

Ottey prefers gold to good looks

BRUSSELS, Sept 20: Merlene Ottey says she would rather have a gold medal than good looks, reports Reuter.

Still smarting from her double defeat by Germany's Katrin Krabbe in the 100 and 200 metres at the World Championships Ottey is determined to take revenge at next year's Olympics.

"I'd rather win a gold medal than the beauty contest right now," Ottey said before the recent Grand Prix meeting here.

She refused to accept Krabbe was the new number one. "Maybe I lost in Tokyo but I'm still the best," she said.

"My start was terrible and I've learnt from that. I won't repeat it next year. It's better it happened in Tokyo than in Barcelona."

But she admitted the double defeat was the biggest let-down of her career. "I thought (the disappointment) would last forever, but it didn't," she said. "It's just a hard way to learn a lesson."

"I've not really got over Tokyo but have put it aside for now. Now I just focus on what lies ahead."

The Jamaican, 31, denied her age was beginning to tell

and proved it here by clocking 21.64, the third fastest time ever over 200 metres.

She believes she can break the world 200 metres record. "The motivation is still there."



MERLENE OTTEY

The Barcelona Olympics and world records — there's enough to motivate me," Ottey said.

She added: "I'm never satisfied, I guess, so I keep going. And I have managed to stay

healthy. I haven't had a major injury."

Ottey is well aware people like to describe her as one of the most striking beauties in athletics.

But she said: "I don't worry about a beauty contest out there. I just go out there and run. I walk naturally the way I do and like to take care of myself and my body. If you treat it right it lasts longer."

In Olympic year she plans less travelling home to Jamaica her programme includes some indoor 60 metre races which she hates but acknowledges: "I'll have to get used to it. I

have to get confident with the starts."

Asked about retirement plans, she said laughing: "I have thought about that and I try not to panic."

She admitted: "I don't want to spend the whole year on the track doing the same thing I've been doing for the past 12 years."

But Ottey is not interested in coaching and would quite like to get into the real estate business in Jamaica.

Meanwhile, she is simply fed up with questions about Krabbe. "I'm leaving on holiday soon so at least I won't hear her name any more for two months," Ottey said.

Nepalese athlete, coach resurface

TOKYO, Sept 20: A Nepali marathon runner and his coach, reported missing after taking part in the Tokyo World Athletics Championships early this month, have resurfaced in Japan bewildered at all the fuss, reports Reuter.

An official of the Championships organising committee said today that Krishna Bahadur Basnet and coach Nar Bahadur Dahal Basnet were located after a search by the committee, the Nepali Athletics Association and the Nepali Embassy.

The pair, who had not been seen since the track and field games closed on September 2, were located on September 17 staying at the home of a Nepali friend.

They went to the organisers' office on Thursday to apologise for any trouble they had caused, the official said.

They said they had told the Nepali Athletics Association sounded before and that they wished to stay on to study the Japanese marathon training methods but there seemed to have been some misunderstanding.

Krishna Bahadur Basnet, 32, finished 31st in the September 1 men's marathon final in two hours 33 minutes 13 seconds, the race was won by Japan's Hiroshi Taniguchi

Frazier faces Seles in semis

TOKYO, Sept 20: Amy Frazier of the United States smashed aside her compatriot Debbie Graham here today to secure a semifinal berth against world number one Monica Seles of Yugoslavia in the 350,000-dollar Nichirei international women's tennis tournament, reports AFP.

Frazier, who celebrated her 19th birthday with a hard fought three-set win over Japan's Naoko Sawamatsu Thursday, needed less effort to beat Graham 7-5, 6-1.

Graham fired 11 aces to upset sixth-seeded Pam Shriver in the first round Tuesday, but her service and hard returns deceived her into committing eight double faults despite hitting five aces and 11 service winners.

Seles, seeking revenge for her quarterfinal loss to Frazier last year, needed only 48 minutes to whitewash Maya Kidowaki of Japan 6-0, 6-0 and at least improved her points in the computer rankings with the win.

Kidowaki, who survived the second round against American Carrie Cunningham saving six match points against her, tenaciously staked off four more match points.

But she hit a sluggish double fault on the next point to disappoint 1,300 fans at the Ariake Coliseum.

The score looks very easy, but I don't think so," said the 17-year-old Yugoslav, who collected the Australian French and US Open titles this season.

