

Top four to play in Philadelphia Slims semis

PHILADELPHIA, Nov 14: Third seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and fourth seed Jennifer Capriati enjoyed smooth passage into the semifinals of the 350,000 Virginia Slims of Philadelphia with identical 6-2, 6-1 victories on Friday, reports Reuter.

The fifth-ranked Sanchez Vicario beat unseeded Natalia Zvereva in 68 minutes and Capriati played even faster, winning her quarter-final over eighth-seeded Lori McNeil in 51 minutes.

In today's semifinals, Capriati will face top-seeded Steffi Graf and Sanchez Vicario will play second-seeded Gabriela Sabatini.

The seventh-ranked Capriati, playing her first tournament since losing to Canadian Patricia Hy in the third round of the US Open, went for broke on almost every shot.

"Today wasn't easy," said Capriati, who is now 3-0 in her matches with McNeil. "I had to play well to win with the score I did."

Capriati pressured the 20th-ranked McNeil from the outset, forcing her fellow American into a defensive posture.

Capriati won 23 of 28 points on her first serve. McNeil won only 13 of 28 points on her first serve.

McNeil held serve once in the first set and not at all in the second set. Capriati lost her serve once in the match, in the third game of the second set.

"There's two Jennifers, one of the court and one off the court," said the 16-year-old Capriati.

"Quitter" Riddick Bowe makes Holyfield quit title



LAS VEGAS, Nov 14: Riddick Bowe battered champion Evander Holyfield in the 10th round and

knocked him down in the 11th in one of the most exciting title fights in recent years to win the undisputed world heavyweight championship with a unanimous points decision on Friday, reports Reuter.

Bowe, 25, was just too big and too strong for Holyfield, who put on one of the most magnificent displays of courage to come back from the pummeling that appeared to knock him out on his feet.

The judges scored it 115-112, 117-110 and 117-110 for the 12-round fight.

In the 11th round Bowe caught Holyfield with a left hook that sent him reeling into the ropes. Holyfield slumped down against the ropes and Bowe jumped on him with a clubbing right to the back of his head, sending him down for the first time in his career.

Holyfield, 30, took a standing eight count and it seemed only a matter of seconds before the six-foot-five (1.95 metres) and 235 pound (106.5 kg) Bowe would end it.

But Holyfield, outweighed by 30 pounds (13.6 kg), somehow managed to come back and land a few punches of his own to the roar of the crowd of about 18,000 in the Thomas and Mack Centre.

Bowe's heart has been questioned throughout his career because he appeared to quit against Lennox Lewis in the gold-medal round at the 1988 Olympics.

But there was nothing but

heart in both fighters on Friday.

"A lot of questions about me were answered. I put him through hell, I said from the beginning I was a great inside fighter. My kiss (left jab) kept him at bay.

"He hit me with a lot of shots," Holyfield said of the 10th round. "He knocked me pillar-to-post. I thought he would eventually tire and I'd have a good chance to take him out."

"I thought he would fold a little in the later rounds. He was able to use his jab and the leverage of his height. I always felt that I would win, even in the later rounds," said Holyfield, who was three inches (eight cm) shorter than Bowe.

"I take my hat off to Riddick Bowe. It's not that I fought a lousy fight, he had more and he fought a better fight," said Holyfield, who won the title in October 1990 against James "Buster" Douglas. He had defended his title three times before facing Bowe.

"I couldn't match him," Holyfield said. "I gave it my best and it wasn't good enough. He was able to top what I had. He fought a tremendous fight."

