

Agassi stays on course

NEW YORK, Sept 5: Andre Agassi followed the sun to the US Open Friday and easily moved into the third round of the year's final Grand Slam tournament, reports agencies.

The Wimbledon champion and No. 8 seed at Flushing Meadow needed only one hour, 32 minutes to crush Francisco Roig of Spain 6-1, 6-3, 6-2 and move into the next round, where he will play Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands.

Patricia Hy of Canada caused the second major shock in the US Open women's tournament in as many days by eliminating Olympic champion Jennifer Capriati 7-5, 6-4 on Friday at the National Tennis Centre.

Hy showed no respect for Capriati's serve, breaking the 16-year-old six times as she came to net to hit angled touch volleys that took the steam out of the hard hitting American.

Capriati joined Martina Navratilova, a four time Open champion who was beaten by Magdalena Maleeva on Thursday, on the sidelines.

Hy's stunning upset put her into the round of 16 and was the lone surprise on a busy day that had men's and women's matches carried over from Thursday's rain plagued programme.

Among the men to advance to the third round were defending champion Stefan Edberg, 1990 champion Pete Sampras, and 1989 Open winner Boris Becker.

Fourth-seeded Michael Chang defeated Patrick McEnroe 6-3, 6-3, 6-4; No. 5 Goran Ivanisevic downed Mexico's Leonardo Lavalle 7-5, 7-6 (9-7), 6-2; No. 10 Carlos Costa of Spain ousted Germany's Alexander Mronz 6-3, 6-1, 6-2; and No. 13 Guy Forget of

France beat Sweden's Magnus Larsson 4-6, 6-1, 7-6 (12-10), 6-0.

Chang said playing Patrick bears little resemblance to playing his brother John McEnroe.

"I would say that they are more opposites," Chang said.

Chang became the youngest man ever to win a Grand Slam title when he won the 1989 French Open at 17, but he says his number four seeding at the US Open is a new experience.

"It is a big difference from not being seeded or being anywhere from nine to 16, where I used to be," he said.

"I think now it kind of opens up the draw a little bit better for me. I no longer have to draw an Edberg in the round of 16 like I did last year."

Agassi has accepted an invitation to play in the Grand Slam cup in Munich in December.

Agassi has never played it before.

"I have heard a lot of great things about the tournament. I have always played well in Munich, so it is going to be fun, to go back."

Other winners included Wally Masur, Omar Camporese, Todd Martin, Alexander Volkov, Javier Sanchez, Mark Woodforde and Richard Fromberg.

In other women's play, Gabriela Sabatini summoned up some mental toughness to finish off the dangerous Natalia Zvereva.

Sabatini, the 1990 champion, prevailed 6-4, 5-7, 6-4, but not before nearly joining four time winner Martina Navratilova and Capriati as a celebrity relegated to the sidelines.

"I don't know what happened," Sabatini said about her troubles in completing the victory. "Probably I was rushing a

little bit. I wanted to finish the match."

An easier time was by fifth seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain, who reached the third round with a 6-2, 6-1 victory over American wild card Lindsay Davenport.

Joining Sabatini into the fourth round were seventh seeded American Mary Joe Fernandez and 13th seeded Helena Sukova of Czechoslovakia, straight set winners over Brenda Schultz of the Netherlands and American Lori McNeil, respectively.

In the first match of the night session, women's top seed Monica Seles won the first game, then dropped four in a row before beating German Claudia Porwik 6-4, 6-1 in a third round match.

Porwik overwhelmed Seles from the net early on, but once the Yugoslavia figured out how to pass her the match was virtually over. Sabatini was serving for the match at 5-4 in the second set but was broken at 15 by Zvereva, who sent the contest to a third set by breaking the Argentine at love in the 12th game.

Sabatini roared to a 5-1 lead in the final set as her topspin strokes drove Zvereva deep into the corners but again, once victory was within her grasp, gremlins crept into her game.

Zvereva, a 1988 French Open finalist now ranked 26th, broke in the eighth game to draw to 5-3, held serve for 5-4 and had a breakpoint to pull even in the 10th game.

Sabatini, however, saved the breakpoint by ripping a backhand winner. An ill-advised drop shot launched from the baseline by Zvereva landed in the net and then she failed to return Sabatini's next serve to bring the two hour 33 minute match to an end.



American Andre Agassi, this year's Wimbledon winner, gets ready for Spaniard Francisco Roig's return in his second-round encounter of the US Open at Flushing Meadow, NY on Friday. Agassi won 6-1, 6-3, 6-2. — AFP photo

O'Brien sets world Decathlon record



TALENCE, France, Sept 5: Dan O'Brien set a world record in the decathlon Saturday, finishing with 8,896 points in a multi-event invitational meet outside of Bordeaux, reports AP.

