

WEEKEND SPORTS WEEKEND

Two get IM norms

F. M. Rahman

The first United Insurance masters' chess tournament concluded on May 12 — much to the relief of both the players and organizers.

The enthusiasm — which the tournament had raised at the start was dampened considerably by the catastrophic cyclone on April 29.

Nevertheless, the meet had to be dragged on, since abandoning half way through would have meant a heavy loss to the sponsors.

Indeed, an evil gremlin seemed to have pursued this meet from the very beginning.



TAHMIDUR RAHMAN otherwise why should Bipin Shenoy the soft-spoken chess player from Calcutta, fall seriously sick just at a time when he was picking up points after a disastrous start.

For all that, it has been a good tournament, as far as the local players were concerned. After all, two international master's norms in one tournament must be viewed as a good bargain.

Credit goes to the bespectacled engineer Syed Tahmidur Rahman and seasoned Younus Hassan for having earned that distinction.

As it was, Tahmid started in great style, scoring as many as eight points out of the first nine games. He was cruising along like an eel, and looked well set to win the tournament until his equal position against IM T N Parameswaran of India began to deteriorate — thanks to a series of weak moves.

Tahmid failed to check the rot and lost to V Koshi the very next round when the tall man from Kerala demonstrated some flawless technique in a rook ending.

Tahmid, however, had de-

molished the ultimate winner Mahmood Ahmed Lodhi from Pakistan in the fifth round in what may be termed as the most beautiful tactical finish of the tournament.

Lodhi deviated from his usual (I) d4 and opened with (I) e4, but the ploy backfired when his attempt to confuse things with a bishop sacrifice was refuted calmly by Tahmid.

For Tahmid this has been a fine tournament. He played the sharp position well, and managed to avoid the kind of sterility that would often make it difficult for him to play for the full point.

Younus, on the other hand, had a very bad start. He lost patience in a commanding position against Rezaul Huq, who seems to have regained some of his old grit and paid the penalty. But then he bounced back with two fine wins against Vishal Sareen and Bipin Shenoy, and was running for the norm once again.

The winners, IM Lodhi, known for his aggressive and resourceful play, should be considered lucky to have won it. He got into a lost position against the tournament rabbit Arshad Nanno, and had to defend very carefully to get a draw from his game against IM Misra.

Misra disappointed. He fell out of contention with too many short draws.

As for the other players, T N Parameswaran played superbly to tie for the second spot along with Tahmid and Younus.

Our only International Master Zillur Rahman Champak should have done better.

Zillur's attempts to flatten his opponents with a big punch early in the game did not work well.

In his game against Almasur Rahman he lost his way in an obscure middle game in which he was two pieces down, but had some attacking chances.

Rezaul Huq must overcome his chronic time problem to be able to cash in on his good defensive play.

Moreover, he must have better control over his nerves.

Fide Master Koshi played well and would certainly have made the norm with a little luck. He is a very uncompromising player, and likes to play chess in a sporting manner targeting about results.

Now something has to be said about the way the local press covered this tournament.

One daily went so far as to say that a conspiracy was on to deprive IM Mahmood Lodhi of the top spot.

This was outlandish, to say the least.

It also shows how murky our thinking still is, even when it comes to sports.

Some journalists got sniffling about the genuineness of some games. They should bear in mind that raising such an issue has its hazards too.

In the ultimate analysis, it is



YOUNUS HASSAN the game of chess that suffers when too much light is shed on such issues.

Everything of course was not perfect, but then 100 per cent perfection is always theoretical goal which the ordinary mortals are not expected to attain.

Let's not forget, a blemish becomes darker when our eyes are set on it—better we take them off!

The organizers deserve thanks for having managed things well.

However, their austerity drive appears to have been misdirected.

For good reasons, the local players could not relish the idea of their pocket money not coming along.

Bangladesh, we may say, is on the threshold of a breakthrough in international chess. We have a host of strong young players who, when propelled to the international arena, will prove their mettle beyond doubt.

For that purpose, we need such tournaments. So thanks are due to the United Insurance authorities for their being magnanimous enough to sponsor this meet.

After more than 20 years in which the strongest pressures to isolate South African sport have come from the outside world — with the backing of anti-apartheid forces within the country — the boycott has now come home.

That was made abundantly clear by the parting words of the International Olympic Committee as they left South Africa after five days of discussion with sports administrators and politicians.

The delegation, headed by IOC vice-president Keba Mbaye of Senegal, set five conditions for South Africa's re-admission to the Olympic fold — and by implication, for their inclusion in the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona:

*The abolition of apartheid.

*South Africa's adherence to the Olympic charter.

