

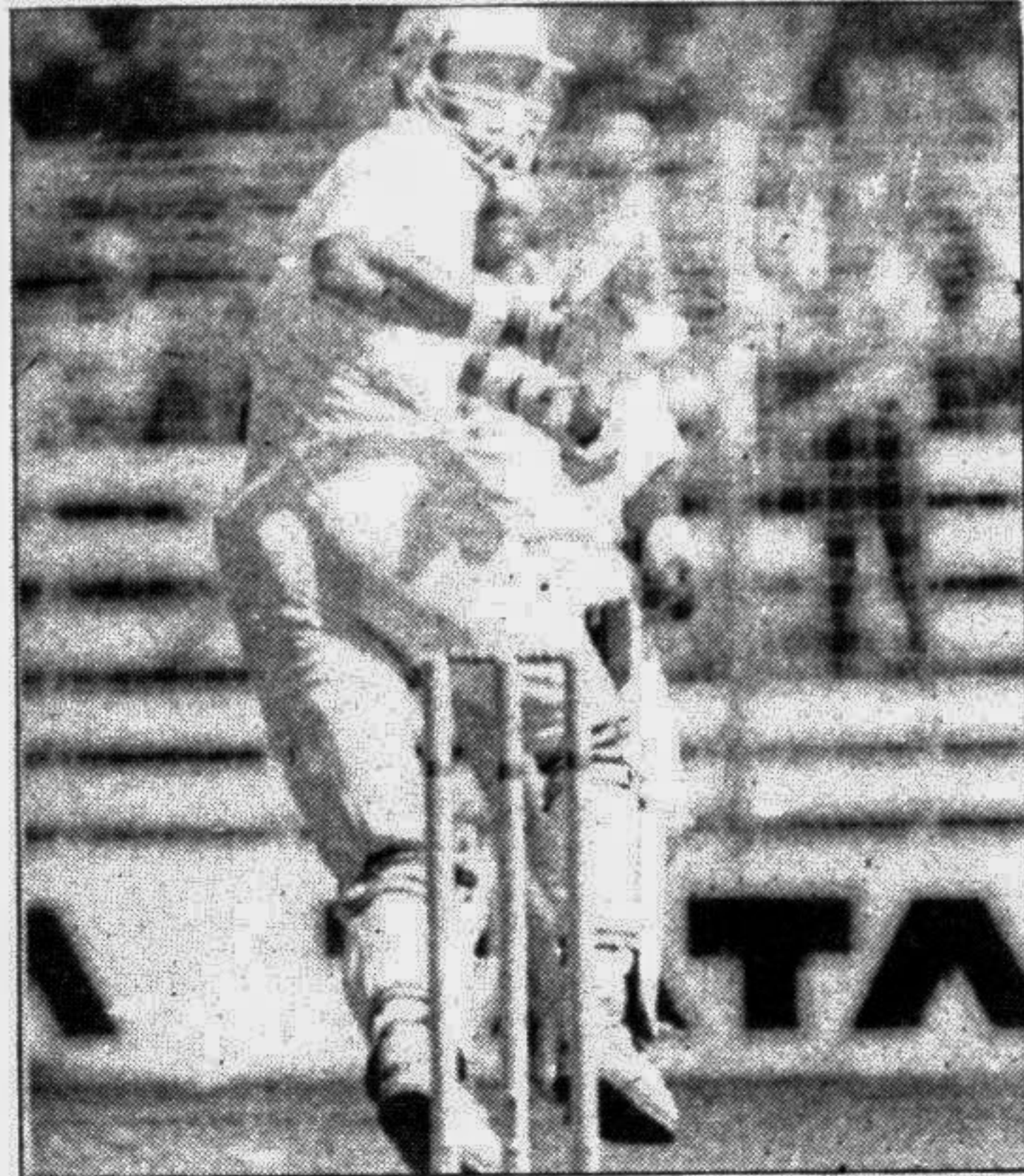
Indian batsmen take over from Hick

BOMBAY, Feb 20: England were given scant opportunity to dwell on the glories of Graeme Hicks...

more than an hour, farming 70 per cent of the strike as India lost their grip in the field.

well caught off Hick soon after by relieved wicketkeeper Richard Blakey but his departure brought no respite as Kambl sauntered on to his home ground and proceeded to cut and drive at will.

