

## Sabatini leaves Capriati near to tears



MELBOURNE, Jan 22: Jennifer Capriati's error-strewn defeat to Gabriela Sabatini in the quarter-finals of the Australian tennis Open Tuesday may not have been her biggest career disappointment, but it ran a close second, reports AFP.

The abundantly talented American youngster has telescoped more into her fledgling career than others would do in a lifetime.

The fear Tuesday night was that the emotional bubble of a shattered 15-year-old prodigy may have burst.

Inside two years Capriati has become the youngest player at 14 to be ranked in the women's top 10, the youngest female semifinalist at last year's Wimbledon, accumulated tournament earnings of \$20,000 US dollars and she even featured in for best 1991 list of the world's 40 highest paid athletes.

Third-seeded Sabatini, mixing her game with drop shots and net-play along with her strong groundstrokes, ousted fifth-seeded Capriati 6-4, 7-6 (7/1) in one hour 44 minutes.

No sooner had she left the court, she was straight into the media interview room, hardly composing herself to explain such a giant let-down.

Capriati, at 15 years 10 months the youngest-ever Australian Open quarter-finalist, her eyes welling and close to tears, told the world press: "There has been some pressure... actually, a lot of pressure from everyone, maybe it's becoming more serious now."

"It's because I have a chance to become higher (ranked) than what I am now and I have to really work at it

to try to keep up there and keep playing well."

"Of course, it's still fun, but I have to really concentrate now, and settle down and really think about it."



Gabriela Sabatini (above) ended Jennifer Capriati's run



"Times again tonight I had chances, so many short balls I could have come to the net on, and just didn't... So many

times I could have closed it."

Capriati rated her semifinal loss to Monica Seles at last year's US Open as her biggest career disappointment when she lost in a third set

in her second Australian Open semifinal, was sympathetic about Capriati's situation.

"Everybody has to go through those moments," Sabatini told her media conference.

"I've been through it, so it's something she has to work on... It just happens."

"Personally, it was a pretty difficult time for me before I won the US Open in 1990, I had my doubts about playing tennis, I was not enjoying it."

"I just tried to keep working hard and to be patient and one day everything started to open."

Sabatini said that Capriati, six years her junior, had made many mistakes in the fateful second set tiebreaker.

"I didn't do anything special in the tiebreak, I was just serving or hitting a return and she was just missing."

"I really played very well tonight, I played smart, I attacked her, I was approaching pretty well and on the important points she was lacking in experience."

Sabatini broke Capriati in the opening service game and the American youngster survived eight deuces on her next service to hold before breaking the Argentine to love in the fourth to level at 2-2.

Capriati was in the middle of a golden run of four games to lead 4-2, before the third seed broke back in the seventh and ninth games and serve out with three set points in the 10th game.

Capriati was in early strife in the second set losing her service in the third and trailed 2-3, before Sabatini again broke with across-court forehand.

The set went with service to the tiebreaker and Sabatini reeled off six straight points before a smash sealed it at 7-1.

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in her second Australian Open semifinal, was sympathetic about Capriati's situation.

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## Edberg wears down Lendl to reach semis



MELBOURNE, Jan 22: Stefan Edberg wore down an aggressive Ivan Lendl in five sets Wednesday to advance to the semifinals at the Australian Open, reports AP.

The top-seeded Swede beat Lendl 4-6, 7-5, 6-1, 6-7 (5-7), 6-1 in a three-hour 10-minute battle between a pair of two-time champions.

Edberg, 27, is bidding for his second straight Grand Slam title following his U.S. Open triumph late last year. He won the Australian Open in 1985 and 1987, when the tournament was played on grass courts. He is seeking the 34th title of his career and his sixth Grand Slam.

Lendl, 31, won the Australian Open in 1989 and 1990 and was runner-up last year. He missed out on the semifinals for the first time since 1984.

Second-seeded American Jim Courier downed his out-gunned Israeli opponent Amos Mansdorf 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 in another quarterfinal played in humid conditions.

Courier, the French Open champion, earned a semifinal meeting with either No. 4 Michael Stich of Germany or unseeded Dutchman Richard Krajcek.

Lendl, seeded No. 5, began superbly against Edberg—attacking at every opportunity. He won the first seven points, took a 3-1 lead and served out

the set. He led 5-3 in the second set before Edberg began to recover.

The slick Swede won four straight games to take the second set, beginning a run in which he broke Lendl's serve four times and won 10 out of 11 games.

The fourth set was much



STEFAN EDBERG

tighter and went on serve right through to tiebreaker, which Lendl took 7-5. He clinched the set with a ripping passing shot.