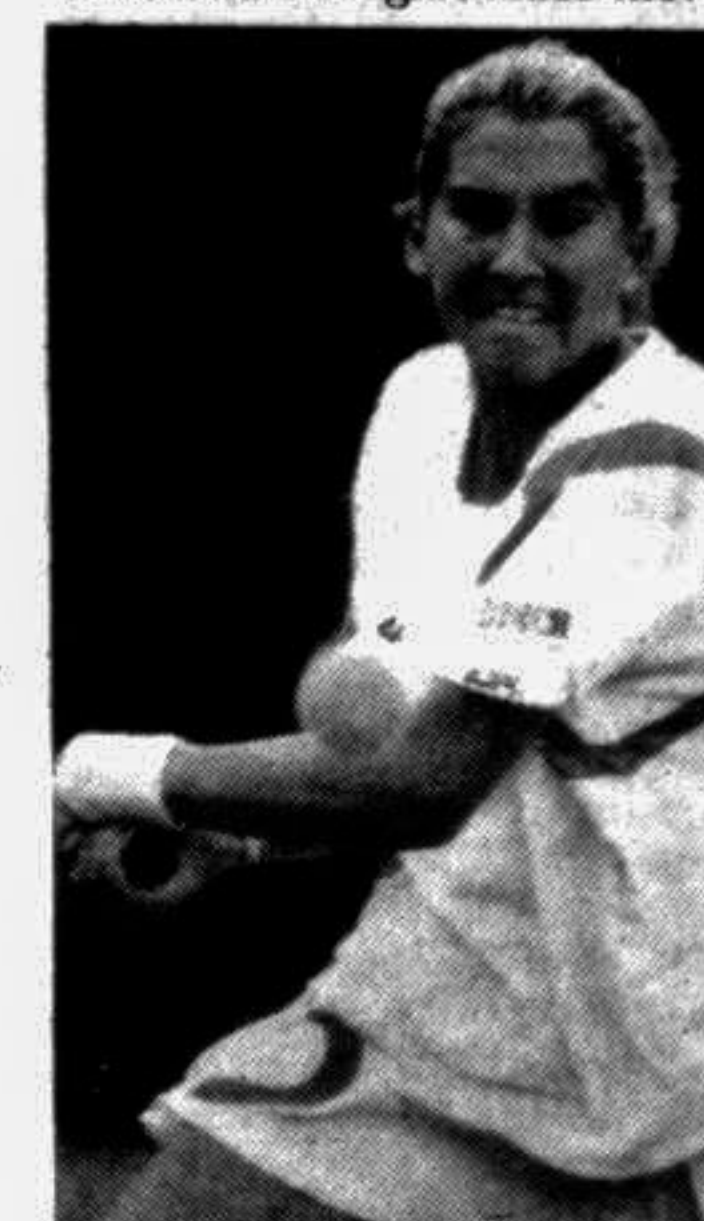
"I got a lot of good returns and tough serves (from Kidowaki) I really was determined for serve, which I think was the key point, and I had to concentrate to play great tennis to beat her this way, she added.

About her semifinal match against Frazier Seles said, "she has no special strategy. Amy's gonna hit very hard ball. Her ground strokes are very good. She hits the ball very hard and she is running very well."

"It's always a tough match against her. It's always going to be three sets. So I hope I can play better this time than I did last year," said the Yugoslav

Frazier, meanwhile, said simply that she would try to concentrate on her serve and good returns.

Third-seeded Katerina Malceva of Bulgaria also moved



MONICA SELES

into the semifinals when she eliminated Laura Gildemeister

of Peru 6-3, 3-6, 6-1.

The Peruvian, ranked 27th in the world, overcame the first set deficit showing a series of lighting forehand cross-court shots and effective drop shots to tie the match at one-set all.

But the 80-minute baseline battle caused hamstring strain on Gildemeister's left thigh and she needed court-side treatment at the beginning of the decider.

Gildemeister, however, never recovered her form and permitted the Bulgarian to attack on her weaker backhand side.

The fight ended abruptly 29 minutes later when the 11th-ranked Bulgarian launched her fifth service ace, third in the last game, into the centre line.

"I can't say the injury affected my play," said the Peruvian; "The first game of the final set was very important and I lost patience after that."

