



Much feared Pakistani paceman Waqar Younis beaten by the pace on this occasion by a Curtly Ambrose delivery in the final of the triangular series against the West Indies in Johannesburg on Saturday. West Indies beat Pakistan by five wickets. — AFP photo

Ondruska not afraid of Agassi

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz., Feb 28: South African Marcos Ondruska will put his week of ups on the line against Andre Agassi in the final of the dollar 300,000 Scottsdale tennis championships after both scored semifinal wins on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Second-seeded Agassi dashed Australian Mark Woodforde's bid for a second successive final and stopped his match streak at eight with a 6-2, 6-3 victory in cold, windy conditions.

Ondruska, ranked 67th in the world, sprang his third surprise of the week, dispatching eighth seed Andre Chesnokov of Russia 6-4, 7-5 earlier in the day.

"I played him once and that's enough to know he's a tough competitor," said Agassi, whose 11-1 start and title in San Francisco earlier this month is his best jump out of the gate since he joined the tour in 1986.

"Today Mark Woodforde was the most important thing in my tennis. Tomorrow Ondruska is, the reigning Wimbledon champion and world number eight said.

Agassi who has dropped only 11 games while steamrolling four opponents, said he would not take Ondruska lightly.

"I hope he's not going to be wondering whether or not

Andre is going to show tomorrow. Because it doesn't matter where I'm playing, what city it's in, what surface it's on, or what round it's in. Every match has its own importance."

The 22-year-old American wore down the left-handed Woodforde with a punishing groundstroking game and strong service returns.

"I was tired out there and struggling," said Woodforde, ranked 23rd, who won last week's US Indoors singles title.

"It's unbelievable," said the unseeded Ondruska, who, like Agassi, has yet to drop a set here as he eliminated seeds Francisco Clavet of Spain, American Brad Gilbert and Chesnokov.

"It's been almost a dream week," added Ondruska, who gained entry into the main draw when three players withdrew last Friday. "I think it means a lot to me because it's only my second tour event final, and it's sweet."

He was runner-up at Cologne last year.

Although Ondruska, ranked 67th in the world, lost to Agassi 6-0, 6-4 in the quarterfinals in San Francisco earlier this month in their only career meeting, the 20 year old newly named Davis Cupper says he'll be more prepared this time.

"He won the first seven games of the match, but after that it was pretty tight. I know what I did then and I know how he plays and the things he does," said Ondruska.

"The bottom line was that I was just tired, playing 15 days straight. The boiler sort of got

cold," he added. "He has one of the best returns if not the best in the game. It was his strength against my strength, and tonight he came out on top," said Woodforde of his serve.

Ondruska, a pro since 1989 but still looking for his maiden title, is enjoying his own Cinderella story.

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China gripped by boxing fever

BEIJING, Feb 28: Young Chinese workers on Saturday screamed for blood, chanted, and stood on their seats at the country's first professional boxing tournament, billed as the "Brawl at the Wall," reports Reuter.

A near capacity crowd of 18,000 watched five pro fights at Beijing's capital gymnasium — a drop in the ocean compared with the 400 million watching live television coverage in farms and villages across the world's most populous country.

The "Brawl at the Wall" has gripped China with its mixture of American showbiz, raw capitalism and kung-fu style violence.

American lightweight Leonzer Barber and Mike Sedillo displayed boxing skills never before seen in China, where the sport was banned for 28 years "uncivilised" after the 1949 communist revolution.

Barbar scored a unanimous points decision to retain his WBO crown.

He picked up 60,000 dollars for his win — small change in the world of pro boxing but a sum beyond the imagination of most Chinese peasants.

It took Barber six rounds to tame Sedillo, who came out at

the opening bell throwing fast combinations that had the champion retreating to the ropes.

"He wanted to push me around, but in the end I pushed him back. I was physically stronger than him and that was the difference," Barber said later.

Asked about his first fight in China, he said: "It feels great. I hope the people in China enjoyed the show. It was a hell of a fight."

Said Sedillo: "This is a peace mission from the United States. We're all winners tonight."

Between rounds a parade of ring girls dressed in the skimpiest of mini skirts and body-hugging blouses were greeted by whistles and cheers from an audience more used to unisex blue Mao suits.

Former world heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali received a standing ovation when he appeared in the stadium. He is still a hero to millions of Chinese boxing fans.

Another former world champion, Mike Weaver, was also a crowd pleaser as he donned a Green People's Liberation Army cap with a red star to celebrate his unanimous points victory over fellow American Bert Cooper in a non-title bout.