*The formation of a single representative Olympic body which will encourage affiliated national federations to normalise relations with the relevant international bodies.

*The unification of individual sports on a non-racial basis.

*The normalisation of South Africa's relationship with the African Olympic movement.

On the face of it, condition number one throws up a major obstacle unless South Africa's politicians move faster.

The delegation did not specify what it would consider the abolition of apartheid to be. But Mbaye and others indicated that South African sport would not have to wait until full political rights were granted to all.

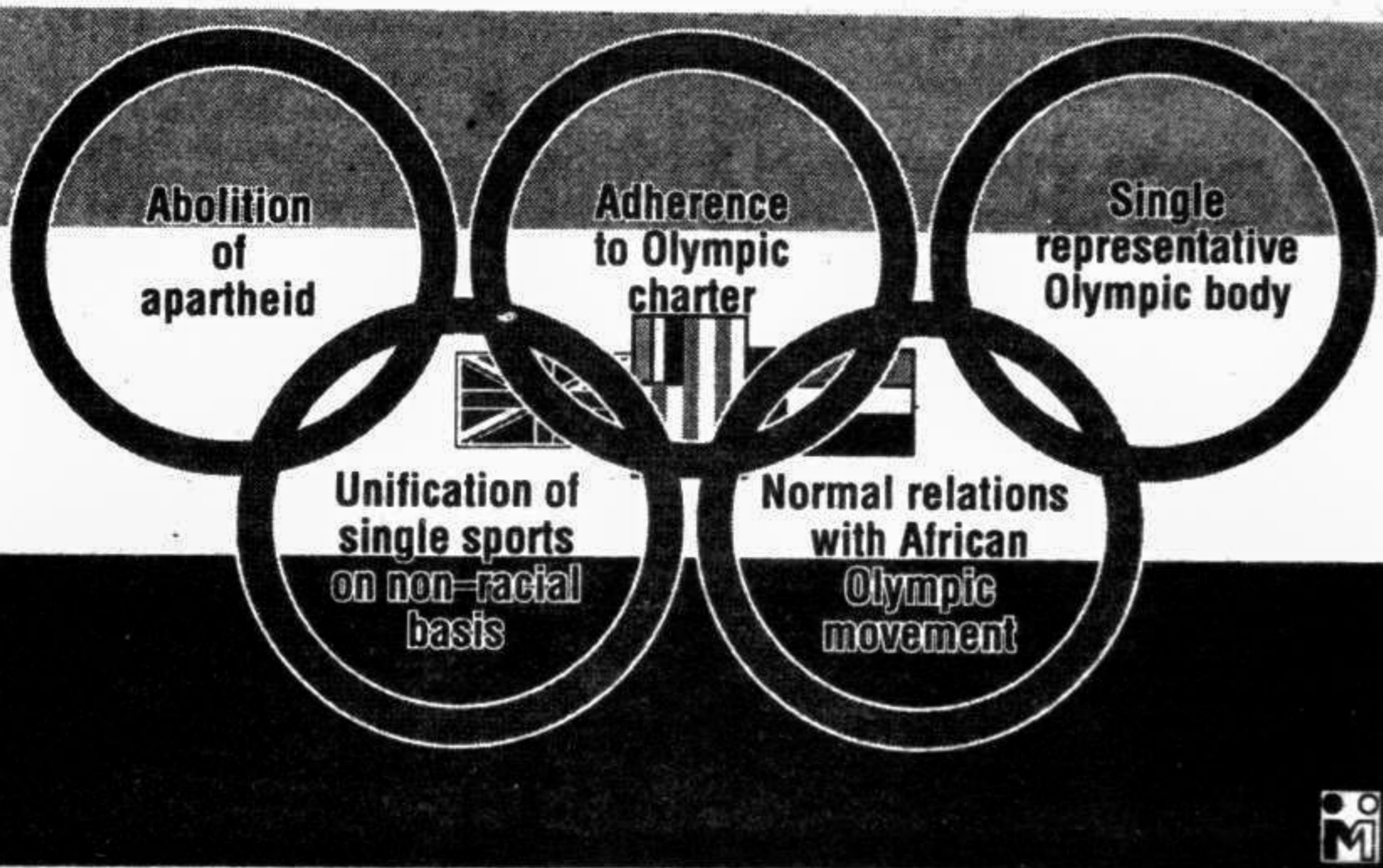
It is well-known that the IOC president Juan Samranch has a deep desire to see the first undivided Olympic Games take place in his home city, under his presidency. His wish to have South African back is what has driven the IOC to reassess the country's exclusion, a process which began some two years ago and culminated in the delegation's, the first Olympic visit since 1967.

