WERIND

ranging from collops, if one

Maradona seeking relief in co-

caine from the unbearable

pressures of having to perform

relentlessly had there not been

so much at stake. The money

being dished out to witness a

sporting spectacle or perfor-

mance by a public disillusioned

with life in general is not even

funny. Hence the recent spate

of drug related problems in an

area previously famed for fair

being lavished on the stars of

the day seems to have instilled

in the greats of yesteryears a

burning desire to comeback. In

All the hype and attention

play, honesty and integrity.

SPORTS

WERIND

Recent attempts at a comeback by such sporting greats as Bjorn Borg and George Foreman inspire former fivetimes national tennis champion Sarder Iftekhar to produce this piece:

The arena of sport has always been replete with instances of heroics anecdotes of athletes and sportsmen achieving the seemingly impossible have been passed down through generations since time immemorial. It has always been a sports star with a hitherto unsurpassed achievement who has superseded a particular form of sport in terms of attaining immortality. Thus events such as

Rod Laver's Grand Slam in tennis, Rocky Marciano's unbeaten run of fortynine consecutive victories in heavyweight boxing, Diego Maradona's dream World Cup performance in 1986, Sir Garfield Sobers' 365 not out in Test cricket and a handful of such sterling performances by Goliath shine like luminescent stars in a galaxy of planets and satellites.

Having focussed our attention so far on the gladiators who engage in mortal combat either for a living or for the sheer love of the game let us now look towards the vast multitudes of mere mortals who have flocked to the different arenas of the world — the mediocres or average spectators. It would be unfair not to

ON COMEBACKS hyperbolic jargon what is being talk of the general public at alluded to is a dormant volcano large - who, with their bewildering variety of imperfections . being reawakened — the urge fiction.

get physical, downright meanbig that last one time. Thus one observes the great ness if one gets astral - provide the barometer for meacomeback efforts of recent times dating from Muhammad suring outstanding perfor-Ali to Larry Holmes to John mances by our greats. After all, McEnroe to Mark Spitz to it is the paying public who George Foreman to Bjorn Borg immortalise great mortals. at the last count. If these The commercialisation of sport has taken its toll on us giants have a fault it is in tryall. It has placed the highest ing this one last time to attain premium on performance rea meaningless aura of invincigardless of the ways and means bility or immortality that was of achievement. Thus we are already theirs. Unfortunately, inevitability or the prospect of witness to all sorts of excesses by today's greats of the game. humiliation has not deterred It is difficult to imagine Ben such comeback efforts. It, however, appears that the gods Johnson succumbing to the temptation of performance are not crazy as Greek mytholenhancing drugs or of ogy would have us believe -

of an indomitable spirit to win

It is thus with heavy hearts that the public have seen these idols being torn down before their own eyes - defeated and despatched with disdain. Alas! Dickens may have been able to conjure up circumstances which led to the fulfillment of Pip and Estella's Great Expectations —

order and sense prevail. The

clock may not be turned back

(although in its heart it proba-

bly wants to) and age may not

be defined. So we see sad re-

versals of fortune - the hum-

bling of the immortals at the

hand of the also-rans.

but it would be unrealistic to base our expectations on mere

Having said all that, how much should one make out of these reversals of fortune, these apparently futile efforts at comebacks?

A few weeks ago' Viv

Richards, commenting on

Gordon Greenidge's memorable 'comeback' 226 against Australia in the fourth Test at Barbados, said something which helps us to interprets this unrealistic expectation on the part of the greats in a different perspective. He said, quite rightly, that form is temporary, class is permanent. It took a great man like Sir Richards to point out the difference between genius and mediocrity. A man's greatness can never be judged by performance - this is too transitory. Class is what sets the greats apart from the rest of the pack. So when a great athlete or sportsman or singer or whatever makes a comeback would it not be too unjust to judge him by his performance on a given day and not his class? After all one derives more pleasure from watching a great passing shot from Borg than witnessing an unknown Jordi Arreas (conqueror of Borg at Monte Carlo) gasp and

grunt his way to a 6-2, 6-3 vic-

tory. Similarly, one would rather watch Maradona score four goals in a 5-a-side soccer match played with friends on a beach than watch a Stojkovic score with a free kick in a European Cup final.