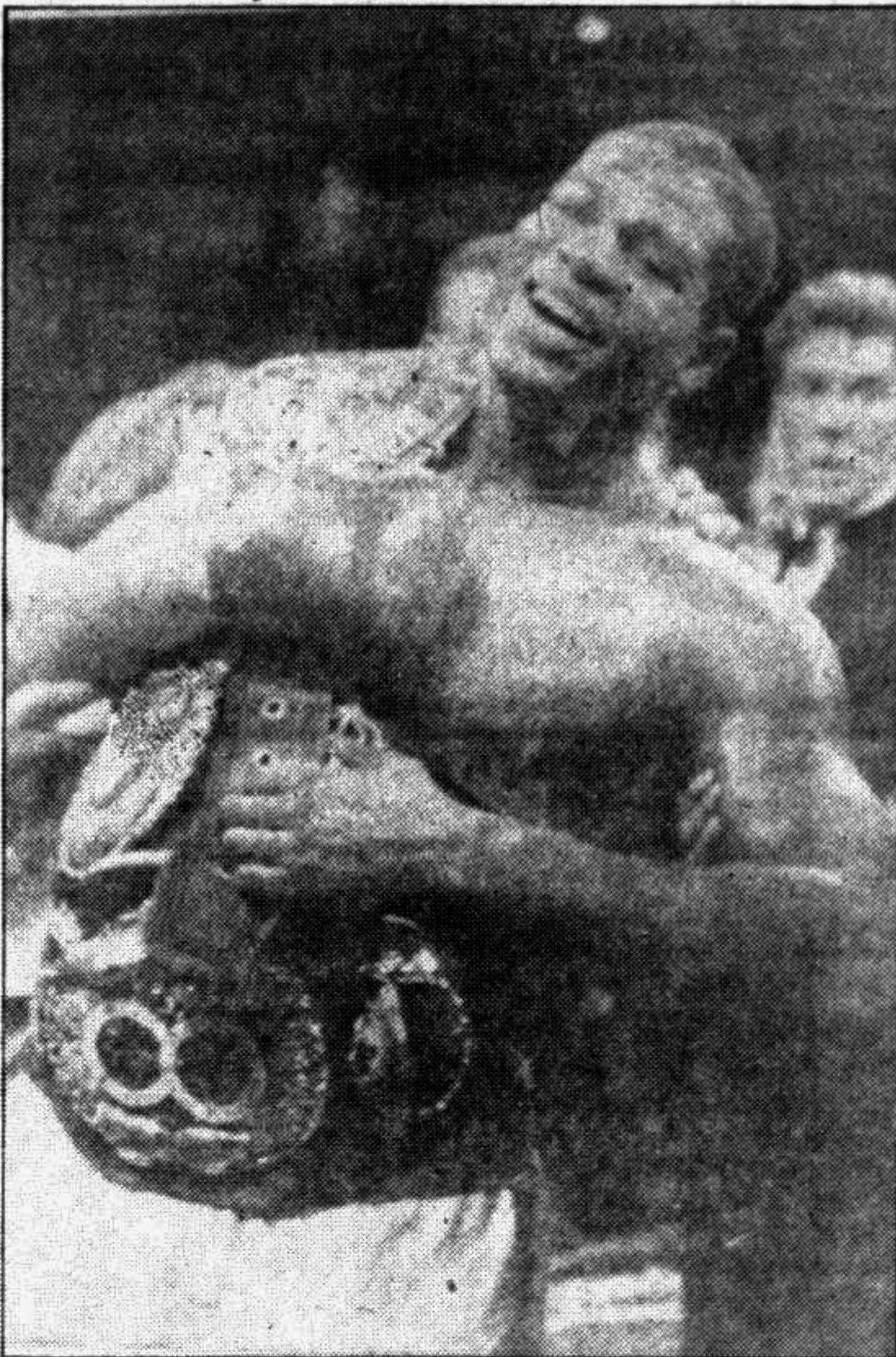
Holyfield hinted at retirement. "I don't want a rematch. I think I'm finished, but I want time to find out."

A happy but clearly very tired Bowe said his youth was what made him different from two of Holyfield's previous opponents, George Foreman and Larry Holmes. "I was young and strong in the end. He thought I would fade."

After the fight, Bowe's manager Rock Newman, who has

threatened to arrange a bout against Foreman in China despite an agreement to face Lewis next, was jubilant and

angry at the same time, shouting obscenities at ringside reporters who had questioned Bowe's heart.



