

# Huber heat melts Sanchez Vicario

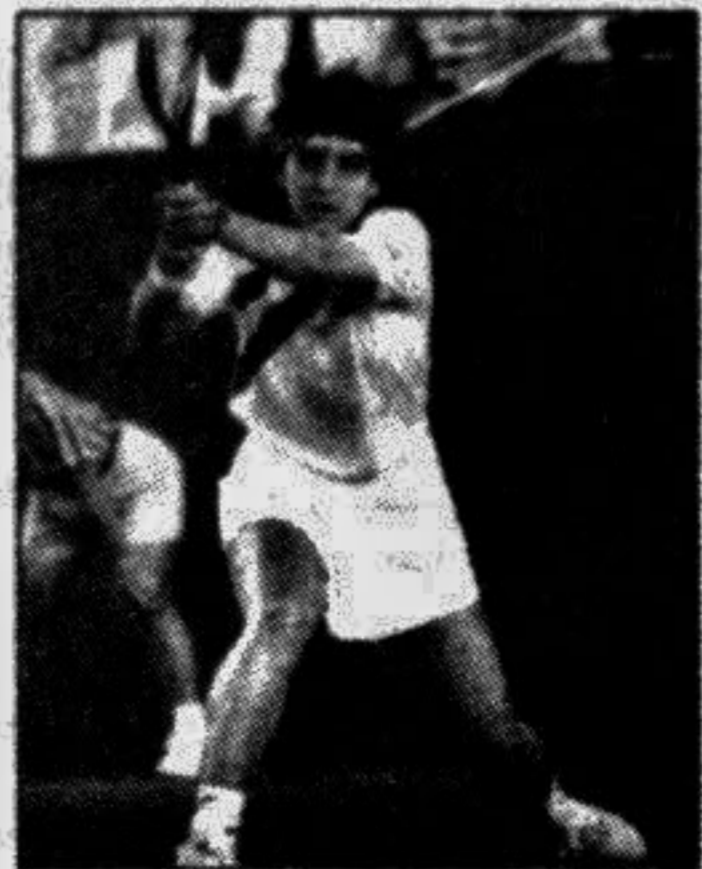
**SYDNEY, Jan 15:** The roasting Australian sun providing no hiding place for Arantxa Sanchez Vicario today as her challenge for the New South Wales Open suffered burn-out against 18-year-old German Anke Huber, reports Reuter.

worry in the lead-up to next week's Australian Open. Sabatini, in contrast, was let off the hook in the first set of her match as Rittner's compo-

down the line that landed inches inside the corner as Shriver watched helplessly. "That's as castly as I've lost in a long while," Shriver said.



ANKE HUBER



ARANTXA SANCHEZ

With temperatures approaching 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) at the White City courts, the Spanish second seed could not recover an early deficit and crashed out 7-6, 6-3, giving Huber a semifinal chance against American Amy Frazier.

Top seed Gabriela Sabatini had more success against German opposition, removing Barbara Rittner 7-5, 6-3. She now meets Jennifer Capriati, who swept a perspiring Pam Shriver off the Centre Court 6-0, 6-1.

The men's final on Saturday will be between world number three Pete Sampras and Austrian Thomas Muster, who has yet to drop a set in the tournament.

Sampras was glad to escape the relentless heat after beating Israel's Amos Mansdorf 6-3, 7-5, while the hard-hitting Muster won an all-European battle against Italian Omar Camporese 6-4, 6-3.

The popular Sanchez Vicario has made a habit of fightbacks in Sydney, reaching the final last year after downing Huber in the last semifinal. This time, though, she could not escape from the depths of a set and 3-0 down as the German extracted sweet revenge.

"I made a lot of mistakes... I think she played a good game but I'm the one who made the mistakes, and that's where I lost the match," admitted Sanchez Vicario. Her right ankle, injured during her opening match, also bothered her slightly but is not a serious

sure melted in the heat. She admitted she will need to be "more aggressive" against Capriati who was in irresistible touch against Shriver.

After dropping the first two points, Capriati won 32 of the next 42 while taking the first nine games.

When she finally held serve to pull within 3-1 in the second set, Shriver raised her arms in mock victory and slapped high-fives with two fans and a ball girl.

