

Becker again bows to Agassi

FRANKFURT, Nov 13: American Andre Agassi began the defence of his ATP Tour World Championship tennis title in confident style on Tuesday by defeating Boris Becker in straight sets on his home German soil, reports Reuter.

The 21-year-old world number eight served superbly and played some brilliant ground strokes to seal his first round-robin group match 6-3, 7-5 in one hour and 39 minutes.



ANDRE AGASSI

The result marked Agassi's

fifth consecutive victory over the German world number three, who has not beaten the American since 1989.

The French Open finalist joined Czechoslovak Ivan Lendl, the oldest man in the tournament, and American Jim Courier as winners on the opening day's group matches at the Frankfurt event, the traditional end to the ATP tour's season.

Lendl, 31, hardly wasted a second in a commanding 6-2, 6-4 victory over Frenchman Guy Forget which took just 75 minutes.

His fast finishing contrasted sharply with Courier's energy-sapping 6-7, 7-5, 6-4 victory over Czechoslovak Karel Novacek in the first match of the day, which lasted a grueling two hours and 40 minutes.

Agassi's match did not start until 2255 local time but the American seemed wide awake. He broke Becker's service in the second game and went on to take the first set 6-3 in 42 minutes with a masterful display of accurate ground strokes.

Becker, roared on by the partisan German crowd in the indoor Festhalle arena, had opportunities to get back into the match.

But he failed to take any of the four break points he had

on Agassi's first service game of the second set. After the rest of the games went to serve, the American made a crucial break in the 11th game to take a 6-5 lead before serving successfully for the match.

Agassi said Becker was unlucky to lose the Group B match.

"He's played well every time we have played. But I thought he was just bottom line unlucky," Agassi said.

"It is really unfair that we were not out there playing a third set. He had five or six



BORIS BECKER

break points and I just had one and it worked out."

Becker was critical of the timing of the match. Organisers kept to a 75-minute break between the first and second match for television reasons.

"When the draw was made I asked if this was fair. TV is more important than tennis these days," Becker complained.

"It was a very close match but somehow I just couldn't get a break....I'm going to dream about that game when I had four break points."

Lendl looked as sharp and eager as ever against the 26-year-old Forget despite a disappointing year in which he slipped to fifth in the world rankings, his lowest position for 10 years.

The Czechoslovak made key breaks of serve in the fifth and seventh game to run away with the first set 6-2 in 35 minutes.

Once he had broken the Frenchman again in the third game of the second set, the outcome of the contest never looked in doubt.

Courier, playing in the same Group A as Lendl, had to work a lot harder for his victory.

After losing the first set in the tiebreak, the American had to show all his competitive bite to overcome Novacek who only stepped into the tournament at the weekend after Sweden's world number one Stefan Edberg withdrew.



Action from yesterday's Green Delta Second Division league match between Mukta Bihanga and Tejgaon Agragami which ended in a 1-1 draw at the Hockey Stadium.

—Star photo

Sanchez, Garrison post wins

PHILADELPHIA, Nov 13: Third-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and No 8 Zina Garrison won their opening matches Tuesday night in the Virginia Slims of Philadelphia tennis tournament, reports AP.

But fifth-seeded Mary Joe Fernandez fell prey to the overpowering serve of Brenda Schultz in a 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 first-round upset in the dhrs 350,000 event.

Sanchez Vicario, who had a first-round bye, had to battle to get past Tami Whittingler 6-0, 3-6, 6-2 in a second round meeting.

Garrison rolled over 15-year-old Joanne Moore 6-0, 6-

0 in a first-round meeting.

In other first-round matches, seventh-seeded Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere eliminated Elizabeth Smylie, 6-1, 6-2; Lori McNeil defeated Eva Sviglerova 6-1, 1-6, 6-2; Helena Sukova beat Elena Brokoviets 6-3, 6-4; and Natalia Svereva topped Sabine Appelmans 6-4, 6-2.