Given all that, the IOC will consider condition one, the abolition of apartheid, to have been met by the scrapping of three apartheid laws—the Groups Areas Act, the Land Use Act and the Population Registration Act. This legislation should be on the scrapheap by the end of this Parliamentary session, which finishes in June.

To be the end of apartheid says a great deal about the public profile and persuasiveness of State President FW De Klerk. "We were extremely impressed

S Africa : Olympic challenge?

The sports boycott on South Africa is beginning to crumble. Decisions have to be made quickly as to how best manage the impending changes. To add to the pressure, the International Olympic Committee has given South Africans until June to meet its conditions for inclusion in the Barcelona Olympics. But as Gemini News Service reports, scrapping apartheid may be the end of one problem and the beginning of another.



SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTS FIELD THESE FIVE TEAMS

by President de Klerk," said IOC director Francois Carrard. "We were very much on the same wavelength."

These three laws are the cornerstone of apartheid; having convinced others of that, he can then expect rewards when he pronounces them dead.

That might work in London or Lausanne but ultimately it is South Africans who need convincing, not Europeans.

There is still a strong feeling among black political organisations — like security laws, education, government spending and above all political rights — have not been addressed.

There is a concern that South Africa will return to international sport without addressing the inequalities in facilities and opportunity — for example, it is estimated that whites own 73 per cent of all that the IOC considers this

The key question though is, who else is on that wavelength? There are many political and sports organisations in South Africa who feel that De Klerk has made himself both the examiner and the exam candidate. He has insisted that athletics tracks, 82 per cent of the swimming pools and 82 per cent of all rugby fields.

There are five organisations involved in the Interim National Olympic Committee of South Africa, which was given 180 days by the IOC to form a united structure.

The National and Olympic Sports Congress (NOSC) has the backing of the African National Congress. It supports the continuation of the moratorium, at least until there has been unification of white and black sports bodies and large-scale upgrading of facilities, with a possible return for individual sports which have

achieved this.

The South African National Olympic Congress (SANOC) is the country's oldest establishment organisation and was expelled from the Olympic movement in 1970. Since the beginning of last year, the SANOC has been willing to accept the moratorium until unity is achieved, but mainly because they see this as their only route back into the Games.

The Congress of South African Sport (COSAS), consisting largely of white sports administrators, was formed in the early 1980s. It is against the sports moratorium but will abide by it while the new Olympic body is being formed.

The Southern African Council on Sport (SACOS) was the main black sports body but has been overshadowed by the NOSC. SACOS operated from the watchword "no normal

sport in an abnormal society and believes in strict adherence to the moratorium.

Finally, the South African Non-Racial Committee (SANROC) was formed in exile in 1962 and was the driving force behind efforts to isolate South Africa. Its principal significance in the current phase lies with its head, Sam Ramsamy, who is a special adviser to both the IOC and the United Nations on apartheid and sport and head of the interim Olympic body.

From this mix of organisations, one, and one clear policy will have to emerge. Even within the organisations there are differences. For instance, some in the NOSC believe that sports which achieve unity and bridge the gaps in facilities should be allowed some international competition. Yet the NOSC council has just reaffirmed its support for the moratorium and stressed that improving facilities and not international competition was the priority.

The fact is, the boycott is going to go, one way or another. It can either be allowed to crumble away, creating more division and confusion, or its lifting can managed in a way that extracts every last ounce of flesh from white sports bodies.

A possible solution lies in the selective boycott approach — allow back those sports which have redistributed their wealth and opportunities; keep at home those that refuse to change. That will give real change the massive incentive it needs.

Many black people do not want to see white South Africa enjoying the spectacle of an all-white rugby team playing against the all blacks of New Zealand. But surely they don't feel the same way about the national soccer team, or the country's top black marathon runners?

They will feel cheated if the boycott is dropped and everyone goes to the start line together — white elitist sports where nothing has changed, equal in status with non-racial soccer or road-running, the sports of the majority.

If that happens, after all the years of sacrifice that supporting the boycott has meant — and blacks have made the biggest of these — some sports people might have cause to wonder if it was actually worth it.

Atlanta organisers, USOC battle for sponsorships

ATLANTA, May 23: Billy Payne, chief of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, and Harvey Schiller, executive director of the US Olympic Committee, are in a battle over control of the lucrative corporate sponsorships that will fund the 1996 Games, reports AP.

The battle began in earnest last month when local, national and international Olympic and corporate officials gathered in New York for the first big meeting to discuss marketing opportunities for the Atlanta Games.

Payne, Schiller and their affiliated organizations have been asked by the International Olympic Committee to hammer out the first-ever joint marketing agreement between the host city and the nation's Olympic Committee.

