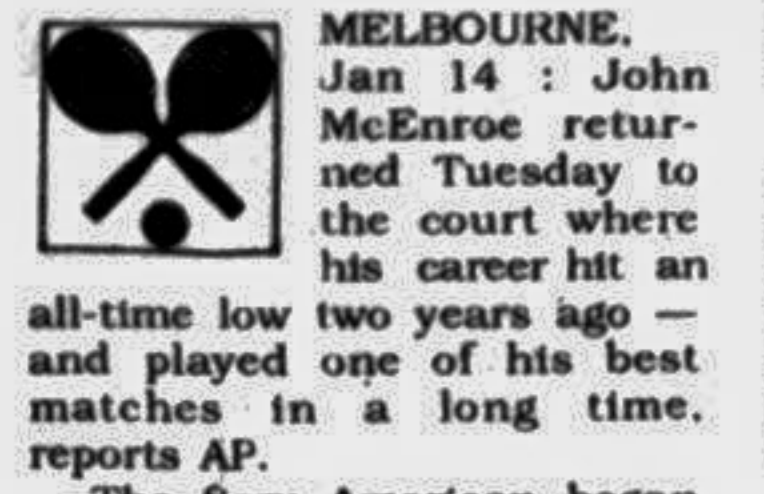


Mellowed McEnroe mauls Dyke



MELBOURNE, Jan 14 : John McEnroe returned Tuesday to the court where his career hit an all-time low two years ago...

lar on it," he said. "But there is always hope." The left hander is making only his fifth appearance at the Australian Open...

"I felt I played very well. Brod's not a big server and that's the sort of match I like to play," McEnroe said.



JOHN McENROE behaviour as he skillfully dissected Dyke in straight sets.

McEnroe, 31, who missed last year's Grand Slam event with a shoulder injury, was never in trouble against a fellow left-hander, serving, volleying and lobbing superbly.

left ankle and, clearly unsettled, went to duce three times before winning the game.

"Fortunately I went with it and didn't hurt myself seriously," McEnroe, now ranked 28 in the world, told a news conference.

The only problem was afterwards. It had nothing to do with the Australian Open. It was people trying to sell their newspapers," he said.

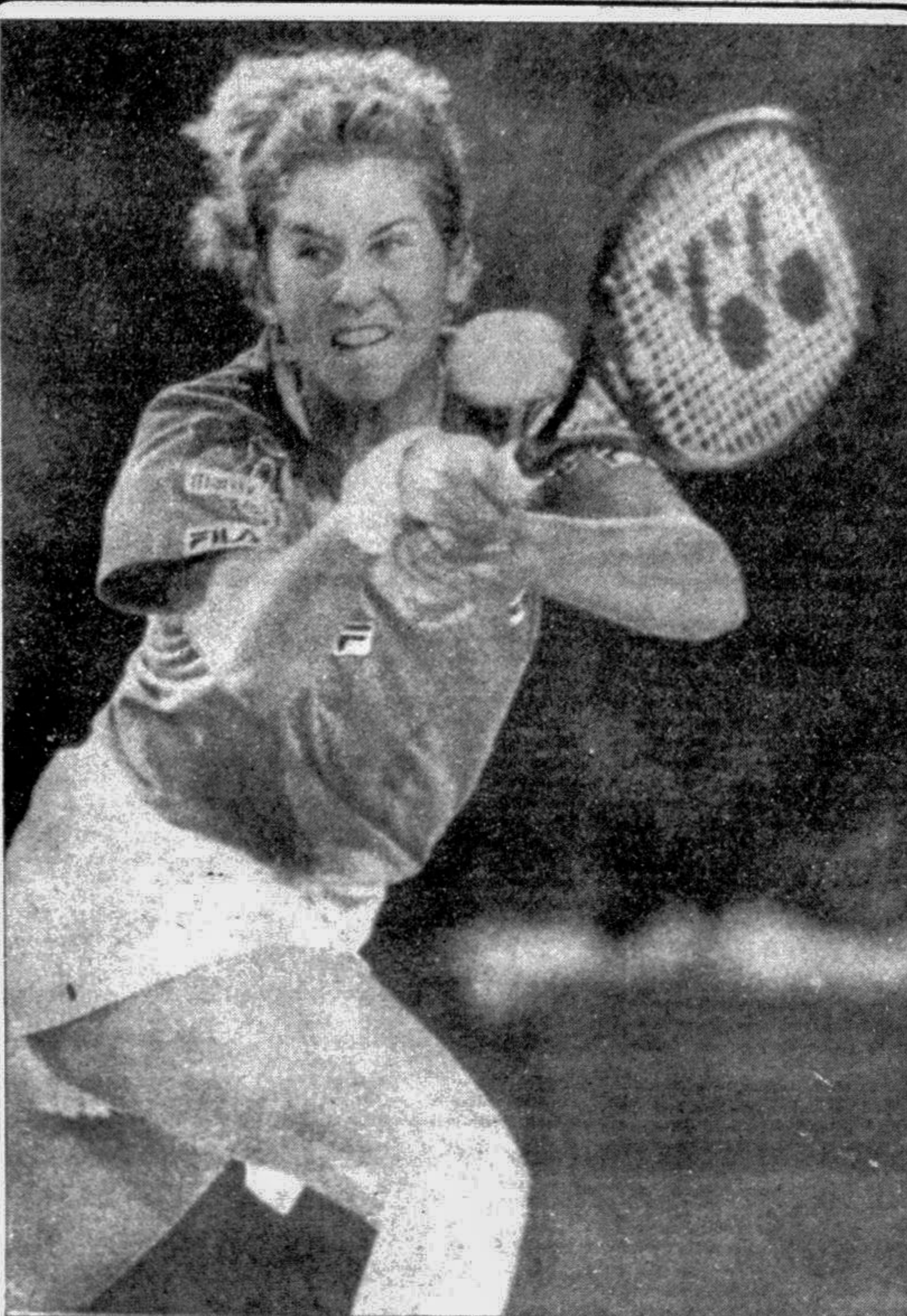
McEnroe, who has never won an Australian Open title, has said this could be his last year after 15 years on the international circuit.

