

Hungary's Krisztina Egerszegi about to leave the pool after winning gold in the women's 100m backstroke final at the European Swimming Championships at the Ponds Forge pool, Sheffield yesterday. — AFP photo

Van Almsick's poorest so far

SHEFFIELD, Aug 6: Franziska van Almsick, already winner of four gold medals from four events at the European swimming Championships, qualified only sixth fastest Friday for the women's 100 metres butterfly final, report agencies.

The 15-year-old German won her heat easily in 1 minute 01.66 seconds. But her time was beaten by five more swimmers in later heats, including Inge de Bruijn of the Netherlands, who was fastest with 1:01.29.

Van Almsick, who won two silver and two bronze medals at the last year's Olympics, is on course for seven golds here.

She already has won the individual 100 and 200 metre freestyle titles and shared in Germany's 800 and 400 metre freestyle relay triumphs.

She also is scheduled to swim in the medley relay on Saturday and the 50 metres freestyle on the final day of competition Sunday.

In other heats, Hungary's Károlyi Gábor, who set a world record in the 100 metre breaststroke heats on the way to the gold medal on Tuesday, was fastest qualifier for the 200 metre final.

Gábor won his heat by two seconds in 2 minutes 15.00 seconds and his nearest challenger appears to be defending titlist Nick Gillingham of Britain, who is aiming to be the first swimmer to win the event three times in a row.

Gillingham, the Olympic bronze medalist, won his heat in 2:15.13 and seemed to have plenty in reserve.

Finland's Antti Kasvio, who beat Olympic champion Evgeny Sadovyi of Russia to win the 200 freestyle title, led qualifiers for the men's 400 freestyle final.

Kasvio clocked 3:51.51, with German world champion Joerg Hoffmann only a fraction slower in winning his heat in 3:51.77.

Sadovyi, who won both the 200 and 400 in Barcelona, and Sweden's Olympic bronze medalist Anders Holmertz, cut it fine with the seventh and eighth aggregate times for the last two final places.

Former East German Sylvia Gerasch, world champion in

1986, lined herself up for a second European Championship gold in eight years in the women's 100 metres breaststroke.

Gerasch won her heat in 1:09.61 from Wednesday's 200 breaststroke winner Brigitte Becue of Belgium.

Olympic champion Elena Rudkovskaya of Belarus, who pulled out of her 200 breaststroke title defence here, qualified comfortably in 1:10.90. She finished second in her heat behind Svetlana Bondarova of Ukraine, who clocked 1:10.75.

Czech Olga Spilachova led qualifiers for Saturday's women's 800 metres freestyle final.

European Championships.

Unfortunately he shed something else in Thursday's action — his European title.

The American-born swimmer who competes for his father's country, Spain, was closing on Russia's Vladimir Selkov stroke by stroke.

But he could not make up the lead Selkov had taken on the first leg and the Spaniard said goodbye to his European 200 metre backstroke title.

Lopez Zubero pushed Selkov to a European championship record of 1 minute 58.09 and was 0.42 behind with Italy's Emanuele Merisi third in 1:59.57.

trains under Chris Martin at the University of Florida.

"Now I'll have to get fired up for the World Championships next year."

"After the Olympics I took six months off. Everything had been heard up to the Olympics and I was just burned out," Lopez Zubero said.

"I put on a lot of weight, around 30 pounds (14 kilos), and other swimmers were coming up to me and saying I was out of shape. I needed to get back into shape pretty quickly."

"During the time I took off, I went to my father's home town in Zaragoza where people recognized me in the streets," the Spaniard said.

"It was kind of hard with people starting at you while at school in Florida it doesn't happen because nobody knows what I've done."

While Lopez Zubero lost his title, Van Almsick snapped up her fourth gold medal and Krisztina Egerszegi sprinted away with her second.

Van Almsick threatened a world record in the lead-off relay leg but slipped a fraction off the pace on the return length and touched 0.14 of a second outside American Jenny Thompson's 54.48 mark.

But she had established such a huge lead that a German victory was never in doubt.

Egerszegi, who has won all her big races in the 1990s, retained a second European title by adding the 100 metres backstroke to the 400 metres individual medley she won on Tuesday.

Egerszegi hoisted Hungary's golden tally in Sheffield to four, keeping 16-year-old Russian Nina Zhivanevskaya at bay to win in 1:00.83 — just a shade slower than the 1:00.31 world record she posted at the 1991 European Championships in Athens.

"I am pleased with gold," said Egerszegi, whose collection now runs to four Olympic, two World championship and five European titles.

"I want to go on and keep winning. I keep looking out for new rivals to beat."