On Saturday, Malceva will face defending champion Mary Joe Fernandez, who breezed past Marianne Werdel in an all-American match Thursday

French favoured against Yugoslavs

PARIS, Sept 20: Deprived by civil war of its two best players, Yugoslavia faces France starting Friday in what could prove to be one of the most mismatched Davis Cup semifinals ever, reports AP.

The stars who carried Yugoslavia this far in the competition, Goran Ivanisevic and Goran Prpic, are Croats, both ranked in the world's top 20.

They quit the team because of the conflict between the breakaway republic against the Serbian dominated federal army and Serbian guerrillas.

In their place this weekend, in the southern French city of Pau, is a patchwork squad of four Serbians that even French captain Yannick Noah has trouble taking seriously.

"I'm sure, in my head, that we're already in the final," Noah told the French sports daily, l'Equipe.

The winning team will play in late November for the Davis Cup against the survivor of this weekend's other semifinal between the United States and Germany. If France and the United States advance, France would be the host.

The Yugoslavs' leader is Slobodan Zivojinovic, who in 1987 climbed as high as 19th in the rankings but now stands at 167.

After the level of experience and talent plummets: Srojan Muskatirovic, ranked 439th; Goran Mihaljevic, 642; and Nebojsa Djordjevic, 942.

All three newcomers, aged 18, 19 and 20, served as ball-boys when Yugoslavia upset France in a Davis Cup match six years ago.

Zivojinovic and then unknown Prpic, ranked 500th

played in that match against Noah and Henri Leconte.

"They were among the five or six best players in the world, and we beat them," Zivojinovic said. "In the Davis Cup, anything can happen...."

Connors set to come back

PARIS, Sept 20: US Open hero Jimmy Connors returned to tennis action in France this week after a two-week rest following his startling exploits in New York, reports Reuter.

Connors trained on Thursday at the French Open



at Roland Garros for an exhibition on Friday at Villeneuve d'Ascq in northern France and next week's tournament in the Swiss city of Basle where he makes his return to the international circuit.

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He then pulled out of last week's tournament in the south-western French city of

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Leading the French team is Guy Forget, ranked No. 6 in the world and coming off a victory in last week's tournament at Bordeaux.

Leconte left out

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French non-playing captain Yannick Noah, announcing the squad on earlier this month, named world number six Guy Forget, 18-year-old Fabrice Santoro and two untried players, Thierry Champion and Arnaud Boetsch, for the tie starting today.

Leconte, who had an operation in July after injuring his back at Wimbledon, returned

to competition at the Bordeaux International tournament last week but Noah clearly did not feel he would be fully fit for Davis Cup duty.

He was named as a reserve along with youngster Cedric Pioline.

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Becker pullout may help Americans

KANSAS CITY, Mo., Sept 20: Boris Becker's pullout from the Davis Cup may have been the best thing for the German team, given the US team's plot to maximize its home-court advantage with a \$40,000 investment, reports AP.

That's how much the United States Tennis Association paid to haul in tons of crushed red brick from Florida and set up an indoor clay court just as slow as America's top players, Jim Courier and Andre Agassi, like for the semifinals series starting today.

Courier edged Agassi in a grueling five-setter on a similar court in the French Open final this year, and they're both pleased to be cheering for each other this time on a surface perfect for their baseline styles.

But with Becker out because of a leg injury sustained at the US Open, the court strategy could backfire. His replacement, Carl-Ewe Steeb, is a baseliner better suited than Becker to the long rallies that clay demands.

How slow will the court be? "That depends on how much we water it tonight," Courier quipped Thursday as the Americans straddled the line between good sportsmanships.

Just as baseball teams sometimes give an extra sprinkling to the baspaths to slow down base-stealing oppo-

nents, so might the USTA dampen the chances of Germany's serve-and-volley master Michael Stich.

The slower the better for Agassi, who faces Stich, the Wimbledon champion, in the first best-of-5-sets match Friday. Courier follows against Steeb.

A doubles match will be played Saturday, and two singles matches are scheduled on Sunday, with the winner going



BORIS BECKER

to the final in November against the winner of this weekend's France-Yugoslavia match.

The idea of bringing in red clay was inspired in part by Courier's and Agassi's success in the French Open, and in part by the earlier prospect of facing Becker and Stich, whose styles are more suited to hard courts or indoor carpets.

Courier beat Stich in the semifinals on the red clay at Roland Garros in Paris and Agassi beat Becker in the same round, both in four-set

matches.

