

Zonal semis tomorrow

Sports Reporter

Some zonal quarter-finals of the Gold Leaf national cricket championship were held at various venues across the country yesterday.

At Faridpur, Narayanganj recorded a massive 138-run victory over Gazipur.

Narayanganj will now take on Tangail in the zonal semifinals tomorrow, March 30.

Electing to bat, Narayanganj piled up a massive 314 for the loss of five wickets in 43 overs, thanks to sensible batting by Wahid, Jahangir and Ripon.

Wahid top-scored with 87 while Jahangir and Ripon made 77 and 63 respectively.

Palaah and Mithu took two wickets each for Gazipur.

Facing a huge total, Gazipur were all out for 176 in 42.2 overs.

Palaah and Swapan got 43 and 24 respectively for Gazipur.

Mizan and Babu claimed two wickets apiece for Narayanganj.

At Thakurgaon, Dinajpur moved into the zonal semifinals crushing Nilphamari by nine wickets.

Sent into bat, Nilphamari were dismissed for a paltry 86 in 32.5 overs.

Extras contributed 25 while Biplab made 14 for Nilphamari.

Nital and Dear took two wickets each for Dinajpur.

In reply, Dinajpur cruised past Nilphamari's total scoring 87 in 20 overs for the loss of one of their opening batsmen.

Sumi and Raja remained unbeaten with 38 and 35 respectively.

Dinajpur will now meet

Chapah wabganj tomorrow.

Mac ripur recorded yet another massive nine-wicket victory over Moulvibazar at Chandpur.

Batting first, Moulvibazar were all out for 142 in 35 overs with Layek making 36 and Biman 30.

Amir Babu of Madaripur wreaked havoc in the opponents' batting line-up claiming four wickets for 36 while Yaad and Sajib took two wickets each.

In reply, Madaripur made 143 in 30 overs with nine wickets to spare.

Yaad scored 44 while Zia and Sajib remained unbeaten with 37 and 25 respectively.

At Barisal, Jessore trounced Jhenidah by eight wickets.

Put into bat, Jhenidah made 188 for nine wickets in their stipulated 45 overs, Bimal of Jessore, taking five wickets for 42.

Rana with two wickets lent Bimal able support.

Liton, Chanchal and Robin scored 39, 38 and 30 respectively for Jhenidah.

In reply, Jessore made 189 for two wickets in 25 overs.

Raju and Rome remained not out with 75 and 66 respectively for Jessore.

Jessore will now face Patuakhali in the zonal semifinals tomorrow.

At Jessore, Satkhira posted an impressive 39-run victory over Jhalakathi.

Satkhira will clash with Barisal in the zonal semifinals scheduled to be held tomorrow, Monday.

Batting first Satkhira made 159 in 38 overs for the loss of nine wickets with Shampoo

getting 42 and Baban 28.

Liton claimed six wickets for 39 while Islam bagged two for Jhalakathi.

But in reply, Jhalakathi were skittled for a paltry 120 in 36.4 overs.

Anwar scored 24 and Islam 18 for Jhalakathi.

Lalu of Satkhira took three wickets for 31.

At Tangail, Manikganj beat Jamalpur by 40 runs.

Sent into bat, Manikganj made 186 all out in 33.2 overs with Munna, Sudev and Suman scoring 43, 28 and 23 respectively.

Biplab, Dipu and Sabuj took two wickets each for Jamalpur.

In their turn, Jamalpur were dismissed for 146 in 41.1 overs.

Farak, Sajib and Rumi scored 43, 28 and 20 respectively for Manikganj.

Chitta took three wickets for Manikganj.

Manikganj will now take on the winners of today's match between Rajbari and Faridpur tomorrow.

At Pabna, Rangpur got a walk over against Panchagarh.

Rangpur will meet Kurigram in the zonal semifinals tomorrow.

Bangladesh Railway and Rajshahi University did not turn up for their scheduled contest at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium. As a result, tomorrow Bangladesh Biman will clash with BKSP in the semifinals.

Meanwhile, the results of the Sylhet zone match between Comilla and Feni was not available till the time of filing this report.



Hira Lal looks on as Faisal Haq makes a return during yesterday's lost doubles match of the Davis Cup play-off against Pakistan at the Ramna Tennis Complex. Pakistan easily won the issue with a 3-0 lead.

