

Sabatini races to Round 2

ROME, May 4: Gabriela Sabatini began defence of her Italian Open women's tennis title Tuesday with a 6-0, 6-2 rout of Dutch qualifier Claire Wegink, reports AP.

The No 3 seed from Argentina needed only 58 minutes to dispose of Wegink, ranked 158th in the world.

Sabatini, who has won the Italian Open four times, came into Rome without a tournament victory this year, and is battling her longest dry spell since 1986.

But her precise ground strokes, hit with heavy top spin and bouncing high on the red clay courts, and deft lobs proved too much for Wegink.

"The Roman people bring me luck," Sabatini said after receiving steady encouragement from the centre court crowd.

Sabatini said she wasn't worried about her winless streak. "I'm in good shape."

Another Dutchwoman, Brenda Schultz, had better luck, defeating the No 14 seed, Zina Garrison-Jackson of the United States, 6-4, 6-2.

Italian entries were hoping for some good luck, too.

Silvia Farina's victory over American Lori McNeil Monday didn't set off a soccer-style roar at the Foro Italico, but more a sigh of relief.

A home player had made it into the second round of the Italian Open.

It has been eight years since an Italian woman won the clay court classic, and that



GABRIELA SABATINI

was when the tournament was exiled to Taranto in southern Italy because of poor attendance. Before that, the last Italian woman to win was in 1950.

Now the fans are back and so are the big names on the tour, so Italian fans are keeping their hopes in check.

"The state of our tennis is such that reaching the third round should be considered a success. Sad, but true," said tennis commentator Rino Tommasi in La Gazzetta dello Sport, Italy's leading sports daily.

But Farina's 5-7, 6-2, 6-2

win over the 13th-seeded McNeil was not the only success for the home colours in the opening round Monday.

Elena Savoldi got through — beating another Italian.

And Francesca Bentivoglio advanced, defeating Manon Bollegraf of the Netherlands in straight sets.

Not exactly big names on the tennis circuit, but getting three players through was seen as a success for the Italian women.

Tennis experts have blamed past failures on poor organization, a lack of qualified coaches and trainers and players who don't give their all.

In her victory news conference, Farina said Italy needed an "American model" to ensure that players can reach their potentials.

Beating a seed, said Farina, "should give me the confidence to obtain better results."

One tennis commentator, at least, wasn't so down on her fellow women. "At least they do better than the Italian men," said Lea Pericoli, a former Italian champion.

No Italian man has won at the Foro Italico since Adriano Panatta accomplished the feat in 1976, the year he also won the French Open, a Grand Slam event, also played on clay.

In one surprise in opening play, Iva Majoli, a 15-year-old from Croatia, upset the 10th seed, Nathalie Tauziat of France. The tournament's top seed, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain, is not scheduled to play until Wednesday.

Forget falls to Dirk Dier

HAMBURG, Germany, May 4: An out-of-touch Guy Forget failed to advance beyond the 1st round of the German Open in Hamburg on Monday, crashing out 7-5, 7-6 (7/5) to unheard-of German qualifier, Dirk Dier, reports AFP.

The tenth seed could do nothing right and Dier, ranked 235 in the world, took full advantage of a string of unforced errors from the Frenchman to claim the biggest win of his career.

An outstanding junior who has failed to repeat his success on the senior circuit, Dier waited patiently for the breakthrough that came in the tenth game.

With the score at 5-5, a wild backhand gave Dier two break points and a mis-hit volley left Dier serving for the 1st set.

Dier broke Forget again to lead 2-1 in the second but the Frenchman broke straight back.

Forget saved set point at 4-5 with a forehand volley but he suffered the consequences of his ragged play in the tiebreak.

A netted backhand gave Dier match point, and a forehand in the net sealed his fate.

Both players attacked at every opportunity but Forget never looked comfortable on the slow clay. His usually lethal service was misfiring. Only 55 per cent of his first serves found their target and his unforced error tally of 34 was more than double his opponent's.