Piercely patriotic, McEnroe has always made a great effort to play for the United States despite the demands of the tennis circuit.

"I think I could have made the difference between winning and losing," he said. "I could have added the emotion."

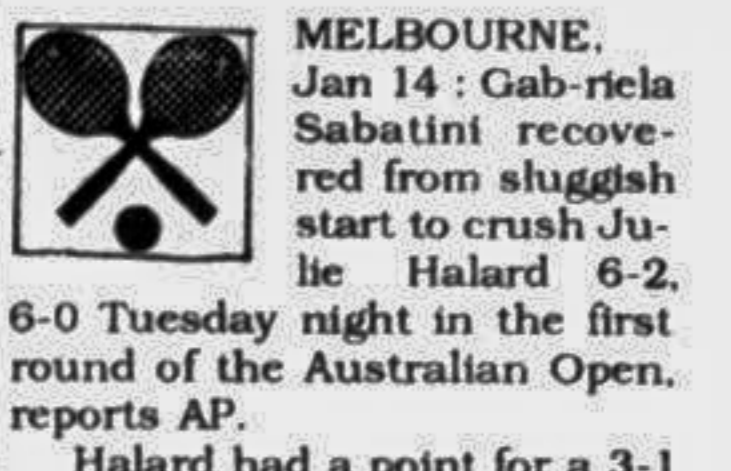
McEnroe, who last won a Grand Slam title over seven years ago, still believes in his heart he can win another. "I know it's a long shot but if you don't think you have a chance, there is no way you are going to do it."

As for Becker, whom he rated as currently the world's top player despite the rankings, "I would love to have the opportunity to play him."



Monica Seles of Yugoslavia makes an aggressive backhand return to Akiko Kijimuta of Japan during the first round of the Australian Open tennis in Melbourne on Jan 13. Seles won 6-1, 6-0.

Sabatini's super start as sick Graf goes home



MELBOURNE, Jan 14 : Gabriela Sabatini recovered from sluggish start to crush Julie Halard 6-2, 6-0 Tuesday night in the first round of the Australian Open.

Halard had a point for a 3-1 lead in the first set, squandered it and did not win another game.

Sabatini, the No. 3 seed, won in just 56 minutes, hammering groundstrokes past the hapless Halard and benefitting from a series of errors by her erratic opponent.

