

29: Third seed Conchita Martinez of Spain ran unseeded German Sabine Hack

ragged on Sunday to win the 375,000 Virginia Slims of Houston tennis tournament, reports Reuter.

Martinez, playing with fractured finger, scored a 6-3, 6-2 victory in one hour and 22 minutes after receiving a shot of Novocaine to numb the pain in her racket hand.

"This will help me a lot for my confidence," said Martinez, who earned 75,000 dollars for her second title of the year and will move up to seventh in the world to equal her careerbest ranking.

"The win yesterday was especially good," she said of Saturday's semifinal upset of top seed Gabriela Sabatini. "It gives you energy."

Hack also reached the final with an upset win. But instead of being energised, the German was left drained after taking more than three hours to defeat fourth seed Jana Novotna late on Saturday night.



CONCHITA MARTINEZ

"I was a little impatient, maybe a little tired mentally." admitted Hack, who had won just one match in 1993 prior to this tournament.

Martinez, a clay-court specialist, drilled 18 winners, mostly off her forehand, and wore the German out by forcing her to scramble around the court.

But the Spaniard said it took her some time to get used to Hack's heavy top spin ground strokes.

"It was difficult," said Martinez, who plans to take three weeks off to give her finger a chance to heal. "I just had to get used to

the bounce of the ball. It was really coming with a lot of topspin and it bounced different," added Martinez, who fell behind 3-1 in the first set.

When Martinez figured out how to handle Hack's topspin, the German never had a chance. Martinez ran off the next

five games to take the first set

and dominated the second as

"I'm feeling pretty good,"

she said.

Asian players not far behind



INDIAN WELLS, California, Mar 29: Riding the wave created by the continent's economic boom.

Asian tennis has emerged onto the sport's world stage, reports AFP.

Japan has been in the picture for some time, but Indonesia, China, Thailand and Taiwan are now following. The movement has not sur-

prised Keving Livesey, who left Great Britain for Hong Kong 15 years ago, coached their Federation Cup team, and is now involved in establishing women's tournaments throughout "Going back 10 years Asia

was very much a developing area," he says. "The Japanese were the first to show a determination to get themselves together in terms of tennis promotion and development."

"They began by putting money into junior events, and started the first ITF world ranking tournament called the JEL Cup. That is still there today. Now the juniors can play from January through to May every week if they want to."

Livesey identifies Japanese sports photographer Eiichi Kawatei as playing a key role in the Asian tennis explosion

'His great interest was tennis, and because he was one of the few Japanese travelling around the world who spoke English he was asked by the Japanese Tennis Federation to sit on a variety of committees,"

collapse of the Soviet Union in

1991 shattered the once-"

proud world of Soviet sport

and turned legions of formerly

elite and affluent athletes into

abroad and some have become

his free time selling Russian

caviar in Bucharest's Mazei

old does not fit the mould of a

peasant. That's because he's a

professional water polo player.

second class," said Nicula, a

former centre forward with

the Soviet national water polo

team who plays now for the

of Moldova which declared in

dependence from the Soviet

Union shortly before the em-

He came to Romania in

November 1991 'to get a little

bit more money compared to

are pensioners in Moldova.

The total monthly income for

the two of them is 6,000 rou-

what I would have in Moldova".

He told, "Both my parents

"But one kilo (2.2 pounds)

game against Hlasek 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

Nicula is from the Republic

Romanian club Dinamo.

pire's collapse.

bles (11 dollar).

Many sought their fortunes

Vyacheslav Nicula spends

The lanky, blond 23-year-

'We are viewed here as

paupers, reports Reuter.

peddlers in Romania.

Market.

said Livesey.

"lic's still a fanatical tennis



KIMIKO DATE

he set for Japan and the rest of Asia over the years has been quite phenomenal. He's now president of the Asian Tennis Federation, and he's also the ITF committee of management representative for his area."

"Japan, there's no doubt about it has been the leader in Asia, and they've done it in a very interesting way."

"They haven't really set out any junior development programme, what they've done is to set up good quality clubs who have coaches who com-

From affluence to insolvency

In the four-story grey build-

ing which is Dinamo's shoddy

headquarters. Nicula shares a

small dilapidated room with

another former member of the

Soviet team, Andrey

Christyakov signed a contract

with the club to try to solve his

financial problems and main-

to play here if it were not for

the isolation of Moldovan sport

after the collapse of the Soviet

contract we signed here in-

tain his professionalism.