Newly-crowned champion Riddick Bowe is all smiles after being presented the championship belts. Bowe dethroned Evander Holyfield in Las Vegas on November 13 with a unanimous decision in 12 rounds. — AFP photo

"Any more questions about his heart? Any more questions about his heart? Any more questions about his heart?" Newman spat out at reporters.

"I'm the man. I'm the champ," Bowe said. "I'm looking forward to George Foreman or Lennox Lewis."

Holyfield chose to fight the bigger man inside, where the ex-champion's corner thought Bowe would not be able to get much leverage for his power punches.

Often throughout the fight the two men battled toe-to-toe, each landing his best punches only to have the other come back with shots of his own.

Holyfield won the early going, landing solid combinations of sharp, short punches to the head.

Bowe threw several low blows in the fight and was warned once by referee Joe Cortez.

By the fifth round Bowe appeared to be tiring, living up to the predictions of some that the 35 pounds (16 kg) he had lost in the last two months had affected his stamina.

Holyfield caught Bowe with a thumb to the left eye in the eighth round, and swelling started around it almost immediately. Holyfield had a cut on his left eyelid.

But it was the 10th and 11th rounds that brought the crowd to their feet in appreciation of two of the most exciting rounds between heavyweights in years.

In the 10th, Holyfield was battered unmercifully by a barrage of just about every punch imaginable — head-snapping uppercuts and rights and lefts to the head. Holyfield was a

magician to stand up after the hammering.

Yet he came back with two hard uppercuts and combinations to rock Bowe and bring a tremendous roar from the crowd.

Then it was Bowe's turn. He hit Holyfield with a right uppercut, a left and then several combinations to put Holyfield up against the ropes just before the bell.

The crowd was standing and cheering in the 11th round.

Bowe, using his reach advantage, again slammed Holyfield around the ring almost at will, landing close to two dozen punches.

But Holyfield still refused to go down until Bowe caught him close to his own corner with a left hook and then the chopping right to the head, as Holyfield slumped down to one knee, his hands over his head. Holyfield took an eight-count.

The two kept punching toe-toe in the final round and were still punching at the bell.

Holyfield, 30, is now 28-1. Bowe is 32-0.

"I had blood running in my eyes," Holyfield said. "But I always felt I could win. Even in the last round I felt things could happen. But he withstood the pressure and kept fighting."

"I realise it can't last forever," Holyfield said, reflecting on his championship career. "I did all I can. If I feel later I can come back I'll do it. But now let's just go home."

"He's a helluva warrior," Holyfield's assistant trainer, Lou Duva, said of the new champion. He could have been talking about either fighter.

Holyfield may be at the end of the road

LAS VEGAS, Nov 14: Beaten and battered by a bigger man, Evander Holyfield's career may have ended with his first loss, reports AP.

Holyfield left the ring Friday night without the undisputed heavyweight title and gave serious thought to retirement.

"I think I'm finished," the now former heavyweight champion said. "I did all I could. I think I'll just go home and be a full-time father."

Holyfield, outweighed by 30 pounds (13.6 kg) and finally facing what many thought to be the first legitimate challenge to his heavyweight title, fought his heart out for 12 rounds in one of the most exciting heavyweight title fights in recent years.

But this time heart wasn't enough, as Riddick Bowe took command during the middle rounds before staggering Holyfield in the 10th round and finally knocking him down a round later.

Holyfield survived the round but the outcome of the fight was no longer in doubt.

Except to the former champion, that is.

"I never gave up in the ring," Holyfield said. "Even in the last seconds I felt I could manoeuvre him and get something together."

Instead, a night that started off badly for Holyfield when he forgot to bring his boxing shoes from the hotel to the arena ended with him leaving the ring without something far more important — the three heavyweight title belts.

It also ended a title reign that spanned only four fights in two years, a reign some felt was suspect because of the quality of Holyfield's opponents.