O'Brien's mark broke the record of 8,847 points set by Britain's Daley Thompson at the 1984 Olympics. The world record for the 26-year-old American and reigning world champion came 2 1/2 months after he failed to clear a height in the pole vault at the US Olympic trials and missed a trip to Barcelona.

It was the first decathlon of the year that O'Brien finished.

An earlier AP report said: After a record first day, Dan O'Brien needs just about an average second day and the world decathlon record would be his.

Even though he didn't get the gold medal in Barcelona — or even make the Olympic team — O'Brien could salvage the season by continuing his hot pace in the decathlon.

O'Brien, the 1991 world decathlon champion, was on world record pace after five events Friday at a multi event invitational meet in this Bordeaux suburb.

He compiled 4,720 points, better than the record 4,698 he amassed on the first day of the US Olympic trials at New Orleans in June when he failed to make the team after missing three times in the pole vault the second day.



DAN O'BRIEN

With another day and five events left, O'Brien was 43 points ahead of the pace set by Daley Thompson at the 1984 Olympics, when the Briton set the world record of 8,847 points. After the first day, Thompson had 4,677 points.

Now O'Brien needs 4,128 points to beat Thompson's record. In the last two decathlons he has finished — at the 1991 American championships and the 1991 world competition — O'Brien scored 4,097 and 4,210 respectively. That's an average of 4,153 points, just enough to beat the record.

But he is looking for better results than in the past. "I have been vaulting well, and if I can do 50 metres (164

feet) in the discus, I have a good shot," he said.

His previous best in a decathlon is 48.08 metres.

As for the pole vault, anything can happen, as O'Brien knows.

So, O'Brien remained cautious. At the US Olympic trials in March, he also bettered Thompson's first day total before crashing out on the second day after failing to score in the pole vault.

It is very difficult to forget New Orleans and missing Barcelona. It puts extra pressure on me here. Beating the world record would not compare to being Olympic champion," he said.

O'Brien's first day total was 27 points less than the 4,747 he registered at the 1991 US championships. But that total included two wind-aided marks.

Saturday's five events are the 110-metre hurdles, discus, pole vault, javelin and 1,500 metres.

In the women's heptathlon, Germany's Sabine Braun, bronze medalist in Barcelona, led after the first day with 3,921 points.

IAAF's Golden Order of Merit for Lewis

TURIN, Italy, Sept 5: The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) paid tribute to the phenomenal achievements of Carl Lewis when they made him one of the first recipients of their Golden Order of Merit on Friday, reports Reuter.

International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Juan Antonio Samaranch and Prince Albert of Monaco were among the four other recipients of an honour created to coincide with the IAAF's current 80th anniversary celebrations.

Samaranch outlined the positive image portrayed by American Lewis, who has won eight Olympic gold medals in his glittering career.

"Lewis is not only the number one athlete in the world but he has always fought for clean (drug-free) sport," Samaranch said during a ceremony at Turin City Hall.

Hy turns the table on Capriati



NEW YORK, Sept 5: It seemed that Patricia Hy could never get a lucky break at the US open, reports Reuter.

For three years in a row, in a draw of 128 players, American teen sensation Jennifer Capriati always seemed to be squarely in the path of the Cambodian-born Canadian.

The last two years Capriati mowed Hy down in straight sets. But on Friday Hy turned the tables, shocking the sixth seeded Olympic champion with a stunning 7-5, 6-4 third-round upset.