Such an agreement, scheduled to be signed June 1, would outline various levels and categories of corporate sponsorships and how much they would cost. More importantly, the agreement would designate which organization has ultimate control over their sale and how the proceeds will be divided.

Payne has said he thinks the "lion's share" of control and revenues of those marketing opportunities should go to the Atlanta group.

The Atlanta sponsors are counting on at least 324 million dollars in fees from America's largest corporations in return for their right to use the Olympic rings and symbols in advertising and promotions. But US Olympic Committee

Deputy General John Krinsky Jr. has said, "We are the experts."

Understandably, both organizations want the dominant position.

Historically, host cities have



Atlanta 1996 City for the 1996 Games

controlled national and local sponsorships, naming the official sponsors of the Games, and used the money to build Olympic facilities. Payne is counting on those sponsors to

pay for at least 27 per cent of the 1.2-billion-dollar cost of the '96 Games.

The US committee, however, has for years been negotiating deals with a list of large US companies to sponsor the US Olympic team during Games on foreign soil. Those deals typically in the 1-million-dollar to 7-million-dollar range, gave companies such as General Motors and McDonald's the right to link products and services with the US team.

Those proceeds largely fund the committee's 300-million-dollar quadrennial operating budget, which supports US Olympic training programme and facilities. Understandably, the US Olympic committee doesn't want to jeopardize its relationship with those companies. It hopes to continue working with them long after the Games and in Atlanta.

The governing body of the Olympics, the International Olympic Committee wants to make sure Payne and Schiller don't go knocking on the same corporate doors and competing for a limited pool of sponsorship money. It also wants to protect the value of sponsorships, which make possible amateur athletics worldwide.

"The basic reason is if you don't end up with a single marketing programme you could end up in a situation whereby the sponsor of the Games could be Coca-Cola and the sponsor of Olympic team could be Pepsi-Cola," explained Richard W. Pound, an IOC marketing specialist. "That would be hideous."

GRAND Slam tennis has shown a pattern in recent years of producing young and unexpected winners, such as Michael Chang who was only 17 when he took the 1989 French Open and Pete Sampras, aged 19 in 1990 when he became the youngest winner of a US Open in 100 years.

Since the game is no longer dominated by nearly unbeatable stars in the mould of Bjorn Borg, John McEnroe, Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova, others are pressing for a piece of the action.

They include bright new teenagers and late-developing older players who have been lurking down the rankings. Who, among the heirs-in-waiting, is talented and ambitious enough to push for the three remaining slams of 1991?

Patrick McEnroe: Long known as a fine doubles player, finally stepped out of brother John's shadow when he advanced to the singles semifinals of the Australian Open in January where he lost to Boris Becker. A right-hander, unlike John, he was ranked 356 in the world at the end of 1989 but now, aged 24, is 55th.

His previous best big-tournament singles performance was the second round of last year's US Open, but he won the 1989 French Open doubles and the 1989 Masters doubles in London, both times with fellow-American Jim Grabb.

He wields a powerful double-fisted backhand and is comfortable on all surfaces. He attributes his surge up the rankings to improved fitness. He has done well enough out of sport to buy his own apartment on Manhattan's de luxe East

Side in New York. Mild-mannered and easy-going, Patrick enjoys a close relationship with his emotional and turbulent brother and they keep in close touch. He never expects to match John—"what he did was just beyond imagination"—but hopes to make his own mark. "My aim is to give it one hundred per cent and look back in ten years and say I had a great time and did as well as I could."

Thomas Muster: The Austrian, ranked 21st in 1989, now 8th, made a comeback from a serious injury and could peak at the French or US Opens. Born in Leifnitz, Oct. 2, 1967, he plays an aggressive and powerful game and Ivan Lendl rates his forehead one of the best on the tour. His top 1989 performances were reaching the semis of the Australian and the final of the Lipton event, which he lost.

Last year he was largely responsible for taking Austria to the semifinals of the Davis Cup, he won the Italian Open and lost in the semifinals of the French to eventual winner Andre Gomez. In the US Open, too, he went out to the eventual winner, Sampras.

Nicklas Kulti: Righthanded and 6 ft 3 in, this 19-year-old is Sweden's most promising player in the great line of Borg, Mats Wilander and Stefan Edberg. He began playing at the age of six and was ranked number one junior in 1989, after winning Wimbledon and the Australian juniors and being runner up at the US Open juniors. He has won 11 national titles.

A typical Swedish baseliner with a fine service return, Kulti is best on clay and hard

courts. He was ranked 118 at the beginning of 1990 but improved his position by the end of the year to 51 after reaching the final in Prague and upsetting sixth seeded Emilio Sanchez in the French Open.