Seles reigns as queen of the court



NEW YORK, Nov 14: For Monica Seles, the Virginia Slims Championships is the wrap-up of the 1992 season. For everyone else, it's a hopeful beginning for next year, reports AP.

For the second consecutive year, Seles dominated women's tennis. Name it. She won it. Everything except Wimbledon.

The hard-hitting 18-year-old native of Yugoslavia captured nine titles in 1992, including her second straight Australian and US Opens and third consecutive French Open. She fell to Steffi Graf in the final at Wimbledon, the one Grand Slam title she has yet to win.

Seles, who already has won 29 titles in her career, has already clinched the year-long Kraft Tour points race, along with the \$500,000 Virginia Slims bonus pool payout and the Mazda RX-7 sports car that goes with it.

The only question remaining is whether she will break her all-time tennis record for earnings in a single season of \$1,247,758 set last year. She can do that by reaching the final of the Virginia Slims Championships, which begins its week-long run at Madison Square Garden on Monday.

The winner will earn \$1,250,000 with \$120,000 going to the runnerup.

Winning the \$1.3 million

tournament isn't a given for Seles, who is going for her third straight title. The elite 16-player field includes Graf, the winner in 1989 and 1987; Gabriela Sabatini, 1988 champion; and Martina Navratilova, who seemingly owned the tournament until this new crop of players came along.



MONICA SELES

At 35 and admittedly in the late afternoon if not the evening of her long career, Navratilova says the Slims championships can set the direction of the women's tour in 1993.

"I think it's going to be hard for Monica to stay No 1 again," the left-hander said. "I thought that last year, and it has been a

lot closer, although she ended up winning three Grand Slams anyway. But she has proved to be a little bit more vulnerable, if you can call it that."

Navratilova, who increased her record career tournament title to 161 by capturing Filderstadt, Germany, last month, said several players have a shot at supplanting Seles on top of the Virginia Slims computer rankings.

"I think we'll be seeing some great tennis from Gabriela, and as to how much Jennifer Capriati can do, there is no telling. She is very, very talented. Steffi certainly is rejuvenated and fighting as hard as ever."

"It's going to be an exciting year." Going into this past week's Virginia Slims of Philadelphia tournament, where she's the top seed, Graf had won seven tournaments in 1992 while posting a 67-6 match won-lost record; Seles is 66-5. And the German right-hander has come on strong since the US Open, capturing titles in Leipzig, Germany; Zurich, Switzerland; and Brighton, England, since losing in the quarterfinals of the year's final Grand Slam tournament at New York's Flushing Meadows in September.

The 16-year-old Capriati, struggling to regain the youthful enthusiasm that has marked her play since the turned pro two years ago, was the surprising gold medalist at

the Barcelona Olympics, the biggest title of her young career, where she upset Graf in the final. She followed that by winning at San Diego.

Sabatini, whose only Grand Slam title was the 1990 US Open, has a history of playing better in the first half of the year. She had won five tournaments by the second week of May, but none since.

Among others in the star-studded field are Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Conchita Martinez of Spain, Mary Joe Fernandez, Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere of Switzerland, Jana Novotna of Czechoslovakia, Nathalie Tauziat of France and Zina Garrison.

Only the top 16 singles players and the top eight doubles teams in the world qualify for the Virginia Slims Championships, the richest and best-attended event in women's tennis. It will wind up on Sunday Nov 22, in a unique best-of-5-sets final, the only time during the year the women play more than best-of-

WBC names Chavez boxer-of-the-year

CANCUN, Mexico, Nov 14: The World Boxing Council named super-lightweight champion Julio Cesar Chavez of Mexico boxer-of-the-year on Friday at the end of its annual convention, reports Reuter.

Chavez was the runaway winner of the award, garnering 23 votes against four for his closest rival, super-featherweight champion Azumah Nelson of Ghana.

Chavez, who is often dubbed the best pound-for-pound boxer in the world, fought five times in 1992 including three successful title defences.

