



Yugoslav Monica Seles, the top rated women's tennis player in the world, prepares to hit a backhand on Aug. 17 to Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in Semifinals of Virginia Slims tournament. — AFP photo

Date sends Sabatini packing

MANHATTAN BEACH, California, Aug 18: Kimiko Date of Japan, ranked No. 112 in the world, scored the biggest win of her career on Saturday, upsetting second-seed Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina 3-6, 6-1, 6-4 in two hours and 28 minutes to advance to the final of the 350,000 U.S. dollar Virginia Slims of Los Angeles, reports Reuter.

Top-seed and defending champion Monica Seles of Yugoslavia, who has never played Date, eliminated third-seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain 6-7 (5-7), 6-4, 6-4 in two hours and 19 minutes in the other semifinal match at the hard court tournament.

Seles automatically loses the number one ranking on Monday to Steffi Graf of Germany because of Sabatini's loss, because of the bonus point structure. Seles would have needed to beat Sabatini in the finals to keep the top spot.

Sabatini, ranked third in the world, had difficulty ending long baseline rallies

throughout the match because of Date's persistent court coverage. The Argentine seldom followed her serve to the net because of Date's pinpoint service returns.



GABRIELA SABATINI

Date, who has not previously advanced past the third round of a tour event this year, predictably called this her best tennis of the year and credited her success to playing the ball instead of the opponent.

"I am certainly very surprised with this win," Date said through a translator. "I didn't think about who I was

playing. I just tried to play my best tennis and not worry about her."

Said Sabatini: "She played very well, and I had difficulty with my shots. I didn't feel I could get enough rhythm to come to the net in the third set."

Seles, who said she will decide this morning whether to play in Washington this week to get more preparation for the U.S. Open, was frustrated by her own play but gave considerable credit to her opponent.

"I was mad at myself after losing the 5-3 lead in the first set and then losing a 3-0 lead in the (first set) tiebreak," Seles said. Arantxa is very tough. You have to hit a perfect shot to win the point because she is so fast.

The erratic match between Seles and Sanchez Vicario, which had 14 service breaks in 33 games and twice as many unforced errors as winners, turned in the ninth game of the third set when Sanchez Vicario won just one point on her serve, allowing Seles to break for 5-4 and serve out the match.

Dittmar lifts NZ squash title

HAMILTON, New Zealand, Aug 18: Chris Dittmar had an easy 9-7, 9-3, 9-1 victory over world champion Rodney Martin in the final of the New Zealand Open today as Martin fell well short of his world title form, reports Reuter.

Martin, who captured the world crown two weeks ago, had been complaining of tiredness all week and fellow Australian Dittmar said it showed.

"Even in the hotel this week Rodney hasn't been himself. He has been moping around, and today he just couldn't get into it," Dittmar told reporters. "I expected a lot harder games."

Martin said earlier he was suffering from a lack of motivation after beating Jahangir Khan of Pakistan in the World final two weeks ago.

After he dropped the close first game, the fight went out of Martin and Dittmar took just 34 minutes to win.

Martin and Dittmar are both planning to play in the Hong Kong and Pakistan Open tournaments in September.

In the women's final, number two seed Robyn Lambourne of Australia took advantage of the absence of world champion Susan Devoy to grab Devoy's home title.

Lambourne beat fellow Australian Danielle Drady in straight games 9-5, 9-2, 9-3.

Lambourne had a tough road to the final, reversing the Australian Open final result against Michelle Martin in a five-game quarter-final then beating Liz Irving in four games to earn her place against Drady.

She wrapped up the title in under 40 minutes.

Devoy, who is pregnant, withdrew from the event before her quarter-final match on Friday.

Barkley survives a close call

LAS VEGAS, Aug 18: Former World Boxing Council middleweight champion Iran Barkley, fighting as a light heavyweight for the first time, survived an eighth-round knockout to win by a decision over Juan Hernandez of Mexico in their 10-round main event, reports AP.

