

Seeds stay firm for greater glory



WIMBLEDON, England, June 26: Boris Becker and Andre Agassi survived second-set stumbles as the major players stayed on course for greater glory at Wimbledon on Friday, reports Reuter.

Becker continued to demonstrate the ominous increase in form and confidence that he hopes will bring him a fourth Wimbledon title as he subdued close friend Jakob Hlasek of Switzerland 6-3, 3-6, 6-2, 6-3 to reach the last 16.

Then he joined the growing ranks of players who say they have no objection if Agassi bathes in the Wimbledon spotlight.

"I think I'll have to cut some hair off my chest and then I'll get the same attention. But that's fine with me," he said in reference to Agassi's earlier disclosure that he has done just that.

Agassi, the holder, lost the second set through little fault of his own before rolling remorselessly past Australian Patrick Rafter 6-1, 6-7, 6-0, 6-3, winning nine games in a row in the third and fourth sets of their third round match.

Later he dealt ruthlessly with the reporter who quizzed him on his thoracic hair on Wednesday and who said on Friday he thought Agassi owed a further explanation.

"Somewhere along the line I gave the impression I care what you think?" Agassi asked. And when the reporter admitted going to Agassi's rented house, Agassi said calmly: "Don't do that any more, please."

In the women's singles, top seed Steffi Graf played at a level that might leave even Martina Navratilova, her only serious rival for the title, with little chance of success should they meet as expected in the final.

Graf whitewashed hapless Canadian Helen Kelesi 6-0, 6-0 in just 34 minutes, four minutes fewer than she took in a similar shut-out of Australian Kirrily Sharpe in the opening round.

The only seed beaten in either singles on day five of the championships was women's

ing through 6-4, 6-1, 6-1 while German Michael Stich, the sixth seed who won at Queen's two weeks ago, beat Christo van Rensburg of South Africa 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.



Former Wimbledon tennis champion world number five Michael Stich of Germany makes a backhand return in the third-round match of the men's singles against Christo van Rensburg of South Africa on Court 2 at the Wimbledon tennis championships on June 25. Stich won 6-3, 6-4, 6-4. — AFP photo

But Stich could have problems in Monday's fourth round against Czech 11th seed Petr Korda, who put out tough American Derrick Rostagno by the same score. Korda holds a 5-1 life-time edge over 1991 Wimbledon champion Stich.

Agassi can also look ahead to an uncomfortable time on Monday against Dutch giant Richard Krajicek, the ninth seed who advanced with a 6-2, 7-5, 5-7, 6-2 win over Italian

Chicago Bulls basketball cap — "Because I admire Michael Jordan very much," he said — used to train a lot with Hlasek when they both worked with Guenter Bosh.

game and like the lay-off doesn't have an impact on me any more."

Britain's much maligned men's squad put a player into the fourth round for the second straight year — Jeremy Bates managed it in 1992 — when Andrew Foster advanced past Russian Andrei Olhovskiy, who withdrew through illness at 6-3, 6-5 down.

Graf could not recall achieving two shut-outs — spectacles (0-0) in tennis parlance — at any major championship in the past.

She was not inclined to show Kelesi any mercy. "I wish she had played better because I know she can play better. But I think it's wrong to lose a few games just to make the score look better," she said.

"I feel very good," added Graf, who had a foot injury last week.

Seventh seed Jennifer Capriati stood at one set-all against Brenda Schultz after the Dutch woman played an outstanding game to break the American to love and win the second set. But Capriati blew her away in the decider to win 7-5, 4-6, 6-2.

Schultz won the first game of the final set but then Capriati took a break to attend to a blistered foot.

Waiting for the resumption, Schultz lost her rhythm completely and Capriati won the next five games.

Stich has no sympathy for neo-Nazis

WIMBLEDON, England, June 26: Former Wimbledon champion Michael Stich denied on Friday he had any sympathy with neo-Nazis in his native Germany, reports Reuter.

"I do not sympathise at all with those people and I never did. I'm never going to," he told a news conference after beating South African Christo van Rensburg in the third round of the championship.

Stich was replying to questions concerning an interview he gave to German Playboy magazine, which implied he had extreme right wing sympathies. "There are things in there written in the wrong way ... that I never said," the 24-year-old sixth seed said.