Union," said Christyakov.

Like Nicula, 28-year-old

"I would never have come

"The more so, that the

Under their present con-

tract each player gets 25,000

let (50 dollar) a month plus a

"hotel room" and canteen

with them for more than 30

days a year they have to pay a

our salaries indexed according

to monthly inflation but in

spite of all our negotiating with

the club officials it has never

been done," said Christyakov.

If their wives want to be

"We thought we would have

our dignity," Nicula

of meat costs 1,000 roubles

(1.8 dollar), so I have to help

them."

Christyakov.

added

food.

room charge.

pete against each other to be the best." supporter, and the standards They've also put an enor-

mous amount of money into tournaments, and the corporate people, the sponsors, have got behind the game in a very positive way."

That money has, however, made it unnecessary for many Japanese to travel overseas, especially the men. Suzo Matsuoka is enjoying some success, but most prefer to stay at home playing on the lucrative and extensive Japanese circuit.

"We have good money tournaments in Japan, and even if you lose first round you get about 700 dollars," says Rika Hiraki, a former Japanese junior champion who is now excelling as a doubles player on the women's circuit.

"You've also got players from Thailand like Suvimol Duangchan, who won a gold medal in the South East Asia Games. There are a bunch of youngsters coming through, there must be a dozen Thai girls think are very exciting."

Kimiko Date and Naoko Sawamatsu from Japan are now solidly established, and leading those from the emerging tennis nations is Indonesia's Yayuk

"She really is a very exciting young lady," said Livescy. "Even though she's quite small at 5ft 4.5 inches the other girls can see that Yayuk is there and there's no reason they shouldn't be able to do it."

"The Romanian players

But team coach Oliviu

"Signing this discriminat-

Raducanu said: *Both players

are quite satisfied with the

contract... they signed it quite

ing contract, knowing that

Dinamo is a strong club we

thought that for us it could be

a chance to go abroad and join

states but felt ashamed all the

time. We thought more of sell-

ing our merchandise to get

some extra money instead of

small electronic consumer

goods and black Russian caviar

in 120-gram (four-ounce) pots.

dollars a pot - less than a

tenth of what it could fetch in

the west before the collapse of

the Russian caviar industry

both players, Christyakov said

warily: "I think that's enough.

When the contract expires in

March Vyacheslav and I should

go back to Moldova and play

there. At least there we shall

be surrounded by relatives and

friends."

Expressing the mood of

The goods they sell include

They sell the caviar for five

thinking about the games."

"We did visit some foreign

a western team," Nicula said.

have no such problems.

eagerly"

Sweden sweep it clean

KALMAR, Sweden, Mar 29: Sweden's Stefan Edberg and Nicklas Kulti easily won the reverse singles Sunday to give Sweden a 5-0 victory over Cuba in the Davis Cup first round match, reports AP.

World No 3 Edberg defeated Mario Tabares in straight sets 6-3, 6-2, while 19-year-old Kulti beat Juan Antonio Pino 6-4, 6-4.

Both matches were reduced to best of three sets with the outcome already decided after doubles specialist Anders Jarryd and Henrik Holm won Saturday's doubles giving Sweden an unbeatable 3-0

Sweden will meet the winner of the Spain-Holland meet in the next round in July.

Indonesia in the next round

JAKARTA, Mar 29: Suwandf beat Joseph Lizardo 6-7, 6-2, 7-5, 6-2 in the final singles Monday, giving Indonesia a 3-2 victory over the Philippines in the first round of Davis Cup Asia Qceania Zone tennis play, reports AP.

Suwandi played with an injured leg but the heat foiled Lizardo, who collapsed at the end of the match.

The Philippines' Felix Barrientos had tied the competition 2-2 earlier Monday with a 6-3, 1-6, 4-6, 7-5, 6-3 victory over Benny Widjaja in a singles match that had been suspended on Sunday with Widjaja leading two sets to one. The two teams had split

the earlier singles, with Widjaja trouncing Lizardo 6-0, 6-0, 6-2 and Barrientos beating Suwandi 6-3, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2. In the doubles, Indonesia's

Suharvadi and Bonit Wirvaan beat Robert Angelo and Barrientos 7-6, 6-1, 6-7, 4-6,

Indonesia play South Korca in the next round in May.