Table with columns: Player, Runs, Wickets, Overs. Includes players like Kapil Dev, Prabhakar, Kumble, Emburey, Tufnell, Hick.



England's Zimbabwe-born batsman Graeme Hick turns one to the fence on his way to a brilliant maiden Test century on the second day of the third and final Test against India in Bombay yesterday.

After Hick had overcome the ordeal of being stranded on 99 overnight to carve a masterly 178 out of England's unexpectedly healthy total of 347, India responded with 144 for one wicket by the close.

Navjot Sidhu with 69 not out and Manoj Prabhakar, 44, set the pace with India's first century-plus opening stand for three years.

Vinod Kamble, reveling in his home Test debut, then cracked an unbeaten 20 that promised more runs on Sunday.

Their performances underlined how much more comfortably the Indian batsmen play spin than the tourists.

It also emphasized that the toss-won here by England for the first time — did not so much decide the first two matches in India's favour as simply widen the gulf between the sides.

England had resumed amid great tension with Hick poised on 99 not out. He immediately assumed the confident air of the previous evening and calmly pushed Rajesh Chauhan's third ball into the covers to complete his 68th first-class hundred, but his first in the international arena.

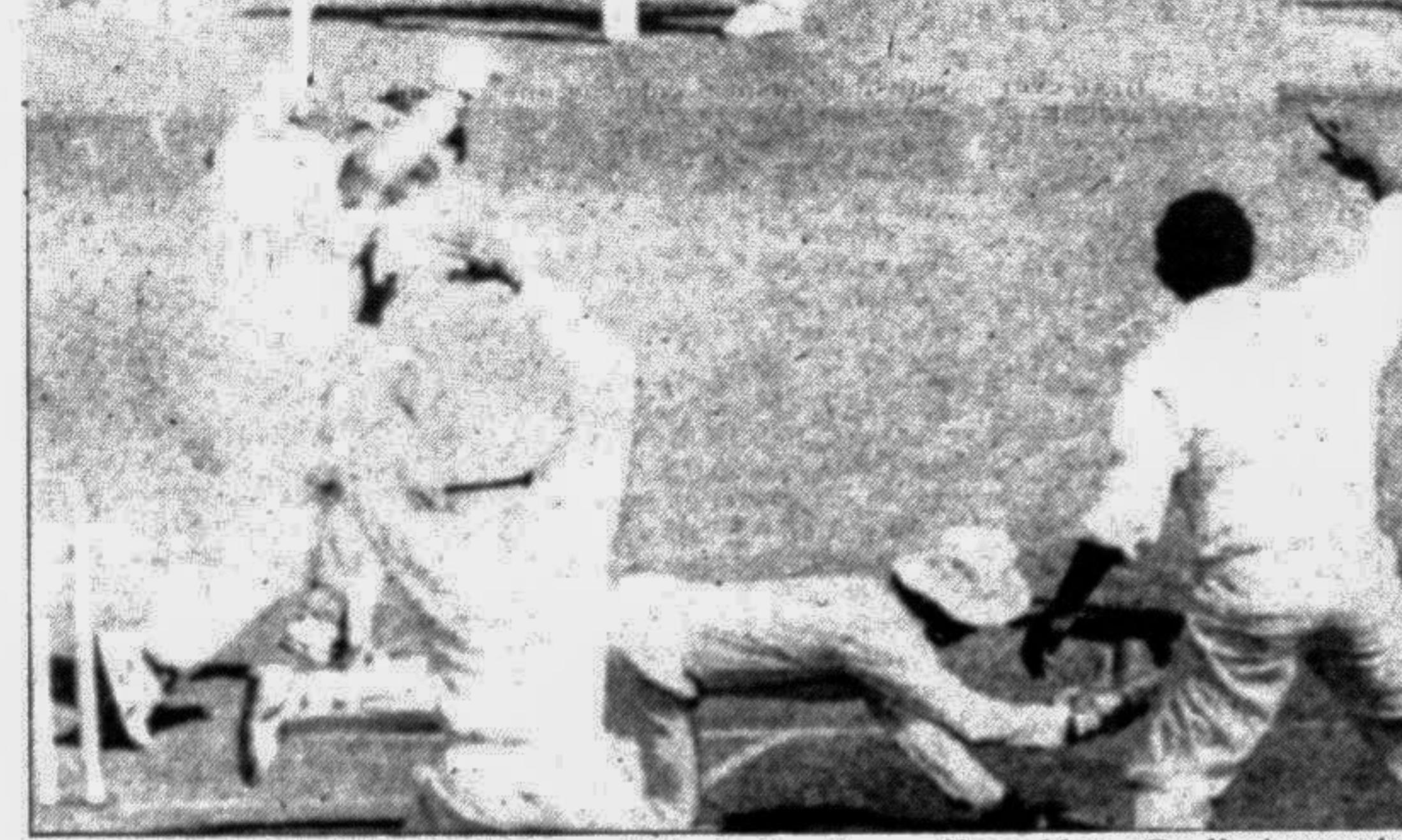
Despite the occasional lifting ball, he continued to score freely and even the belated introduction of Kapil Dev could not slow him.

