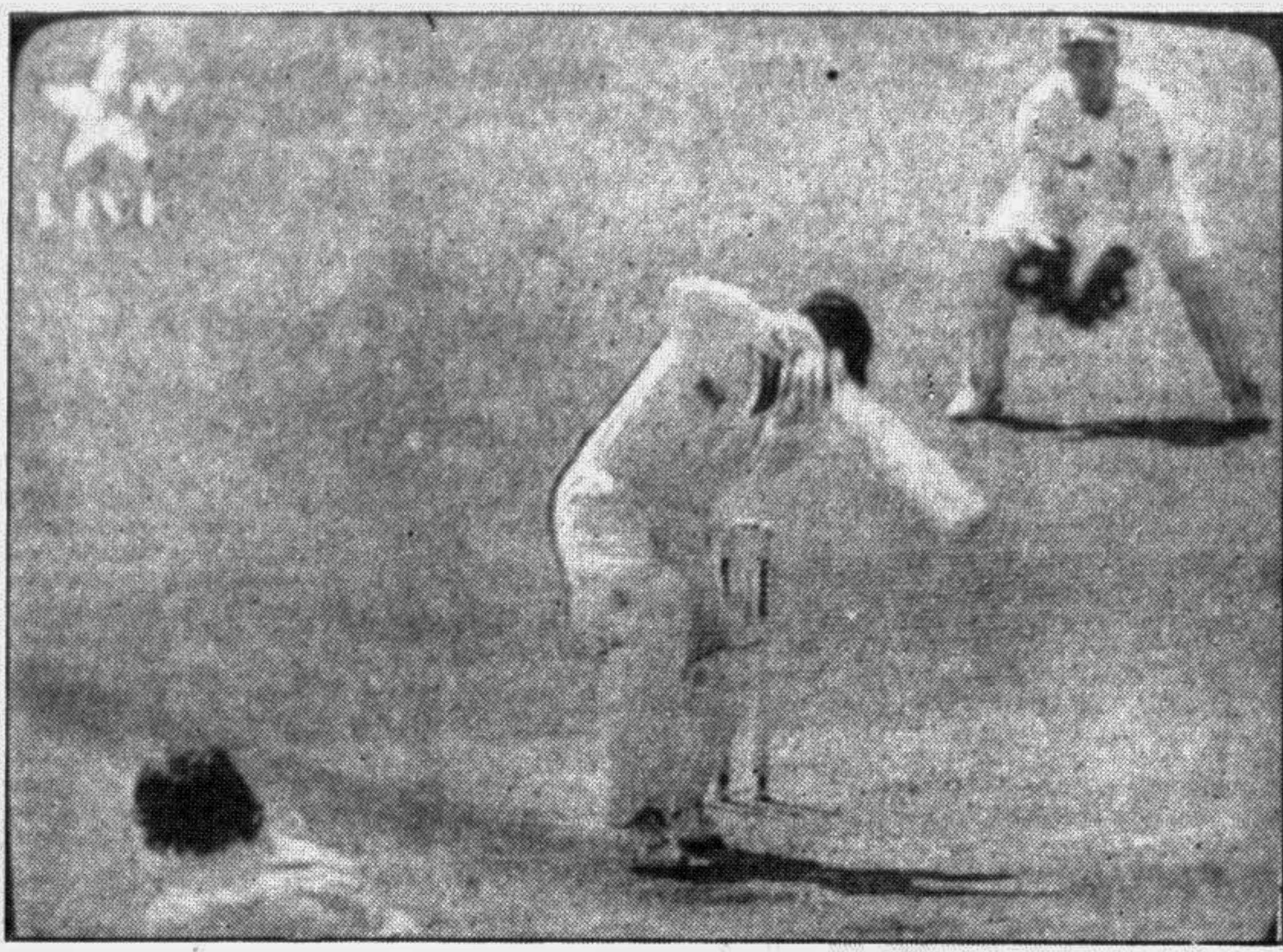


Sport



Stand-in Australian captain Mark Taylor edges one from England allrounder Dermot Reeve into the gloves of wicket-keeper Alec Stewart during the third and final one-day at Lord's yesterday. Taylor, deputising for Allan Border, made 57. — Star TV photo