Sanchez Vicario needed only 22 minutes to win the first set but, perhaps slowed by a head cold, she faltered in the second, losing her service in the first game and again in the third to fall behind 3-0. Whittingler got another service break in the final game of the set when Sanchez Vicario hit a forehand long.

The two traded breaks in

the first two game of the third set and Sanchez Vicario had to save a pair of break points to tie the set at 2-2.

In the next game, it was Whittingler's turn to save a pair of break points, but she lost her serve when she hit a forehand into the net. She double faulted to fall behind 5-2 and allowed Sanchez Vicario to serve out the match.

Moore, a student at Nick Bollettieri's tennis academy in Bradenton, Fla, was no factor against Garrison, who recorded six service breaks and never faced a break point.

Schultz, whose serves were measured as high as 105 mph (169 Kph) during the match, handed Fernandez her earliest defeat of the year. In 17 previous tournaments in 1991, Fernandez, the world's seventh-ranked player, had not lost in the first round and had advanced as far as the quarter-finals in 15 of the events.

SCHULTZ UPSETS FERNANDEZ

Brenda Schultz of the Netherlands used her lethal serve to upset fifth-seeded Mary Joe Fernandez 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 yesterday.

The 6-foot, two-inch (1.88 metres) Schultz called her first-round victory over the seventh-ranked Fernandez one of the two biggest wins of her career. This year, the 35th-ranked Schultz upset then seventh-ranked Jana Novotna, of Czechoslovakia, in the second round at Wimbledon.

Schultz, who won her first ever tournament title this past summer in Schenectady, credits the development of a more all-around game for recent successes. But, she knows the foundation of her game relies heavily on her powerful serve, which often clocks in at over 100 miles per hour (160 km).

"It's not only my serve now," said Schultz, after her victory. "In the beginning, it definitely was always just the serve. I never even learned to play a second volley. Now, I've learned to play the points a little more."

Schultz raced through the first set, barely letting her American opponent warm-up. In the second set, Fernandez had an easier time reading Schultz's serve. Service breaks in the sixth and eighth games allowed Fernandez to even the match at one-set all.

Intelligent strategic maneuvering enabled Schultz to win the match in the third set. She used her serve as a better weapon than just a bullet.

"I played (my serve) more to her body," Schultz said. "I made her make the shot instead of my just serving hard. And it worked."

Fernandez played a weak third game in the final set, letting Schultz break her serve and eventually win the match.

"In the third set she was hitting her serve into my body," said Fernandez. "She served well on the key points. She deserved to win the third set."

Lakhani's title

Muslim Lakhani clinched the title of the Sonargaon Hotel squash tournament, beating Aziz 9-5, 9-6, 1-9 and 9-6 in the final held at the hotel court yesterday afternoon.

Eighteen players took part in this year's five-day long tournament.

General Manager Andrew McBurnie gave away the trophies after the final.

Bush for Johnson on AIDS panel

NEW YORK, Nov 13: President George Bush has invited basketball star Earvin Magic Johnson to join an advisory panel on AIDS but the former Los Angeles Lakers player has made no decision yet, White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Johnson, 32, announced last Thursday he was infected by the AIDS-causing HIV virus and pledged to become a spokesman for AIDS. The news gripped America, partly because Johnson was infected through heterosexual intercourse.

The President would like to have Magic on the AIDS commission, Fitzwater told reporters in New York, where Bush was delivering two speeches. "We don't have any definite answer at this point," said Fitzwater.

Hockey results

Sports Reporter

Mukta Bihanga, their super league berth virtually assured, dropped a point in the Green Delta Second Division hockey league when they were held to a one-all draw by Tejgaon Agragami at the Hockey Stadium.

Both sides scored once after a barren first half of this Group A tie.

Mohammed Hossain put Mukta Bihanga ahead with a fine field goal in the 40th minute of the proceedings. But it proved a very short-lived lead because another beautiful field goal from Sirajul Islam restored parity for Tejgaon Agragami just eight minutes later.