However, Edberg lifted his game in the fifth set and Lendl wilted. The Swede raced to a 5-0 lead and then served out for the match 6-1.

"I got off to a good start in the fifth set and that was crunch time," Edberg said. Edberg lost only four points

on four service games in the final set as he used a wide variety of strokes.

"I didn't really have too much chance in the beginning," Edberg said. "He gave me the chance and from then I played some really good tennis. Once I got my momentum going I felt a lot more comfort-



IVAN LENDL

able."

"Once you can come through one of these matches you are going to feel a lot better," he added.

Lendl had won two of their three previous meetings at the Australian Open and still has a career edge of 13-12. Neither player had dropped a set going into the quarterfinal.

Edberg said he believed Lendl was becoming slightly less of a threat.

"He's not quite as confident as he may have been a couple of years ago," Edberg said. "He

makes a few more easy mistakes, but he's still playing some very good tennis."

Lendl, surprisingly, agreed. "If I had the confidence I had two or three years ago I would have won the second set and probably the match," he said. "It's going to take time and I'll need to win some of these matches if I'm going to get it back. I have no doubt it will come back in the end."

Edberg will face Wayne Ferreira of South Africa in Friday's semifinals.

Courier scored his third straight victory over Mansdorf, a 26-year-old former Israeli army soldier playing in the first Grand Slam quarterfinal of his career.

"Every time you can get into the deep end of the second week of a Grand Slam it is fantastic," Courier said.

The Rangy 21-year-old American has risen from 25th to second in the world rankings over the past 12 months. His consistent serve and strong groundstrokes proved too much for Mansdorf.

"I'm playing the big points well, serving well and concentrating extremely well," Courier said. "This year everything is coming together right at the start."

No women's singles matches were scheduled Wednesday. Both semis will be played Thursday with defending champion Monica Seles, the top seed, facing No. 4 Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain.

The other semi pits No. 3 Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina against No. 7 Mary Joe Fernandez of the United States.

## Stich sent packing



MELBOURNE, Jan 22: Dutch power-server Richard Krajcek ousted last Wimbledon champion Michael Stich, the No. 4 seed, 5-7, 7-6, (7-2), 6-7 (1-7), 6-4, 6-4 in a three-hour 36-minute center court quarter final duel of the Australian Open, reports AP.

With that match Krajcek, 20, won an energy-sapping battle between two of the hardest serve-volleyers in tennis. Krajcek, like Ferreira, made it to the semifinals of a Grand Slam event for the first time in his career.

There were only three breaks of serve in the entire match, in which Krajcek served 22 aces and his German opponent 15.

Stich had beaten Krajcek in all three of their previous meetings, but wilted in the final set after Krajcek broke his serve in the seventh game.

"He's a great player," Stich said. "He's got every shot he needs to be a top player."

Krajcek said his play had exceeded his expectations.

"Realistically I should have made the third round," he said. "After that, everything was a bonus."

through his commercials. I like to go to the mall, a restaurant or a movie and not be bothered," Courier said.

"I don't want to have to keep looking in the mirror all the time because people are watching what I'm doing."

Like it or not, the Florida-born player will have to handle blanket media attention if he wins his first Australian Open title, to add to the French Open title he won last year.

But a dual career in television commercials like Agassi's was unlikely. "You can make a lot of money winning tennis matches," he said.

"If I do commercials they will be more like who I am," he said.

In the space of a year, Courier has had a phenomenal rise from a relatively average ranking of 26 to number two. In the process beating more top-10 players than anyone else on the tour in 1991 and winning 1.7 million US dollars in prize money.

Courier acknowledged the money was a comfort but it was not everything.

"When I didn't have any money I was just as happy as I am now and there's no reason to be any happier. Or more happy or less happy," he said.

And to press home his point, the man who likes to call himself just a regular guy, gave the media a maxim to ponder over.

"Happiness is not what you've got, it's how happy you are with what you have. I am happy with what I have," Courier said.

Courier would probably be a touch happier on Sunday if he comes away from Melbourne with the Open title and the number one crown.

Christie, who is currently warm-weather training in Australia, said he had not even heard about the proposed match until contacted by a journalist.

"What makes it worse is that the decision was made before, the IAAF had met to finally approve South Africa's readmission," he said. "It is wrong that Britain is seen as so desperate for a match in South Africa."

"Our team is racially inte-

## Hockey umpires strike

Sports Reporter

The Green Delta First Division hockey league remained suspended yesterday following a strike called by the umpires in protest against the unruly behaviour of an Usha KC official on Monday.

The league committee held a meeting yesterday evening to resolve the impasse but the upshot of the closed door palaver could not be known till the time of penning this information.