Hernandez pressured Barkley the entire bout on Friday night, but the New Yorker was even more aggressive, scoring to the body early and to the head late. Barkley won all three judges' scorecards by a 96-93 score.

The 178-pound (80.6-kilogram) Hernandez knocked down Barkley, at a left to the head in the eighth. Barkley was up quickly, however, and never came close to going down again.

Barkley, the WBC 160-pound (72.4-kilogram) champion for eight months in 1988 and 1989, improved to 25-7 with 16 knockouts. Hernandez is 25-15 with 18 knockout victories.

The triumph was Barkley's first since June 1988, when he stopped current World Boxing Association light heavyweight champ Thomas Hearns to win the WBC middleweight title.

Peruvian shooter stripped of medal

HAVANA, Aug 18: A Peruvian pistol shooter was stripped of his silver medal at the Pan-American Games in Cuba Thursday after he tested positive in the third and most serious doping violation of the Games, the organisers said, reports Reuter.

Pedro Garcia Miro, who finished second in the Men's centre fire pistol competition August 9, tested positive for propanolol, a substance banned under strict International Olympic Committee regulations.

Propanolol is one of a group of drugs known as Betablockers, which lower blood pressure and slow the heart beat, useful for a shooter trying to steady his aim.

Following the disqualification, the Pan-American Sports Organisation (PASO) Executive Committee awarded the silver medal to third-placed Darisus Young of the United States while the bronze went to Argentina's Oscar Yuston.

US shooter Don Nygord won the gold medal in the event.

On Tuesday, Mexican rower Jose Antonio Gomez was stripped of the gold medal he has won after testing positive in a doping check.

The PASO Executive Committee said he had unwittingly taken a headache pill containing a banned drug and it recommended no further sanctions against the Mexican athlete.

Unplaced Canadian shot putter Georgette Reed was also left off with a warning after she took a similar kind of headache pill, showing up positive in a random dope test.

Miroshina shines in qualifiers

ATHENS, Aug 18: Elena Miroshina, the Soviet Union's World Championships silver medalist, took

the first bold plunge towards regaining her European platform diving title on Sunday when she led qualifiers for Mondays' final, reports Reuter.

Miroshina, just 13 when she won the 10-metre high-board gold medal in Strasbourg in 1987, compiled 311.07 points from her six dives to claim top qualifying place nearly 15 points ahead of teammate Inga Afonina (296.55).

Hungary's Ibolya Nagy sprang from eighth to third with a big final backward 2-1/2 somersaults which earned her 63.99 points. The second-highest mark of the day, for an overall 282.30.

Miroshina, who did not defend her European Crown in Bonn in 1989, produced the highest-scoring dive with an inward 3-1/2 somersaults which garnered 65.28 points in the fifth round.

Former East German Ute Wetzig, who won the title in 1989 in Miroshina's absence ahead of Afonina, had to settle for fourth overall on 297.66.

Miroshina, second behind 12-year-old Chinese prodigy Fu Mingxia in last January's World Championships in Perth, led after the first series of dives but was overhauled in the second by Afonina.

Afonina, sixth in the World Championship final, yielded top spot two dives later to Germany's Jana Von Der Goenne, who achieved a superb backward 1-1/2 somersaults with 2-1/2 twists with a fourth effort worth 63.84.

Von Der Goenne dropped to third on the penultimate dive and to fifth with a misjudged final effort but should still be a strong medal contender on Monday if her programme goes right.

Miroshina recaptured the lead with her superb fifth dive and stretched away from Afonina in the sixth, amassing high marks in the second half of the preliminaries with the score-heightening benefit of dives of greater difficulty than those of her rivals.