Capriati, who had looked vulnerable in her first two matches in this 575,000 warmup for next week's Australian Open, looked sharp in all phases of her game, blasting four aces and ripping pinpoint passing shots when Shriver ventured to the net.

After Thursday's three-hour struggle against South Africa's Ros Fairbank-Nideffer, Capriati said she was looking for a shorter outing.

"I wanted to play well," she said. "I felt very good out there. I'm very happy with it."

She finished the match off almost exactly an hour after it began, zipping a forehand

"It gives your ego a kick. You just hope this is one of those exception things. When she's hitting her groundstrokes with such accuracy, I have a lot of problems."

While Shriver said Capriati is a definite threat to win the Australian Open, she needs to work on her consistency. "Jennifer is up and down still," she said. "It takes an un-canny amount of consistency so your bad days are just little valleys."

The 30-year-old Shriver intends to remain on the women's tour this year, but said she would begin to wind down her singles commitments in 1994.

Sampras again showed his pedigree against Mansdorf, picking up his fourth win in four successive days of increasingly smooth tennis.

Only midway through the second set "when the heat kind of got to me" did he falter, but he recovered quickly, another good sign in the lead-up to Melbourne.

"I went upstairs afterwards and put a bag of ice on my head," said Sampras.

Spectators were still using umbrellas for protection at Sampras' late-afternoon match against Mansdorf after court-side temperatures passed 40 C (104 F) under the relentless sun.

"It was unbelievably hot," a drained Sampras said. "You basically have to conserve energy. At times you have to lay off a little."

Sampras started off hot, breaking Mansdorf in the third game. He broke again at 5-3 on a pair of nearly identical forehand drives that landed inches off the line and a volleying error by Mansdorf.

In the second set, Sampras had eight of his dozen aces to keep Mansdorf at bay, including two after he fell behind 0-40 while serving at 4-4.

"I was running out of gas at that point," Sampras said.

Mansdorf fended off one match point a game later on a second-serve ace to level the score at 5-5. With a tiebreaker appearing imminent at 5-6, 40-15, three Mansdorf errors and a let-off service return that dropped for a winner gave Sampras the match in an hour and 20 minutes.

Muster, who took three cold showers after his earlier match against Camporese, had little trouble with the unseeded Italian, who committed 39 unforced errors to 22 for the Austrian.

"We both had a big problem with the heat," Muster said. "It wasn't possible to play long rallies."

Muster's performance in reaching the final was another important step back to the big-time after the serious knee injury he suffered in 1989 when he was crushed under a netball.

"I think right now I'm back to my old level. I'm good enough and physically good enough to become a top 10 player again," he said.

## Capriati's cue

**SYDNEY, Jan 15:** Sixteen-year-old Jennifer Capriati warned today that unfit tennis players should beware of the heat at next week's Australian Open, reports Reuter.

"It's not like this anywhere else... it's really hot," said the Florida-based American after reaching the semifinals of the New South Wales Open with a crushing 6-0, 6-1 victory over compatriot Pam Shriver in temperatures nudging 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit).

"If you're not used to it and you're not in good shape I think it could hurt you, especially in a long match."

Capriati is convinced the heat will be a major factor in determining the winner at the first Grand Slam tournament of the year.

"The courts take in the heat and are really hot... it hurts your feet because it's so hot," complained the world's sixth-ranked player.

A hot and bothered Shriver said her opponent had the potential to be number one in the women's game but needed more consistency to challenge the likes of Monica Seles.

"I won't be surprised to see Monica win between two and four Grand Slam titles this year," Shriver added.



British boxer Lennox Lewis holds up the WBC heavyweight title belt which he was awarded in London on Jan 14. Lennox will make the defence of his WBC title in April but he will have to wait 10 days to find out his opponent. — AFP photo

## Lennox Lewis' title defence

# Date fixed, opponent not yet

**LONDON, Jan 15:** World Boxing Council (WBC) heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis will make his first defence of his title in London on April 24, reports Reuter.

His opponent remains less clear-cut. Frank Maloney, manager of the British-born former Olympic champion, told a new conference on Thursday that the date was certain but the opponent still undecided.

Jose Sulaiman, president of the WBC, said a vote was currently underway among WBC members to decide whether Lewis must fight mandatory American challenger Tony Tucker or would be allowed to first meet an opponent of his choice.

