

PRESSURE ALL ON MURRAY, SAYS HEWITT

GLASGOW: Australian veteran Lleyton Hewitt says the pressure is all on Andy Murray as he attempts to lead his Great Britain side to Davis Cup glory. Murray suffered the disappointment of being knocked out in the fourth round of the US Open by Kevin Anderson in New York last week - his earliest exit from a Grand Slam tournament in five years.

The 28-year-old is now concentrating on leading Team GB into the Davis Cup final for the first time since 1978 as they prepare to face Australia in their semi-final clash at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow.

The best-of-five tie opens with two singles rubbers today, followed by the doubles rubber on Saturday and the reverse singles on Sunday.

Murray played three tough matches in three days in GB's win over France in the quarter-finals in July - including a doubles win with older brother Jamie - and Hewitt says the weight of expectation will be on the Scot again this time round.

"A lot of the pressure is obviously on Andy," said Hewitt, who won the competition with Australia in 1999 and 2003. "Whoever gets the opportunity to face him on day one really has nothing to lose, you can go out free swinging and play your game." The 34-year-old, who is set to retire

after the Australian Open at the start of 2016, added: "I think Andy pretty much has got to win that match in a lot of ways so it's going to be a bigger rubber for them, I think, and these young boys are big match players as well. "We're going to try and come up with the best team play to win three out of the five matches."

However, two-time major winner Murray was adamant that Great Britain's Davis Cup squad was not a one-man team.

Pressure on everybody

"I wouldn't say it's all on me. We got into this position by everyone in the team playing their part," Murray said. "I think there's pressure on everybody. It's Lleyton's last chance to win the Davis Cup and he'll be feeling pressure as well and all the players in their team will be feeling the same way.

"The pressure is on us as well because everyone views this as a good opportunity, so we can point fingers at one another and say there is pressure for certain individuals and none on the others but they'll be feeling the pressure as well and we'll see who handles it better over the weekend." The 28-year-old, who will be cheered on by a passionate home support in Scotland, added that he had played some of the best tennis of his career in the competition. — AFP



GENEVA: Roger Federer (left) of Switzerland, shakes hands with Jesse Huta Galung (right) of the Netherlands, after the drawing of the tennis Davis Cup World Group Play-off round match between Switzerland and the Netherlands, in Geneva yesterday. —AP

MURRAY PLEDGES TO MAKE EVERY ACE COUNT FOR REFUGEES

LONDON: Andy Murray has pledged 50 pounds (\$77.59) to children's charity UNICEF for every ace he hits for the rest of the year after being moved by television images of refugees fleeing to Europe.

His sponsors Standard Life, along with tennis bodies the LTA and ATP, have pledged to match the world number three's donations so that every ace will be worth 200 pounds. "Having seen the images broadcast on the news in recent weeks I felt I had to do something to help the millions of children and their

families who have been forced to flee their homes and had their lives turned upside down," the Scot said in a statement. "I'll get that little bit more satisfaction from each ace I hit knowing that it will be helping UNICEF keep children safe." Murray is playing for Britain in their Davis Cup semi-final against Australia in Glasgow this weekend, and is due to compete in Shanghai, Paris and the ATP World Tour finals in London in November. The British number one hit 64 aces in his four matches at the US Open earlier this month. — Reuters



GLASGOW: Australia's Thanasi Kokkinakis (left) and Britain's Andy Murray pose for the media after the draw for the semifinal tennis matches in the Davis Cup in Glasgow, yesterday. —AP

ANDY MURRAY FACES THANASI KOKKINAKIS IN DAVIS CUP SEMI

GLASGOW: Andy Murray has been drawn to play Thanasi Kokkinakis in the opening singles match of the Davis Cup semi-final between Britain and Australia. Thursday's draw also pitted Dan Evans, who was brought in as the second singles player ahead of James Ward and Kyle Edmund, against Bernard Tomic.

The matches are being played on an indoor hard court at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow. In Saturday's doubles, Jamie Murray and Dominic Inglot were nominated to face Lleyton Hewitt and Sam Groth. In Sunday's reverse singles, it's Andy Murray vs. Tomic and Evans vs. Kokkinakis.

Britain is bidding to reach its first Davis Cup final since 1978. Australia has won the competition 29 times, the last triumph coming against Spain in 2003.

Evans called up

Britain gave Dan Evans, ranked 300th in the world, a surprise call-up yesterday as their second singles player for the Davis Cup semi-final against Australia in Glasgow this weekend. The 25-year-old joins brothers Andy and Jamie Murray and Dominic Inglot in a team trying to reach their first final since 1978. World number three Andy Murray will play Thanasi Kokkinakis, ranked 72, in Friday's opening singles match with Evans then playing Bernard Tomic (23).

US Open doubles runner-up Jamie Murray will team up with Inglot, who reached the men's doubles semis in Flushing Meadows, for the third rubber against Samuel Groth and Lleyton Hewitt on Saturday. Evans, who had been due to play a challenger event in Istanbul this week, was preferred over far higher-ranked Kyle Edmund and James Ward for the second singles slot.

Edmund is ranked 100th in the world but had never

played a Davis Cup tie and fell heavily in practice this week while Ward has lost his last 10 matches.

Goffin to face Delbonis

World number 15 David Goffin will lead Belgium in the opening singles Davis Cup semi-final game against Argentina's Federic Delbonis, Thursday's draw revealed.

The tie begins at 12h00GMT today and takes place in Brussels where Steve Darcis will be second on court for the hosts against Leonardo Mayer for the South Americans. Neither country have ever won the Davis Cup although Argentina have lost 3 finals and appeared in 10 of the past 14 Davis Cup semi-finals. Belgium are playing in the last four for the first time since 1999 and will host the final in November should they progress.

Saturday's pivotal doubles' rubber will feature Belgium's Ruben Bemelmans and Kimmer Coppejans against Carlos Berlocq and Diego Schwartzman of Argentina although the two captains can change their line-ups up to one hour before the match. Sunday will feature the reverse singles with three points needed for victory. Great Britain will take on Australia in the second semi-final taking place in Glasgow. —

Friday singles:

David Goffin (BEL) v Federic Delbonis (ARG)

Steve Darcis (BEL) v Leonardo Mayer (ARG)

Saturday doubles (provisional):

Ruben Bemelmans/Kimmer Coppejans (BEL) v Carlos Berlocq/Diego Schwartzman (ARG)

Sunday singles (provisional):

David Goffin (BEL) v Leonardo Mayer (ARG)

Steve Darcis (BEL) v Federic Delbonis (ARG) — Agencies



(From L) Belgium's tennis players Kimmer Coppejans, Ruben Bemelmans, Steve Darcis, David Goffin, captain Johan Van Herck and Argentina's tennis team captain Daniel Orsanic, Leonardo Mayer, Federico Delbonis, Carlos Berlocq and Diego Schwartzman pose for photographs yesterday. —AFP