Weaver, 41, outboxed and outlasted his 26 year old op-

ponent, Cooper with a build like Mike Tyson but lacking the disgraced champion's fitness, kept charging in but was rarely able to inflict much damage.

Despite the presence of armed police, the crowd at the capital gymnasium decided to throw caution to the wind to enjoy their night out in a city starved of live entertainment.

Some had paid as much as 100 dollars for a ticket and were looking for blood.

They roared on fighters who seemed to be heading for a knockout victory. "Kill him, hammer him don't stop now" they yelled.

Organisers of the "Brawl at the Wall" see it as a dress rehearsal for a big-name heavyweight title fight later this year.

Lewis-Tucker bout in jeopardy

LONDON, Feb 28: WBC heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis' scheduled fight against Tony Tucker in Las Vegas on May 8 is in danger of being called off, according to the manager of WBA and IBF titlist Riddick Bowe, reports AP.

Rock Newman said Friday he had "first-hand knowledge" that the bout was "in very serious jeopardy."

In a one sided bout at London's Dagenham arena, Hide floored Murray four times — once each in the second, third, fourth and fifth rounds. Murray got to his feet at the count of nine after the fourth knockdown, but referee Dave Parris stepped in to stop the fight.

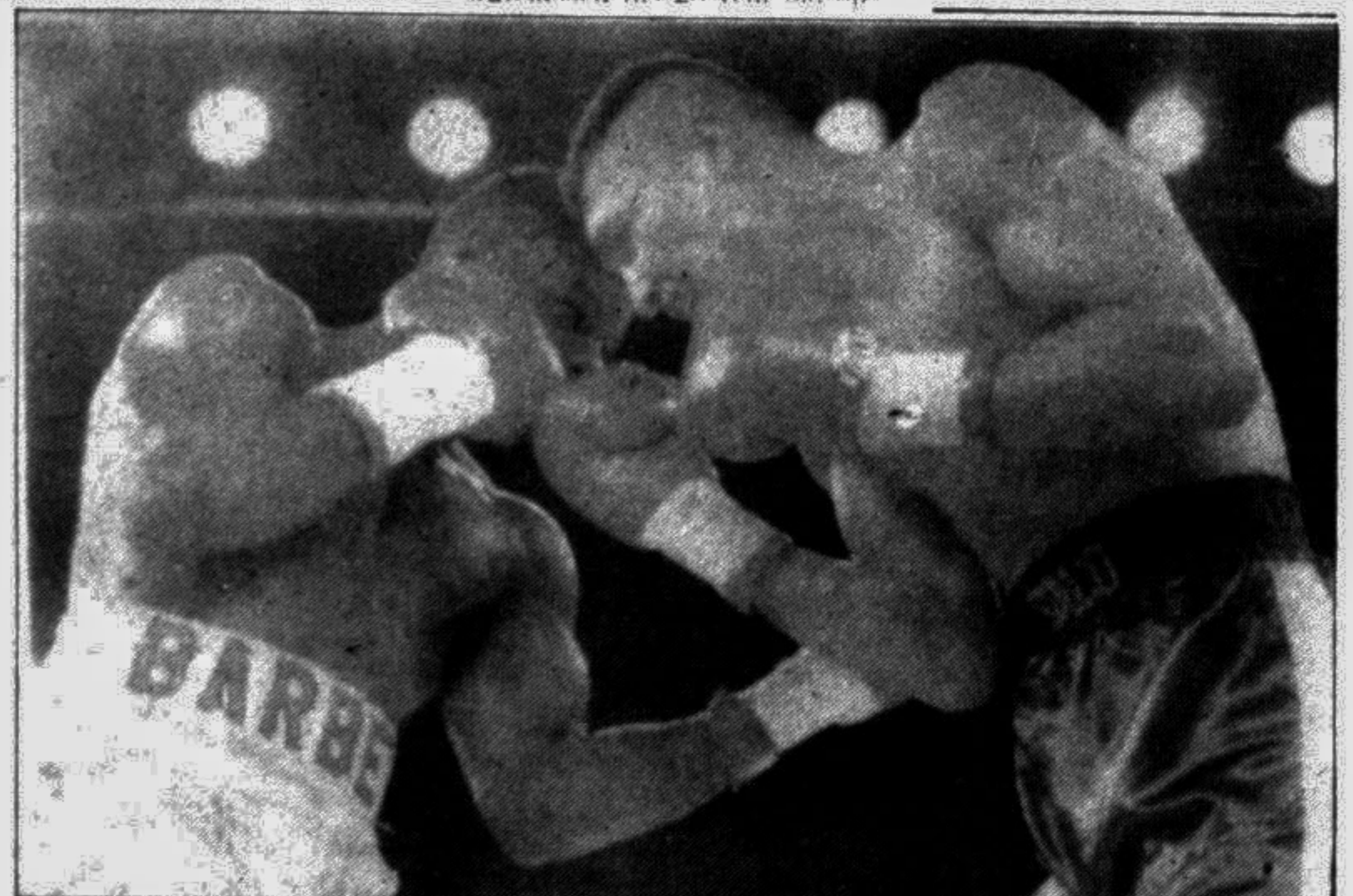
Murray was no match for Hide, who scored at will with left hooks and right crosses to extend his record to 21-0. The one time Murray seemed to land a solid punch, Hide flashed a smile in the direction of Bowe at ringside.