Though these matches will be played in the Arena, and though red clay is as foreign in these parts as haute couture, the Americans decided to play on clay just as they did when they beat Australia on a makeshift court in the Davis Cup final last year.

In the second round this year against the clay court specialists from Spain, the US team pulled a switch, choosing to play on grass at Newport, R.I., with a completely different squad, John McEnroe, Brad Gilbert, Rick Leach and Jim Pugh.

Court surface aside, America's Davis Cup team this weekend represents the coming of age of Courier and Agassi as top players on an equal plane and playing on the same side for the first time.

Once teen-age rivals at Nick Bollettieri's bang-from-the-baseline tennis academy in Florida, they are putting aside for the moment any lingering animosity from those days or from their French Open final.

"We both have true respect for each other as players," said Courier, ranked No. 3 in the world behind Stefan Edberg and Becker after reaching the US Open final. "I'm certainly in my fidget this week. As he said, and I back him up, he's playing about the best tennis I've ever seen him play. I feel I'm playing some pretty good tennis, too."

Agassi said he was "mentally and emotionally fatigued" going into the US Open.

"My early exit was really a blessing in disguise," he said, noting that he took the next two weeks off to practice, re-assess his game and regain his confidence. He talked with John McEnroe and said he's thinking about working with him or another top player to raise his game a notch, rather than just working under the tutelage of Bollettieri.

"I might need a little bit more than just hitting tennis balls, and getting stronger."

Jim Courier

said Agassi, who has beefed himself up "a good 25 pounds stronger" than he was in early 1990.

For the moment, though, he's "I've played better," he said of his recent practices. "I'm now hitting the ball well. I'm fresh, rested and excited to play again."

He described his whole erratic year, in which he dropped from No. 4 to No. 7 in the rankings, as a "hit and miss thing," and said, "this is of concern but no sense of panic."



JIM COURIER

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UEFA permits Israel to play

MONTREUX, Switzerland, Sept 20: Israeli teams will be allowed to play in European soccer competitions under a statute change approved by the congress of the European Football Union (UEFA) on Thursday, reports Reuter.

The congress unanimously passed an amendment giving UEFA's executive committee the power to invite members from other continental federations to play in Europe with FIFA approval.

The extraordinary congress had been convened because applications for the 1996 European championship will be invited before the next regular congress is held in June 1992.

Israel has been directly affiliated to FIFA, the International Football Federation, since resigning from the Asian Football Federation because some members refused to play them.

The congress also adopted a proposal which would allow the executive committee to negotiate a global television and marketing contract for the final rounds of the European Cup competition.

UEFA estimated that around 70 million Swiss francs (50 million dollars) would be brought in from such a contract.

Fifty-four per cent of the money would be distributed between the last eight clubs in the competition, 19 per cent would go to those eliminated in the earlier rounds in all three UEFA competitions, seven per cent would be divided among the 35 national associations and 20 per cent would go to UEFA to promote youth football and pay match officials.

Inter Milan beaten

LISBON, Portugal, Sept 20: Local side Boavista beat Inter Milan of Italy 2-1 in a late UEFA Cup first round, first leg match here yesterday, reports AFP.

USOC meets Monday to select a new chief

WASHINGTON, Sept 20: The resignation of Robert Helmick as president of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) amid allegations of conflict of interest, is the "tip of the iceberg," according to a senior sports official, reports AFP.

Helmick, under investigation for reportedly taking more than 275,000 dollars over several years for consulting services, resigned Wednesday night.

"He did what he had to do," Howard Peterson, president of the US Ski Federation, told AFP Thursday.

"Although some people al-

ready are trying to portray the situation as being over, it is actually only the tip of the iceberg."

Helmick, who has headed the USOC since 1985, announced in Indianapolis last week that he would not seek re-election when his term expired following the 1992 Barcelona Olympics but, following telephone talks with the USOC executive committee on Wednesday, decided to tender his resignation.

"No one has asked me to resign or forced me to resign," he said in a statement. "I just cannot allow this organisation, to which I have given so much. To be paralyzed by this situa-

tion".

Peterson said other American federations offered their support in making his broad charges, but were reticent to speak out on their own because of their heavy financial dependence on the USOC.

"Almost 90 per cent of the budgets of other sports organisations comes directly from the USOC, compared to us just six per cent for the USSF," he said.

A small number want to keep going (the investigation) but are scared."

One of the most visible federations, the Athletics Congress, refused to make any comments either on Helmick

or on Peterson's allegations.

