

Ivanisevic unstoppable in Sydney

SYDNEY, Oct 11: Goran Ivanisevic, feeding off the frenzied emotion of his fans, thoroughly dominated top seeded Stefan Edberg on Sunday to win the Sydney Indoor tennis tournament 6-4, 6-2, 6-4, reports AP.

Ivanisevic, the No 2 seed who lost to defending champion Edberg in last year's semifinals, collected the \$135,000 first prize and now has won their last three meetings.

"I was pumped today," said the 21-year-old Croatian. "I didn't feel I could lose the match."

He seemed to gather strength from the hundreds of rowdy fans who cheered every point he won, then chanted "GORAN" and waved red-white-and-blue Croatian flags between games.

Ivanisevic yelled and pumped his fist in their direction several times in the final set. After he shook hands with Edberg at the net, he dashed into the packed upper deck to toss his shirt as a souvenir and hug several supporters.

Still exuberant at the awards presentation, he popped open a well-shaken bottle of champagne and sprayed his coach, spectators, tournament officials and photographers.

Ivanisevic gave his fans part of the credit, saying they picked him up when he was emotionally down at times during the \$1.1 million event. He said that because of its strong Croatian community, Australia is like playing at home.

"They have me great support," he said. "It was a nice feeling. It gives me something extra. I play a bit for me and a bit for them."

The lean and lanky left-hander, who led the tour with an average 14 aces per match this year, yielded only 16 points in 14 service games. He rolled up 11 aces and blasted 24 other serves that Edberg never got back into play.

"He was really creaming his serves today," Edberg said. "I think it would have been hard for anyone to beat him when he's playing like that. When he gets up early like he did today, he serves loose. If he just hit second serves today, it would have been a more even match."



Croatia's Goran Ivanisevic returns a serve to top seed Stefan Edberg of Sweden in the final of the Australian Indoor Championship in Sydney on Saturday. Ivanisevic won the title by beating Edberg 6-4, 6-2, 6-4. — AFP photo

Meanwhile, Ivanisevic broke the Swede five times, most importantly after Edberg had broken him to even the first set at 4-4. It was Edberg's first and last chance to break.

Edberg's net game, among the best in men's tennis, was left ashamed by ripping baseline shots that either found the corners or forced wild, awkward volleys in self-defense by nearly nailing him in the body. Edberg won only 15 points in his 31 trips to the net.

Edberg said his could only muster about 80 percent power on his own serve until the third set, when it was too late — he was already down a break, and Ivanisevic just had to hold serve the rest of the way. The fans' screaming cheers built steadily to the final point, but Edberg said it didn't bother him.

"I didn't really notice it that much," he said. "I had other things to think about. And you don't have much time to think

out there."

There was also little time to celebrate, seek solace or take a siesta — both players are heading to Tokyo for an indoor tournament this week.

Ivanisevic can keep moving up from his No 8 ranking, while Edberg still has hopes of retaking the top spot by the end of the year. It's a position that once seemed out of Ivanisevic's grasp because of his reputation for inconsistency, but he now believes he has a shot at it.

"Why not? It's pretty far. No 1. But I have everything to dominate the game," he said. "People said I can't play Grand Slam, then I reached the final at Wimbledon."

He credited his increased concentration for a brief hospital stay earlier this year for a fast heart beat.

"That was a little bit scary... the worst four days of my life," Ivanisevic said. "I was not taking care. (Afterward) I noticed

this change. I was starting to be more professional."

Asked whether he was now in a position to dominate the game, the straight-shooting Croat, coached by Australian Bob Brett, said: "Why not? This is my best year and I have proved to myself that I can beat everybody on every surface and I can play Grand Slam tournaments."

"If I can keep working like that and keep my mind at it, I think I can be counted next year as one of the top players. Looking ahead Ivanisevic, deeply committed to the Croatian cause, said he would be playing in six exhibition matches in Europe to raise money for Croatian children.

