

An article from: La Gazzetta dello Sport[■]
by **Rino Tommasi**

LONDON. Maybe two rounds are not enough to seriously update the eve's forecasts, but, with Steffi Graf remaining the favorite to win her fifth title, men's singles matches reminded us that grass courts allow exceptions (the most sensational being those of Borg and Agassi in '92), but more often are made for specialists.

If Stich complicated his life against the Australian Stolle, we have seen against Goellner and Volkov the best Becker of this season, and a healthy Edberg.

Yesterday the Swede got rid in three sets of Israeli's Amos Mansdorf, always beaten by him in 7 previous matches, but often able to cause him trouble. Especially, we remember a match, played right here in 1990, in which, before winning 9-7 at the fifth set, Edberg was twice two points away from defeat. Neither had been easy their last head-to-head (earlier this year in Melbourne), 'cause Edberg had been forced to end the 4th set with a tie-break.

Someone had doubted of Stefan's condition, because he struggled to beat in the first round Greg Rusedski, against whom Stefan had been taken three times to a tie-break, losing one, in the third set, after missing a match-point.

I don't think I'm exaggerating if I say that this Rusedski looked particularly equipped for this surface. He's a left-hander, serves well and in his young record there's a win in a challenger played in Newcastle on grass courts and a title in junior doubles taken right here in Wimbledon.

Yesterday, against Mansdorf, Edberg lost his serve three times, but played well on the return, playing some shots of very high quality.

Now his route looks quite easy, at least until the semifinals, if we consider that, in his quarter of the draw all the other three seeds are out. Muster was eliminated in the first round, Lendl and Medvedev lost yesterday, the former because too old, the latter because too young.

We should note that Becker and Edberg have better percentages of wins out of matches played here in Wimbledon than all the other active players. Becker, three wins and three finals out of nine participations, has a record of 48 wins and only 6 defeats (88.8%). Edberg records 43 wins and 8 defeats out of 10 participations (84.3%).

So, statistics are on Becker's side, Edberg is only up in the head-to-heads, all played in the final: the Swede won in 1988 and 1990, while the German in 1989. It would be a nice final this year as well, but the road is still very long indeed.