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Becker backs more women coaches

German hopeful of continuing Serb tie-up

BY ARMSTRONG VAS

DOHA: Men's tennis will see a flurry of women coaches after Andy Murray broke down a gender barrier by hiring Amelie Mauresmo, says six-time Grand Slam singles champion Boris Becker.

The German winner of 49 tournaments, including six Grand Slams speaking in a telephonic interview with The peninsula said: "The number of women as coaches on the WTA and ATP Tour is very less. More Women should be there as coaches. I do not see any reason for more women players moving into that role. It pains me that the number of women coaches on the circuit needs to be less. The number will increase."

The former Wimbledon champion as coach of world No.1 Novak Djokovic is out to prove experience counts on ATP Tour.

Besides Becker, another former great Stefan Edberg of Sweden is with Swiss great Roger Federer, currently ranked world No.2. Ivan Lendl, another great player of his era, was coach to world No. 11 Andy Murray.

The Briton parted ways with the Czech-born American after a two year fruitful partnership in March.

In June, Briton Murray raised eyebrows with the appointment of former world number one Amelie Mauresmo.

Last month Gala Leon, a former WTA player, became the first woman to be appointed captain of the country's Davis Cup team.

The decision was criticized by Toni Nadal, Rafael Nadal's coach and uncle.

"It is preferable that (the captain) is someone with a background in the world of men's tennis," Toni was quoted as saying.



Former tennis player Boris Becker of Germany talks during the official opening ceremony of the Doha Goals Forum in Doha in this December 2013 file picture. The forum aims to create initiatives for global progress through sports.

But Becker has a different view arguing there are no substantial differences between the men's and women's games.

"Gender should not be an issue when a player, male or female, selects a new trainer to work with," added the 48-year-old, who is the Brand Ambassador for the Doha Goals Forum which will take place in Qatar from November 3 to 5.

"Everyone has talent but you need discipline and dedication to do well. It's a risky business, not everybody is called Djokovic, Federer or Nadal so surround yourself with honest people and work hard," he advised young talent.

Becker is part of a star-studded line-up of speakers who have confirmed their participation for Doha event, which is into its third edition.

Becker first venture to Doha was 21 years back. He was one of the few big names to take part in the first-ever Qatar Open, just two years after the end of the Gulf War. Edberg and Goran Ivanisevic were some of the top players who were taking part along with Becker.

"I was ranked No.2 when I went I came here to Qatar," who beat both the former Wimbledon champions to triumph.

"I have fond memories of Doha and I have a lot of friends there."

"Nobody knew anything about Doha or Qatar back then. Nobody could see some 20 years ago how much it would grow. Nobody could imagine that it would be getting really serious in the world of economics, business and sports," he added.

Becker said he will be focussing on the communication aspect of sports at the Doha Goals.

"I will focus on sports as a tool to affect change in the world. Sports breaks the barriers of race, colour, religion and unites people."

Others high profile sports personalities who will be taking part in the three-day forum are former World Heavyweight Boxing Champion and 1968 Olympic gold medalist George Foreman, Jamaican triple Olympic gold medalist Veronica Campbell-Brown, former Olympic Champion and US Track & Field director Jackie Joyner-Kersey, 1992 Olympic gold medalist Linford Christie and retired German international footballer Christoph Metzelder.

Meanwhile Becker hopes to continue working as coach for the top-ranked Serb.

"We have a very good relationship. We have built a lot of experience, a lot of trust. We like it very much and we want to continue. That is the plan," he said yesterday.

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