

# sport

Hampton & Richmond  
Borough match reports  
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## Briefing



**TENNIS:** Hampton School student Oliver Coates, 12, has been imitating Andy Murray by winning a major tennis tournament abroad. Oliver was watched by world number 14 Nicholas Almagro as he won 6-1 in the final of the Spanish National Team Finals for Team Club Espanol. Dad Jason said: "During the match I was particularly happy to overhear Almagro commenting on how good Oliver was. Then, after the match, I managed to get a photo of Oliver and Nicholas together (see photo above)."

**CRICKET:** Zimbabwe Test cricketer Henry Olonga and former county star Ed Giddins will welcome members of the famous Lashings World XI Cricketing All Stars to the George IV Headliners Club in Chiswick on Monday. The charity fundraising auction, organised by single fathers charity Dads House and including entertainment from comics Scott Chalton and Dave Lee, kicks-off in Chiswick High Road at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £30.

**SAILING:** Tamesis Sailing Club's Mike Stevens, crewed by Doug Dode, won Saturday's Mertin Vintage Open meeting at Hampton Sailing Club. The host club's Phil Dalby and Ben Harridge were second, with another Hampton pairing, Hywel Bowen Perkins and Ben Thomas, third.

**CRICKET:** Teddington Town finished their Thames Valley Three campaign in fourth place. Ed Watchorn (500), skipper Gareth Simmonds (436) and Shimir Patel (425) led the way with the bat, while Warren May was the leading wicket-taker with 33, despite missing a third of the season through injury.

**SOFTBALL:** St Mary's College, Twickenham, is to host a softball clinic this weekend. The USA Olympians slow pitch and fast pitch clinic weekend runs from today until Sunday, and will feature appearances by USA head coach Mike Candrea, team manager Ronnie Isham and star midfielder Jessica Mendoza. The trio will discuss tactics and take part in practice sessions with softball enthusiasts.

# Sports always on my mind

sports psychology

Stuart Amos

British sportsmen and women have long been suspicious of change, but it is with an open mind – and a sense of desperation – that I find myself at Richmond Physiotherapists on a Friday morning late in the cricket season for a session with a sports psychologist.

Amanda Owens was the woman behind Southampton FC's surprise escape from the Premier League drop zone in 2001, and has been working with Surrey County Cricket Club for the past six years. Saints chairman Rupert Lowe brought the 35-year-old to St Mary's Stadium in October 2001 with the remit to keep the club in the top flight and, by May, then-manager Gordon Strachan had taken his side from the bottom to 11th in the table.

I have had a miserable season with the bat at Twickenham Cricket Club and am not about to let that form continue into the rugby season. Can Owens help this 31-year-old amateur stop the rot?

Top psychologist David Peters has been hailed as one of the main reasons behind British cycling's gold medal rush in Beijing. And Owens reckons Carshalton's Olympic champion Rebecca Romero's success will have been as much to do with her world quadruple 2005 as anything else.

"Having achieved greatness, from a psychological point of view, she would have known she could master another sport," she said.

"Her first world title would have been a huge learning



**It's all in the mind:** Amanda Owens tries to work out what makes sports reporter Stuart Amos tick. Deadlinepix Gareth Harmer SP22548

experience and provided a great mental platform to achieve the second."

We go back to my maiden century for Twickenham, as well as a half-century scored as captain of the second team earlier this season.

My behaviours and emotions before, during and after both matches are pulled apart, unloading as much about who I am as a person, as who I am as a sportsman.

It feels like therapy – and to a degree it is – but it is designed to trigger a repeat of more profitable times at the crease.

After only one session, Saturday comes with an altogether more positive outlook.

I have taken time to think about what I want to achieve on the pitch to find the 'zone'.

I stroke a patient 10 before my wicket is disturbed – we go on to lose the game.

It is often said sport is 10 per cent skill and 90 per cent in the mind. Maybe it is the 10 per cent of ability – or lack of it – that I need to address.

Having adapted what I have discussed with Owens to pre-season rugby training in the past two weeks, I have noticed a difference and I am expecting big things over the next eight months.

## DECONSTRUCTING AMANDA OWENS

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** BASES accredited sports psychologist for Surrey County Cricket Club.

**Lives:** North London, with offices in Covent Garden and Richmond.

**Has worked for:** Essex County Cricket Club, British Olympic Association, Lawn Tennis Association and Southampton FC.

**Another thing:** Was once an international tennis player with an official world ranking, although she would like to keep that a secret.