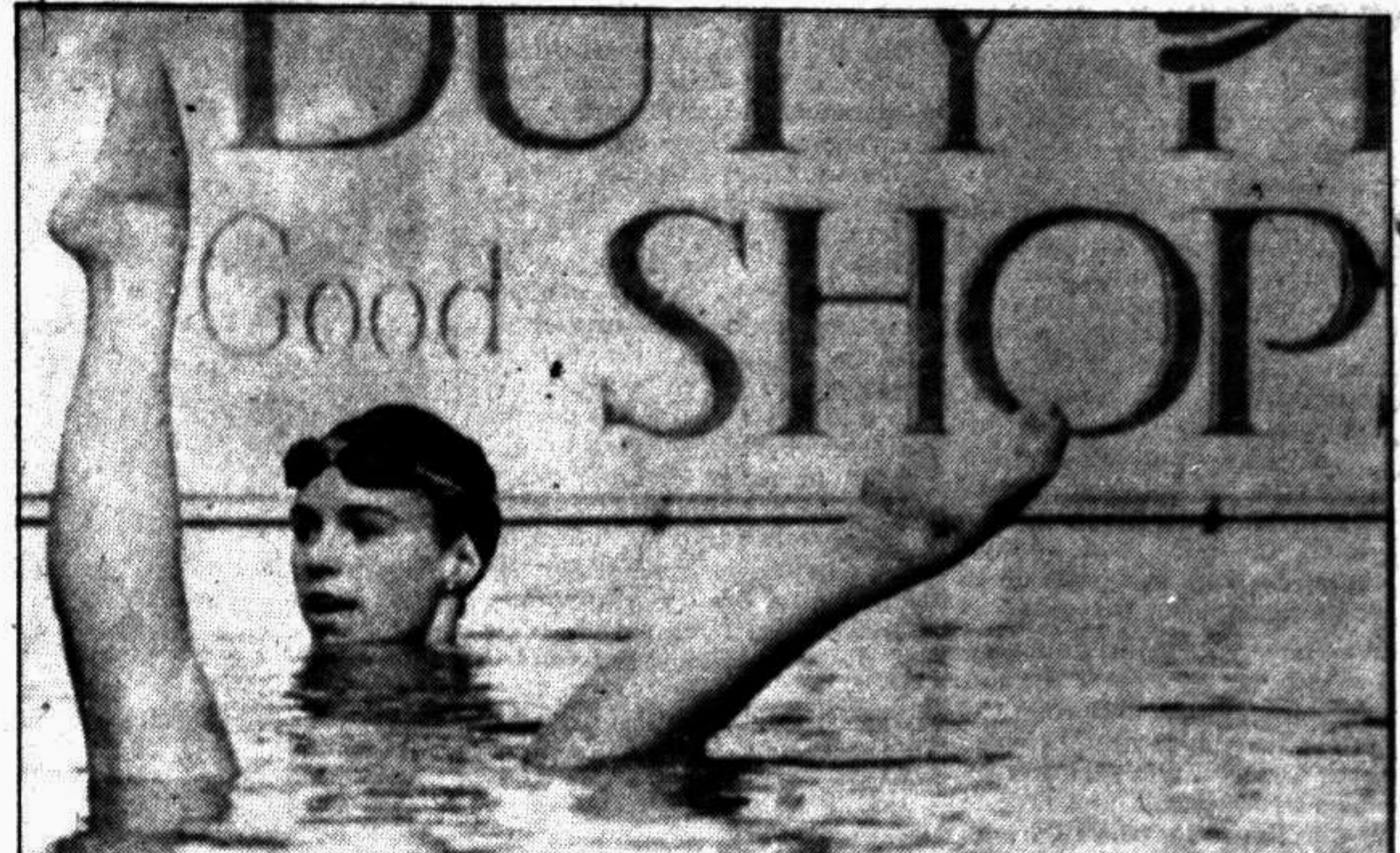
Twelve of the 17 entrants qualified for the final, when

the scores return to zero. The organisers moved the preliminary round to the new indoor pool at the Olympic

200m freestyle, expects little competition in the 100-and 200-metre events.