Rahmatganj earn full points

Sports Reporter

Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society registered an authentic one nil victory against Eskaton Sabuj Sangha in the First Division football league yesterday at the Dhaka Stadium.

Last night, the team from old Dhaka, fitted in yellow and green, dominated the match but had to go home contented with just one goal as their forwards showed a serious goal shyness.

Rahmatganj missed an opportunity to go ahead in the first half when Angur failed to capitalise on a cross from Seraj from the left. The goal, however, came in the 18th minute of the post-lemon session when Shah Alam Babu's left-footer from outside the box entered the net giving Eskaton no change to react 1-0.

Babu passed up a chance to get the second goal when he blasted the ball over the bar in haste, in the 23rd minute. Raju saved Eskaton a few minutes later when he saved a prompt attempt by Mushtaq of Rahmatganj.

Subal of Eskaton was cautioned with the yellow card by referee Sheikh Badruddin for botcheroos play.

Rahmatganj now have nine points from twelve matches while newly-promoted Eskaton Sabuj Sangha have eleven, also from a dozen matches.

TEAMS

Rahmatganj: Milon, Badal, Rubel, Sufian, Seraj, Nazim, Selim (Javed), Shah Alam

TODAY'S MATCH

Neptune active chess begins

Sports Reporter

The Neptune active chess championship, jointly organised by the Dhaka Chess Foundation and Neptune Theatre Limited, got under way yesterday with 56 players taking part.

Following the conclusion of the first and second rounds of the nine round Swiss league meet at the National Sports Council's chess room yesterday, 11 players are jointly leading the points table, each having collected full two points. They are Zilur Rahman Champak, Ziaur Rahman, Saifuddin Lovelu, national champion Rifat-bin-Sattar, Rezaul Haq, Khondoker Kais Hasan, Syed Ruhul Kabir, Khalid Shaikat Prince, Ali Amjad Mintoo, Ameer Hossain and Rezaul Kabir Liton.

Former national champion Syed Tahmidur Rahman, Mansur Rahman, Mahbul Ali, Hasibul Hassan, Kazi Mahmuddunnabi and Abed Ullah each with one and a half points follow in joint second position.

The Tournament offers a prize-money of ten thousand taka.

US lead Czechs 2-0

FORT MYERS, Florida, Mar 28: Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras had little trouble on Friday leading the United States to a 2-0 lead over Czechoslovakia in their Davis Cup world group quarter-final tie, reports Reuter.

Urged on by the partisan crowd and benefitting from his opponent's sloppy play, Agassi beat Petr Korda 6-2, 6-4, 6-1 after Sampras served and volleyed his way to a 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 victory over Karel Novacek.

The Americans have a chance to win the tie today in the doubles competition, when John McEnroe and Rick Leach will tangle with Korda and Cyril Suk.

The difference in Agassi's one hour 49-minute match with Korda was the Czechoslovak's offensive manoeuvres, which earned him 25 winners but also created his downfall 55 unforced errors.

Agassi started by breaking Korda's serve in the first game and, while he didn't play very well until reaching 4-0 in the final set, Agassi wasn't pressured.

"He was too good for me today," Korda said of Agassi. "I was trying to play my game, but nothing happened."

Sampras, at home on the medium-paced hard courts here, controlled his match for the outset, taking revenge for a loss to Novacek on

clay last year in Hamburg in their only other meeting.

He dominated Novacek, a clay court specialist, with precise serves, accurate volleys and penetrating groundstrokes. He blasted 17 aces past Novacek in the one hour 53-minute match.

Sampras surrendered only four points on his serve in the first set and then saved four break points on his serve in the second set, posting 18 winners during ten games.

The American faced only one break point in the third set, when he served for the match at 5-2. Novacek dumped two service returns into the net on the final two points.

Davis Cup seems to be Agassi's favourite forum. His victory on Friday gave him a 15-4 won lost record since first participating in 1988.

"There's no question I played better today than the rest of the years, which is encouraging for me," said Agassi. "I've played long enough to know nothing compares to the experience and joy of playing for your country."

After his match, Sampras, who improved his Davis Cup record to 3-2, danced around the court, pumping his arms in the air, smiling proudly.

"All in all, I played my best Davis Cup match so far," Sampras said after his victory. "For the first time (in Davis Cup) I felt comfortable on court."

France face exit

LONDON, Mar 28: Defending Davis Cup champions France face an abrupt exit from this year's competition after Switzerland took a surprise 2-0 lead in a stormy World Group quarter-final in Nimes on Friday, reports Reuter.