Austria's Thomas Muster and Switzerland's Marc Rosset, seeded 11 and 13, both went through to the next round although Muster was made to struggle for three sets by another local qualifier, Hendrik Dreckman.

Fourth seed Sergi Bruguera, beaten on clay by Stefan Edberg for the first time in Sunday's Madrid Open final, pulled out of the tournament with a right shoulder injury.

French NOC chief steps down

PARIS, May 4: Nelson Pailou, one of the most influential figures in French sports, stepped down Tuesday after 11 years as the head of the French Olympic Committee, reports AP.

He was replaced by Henri Serandour, 56, the president of the national swimming federation for the past 12 years and a vice president of the European swimming governing body.

During Pailou's tenure, France has increased in strength in several Olympic sports, notably judo and fencing, and lined up sponsors for national teams.

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Desire to win still eggs Lendl on

PARIS, May 4: American Ivan Lendl showed that he had not lost the desire to win when he clinched his 93rd career title in Hamburg on Sunday, beating Germany's Michael Stich 7-6, 6-3, reports AFP.

The 33-year old star may have slipped to number eight in the world, but he hasn't lost the burning desire to win.

Those who watched Lendl lose to the unseeded Marc Goellner in the final at Nice last month will know that defeat still hurts the ex-world number one as much as ever.

As the tricky Goellner gradually reversed Lendl's early dominance, you could almost see the dark clouds of anger and frustration descending.

You wouldn't want to have bumped into him in the dressing room.

"I've always seen like that," admitted Lendl during an interview in the French sports magazine 'L'Equipe' on Monday.

"I can't help it. Even when I play games with Marika (his three-year-old daughter), I hate letting her win. It is a problem for me."

"I've always wanted to win every game, whether the other player is better than me. When I play golf with professional players, I want to play as well as them. I can't stop myself being like that."

He still has ambitions in tennis, although he admits that in the twilight of his career he has little left to prove.

"I'd like to win one of the Grand Slam — including Wimbledon, of course, or any of the others."

"I know my chances of winning Wimbledon get smaller every year, but you never know."

Does he think of retirement?

"I'm ready for life after

to school, and then do some training."

"If I don't train in the morning, then I feel lousy for rest of the day. I need the exercise. It's like a drug."

The game has certainly changed since Lendl dominated men's tennis, winning eight Grand Slam titles and holding the number-one spot



IVAN LENDL...win matters most

for 207 weeks from 1985 to 1988.

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"It's magnificent watching Courier because of his power, the energy he transmits. In

Australia, Jim seemed totally in control. He whacks every ball, and when one lands short, it's a real massacre."

"I think that's beautiful, when the power inside someone is so strong that everyone around can see it, can feel it."

"Because of the way the game has changed, it's become much harder to stay at the top. I think that even though I'm no longer number-one, I'm probably a better player now than I was five years ago."

"But I also think that this kind of tennis could become a problem, especially for the fans. Most points are now settled in the first few shots."

Golf is likely to take up much of his time when he eventually decides to quit tennis, but Lendl will not be happy just to hack around the courses near his home in Connecticut.

"I'd like to become really good. It would require a lot of work, and would be a focus for my competitive energy. Golf would be a good transition. I'll probably take part in some club tournaments."

"I tried to enter a tournament once but I failed to qualify. But I didn't mind because it was in the middle of the US Open."

Ironically, Lendl has become a crowd favourite since he stopped winning regularly.

When he was at the top of his profession, he was never as popular as Jimmy Connors or John McEnroe. But today the fans respect his achievements and share his desire to win another Grand Slam title.

At Wimbledon, where every year he states his determination to win and every year he loses, he has become something of a cult hero.

Vail veils Seles from fans

DENVER, May 4: Monica Seles, stabbed in the back by a spectator during a tennis tournament in Germany, received a preliminary evaluation on her wound by therapists in Vail, according to a newspaper report, reports AP.