World Team Cup goes to US

DUESSELDORF, Germany, May 23: The US team defeated Germany 2-0 Sunday on singles wins by Pete Sampras and Michael Chang, winning a record fourth title in the 1.75 million World Team Cup, reports AP. A doubles match was being played later Sunday, but the two singles victories secured the title for the United States. Playing on the center court, Sampras eliminated Michael Stich in 71 minutes, 6-4, 6-2. French Open winner Chang had a greater struggle with Carl-Uwe Steeb, defeating his German opponent 6-3, 7-6 (7-5) in precisely two hours. Germany team captain Niki Pilic was disappointed with Steeb's loss. "Even if you are leading 5-2 in a tie-break, when you make three faults you can't win," Pilic said. German Open winner Stich and Sampras, a serve-and-volley specialist, played equally well in their first set. The 21-year-old Sampras kept Stich busy with a blazing forehand.

Bowe ends Ferguson's fairy tale

WASHINGTON, May 23: It was almost midnight when Riddick Bowe started his defence of the heavyweight title against Jesse Ferguson, but the champion didn't come close to letting the fight go into Sunday morning, reports AP. Bowe knocked Ferguson down with a crushing left-right combination late in the first round. The 36-year-old challenger struggled up at nine and the round was over. A bell cannot save a fallen fighter. Bowe charged out at the beginning of the second round and floored Ferguson with a six-punch barrage. Referee Larry Hazzard started to count, but stopped the fight when it became obvious that Ferguson couldn't continue. The end came at 17 seconds of the second round. "By no means am I taking Jesse Ferguson lightly," the 25-year-old Bowe said before the fight. "This is his last chance." Ferguson never had a chance as he lost for the fifth time in his last seven fights and the 10th time in his 29-bout career. Ferguson landed just 19 punches in the 3 minutes, 17 seconds of action, while Bowe landed 65. Bowe now has needed less than 6 minutes to defend the title twice. In his first defence, he stopped Michael Dokes at 2:19 of the first round on Feb. 6 at Madison Square Garden in New York. On that card, Ferguson upset Ray Mercer on a 10-round decision to get the title shot that was supposed to have been Mercer's. So it was Ferguson, not Mercer, who climbed in with Bowe on a cool Saturday night before about 9,000 in 55,000-seat RFK Stadium. It was this city's first championship fight since Joe Louis beat Buddy Baer on May 23, 1941, at old Griffith Stadium. Ferguson had supplemented his income during his checkered career by sparring with

the likes of Mike Tyson and Lennox Lewis. And that's exactly how Bowe treated him — like a sparring partner. The 6-foot-5 (1.96-meter) champion, who weighed 244 pounds (111 kilos), 20 (nine

first-round knockout. He landed a thunderous left-right combination to Ferguson's head, and draped the challenger across the lower strand of the ropes. Ferguson then rolled over and



Heavyweight champion American Riddick Bowe celebrates his victory over compatriot Jesse Ferguson, who was knocked out at the start of the second round, to retain his International Boxing Federation (IBF) and World Boxing Association (WBA) heavyweight titles in Washington on May 22. — AFP photo

Bowe was on top of him before the clang of the bell died to open round 2, and Ferguson was the champion's 29th KO victim. Bowe is 34-0. Bowe earned \$7 million for the defence of the IBF and WBA titles. Lewis, a Briton, is recognized as champion by the WBC because Bowe wouldn't meet that organization's deadline for signing for a defence against Lewis. "I'm a great man with a championship," Bowe said. "Lennox Lewis is a bogus champion." Bowe's legendary 81-year-old trainer, Eddie Futch, said he was pleased with what his fighter showed him. "Every fight he is learning, he led with the upper-cut and followed with the hook." Havig disposed of Dokes and Ferguson, Bowe will now face renewed calls to take on a challenger with more convincing credentials, such as Holyfield or World Boxing Council (WBC) heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis of Britain. "I don't care who it is," Bowe said. "Let all fighters come to big daddy." Bowe's manager, Rock Newman, said the tantalising bout with Lewis, who beat Bowe at the Seoul Olympics, was still possible. "We offer Lewis 12 million (dollars)," Newman said. "We don't think their man can win." While Bowe looked ahead, Ferguson could only wonder what-if. He started the fight in the best shape of his life, weighing in at 224 pounds, but when his big chance came, he could do nothing with it. Ferguson, of Philadelphia, earned \$500,000, more than 10 times his previous biggest purse. The fight also will go into the record books as the first heavyweight title fight to be judged by three women. They were Patricia Jarman of Las Vegas, Jean Williams of Atlantic City and Sheila Harmon-Martin of Washington.