He took his third Toulouse title, adding to 1986 and 1991. He was seeded second this year.

Korda, a finalist at the French Open in June and now No. 5 in the world, got to the finals here without meeting a seeded player before Forget.

Forget jumped to a 3-0 lead and served for the first set at 5-3. He fell behind 15-40 behind three unforced errors. Then he used his big serve to get back in the game behind two service winners and an ace. He then took the first set as he forced Korda into an error.

Bohn takes lead

TOKYO, Oct 11: Parker Bohn III increased his lead Friday after 24 games of the 32-game match play in the 15 million yen (dls 125,000) Japan Cup US-Japan pro bowling tournament, reports AP.

Bohn, of Freehold, NJ, is averaging 235 and is followed by Japan's Masaaki Saito, who at 47 is one of the oldest players in the tournament.

In third place is PBA President Marc McDowell of Madison, Wis, who led this tournament after the opening day Thursday.

Seiko Super may heal Edberg's wound

TOKYO, Oct 11: Defending champion Stefan Edberg of Sweden was to leave a Sydney disappointment behind, flying here in a bid for the third title at the million dollar Seiko Super Men's tennis tournament to begin this week, reports AP.

Edberg, the winner here in 1987 and 1991, lost a slight chance to regain the number one ranking in Tokyo after failing to defend the Australian Indoor championship when he crashed to Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia 4-6, 2-6, 4-6 in the final Sunday.

The 26-year-old Swede said in Sydney that the defeat was not "the end of the world" to his chances of regaining the number one spot.

"I've just got to go in and try to win in Tokyo. It's just a matter of 70 to 80 points from last year. I'm still hanging in hoping for it," he added.

Edberg had recaptured the top spot on the ATP computer rankings when he retained the US Open trophy last month, gaining a three-point advantage over Jim Courier of the United States.

But he surrendered the

place to the American without hitting a ball last Monday, as the Australian Indoor championships was slated one week later than last year, curtailing his total points from the best 14 tournaments in the past 12 months to below Courier and another American, Pete Sampras.

Last year, Edberg stretched the longest singles match-winning streak of the year, grabbing the US Open, Australian Indoor and Seiko Super tennis here, and he had a chance to regain the top spot if he could repeat the excellent performance.

Forty-eight world leading players, including Michael Chang, Boris Becker, Ivanisevic and Ivan Lendl, will take part in the seven-day day competition on the artificial indoor courts at the Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium.

The top 16 seeds receive first-round byes before competing for the top prize money of 1,350,000 dollars and 230 point counting towards the computer rankings. The runner-up will collect 72,600 dollars and 173 points.

To the disappointment of fans, Courier and current Wimbledon champion Andre

Agassi of the United States pulled out of the tournament for health reasons.

Top-seeded Edberg, who has a rating of 83.9 per cent with 50 wins against six losses in Japan, will take on either Kenneth Carlsen of Denmark or American Jim Grabb in the second round.

In the same quarter with Edberg are 15th seed David Wheaton of the United States, ninth seed Emilio Sanchez of Spain and eighth seed Alexander Volkov of Russia.

Edberg is on course for a semi-final collision with third seeded Becker, if the German gets past the possible hurdles of 14th seeded Henrik Hilm of Sweden, South African Wayne Ferreira, seeded sixth, and Paul Haarhuis of the Netherlands, the 12th seed.

Second-seeded Chang will lead the bottom quarter with 16th seed Todd Woodbridge of Australia, 10th seed Javier Sanchez of Spain and seventh seed Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands.

The 1989 French Open champion will meet the winner between Andrei Olhovskiy of Russia and Ryuso Tsujino of Japan in the second round.

Hosts dominate Indonesian Open

JAKARTA, Oct 11: Indian runner VK Sindu and Thailand's Pornsak Phiyod clinched gold medals in the 400 metre women's hurdles and men's high jump in the Indonesian Open Track and Field Championship here Saturday, reports AP.