French captain Yannick Noah, forced to gamble on the largely untried Arnaud Boetsch and Thierry Champion in the opening singles, saw both players defeated by the more experienced Swiss Jakob Hlasek and Marc Rosset.

Hlasek beat Boetsch 3-6, 7-6, 6-4, 7-6 while Rosset downed Champion 6-4, 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 in a match interrupted by a heated argument between Noah and match officials.

Noah complained bitterly that the Swiss section of the crowd tried to upset local boy Champion's concentration on game point midway through the fourth set and play was held up for more than 10 minutes as whistling French spectators prevented Rosset from serving.

The United States, beaten by France in last year's final in Lyon, had no such worries against Czechoslovakia in Fort Myers, Florida, taking an impressive 2-0 lead without dropping a set in either of the two singles rubbers.

Four-times winners Sweden did exactly the same in Lund as they opened up a 2-0 lead over Australia.

The start of the fourth quarter-final in Macao between Brazil and Italy was delayed for five hours because of rain.

France's problems were in stark contrast to their week-end triumph in last year's final, when they were inspired

Wessels' men do SA proud

JOHANNESBURG, Mar 28: In a display of national pride not seen since South Africa was forced into the sporting wilderness two decades ago, thousands of people white and black lined the streets here Friday to hail the country's World Cup cricket squad on their return from Australia, reports AFP.

"You have brought dignity and pride to all South Africans," Foreign Minister Pik Botha told the cricketers, summing up the mood of the fans.

"You have engendered a new feeling of national pride in all of us," he added, eliciting a roar from the gathered throng, so used to being shunned by the world because of apartheid.

A spokesman for the black nationalist African National Congress, which spearheaded South Africa's isolation and then helped its return as President Frederik De Klerk began dismantling apartheid, was as enthusiastic.

"You cricketers are a magnificent example of the potential we have in this country," Aziz Pahad, said.

"You have been ambassadors for the new South Africa on and off the field."

Earlier, the squad were treated to an American-style parade through the streets on the city, paper streamers raining down on the open-roofed bus which carried them past cheering crowds.

Huge banners proclaimed the South Africans "World champions," despite losing a controversial semifinal to England, while others, carried by schoolgirls, offered proposals of marriage to the younger stars of the team.

One read: "Jonty, you can dive onto my wicket anytime" a reference to a memorable dive by Jonty Rhodes onto the wicket to run out Pakistan's Inzamam-ul-Haq in a crucial first round game.

After touring through the streets, the parade wound its way to the city hall where drum majorettes, a guard of honour comprising firemen and a throng of frenzied supporters welcomed and garlanded the squad.

As team captain Kepler Wessels began to speak, a helicopter hovering overhead

dropped a load of confetti on the players while military jets flew high in the sky.

Wessels' message - that it was an honour to have represented the "whole nation" rather than just the white minority - was warmly and loudly received.

But an even louder and warmer reception greeted the

simple message delivered by team vice-captain Adrian Kuper: "Today I'm proud to be a South African."

Benefit match for S Valson

SILCHAR, Mar 28: Leading Indian, Australian and Pakistani players would play in a one-day benefit cricket match for former Indian medium pacer, Sunil Valson here on April 8, reports PTI.

Organised by the Silchar District Sports Association (SDSA), the match would feature Sunil Gavaskar, Mohinder Amarnath, Syed Kirmani, Roger Binny and Arun Lal among others, the SDSA president, Kamalendu Bhattacharjee told newsmen here on Friday.



SUNIL VALSON

The names of the Australian and Pakistan players would be announced later.

Valson would receive a purse of Rs six lakh, while all rounder Kapil Dev would be presented a cheque of Rs two lakh for taking 400 wickets in Test Cricket, Bhattacharjee said.

The president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India and Civil Aviation Minister Madhav Rao Scindia, Union Minister of Steel, Santosh Mohan Dev, the Assam Chief Minister, Hiteswar Sankar and his counterparts from Tripura and Mizoram would be present at the match.

Facile win for Swedes

LUND, Sweden, Mar 28: Sweden cruised to a comfortable 2-0 lead against Australia in their Davis Cup quarter-final on Friday after Magnus Gustafsson and Stefan Edberg easily won the opening singles rubbers, reports Reuter.