Kapil did end the resistance of John Emburey for 12, however, and the all-rounder swiftly made Philip DeFreitas (11) his 419th Test wicket.

But Hick, who had gleamed 68 runs from partnerships with those two, found an unexpected ally in Philip Tufnell.

In his own smaller way, Tufnell, like Hick, had his batting confidence buoyed by a personal best innings in last week's Madras Test in which he scored 22 to Hicks 64.

Hick nurtured Tufnell for



England batsman Robin Smith is caught by Indian keeper Kiran More off a Venkatapathy Raju left-arm on the opening day of the third and final Test in Bombay on Friday. England made 347.

Jansher stretched to limit

CARDIFF, Feb 20: Top seed and defending champion Jansher Khan was given a tremendous fight by Australian Rodney Eyles before reaching the semifinals of the Welsh Classic on Friday, reports Reuter.

Eyles, ranked world number 10, who won the opening game and was well in contention in the next two before finally going down 13-15, 15-11, 15-13, 15-10 in 66 minutes.

The Pakistani world champion...

Together we stand

LONDON, Feb 20: Britain's leading men squash players formed the British Squash Professionals Association (BSPA) on Friday after a dispute with the existing ruling body in the country, reports Reuter.

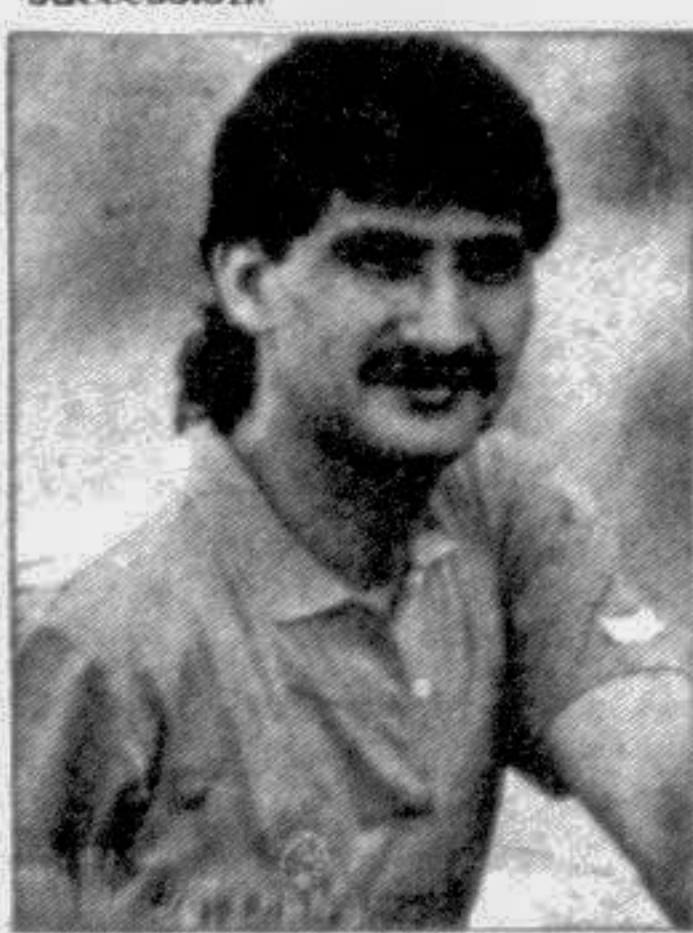
Led by England number one Chris Walker and the fourth-ranked Tony Hands, the new association came about following a dispute with the Squash Rackets Association (SRA) over last month's national championships.