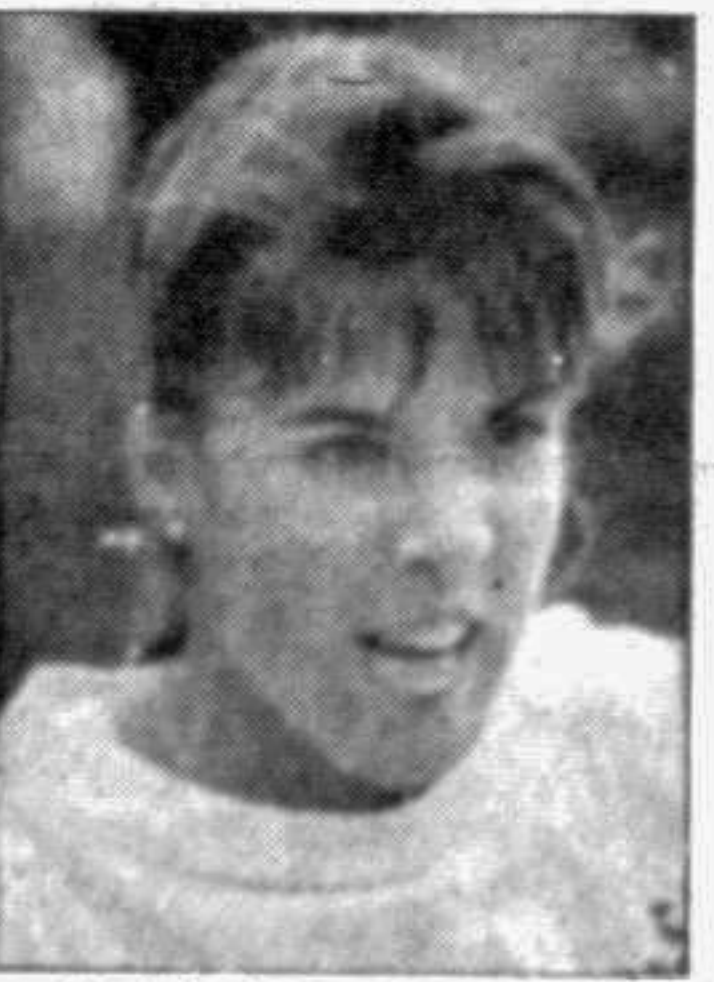
"This is the third year in a row I've played her here and I said, maybe the third time is my lucky charm," she said after taking out the crowd favourite.

Luck had little to do with it on Friday as Hy made her own breaks, dictating points, frustrating Capriati with perfectly executed touch volleys and capturing the Floridian's serve three times in each set.

"I always knew I had it in me. It was just a matter of letting it come out," said Hy, adding that she had learned from her previous losses.

Hy, who also lost to Capriati

at Wimbledon's third round this year, said she was not surprised to see she had drawn the American yet again.



JENNIFER CAPRIATI

"I just thought it was funny," said the beaming 27-year-old. "I wasn't taken a back that I had to play Jennifer. Every player knows that there are certain players that you always play in tournaments."

Hy, who will play 13th seed Helena Sukova in her first ever fourth round match in a Grand Slam, positively exudes confidence in her ability.

She said she knew she was good enough to give top players a hard time ever since she took Steffi Graf to three sets in a 1987 Federation Cup match.

"I have taken a few top players to tight matches," she said. "I knew it wasn't a matter of strokes (that she lost those matches). It was a matter of mental."

She said she had to make herself realise that missing a ball was not the end of the world.

"That was the very first step to make. I had to make myself understand that tennis is only a game."

The next step was to develop the mental toughness and fighting spirit of stop allowing her opponents back into a match when Hy had taken a lead.

That lesson came in handy in the second set when she had Capriati down a break and the sixth seed appeared to be mounting a comeback.

"I said, look, how many matches do I have to lose that way before I learn anything?" "That is when I started saying, 'Well if I'm going to win this set I've got to hit full out.' And hit full out she did."

"Never before when I played her had she played that well," said a devastated Capriati. "She has a pretty good chance to make more upsets."

Christie backs out once again

LONDON, Sept 5: Olympic 100 metres champion Linford Christie has abandoned plans for a showdown with Carl Lewis in Tokyo later this month, reports Reuter.

Christie said he wanted the race to take place in front of his home fans next season.

Earlier this week the British sprinter said he was prepared to meet the man he deposed as Olympic champion in Tokyo on September 19 as long as he was guaranteed at least half the 495,000 dollars likely to be on offer.

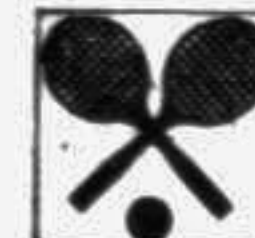
But Christie issued a statement on Friday saying: "Weighing up the significance of head-to-head with Carl and the tremendous support I have received from the British public, I have decided to postpone the race until next season when I hope, with the support of the British Athletic Federation and the agreement of Carl, to arrange it on British soil."

His agent Sue Barrett said Christie felt very strongly that as Olympic champion he should be the person to dictate where and when the race would take place.

Two 100 metres races are planned for the Tokyo meeting.

Christie is expected to run in one and Lewis the other.

Lendl leaves Connors cold



NEW YORK, Sept 5: Ivan Lendl may have adopted the United States, but at the US Open Friday night

he was still the villain as he ousted veteran Jimmy Connors in four sets en route to the third round, reports AFP.