Gustafsson, ranked 16th in the world, had little trouble overcoming 57th-ranked Wally Masur 7-5, 6-4, 6-4, in what both sides viewed as a crucial first match.

World number one Edberg easily dismissed 90th-ranked baseliner Richard Fromberg 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 to put the four-times champions firmly on course for a coveted semifinal berth.

Sweden, beaten in the first round in 1990 and 1991, avoided another humiliating first round elimination after being 2-0 down against Canada

last month when Gustafsson outlasted Daniel Nestor over five sets in the decisive final match.

"I knew this was a key match and I have been very nervous all week," said Gustafsson, who suffered a sprained ankle in training.

"But when I woke up this morning, I felt no pain in my foot, and when I came in and saw the big crowd, I began to feel really comfortable.

"This was one of my best indoor matches, particularly considering that I met a serve and volley specialist," said Gustafsson, who paved the way to his victory in the first set when he broke Masur's serve for 6-5 after the Australian double-faulted.

Masur knew the first singles was vital if Australia, Davis Cup champions 26 times, were to beat Sweden for sixth time in seven clashes.

A cakewalk for Pakistanis

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh pair, withering with the passage of time, showed early promise of rising to the occasion when they took a two-one lead of games in the first set, breaking the service of Pakistan number one Rashid Malik. But the Bangladeshis failed to cling to the advantage as Rashid and Pakistan number four Khalid, who is seeded second in this competition, fought back magnificently with Khalid, in particular, producing some remarkable passing shots.

The hard court of the Ramna Tennis Complex could not deter the Pakistanis—more used to the slower clay, from rushing to the net to attack the weak serves of the local boys.

Both Malik and Khalid were cut a above their Bangladeshi opponents in reflexes and basic skill. The return of service of both the local players rather poor.

The reverse singles, which have nothing left in them than mere academic interest, will be played today starting at nine in the morning.

Pakistan number one Rashid Malik will play Bangladesh number one Hira Lal while Muhammad Khalid will take on Bangladesh number two Shibu Lal, who is Hira Lal's younger brother.