The other fixture of the day, scheduled earlier in the day, fell through with Combined Sporting Club conceding a walk over to Farashganj Sporting Club, thereby facilitating Farashganj's entry into the super league from Group D.

In the match yesterday, Mukta Bihanga's Masud Mia and Tejgaon Agragami's Masudur Rahman received the yellow cards while Masud Hassan was shown the green card.

The preliminary robin league matches conclude today with two ties scheduled for this afternoon.

Nineteen teams, divided into four groups, are competing in this year's league. The top two from each group qualify for the super league.

Magic Johnson's Olympic wish

NEW YORK, Nov 13: Magic Johnson says he wants to play in the Olympics next summer, although his doctors have told him the rigours of playing basketball might hasten the onset of AIDS.

"If I'm healthy, I might very well be on the floor for the opening tap at Barcelona," Johnson, who is infected with the AIDS-related HIV virus, wrote in this week's issue of Sports Illustrated magazine.

Johnson says he has dreamed all his life about playing on a team with Michael Jordan and Larry Bird, who have also been named to the Olympic team.

"I get goose bumps just thinking about what it would be like to be on the floor with those guys," he says.

"And I want to bring back the gold medal. I've accomplished everything in this game — from a team perspective and individually. I've won championships in high school, college and the pros. And I've won every award there is. But I don't have an Olympic gold medal. God willing, I'll get it."

In the article, co-authored by his biographer, Roy Johnson, Magic Johnson says he's certain he was infected with the HIV virus "by having

unprotected sex with a woman who has the virus" and says he has never had a homosexual experience. Homosexuals are the largest risk group in the United States for the HIV infection and AIDS.

"I can't specify the time, the place or the woman. It's a matter of numbers," Johnson says.

"Before I was married, I truly lived the bachelor's life."

Chamberlain, the NBA's all-time leading rebounder, wrote in his recently published autobiography that he has had sex with an estimated 20,000 women.

Johnson disclosed that he found out on Oct 25 that he had tested HIV-positive and missed the Los Angeles Lakers' first three games with "the flu" because he and his doctors wanted to verify the tests.

"I never had the flu as the team announced after I didn't show up for the game against the Jazz on Oct 25 and then missed the first three games of the regular season," Johnson says.

"I was not trying to deceive anyone. I only wanted to make sure that the insurance company's results were correct."

Johnson announced last Thursday that he had tested HIV-positive while undergoing an insurance policy exam and said he had found out just the day before.

But in the Sports Illustrated article, Johnson says he first

found out when Dr Michael Mellman, the team physician, telephoned him at his hotel room in Salt Lake City before an exhibition game Oct 25.

"I need to see you in my office. Today," Johnson says Mellman told him.

Johnson then flew back to Los Angeles, where Mellman told him he had tested positive for the HIV virus, which can lead to AIDS. From then until last Thursday, only a few people knew about the infection — his agent, Lon Rosen; Lakers owner Jerry Buss and general manager Jerry West; his wife and his parents.

Just before his Thursday news conference, Johnson says he called five of his closest friends — talk show host Arsenio Hall; his former coach, Pat Riley, now of the New York Knicks, and Larry Bird of the Boston Celtics; Isaiah Thomas of the Detroit Pistons and Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls.

"Larry cried. So did Arsenio. Isaiah just didn't want to believe it. Pat and Michael listened in stunned silence," he says.

Johnson says he was one of the three most sought-after bachelors in Los Angeles along with Hall and actor-comedian Eddie Murphy.

United States for the HIV infection and AIDS.

"I can't specify the time, the place or the woman. It's a matter of numbers," Johnson says.

"Before I was married, I truly lived the bachelor's life."

Chamberlain, the NBA's all-time leading rebounder, wrote in his recently published autobiography that he has had sex with an estimated 20,000 women.

Johnson disclosed that he found out on Oct 25 that he had tested HIV-positive and missed the Los Angeles Lakers' first three games with "the flu" because he and his doctors wanted to verify the tests.