In order of the day, there-

fore, is to view these heroic instances of comeback efforts by the living legends in their true perspective. The would be Gatuicks and Boswells of the world should refrain from unnecessarily sharpening the knives of criticism. It is not for mere mortals to pose as judge and jury and jeer failed comeback bids by the greats. Perhaps the urge to bring down our idols from their exalted heights is irresistible, a perverse manifestation of our own inadequacies. But let us not forget, their greatness transcends one or two blemishes. In the final analysis the only crime we may accuse them of is shattering our perceptions of their infallibility, nothing more. The class of a champion is always evident, in victory or in defeat. The sands of time may dim the memory of their performances, but let us not make too much of performances for these are mere statistics. For now, let us just be content with the fact that this heroes still brave all odds and adversities to attempt the impossible one more time.

In a world bogged down in the quicksand of pettiness and mediocrity we need our superstars more than they need us.

Clubs' finances worry FIFA



ZURICH, June 6: World soccer's governing body, deeply concerned at the financial mess confronting

many clubs, is to examine the problem at a meeting in Lisbon next week, reports Reuter.

The International Football Federation (FIFA) was worried because clubs' financial difficulties were first raised in the executive committee in 1988, Secretary Sepp Blatter said in an interview with Reuter on Wednesday.

has got a lot worse now. In Spain, for instance, the government has had to intervene to alter the structure of the clubs towards making them into economically viable commercial undertakings."

Blatter said: "The position

Clubs were the backbone of the world's most popular sport, Blatter said. 'They must be financially sound. If they disappear through mismanagement, football could well disappear too.

"We are monitoring the situation very closely. Through the national associations and confederations we must see that clubs aim for financial soundness and not indulge in financial adventurism."

English First Division Tottenham Hotspur are among the clubs facing a cash crisis, having debts reported to be 18 million pounds sterling (30 million dollars).

Blatter said that Lennart Johanssen, the President of UEFA, the European confedcration of FIFA, was completely in agreement with the world

Wembley to host cricket.

LONDON, June 6 Wembley Stadium, traditional home of English soccer, is to play host to cricket for the first time, reports Reuter.

A day-night match between Europe and the Rest of the World had been organised as part of Crickathon '91, a 10 million pounds (17.4 million dollars) charity appeal spearheaded by former England captain David Gower.

The game is scheduled for September 28, less than three weeks before England meet Turkey in a European championship soccer qualifier on the same ground.

body's views on the urgent need for clubs to strive for financial stability.

Blatter also said the United States organisers of the 1994 World Cup finals had been asked to elaborate further on their radical proposal that penalty shoot-outs should be scrapped in the final and the match replayed.

He pointed out that but for the penalty shoot-out in the European Cup final in Bari last week, the issue could have dragged on interminably in re-

One alternative to penalty shoot-outs has been suggested by English Football Association chief executive Graham Kelly.

Kelly proposes deciding matches by giving the ball to players on the edge of the penalty area and requiring them to beat the goalkeeper in a one-on-one situation.

"The beauty of this idea is that everyone would no longer be concerned about the problem of goalkeepers moving before the penalty kick," Kelly

Blatter said the task force "Football 2000," set up by FIFA to study the game's shortcomings and suggest measures to make it more attractive to spectators, would make an interim report to the executive committee in Lisbon.

Seles, Sabatini



PARIS, June 6 Monica Seles and Gabriela Sabatini could be barred from the 1992 Barcelona Olympics if they refuse to play in an

international tennis competition this summer, reports AP.

Seles and Sabatini, two of the top three players in the world, could be punished if they don not offer to play for their countries in the Federation Cup, a spokesman for the International Tennis Federation said Tuesday.

Players must be in good standing with their national federations in order to qualify for the Olympics, said ITF spokesman lan Barnes. That depends on the players making themselves available for the Davis Cup or Federation Cup this year, Barnes said.

The Federation Cup, to be held this July in England, is the top annual event in which women perform for their country. The Davis Cup is the men's equivalent.