"What they (neo-Nazis) do is completely wrong and it's totally bad ... I don't know why they do it."

Stich, who beat Van Rensburg 6-3, 6-4, 6-4, declined to reveal his true political beliefs.

Williams dies

SAN FRANCISCO, California, June 26: Archie Williams, a black athlete whose Olympic 400m victory helped thwart Hitler's bid to use the 1936 Games as Aryan propaganda, has died at the age of 78, reports AFP.

Williams won the 400m in 46.5 seconds at the 1936 Games in Berlin, though nearly all of the attention went to his teammate Jesse Owens, who won three golds.

Much was made of Hitler's refusal to acknowledge Owens, but in a 1981 newspaper interview Williams recalled that the United States in the same era offered few opportunities to blacks.

"As I recall, when I came back home ... people asked me, 'How did those dirty Nazis treat you?' to which I always replied, 'Well, over there at least we didn't have to ride in the back of the bus.'"

He also said he felt the German people were more curious about, than hostile toward, black athletes.

"I think they wanted to see if the black would come off if they rubbed our skin," he said. "Jesse Owens might have been snubbed by Hitler, but he was a hero in the eyes of the Germans. They followed him around the streets like he was the Pied Piper."

Williams received his degree in mechanical engineering in 1939, but the limited opportunities for blacks in the profession forced him briefly to take a job of digging ditches.

"I remember him telling me that he couldn't get a job when he finished his engineering degree," said Vesta Williams, his wife of 50 years. "It was racism ... they weren't hiring black engineers."

Later Williams earned a pilot's licence and for 22 years he trained pilots at the Tuskegee Institute and in the army air corps.

While in the military he studied meteorology and aeronautical engineering.

At the age of 55 he started teaching maths and computer science in a California high school. He retired from teaching in 1986 and took up flying again as co-owner of Blue Sky Advertising.



American David Wheaton readies to serve during his third round match against compatriot Michael Chang in the Wimbledon tennis championship at the All-England Club yesterday. — Star TV photo

Navratilova's quickest so far

WIMBLEDON, England, June 26: Martina Navratilova barely warmed up on a blustery Number One court at Wimbledon on Saturday, dispatching Canada's Patricia Hy 6-1, 6-0 in 41 minutes, reports Reuter.

The 36-year-old second seed showed no sign of losing her edge to age, serving, volleying, chipping and smashing like a youngster.

Cambodian born Hy, ranked 38 in the world, resisted only into the second game, which she won on serve.

After that, Navratilova, the veteran of the tournament now that Jimmy Connors had called it a day, wrecked the 27-year-old's confidence.

Hy cursed herself as she sent balls wide, missed apparently easy volleys and double-faulted on crucial points.

It was the quickest of Navratilova's matches so far this Wimbledon, though none has lasted an hour, she beat Michelle Jaggard-Lai 6-2, 6-1 in 52 minutes, followed by Ros Fairbank-Nideffer 6-0, 6-4 in 59.

But her biggest rival for the title, top seed Steffi Graf, has hardly suffered either, the German defending champion has lost just three games in her journey to the fourth round.

The men's second seed, Stefan Edberg, also arrived safely in the fourth round, beating British hope Chris Wilkinson 6-4, 7-5, 6-3.

Edberg, twice champion here, had to contend with a noisy partisan crowd and a strong serve from his opponent in an erratic match peppered with service breaks.

But Navratilova's victory was serene. "Every match I've been playing a little better," Navratilova, seeking her 10th Wimbledon singles title, said, adding she felt she was just reaching her peak of the season.

She said she was not worried she was getting through the early rounds too easily.

"I had the tough matches last week at Eastbourne. I

don't have to play three sets to be tough."

The Czech-born American, playing her 21st Wimbledon, won the women's warm-up tournament at Eastbourne.

But she said she was not considering whether this Wimbledon might be her last. "It has not entered my mind," she said. I don't know whether I will feel the urge to play next year ... But it's not important."

Navratilova beat the record for women's singles titles, when she won her ninth championship in 1990, but she still needs three more singles or doubles crowns to beat

her coach Billie Jean King's record aggregate of 20 Wimbledon titles.