In the women's 400 metre hurdle, Sindu clocked 62:52 secs, slightly ahead of host runners Nunuk Aprianti and Jatiningih, who took the silver and the bronze with times of 62:66 and 63:22.

In the other six finals on Saturday, Thailand's Phiyod beat Indonesia's Ketut Gede Wijaya for the gold in the men's high jump even though both men jumped two metres clean.

Phiyod, however, had the advantage as he had jumped 1.96 metres clean on the first try while Wijaya only succeeded on his second try. The bronze was taken by Wisnu Nugroho from Indonesia who reached 1.96 metres.

Both Phiyod and Wijaya tried to overjump 2.05 metres, but failed.

In the men's 400 metre hurdle, Indonesian athletes took all three medals with Herman Balaguise, Don Barco and Kikin Rahudin respectively clocking 53:08 secs, 53:28 and 54:10.

In the men's 5,000 metres, Indonesia's Parlautan Stregar finished first in 14 min 33:56 sec to clinch the gold, ahead of silver medalist Gulab Chand of India in 14:42:45 and Indonesian Java's Hasanuddin, who finished at 14:52:47.

In the women's long jump, Indonesia's Rabaya won the gold with 5.87 metres, while compatriot Rukmi took the silver. Singapore's Yu Long Nyu prevented an all-Indonesian sweep by taking the bronze.

Yosephine Mebri of Indonesia took the gold in the women's javelin with a 44.08 metre throw, followed by compatriots Ni Ketut Admayanti with 42.46 and Sulashtri with 41.02.

Earlier in the day, Indonesian women also swept the medals in the 10 kilometre walk, with Hastiati Lawole winning gold in 54:28 well of her own national record of 50:26 clocked here in August last year.

Izumi leads all the way to win at Beijing marathon

BEIJING, Oct 11: Takahiro Izumi of Japan led from the start and won the Beijing International Marathon Sunday in 2 hours, 11 minutes, 29 seconds, the official Xinhua News Agency reported, reports AP.

China's Hu Gangjun was more than one minute behind in 2:12:45, and Japan's Toshinobu Sato placed third in 2:13:12.

Defending champion Nebashi Dube of Ethiopia did not place in the top 10.

Among the women, China took the top three places. Xie Lihua was first in 2:28:53, Li Yemei second in 2:30:39 and Zheng Guixia third in 2:30:49.

The race attracted 349 entrants, who ran through central Beijing along the Avenue of Eternal Peace and past Tiananmen Square.

Graf wins her sixth Zurich title

ZURICH, Switzerland, Oct 11: Steffi Graf rallied to beat Martina Navratilova 2-6, 7-5, 7-5 to win the European Indoors on Sunday, her sixth straight Zurich title, and evened her career record against the nine-time Wimbledon champion, reports AP.

It took only 24 minutes for Graf to win the first set, but Graf regrouped to earn her first victory over the 35-year-old Czechoslovak native since the 1989 Virginia Slims Championship final and eighth in 16 lifetime meetings.

Graf, who lost their last encounter in last year's US Open semifinals, led 1-0 and then earned a triple-break point but failed to convert any of them.

After Navratilova dominated at the net and baseline, Graf recovered in the second set as her opponent appeared disrupted by a line call that enabled Graf to break serve and draw level at 4-4. Navratilova, who turns 36 next Sunday, broke Graf in the opening game of the third set but then visibly tired, allowing the German to complete her victory in an hour and 48 minutes.

Graf is a favourite with Zurich spectators and has never lost in her six appearances at the tournament, this year worth \$350,000. Graf collected \$70,000 for her victory before a sell out crowd of 3,500, her second tournament title in a week.

Forget ends title drought in Toulouse

TOULOUSE, France, Oct 11: Guy Forget of France won his first title in nearly a year as he beat top-seeded Petr Korda of Czechoslovakia 6-3, 6-2, in the final of the \$135,000 Toulouse Open tennis tournament Sunday, reports AP.

