has opened doors for the country’s American occupiers, who are setting up a new channel in hopes of winning over Iraqis.

Satellite television is one of the perks U.S.-British occupation has brought post-war Iraq. It has helped introduce them to open debate, free speech and spin, along with the culture of couch potatoes and remote control fights.

“We’re like the blind who have been offered the gift of sight,” said Mahabat Ahmad, 32, a translator.

Wolfowitz says U.S. seeks allied relief for forces in Iraq

By Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The United States is seeking support to relieve coalition forces of some of their commitments in Iraq, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz told a House committee June 18, stating that “we need help from our allies” and “we are actively seeking it.”

Wolfowitz testified to the House Armed Services Committee that in coming weeks and months the U.S. will see “more and more contributions from other countries.”

Wolfowitz, joined by Marine Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told committee members that the U.S. is soliciting countries for both peacekeeping and combat forces.

He added that ultimately CENTOM commander Gen. Tommy Franks would decide what kinds of forces actually are useful.

“Not everything that everybody offers us can be used, especially when we’re still in this kind of mixed environment,” he

explained.

He told the committee that the United Kingdom and Poland have each made public their intention to lead a peacekeeping division, staffed by their personnel and personnel of other coalition countries, including some that did not join the coalition initially.

He said that among those that have publicly indicated a willingness to participate are Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Denmark, Ukraine and Hungary, adding that “we expect a number of other countries to announce their participation in coming days and weeks.”

In addition, Pace said there are commitments from coalition forces that could offer some relief to U.S. forces. “There’s another 10,000 or so troops that are being discussed by various nations,” he said.

“But we have about 20,000 additional coalition troops that have been volunteered by countries to go to theater within the next 60 to 90 days,” he said.

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Photo by Pfc. Christina Carde

In an effort to keep troops informed about the different types of unexploded ordnance in the theater, boards containing examples of UXOs are in the gym, dining facilities and other places where troops frequent.

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into five teams responsible for going out to different (forward operating bases), being ready to go out with the (Quick Reaction Force) and maintain 24-hour operations for base security,” said Rodriguez. “We have also been out on several demolitions around the perimeter in the past week.”

Although the 797th was deployed to Kosovo in 1999, Rodriguez said the mission here is much different.

“There is a higher state of emergency out here that in places like Kosovo or Bosnia,” said Rodriguez. “The level of awareness over there was still high, but nothing

like a combat zone.”

According to Rodriguez, Afghanistan’s summer months will have an effect on their mission.

“Our missions are going to be more frequent now that summer is here because more people are out and about and will be calling in more possible UXOs,” said Rodriguez. “Also with the 120 days of wind around the corner, keeping our equipment functional will be as much of a challenge as our daily operations.”

Regardless of the challenges the mission may bring, the 797th is ready for the task.

“We have been training and familiarizing ourselves with the different UXOs out here so we can be fully prepared for the mission,” said Rodriguez. “Our guys are very skilled and professional in their jobs and they are ready to accomplish the mission.”

If the 797th accomplishes one goal during their deployment, they don’t want it to be the number of UXOs destroyed, but the number of people that go home in one piece.

“Our main goal is to get all of our guys out of here successfully and unharmed,” said Rodriguez. “Our secondary goal is to make sure the U.S. and coalition forces are safe. We would rather receive 100 calls that turn out to be nothing, than not receive the one call that costs someone their life.”

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from Colonial Flag and dozens of donuts from Krispy Kreme were also donated. McDonald’s even chipped in, providing hot chocolate. Copy Cat donated a 2 feet x 10 feet Operation Home Run vinyl banner.

“It’s a benefit really for the children. They’ve been used to no sports, no fun, no anything. It creates a bit of teamwork for the children in Afghanistan,” said Robert Merrick, DHL International operations manager for Afghanistan.

An Afghan Ministry of Health official related to one of Operation Home Run’s executive staff members, “that it is imperative the Afghan children relearn the ability to play with each other,” according to the website for the project, operationhomerun.org

The equipment arrived free of charge via DHL International June 23. Inks and his mother, Kim Inks are scheduled to arrive in Afghanistan to distribute the donations.

For more information about the project, visit the official website, www.operationhomerun.org

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During his testimony, Wolfowitz emphasized that there's been "great progress" in stabilizing "some areas" of Iraq, but he also cautioned that the U.S. soldiers continue to "face an adaptive and determined enemy."