Maloney has asked the WBC to allow Lewis to fight London-born Jamaican Alex Stewart first. Whoever the opponent, Time-Warner Sports president Seth Abraham announced the American HBO cable television and TVKO pay-per-view organisation had signed a four-fight

contract with Lewis. Abraham has already signed a six-fight deal with American World Boxing Association (WBA) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) champion Riddick Bowe, the man who dramatically relinquished the WBC title in London last month.

Abraham said HBO had decided to sign both fighters because the station wanted one undisputed champion.

"HBO spent 25 million dollars to unify the heavyweight championship from 1986 to 1989," he said.

"It's in our best business interest to have one world champion and the fastest way to re-unite the title is to have Bowe and Lewis under contract. "We hope to use the cheque book to bring them together as soon as possible."

The conference was Lewis' first since he was awarded the title after Bowe disdainfully dropped his WBC belt into a dustbin at a news conference last month.

Lewis, the first British heavyweight world champion this century, stepped from his

car brandishing an identical belt over his head in a gesture that ultimately proved once again that nothing is quite as it seems in boxing. "This is a great day for the WBC," declared Sulaiman, who arrived late at the conference after being taken to see a doctor for treatment of suspected food poisoning.

"Lennox is the authentic champion of the world."

A minor mystery surrounded the belt paraded on Thursday, which was clearly not the one Bowe rejected.

"I was informed that the belt was taken back to him (Bowe), to his room. Perhaps it is at home in his trophy room. Every champion keeps the belt that he is given," said Sulaiman. He told reporters that the belt Lewis had held up for photographers was one he brought from Mexico for a "crowning" ceremony at a banquet later on Thursday.

But John Morris, head of the British Boxing Board of Control, said it was just an old one he had provided. "It's just a belt. I brought it back from Geneva."

# 'Pistol Pete' knows what it takes

**SYDNEY, Jan 15:** Men's tennis is waiting for a new leader to emerge from a largely stereotyped pack in the heat and

"It's very big goal of mine. I'd definitely like to achieve that goal before the end of my career but I'm not going to put extra pressure on myself to do

edges that the men's game, still overrun with blitzkrieg servers, is a confused place at present.

"Four guys are capable of be-



An exhausted Pete Sampras signs autographs for young fans after defeating Sweden's Nicklas Kulti in the quarterfinals of the New South Wales Open in Sydney on Jan 14. Top seed and world number three Sampras won the match in straight sets 6-4, 6-2. — AFP photo

dust of Melbourne when the first Grand Slam tournament of 1993, the Australian Open starts on Monday, reports Reuter.

If the champion is not an American called Courier, a Swede called Edberg or a German named Becker, some spectators will probably demand a recount. The rest will probably be wondering why they failed to back a man called Sampras.

The current world number three could easily shape a tournament rated by most of the leading pros as the most physically demanding of the "Big Four" championship, in a field lacking a dominant male.

"Pistol Pete", as the headline writers have dubbed him, knows the score. Boris Becker and Jim Courier's Australian Open triumphs of 1991 and 1992 respectively have each coincided with their installation as world number one and Sampras, who missed both tournaments through injury, has set his sights in a similar direction.

"I've definitely thought about it—I've had two pretty good sniffs at it. If I could have won a couple more matches I could have been up there," said Sampras.

in six months or a year. "I'm 21 years old and I've got a long career ahead of me. I'm not going to lose any sleep over it."

Sampras, runner-up at the 1992 US Open and a semifinalist at Wimbledon, acknowl-

ing number one by the end of the year. I don't think you're going to see the domination that Lendl had five years ago.

"As for the Australian Open, the way Courier played last year he must be a strong favourite. Edberg has always

performed very well, Becker won last week at Qatar and is obviously very motivated. I'm going to give it my best shot. You can go down to 10 guys who will feel they can win it."

That would certainly include Wimbledon finalist Goran Ivanisevic, last year's semifinalist Wayne Ferreira of South Africa — "There's more pressure on me this year but it's nice to know people are worried about you" — Petr Korda of the Czech Republic and even twice-winner Ivan Lendl, now an American citizen.

Friday's draw gave top seed Courier a comfortable-looking path to the last eight, with Sampras and Edberg in a tougher bottom half. Becker, too, might have preferred someone other than compatriot Michael Stich as his potential fourth round opponent.