Forget won six tournaments in 1991 and helped France to the Davis cup over the United States. But he had not won a title since the Paris Open last November and his ranking slid from No. 4 to No. 14.

He took his third Toulouse title, adding to 1986 and 1991. He was seeded second this year.

Korda, a finalist at the French Open in June and now No. 5 in the world, got to the finals here without meeting a seeded player before Forget.

Forget jumped to a 3-0 lead and served for the first set at 5-3. He fell behind 15-40 behind three unforced errors. Then he used his big serve to get back in the game behind two service winners and an ace. He then took the first set as he forced Korda into an error.

Devoiy bids a brilliant goodbye

VANCOUVER (Canada), Oct 11: Susan Devoiy, the world's top woman squash player for eight years, went out on a high note here Saturday as she announced her retirement after winning her fourth World Open championship, reports AP.

The New Zealander beat Australian Michelle Martin 9-4, 9-6, 9-4 to seal her reputation as one of the best in the history of the sport.

The outcome was never in doubt, but despite her devastating form throughout the tournament, speculation about the 28-year-old's retirement had been rife all week.

"I actually decided at 1:30 this afternoon," she said. "I came in and told my husband that I had something important to tell him and he said, 'uh-oh.'"

"But I didn't want to think about it too much in case it put me off during the match. And, in fact, I was thinking about it a little bit before the end."

It did not show, as Devoiy played an almost perfect final, full of relentless aggression, to climax the week.

The intensity of her attacks was too much for four world class opponents in succession, and the last of them, Martin, was also in the best form of her life.

The Australian, whose brother Rodney Martin lost his men's World Open title in Johannesburg two weeks ago, tried to slow the pace in the second part of the contest but to no avail.

The finish brought emotional scenes as Devoiy left the court in tears. As she held the trophy aloft she was overcome again and had to put it down.

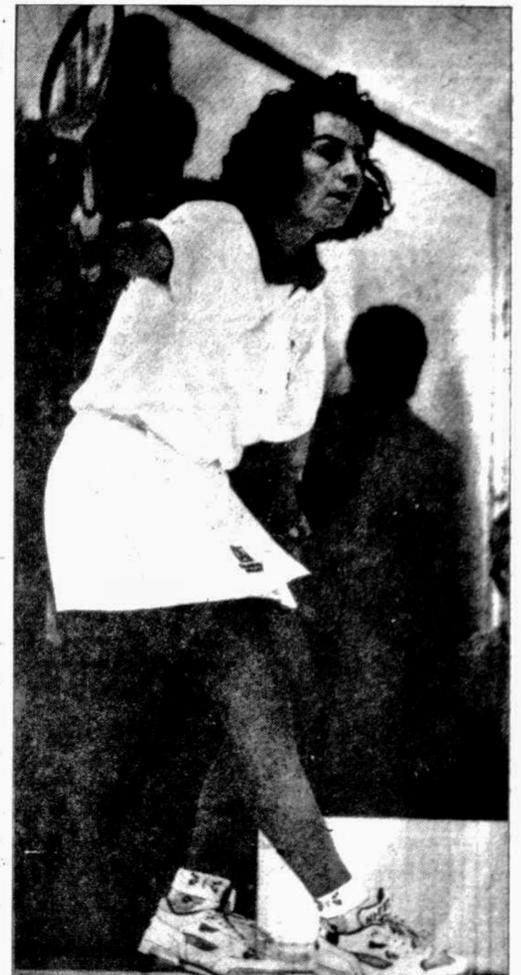
Lopez retains WBC crown

TOKYO, Oct 11: Champion Ricardo Lopez of Mexico scored the fastest knockout ever in a strawweight world title match, keeping his World Boxing Council crown by flattening Taiwan's Rocky Lin in 4 minutes, 46 seconds, reports AP.

After staggering him with a powerful left, Lopez knocked out Lin with a crushing right and left to the face at 1:46 of the second round of a scheduled 12-round bout at Korakuen Hall.