That enemy, he said, even though defeated on the conventional battlefield, is "intent on killing Americans and Iraqis and disrupting the establishment of order in Iraqi society and the process of building a new and free country."

The deputy secretary said, however, "We will eliminate those elements, but it will take time. How long is something that is difficult or indeed impossible to predict."

Wolfowitz told the committee the Defense Department is working to manage deployments in Iraq and elsewhere "as effectively as possible."

He said the Defense Department is taking into account all risks involved: "the operational risk, the warfighting risk, and the force management risk — the risk imposed when our personnel are pushed too hard, too long."

Pace noted that two weeks ago he had lunch and breakfast with troops in the 3rd Infantry Division in Iraq.

"They're wonderful soldiers," he said.

"They do look forward to the day they can come home, but they also understand that there's a mission to complete," he added.

Determining who comes home and when is also an issue on the Pentagon's agenda.

Wolfowitz told the committee the military needs a rotation policy that gives troops clarity as to "how long they're going to be there."

"I think if they have clarity, they can live with difficult circumstances," he said.

Wolfowitz said that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has asked Franks to provide a clear recommendation on when troops in the 1st Marine Division and the 3rd Infantry Division can expect to return home.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: "The Core."
Scientists discover that the Earth's core is about to stop spinning. This will cause tremendous natural disasters, wiping out life as we know it. A team of scientists is recruited in a crash project to send a ship and bomb into the center of the Earth to prevent the catastrophe.

Tomorrow's movie will be "Star Trek: Nemesis."



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Thursday
Bagram:	Mostly clear H: 90F L: 66F	Clear H: 95F L: 68F
Kandahar:	Dust H: 106F L: 72F	Haze H: 106F L: 73F
Kabul:	Dust H: 95F L: 63F	Haze H: 95F L: 68F
Uzbekistan:	Dust H: 103F L: 64F	Mostly cloudy H: 94F L: 65F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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CJTF-180 Commander —

Maj. Gen. John R. Vines

CJTF-180 Command Sergeant Major —

Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Carey

Public Affairs Officer —

Col. Rodney Davis

Public Affairs Sergeant Major —

Sgt. Maj. Harrison Sarles

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Commander — Maj. William Mott

NCOIC — Staff Sgt. Christina Bhatti

Editor — Sgt. W. Cullen James

Journalists — Spc. Debralee P. Crankshaw,

Pfc. Christina Carde, Pfc. Terri Rorke

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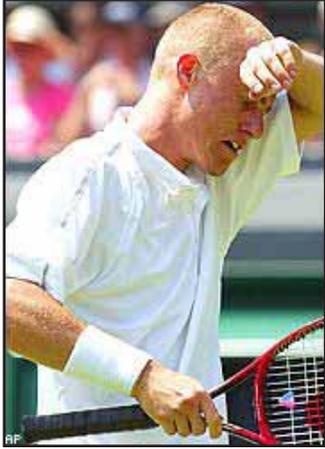
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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *ESPN.com*)

Touch of fear factor in ousted Hewitt



Lleyton Hewitt lost more sets Monday than he did in his run to the title last year (two).

WIMBLEDON, England — It is tradition here at the All England Club: The defending champion opens the tournament on storied Centre Court against an over-matched victim. A nice bit of warmup theater for the first-day sporting crowd.

On Monday, Lleyton Hewitt — the No. 1 seed and the No. 2-ranked player in the world — faced one Ivo Karlovic, a gangly 6-foot-10 Croatian qualifier who had never, ever played a Grand Slam match. Sure enough, Hewitt won six of the seven games in the first set in a scant 19 minutes and

all seemed well.

No one was prepared for what turned out to be one of the biggest upsets in The Championships' 117 years.

Indeed, Karlovic — the 203rd-ranked player in the world — stunned Hewitt, 1-6, 7-6 (5), 6-3, 6-4. As John McEnroe once said: You cannot be (expletive deleted) serious.

"You know, sure, defending champion," Hewitt said later. "But at the end of the day I'd be disappointed losing Wimbledon first round any time. That's what you've got to deal with.

"It's very hard at the moment to try and say you're going to try and learn something from it but, hopefully, I can."