The Vail (Colo) Daily said sources close to the Steadman Hawkins Clinic at Vail Valley Medical Center confirmed that two therapists made the evaluation Monday in the tennis star's hotel room.

Seles was treated at the Steadman clinic for a stress fracture of her leg in 1991.

The clinic has a history of very tight security for its big-

name sports patients, protecting them from the media, and traditionally issuing a news release after the star's departure.

The world's No 1 woman player was attacked Friday during

ing the Citizen Cup in Hamburg. While the injury was not deemed serious, doctors say she could miss one to three months of tennis.

Seles arrived at Denver's Stapleton International Airport on Sunday, according to published and broadcast reports. Seles, 19, a native of the former Yugoslavia, lives in Sarasota, Fla.

She reportedly will be at the Steadman Hawkins Clinic at Vail Valley Medical Center, where she was treated in 1991.

Dr Lyon Steadman, the clinic administrator and son of clinic founder Dr Richard Steadman, would not disclose Seles' whereabouts. Richard Steadman was out of state Monday.

"I can't comment as to whether or not she is here, and even if she was here, because of medical responsibilities, we can't divulge any of that information," Lyon Steadman said. "It's up to the patients to decide. At Monica's agent's request, we are respecting her privacy."

A call to Seles' agent in Cleveland was not returned.

She suffered a half-inch-deep (1.25-centimeter) wound in the back that did not damage any vital organs. But doctors at Hamburg University Hospital said she appeared to be psychologically shaken.

She had come to Hamburg after a long layoff because of the flu and had not played in a tournament since Feb 21.

Hamburg police identified the man charged with stabbing Seles as Guenter P., 38, a lather operator from Nordhausen in eastern Germany. While police refused to give his last name, a Hamburg newspaper, Morgenpost, identified the assailant as Guenter Parche.

The man told police he was an avid fan of Seles' German rival, Steffi Graf, and he sought to have Graf return to No 1 in the rankings. Police said the man faces charges of attempted murder.

Seles knows now what death is

HAMBURG, May 4: Monica Seles said the knife attack on her last week was so unreal she thought she had died, reports AP.

The 19-year-old Yugoslav world number one, who was flown home to America in a private jet on Sunday, described events during the Hamburg tennis tournament last Friday.

"In the first moment I didn't realise what had happened. I couldn't breathe," Seles told the German newspaper Bild.

"The pain came when someone pressed their hand on my back. It was like a fog, somehow unreal, and I thought maybe I would die."

"I was lucky because I went down a little. To reach my towel when the knife hit me. If not, I could have been dead, or it could have damaged my spine."

"Everything is so close together, even life and death. I thought about it before, but now I know what death is."

Seles' mother Esther was often in tears over the weekend, but was grateful the incident did not end in tragedy.

"I prayed to god that he left us our daughter," she said. "I wish I could face the man who did this and ask him if he has children."

Her father Karolj was equally upset, and will now ask for extra protection for his daughter at tournament.

"There were not enough safety precautions before this happened. In future, I will put into contracts that Monica gets a bodyguard for every tournament she plays," he announced.

Bad losers

HARARE, May 4: Croatia's Goran Ivanisevic and Goran Prcic have been accused of wrecking their changing room after losing the doubles match in last weekend's Davis Cup tie here against Zimbabwe, reports AP.

The incident allegedly occurred after Sunday's match in the Euro-African zone Group One second round tie.

City council official Lovemore Malunga told The Herald newspaper on Tuesday that these guys went berserk. They broke the shower pipes and smashed soft drink bottles against the walls. The whole changing room was in a mess.

The paper accompanied its report with pictures of the wrecked room.

Tennis Association of Zimbabwe president Paul Chingoka confirmed receiving a report about the damage and said the match referee, Andreu Pedro of Spain had been informed and would investigate.