11th Lancer golf tomorrow

Sports Reporter

The eleventh Lancer golf tournament will be held at the Kurmitola Golf course tomorrow, Friday, says a Ranga Ltd press release.

Li General M Nooruddin Khan, psc, the Chief of Army Staff, will inaugurate the competition by tee-ing off at eight in the morning.

He will also give away the trophies at the prize distribution ceremony scheduled for 6:30 the same evening.

Hatkholah badminton from today

Sports Reporter

The fifth Hatkholah Open badminton tournament begins today, January 23.

Sixty-six participants, divided in two groups, will take part in the week-long championships.

While Group A will feature national players Group B will be an open one.

Taka 35000 has been earmarked for cash awards in an estimated budget of Taka one lakh twenty-five thousand.

Matches will begin at 5:30 pm everyday at the venue, opposite the Oshar cinema hall.

The organisers held a press conference yesterday, by Maj Gen Mahbubur Rahman, Chairman of the NSC.

Amateur Athletic Federation council meeting in Mexico City, which could the IAAF would welcome the republic back. British officials had already jumped the gun by organising the Cape Town match and a return fixture in Edinburgh the following month.

But Christie, sharing team-mate John Regis' view that there needs to be more political change in the republic before he competes there, insists the British federation is showing undue haste in embracing the South Africans.

"There is no way I will compete in either of the matches," said the Olympic 100m silver medalist. "I can't believe no one thought about consulting the athletes on such a sensitive issue. They've acted in a very insensitive way."

"Christie's comments come on the eve of the International

by the ease with which Ferreira put together his best style in the biggest match of his career.

Those who brought American flags had few chances to wave them. Instead, the few South Africans in the stands proudly waved a couple of orange, blue and white banners.

Told that McEnroe believed Ferreira played a perfect match, he replied: "There's never a perfect match, but I did everything right that I needed to do."

He said one of keys was his ability to mix up his serves to keep McEnroe guessing and prevent him from charging the net.

McEnroe, wearing a red-and-black elastic support on his right knee for the third straight match, never got a chance to display his deft touch at the net.

He appeared a little sluggish and had trouble taming an inconsistent first serve that had him shaking his head when an inordinate number hit the tape and sailed long.

During a stretch of five service games spanning the end of the first set to the middle of the third, Ferreira lost only three points.

Ferreira leaped with his arms up, while a dejected McEnroe slumped his head, walked to the net slowly and congratulated him with a handshake and a pat on the shoulder.

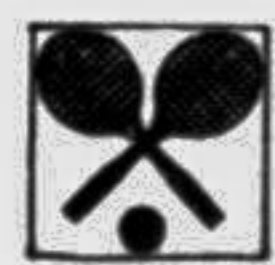
McEnroe, who maintained to the end his good behavior despite obvious annoyance over numerous line calls that went against him, packed his bag quickly and left with his head down and no acknowledgement to the cheering crowd.

He hinted strongly this would be his last Australian Open if he can't make any more progress in other major tournaments this year.

"Unless things change drastically from last year, I'm not going to be back," McEnroe said.

He said he has no plans to become a full-time player again, but that if he is able to rejuvenate his game, he would selected tournaments in 1993.

## Odds against Sanchez, Fernandez



MELBOURNE, Jan 22: Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and American Mary-Joe Fernandez must overturn the form book in the Australian Open semifinals to prevent a showdown between Monica Seles and Gabriela Sabatini, reports Reuter.

Sanchez Vicario has never beaten world number one Seles, her opponent in the last four, while Fernandez has lost nine of 14 matches against semifinal rival Sabatini.

Despite Seles' domination of the tournament's fourth seed, Sanchez Vicario could benefit from an extra day's rest after her quarter-final opponent, Swiss Manuela Maleeva-

Fragniere, defaulted because of injury.

While Sanchez Vicario was able to rest, Seles was caught up in a battle against young German Akke Huber, who many believe will soon be vying for the number one crown.

The only other occasion Seles and Sanchez Vicario have met in a Grand Slam tournament was in the final of last year's French Open. Seles won in straight sets.

Despite the record, Seles said: "She's (Sanchez Vicario) a very tough opponent and I always have close matches with her. I've never played her in Australia, so I know I'm going to have to play great tennis again."

Fernandez, yet to win a Grand Slam title, takes on

third seed Sabatini, having lost in straight sets to the Argentine at the New South Wales Open earlier this month.

The American, who lost the 1990 Australian Open final to Steffi Graf and last year's semifinal to Seles, said: "I still don't play the way I practise."

"I am practising well. I think a lot of it is mentally believing in yourself, so it's only a matter of time."