There should be a duel for

freestyle events, German world record holders Uwe Dassler and Jorg Hoffman are favoured for gold medals.



Beatrix Mulner of Austrian synchronised Swimming team watches as her teammate Karin Winkler trains on Aug 17, two days before the finals of the European Swimming Championships in Athens. — AFP photo.

Centre, deciding on Saturday the winds were too strong to stage it in the main outdoor pool as originally planned.

Earlier AP report said,

The Championships began Saturday with qualifying matches in men's water polo at the Athens Olympic Sports Complex, Europe's newest swimming center. Athletes from 29 countries are competing in the biennial championships.

Missing from the games are Hungarian Tamas Darnyi, defending champion in the 200- and 400-meter medleys, and France's Stephan Caron, who broke the European 100-metre freestyle record with a time of 49.18 seconds at last month's World University Games in Sheffield, England.

But Martin Zubero of Spain, who shattered the men's record in the 200m backstroke this week at the US National Championships in Florida with a time of one minute, 57.30 seconds, said through his coach that he wants to better that time here.

Italy's Giorgio Lambertini, world record holder in the

gold in the 100 breaststroke, with Hungary's Norbert Rozsa going up against Vasili Ivanov of the Soviet Union. The two share the world record with a time of 1:01.45. They will get stiff competition from Britains Adrian Moorhouse,



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ranked third in the world and holder of the second best time ever (1:01.49).

In the 400 and 1,500

in the women's events, a few favourites stand out. Hungary's Krisztina Egerszegi is the European record holder in the 200 backstroke with 2:09.15. Also favoured are Germany's Grit Mueller and Jana Henke in the 800 freestyle, and Olympic champion Tania Dangelakova of Bulgaria in the 100 and 200 breaststroke events.

Ethnic troubles in Yugoslavia have weakened that country's water polo team with five Croatians, the backbone of the squad that won the World Championship, refusing to come to Athens.

The Championships are being held in a swimming complex originally designed as part of Athens' unsuccessful bid for the 1996 Summer Olympics. The Sports Complex first was used for the Mediterranean Games last month.

The Complex includes an outdoor Olympic-sized pool and diving pool seating 5,000 people, and an indoor Olympic-sized pool and diving area with a 5,200-seat capacity.

Becker to meet Sampras in final

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana, Aug 18: Top-ranked Boris Becker waylaid sixth-seeded David Wheaton 7-6 (7-5), 6-4 to earn a spot in the finals of the U.S. hardcourt championships on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Becker, who will be looking for his 31st career title today, will take on fifth-seeded American Pete Sampras who spotted second-seeded compatriot Jim Courier's 21st birthday beating him 6-3, 7-6 (9-7).

Becker of Germany continued his dominance over the American Wheaton. In four matches, he has not lost a set to the 12th-ranked Wheaton.

Sheaton kept it close in the first set, forcing a tiebreaker. But Becker captured the necessary minibreak when Wheaton sailed a backhand wide on the tenth point.

Wheaton's volleys, which kept him in the match, faltered in the second set. A backhand volley into the net at 15-40 in the fifth game won the match for Becker.

"I know how well I can play, but I don't know how well David can play," said Becker, and more. "I don't know if I can push myself. Our matches

are always close, but the hasn't won a set, Becker said. Who as defending champion has not dropped a set this

Korda, Ivanisevic in Volvo final

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut, Aug 18: Petr Korda and Goran Ivanisevic scored straight set victories to breeze easily into the final of the Volvo International Tennis tournament on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Korda of Czechoslovakia knocked off Switzerland's Marc Roset 6-4, 6-3. The 16th-seeded Rosset, who upset Ivan Lendl earlier in the week, fought off two match points at 2-5, but finally succumbed.

Ivanisevic of Yugoslavia dispatched ninth-seeded American Derrick Rostagno 6-4, 7-5 despite swirling winds on the court.