Omar Camporese: Born May 8, 1968 in Bologna, Italy, he

climbed to 45 in 1990 from 216 in 1988.

Runner-up to Guillermo Perez Roldan at San Marino in 1990, Camporese reached the quarters at the Italian Open and semis at Ljubiana. He gave Becker a tough fight in the third round of the 1991 Australian Open before losing in five sets.

Earlier, the young Italian, who is also a polished doubles player, reached the semifinals of the New Zealand championship.

Fabrice Santoro: Born December 9, 1972, this Frenchman was ranked number two in the ITF junior rankings in 1989 when he won the French junior open, a title he retained in 1990. He started 1990 at 171 in the rankings and by the end of the year was up to 62.

He bloomed at Nice, beating Jean-Philippe Fleurian and Andrei Chesnokov before losing in the quarters. Santoro plays unorthodox two-handed strokes and moves and volleys well.

Jaime Yzaga: From Lima in Peru, was born Oct. 23, 1967 and started playing at the age

of six when his father gave him a racket. He made his mark at the 1985 US Open when he took a set from Lendl, the only player to do so in that tournament. The same year he won the French Open junior and Wimbledon junior doubles.

In 1989 he reached the

of Sweden in five tough sets. He was also runner-up at Bastad in 1990.

Petr Korda: A Czech, Korda, 22, was ranked 59 in 1989, up from 188. He ended 1990 on 38 and has already beaten Chang, Gomez and Yannick Noah. During 1989 he was a finalist in Frankfurt, a quarter-finalist in Prague and a semifinalist in Vienna.

Last year he was a semifinalist at the Philadelphia ATP event, a quarter-finalist at Memphis and got to the semis in Munich.

March Rosset: He is one of Switzerland's few representatives in serious tennis.

Ranked at 56 at the end of 1989, this 20-year-old had moved up to 22 by the end of 1990.

World's number four junior in 1988, he won the Orange Bowl title that year followed by his first pro title in his home town, Geneva, in 1989 and his second at Lyon, France, in 1990. Also last year he reached the finals in Madrid and Bologna.

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He is a baseliner with solid ground strokes and a serve that has been clocked at 124 miles per hour.

Other players to watch are the Frenchman Guy Forget who broke into the top 10 for the first time last fortnight with a victory over Stefan Edberg, American Jay Berger (17th), Svensson (12th), Perez Roldan (14th) and Richey Reneberg (20th). — Compass Sports

Eurosport's demise not end of sports TV revolution

LONDON, May 23 The plug has been pulled at Europe's largest sports television channel, but officials say that doesn't mean the end of all sports stations on the continent, reports AP.

Officials at Eurosport, which went off the air Monday, say they hope to find investors willing to resurrect the satellite channel.

And Screensport, its main competitor, said it plans to add Swedish broadcasts next

year. It now is available throughout Europe in English, French, German and Dutch.

The birth of those two satellite stations in 1989 was hailed as the beginning of a revolution in European sports television. The contingent's sports fans were promised the same type of saturation coverage that the ESPN sports

cable channel, Sports Channel America and other television outlets provide for Americans.

The launch of the 50-million dollar Astra satellite in late 1988 paved the way for those stations, which could be picked up by customers who bought small satellite dish.

Instead of a few hours a week of sports programming

focusing on local and national events, satellite TV offered fans virtually round-the-clock sports from around the globe.

Eurosport was beamed to 26.5 million homes in more than 30 countries, while Screensport reaches an estimated 17 million homes in 19 countries.

Eurosport featured live cov-

erage of last summer's World Cup soccer, Formula One auto racing the World League of American Football and major tennis and track events.

Screensport offers mostly taped footage from ESPN of American sports such as college football and basketball, baseball and pro basketball.

Eurosport is a consortium

of Britain's Sky Television and the European Broadcasting Union, which provided Eurosport with exclusive rights to major sporting events throughout Europe.

But based on a complaint filed by Screensport, the European Commission ruled in February that the Eurosport setup was a violation of fair

competition rules.

The EC said the deal between Sky and the EBU, which includes national networks throughout Europe, enables them to cooperate when they should have been competing. The EC also said the arrangement denied other networks, such as Screensport, access to sports programming.

Eurosport cut transmission on Monday, saying the EC ruling made it impossible to continue. The EC said Tuesday it did not force Eurosport off the air and that it was surprised by the network's disappearance.

Television researchers, advertising agents and financial analysts all said it was too early to tell whether Eurosport would return and if the satellite revolution would succeed in Europe.