



## (Re-)play it again, Jon (pt. 4)

Posted: Wednesday March 8, 2006 12:49PM; Updated: Thursday March 9, 2006 12:23PM

**One of the big headlines last week was the comeback of Pete Sampras to World Team Tennis. I know the articles haven't triggered anything to last week's mailbag, but I was wondering if we can explore the comeback a little. First, Sampras out of the blue says he wants to play in WTT -- would you suggest this is a stepping stone to playing in the ATP Tour as a doubles player or perhaps even as a wild-card single? Second, do you think he has taken a leaf out of Martina Hingis' book and allowed himself to rate his game in comparison to top 10 ATP players? Last, it must play in his mind that Federer might actually break his own remarkable records -- would coming back to the tour mean that Sampras is threatened by Federer's current dominance?**

-- Carl the Scientist, San Juan, Puerto Rico

I suppose comeback speculation is inevitable, but I would urge you guys to dial it back here. Hingis was 23 trying to come back on the WTA Tour. Sampras is 34. And married. And the father of two. Sampras has been in **JD Salinger**-level hiding since his retirement. He plays golf and watches sports and probably had to suffer through the *Curious George* movie. He needed something to supplement his days, and, having ruled out Kabbalah and Sudoku, he figured he could get back to playing some tennis. He could take inventory of his game and earn a little cash playing WTT. Why not?

### Passing shots

- Reader **B. Gilbert** of San Rafael, Calif., took issue with our riff on why a reunion between Roddick and his former coach is unlikely. Just to be clear, we never meant to imply that Gilbert has ever been anything less than professional discussing Roddick on the air. It's simply that we had heard that some of his comments were not well received by the Roddick camp.
- A "good on ya, mate" to the Outback Steakhouse for agreeing to become the title sponsor of the Champions Cup Series tennis circuit through 2008. The Champions Cup Series, which begins this Friday with the inaugural event in Naples, Fla., will become known as the Outback Champions Series.
- The next issue of *Smash Magazine*, the *Tennis* mag quarterly aimed at a younger demo, is out. Check it out.
- Remember **Claude England**, the New Zealander (New Zealot?) we unofficially determined to be the most diminutive male pro since **Olivier Rochus**? **SJCIT** of Baltimore informs us: Claude England is our tennis pro. He is indeed from New Zealand and probably considered the top and most respected pro in Baltimore. He runs one of the best kids programs in the state!

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- Nice to see **Brenda Schultz-McCarthy** scoring a wild card this week. Is this the year of the comeback or what?
- **Erwin Ong** of Los Angeles asks if **Robert Waltz** is out there. "He has a statistical background and would cover WTA rankings and results like a hawk, churning out analysis mostly based on who was moving up and down the rankings, how many points they had to defend, etc. I tried looking for a 2005 WTA statistical abstract, but couldn't find one anywhere."
- Get your U.S. vs. Chile Davis Cup tickets [here](#).
- Next time we talk about "Tennis Dads from Hell," here's [the new standard-bearer](#). (Thanks to **Lucy Clark** of Arlington, Va., for passing on the link.)
- Nice to see Venus and Serena back in the public eye. Alas, it was at an Oscar after-party, not on a tennis court. And, in an all-time Freudian slip, one allegedly alluded to **Philip Seymour Hoffman** as ... well, let's just say his last name came out as **Hoffmore**.
- Fellow *Simpsons* fans, if you haven't already seen [this](#).
- Anagram of the week: Miss Venus Williams = I'll win massive sums.
- Thanks to the many of you who volunteered for tech-savvy help. Here's another chance: Any of you have expertise in podcasting? If so, you know where to find me.

And finally, **Alex** of Atlanta writes: "I am embarrassed to admit this, but **Andy Murray** with the wild hair in Las Vegas last week reminded me of **Butthead**."

Have a great week, everyone!

*Sports Illustrated* senior writer *Jon Wertheim* covers tennis for the magazine and is a regular contributor to *SI.com*.