It was the first time a men's defending champion has lost a first-round match in the Open Era, which goes back to 1968. Only once in Wimbledon history, 1967, had it happened before; champion Manuel Santana lost to Charlie Pasarell. This was only the second ATP victory of the season for Karlovic and the fifth of his 24-year-old life.

"I'm excited," Karlovic said. "I believe I'm going to realize some other day that I win."

Agassi pushed to four sets

WIMBLEDON, England — Second-seeded Andre Agassi began his 13th Wimbledon by hitting 16 aces and beating British wild-card Jamie Delgado 6-4, 6-0, 5-7, 6-4 on Tuesday.

Agassi punctuated the victory with his ritual of bowing and blowing kisses to the Cen-

tre Court crowd.

"For me at this stage of my career, it's quite a feeling to be out there," said Agassi, 33. "You never really know how many chances you're going to get again. I feel like as I get older, I have more capacity to embrace those moments."

French Open champion Juan Carlos Ferrero, seeded third, drubbed Jean-Rene Lisnard 6-2, 6-1, 6-3. But French Open runner-up Martin Verkerk, seeded 21st, lost in his Wimbledon debut to Robin Soderling 6-3, 6-4, 6-7 (5), 6-1.

Serena, Capriati triumph in openers

WIMBLEDON, England — Serena Williams regained her Grand Slam grin Tuesday.

Eager to put Paris in the past, Williams began her bid for a second consecutive Wimbledon title by beating fellow American Jill Craybas 6-3, 6-3.

The match was the first for Williams since her 33-match Grand Slam winning streak ended with a loss in the French Open semifinals to eventual champion Justine Henin-Hardenne. French fans cheered Williams' mistakes and booed her after the defeat.

Nearly three weeks later, she was able to joke about her tearful reaction.

"My eyes were watering — correction," she said with a laugh.

Williams said the show of emotion at Paris may have won her more fans.

"I was a little upset for a few days when I was at home, hitting the practice court immediately off the plane and swinging in my sleep," she said. "But everyone seemed to have seen the match and really supported me."

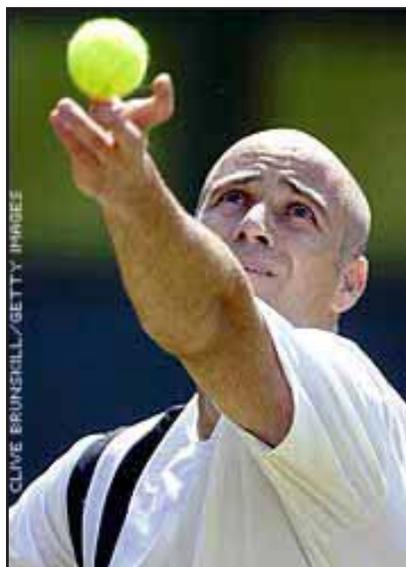
This time there was only silence when Williams double-faulted, and warm applause from the Centre Court crowd greeted her arrival.

"I definitely heard a large roar and clap," she said. "That was nice."

On a second consecutive sunny, mild day at Wimbledon, No. 8-seeded Jennifer Capriati needed only 42 minutes to beat Myriam Casanova 6-1, 6-3.

The top-seeded Williams could get a rematch in the semifinals against No. 3 Henin-Hardenne, who beat Julia Vakulenko 7-5, 6-1. Henin-Hardenne gave no indication she was bothered by the sore left wrist that prompted her quit during Saturday's final in the Netherlands.

Williams avoided the fate that befell



Andre Agassi had 16 aces in his first-round victory Tuesday.

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Wimbledon's other defending champion, Lleyton Hewitt, who lost Monday to 6-foot-10 qualifier Ivo Karlovic of Croatia.

"I didn't want to make history by having two No. 1 defending champions go out," Williams said.

Heldman helped form first solo women's tour

NEWPORT, R.I. — Gladys Medalie Heldman, a tennis Hall of Famer who is credited with helping create the women's tennis tour, died Sunday at the age of 81.

Heldman was elected to the Tennis Hall of Fame in 1979. The Hall of Fame announced her death on Monday.

Heldman became involved in tennis after her marriage in 1942 to Julius Heldman, a former U.S. Junior Champion (1936). In 1953, she founded World Tennis magazine, and served as the publications publisher, editor and writer during more than two years on the job.