French Open begins today

A lot will be missed at Roland Garros

PARIS, May 23: No Monica. No Andre. No Jimbo or Mac. The French Open is missing them all this year, leaving the Grand Slam event short on personality, controversy and drama, reports AP. Sure, most of the top players will be here when the \$1.8 million clay-court classic opens Monday at Roland Garros. The favourites will be Jim Courier, aiming for his third straight men's title, and Steffi Graf, going for her third career women's championship. Both are worthy, respected champions. But the French Open, and tennis in general, has been hit by the loss of some marquee names, crowd-

inspiring stars and compelling rivalries. Heading the absentee list is Monica Seles, who was stabbed in the back during a match in Hamburg last month and was forced to withdraw from both the French Open and Wimbledon. Seles has won the French the past three years and captured a total of eight Grand Slam titles, including the Australian Open in January. "She'll definitely be missed," said Graf, who replaces Seles as the top seed. "Because of who she is and the way she plays we wanted her to be there." The German assailant who attacked Seles told police he wanted to help Graf regain the No. 1 ranking — and that is expected to happen in

Paris or at Wimbledon as long as Graf doesn't lose in the early rounds. Seles stabbing has prompted French Open officials to reinforce security. Spectators will be searched entering the grounds and bodyguards will be posted near the players' chairs. But officials said the measures will be discreet. "We're not going to turn the stadium into an armed camp," said assistant tournament director Herve Dutreil. "The tournament is, above all, a great festival of tennis." The party will go on without Andre Agassi, who pulled out this week with tendinitis in his right wrist — an injury that could also keep the two-time French finalist and crowd

favourite from defending his Wimbledon title next month. The fans also will miss John McEnroe and Jimmy Connors, who lost in the first round last year and have more or less retired. Connors and McEnroe were crowd favourites at Paris despite never counting the French Open among the 15 Grand Slam titles they won between them. That's not quite the case yet with Courier, who assumes a no-nonsense approach on court and an aloof posture off it. Some might call him boring or arrogant, but no one can question his fitness, intensity and mental toughness. Courier lost only one set last year in Paris, beating Petr Korda in straight sets in one-sided final and delighting the crowd by accepting the trophy with a speech in French. He starts as the overwhelming favourite again this year, bidding to join Bjorn Borg as the only players of the Open era to win the French three years in a row. "It's no guarantee I'm going to do great at the French, but if I had to pick a way to get ready, this would be it," Courier said after pouncing Goran Ivanisevic 6-1, 6-2, 6-2, in the Italian Open final last Sunday. Pete Sampras has replaced Courier atop the rankings, but will need something extra to dethrone Courier at Roland Garros. More comfortable on fast surfaces, he looked sharp on clay in Rome until he was blasted off the court by Ivanisevic in the semifinals. Sampras has pretty strokes, a big serve and the talent to win on any surface. But, between points his harried look and stooped posture don't exactly project an aura of invincibility. He admits that he tends to get down on himself when he falls behind. "Courier is the type who gets tougher if he loses the first set," Sampras said. "I guess we have different personalities. Sometimes I get a little bit discouraged. It affects my tennis. I've always had a problem with that. It's something I've been working on." No matter how hard he works, Boris Becker never seems to master clay. He has won all Grand Slam titles except the French and this year has failed to get past the third round of any clay-court event. "The fact is that I'm not one of the greatest players on clay," the three-time Wimbledon Champion said. "It's been like that for nine years and it's not going to change." The French is also the only major title to elude Stefan Edberg, but he appears a more legitimate threat than Becker. The Swede reached the final here in 1989 and won a clay-court event in Spain this spring. Michael Chang who beat Edberg for the title four years ago at 17, has failed to win a clay-court title since. But he played well in reaching the semifinals in Rome. Other top contenders include three-time champion Ivan Lendl; Korda who surprised everyone by making the final last year but has installed himself as No. 5 in the world; Ivanisevic, back in form after recovering from injuries; 18-year-old Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev, winner of two clay-court events this year; and Sergi Bruguera, a prototype clay-courtier from Spain. On the women's side due to a lack of depth, the tournament isn't expected to get interesting until the late rounds. With Seles out, Graf becomes the natural favourite to win her 12th Grand Slam title. She is coming off a three-set victory over Gabriela Sabatini in the German Open.