Seles said she does not want to play because Yugoslavia has such a weak team, though she has not ruled out a change of mind.Sabatini, who has a poor relationship with the Argentine Tennis Federations, said she will "probably not"

Barnes and several Yugoslav journalists have charged Scles with demanding money from the financially strapped Yugoslav Tennis Federation, an accusation denied by Seles and the Federation. The ITF spokesman and the

Yugoslav writers said the world's top-ranked player was demanding 125,000 dollars to 250,000 dollars to play in the Federation Cup. But Seles and her agent,

Stephanie Tolleson of International Management Group, both denied making any monetary demand- and the Yugoslav Tennis Federation said Tuesday such claims were ridicu-

"Insinuations by Yugoslav journalists about Monica Seles simply do not hold water.She has never asked for any kind of money, said Zoran Peric, Secretary General of the federa-

Seles would automatically qualify for appearance money from the ITF if she plays in the Federation Cup. The ITF is offering a bonus pool of 500,000 dollars with the No. 1 player getting 120,000 dollars just for showing up.

Seles, who lives in Florida, has said playing in the Federation Cup would be a waste of time and mean another trans-Atlantic trip during a busy summer. The Yugoslav team probably would get eliminated in the first round, she said, because the nation has no other top women's players.

The top-ranked Yugoslav woman after Seles is Maya Palaversic at No.224, while Nadin Ercegovic is No. 266 and Barbara Mulej is No. 278. Veteran Sabrina Goles has not played in recent months.

A couple of players who hope to qualify as Americans of the 1992 Olympics probably will be given special exemptions from the ITF rule requiring a willingness to play in the Federation Cup or Davis Cup, Barnes said.

Martina Navratilova does not plan to play in the Federation Cup, opting instead for Team Tennis in the United States. But Barnes said she was not originally nominated for the Federation Cup and remains in good standing with the United States Tennis Association. Ivan, Lendl, a Czechoslovak

who is expected to receive American citizenship early next year,does not play Davis Cup matches but also should be allowed to play at the Olympics, Barnes said. Seles, who has until June 13

to sign up for the Federation Cup, still has not made a final

"I'm kind of 50-50 about it," she said. "To play Federation Cup, is a waste of time, even if they pay me a guarantee. But if I can't play the Olympics, then I don't have a choice . I hope that rule will be changed."

"I don't see why you have to play the Federation Cup to play the Olympics, they are two different things."

found itself in an embarrassing

position in May when the gov-

ernment, divided over the is-

commitments on the assump-

tion that Benson and Hedges

would be allowed to sponsor

the Cup, and said that without

an exemption the 11 matches

might be played in Australia

The organisation said the

NZC claimed it had made

sue, failed to act.

instead.

NZ changes anti-

tobacco laws

WELLINGTON, J-

une 6 : An urgent

session of parlia-

approved a chan-

ge to New Zeal-

ment Wednesday

Hard choice for Courier despatches Edberg



PARIS, June 6: Jim Courier, in the biggest victory of his career, knocked top-seeded Stefan Edbe-

rg out of the French Open Wednesday, setting up two semifinals matching Americans against Germans, reports AP.

With power, poise and a timely stroke of luck, the No 9 seed from the United States reached his first Grand Slam semifinal with a 6-4, 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 victory. Edberg now will lose his

No. 1 world ranking if Boris Becker, ranked No. 2, wins his semifinal match Friday against Andre Agassi. Courier, 20, will vie for the

other spot in the final against 12th seed Michael Stich, whose aggressive serve-andvolley tennis overpowered Argentina's Franco Davin, 6-4, 6-4. 6-4. Becker and Agassi both de-

molished their quarterfinal opponents Tuesday. Agassi routed Jakob Hlasek 6-3, 6-1, 6-1 in 75 minutes, while Becker said he played "almost perfect" in a 6-4, 6-4, 6-2 victory over 1989 champion Michael Chang.

Courier had beaten Edberg once before, at Basel in 1989, before the Swede was No. 1, but lost their last three encounters.

"I had to keep him off of the net ... I just needed to play my game effectively to do so,' Courier said. "Once I started rolling my serve in, I felt like I was going to win 55 per cent of the points from the back court, which was enough."

Courier benefitted from numerous errors by Edberg, including two in the final game, and a disputed line call. The second-to-last point was a lob by Edberg that dropped close to the baseline - the linesman called it in, but the umpire, at Courier's request,



American Jim Courier screams with relight after defeating Swede Stefan Edberg in the French Open quarterfinals on -AFP phote Wednesday.

inspected the mark and called

Courier also was lucky - his decisive service break in the seventh game of the last set came when he mis-hit the ball with the frame of his racket and it looped over Edberg's head as the Swede charged the

Courier looked up at the sky

with an expression of grati-

"You need a little luck once in a while, and mine came through at a big moment," he "He had things running for

him, while I felt I was missing a lot of shots by a few inches," Edberg said. "It was typical of the match ... My lob was out

and then he hit the line (on match point)."