"I'd be quite thrilled if it happened. But I won't be shedding any tears if it doesn't," she said. "It is still a long way off."

Navratilova was followed swiftly into the fourth round by unseeded Belarussian Natalia Zvereva, who beat Sabine Appelmans of Belgium 6-3, 6-4.

Zvereva knocked out 12th seed Katerina Maleeva in the first round and Andrea Strnadova of Czechoslovakia in the second.



THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT: Nine-time winner Czech-born American Martina Navratilova punches the air to celebrate after taking the first set against Canadian Patricia Hy during their third round match of the women's singles yesterday. Navratilova won the match 6-1, 6-0. — AFP photo

A busy week for policemen at Wimbledon

WIMBLEDON, England, June 26: Sunshine, stalkers and reporters have caused police the biggest headaches in the first week of Wimbledon, security chief Des Wyke said on Friday, reports Reuter.

Interest in the unwanted heckler, who followed top seed Steffi Graf from the Paris Open, caused problems for the police who had to intervene to protect him from being swamped by photographers.

The man was eventually ejected from the All-England Club. A second man, described by chief inspector Wyke as an admirer of Graf's German compatriot Anke Huber, had to flee from the grounds to avoid media attention.

"Two officers ran after him over the road to check he was all right," Wyke said, adding he had committed no crime.

After the incidents police had to stop the press swarming round Graf and Huber. "But a simple shout was usually enough," Wyke said.

Public concern with security increased after Yugoslav star player Monica Seles was stabbed by a disturbed Graf fan during a tournament in Hamburg last April.

Unaccustomed good weather has also brought out the crowds.

"It makes getting from A to B more difficult," Wyke said. But he said, despite daily crowds of some 40,000, he had received reports of only 14 thefts, mostly from cars.

Police have also been cracking down on ticket touts. Two have been arrested and a further 15 summonsed for trading without a licence.

Another trader was being reported for breach of copyright after selling hats printed with an All-England Club logo.

Indian booters to compete in Asian Games

BANGALORE, June 26: The Indian football team will participate in the Asian Games to be held at Hiroshima in October this year, reports PTI.

PP Lakshmanan, secretary of the All-India Football Federation (AIFF) told pressmen after the federation's executive committee meeting here that the AIFF had taken a decision to this effect and would approach the government and Indian Olympic Association in this regard.

He said AIFF would also request the government to include football in the priority list.

Three coaching camps would be conducted for the team, the first from Jan 15 to Feb 14, followed by another from May 1 to 30 and a third from Sept 1 till the departure of the team. The venue for the camps would be decided later, he added.

Lakshmanan said the next Federation Cup had been allotted to Goa and would be held in May next. A new format for participation would be introduced from the coming tournament, under which the first eight teams conducting the leagues regularly along with the hosts would be invited to take part, he said.



World number one American Pete Sampras had a hard time on June 25 during his third round match of the men's singles against Zimbabwean Byron Black. Sampras had more problems with his nose than his opponent as a nose-bleed in the second set brought the game to temporary halt.

number 10 Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria, the youngest of the three sisters who were seeded 10th, 11th and 12th here.

All were eliminated early, Magdalena leaving last in a 6-4, 6-2 defeat by Yayuk Basuki of Indonesia.

Top men's seed Pete Sampras overcame stiff first-set resistance from Byron Black of Zimbabwe before sail-

qualifier Laurence Tieleman.

But Agassi may have some moral support in that match — if he needs any more than he already gets from his rabid Wimbledon fans — in the person of his close friend, singer-actress Barbra Streisand.

He said he expected her along at the tournament soon, next week or possibly sooner. Becker, wearing his regular

show no evidence of the injury that sidelined him for two months.

"My wrist is fine and I am hitting the ball as hard as I want. I've never really struggled with that. Power is not a problem."

"A guy like Krajicek, you've got to go out there ready for it. I think I am ready. I feel as if I'm really in the groove of my

Torrence runs year's fastest

INDIANAPOLIS, June 26: Olympic 200 metres champion Gwen Torrence cruised to the fastest women's 400 metres of the year and Irishman Marcus O'Sullivan won the outdoor season's fastest mile on Friday at the Indy Games.