Sabatini, who last lost to Fernandez in 1989, said before beating her in the New South Wales Open that her wins against the American were achieved because she thought more about her game.

"I think more now on how to improve. I think I play more cleverly. I attack more," she said.

## Ferreira ends McEnroe saga



MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 22: John McEnroe's magical run at the Australian Open came to an end Wednesday at the hands of a 20-year-old who has never won a pro tournament, reports AP.

Wayne Ferreira, a South African ranked 46th in the world, gave McEnroe a thorough beating with a booming serve and stinging groundstrokes. His 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 victory earned him a semifinal meeting with top-seeded Stefan Edberg.

McEnroe, owner of one of the best service returns in tennis, had to watch as Ferreira blasted 15 aces and numerous winners. Ferreira's go-for-broke style meant that when he missed, he missed badly. But he didn't miss often in the two-hour whipping.

"I came out very strong," Ferreira said. "I felt right from the start of the match that I could win that quick."

McEnroe, broken once in each set, could manage only three break points. Ferreira had at least one ace in each of his first 10 service games. He finished off the first set with ace No. 6 and the second set with No. 13.

The New York left-hander watched Ferreira's almost flawless display in disbelief, often standing with hands on hips after watching winners zing by for two hours.

"He just played too good," McEnroe said. "He outplayed me. I had heard through friends that Ferreira was a big talent."

But the man who swept out No. 3 Boris Becker in straight sets and No. 13 Emilio Sanchez in a marathon five-setter under a broiling sun, said he could leave Melbourne on Thursday with his head held high. He'll meet his family in Hawaii in preparation for Davis Cup.

McEnroe said he was pleased he controlled his temper throughout a tournament, from which he was kicked out two years ago for throwing a tantrum.

He said it was very important for him to try to leave the sport with a legacy as a talented player rather than

someone who simply has an explosive personality.

"I'm sort of a piece of meat that people take advantage of," he said, referring to media hype of his outbursts.

Ferreira said he watched every match McEnroe played here and was happy to see him progress.

"I wanted him to do well," he said. "It's just unlucky that he wasn't on the other side of the draw."

It was the first match of the tournament played with the Centre Court's retractable roof closed because of a pre-match shower. McEnroe said he was told just a half-hour before the start of the match and didn't think it would work against him.

"But it probably hurt me



JOHN MCENROE

that it was indoors," he said. "The ball was not moving as quickly as I would like. The ball didn't seem to have the same zip. I wasn't able to rush him enough."

Ferreira, relegated to the outside courts in early upsets of No. 8 seed Karel Novacek and No. 15 David Wheaton, said it was difficult for him to assess the difference in conditions.

"I don't know. I never played on Center Court at the Open," he said.

But Ferreira agreed with McEnroe about the effect of the closed roof on the pace.

"I thought the balls were coming really slow," he said. "I was coming to everything a little early."

The packed, pro-McEnroe crowd in the 15,000-seat stadium, enchanted by his return to the limelight and immaculate behavior, also was stunned



LONDON, Jan 22: European Cup champion Linford Christie has attacked the British athletics hierarchy for arranging two matches with South Africa before the republic have even been re-admitted to the international scene, reports AFP.

The British skipper has also criticised his bosses for failing to consult his colleagues and himself about the fixtures, and forecast that Britain's black athletes would boycott the planned fixture in Cape Town on May 23 and 24.

"I predict that no black athletes will compete in South Africa," declared the sprinter. "What sort of national team will Britain have then? Black athletes make up half the team."

Christie's comments come on the eve of the International

Amateur Athletic Federation council meeting in Mexico City, which could the IAAF would welcome the republic back. British officials had already jumped the gun by organising the Cape Town match and a return fixture in Edinburgh the following month.

But Christie, sharing team-mate John Regis' view that there needs to be more political change in the republic before he competes there, insists the British federation is showing undue haste in embracing the South Africans.

"There is no way I will compete in either of the matches," said the Olympic 100m silver medalist. "I can't believe no one thought about consulting the athletes on such a sensitive issue. They've acted in a very insensitive way."

"Our team is racially inte-

grated and I think all the athletes should have been called together and asked for their opinion. If necessary, there could have been a secret ballot."

"After all these years of representing Britain and of being asked to act as an ambassador, it is sad to think the officials don't really care about the athletes. I'm very disappointed."

Christie, who is currently warm-weather training in Australia, said he had not even heard about the proposed match until contacted by a journalist.

"What makes it worse is that the decision was made before, the IAAF had met to finally approve South Africa's readmission," he said. "It is wrong that Britain is seen as so desperate for a match in South Africa."

## CROSSWORD By Eugene She