The players had been unhappy with the conditions laid down by the SRA and most of them boycotted the event.

The BSPA are claiming unanimous backing from the players and are already planning their own competitive events.

Former England captain Neil Harvey and former British champion Paul Carter have been appointed as officials BSPA promoters with a brief to re-build the professional tournament circuit in Britain.

pon, unbeaten in any event since August, looked to have things his own way when he led 7-3 in the opening game. But the 25-year-old from Brisbane hit back with some stunning drop shots and fierce volleys to win seven points in succession.



JANSHER KHAN

Jansher saved one game point but was powerless as Eyles took the game with another inch-perfect drop.

At 8-8 in the second Eyles, who reached world number six three years ago before suffering an ankle injury, had every chance.

But the Pakistani edged ahead to level the match. And it was a similar story in the third as Jansher took three points in succession from 12-11 to seize the initiative.

Jansher had things more his own way in the fourth as a tiring and increasingly dispirited Eyles finally gave up the cause.

He played very well, but I was always confident my fit-

ness would see me through," said Jansher. "I needed a good match because the first two rounds had been quite easy."

"I thought I had him struggling for a while," said Eyles. "And I'm just disappointed I couldn't force home my advantage."

While Australians Rodney and Brett Martin waited to play their quarter-final matches, their sister Michelle reached the last four of the women's event with a 15-10, 9-15, 17-16, 15-11 victory over Suzanne Horner of England.

Michelle, from Brisbane, who has taken over as world number one after Susan Devoy's retirement, recovered from a 13-10 deficit in the crucial third game.

Former Chinese champ to lead Japan in world TT

TOKYO, Feb 20: Former Chinese world champion He Zhiyi will spearhead the Japanese national squad for the 42nd World Championships at Gonen bog, Sweden, in May, the Japan Table Tennis Association said Friday, reports AFP.

She clinched the 1987 world title in New Delhi and was Asian champion three times between 1984 and 1988 before 'retiring' from the sport in May, 1989, following her disappointment at being dropped from the national team for the Seoul Olympics.

Five months later she married an official of the Osaka Table Tennis Association, Hi-deyuki Koyama,

Europe to host Christie-Lewis showdown

RALEIGH, North Carolina, Feb 20: If Carl Lewis and Linford Christie are going to have their long-awaited 100-metres showdown before the World Championships in August, it probably will have to be in Europe. A US proposal for the match-up fell apart on Friday, participants said, reports Reuter.

"They wanted an answer today, and I had to say no," Joe Douglas, Lewis's business manager, said of a proposal by the US cable television company HBO to match world record holder Lewis against Barcelona Olympic champion Christie, a Jamaican-born Briton.

But proposals by British television and organisers of a meeting in Lille, France on July 2 are still being considered, Douglas told Reuters by telephone from his office in Santa Monica, California.

The HBO deal would also have matched Lewis against world record holder Mike Powell in the long jump. Both European proposals would involve only Lewis and Christie.

"Lille has made an offer and the BBC has said they would come to Los Angeles and make one for a race in Britain," Douglas said.

HBO's deadline forced him to say no, Douglas said. "We wanted to see what the BBC and Lille had to offer," Douglas said. "But they said they had to have an answer today so I couldn't say yes."

That meant the offer is made, said an HBO spokesman. "We made an offer to Joe last week and told him today was the deadline," Ross Levinsohn, director of sports publicity for HBO, said from his New York office.

"If his decision is no, in our eyes it (the proposals) is dead. We might try to revise it in the fall, but we ran out of time for the spring."

The HBO offer would have paid more than 100,000 to each athlete. No further details were disclosed.

US to begin Davis Cup defence with backup squad

NEW YORK, Feb 20: With most of its top players either too tired or otherwise committed, the United States will begin defence of the Davis Cup with a backup squad headed by Brad Gilbert and David Wheaton in singles, reports AP.

The team, which also includes the world's top-ranked doubles team of Richey Reneberg and Jim Grabb, was selected Friday to face Australia in the first round March 26-28. The matches will be played on grass at Kooyong Stadium in Melbourne.

Gilbert is ranked 24th in the world and Wheaton 48th. Six Americans are ranked ahead of Gilbert, including Jim Courier and Pete Sampras, Nos. 1 and 2.