But afterwards, Bowe said he wasn't impressed with the fighter who is being lined up as a possible opponent in August or September.

"I would knock Herbie out in the first round," Bowe said. "I'd make Herbie pay for a lot of mistakes I saw tonight."

Hide, who was sitting next to Bowe during the interview, protested.

"When I fight for the world title I'll be twice as good," he said. "If I fight Bowe, I'd dance and make him miss."



Defending World Boxing Organisation light-heavyweight champion Leonzer Barber and challenger Mike Sedillo (R) exchange blows during the fourth round of their 12-round title bout in Beijing on Saturday. Barber retained his crown. It was the first time that China staged professional boxing since it was banned in 1959. — AFP photo

Costa, Muster in Mexico Open final

MEXICO, Feb 28: Carlos Costa of Spain defeated American Francisco Montana and Thomas Muster beat local favourite Oliver Fernandez on Saturday to reach the final of the Mexican Open, reports AP.

Costa defeated Montana 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 in 2 hours 10 minutes, winning 86 percent of his first serve points and serving 10 aces.

"I'm winning because I've been serving well," Costa said. "I fought for the match."

"He was just serving too well," Montana said. "His first serve was strong and well placed. It was difficult to return."

Muster's 6-3, 6-4 victory over Fernandez took 93 minutes, enough time the 25-year-old Austrian said to tire out his opponent.

"I was going for it in the beginning of the second set, but then my legs didn't move," Fernandez said.

The decision to allow FIFA and Europe's governing body UEFA to experiment with kick-ins for throw-ins and deciding drawn games with the first goal in extra time was taken by the International Football Association Board at its annual meeting.

The board also agreed to alter the law to allow coaching from the dug-out.

From July this year one designated coach will be permitted to issue tactics to players from the bench in a responsible manner, but will not be allowed to shout from the touchline.

The board also agreed to support FIFA's moves to order referees to enforce the four-step rule for goalkeepers, which Blatter said had become "16-step rule" in some leagues.

FIFA said they also planned to change laws next year to allow a third substitute, a goalkeeper being able to replace another goalkeeper.

FIFA's experiments with sudden death extra time and kick-ins are the latest part of their drive to speed up the game and cut down on time-wasting tactics which they believe marred the 1990 World Cup.

The board also beefed up the backpass law on Saturday to prevent players using tricks to deliberately get round the rule.

Players who try to pass back by dropping to their knees and pushing the ball back or heading it while on the ground will be booked for misconduct.

Blatter said: "I think kick-ins will give more space to the

game, especially now that team tactics mean all players are together in a short space of the pitch, this will open the game. It is not in discussion for the 1994 World Cup.

"Our society is always questioning everything today and we have to question if football is going in the right way and that is why we experiment on some laws of the game," he added.

FIFA's first major change was to ban backpasses to goalkeepers last year, which Blatter said had proved successful.

He sees the kick-in initiative not as a major change but an adaptation of the law which will add to the flow of the game.

UEFA will be first to experiment with kick-ins at their Under-16 tournament in Turkey in May, and FIFA will test them at their world Under-17 tournament in Japan in August.

Sudden death extra time will be used next month to determine drawn games in FIFA's Under-19 world youth tournament in Australia. Games still undecided after normal extra time will go to penalties, as at present.

The international board promised the new changes would not be rushed into law and would be given detailed scrutiny.

English FA chief executive Graham Kelly said: "There will be a full consultation and discussion across a full range of committees in the coming months."

FIFA's new rules okayed



LONDON, Feb 28: FIFA were given the go-ahead to experiment with kick-ins and sudden death extra time by soccer's rule-makers on Saturday, but promised neither would be introduced at next year's World Cup finals in the United States, reports Reuter.

If the two revolutionary changes are successful at youth tournaments in Australia, Japan and Turkey this year then they will be tested in a major professional league next season before possibly being enforced worldwide in 1995.

But FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter said there would be no alternations to soccer's laws for the 1994 World Cup, apart from possibly awarding three points for a win instead of two during the preliminary group round.

