

TENNIS STARS FAIL FIRST BIG TEST

For British tennis, a weekend of ups-and-downs.

Gianni Cucelli - Italy's No. 1 - and Britain's Tony Mottram are first to match their skill at Eastbourne's Devonshire Park in a first round battle for the Davis Cup. Cucelli serving this end.

After losing the first set, the Italian suddenly finds his form. But Mottram doesn't give up and at times he plays like a champion.

Cucelli serving. Match point in the fourth set.

A perfect shot gives the Italian game, set and match. Down sink British hopes, for with Mottram beaten, everything is staked on the battle between the Number two's - Italy's Rolando del Bello and Britain's Geoffrey Paish - bespectacled London civil servant. Many had argued against the election of Paish, but his magnificent fighting display against the stocky, hard-hitting Italian surprised his critics.

Paish serves at the far end. The score is two sets all (this is match point in the decider) and Paish is ready for the kill.

Dogged determination helped Paish to triumph. Two days later, he is again here of the day. With the score at two matches each, Paish comes near to winning the match for Britain. Though he fails (and Italy win through) his was a gallant fight.