Lendl, seeded ninth, won 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-0, despite raucous support for Connors from the crowd of 20,000.

Connors, who turned 40 on Tuesday, had the fans shouting and leaping to their feet as he won the first set, his first from Lendl in five years.

However, he could not keep the seventh-ranked player in the world at bay indefinitely.

"I had a game plan. I wanted to get to the net and be aggressive and I did, but what can you do?" Connors said. "He just kept bunting them back."

In the second set, Lendl saved three break points to hold for 3-3, then broke Connors in the eighth.

He needed just half an hour to win the third set 6-2, wrapping it up on his first set point with an ace.

In the fourth Lendl fought off break points in two games, once with an ace, and relentlessly ran Connors from one side of the court to another.

Agassi becomes first entry for Grand Slam Cup

NEW YORK, Sept 5: Wimbledon champion Andre Agassi, who spurned the first two editions of the Grand Slam Cup, became the first entry for this year's 6 million dollar tournament at Olympic Hall in Munich, organisers said on Friday, reports Reuter.

Agassi bowed out of the inaugural Grand Slam Cup two years ago after agreeing to play and was fined despite claiming an injury.

He also declined to play last year, joining other men's professionals who felt the rich Cup event conflicted with the ATP tour's own season-ending tournament.

A select field of 16 players, based upon points earned in each of the four Grand Slam tournaments, will compete in the Cup tournament starting on December 8.

Connors bantered with the crowd when serving in the fifth game, though the shouts of encouragement failed to help him hold his serve.

Lendl won the match on his first match point, but the cheers and chanting at the end were all for Connors.

Lendl, who became a US citizen this summer, paid tribute to his opponent.

"I thought the first set was the best he played against me in a long, many matches," Lendl said.

Lendl took his record against Connors to 23-13, including their last 17 matches.

Mansur Sptg's title

Mansur Sporting Club emerged as champions in the first Sharal Kishore football tournament by beating Shahid Sporting Club at the Dhania ground yesterday, says a press release.

Wahid and Shah Alam scored two goals each for the winners while Munir netted the face-saver for the vanquished.

Nuru of Sharal United was adjudged the best player.

Eight teams took part in the tournament organised by Faruk Sports.

Connors made his earliest exit in the Open in 20 years. He lost a five-setter to Tom Gorman in the first round in 1972.

Last year he electrified the tournament as he plowed a path to the semi-finals.

Lendl was unruined by the partisan crowd, but later he seemed almost to be asking for understanding when he said: "My goal for the Open was not to come here and beat Jimmy in a second-round match. My goal is to win the tournament."

Friday by winning the men's overall title at the Grand Prix athletics final, reports Reuter.

The 25-year-old American, who broke Ed Moses' nine-year-old world 400 metres hurdles record in the Barcelona Games final, showed the effects of a long, arduous season as he struggled through the final metres to win in an unremarkable 48.16 seconds.

But the victory was a fitting climax to a year in which Young won the Olympics title in world record time plus a record 11 Grands Prix.

"I have been very consistent all year," Young said. "It was a big thrill to win in Turin."

The women's overall title went to Germany's Olympic champion long jumper Heike Drechsler, who has also enjoyed a splendid year.

Drechsler trailed her great rival Jackie Joyner-Kersey until the final round when she soared 7.12 metres to clinch the overall prize of 25,000 dollars.

World champion Joyner-Kersey, second to Drechsler in Barcelona, leaped 6.98 metres

Young ends season on a high note

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with her first jump. She passed on the final four rounds.

Turin, home town of American Olympic bronze medalist Dennis Mitchell exploded out of the blocks to win the men's 100 metres.

Carl Lewis, a late entry after the withdrawal of Britain's Olympic champion Linford Christie, recovered from a poorer start but could not catch the flying Mitchell. He was second.

Mitchell, the American champion, also beat Lewis in Copenhagen last month and the world champion and record holder was again astonished by the speed of his compatriot's reaction time.

"Dennis has had an unbelievable start again," said Lewis, who failed to qualify for the US team for the Barcelona Olympics 100 metres. "But I could have done better here."

Namibian Olympic silver medalist Frankie Fredericks, accelerated sharply over the final 50 metres to beat Olympic champion Mike Marsh in the men's 200.

Jamaica's Merlene Ottey had an equally satisfying win over another American Olympic champion Gwen Torrence in the women's 200.

Torrence led off the bend but faded slightly in the straight, allowing first Irina Privalova of the CIS then Ottey to edge in front.