All of them will be wary of the Melbourne weather, just as capable of serving up a dust storm, temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius or torrential rain. Sampras believes his mediocre form in the opening months of the last few years stems from missing the Australian Open.

"I'm the type of player who needs to play a lot to play my best tennis and in the last two years basically I didn't start the year well."

Laced if he was going to wrap himself up in cotton wool to prevent mishap, Sampras quipped: "I'm going to drive to Melbourne, I'm not going to fly, maybe I'll walk."

## Chang, Uwe Steeb in last four

**JAKARTA, Jan 15:** World number six Michael Chang of the United States and Carl Uwe Steeb of Germany advanced to the semi-finals of the 300,000 dollars Indonesian Open tennis championship of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Tour here Thursday, reports AFP.

Chang, 20, top seeded here, finished an easy game against Rodolphe Gilbert of France taking the first set 6-2, before the left-handed Gilbert retired with an injured wrist with the second set at 2-1 to Chang.

Chang's opponent in the semi-final will be Jacco Eltingh of the Netherlands who surprisingly went down fourth seeded Frenchman Fabrice Santoro 7-6 (7-4), 6-4.

The Indonesian Open is Chang's first IBM/ATP tour tournament in 1993. He said he did not want to comment on a possible meeting with second seed Steeb in the final Sunday, saying the first thing to do was get into the final.

World number 29 Steeb will take on Paul Haarhuis of the Netherlands, ranked 39th in the world and seeded number three here, after beating fellow German David Prinosil 6-2, 6-4.

## Top two seeds to fight it out

**MELBOURNE, Jan 15:** Amanda Coetzer and Naoko Sawamatsu both scored straight sets victories Friday, setting up a final between the top two seeds in the 100,000 US Victorian Open women's tennis championship at Albert Park, reports AP.

Top-seeded Coetzer, from South Africa, was too steady for Australian qualifier Louise Field, winning 6-1, 6-2 in the first set.

Sawamatsu, the No.2 seed from Japan, had a tougher battle but defeated eighth-seeded American Linda Harvey-Wild 7-5, 6-3.

## Arbie outpaces Zhao Jianhua

**TOKYO, Jan 15:** Herianto Arbie of Indonesia shocked world champion Zhao Jianhua of China in straight games here Friday to secure a berth in the men's singles quarter-finals at the Japan Open badminton championships, reports AFP.

The 20-year-old Indonesian, who eliminated the same opponent in their first encounter, at the Chinese Open in October, did it again with a 15-10, 15-9 triumph over the third-seeded left-hander.

"I tried to play faster than him as I had planned before the match, and I could do it pretty well. I'm very happy to beat the world champion twice in a row," said Arbie, a hopeful for the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.

Arbie, who clinched his first international title in the Taipei Open last weekend, said his target here was to beat compatriot Hermawan Susanto and reach the semifinals of the 110,000-dollar tournament.

But Arbie, the 1991 Indonesian national champion, has no wins and two losses against Susanto in major tournaments.

Susanto was a 16-17, 15-5, 15-4 winner over Wimbledon champion Darren Hall of Britain, while Indonesian teammates Ardy Wiranata and Joko Suprianto also advanced to the quarter-finals.

Wiranata outpaced Andrei Antopov of Russia 15-4, 15-10 and Suprianto demolished Kim Hak-Kyun of South Korea 15-12, 17-14.

Wiranata should have a tough quarter-final match against Olympic bronze

Medalist Thomas Stuer-Lauridsen of Denmark, to whom he has lost twice in a row — in the Grand Prix final last month and in the Taipei Open semifinals.

Stuer-Lauridsen, who eliminated all-England title holder Liu Jun of China at the Barcelona Olympics, repeated his excellent play with a 15-8, 15-9 victory.

Suprianto will take on Grand Prix final winner Rashid Sidek of Malaysia, the second seed, who breezed past Stephan Butler of Britain 15-2, 15-7.

China's final men's hope, Wu Wenkai, crashed to Poul-Erik Hoyer-Larsen of Denmark 16-18, 14-17, and Pontus Lantti of Finland, who upset Olympic champion Allan Budi Kusuma of Indonesia on Thursday, bowed to Jens Olsson of Sweden 7-15, 15-2, 12-15.