"She doesn't give you any rhythm to play, so that can make it hard," Sabatini said.

The Argentine player is the main challenger to defending champion Monica Seles following the shock withdrawal of three-time champion Steffi Graf.

Graf quit the first Grand Slam tournament of the year earlier Tuesday, citing a viral infection.

"She has viral illness and will not be fit to play tennis for 10 days," German women's team coach Klaus Hofsass said.

The number two seed felt sick after practising on Monday morning with coach Heinz Gunthard. "She has a fever and is feeling bad," Hofsass said.

Graf was the second late withdrawal from the first Grand Slam title of the year.

American sixth seed Pete Sampras pulled out on Monday before his first match with a shoulder problem, the second year running that injury has

prevented him playing the Open.

"May be she needs a rest over the next three or four weeks," Hofsass said. "Mentally she's good, she likes this tournament and she feels bad that she cannot play."

Graf's withdrawal makes world number one Monica Seles an even stronger favourite to win her second Open title, after stopping her German rival winning for the fourth year in 1991.

Cash still lures Aussies

MELBOURNE, Jan 14 : Pat Cash may be semi-retired at 29 years old, but he can still draw a crowd, reports AP.



PAT CASH national circuit.

played 25 singles matches in 1991, saying full-time tennis bored him.

"I'm not going to go back full-time. I've made that decision," Cash said after his win over Skoff.

Cash said his lack of matches had left him fresh and ready to play. He beat John McEnroe in an exhibition event in Adelaide last Saturday.

"I want to play and I'll give it a good shot," he said.

Cash said he was "satisfied" just to win one round. "But you know me," he added, smiling.

Cash nearly ran into trouble in the third set against Skoff. He was stricken with cramp in both legs in the tiebreaker.

I've had a virus problem and it's made me a little weak," he said. "I've never cramped in two hours before."

Cash said he didn't know if he'd have need able to continue if Skoff had won the third set.

I'd have gone on as long as it was possible, but I was just thinking about winning the tiebreaker," he said.

I was cramping just about everywhere. Every muscle in the body.

Seles stood above 'em all

MELBOURNE, Jan 14 : It was a time of glittering triumphs and embarrassing failures for Monica Seles, a Grand Slam year with a giant hole in the middle and wild rumours swirling all around, reports AP.

Yet, in the end, the tall, lanky teen with the grunting groundstrokes stood above all others as the 1991 AP Female Athlete of the year.

Selected overwhelmingly by sports writers and broadcasters, Seles on Tuesday joined a sterling list of athletes since the first award in 1931. Just turned 18, she became the youngest winner since 15-year-old Olympic gold medal gymnast Mary Lou Retton in 1984.

"It means a lot to me because of all the great athletes who have won it, like Florence Griffith Joyner and Jackie Joyner-Kersey," Seles said as she learned of the vote at the Australian Open.

Seles won all three of the Grand Slams she entered — the Australian, French and US Opens — plus the Virginia Slims Championships while winning a record \$2.5 million and succeeding Steffi Graf as No. 1.

In the balloting, Seles received 72 of 120 first-place votes, worth five points, three points for second and one point for third. Seles compiled 432 points. Tied with 114 points were tennis player Martina Navratilova, a two-time winner, and golfer Pat Bradley.

Gymnast Kim Zmeskal was second to Seles in first-place votes. She got 10 and a total of 72 points. Ahead of her in points were golfer Meg Mallon, who got 104, and softball pitcher Debbie Doom with 96.

The naming of Seles, who succeeds golfer Beth Daniel as Female Athlete of the Year, gives tennis 23 winners in the 61 years of the award.

Rounding out the top 10 in the voting were tennis players Gabriela Sabatini, Graf and Jennifer Capriati, and track star Diane Dixon.

For all Seles' glory, her year was stained when she abruptly withdrew from Wimbledon just before the start, failed to explain her action and went into hiding. That led to rumours of pregnancy and abortion that persisted even after she said she had shin splints.

The episode, followed by her appearance soon afterward at an exhibition where she showed no signs of injury, sullied her once pristine reputation and left her in the eyes of some as a liar, an out-of-control teen, or a manipulative money-grabber.