The allegations were denied though by Sadan Ivanisevic, vice-chairman of the Croatian Tennis Association.

"What you are telling me today is news to us," he said.

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Action from the BGIC fourth schools kabaddi tournament match between Gandaria High and Haider Ali High at the Outer Stadium yesterday. Gandaria High won the tie 36-13. — Star photo

Espana's first title defence

BELFAST, Northern Ireland, May 4: Unbeaten Crisanto Espana, a Venezuelan who fights out of Belfast, plans to make full use of his 74-inch (1.87m) reach when he makes his first defence of the World Boxing Association welterweight title against Panamanian left-hander Rodolfo Aguilar Wednesday, reports AP.

Espana, who took the title from Meldrick Taylor in London October 31, faces a taller, more experienced opponent, who is a replacement for Texan fighter David Gonzales.

Espana's superior reach enabled him to outgun Taylor, who was stopped in eight rounds after he was unable to land any of his big punches.

It also should help him do some damage to Aguilar, a lanky opponent who is 33-4-2.

Schools kabaddi Sports Reporter

Gandaria High School crushed Haider Ali High School 36-13 in the BGIC fourth schools kabaddi competition at the Outer Stadium yesterday.

The winners, who acquired three lonas, led the keenly contested first half 4-3.

In the other match of the day Maniknagar Govt Primary School narrowly beat Notre Dame School 15-13.

The first half score was 2-2.

The only lona of the match went to the winners.

Bangladesh Rifles Public School and College meet Kamalapur High School while Dweepshikha School take on Wari High School in today's matches.

Waldner envisages rare feat

GOTHENBURG, Sweden, May 4: Sweden's Jan-Ove Waldner is attempting to become the first-ever holder of the Olympic and world singles titles later this month, reports AFP.

Waldner, 27, already holds the Olympic title after a straight-sets victory over Jean-Philippe Gattien of France in Barcelona last year.

And he will have the backing of his home crowd in Gothenburg, Sweden, during the World Championships from May 11-23 when he tries to win back the title he held four years ago.

As talented as John McEnroe, as deceptive as a con-man, and with a forehand as powerful as a Joe Louis punch, the smart money will be on Waldner.

Former world number-one Gattien, recently deposed by Waldner, was left helpless in the Olympic final by Waldner's accurate blocking returns.

Waldner claimed after that performance: "That was the best I have ever played — including my World Championship victory. But I would love to go on adding the world title to my Olympic crown."

If "big match" experience were the criteria to become world champion, Waldner might just as well take the gold medal home right now.

He appeared in his first European Under-14 final in Poznan, Poland in 1980, against compatriot Jorgen Persson, to spark off an intense "trial" rivalry which has endured more than a decade.

Waldner won the European

junior titles from 1981-83, and even reached the final of the European senior championships before losing in four sets to three-times winner Mikael Appelgren in 1982.

He has appeared in the last three world finals, in 1987, when he lost to Jiang Jialiang

class had no answer in that Olympic final.

Waldner was the pioneer of the "behind the back" service which bamboozled opponents in the early 80s.

He positioned himself so that opponents could not see the ball at the moment of impact. This meant they could only guess whether topspin, sidespin, or backspin had been served.

Many copied his style, and the service was becoming so effective, it was banned after the 1985 World Championships.

Like Romanian tennis star Ilie Nastase of the 60s or 70s, his talent is both obvious to the sporting layman, and at times aesthetic.

Many believe that on sheer talent, he is the greatest player ever.

Perhaps the Chinese may have something to say about that. But even Chuang Tse Tung, world champion in 1961, 1963 and 1965, did not have the inborn ability of Waldner to hit a tiny celluloid ball over a 9 ft by 5 ft table.

And the only double winners since then, China's Guo Yuchua, who won in 1981 and 1982, and Jiang Jialiang, who won the next two years, had nowhere near his natural flair.