For Noah, it's a distant memory

PARIS, May 23: Ten years later, the images are still fresh in the minds of French tennis fans: Yannick Noah dropping to his knees after beating Mats Wilander in the French Open final, then jumping into the arms of his father Zachariah, reports AP. Noah refuses to be nostalgic about the anniversary of an exploit that helped define French sporting pride. He admits that once he had the champion's trophy in his grasp his ambition wavered, his competitive focus blurred. "The title didn't bring the deep happiness I'd dreamed about," Noah said in an interview. "My attitude changed then. I floated free. I no longer lived like an athlete so my form went up and down. "Occasionally, pride pushed

me to train harder. Or criticism stung and I'd grind out the practice-sessions. The competitive urge was there but performance was no longer my main priority. "Before 1983, only results counted. Afterwards, I realized the public was part of my life and tennis became just a game again." Now 33, after a triumphant detour as French Davis Cup captain, Noah is pursuing a singing career and hopes the public will remain part of his life. Fans rushed to buy his first record "Saga Africa" which sold over 700,000 copies. But sales of "Urban Tribe" ("Big City Tribe"), his funky, rap-influenced follow-up are sluggish. "The public still have the image of Noah the tennis champion," he said. "Suddenly a different picture flashes up on the screen. It needs subtitles and I'm the only person who can write them. I'll take time. I hope to get the show on the road in Europe this autumn. A successful tour could change everything." Noah isn't interested in comparing his two careers but admits he feels the same "gut-churning nervousness" that he experienced as a tennis player. "The deep-breathing and relaxation drills I used in tennis have proved useful recently," he said. Noah stresses the strength he draws from the examples of Bob Marley and Arthur Ashe. Will Yannick Noah revisit Roland Garros stadium during this year's tournament?



Disappointment for Bologna fans

BOLOGNA, Italy, May 23: Unseeded Spaniard Jordi Burillo and fourth-seeded Russian Andrei Cherkasov each beat Italian opponents Saturday to advance to the finals of the \$1.3 million Muratti Time International, reports AP. Burillo had an easy 6-1, 7-5 victory over Claudio Pistolesi, while Cherkasov defeated Italy's No. 1 player, Omar Camporese, 7-6 (7-4), 6-1 in a night match.



Women's world champion South Korean Hyun Jung-Hwa shows her trophy after she beat Taiwanese Chen Jing, 3-0 (20-16, 21-15 and 21-14), in the singles finals of the World Table Tennis Championships in Gothenburg on May 22. — AFP photo