One of those fights, Chavez's September 12 victory over Hector "Macho" Comacho of Puerto Rico in Las Vegas, was named fight-of-the-year.

Chavez, the former WBC super-featherweight and lightweight champion, extended his spectacular career record to 83 wins in 83 fights.

US fight impresario Don King, who organised six world title fights in 1992, was named promoter-of-the-year.

Sheer willpower sees Courier through



ANTWERP, Nov 14: Top-seeded Jim Courier came from behind to beat France's Guy Forget 6-7 (4-7), 6-4, 6-4 Friday and reach the semifinals of the \$1.1 million European Community Championship, reports AP.

In a tight 2 1/2-hour match, the world's No. 1 relied on sheer willpower to overcome an early mediocre spell before edging the eighth-seeded Forget with devastating groundstrokes.

Second-seeded Michael Chang scrambled in the backcourt and scored at the net to beat Michael Stich of Germany 6-3, 6-4 to join his fellow American in the semifinals.

Chang, sixth in the ATP rankings, will play Australian Mark Woodforde Saturday, who beat Sweden's Magnus Larsson 6-0, 7-6 (7-2) in his quarterfinal match.

No. 3-seed Petr Korda of Czechoslovakia goes against Dutchman Richard Krajicek later Friday.

Forget took the early initiative in the match, whipping drives past Courier left and right to break in the third game. But he became sloppy when serving for the set at 5-4, allowing Courier back into the set with unforced errors.

The American could not get control on the length of his drives and it cost him in the tiebreaker.

From then on, Courier said,

"I kind of figured it out and got more depth."

Courier broke serve immediately in the second and kept his service games beyond reach to level to score.

In an exciting third set, Forget made two decisive errors at the net to give Courier



JIM COURIER

the vital breakthrough at 3-3.

"It was a few points here and there" that were decisive, he said.

Once he had broken serve, Courier's power from the backcourt put the match away.

It was the first time in three attempts that Courier reached the semifinal in a European indoor event. Forget has been a finalist twice in the same tournaments.

Chang continued his confident march through the championship with a straight-set win over Stich, the world's

No. 14 player. With his victory, Chang also displayed his improved form at the net, making crucial volleys the few times Stich threatened.

"It gives a new dimension to my game and it gets me out of trouble," Chang said after his win. He used his volleying rarely, but was lethal when he did so. It made the difference in a close match.

But even Chang's natural ability to scramble for every point already had Stich frustrated plenty. "If you play Chang, you get every ball back," said Stich.

In his first set, Woodforde had so much problems at all. Larsson's returns, if they crossed the net, were pitiful, offering the Australian a whitewash first set in only 20 minutes.

Woodforde, ranked 61st in the world, seemed on a roll, but Larsson started playing up to his potential in the second set.

The Swede, 36th in the ATP rankings, held on until 4-4 and forced three break-points. But Woodforde saved them with strong serving and one miraculous volley.

It got Woodforde to the tiebreaker. He dominated the net and forced Larsson into mistakes with slow, treacherous shots before closing out the tiebreaker 7-2.

Woodforde had already beaten five-time ECC winner Ivan Lendl Thursday.

Sukova earns a place at NY Slims



INDIANAPOLIS, Nov 14: Helena Sukova completed the field for next week's \$3 million Virginia Slims Championships by defeating Shi-Ting Wang of Taiwan on Friday to reach the final of the Indianapolis Tennis Classic, reports Reuter.

Sukova's 6-3, 6-3 semifinals victory over the 19-year-old Taiwanese enabled her to pass Germany's Anke Huber in the point standings to claim the last berth for the 16-player, season-ending tournament at New York's Madison Square Garden.

Huber was top seed here but lost in the second rounds of this 150,000 dollar tournament.

"I really wasn't thinking

Kang meets Xie in Asian TT men's final

NEW DELHI, Nov 14: Tenth seed Kang Hee-Chan of South Korea earned a clash with third seed Xie Chao Jie of China in the men's singles final of the Asian Table Tennis Championships on Friday, reports Reuter.