"It's too much tennis for me," Sampras said this week.

He plans to play at Scottsdale, Ariz., and Indian Wells, Calif., the weeks prior to the matches in Australia.

He added that at a time when he's trying to get the No. 1 ranking from Courier, he doesn't want to "fly across the world to play on grass."

Courier, winner of the Australian Open last month; MaliVai Washington, No. 17; seventh-ranked Michael Chang, and ninth-ranked Ivan Lendl, who became an American citizen last year, also have declined to play or weren't asked. Chang is not a top grass player. Andre Agassi, the Wimbledon champion and the world's eighth-ranked player, also declined to commit to the team for the early rounds.

Rain reigns at Australia's 2nd tour match

NELSON, New Zealand, Feb 20: Rain forced the abandonment of the first day of Australia's three-day cricket tour match against a New Zealand President's XI at Trafalgar Park on Saturday, reports AP.

Steady rain, which began overnight, persisted throughout the morning making the pitch unplayable.

Umpires said the match would continue as scheduled and would start on Sunday morning if the rain clears.

New Zealand coach Warren Lees, meanwhile, said his team plans to attack when the first Test against Australia begins on Thursday at Lancaster Park in Christchurch.

New Zealand are poised to play four fast bowlers and just five specialist batsmen.

That means a four-pronged attack of Dany Morrison, left-armers Murphy Su'a, Chris Cairns and Michael Owens, backed up by offspinner Dipak Patel.

Lefthander Chris Harris, out of touch in recent weeks, is the probable 12th man. The pivotal No. 6 batting spot is likely to go to wicketkeeper Adam Parore.

"We are interested in playing attacking cricket," Lees said Saturday.

To win a Test you have to take 20 wickets and you are always trying to win. With that in mind, sometimes you have to take one or two risks."

Khulna cricket

KHULNA, Feb 20: Gazi Memorial School emerged as the Khulna Zone champions of the 11th Nirman schools cricket tournament when they beat Khulna Zila School by 26 runs in the final played Wednesday at the Khulna Stadium, reports BSS.

Winning the toss Khulna Zila School invited Gazi Memorial School to bat first. Gazi Memorial School scored 153 runs in 30 overs with Raju, Suman, Karim contributing 31, 27 and 25 respectively.

Khulna Zila School, in reply, were dismissed for 127 runs in 29 overs.

Montu of Gazi Memorial School was adjudged the man-of-the-match.

Navratilova in Paris Open final



PARIS, Feb 20: Martina Navratilova gained her seventh consecutive final by beating Czech Jana Novotna, 6-1, 6-2, Saturday in the Paris Open tennis tournament, reports AP.

Navratilova, seeded second, will play the winner of the other semifinal between top-seeded Monica Seles and Conchita Martinez of Spain.

Against Novotna, Navratilova won for the seventh time in seven meetings. Navratilova jumped to a 5-0 lead and won the first set in 30 minutes.

At 2-1 in the second set, she had to have her right heel treated but that didn't stop her from winning in just more than an hour.

An earlier AP report said: Top seeds Monica Seles and Martina Navratilova powered into the semifinals on Friday with easy victories.

Seles, the No. 1 seed, moved past France's Mary Pierce, 6-2, 6-2.

Navratilova romped against Julie Halard of France, 6-0, 6-2 in 53 minutes. In three matches Navratilova has lost just eight games.

Two long matches began the day, each lasting more than two hours.

No 3 Conchita Martinez of Spain struggled before beating unseeded Karin Kschwendt of Germany, 6-3, 5-7, 6-3. Fourth seed Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic edged Nathalie Tauziat of France, the

final in every tournament I played in."

At the US Open she lost to Bulgarian Magdalena Maleeva in the second round. Since then she has won two tournaments and lost to Seles in three finals.

Seles and Navratilova appear headed to another final after Seles eliminated Pierce, ranked 13th in the world. Seles needed just more than an hour for the win.

Seles, 14-0 this year and riding a 33-match winning streak, needs just two more wins to overtake Chris Evert in career percentage for victories.

As of now Evert has a mark of 89.96 per cent, based on her career mark of 1,309-146.

Although nowhere near Evert's total amount of wins, Seles needs to win the tournament here to have a mark of 252-28 — exactly 90 per cent.

Seles beat Navratilova for the Chicago Slims title Sunday while Navratilova won the 162nd title of her career the previous week at Tokyo.