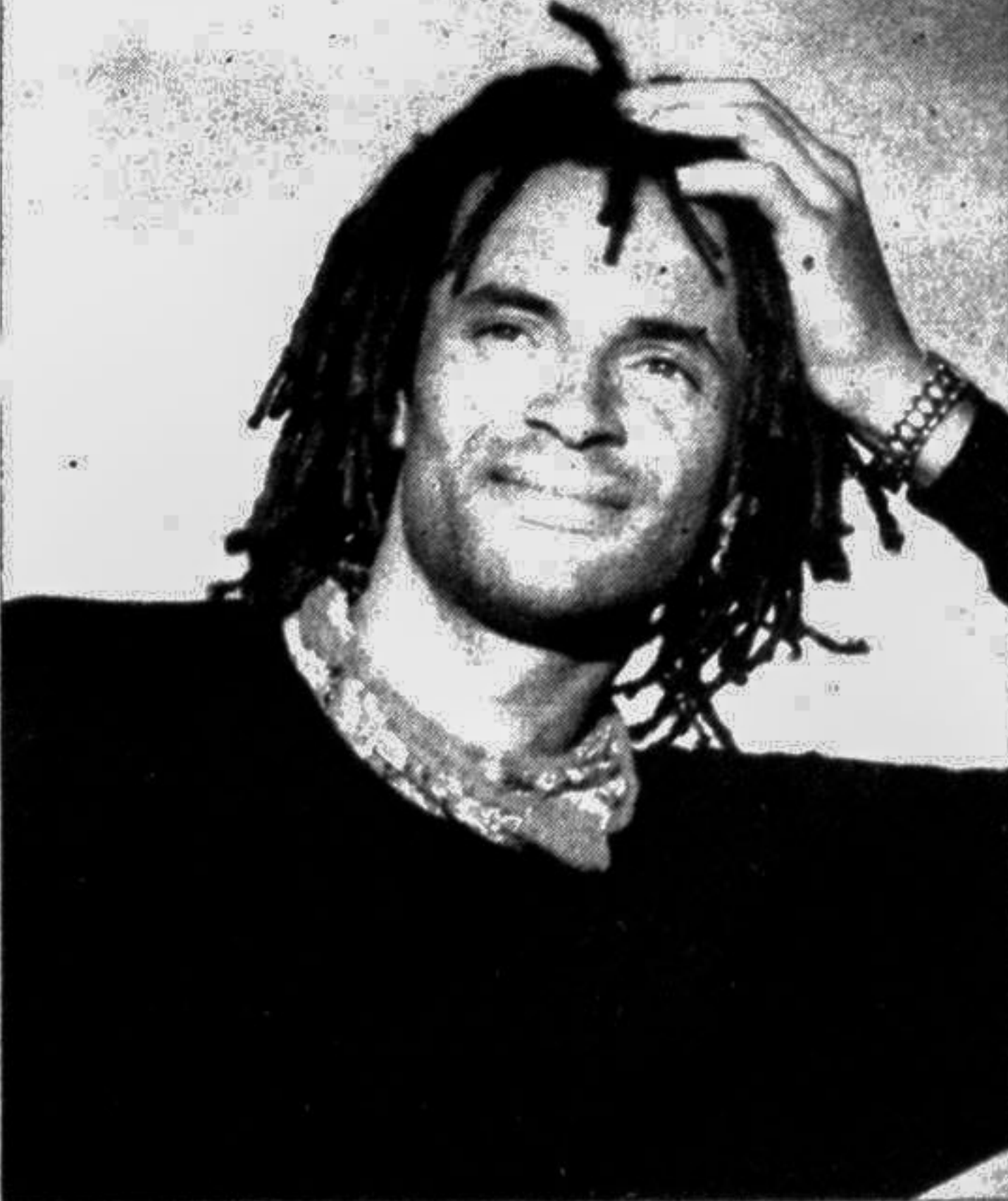
The 'Noah effect' in the Davis Cup

By Olivier Clement

Yannick Noah was revealed by his victory at Roland Garros in 1983. Since then, this "world citizen" (he was born in Yaounde) has become a famous personality in France and a media figure. He has even gone into show business with his song "Saga Africa". This did not prevent him from playing a major part in France's victory in the Davis Cup.

above all, mental preparation. Those selected were "cut off from the world," giving up any information from the outside world. Noah then filled them continually with a conquering spirit. "I wanted them to believe in it." He managed to make them share his pride, his ambition as a champion, his will to win and his generosity in effort and thereby to create "group dynamics" thanks to which each person can give the best of himself. "It worked very well. There was such energy in the group, such force, such a desire for victory."

There was also Noah, the psychologist. Why go and get Henri Leconte, who ranked poorly and was recovering from an injury? "It was anything but bluff. First of all, I knew he was the only player in the group capable of playing brilliantly and madly opposite Sampras and Agassi. Secondly, I knew the man: Henri needs to be appreciated. He will put everything into it if he feels he is supported and that one expects and achievement from him. That is how he gains confidence and transcends his playing. A trial such as the Davis Cup is made for him. What is more, when I told him he would be playing, he had tears in his eyes. He looked at me saying: "Thank you, Yannick, thank you. I will put everything into it, everything." For Guy Forget, it was a different problem. "Unlike Henri,



YANNICK NOAH...a charismatic genius

Guy is introverted and shy and it was up to me to put passion into his heart. I asked him to be more demonstrative after his winning strokes. I knew that that would help and stimulate him and remove his inhibitions."

The American masters arrived with their coach Tom Gorman. They were cool and sure of themselves. Agassi brought Forget down right away. Don't panic. Noah pulled out his joker: Leconte. Leconte was highly concentrated and played like a god literally demolishing an incredulous, paralyzed Sampras in three dry sets. The double Leconte-Forget against Flash-Seguro was won in their stride. Now it was Forget's turn. What was he going to do against Sampras? He had already beat him in the past, but never with so much pressure on him and he was oppressed by losing to Agassi. Forget was nervous and strained but he drew on his reserves to beat his second singles opponent. Was he going to fail in the fourth set? But Captain Noah was there giving him constant encouragement and advice.

This victory was also one for Noah the tactician. Leconte and Forget may be very good players, but, faced with a player like Sampras, the weak spot had to be found. He was a complete player and they were no. Leconte was unstable at the back of the court and Forget hesitating when on the attack. Noah, after viewing the last matches of the American player firmly established the tactics of each player. For Leconte, he absolutely had to go to the net before Sampras and thwart him with very accurate service. And Forget had to not remain at the back of the court, but go well into the ball and go up to the net whenever he could and make his second ball longer when serving.

And the result is the victory that we know about. Well done, Captain Noah! You have won with psychology and tactics.

This article was written after France's Davis Cup triumph in December, 1991.