Devoiy's announcement may have been half expected, but it will still create more tremors in a sport rocked three weeks ago by 10-time British Open winner Jahangir Khan's decision to quit at the end of the season.

With the rigors of training behind her, Devoiy said she hoped to start a family, but she said she planned to play exhibition and will continue to honour sponsor commitments as well as playing squash for fun.



SUSAN DEVOIY

"I cannot think of a better moment or a better way to stop," she told the crowd, who gave her a two-minute standing ovation.

During her career Devoiy won eight British Open titles. It was only half the number that the legendary Australian Heather McKay won a decade and a half earlier, but given the rising standards in the game it is possible no other woman will win as many again.

Devoiy's announcement may

have been half expected, but it will still create more tremors in a sport rocked three weeks ago by 10-time British Open winner Jahangir Khan's decision to quit at the end of the season.

With the rigors of training behind her, Devoiy said she hoped to start a family, but she said she planned to play exhibition and will continue to honour sponsor commitments as well as playing squash for fun.

Squash will miss its two legends

VANCOUVER, Canada, Oct 11: New Zealander Susan Devoiy's decision to join Jahangir Khan in retirement means squash has lost its two

major stars in quick succession, reports Reuter.

But the circumstances of their departure could hardly be more different.

Jahangir announced his imminent retirement two weeks ago at the men's World Open in Johannesburg after walking off during a second round match with a back injury.

Devoiy, in contrast, made her announcement in a blaze of glory after winning her fourth world title here on Saturday night.

"I always wanted to go out at the top and that time has come now," said the 28-year-old from Rotorua.

Devoiy first came to notice in 1983 when on her first overseas tour she won the British Under-23 Open title. But it was the following year that Devoiy really began to make her mark when she came through as an outsider to win the British Open, beating home favourite Lisa Uple in the final at Wembley Conference Centre.

She took over as world number one that year and has fought off all comers to retain the top spot ever since. In that time she has only been beaten by six players.

The following year Devoiy won the world title for the first time in Dublin and retained it two years later before her own fans in Auckland.

She won virtually every major title around the world and made the British Open her own with seven successive victories.

Devoiy set new standards in fitness in women's squash and allied to an armoury of superb shot making she was nearly unbeatable.

And on the odd occasion she found herself in trouble, she was able to call on her renowned fighting spirit to see her through.

"When you are the youngest of seven children with six brothers you learn to be a fighter pretty quickly," she says.

She was awarded the MBE in 1986 and at home she was New Zealander of the year in 1988 and regularly won New Zealand sports person and sports-woman-of-the-year awards.

In 1988 she raised considerable money for muscular dystrophy with a solo walk the length of New Zealand which took her over two months.

But it was an effort for which she paid dearly. Shortly afterwards Devoiy went to Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and lost her world title to England's Martine Le Moignan.

It was a shattering experience and Devoiy vowed to gain revenge—succeeding in Australia 18 months later when she beat Le Moignan to reclaim her title.

But 1991 proved to be a year of disaster. She suffered a shock defeat in the quarter-finals of the British Open by England's Sue Wright and then spent four months out of the game after suffering a miscarriage shortly after playing in the New Zealand Open.

"I really thought about retiring then, I learned that there was more in the world than squash. But I decided to return to win back my British Open title and have one more tilt at the World Championship before calling it a day," she said.

She achieved her first objective in London in April and has now swept all before her to retain the world crown in Vancouver.

Her combative nature brought her regularly into conflict with what she considered petty officialdom. Even last week in Vancouver she took the organisers publicity to task for charging an entrance fee to her coach and husband John Uakley.

Nigeria dump SA in WC qualifier

LAGOS, Oct 11: Rashidi Yekini scored two goals in the second half Saturday, leading Nigeria to a 4-0 rout over South Africa in the opening game of Africa Group D World Cup qualifying play, reports AP.