The last time the United States had two French Open semifinalists was in 1984, when John McEnroe beat Jimmy Connors before losing the final to Ivan Lendl. Stich's advance marked the

first time Germany has had two semifinalists in any Grand Slam tournament, according to the German Tennis Federation. Stich also is assured of joining Becker in the top 10 when new rankings are issued Monday, marking the first time two Germans have been among that Stich, an occasional prac-

tice partner of Becker but not a'close friend, said he would have rather faced Edberg than Courier in the semifinal. He also said he would prefer to play Becker if he makes the fi-His game is a bit easier for

me to play than Agassi," Stich said. "An all-German final would be great for German tennis." Stich said he, like all other

German players, can't help but feel they are in Becker's shadow.

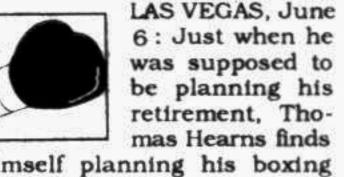
People are always compared to Boris," Stich said. "Other people try their best, but they are just not as good." Stich's route in the draw

was made easier when Ivan Lendl withdrew on the eve on the tournament after hand surgery. Lendl's spot was given to a low-ranked 'lucky loser' from the qualification round.

That helped Stich reach the semifinals without playing a single seeded opponent. His highest-ranked foe was 18vear-old Fabrice Santoro of France, No. 50 in the world, who was stricken with stomach problems the night before their fourth-round match.

For both Stich and Becker, a victory at Roland Garros Stadium would be their first title ever on clay.

Hearns doesn't plan retirement wait for the opportunity but I LAS VEGAS, June



retirement, Thomas Hearns finds himself planning his boxing future, reports AFP. A day after upsetting previ-

ously undefeated Virgil Hill to win his sixth world title, Hearns mulled his options as the World Boxing Association light heavyweight champion. "I'm definitely revived with

this fight," Hearns said Tuesday. "It opened up a lot of people's eyes in the boxing world. People thought Thomas Hearns was tired and finished in boxing. That's not the case

up at the age of 32, won a portion of the 175-pound (79.5kilogram) title for a second time, taking a unanimous decision over an opponent five years his junior while handing

He did it on legs that were suspect and with reflexes many thought he no longer

And he did it by abandoning his former Hit Man tactics and

were looking for the Hit Man

prised Hill, who expected to be the boxer in the fight but had to try and brawl in the later rounds in a desperate attempt to pull out a win.

punching when I thought he'd take the fight right to me," Hill said. "I thought I'd just waited a bit to long."

Hill, though he had made 10 previous title defenses, was stepping up a level, making his first foray into the world of big money and big name fights.

It was a level where Hearns had been many times before, in megafights against the likes of Sugar Ray Leonard and Marvelous Marvin Hagler.

"I definitely gave him too much respect," Hill said. "I allowed the fight to be close. Anytime you're fighting a legend it's switched around a bit. It was like I'm Tommy Hearns and he's Ray Leonard in there."

Hill's trainer, Frenddie Roach, said his fighter came into the fight prepared, despite suffering a broken nose and hyperextended elbow during training.

But when Hill began warming up in the dressing room before the fight, Roach said he knew something was wrong.

could you do at that point? Just try and get him through

won the fight, said he would like a rematch sometime later this year.

would be wonderful to have a rematch."

Not so fast, said Hearns, who has also talked of moving up to the cruiserweight division and winning a seventh world title.

night and that was enough for me for the summer," the new champion said. "I'm not too interested in jumping right back in it again. I just want to enjoy myself for a while."