Czechs sail easy

COFENHAGEN, Denmark Mar 29: Favoured Czech Republic and Slovakia, playing as a unified Czechoslovakia team this season, qualified Sunday for the Davis Cup World Group quarter final by defeating underdog Denmark 4-1, reports

Karel Novacek, ranking 17th in the ATP, easily defeated Dane Frederik Fetterlein, No 282, in two straight sets 6-4, 6-4, putting the firm score to 4-1.

In Sunday's first single Denmark's top player Kenneth Carlsen, ranking 51, had though saved the honor by earning the sole Danish point when he won over 101ranked Martin Damm 7-6 (7-5), 6-4.

Friday, Novacck opened the lead by defeating Carlson 7-6 (9-7), 6-4, 6-1. Fifth-ranked ace Petr Korda gave Czechoslovakia its second point when beating Fetterlein 6-4, 6-3, 6-

In the doubles on Saturday, Korda and Cyrtl Suk gave the unified Czechoslovakia team the unbeatable 3-0 lead. They won over Danish duo Carlsen and Morten Christensen 4-6, 7-6 (7-2), 6-2, 6-2. In the next round in July,

the unified Czechoslovakia team meets Germany who defeated Russin 4 1 The matches were played at

the Aarhus Stadium, some 350 kilometers (217 nules) northwest of Copenhagen.

Kim claws his way to the main draw OSAKA, Japan, Mar 29: Kim

Bong-Soo of South Korea sur vived two tough matches here Monday to secure a berth in the maindraw of the 500,000 dollar Salem Open men's tennis tournament, reports AFP. Kim, came back from 7-8

down in the final set tie-breaker beat Christo van Rensburg of South Africa 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (10/8) earlier in the day, then notched up a 2-6, 6-1, 6-3 win over Mikael Stadling of Sweden in he qualifying rounds. It earned him a first round

encounter Tuesday with Japan's top player Shuzo Matsuoka, who brought his team to a 5-0 with over Hong Kong in the Davis Cup at weekend. Stephane Simian of France,

Doug Flach of the United States and Greg Rusedski of Canada also advanced to the first round, . while American Steve Bryan and Mark Petchey went through as lucky losers.