# Sabatini — burnt out or yet to blossom?

**SYDNEY, Jan 15:** No-one could ever accuse Gabriela Sabatini of suffering an identity problem, writes Reuter.

This is the woman who promotes two brands of perfume and has a rose-named after her. There are plans for a children's doll, manufactured by an American toy company. Pepsi Cola continue to feature her in a multi-million dollar advertising campaign.

Yet doubts persist about the degree of substance behind the alluring dusky image. Is this a talent still waiting to blossom, or is it now a case of don't hold your breath, Argentina?

As she prepares for the Australian Open, the year's first Grand Slam event starting in Melbourne on Monday, Sabatini's moment of truth may just be hovering at the net.

People have said something similar before, but this time they have a whole decade to call as evidence. It is 10 years since Sabatini leapt to international prominence as a gifted junior, yet her roll of honour remains brief for a player of her talents.

At 22, her victory in the 1990 US Open is still her only major title. In eight subsequent Grand Slam events she has reached just one final, at Wimbledon in 1991. A flick through the record books will inform her that contemporaries Monica Seles and Steffi Graf have, meanwhile, chalked

up 18 major titles between them in five years.

Seles and Graf surge on, recreating the old dominance of Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert, and 16-year-old Jennifer Capriati continues to press. Yet Sabatini could still be heard insisting this week that, yes, she was as good as

Seles and was closer than ever to proving it.

"I think Monica is beatable... I think there is a very small difference between us," said Sabatini in Sydney this week.

"Technically I am as good as her, but mentally she is very tough, she plays every point 100 per cent. All I need is to



GABRIELA SABATINI... where is her bag of surprises?

be more consistent throughout the whole year. The way I'm feeling right now, looking at my game, I think I'm playing my best tennis."

It sounds good, but there is a familiar ring to the rhetoric. When she hired Brazilian coach Carlos Kirmay in mid-1990, the world was also persuaded that Sabatini was about to soar to new heights.

After she duly won the US Open that same year, beating Graf 6-2, 7-6 in the final at Flushing Meadow, now, frustratingly, the number of pieces loose in the box appears greater than ever.

It is doubly ironic because Sabatini looks infinitely more at ease off-court. The painfully shy teenager has been replaced by a self-assured young woman well aware of her drawing power, not unlike a Latin version of Britain's Princess Diana.