French Open milestones

MOST TITLES ALL EVENTS INCLUDED (SINGLES AND DOUBLES)

1	Henn Cochet (1926-1932): 4 singles 3 doubles 2 mixed	13.	Margaret Smith-Court (1962-1973) 5 singles 4 double 4 mixed
	Jean Borotra (1925-1934): 1 single 5 doubles	11.	Martina Navratile (1974-1988): 2 singles 7 double
	2 mixed		2 mixed
	Roy Emerson (1960-67): 2 singles	10.	Doris Hart (1948-1953): 2 singles 3 double 3 mixed

cost of the games not going ahead, which they did not dis-	4.	Henri Cochet (1925-28- 30-32)	5.	86) Margaret Smith-Court
close, could bankrupt it. Associate Health Minister Maurice Williamson introduced	3.	Reb Lacoste (1925-27-29	4.	(1962-64-69 70-73) Helen Wills-Mood
an exemption that if passed would have allowed all multina- tional sporting events which	3.	Mata Wilander (1982-85-	3.	(1928-29-30 32) Hilde Sperk (1935-36-37
occurred in New Zealand and one other country, to have to-	3.	Ivan Lendi (1984-86-87)		(1435-30-31

Bjom Borg (1978-81)

bacco sponsorship. The World Cup is to open with New Zealand playing Australia on February 22.

*Ladies

200	(1925-1934):	(1974	1988):		
	1 single		2 sing	ies		
	5 doubles		7 doub	de		
	2 mixed	3	2 mixe	nd		
8.	Roy	10.	Doris	Doris Hart		
	Emerson		(1948-1953): 2 singles			
	(1960-67):					
	2 singles	3	3 doub	Ae .		
	6 doubles	ĝ	3 mix	pd		
	MOST SI	NGLE	S1	TTLES		
*1	Men		*1	adies		
6.	Bjorn Borg (19 79-80-81)	74-75-78-	1.	Chris Eve (1974-75- 79-80-83-		
			221	86)		
4	Henri Cochet (1926-28-	5.	Margaret		

	30-32)		Smith-Court (1962-64-69- 70-73)
3.	Reb Lacoste (1925-27-29	4.	Helen. Wills-Moody (1928-29-30- 32)
3.	Mata Wilander (1982-85- -88)	3.	Transfer of the second
3,	Ivan Lendl (1984-86-87)		
	MOST CONSE	C	TIVE

SINGLES TITLES

*Ladies

Helen Wills-

(1928-30)Hilde Sperling (1935-37) WINNERS OF SINGLES DOUBLES AND MIXED DOUBLES THIS SAME YEAR:

*Ladies the three titles the same (FRA)-twice: 1925 and 1926 Simone Mathieu (FRA)-Once: 1938 Doris Hart (USA)-Once: 1952 Maureen Connolly (USA)-Once: 1954 Margaret Smith

Court (AUS)-Once: WINNERS OF JUNIOR AND SENIOR TITLES

(Singles):

* Men	*Ladies
Ken Rosewall (AUS) Junior	Francoise Durr (FRA) Junior
1952 Senior 1953 and 1968	1960 Sensor 1967
Roy Emerson (AUS) Junior	Mima Jausovec (YUG)
1954 Senior 1963 and 1967	Junior 1973 Semi 1977
Andres Gimeno (SPA) Junior	Hana Mandilikov (CZE)
1955 Senior 1972	Jun, 1978 Sensor 1981
Mats Wilander (SWE) Junior 1981 Senior 1982, 1985 and 1988	
Ivan Lendi (CZE) Junior 1978 Senior 1984, 1986 and 1987.	
LONGEVITY I	RECORDS

(Champions with the

greatest number of years between first and last titles) Men's singles : Ken Rosewall: 15

- years (first title in 1953, last in 1968) Ladies singles : Chris Event : 12 years (first title in 1974, last in 1986). Men's doubles: Ken Rosewall: 15 years (first title in 1953, last in 1968) * Ladies' doubles: Martina
- 1975, last in 1988. Mixed doubles: Martina Navratilova 11 years (first title in 1974, last in

* All events included (singles, dou-

bles and mixed)

Navratilova: 13 years: first title in

Men: Ken Rosewall : 15 years Ladies: Martina Navratilova: 14 years (1974-1988). MOST DOUBLES TITLE-

(by team) *Ladies * Men 3. Jacques Brugnon-Henri 4. Shirley Fry-Doris (1950-51-52 53) Hart Cochet 4 Martina 1927-30-32) Navratikova-

MEN AND LADIES

(1984-85-87-88) MOST CONSECUTIVE DOUBLES TITLES MEN AND LADIES (by teams) *Ladies * Men