KEVIN YOUNG

Zia champion

Sports Reporter

National runner-up FIDE Master Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh Biman emerged the unbeaten champion in the Azad Products weekly active chess competition held at the National Sports Council chess room on Friday last.

Zia, who collected six points from seven matches, was awarded one thousand taka.

Ruhul Kabir Shiplu of Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) finished runner-up with five and a half points.

Four players earned five points each to fill third to six positions following the tie-breaker. They were Khandaker Kayes Hasan of Bangladesh Ansars, Almasur Rahman of Ansars, Saifuddin Lavlu of BTMC and Hasibul Hasan Harif of Dhaka University.

Those who earned four and a half points each were Neyamul Haq Niru, Kalimallah Kalam and A Kasem.

Thirty-players participated in the seven-round active chess competition organised by Anirban Chess School.

Div II chess

Sports Reporter

Narayanganj Chess Club with 12 and a half points led the table of the Second Division chess league at completion of the fourth round of the eight round Swiss league meet at the National Sports Council chess room yesterday.

Narayanganj Club beat Ekok Sangha of Sirajganj 3-1 in this round.

Golden Chess Club, Ulan Sabuj Sangha, Narayanganj Mashgul Mahfil Club and Social Bank also won their respective fourth-round matches.



Chess players engrossed in their Second Division matches at the NSC Chess room yesterday. — Star photo

Fischer puts journalists in dilemma



SVETI STEFAN, Yugoslavia, Sept 5: Bobby Fischer demanded Saturday that all journalists write about his ongoing 5 million dollar match with Boris Spassky as the world chess championship or be barred from covering it, reports AP.

And as "punishment" for reporters' failure to treat him as the reigning champion so far, the American chess player making a comeback after 20 years ordered a news blackout on Game 3 of the match, scheduled to start at 3:30 pm (1330 GMT) Saturday.

No journalists were to be allowed into the spectators' hall for the game, and television monitors showing the play were to be turned off at the press centre. The game's result was only to be revealed later by match officials.

The demands were relayed by the harried match organizer, Jozdimir Vasiljevic, at a specially called news conference on "future collaboration with journalists." He pleaded with the world's journalists to comply with Fischer's ultimatum.

Fischer has always maintained that he is the world champion since his 1972 triumph over Spassky in Reykjavik, Iceland. But he is recognized by the governing body of chess, the Paris-based International Chess Federation, or FIDE.

FIDE stripped Fischer of the title in 1975 because he refused to defend it against Anatoly Karpov under ground rules it set. Karpov became official world champion and later lost the crown to the current official champion, Garry Kasparov.

Organizers, who managed to lure the reclusive out-of-retirement with the offer of 3.35 million dollars if he wins and dollar 1.65 if he loses, have been catering to Fischer's every demand — from the choice of the opponent, to the size of the table and the distance away spectators can sit.

Vasiljevic, a hyperactive, short and stocky post-Communist business tycoon, hopes publicity from the Fischer-Spassky match will help draw companies to this beautiful Adriatic resort.

After Fischer's new demands, he was clearly frazzled. Fischer, he said, was getting "very bothered and bitter" about newspaper reports not calling it the world championship.

"It is in our interest to have the publicity, but it is true also that we have to find a solution together," Vasiljevic told reporters. "If you have suggestions on how to help me, then please go ahead."

He suggested to journalists that by using the phrase the "so-called world championship," they could appease Fischer.

According to Vasiljevic, journalists covering the match must obtain a fax letter from their editorial offices agreeing to the condition or they will be evicted from the match.

Also Fischer has asked Vasiljevic's business organization, Jugoscardic, to provide him with daily press clippings from all over the world.

"Every day he is controlling the reports, and he will be controlling them," Vasiljevic said.

He congratulated the New York Times for publishing a photograph showing a match banner in the background that read: "The World Chess Championship."

As a reward, Vasiljevic said the New York Times would be allowed into Saturday's match, but the paper's reporter had already left Sveti Stefan before the latest brouhaha erupted.

About 800 journalists were originally expected to cover the match, but fewer than 200 showed up, in part because international sanctions against Yugoslavia make travel to this

Montenegrin enclave difficult. Most foreign reporters covered the opening news conference Tuesday and the first games, but have already left.

The rematch with Spassky represents Fischer's first public exposure after 20 years of self-imposed isolation.

Fischer won the first game Wednesday and the two players played to a draw Thursday, so Fischer leads the series 1-0. The first to win 10 games wins the match.

Fischer's temper is legendary. At a pre-match press conference Tuesday, he spat on a US Treasury Department letter warning him not to go through with his match because it would violate US sanctions against Yugoslavia.

Serbia and