Ivanisevic, a 1990 Wimbledon semifinalist who serves in excess of 125 miles per hour, took the first set with little trouble. But he got some help in the second when at 5-5, Rostagno double faulted twice in a row.

"I can push myself more Sampras is finally finding success on the tour in 1991. Last week he reached the final, losing to Frenchman Guy Forget. Two weeks ago he won the title in Los Angeles.

This is the second week in a row the eighth-ranked Sampras has sent Courier packing in the semifinals — he accomplished that feat in Cincinnati last week.

For some reason, he seems really nervous when playing me, said Sampras, who has a 3-0 winning career record over Courier.

"We're both Americans, we're both about the same age and we're both tight on court against each other. Today, he was not hitting his groundstrokes as clean as he'd like."

At 4-1 in the first set, Sampras strained his right quadriceps in his leg, but shook it off and closed Courier out 6-3.

In the second, Sampras had one match point on Courier's serve in the 11th game, but failed to finish it and the match went to a tiebreaker. On his first match point in the tiebreak, Sampras double faulted, but he hit a forehand crosscourt volley to win it.

Croatian athletes barred

BELGRADE, Aug 18: Croatian athletes were informed by Yugoslav sports authorities on Saturday they would not be allowed to compete in next year's Olympics in Albertville and Barcelona, reports Reuter.

A statement issued by the Yugoslav Sports Union (YSU) said all Croatian athletes and teams would be excluded for international sports events.

The move followed the decision of the Croatian Sports Federation (CSF) to withdraw from the Yugoslav Olympic Committee and all Yugoslav sports bodies on August 1.

The statement said the athletes from Croatia are "barred from the possibility of competing for Yugoslav national teams by the unilateral decisions of the CSF."

"The immediate outcome of the decisions is that they (athletes from Croatia) cannot compete in international sports events, including the Olympics in Albertville and Barcelona next year," the statement added.

Croat teams are also barred from competing in "The existing system of international sports team events." Among the statement's im-

lications are that two Croatian soccer teams, Hask-Gradjanski Zagreb and Hajduk Split, would be barred from taking part in the UEFA Cup and Cup Winners' Cup respectively.

Hajduk Split are scheduled to face the winners of the preliminary round tie involving England's Tottenham Hotspur and Australian side Sparkasse Stockerau. Hask-Gradjanski have been drawn against Turkish side Trabzonspor.

Triple European champions men's basketball Jugoplastika Split — now renamed Slobodna Salmacija — would also be affected.

The CSF had previously advised its athletes not to compete in Yugoslav colours, but left the final decision to individuals.

The advice came amid heavy inter-ethnic clashes in Croatia in which more than 200 people have died.

The clashes were triggered when Croatia unilaterally declared independence from Yugoslavia on June 25.

The document, signed by the YSU president Tome Drakulevski, was issued after a bitter struggle within the organisation.

"Opinions were divided whether Croats should be punished so harshly or not," an inside official, who wanted to remain nameless, told Reuter.

"At the end we voted, and the statement is the result."

The YSU also decided that all Yugoslav representatives from Croatia would be withdrawn from international sports bodies and replaced by non-Croats.

The decision would also be applied to referees.

"Croatia is also losing all rights to organise international sports events on its territory, because, by stepping out of the Yugoslav sports system, the republic is no longer under the jurisdiction of Yugoslav sports organisations who are uniquely entitled to authorise the events," the statement added.

CSF president Ivan Kern said earlier Croatia would apply for membership of all international sports bodies, including the International Olympic Committee.

Norris' lightning victory

SAN DIEGO, California, Aug 18: Terry Norris wasted no time in producing a flurry of power punches to knock out Brett Lally in two minutes, 40 seconds of the first round of a scheduled 12-round super welterweight title bout on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Norris, a 2-1 pre-flight favourite, retained his World Boxing Council (WBC) super welterweight title.

Norris put Lally on the floor twice in the first two minutes with power punches and upper cuts.