## Onslow-Cole hoping to erase painful memories

New Malden's Tom Onslow-Cole will not be thinking about past misdemeanours at Brands Hatch in March as he bids to finish the HiQ MSA British Touring Car Championship in style this Sunday.

The 21-year-old was involved in the biggest crash of his career on the season's opening day at the Kent circuit when his Vauxhall Vectra VXR was nudged off the track and into the barriers at high-speed along Cooper Straight.

Six months on, still driving the same rebuilt car, he finds himself sixth in the standings and in a position to pip teammate Matt Neal – the most experienced driver on the grid – for fifth place in the championship.

And a strong showing during the weekend, which features the final three rounds of the season, could even see him

motor racing

Stuart Amos

claim third in the standings.

"It was the biggest shunt I've ever had in terms of G-force and impact. It came at a fast section of the track where there's no real run-off. It's not a very forgiving spot, but the cars are very safe," he said.

"It was a freak accident and will probably be in the back of my mind somewhere, but I won't be driving past that spot and thinking about it.

"I'll be fine and going flat out and looking to erase that memory with a win.

"Going back to Brands at the end of season is good for me. I was fresh within the Vauxhall team back in March and not quite on the winning pace."

## Puckle's boys hoping to land a cup cash boost

Malden Wanderers skipper Giles Puckle is hoping the lack of competitive cricket prior to Sunday's rescheduled National Knockout Cup final will not undermine his side's bid to land a bumper pay day.

The Wanderers, who finished runners-up in the Surrey Championship Premier Division, take on Leicestershire side Kibworth this weekend after efforts to play the match at Lord's last Tuesday were washed out by rain.

The league season ended on September 6, leaving just friendly matches for Puckle's men to prepare for one of the biggest games in the club's history.

Sponsors Cockspur have thrown in a 14-day all-expenses paid trip for the squad to Barbados, to go with the £6,500

cricket

Stuart Amos

winners' cheque. And spinner Puckle, who has claimed more than 50 wickets in all competitions this season, is confident the delay will not affect the strength of his side for the match.

"With the game coming after the league season has finished, there was a concern players will have booked holidays, but I think we have got good availability," he said.

"It is a huge game with a huge incentive to do well.

"It is not the sort of match you want to go into undercooked, so we are going to have to find some good cricket to keep us focused."

## From the Sidelines

with NATHAN WOOLFORD



So, Harlequins have got off to a flyer this season, sitting top of the Guinness Premiership after back-to-back wins in their opening two matches.

However, the major talking point for me has been the close-cropped, new-look haircuts adopted by star men David Strettle, Danny Care and Mike Brown, who have had their longer locks shorn especially for the new season, as if to signify once and for all that Quins mean business this time around.

Strettle, in particular, was barely recognisable at the Stoop on Saturday, having swapped his trademark swirly curls for an extreme short back and sides.

With Quins having got off to a perfect start after so much barbershop activity, I find myself asking the question: Is a new sporting haircut a recipe for success?

A new look for a new season? With all these Quins stars opting for a GI Elvis image, fans will be hoping their heroes take on an approach as stylish and slick as their new hairdos.

There have been many memorable and wacky haircuts in world sport over the years and, in my mind at least, an endless list of superstars as memorable for the way they looked as for any accomplishments achieved on their chosen field of play.

Think Columbian football legend Carlos Valderrama in Italia 90, tennis bad boy John McEnroe (and headband), any carnation of David James over the past 10 years and, of course, comb-over king Bobby Charlton. Each name is synonymous with his hairstyle.

Arguably the most unusual attempt to breed success via change up top came at the 1998 World Cup, when the Romanian national team all dyed their hair a bleached blonde in a bid to inspire unity, spirit and, somehow, glory.

Dubbed the ice lollies by pundit Terry Venables, the blonde bombshells crashed out in the second round.

There has also been a conveyor belt of top sports stars who have shaved their heads over the years in a bid to find that extra, missing bit of guile that will give them the edge (maybe they do it to lose weight). A-listers like Leyton Hewitt, David Beckham, Kevin Pietersen and Andre Agassi have all opted for the cruelest cut of all at crucial points in their career, and all have enjoyed success while sporting Kojak-like cuts.

All in all, I think there is a case for a new look prompting renewed success. It has been proven over the years and, I am sure, it will be proven again.

For previous From the Sidelines see [rftimes.co.uk](http://rftimes.co.uk)