In 1970, she helped carve out a niche for an independent women's tennis tour, which became the Virginia Slims circuit. In its first year, Heldman arranged for 14 tournaments with combined prize money totaling over \$180,000.

In the mid-1970s, Heldman sold the magazine and retired to New Mexico with her husband.

Heldman was a Texas champion and prominent senior player. Her two daughters, Trixie and Julie, both held national junior rankings — Julie won the Italian Open in 1969 and was once ranked as high as No. 5 in the world.

Along with her husband and two daughters, Heldman leaves behind three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Officials: Negotiations will continue

WIMBLEDON, England — Wimbledon organizers tried to quiet a possible rebellion over money by male tennis players, reminding them that profits from Grand Slam events are reinvested in other tournaments.

More than 80 male pros have threatened to play in alternative tournaments set up by the ATP if disagreements with the Grand Slams about prize money and other issues aren't smoothed over.

Chris Gorringer, chief executive of the All England Club, and chairman Tim Phillips said Monday that negotiations will continue with the Association of Tennis Professionals.

"The four Grand Slams are not-for-profit organizations, which already invest their profits back into the grass roots of the game, both domestically and internationally through the Grand Slam Development Fund," Phillips said.

He said the four Grand Slams have invested \$22 million into grass roots programs, including other international pro tennis events. Wimbledon this year is offering prize money of more than \$15.1 million, with the singles prize money increased by 9.5 percent, he added.

In March, the men's and women's tours urged the U.S. Open, Wimbledon, French Open and Australian Open to commit more

profits to prizes, promotion of the game, health benefits and pension programs. Other areas of discussion include the length of the offseason and more combined men's and women's tournaments. The groups met during the French Open earlier this month.

Anna pledges to play WTT in July

ESPN — Despite a recurring back injury that kept her out of the French Open and Wimbledon, Anna Kournikova plans to play in three World Team Tennis matches next month, according to a Kansas City, Mo., Star report.

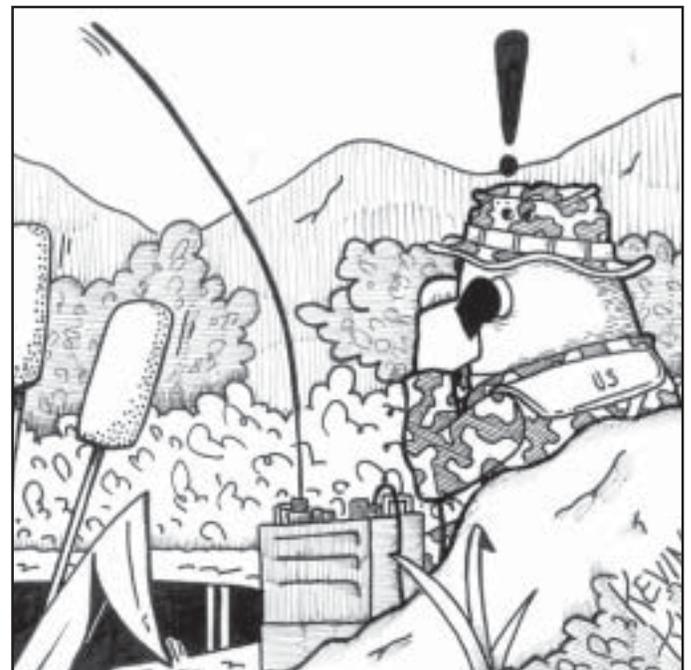
Kournikova, who was the Kansas City Explorers' top pick in the league's marquee draft, confirmed Monday that she expects to play July 16-18, the Star reported. The team will play July 16 in Philadelphia, July 17 in St. Louis and July 18 in Kansas City.

"I think World Team Tennis will be a perfect opportunity to get back into playing tournaments," Kournikova said during a teleconference Monday.

Kournikova's appearance has been in question since a lower back injury in January at the Australian Open. The injury has caused her to withdraw from a series of tournaments, including the two recent majors.

"I definitely hope to play everything (singles, doubles and mixed doubles)," Kournikova said. "But it's up to my health. I'm going to have to find a way to get through this. I know (the back problem) is not going to go away because it's something that's structurally wrong with my back from all the playing."

"Please insert another 50 cents to continue your phone call. Thank you."



kevin_kilgore@hotmail.com

By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support