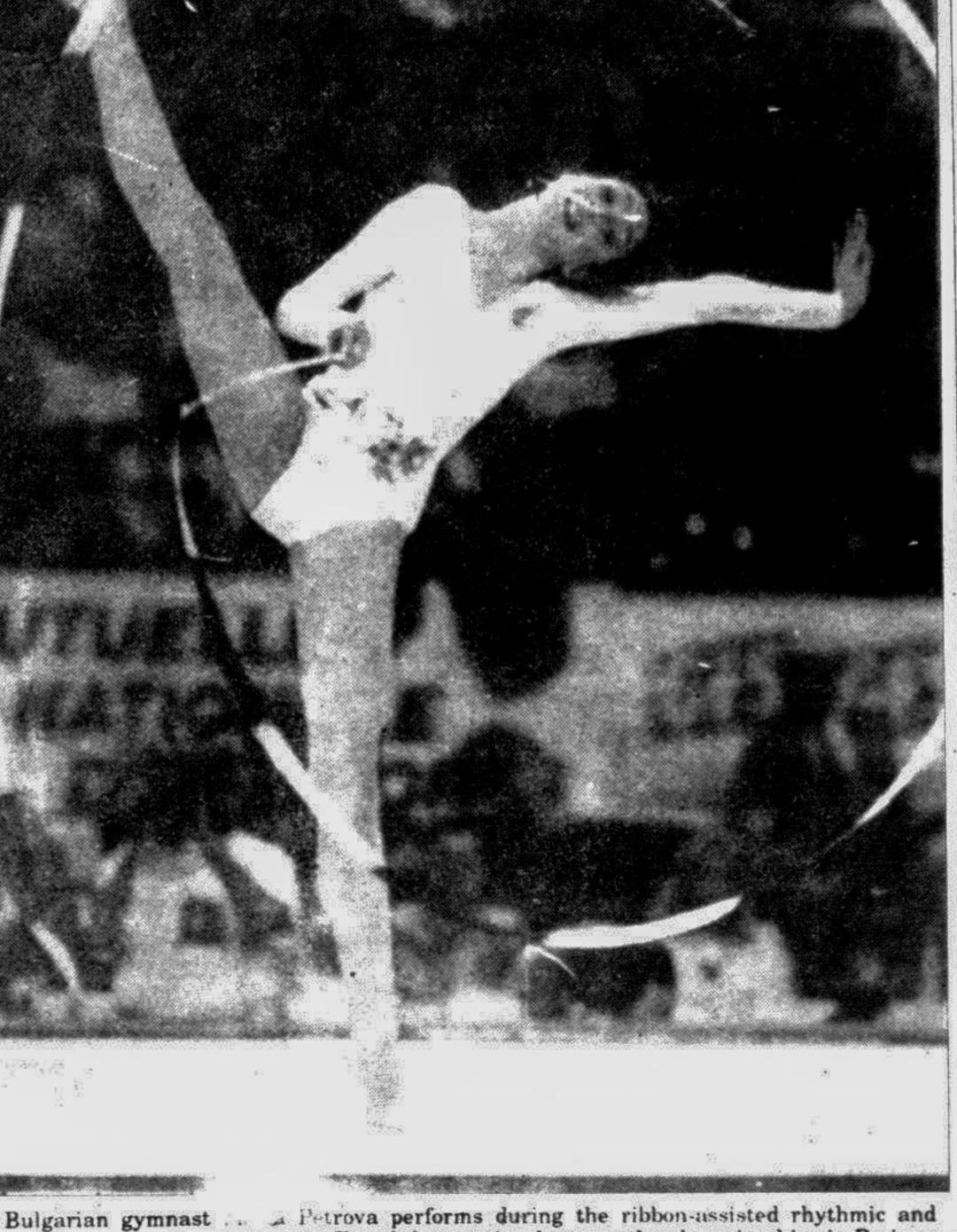
Simian downed Bryan 7 6(7/0), 6-1, and now the 82nd-ranked French man will play Christian Bergstrom of Sweden in the first round.

Top seed falls at French Open

PARIS, Mar 29: Unseeded Indonesian Hendrawan, who defeated top seed Dong Jiong of China in the third round, won the French Open badminton men's singles title on Sunday, reports Reuter. He beat Denmark's Soren

Nielsen 15-10, 14-18, 15-11 in the final. Joint third seed Yao Yan overcame top seed Ye Zhaoying 11-7, 5-11, 11-5 in the all

Chinese women's singles final.



sportive gymnastic event at the French international gymnastics championships in Paris on March 28. Petrova finished first in the event. - AFP photo

Kenya unveil another champ



tance from a lapped teammate BILBAO, Spain, Mar. 29: Individually and collectively, Kenya sounded a chi-

lling warning to the athletics world at the weekend, reports Reuter. With another World Cham-

pionships just over the horizon, the Kenyans unveiled yet another remarkable long distance talent in William Sigei, winner of the men's cross country title in the Basque town of Amorebieta on ounckly.

They then revealed they had plotted Siger's victory with the meticulous precision of a military campaign.

Things went exactly as we wanted," Kenyan chief coach Mike Kosgei reflected shortly after Sigei had headed all of his teammates across the finish line in front of twice champion Khalid Skah. The Kenyans had been

planning Skah's defeat since last year's Barcelona Olympics when the Moroccan finished as the controversial winner of the 10,000 metres. Skah was initially disquali-

fied for receiving illegal assis-,

38 Small bird

and Far

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Solution time: 24 mins.

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APO SIB SYCE

FANS CADDIE

SOCCER

but was seinstated on appeals Kenyan Richard Chelimo

was the victim on that occasion, enjoying the status of Olympic champion for less than 24 hours before being relegated to second place. .

The decision understandably angered the Kenyan team who briefly considered pulling Tout of the Olympics.