Torrence clocked 50.37 seconds to edge Natasha Kaiser-Brown, and O'Sullivan bested American Jim Spivey by a half-second in three minutes 54.48 seconds.

Butch Reynolds, meanwhile, used a strong curve run to win the men's 400 metres in 44.37 seconds, then predicted his world record would fall at the Stuttgart World Championships in August.

"I don't usually make predictions," said the American, who is returning from a two-year suspension for a positive doping test the stead fastly denies was his.

Reynolds, beaten by countryman Michael Johnson at last

weekend's US Championships, set the world record of 43.29 seconds in 1988. He said he still needs several races to reach that form, but he pre-

dicted: "If I'm ready, I will be hard to beat in Stuttgart." Johnson looked impressive in winning the 200 metres in 20.16 seconds although slowing noticeably over the last 10 metres.

Olympic silver medalist Lavonna Martin-Floreal came on strong to edge US champion Lynda Tolbert in the women's 100-metre hurdles. Both clocked 12.78 seconds as world heptathlon record holder Jackie Joyner-Kersey finished third in 12.97 seconds.

Courtney Hawkins beat retiring Greg Foster to the line in the men's 110-metre hurdles in 13.25 seconds. Foster clocked 13.27 seconds.

Olympic champion Gail Devers looked on course for the World Championships with a 11.12-second showing in the women's 100 metres, and Barcelona bronze medalist Dennis Mitchell clocked 10.12 seconds in the men's 100 metres for victory over Jamaican Michael Green.

World record holder Mike Powell started slowly but won the men's long jump at 8.49 metres (27 feet, 10 1/4 inches).