Kang, who earlier won the men's doubles crown in partnership with compatriot Lee Chul-Seung, swept aside the challenge of North Korea's Lee Sung-I, the 13th seed, 21-18, 23-21, 21-16 in the semifinals.

about that", the fourth-seeded Sukova said of the fight for



HELENA SUKOVA

tour points. "It's better that way. I played better today (than in previous days)".

"I missed some easy shots and made some mistakes," said Wang, who was playing in her first major professional semifinal.

In today's final, Sukova will play seventh-seeded American Linda Harvey-Wild, who upset Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria 6-4, 7-5.

Maleeva, the third seed and three-time champion here, earned her Slims finals spot earlier this week.

Today will mark the second time this year that Harvey-Wild, ranked 55th in the world, reached a final. She was runner-up at Eastbourne the week before Wimbledon after upsetting Martina Navratilova in the second round.

Harvey-Wild won four of the last five games in the first set and broke Maleeva's service in the 11th game of the second,

then held her own to clinch the match in one hour 38 minutes.

"I played well. She had most of the pressure on her. I just went out there hoping to have some fun," the 21-year-old American said.

"My shot angles went real well and I just ran with her. I was taking the ball earlier than she was and that gave me an advantage. She wasn't executing her line shots as well as she had earlier this week."

Harvey-Wild never felt she was in control of the match, though.

Clean sweep for China at Asian TT

NEW DELHI, Nov 14: Xie Chaojie of China came from behind to win the men's singles crown at the Asian table tennis championships here on Saturday, defeating Kang Hee-Chan of South Korea in the final, reports AP.

Xie needed 46 minutes to carve out the 16-21, 21-17, 22-20, 21-6 victory at the Indra Gandhi Indoor Stadium, completing a Chinese sweep of the singles titles.

Tang Weiyi had earlier won the women's singles with a hard-fought 21-14, 29-31, 21-9, 9-21, 21-18 victory over her compatriot Wu Na.

China's Liu Gooliang and Wu Na bagged the mixed doubles title outclassing hapless South Koreans Lee Chul-Seung and Ryu Ji-Hye in the final.

The Chinese pair took just 14 minutes to carve out a 21-8, 21-16 win over the Koreans, who wilted under relentless attack.

Borg admits drug use



STOCKHOLM, Nov 14: Former tennis great Bjorn Borg admitted in a Swedish television interview to be broadcast Saturday night that he has used cocaine, reports AP.

"I've tried cocaine, but I'm not a cocaine user. I'm not doing drugs and I'm not a drug dealer," Borg said.

Excerpts of the interview were made available in advance to the Associated Press by Swedish television. The one-hour interview was scheduled to be broadcast by one of the major Swedish networks Saturday night.

Borg, 36, who early this year resumed a comeback he started in 1991, denied several times in the past that he ever used cocaine. In 1990, Borg won a lawsuit against the Swedish monthly magazine "Z" which published the allegations by Jannike Bjorling, Borg's former girlfriend.

"Her allegations are false and shameful," Borg said when the lawsuit was filed in a Stockholm District Court in 1989. Earlier that year, Borg had said "I hate drugs, I hate what drugs do to young people and I would never touch it."

Bjorling, with whom Borg has a son, claimed in "Z" that Borg used cocaine on numerous occasions after they met in 1984. She said Borg offered her cocaine for the first time in the United States in August 1984.