"I never had the flu as the team announced after I didn't show up for the game against the Jazz on Oct 25 and then missed the first three games of the regular season," Johnson says.

"I was not trying to deceive anyone. I only wanted to make sure that the insurance company's results were correct."

Johnson announced last Thursday that he had tested HIV-positive while undergoing an insurance policy exam and said he had found out just the day before.

But in the Sports Illustrated article, Johnson says he first

SOCCER SCENARIO

Platini picks Simba for Papin

PARIS, Nov 13: Michel Platini has called up Paris St Germain's Amara Simba in place of suspended striker Jean-Pierre Papin for France's European Championship qualifier against Iceland next week, reports Reuter.

With seven victories in seven matches, France have already qualified for Group One for the finals in Sweden next year.

The Senegal-born Simba scored on his international debut friendly against Poland in August which France won 5-1.

The rest of the 16-man squad is unchanged from the one drawn up by Platini for the qualifier in Spain last month.

Marseille defender Manuel Amoros will equal Maxime Bossis' record of 76 caps for France if he plays.

Squad: Bruno Martini, Gilles Rousset, Manuel Amoros, Laurent Blanc, Basile Boli, Bernard Casoni, Francis Sylvestre, Jocelyn Angloma, Didier Deschamps, Jean-Philippe Durand, Luis Fernandez, Christian Perez, Eric Cantona, Christophe Cocard, Amara Simba, Pascal Vahirua.

Belgian coach calls up Walem

RUSSELS, Nov 13: Belgian coach Paul Van Himst called up Anderlecht midfielder Johan Walem on Tuesday for next week's European Championship qualifier against Germany, reports Reuter.

The way he plays right now, I just can't ignore him. He's one of those super talents," Van Himst said.

Belgium are already out of the running for the 1992 finals following Group Five defeats by Wales and Germany.

Walem, 19, played for Anderlecht when they beat Dutch champions PSV Eindhoven 2-0 to reach the last eight round-robin stage of the European Cup last Wednesday.

He may replace Franky Van Der Elst, Belgian player-of-the-year last season, who is suffering a viral infection.

Squad: Michel Predud' Homme, Filip De Wilde, Philippe Albert, Vital Borkelmans, Stephane Demol, Georges Grun, Dirk Medved, Danny Boffin, Frank Dauwen, Marc Emmers, Erzo Sefto, Lorenzo Staels, Franky Van Der Elst, Stefan Van Der Heyden, Johan Walem, March Degryse, Luc Nilis, Francis Severeys, Marc Wilmots.

Poles outplay England 2-1

PLA, Poland, Nov 12: Poland beat England 2-1 (halftime 1-0) in a European under-21 soccer championship Group Seven qualifier on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Scorers: Poland: Andrzej Juskowiak (6th minute, 75th) England-Paul Kistson (54th) Attendance: 12,000

STANDINGS						
Final Group Seven standings (tabulate under — played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):						
Poland	6	6	0	0	10	2 12
England	6	3	1	2	11	5 7
Turkey	6	1	1	4	6	11 3
Ireland	6	1	0	5	5	14 2

Switzerland beat Romania

IMPINA, Romania, Nov 12: Switzerland beat Romania 3-1 (halftime 2-1) in a European under-21 soccer championship group two qualifying match on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Scorers: Romania: Marco Walker (4th minute own-goal). Switzerland: Andre Wiederkehr (23rd), Marco Waker (37th), Gheorghis Nemtsoudis (86th). Attendance: 2,000

STANDINGS						
Standings (tabulate under — played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):						
Scotland	6	5	0	1	13	5 10
Bulgaria	6	4	0	1	6	1 8
Romania	6	1	0	4	4	9 2
Switzerland	6	1	0	5	5	13 2

Remaining match: Nov 19 Bulgaria v Romania

Jackson lauds Johnson's courage

DETROIT, Nov 13: The inward reflection of Americans struggling to deal with the shock and hurt over Magic Johnson's infection with the AIDS virus will unite and heal the nation, the Rev. Jesse Jackson says, reports AP.