The semifinals pit Seles against Martinez and Navratilova versus Novotna.

Neither Seles nor Navratilova have lost to their semifinal foes in their career.

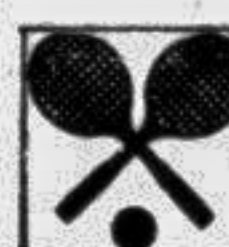


M NAVRATILOVA

No 5 seed, 7-6 (7-2), 4-6, 6-2. Navratilova is playing well on a slow court that wasn't to her liking at the beginning.

"I'm adjusting to the surface now," Navratilova said. "I'm also playing good tennis. Since the US Open I've made

Becker laid low by virus



STUTTGART, Feb 20: Top-seeded Boris Becker pulled out of the Stuttgart Classic tennis tournament because of a virus infection shortly before he was to play his semifinal match against Richard Krajcek Saturday, reports AP.

Tournament officials said Becker apparently caught the same infection that had already forced two other players to drop out.

Dr. Stefan Zieger, who examined Becker, said the German star was suffering from diarrhoea, dehydration, fatigue and dizzy spells.

Magnus Larsson and Petr Korda had pulled out for a similar infection, while Arnaud Boetsch withdrew with a liver infection.

Two stars, Stefan Edberg

and Goran Ivanisevic, dropped out shortly before the start of the dir's 2.25 million tournament because of injuries.

Krajcek, the fifth seed, warmed up for the final by splitting a pair of sets with Patrik Kuehnen in an exhibition match.

Becker is to play in Rotterdam next week but the illness could force him to withdraw.

Before withdrawing Saturday, Becker had won four of his last five tournaments.

Krajcek, 21, will now meet the winner of Saturday's other semifinal between Germany's Michel Stich and Australian Wally Masur.

An earlier Reuter report said: Boris Becker and Michael Stich, embroiled in a bitter public row over the German Davis Cup team, edged closer to a possible showdown on

court at the Stuttgart Classic tennis tournament on Friday, reports Reuter.

Becker, who has faced fierce criticism by Stich for refusing to play for Germany in the opening round of the Davis Cup, confidently reached the semifinals with a 7-8, 7-5 win over South African Wayne Ferreira.

Stich had few problems booking his place in the last four with 6-4, 6-3 victory over Frenchman Cedric Pioline in just 76 minutes.

The Germany's argument over Becker's decision to skip next month's first-round match against Russia to concentrate on regaining the number one spot has reached boiling point in the last two days.

Stich has said he will refuse to play in the Davis Cup if Becker is allowed back into the team later in the season after missing the first match.

Becker made a bitter outburst late on Thursday when he heard from Davis Cup member Carl-Uwe Steeb that Stich last week allegedly demanded a written assurance from the German Tennis Federation (DTB) that Becker would not be selected.

Bowe's benignity

MOGADISHU, Feb 20: World heavyweight boxing champion Riddick Bowe will pay a "goodwill" visit to Somalia on Monday as part of his efforts to raise funds for the famine-hit African country, US sources said on Friday, reports Reuter.

They said Bowe, who dethroned Evander Holyfield last November, would also hold talks with US special envoy for Somalia Robert Oakley during his one-day trip.

American Bowe has said he will donate part of proceeds from his next title defence of the boxing crown later this year to Somalia, where more than 300,000 people died in the past two years from a civil war-induced famine.



Riddick Bowe, the WBC and IBF heavyweight champion, joins African National Congress Secretary General Cyril Pamphose in the black national solidarity conference in Soweto, near Johannesburg on February 19. Bowe said if negotiations fail, as a fighter he is prepared to go to the bush with the South African organisation to make them succeed.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Clues include 'Chief of Staff', 'Bradley', 'Marseille', '39 Planes', '40 Obstruction', '41 Bruce Wayne's butler', etc.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with numbers 1-55 and letters A-Z.

CRYPTOQUIP POPM GBCSVB GZFE CW ZEIZDJ MPPYEPJ BFJ VFWE UWFP MY, JBP JZFY, CMED BZOP PDPJ UCW DCS. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: LIVELY CATTLEMAN GOT BAD STOCK-MARKET TIP AND SHOUTED, 'THEY GAVE ME A BUM STEER!' Today's Cryptoquip clue: D equals Y 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.