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Kenya's victory

NAIROBI, Feb 28: Kenya beat Guinea 2-0 (halftime 1-0) in a World Cup soccer Africa Group I qualifier on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Scorers: Henry Motego (10th minute), Patrick Nachok (87th).

Guinea qualify for tournament's second round after beating Kenya 4-0 in Conakry in first leg. Their group was reduced to only two teams.

Senegal win

DAKAR, Feb 28: Senegal beat Gabon 1-0 in a World Cup African Group G qualifier on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Scorer: Mamadou Badiane (35th).

Colombia's woe

SYDNEY, Feb 28: Colombian hopes for a good start to the World Youth Soccer Championship have been damaged by the late withdrawal of three key players, reports AP.

The team, which was met at Sydney airport Sunday by nearly 200 flag-waving and singing supporters, plays host nation Australia at the Sydney Football Stadium on Friday night in the opening match of the tournament.

Two key players were injured in the past two weeks and another player could not gain a release from his club.

The biggest worry for coach Reynaldo Rueda has been finding replacements for striker Francisco Mosquera and attacking midfielder Frank Overo, who failed fitness tests after receiving match injuries.

"They were two very important players and had been with the team during its two months together at training," said Rueda.

"But the team... is still confident of a good performance."

The Colombians have played 16 matches in the past eight weeks with a 12-2-2 record.

The 35-year-old Rueda is making his first appearance as the Colombian national coach.

Despite the tiring effects of the long flight, Rueda ordered a training session for the players within 30 minutes of arriving at the team hotel.

Fernandez has an easy ride

INDIAN WELLS, California, Feb 28: Top seed Mary Joe Fernandez had three service breaks in the first set en route to a 6-3, 6-1 semifinal victory over No 5 Helena Sukova of Czech Republic in the Evrt Cup on Saturday, reports AP.

No 4 Amanda Coetzer of South Africa defeated Stephanie Rottier of the Netherlands, 6-4, 6-3 in the other semifinal.

Fernandez led 2-0 when a forehead error by Sukova gave Fernandez a service break.

They traded service games before Fernandez led 3-2. She won the next two games to go up 5-2 before being broken at love by Sukova.

Fernandez closed out the first set 6-3 when Sukova's forehead sailed long. Fernandez, a 21-year-old from Miami ranked seventh in the world, took a 3-0 lead in the second set before wrapping up the match in 67 minutes.

"This is the best I've played all week," Fernandez said. "I never know what to expect from her. She serves and volleys and comes in and she hits short balls. I was trying to return her serve away from her, get her off position."

Fernandez faces Coetzer in Sunday's final for the \$75,000 prize.

Jarryd nips Novacek

ROTTERDAM, Feb 28: Wild card entry Anders Jarryd overpowered seventh-seeded Karel Novacek in a straight sets final victory to clinch the \$100,000 ABN-Amro tennis tournament Sunday, reports AP.

Jarryd had eight aces and five love games to beat the 19th ranked Czech 6-3, 7-5 in a 1 hour, 42 minute final in one of Europe's premier indoor competitions.

It was Jarryd's first singles title this year, after several years of descent in the ATP standings. The 31-year-old Swede had to enter the tournament as a wild card ranked at 156.

It was an exciting but nerve-racking match final, with both players diving to the corners for well-placed balls.

Jarryd fought Novacek's power play with sharp anticipation and stunningly fast volleys made possible by his top-notch athletic condition. But Novacek also had some good breaks with precision cross-court hits.

Jarryd took a quick lead with three aces propelling him to 3-1 in the first set.

Novacek broke his opponent's serve in the sixth game, but Jarryd scored two aces and saved three break points in the following game to bounce right back and win the set in nine games. Novacek's frustration showed up in his netting many serves, and in the double fault that handed Jarryd the first set.

Jarryd began the second set strong again with serving a love game and then breaking Jarryd to take a 2-0 lead.

Novacek looked set for a comeback after a three-ace love game brought the score to 6-5 in Jarryd's favour. But Jarryd gave Novacek no breathing room and served another love game to win the match.

Jarryd adds \$182,000 to his \$4,495,165 in career prize money, much of it made as one of the most successful doubles players in tennis.

The Swede's first victory in the port city tournament came after beating Wayne Ferreira, Paul Haarhuis, Goran Ivanisevic and Alexander Volkov.

It is sure to be a boost for his morale after being between twice in the final here, in 1986 and 1989.

"This is the best tennis that I've played for five or six years," Jarryd said before Sunday's final. "I've beaten three guys in the top 20. That gives me a lot of self-confidence."

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