Suddenly, she wasn't the cute tennis princess, but an outlandish Madonna in sneakers, a "mystery girl" conning the world. She was even booed during her victory speech at the US Open when she thanked Donald Trump for his support.

"I was playing great tennis through the whole year and there weren't too many really bad times," she said as she reviewed a year that was at once one of the best and worst of her young life.

"The worst was probably Wimbledon because I couldn't play it and such a big deal was made out of it."

"It was the first time I'd ever read stories about me that were lies. People just believed that junk and it hurt me knowing the kind of accusations people make up."

"I just really freaked. I didn't know what was going on at the time, but my agent showed me all those clippings, and even now they're still going on about it."

Seles laughed at a caricature in a Melbourne tabloid — her savagely twisted face on Madonna's body, satin bustier and lace stockings exposed and a racket with a long whip in her hand.

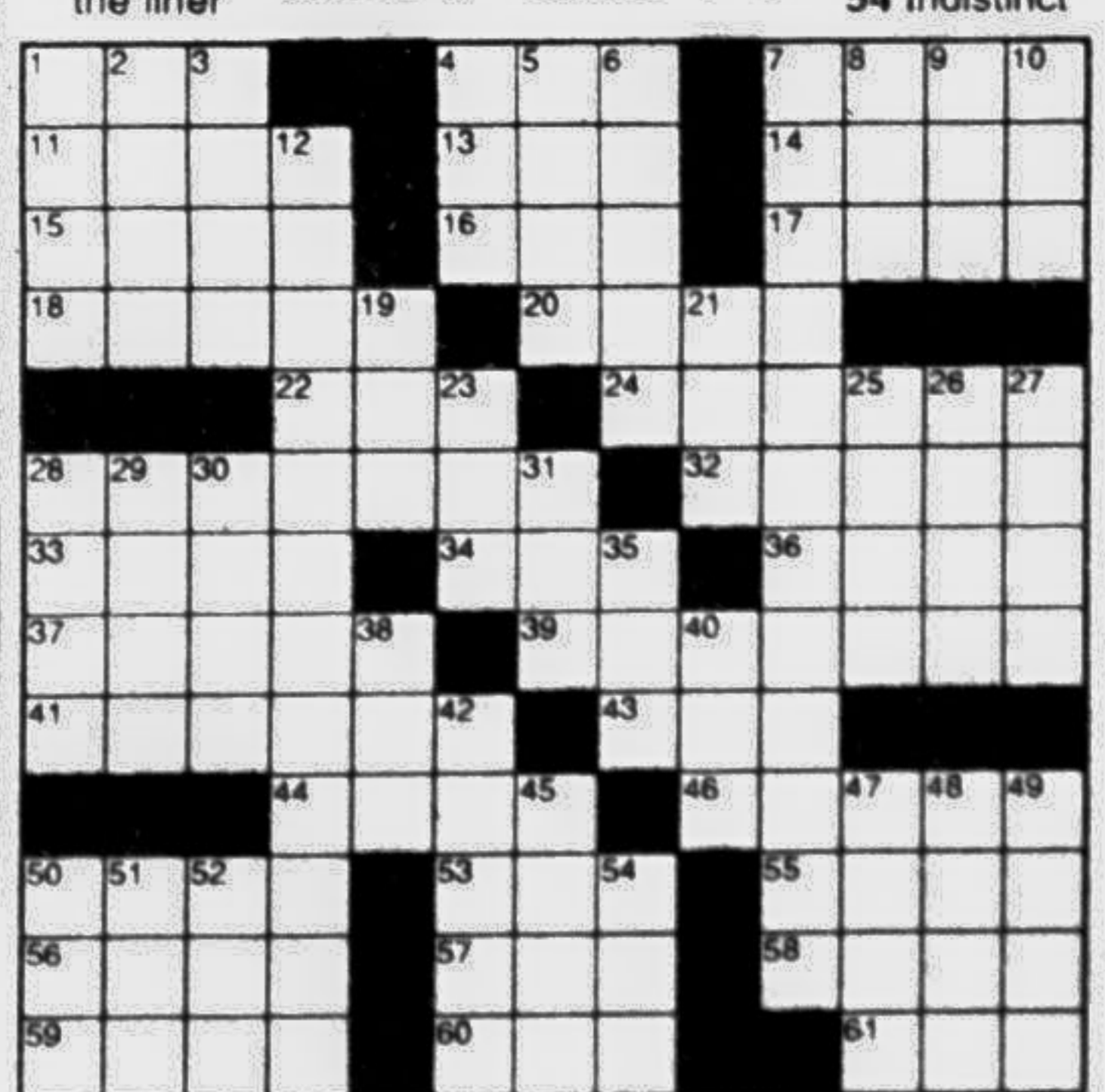
"Oh, God!" she exclaimed, putting her hand to her lips in embarrassment over the sketch that her cartoonist father surely did not draw.