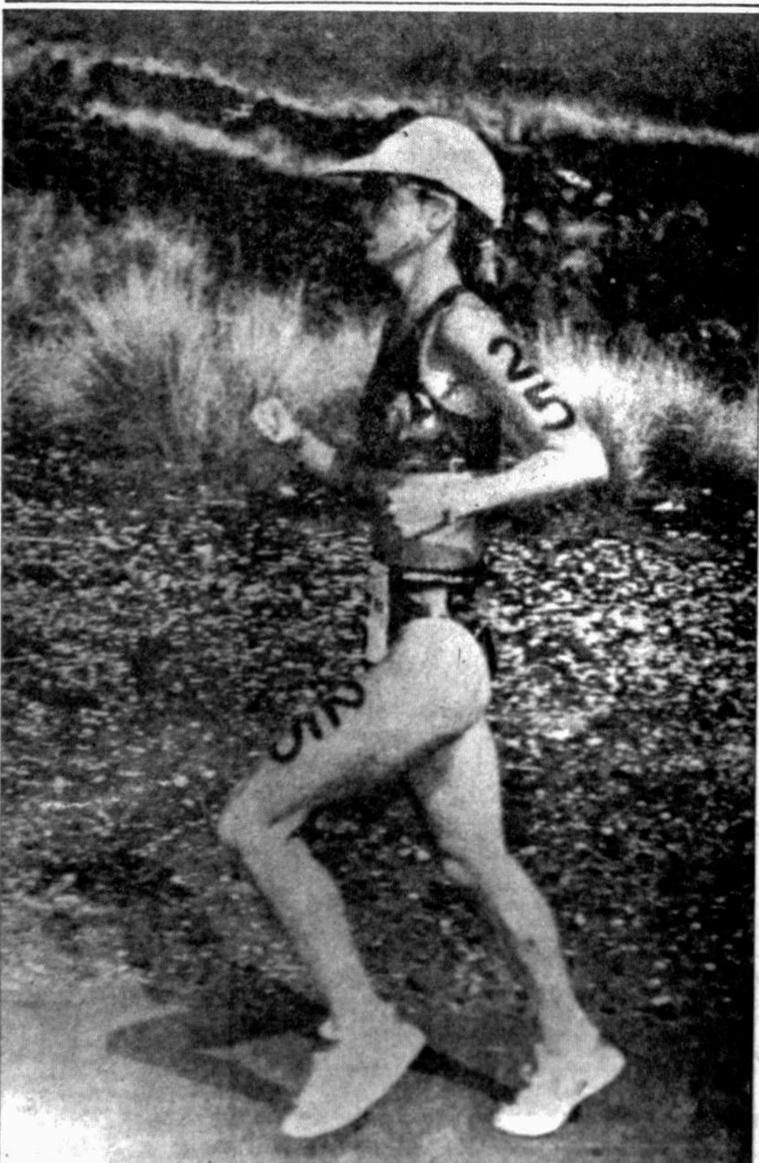
South Africa, banned from most international sports competition until last year because of apartheid, was readmitted to international soccer and placed in Group D with Nigeria and the Congo following last December's World Cup draw.

South Africa's hastily assembled team rarely threatened on Saturday.

Nigeria took the lead in the 38th minute on a goal by Richard Owobokori. Sam Siasia added his goal in the 57th minute and Yekini completed the scoring with tallies in the 57th minute and 88th minutes before 40,000.

Nigeria, which reached the semifinals of the Africa Cup this year, had been expected to win easily. South Africa lost their last two matches against international teams, 1-0 to Zambia and 4-1 to Zimbabwe.

In other Africa World Cup qualifying games Friday night, Algeria beat Burundi 3-1 in Tlencen, Algeria, and Zimbabwe beat Togo 1-0 in Harare.



Paula Newby-Fraser of the US runs in the Ironman Championship in Kailua Kona, Hawaii on Saturday. Newby-Fraser won the women's title in the triathlon. — AFP photo