Peterson said USOC executive director Harvey Schiller had asked for free 3,000 dollar ski passes and equipment, Peterson is demanding that Schiller also resign.

He cited other abuses of executive privilege such as free memberships at private golf clubs.

"Some people have told me they are embarrassed over some of the gifts they've received in the past," Peterson said.

But while some officials are hoping Helmick's resignation will lead to a general house cleaning within the USOC, others hope for a rapid return

NCAA gives Tennessee compromise penalty

KNOXVILLE, Tenn., Sept 20: The NCAA hammer fell softly on Tennessee, reports AP.

The NCAA said Wednesday that it accepted the self-imposed penalties Tennessee announced in August, and placed the Volunteer football programme on probation for two years.

The Vols thus avoided harsher punishment, such as a ban on television or bowl appearances. A bowl ban would have had the No. 6 Volunteers ineligible to defend the Southeastern Conference title they've won or shared the last two years.

"All of us at the university certainly regret those things

Protests won't hit Berlin's bid: Samaranch

BERLIN, Sept 20: Berlin's hopes of staging the 2000 Olympics have not been dashed by two noisy nights of anti-Games protests this week, International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Juan Antonio Samaranch said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

"We are used to these kind of demonstrations," Samaranch said. "Berlin is the capital of Germany and also the capital of democracy. In democracies there are many points of view."

The German capital's hosting of the three-day IOC executive board meeting, which finished on Thursday, was disturbed by a demonstration involving about 1,500 people near the delegates' hotel on Monday.

Then more than 500 protesters raced around city centre streets on push bikes throwing fireworks and chanting anti-Olympic slogans near an IOC reception on Wednesday.

"If there are people against the games we have to respect their views," Samaranch told a news conference. "I'm sure

the summer games.

HELMICK ISSUE

Meanwhile, an AP report said, Robert Helmick, who resigned as president of the US Olympic Committee amid controversy over his business International Olympic Committee in Berlin.

The IOC executive board appointed a three-man commission to determine whether Helmick's financial dealings represented any conflicts of interest.

Helmick has been a member of the IOC — a lifetime post since 1985. He has also been serving a four-year term on the IOC's powerful 12-member executive board since 1989.

While officials declined to speculate on Helmick's future with the IOC, they did not rule out the possibility that he could be forced to leave his post if the inquiry confirms any wrongdoing.

IOC officials were shocked in the United States that Helmick had worked as a paid consultant for several firms connected with the Olympic

movement. He reportedly earned at least \$127,000 for the work in 1990.

Helmick attended the IOC meeting in Berlin on Tuesday, asking the executive board to defer any action on his case until the USOC's inquiry was complete. The board agreed.

Helmick returned to the United States, where he announced his resignation Wednesday. He denied any wrongdoing but said the controversy was making it impossible for him to carry out his duties.

The three-man inquiry commission is headed by IOC Vice President Keba Mbaye. The other members are IOC Director General Francois Carrard and executive board member Marc Hodler, president of the International Skiing Federation.

The committee was asked to report its findings at the board's next meeting in December in Lausanne.

Helmick was informed about the decision. "He welcomes it and looks forward to

occurred that led to the NCAA investigation. But we are satisfied with the conclusions of the infractions committee and do not plan any sort of appeal," University president Joe Johnson said.

"Most encouraging to me was the committee's decision to adopt several of the actions we imposed on ourselves following the in-house investigation," he said.

Tennessee had been accused of six recruiting violations and with running an improper summer football camp. After its investigation, Tennessee admitted most of the recruiting violations and fired Jack Sells, the assistant coach involved in all of them, on June 7.

"In addition to the probation we have been directed by the infractions committee to make sure our coaches are instructed on NCAA rules before they become involved in recruiting," Johnson said. "We've already begun work in this area."

Johnson said he has met with head coaches in all sports and "asked them to make sure that rules and rules compliance are right on the forefront of the minds of all of our people, especially in recruiting."

The university denied it ran an improper summer camp, and the NCAA said in its decision Wednesday it found on violations. But the infractions committee "strongly advised" the university to change the way it runs the camp, which was suspended this summer pending the outcome of the investigation.

Johnson said the university will make sure all the rules are followed if the camp is renewed.

The NCAA said Tennessee's cooperation in the investigation and the self-imposed penalties were the reasons harsher penalties were not given out.

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