2. Ken Mc Gregor-Franck

(1951-52)

(1950-53) Vice Seixas-Tony Trabert 3. Simoge (Adeline N Yorke (1936-38)

Shirley Fry-

Pam Shriver

MOST DOUBLES TITLES MEN AND LADIES (by player)

- M e n		Ladies		
5.	Roy Emerson (1960-61- 62-63-64-65)	7.	Martus Navratikwa (1975-82-84- 85-86-87-88)	
5.	Jean Borotrs (1925-28- 29-34-36)	6.	Samone Mathieu (1933-34-36- 37-38-39)	
5.	Jacques Brugnon(1927-6 30-32-34)	5.	Dors Hart 28- (1948-50-51- 52-53)	
		5.	Prancoise Durr (1967-68-69- 70-71)	

MOST CONSECUTIVE DOUBLES TITLES MEN AND LADIES (by player) *Ladies * Men

6. Roy Emerson (1960-65) 5. Francoise Durr (1967-71) Martina Navratilova (1984-88)MOST MIXED DOUBLES TITLES

(by team) Margaret Smith-Ken Fletcher (1963-64-65) 3. Françoise Furr-Jean-Claude Barclay (1968-71-73) MOST MIXED DOUBLES TTILES

(by player) *Ladies Ken Fletcher (1963-64-Smith-Court 6 (1963-64-65-Jean-Claude Burclay (1968-71-73)

Hearns, supposedly washed Hill his first loss in 31 fights.

outboxing Hill over the 12round distance. "A great boxer doesn't like to be boxed," said Hearns trainer. Alex Sherer. They

to come out bombing from all over the place. We wanted to show him something differ-The tactic admitedly sur-

"He came out counter-



der Jan Zelezny produced the fo urth best javelin throw of all Tuesday, reports Reuter.

96.96 metres set by Finland's Seppo Raty, but delighted a

six days last July. Zelezny's fifth-round throw

metes, but was red-flagged like four of his other attempts. Vladimir Sasimovic of the Soviet Union was a distant

the end of the summer. Zelezny was using a Hungarian Nemeth design - last year's model in a discipline now being revolutionised by techno-

did not scare me. Perhaps it

"He was off and he knew it too," Roach said, "But what

the fight." Hill who said he thought he

"Tommy said he would fight me again," the 1984 Olympic silver medalist said. "That

"The fight was done last

Zelezny delights home crowd



The Czechoslovak failed to match Sunday's world record

BRATISLAVA.

Czechoslovakia,

June 6 : Former

world record hol-

rain-soaked home crowd with a second round effort of 90.40. The throw was just under a metre better than the world record Zelezny held for a brief

was also clearly more than 90

second with 81.94 in the opening meeting of the European Grand Prix season. Unlike Raty, who prefers a new and controversial Swedish javelin which the Finn claims could fly 100 metres before

logical breakthroughs. "Raty's unbelievable throw

Zelezny said. "I'm happy with the (meeting) record I set but I wanted to do better. I was suf-

fering more from the pain of an Achilles tendon rather than from the rain but I feel I have trained well and am in better shape than last year." Only three men. Zelezny Raty and Britain's Steve Backley, have thrown beyond 90

metres since the javelin was

modified to reduce distances

will not be officially approved."

in 1986. Bubka fails

Sergei Bubka of the Soviet Union narrowly failed to improve the pole vault world record he has made his own property. After winning easily with 6.00. Bubka had the bar raised

to 6.08, one centimetre higher than his latest outdoor record set in Japan last month. On the second of his three attempts. Bubka cleared the bar well but just caught it on the way down. He held his head in his hands in disap-

the landing mattress. Neither of Bubka's other tries went Former world record holder Renaldo Nehemiah of the United States comfortably

pointment as he crashed on to

won the men's 110 metres

and's tough antitobacco laws to allow a cigarette company to sponsor 11 matches here in the 1992 one-day cricket World Cup, reports AFP. The bitterly fought bill was passed by 41 votes to 19 Wednesday morning after par-

night.

The row over the 11 games here in the Benson and Hedges Cup was a flasco for the government which while in opposition promised to abolish the Smokefree Environments Act which bans tobacco advertising and sponsorship. New Zealand Cricket (NZC).

liament debated it Tuesday

the code's government body.