"Magic Johnson is making the transition from thrilling us to healing us," Jackson told churchgoers Sunday. "His powerful body is the instrument of the healing. His prominence puts light and heat in a cold dark place."

Jackson called for a national AIDS summit next month that would include athletes, ministers and leaders of more than 50 cities. The summit would lay the groundwork for a safe-sex campaign Johnson has pledged to lead.

Jackson offered a moving sermon at Detroit's Hartford Memorial Baptist Church that brought the congregation to its feet with shouts of "yes" and "Amen."

"I just to share because we are all in search of the appropriate response to our agony,"

Jackson told about 350 people attending the sunrise service.

"Magic Johnson has gone from saving ball games to saving lives," Jackson said of the Lakers' star's decision to go public with his infection to educate others about the deadly disease.

"His announcement was like a hole had been shot through our souls," Jackson said. "It was dramatic way to get the nation's attention, to get the world's attention."

Many AIDS experts have said Johnson's announcement has done more than any event of the past decade to change American attitudes towards AIDS. Johnson has admitted he acquired the virus through promiscuous heterosexual sex.

"When it's dark, say it's dark," Jackson said. "Magic did. When it's dark, don't adjust to the darkness. Don't give up, don't drop out."

To change sexual behaviour, parents must teach children about sexuality, Jackson said.

Teach your child at the point of curiosity, when they

Noah has a tricky choice to make for Davis Cup final

PARIS, Nov 13: Henri Leconte, Olivier Delaitre and Arnaud Boetsch are the contenders to be France's number two singles player in the Davis Cup final against the United States in Lyon later this month, reports Reuter.

Francois Jauffret, France's national coach, announced on Tuesday the three would join French number one Guy Forget for a training session in Montreux, Switzerland, next week.

Fabrice Santoro, who was instrumental in France's victories over Australia and Yugoslavia in the previous rounds, was called up only as "a sparring partner," he said.

Team captain Yannick Noah may still consider playing in the doubles in the final, which will take place from November 29 to December 1. Jauffret added.

The final line-up will not be announced before the draw on November 27, he said.

Fernandez eliminated

INDIANAPOLIS, Nov 13: Qualifier Mary Lou Daniels ended Gigi Fernandez's bid for a sport in next week's one million-dollar Virginia Slims championships by beating the Puerto Rican 6-4, 6-1 in the first round of the 150,000-dollar Jell-O Classic women's tennis tournament on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Top seeded Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria easily eliminated Tatania Ignatieva of the Soviet Union 6-1, 6-3 in her first-round match. Ignatieva was a last-minute replacement for Maya Kidowaki of Japan, who withdrew with the flu, as did eighth-seeded Carrie Cunningham of the US. Three other seeded players, including sixth-seeded Patricia Hy of Canada and seventh-seeded American Patty Fendick, were upset in first round action at the 32-player indoor tournament.

The most surprising loss

was fifth seeded Yayuk Basuki of Indonesia, who was upset by qualifier American Ann Henricksson, 149 in the world, 6-4, 6-3.

Fernandez's loss to Daniels, mathematically eliminated her from gaining one of the 16 places in the year-end championships, which begin on Monday.

Fernandez has played seven consecutive tournaments in attempting to secure a spot in the elite tournament, but a tough travel schedule over the last two days rendered her serve-and-volley game ineffective against Daniels, a steady baseliner.

"Mentally, I'm pretty exhausted," Fernandez said. "I made a decision a long time ago to go for the championships. I knew if I won the tournament here, I could have made it, but I felt my body and mind weren't in it today."

Fernandez, 20 in the world, lost her serve to fall behind 2-4 in the first set



Champion Muslim Lakhani(L) and runners-up Aziz(R) seen with General Manager Andrew McBurnie after yesterday's final of the Sonargaon Hotel squash tournament at the hotel court.