He was born at a time in table tennis history when the domination of Japan and China from the 50s to the mid-80s, was wrested from their grasp by Sweden.

Few players can hit with such power and spin on either wing, serve with such deception, and can vary and change tactics in the middle of a rally.



JAN OVE WALDNER

of China, before beating Persson for the title in 1989. Persson got his revenge in 1991.

Gothenburg was also the setting of the championships in 1985 when Waldner lost early to a lowly world-ranked Japanese player. He will relish the chance to make amends in front of his home crowd this time.

Anyone who has played against Waldner has to deal with his treacherously deceptive serves which are about as returnable as a perfect wine in a restaurant.

Even a player of Gattien's

Turkey seeks S Arabia's help for Games bid

RIYADH, May 4: Turkey on Monday sought the support of Saudi Arabia in its bid to host the Summer Olympic Games in the year 2000, reports AP.

Turkish Ambassador Ali Tuysan presented to Prince Faisal bin Fahd, president of the Youth Welfare and Saudi Olympic Committee, the "official bid document of Istanbul for the Olympic Games to be held in 2000," the embassy said.

The proposed dates for the games are July 15-30, 2000.

Saudi Arabia is influential in Arab and Islamic ranks and has close contacts with key capitals internationally.

The embassy statement noted that Istanbul is the only city in the world built on two continents — Europe and Asia. It said at present, Istanbul had 322 hotels providing 44,902 beds and by the mid-1990s would have another 133 hotels and total bed capacity of 68,500.

The climate in the Turkish city was similar to north Italy and the mid-Atlantic cities of the eastern United States, and telecommunications facilities were up to date, the statement said.

The Olympic Park will be built at the foothills of the Balkan mountains, and the proposed site for the Olympic village is an existing housing development of 40,000 apartments near Lake Kucukcekmece.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 The present time?

5 Pen's mate

8 Wash place?

12 Post-bout garb

13 Tint loudly

14 Crocus or gladiolus

15 Vicinity

16 Raw rock

17 National park in Utah

18 Cowardly

20 Baffle

22 Tackle's teammate

23 Hope-Crosby Road destination

24 "The Grapes of Wrath" surname

27 High station

32 Hole-making tool

33 Nancy's man

34 Arctic diver

35 Free

38 Locale for

dangling instrument

39 Stan Getz' instrument

40 Springsteen's birthplace?

42 Slips

45 Wept

49 "Step — I" (go faster)

50 Say it's OK

52 Incite

53 "— in Love with Amy"

54 Stick figure?

55 English tragedian

56 Juror, theoretically

57 Twisted water, e.g.

58 "— Temple"

Solution time: 23 mins.

10 String instrument

11 A slave to

19 Running vessel

21 Grecian

24 Jostle

25 Have bills

26 Myrtle derivative

28 Curly's pal

29 Trade concotions

30 Prop for Minnesota Fats

31 Supplement, with "out"

36 Egg day

37 Tin Man's handful

38 No alternative?

41 Very

42 Aerobic maneuver

43 Mrs. Lindbergh

44 Tortoise-like

46 British gun

47 "Zounds"

48 Just say no

51 Mess up

DOWN

1 The picture of health?

2 "Mondo Cane" theme

3 Magwitch of "Great Expectations"

4 Irreversible

5 Seafood concotions

6 Shared by us

7 Traffic noise

8 Ms. Borden

9 Gold-water, e.g.

10 String instrument

11 A slave to

19 Running vessel

21 Grecian

24 Jostle

25 Have bills

26 Myrtle derivative

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51 Mess up

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12					13				14		
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53					54				55		
56					57				58		

CRYPTOQUIP

MNK GMTITHZI XHNXHDI

SHX XCMAIJ XM SI'KI

X'IIRYJD CGI TYXXYJD

A Y J R

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: HE RUNS THE BEST POPULAR SALOON, BAR NONE.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: T equals M

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.