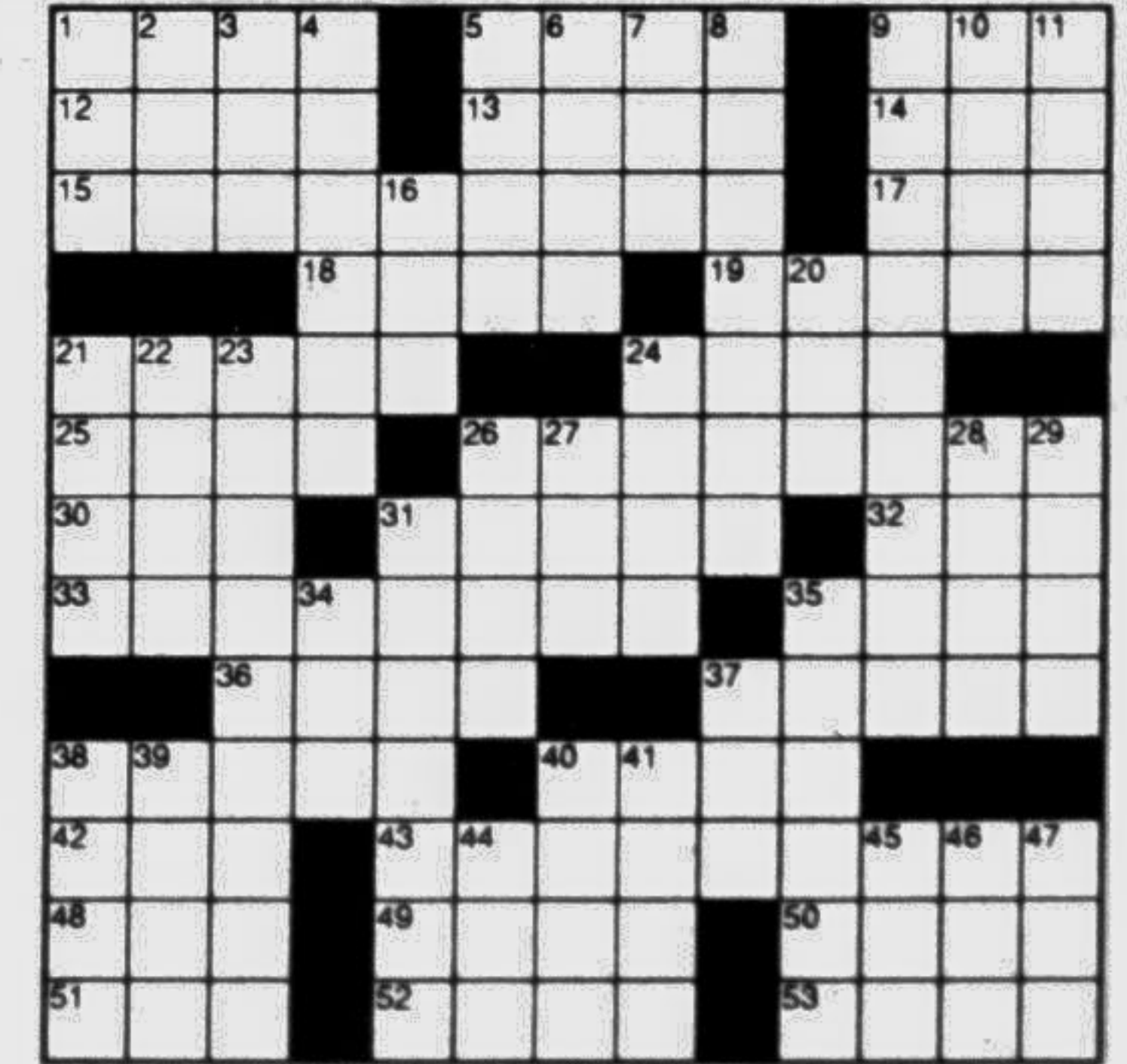
GWEN TORRENCE

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Pantheon figures
 - 5 In no time at all
 - 9 Motorist's purchase
 - 12 Ham's dad
 - 13 Sheltered
 - 14 Torched
 - 15 Props for Penguin and Poppins
 - 17 Oklahoma city
 - 18 In the pre-swam mode
 - 19 Courier's show
 - 21 Michael of tennis
 - 24 Eye-catching apparel
 - 25 "Darn!"
 - 26 Fred and Wilma's milieu
 - 30 Stick figure?
 - 31 Informal language
 - 32 Last Hebrew letter
 - 33 Moldings and such
 - 35 The death of the party?
- DOWN**
- 36 Worm, often
 - 37 Actress Hannah Liszt
 - 40 Oddball
 - 42 Realtor's offering
 - 43 Spirit of the time
 - 48 Ms. MacGraw
 - 49 Burt's Mrs. Profligate
 - 51 Sleuth
 - 52 Tackles' team-mates
 - 53 Arizona city
 - 1 Wilde-beest
 - 2 Dutch uncle
 - 3 Small
 - 4 Cut down to size?
 - 5 Novice skater's woe
 - 6 Partner in crime
 - 7 Neptune's realm
 - 8 First word into the mike?
 - 9 Spartacus, for one
 - 10 Verdi opera
 - 11 Obedience-school lesson
 - 16 Future falcon
 - 20 Indivisible
 - 21 Grub
 - 22 Medal earner
 - 23 Like a tumbler
 - 24 Theological of jazz
 - 26 Change place?
 - 27 Pitch
 - 28 Indiana city
 - 29 First name in dare-devilry
 - 31 Stir, in a way
 - 34 Rather or Laurie
 - 35 Where to pick up a tart
 - 37 Family member, maybe
 - 38 Musical symbol
 - 39 Auditor's desire
 - 40 Benevolent
 - 41 He gave us a lift
 - 44 A billion years
 - 45 Debtor's letters
 - 46 Bottom line
 - 47 Mid-afternoon break

Solution time: 24 mins.

COBB MUD FLAW
 ATREDALE ROSE
 PLATINUM EVIL
 TAN ORDEAL
 REBEL ACED
 SPAR SPRAYED
 TIM MORAL DUB
 CAMELOT CAKE
 ERIN LAMED
 HORNET FIR
 AVIO ARIZONAN
 DIME RUTABAGA
 IDYL YES SHOP



CRYPTOQUIP

D J H M J I V J R D ' D V Y C Z V E
 I J H N E X J I M A L E J H N
 D M A L Z X Z J M R L Z Z V X
 D Z L C Y I Z .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE MATADOR IN SPAIN WHO AMAZED US BY GOING TO SLEEP IS A BULL-DOZER.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: I equals C
 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.