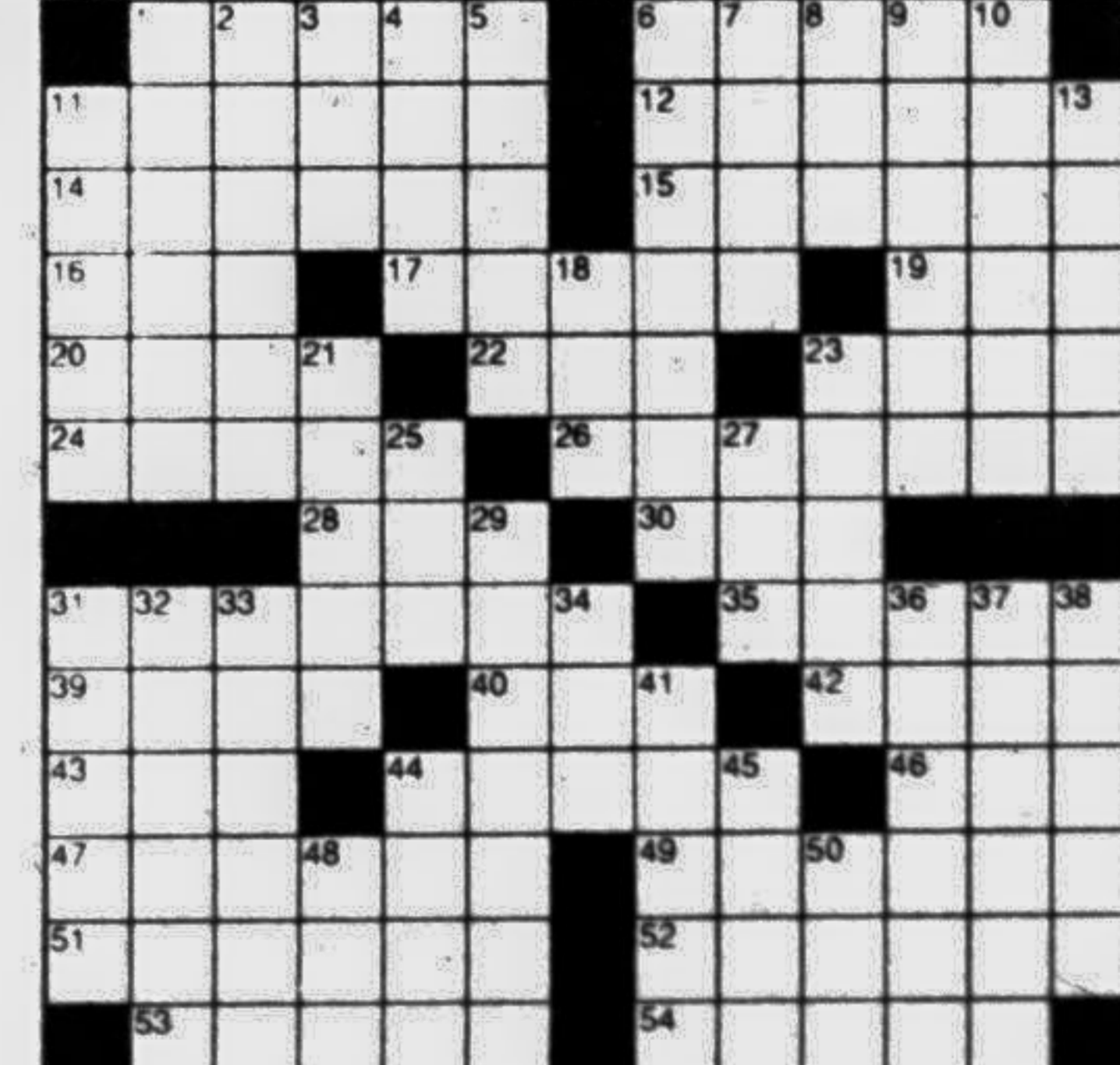
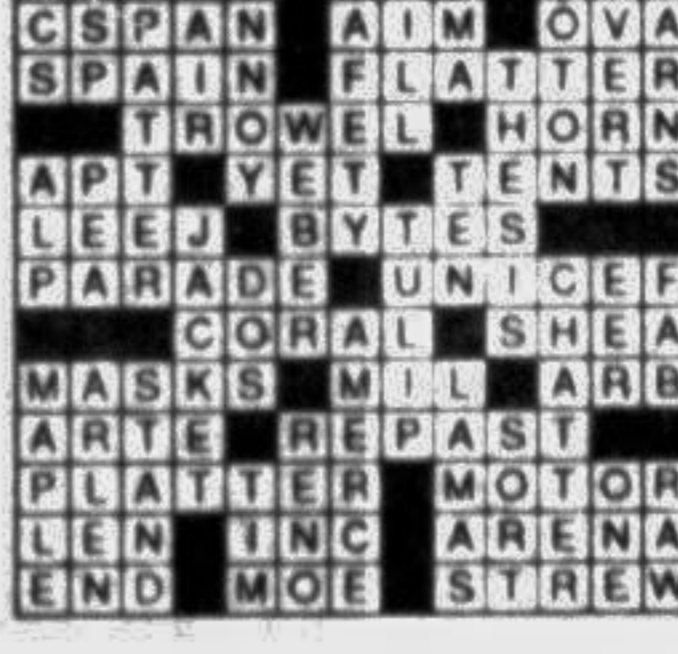
After last year's Virginia Slins Championships, she was seen briefly on stage with microphone in hand making her debut as a singer in public. She also purchased a ranch at home in Argentina, appointing her father, a former General Motors executive, to look after it.

But on court, a fragile impression persists. At this week's New South Wales Open, an event she won in thrilling style 12 months ago, her early matches were peppered with spells when opponents completely dictates events.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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Solution time: 28 mins.



## CRYPTOQUIP

DTUEN VBMFLKQVLCBM  
YBKGETM SWB STF YCKGR  
FTCR "LWGN UBSGKGR  
LWG DBBE BM EG"

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE CHEF AND HIS ASSISTANT SAT DOWN AND HASHED OUT THEIR DIFFERENCES.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: F equals S  
The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.