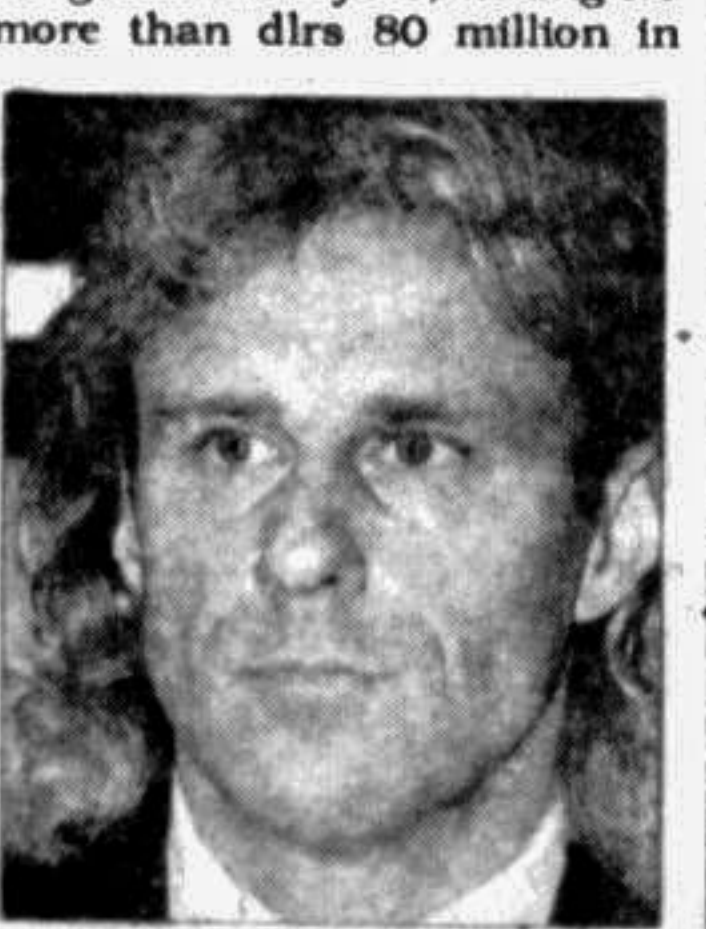
Borg sued "Z" for more than four million Kronor (\$1.8 million) in Sweden, lawsuits involving more than \$10 million are unusual.

In the television interview, Borg said he used cocaine a long time ago, during his time with Bjorling.

Borg, whose revelations made front pages in the Swedish afternoon papers Saturday, also said in the television interview that "I'm virtually broke."

Wimbledon titles from 1976-80, six French Open crowns and 51 other titles, Borg was estimated to have earned at least \$75 million in prize money and endorsements when he retired from tennis in 1983.

Borg's fashion-based empire collapsed in 1989 and his former business partner Lars Skarke filed a lawsuit against Borg later that year, asking for more than \$80 million in



BJORN BORG

damages for breach of contract. The lawsuit has not yet been settled.

Lars Mattsson, Borg's lawyer who also attended the interview, said other lawsuits against Borg total between \$1.8 and \$10 million.

Borg, who lost all eight first-round matches in ATP tournaments this year without winning a set, also said in the television interview that he will go on playing next year despite the setbacks.

"I really enjoy playing tennis," he said. "I hope to play Grand Slam tournaments again next year in addition to other ATP tournaments and senior events."

Borg is now ranked in the low 700s on the ATP computer and would have to qualify or rely on a wild-card by the organizers to get into a Grand Slam tournament if he doesn't improve his ranking dramatically.

Edberg, Ivanisevic in 'Big Four' final



ROME, Nov 14: Goran Ivanisevic downed Pete Sampras in straight sets and Stefan Edberg struggled past Boris Becker Friday night to qualify for the final of the "Big Four" tennis exhibition at Rome's PalaEUR, reports AP.

Ivanisevic fired his usual ratio of aces in a 7-6, 6-4 victory against the American opponent, ranked two in the world.

The young Croatian player won the tie-break 7-4, rallying from a 1-3 deficit. He then made a decisive break in the ninth game for the second set.

Edberg, the No 3 in the ATP lists, needed three sets and about two hours to overcome Becker 6-4, 2-6, 6-3.

The Swede won the first set taking advantage of five double faults of Becker, who lost consecutive games after leading 3-1.

Becker's passing shots caused Edberg's collapse in the second set but the Swede fought back in the third with a risky but successful all-attack tactic.