His final flurry to the body and chin of the helpless Lally ended with a righthand shot that sent Lally onto the ropes and onto the canvas.

It was easier than I expected, Norris said after the fight. I had studied him for three months. I knew I could chain him with aright hand uppercut hook, and that's exactly what happened."

The US women's 400 medley relay team set a Pan Am record as Jodi Wilson, Dorsey Tierney, Angie Wester-Krieg and Ashley Tappin clocked 4:12.51. Tierney and Tappin each collected their third gold.

Mark Dean won the 200 butterfly, Lisa Summers took the 200 individual medley, and Gill edged Rodolfo Falcon of Cuba in the backstroke.

Dean, still coming back from lung surgery in June 1990, beat 1988 Olympic gold medalist Anthony Nesty of Surinam by nearly two seconds with a time of 2:00.11.

Cuba won the baseball gold, as expected, with another rout, as expected. The Cubans pounded Puerto Rico 18-3, giving them 131 runs in nine games.

Unbeaten Cuba hit seven homers, including three by Eremidello Urrutia, who went 6-for-6, and pounded out 23 hits.

Chris Roberts singled to drive in Jeff Hammonds, who had led off the 15th inning with a double, as the United States outlasted the Dominican Republic 2-1 for the bronze medal in baseball.

Roberts' one-out hit broke an 0-for-9 slump, including 0-for-8 Saturday.

"We were all tired and we wanted to get home with the victory," Hammonds said. "I got a good jump and I knew it would be a close play at the plate. But I knew coach wouldn't hold me up in that situation just because of the length of the game and Chris Robert would have been at

second base, anyway."

The Americans overcame a 163-pitch, 13-inning effort by Dominican starter Felix Nova, who lost his bid for his fourth victory at the 1991 Pan Ams.

The US team avoided a second straight loss to a team with less talent but more motivation. They lost 7-1 Friday to Puerto Rico, which played Cuba for the gold in the nightcap.

University of Miami baseball coach Ron Fraser, who will coach the American team in Barcelona, where baseball will be a medal sport for the first time, said it isn't going to be easy to win it all there, either.

"Remember when Jesus healed the blind man," Fraser asked. "Remember when Moses separated the Red Sea, so the Israelites could go through?"

"Those were two great miracles," he said, and winning the gold in Barcelona "would be another."

The men's basketball team matched the bronze of the baseball team and their compatriots in women's basketball. The men beat Cuba 93-74 in a brutal game that nearly broke out into a brawl. Then had to sit and watch, with a tug in their hearts, as Puerto Rico beat Mexico 77-65 for the gold.

strong performance to beat

China 3-1 in the other semifinal match, and promise to give South Korea a stern challenge in the final which experts tip to be a five-set classic.

Japan won 15-7, 15-7, 5-15, 15-4.

The champion team alone will qualify for a place in the Barcelona Olympic Games.

Australia and China will meet today to decide third and fourth positions in the tournament.

In other matches, Taiwan will play Indonesia to determine fifth and sixth positions and Iran will clash with Pakistan for seventh and eighth.

RESULTS
Semifinals: South Korea bt Australia 3-0 (15-2, 17-16, 15-11); Japan bt China 3-1 (15-7, 15-7, 5-15, 15-4).

Other top group games — Taiwan bt Iran 3-1 (15-8, 15-7, 11-15, 15-12); Indonesia bt Pakistan 3-0 (15-6, 15-7, 15-4).

Final positions in the tournament of teams in the lower group: Thailand, 9th, India, 10, North Korea, 11, New Zealand, 12, Saudi Arabia 13, United Arab Emirates, 14, Western Samoa, 15.

IMF delays changes
SCARPERIA, Italy, Aug 18: The International Motorcycling Federation (IMF), faced with threats of an alternative world championship next year, has postponed by one year changes in the 500cc class which are strongly opposed by Japanese manufacturers.