"I would really like it if people could get away from the Madonna (comparison) because that's not me. My personality and everything is so different. I said I liked one of her songs, but that doesn't mean I want to be her."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 1 Sign of a hit 4 Young devil 7 Arabian gulf 11 Powder ingredient 13 Actress Thompson 14 Word before dive or job 15 Kind of exam 16 Actor Olin 17 Exploit 18 Code or colony 20 Josip Broz 22 Tease 24 Wine vessel 28 Idle chatter 32 Barbara (play) 33 Bedouin 34 Pull behind 36 Singer Vikki 37 Drawing room 39 Leaves the liner

FEEDS WEEDS HAMLET ADORED ELPASO FINALE ELI KNIFE GEE DORM ELL BOND SNEAD KETONES YEA SOW RUBBERY PENAL EPEE TOT RACE ESS FLUID ICE DESTRE TAILED STIVES ARNESSE SEEDS NEEDS



7-15 CRYPTOQUIP

RFCGFQMV W VCHWX WRH LM TQGNFQHXQMV GZFKK QGKWM T QG W ZLMV NFHGX. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SAID FAY WRAY, AFTER HER ENCOUNTER WITH KING KONG: "I GUESS I GOT CARRIED AWAY."

Today's Cryptoquip clue: V equals G

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

AUSSIE OPEN NOTEBOOK

MELBOURNE, Jan 14 : Back in the good old days, practising was a foreign concept to John McEnroe. He won 77 titles, including seven Grand Slam crowns, on an abundance of natural talent and not much training.

Monica Seles is on the move, looking for her fourth consecutive Grand Slam singles title. If the top-seeded Seles successfully defends her Australian Open crown, she will become the fifth player since the Open era to accomplish the feat.

Steffi Graf won five titles in a row between 1988 and 1989. A loss in the final of the 1989 French Open ended her streak.

There were 20 women in the Australian Open who won at least a \$1 million in career prize money. Four of the women were listed by Forbes magazine in August as being among the top 50 highest-paid athletes in the world.

Steffi Graf, who pulled out of the tournament Tuesday with a viral illness, was No. 16 on the list with earnings of \$7.3 million.

Monica Seles was listed as the highest paid female athlete with \$7.6 million — that figure put her at No. 12 among all athletes listed.

Zola may again run in Britain

LONDON, Jan 14 : Zola Budd could make an emotional return to Britain this summer if South Africa is readmitted to international athletics, reports AP.

British officials plan to send a team to Cape Town in May and then host an historic international against the republic in Edinburgh on June 19 if the South African return is rubber-stamped by international chiefs later this month.

They are confident that Budd, now Zola Pieterse following her marriage, will be in the South African team for the match at the Meadowbank Stadium — and could be pitted against Scotland's brilliant duo of Liz McColgan and Yvonne Murray.

British Athletic Federation promotions officer Andy Norman said some athletes from the republic could compete in Britain as early as the Pearl Assurance invitation even at Glasgow's Kelvin Hall on February 8.

Navratilova-Nelson suit trial Apr 6

FORT WORTH, Texas, Jan 14 : An April 6 trial date has been set for the paternity lawsuit between Martina Navratilova and former companion Judy Nelson, the tennis star's publicist said Monday, reports AP.



NAVATHILOVA IMG said no one was available for comment Monday night.

Cleveland-based International Management Group, which represents Navratilova, has been added to the lawsuit.

A telephone operator at Houston, could not be reached. In addition to Navratilova, IMG also has represented such athletes as Michael Jordan, Wayne Gretzky and Joe Montana.