They have not forgiven Skah and if any further incentive were needed the outspoken Moroccan himself provided it shortly before Sunday's cham-

"Skah said it was going to be easy for him because (John) Ngugi was not there and Chelimo wasn't there," Cosgi

Ngugi, who has won the title a record five times, is currently suspended for refusing to take a drugs test while Chelimo was not selected.

In their absence, the Kenyans decided national champion Sigei was the man to take the title and designated Dominic Kirui and Chelimo's brother Ismael Kirui as pacemakers.

For most of the race, on a

24 "...an ---

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fast well grassed surface ideally suited to Africans, Sigel kept out of trouble in third place. We were taking care of

them," Cosgi explained. "We didn't want anybody to spike him. That was why he was running alone." Then, in the final straight,

Signi loped easily to the front to win by five seconds from Dominic Kirui with Ismael Kirui in third place.

Cosgi sees a clear resemblance between Sigei and Ngugi, the 1988 Olympic 5,000 metres champion.

"He has the longlegs. If there was mud he could manage. If it's raining Sigei could manage," Cosgi said. As Skah knows only too well

the Kenyans have employed similar tactics in the past on the tracks. Two years ago Chelimo

paced Moses Tanui to the world 10,000 metres title in Tokyo while Thomas Osano slowed down a following group which included eventual bronze medalist Skah. In the junior event 16-year-

old Gladys Ondeyo led three teamma es across the finish line in a race.

Italy make it 4-1

MODENA, Mar 29: Jaime Oncins beat Omar Camporese 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 in the first reverse singles match Sunday. earning Brazil's lone consolation victory in a 4-1 Italian win in a first-round Davis Cup World Group match, reports

Italy had cliriched the victory and a berth in the quarterfinals against Australia with a victory in Saturday's doubles that gave it an insurmountable 3-0 lead.

In Sunday's final reverse singles match, Diego Nargiso beat Cassio Motta 6-1, 6-2 to complete the rout.

Fiji edged

HONG KONG, Mar 29: Western Samoa upset defending champions and seven-time winner Fiji 14-12 Sunday and won the Cathay Pacific-Hongkong Bank Sevens Rugby tournament for the first time, reports AP. The speedy Fijians took the

lead in the first minute with a try by Sakeasi Vonolagi before a capacity crowd of 33,000 at the Hong Kong Football Stadium.

Teammate Wasale Screvi, the most popular Fijian player among Hong Kong fans because of his mazy runs, failed to convert the try. The Western Samoans, who

also upset last year's losing fi nalist New Zealand 24-14 in the semifinals, struck back three minutes laster when Alama leremia scored a try, converted by Anatelea Aiolupo.

In an thrilling but at times scrappy match, the Fijians regained the lead with a try by Mesake Rasri, converted this time by Serevi Less than two minutes be-

fore halftime, Western Samoa clinched victory when Alefaio Vaisuai scored his team's second try. It was again converted by Ailupo. Both teams battled hard for

the ball in the second half but could not add to the scoreline. The Fijians, who had won

the tournament for the last three years in a row, advanced to the final with a 17-14 victory over five-time winner Australia.

In Western Samoa's only previous trip to the final, in 1979, it lost to Australia.

Tonga beat Italy 38-28 to win the Plate event for teams that finished in second place in preliminary group competi-

Romania took the Bowls trophy with an 17-14 victory over Papua New Guinea in competition among last-place teams in preliminary play.

Other teams participating in the two-day tournament were Argentina, American Eagles, Canada, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, South Korea, Kwang-Huah Taipei, Malaysia, Namibia, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, Shri Lanka, Thailand, and the Welsh President's Seven.

Ngugi faces drug investigation

AMOREBIETA, Spain, Mar 29: Five-times world cross country champion John Ngugi faces a drugs investigation on April 7, Kenyan team manager Samsuero said here Monday, reports AFP.

Ngugi has to explain to the Kenyan Athletics Association why he refused to co-operate with IAAF drugs testers who visited him last month.

He was suspended on February 26 and now faces a four-year ban.

CRYPTOQUIP

FX OCP KCPIVM

IHB-IPEEWFTI HPMC OCP'J

XPAWFBV. MHJ Yesterday's Cryptoquip: HAM ACTOR PROBABLY HAS PROBLEMS WITH HIS TEETH SINCE HE CHEWS THE SCENERY.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: I equals G

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.