Europe looks up at Ivanisevic

PARIS, May 23: European hopes of ending the continent's bleakest spell in more than two decades at the French Open starting on Monday may rest on the shoulders of the unpredictable Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia, reports Reuters. No European has won the men's singles since Sweden's Mats Wilander triumphed in 1988 and with American Jim Courier hot favourite for his third successive crown, it will take something special to stop the non-European trend. The 21-year-old from Split is certainly something special and there are signs that he is beginning to put behind him the erratic excesses of youth to approach tennis maturity. The only player to take a set off Courier last year at Roland Garros, Ivanisevic has become much more consistent of late and could be ready to make his best challenge yet. Europe badly needs a winner after years in which it was perceived wisdom that the continent's plethora of clay court specialists virtually guaranteed success in Paris. Of the 19 men's singles finals played from 1970 to 1988, Europeans won 18, only Argentinian's Guillermo Vilas

breaking the monopoly in 1977. The longstanding theory that Americans did not have the clay background to make the grade at the French was



broken in 1989 when Michael Chang ended a 34-year spell without success. But the American continent has now taken over, Andres Gomez of Ecuador winning in

1990 and Courier taking the last two titles. Worse still for the Europeans, Petr Korda of the Czech Republic was the continent's only player to reach the final in last three years — and he took only eight games off Courier in last year's showpiece. Ivanisevic, losing finalist at Wimbledon last year to American Andre Agassi, showed a return to form after early season injury problems when he reached the final of the Italian Open in Rome this month — though he was crushed in straight sets by Courier. The tall, big-hitting Croat believes he has the weapons to do well in Paris. "People think I'm just a machine for making aces but I work very hard at all my strokes," he said. "I had a chance to win Roland Garros last year because I was up in the fourth set against Courier in the quarter final and he was getting nervous. If I'd won that, we would have gone to a fifth and he's not always at his best in fifth sets. "When I concentrate, I can play very well on clay. I can stay on the baseline like the specialists and run all day. I may be 'all but I move around the court well."

Martin wins squash title

TOKYO, May 23: World number one Michelle Martin crushed English champion Cassie Jackman in just 39 minutes in the final of the super squash tournament on Sunday, reports Reuters. "Cassie can hit you off the court if you let her into the match," conceded the Australian after her 9-3, 9-7, 9-7 victory. "The game play was to keep the pressure on from the first rally and give her nothing to work with." The plan worked to perfection. Martin raced to an 8-0 lead in the first game and it took a marginal penalty stroke in the backhand court to give fifth-seeded Jackman her first point. "I started so sluggishly," Jackman admitted. "I might have got into the match if I had pushed the second game when I was 7-4 down." But Martin was determined to add this richest prize on the women's world tour to the Canadian Guernsey and British Open titles she has won since world champion Susan Devoy retired in October. She finished the second game with two perfect volley shots and came back from 4-3 down in the third to force Jackman into vital unforced errors from 7-7.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid and clues. ACROSS 32 Greasy 51 Basks in partner 1 Charles or Lady 34 Dis-mounted 13 Central part 5 Mortar 35 Forearm bone 1 Baby's perch 19 Hill-builders 8 — the scenery (ham it up) 37 Scottish seaport 2 Biblical lion 20 Health resort 12 Telephone number 40 Suburban street 3 Sorority-house 21 Stinger 22 Jai — 23 Eyelashes 25 Fruit stone 26 Spanish surrealist 14 "Honey-suckle" (29 song) 41 Designer Cassini Week or Writ 27 Of the ear 29 Give the once-over 15 Places for stray animals 42 Cash for incidentals 7 Intended 31 Dijon season 8 Russian peninsula 33 Pokes gently 16 Jot 17 It follows small or fish 48 Broker's client 10 Italian noble house 34 Not quite 36 Singing and dancing girl 18 Meddle with 49 Baseball's Slaughter 11 Tear's 37 Kansas senator 38 — Bator 39 Verne's captain 24 — "Fire" (Nabokov book) 43 Daughter of Cadmus 44 Acid once used in detergents 45 Geologist's time period 29 Bands on shields 46 Many mos., possibly 30 Had a snack

Cryptogram puzzle grid. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51

CRYPTOQUIP H C M N K B H K C U , H A A C G I O K Y Z D I B A H U I K X H K I J M S I H C Y J D E A N O X H J Z S Y E G I X. Saturday's Cryptogram: THE BASEBALL MANAGERS' MEETING IS A COLOSSAL HIT — SCORES ATTENDED. Today's Cryptogram clue: B equals P The Cryptogram 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.