Popov, like Egerszegi a double Olympic champion, turned second to German Christian Troeger at the halfway mark of the 100 freestyle but left his rivals trailing far behind on the second length.

"It wasn't easy to win and I wanted to go faster today. My big problem was the first lap," said Popov, who trained in Australia from January to May.

His time of 49.15 was a championship record but outside his own 48.93 European mark and the 48.42 world record of American Matt Biondi.

When asked why he had not broken the record he replied: "I just couldn't, I'm not a machine."

Popov won by just over half a second from 27-year-old Swedish veteran Tommy Werner, a World Championship silver medalist in 1991, with Pavel Khlykin of Ukraine third.

Germany gained a one-two victory in the opening women's 400 freestyle final, with Dagmar Hase winning by nearly two seconds from Kerstin Kielgass in a modest 4:10.47.

Russian Olga Kirichenko, 17, charged through the first 100 inside world record pace but Hase overtook her soon after the halfway mark and won easily. Defending champion Irene Dalby of Norway was third.

The Uruguayan Football Association took the decision after Brazil reserve goalkeeper Zetti and Bolivia defender Miguel Rimba blamed the tea when FIFA said traces of cocaine had been found in dope tests carried out following a World Cup qualifier in La Paz between the teams.

The tea, called "Trimate," is made from a combination of coca leaves, the raw materials for cocaine, and aniseed and is drunk widely and legally in Bolivia and Peru, where it is seen as a cure for altitude sickness.

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Smooth sail for Ivanisevic

KITZBUHEL, Austria, Aug 6: Top-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia defeated Austrian Gilbert Schaller in under an hour Thursday to move into the quarterfinals of the dlr 400,000 Philips Head Cup, reports AP.

"I didn't expect it to be so easy," Ivanisevic said, after dispatching Schaller, seeded 15th, 6-2, 6-1 in only 56 minutes. Second-seeded Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine and Austria's Thomas Muster, seeded third, also moved on to the quarterfinals.

Medvedev defeated Daniel Vacek of the Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-4 and faces seventh-seeded Jan Stemerink of the Netherlands in the quarterfinals. Stemerink routed Federico Sanchez of Spain, 6-4, 6-3.

Muster worked for his 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 victory over Germany's Patrick Baur, saying afterwards he was afraid he would lose.

The Austrian faces Morocco's Younes El Ayanaoui, seeded 11th. El Ayanaoui eliminated fifth seed Emilio Sanchez of Spain — a two-time Kitzbuehl winner — 6-4, 5-7, 7-6 (7/5).

Ivanisevic will play Germany's Bernd Karbacher, seeded eighth, who routed Renzo Furlan of Italy, 10th, 6-2, 6-0.

Sixth-seeded Javier Sanchez of Spain also made the quarterfinals, defeating Marcelo Filippini of Uruguay, seeded 12th, 1-6, 6-3, 6-0.

Hadad no match for Sampras

LOS ANGELES, Aug 6: Pete Sampras, playing his opponent for the first time, advanced to the quarterfinals of the Volvo Los Angeles tournament Thursday night, beating Mauricio Hadad of Colombia 6-4, 6-0, reports AP.

It took a little while to get used to him, Sampras said. "I had to run down some balls. He was tough to play especially when he has a weapon. He returns everything."

Sampras, the top seed and world's No. 1 player, faces Patrick McEnroe in Friday's quarterfinals.

McEnroe rallied past No. 8 seed Brad Gilbert 6-7 (8-10), 6-3, 6-0. He dropped the first-set tiebreaker on a netted forehand, then recovered and had little trouble with Gilbert.

"My confidence is the best it's been in two years," McEnroe said.

No. 4 seed Richard Krajicek, the defending champion from the Netherlands, escaped with a 1-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-0 victory in the second round over Jason Stoltenberg of Australia. No. 5 Alexander Volkov of Russia defeated Michael Joyce 6-1, 6-3.

Krajicek led 3-0 in the second set before Stoltenberg broke back to tie it 3-3 and then both players held serve to force the tiebreaker. Stoltenberg led 5-3 when he committed three errors and Krajicek hit a forehand winner to win the tiebreaker 7-5.

The downtown arena, the new home of the San Jose Sharks, is set to open Sept. 7 and will seat 10,500 for the Jan. 31 tennis tournament.

The event will feature 32 top pros and a purse of about dlr 700,000.

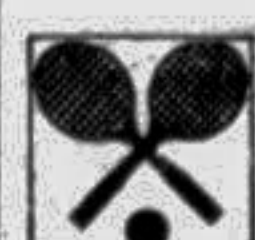
New venue For Volvo tennis

SAN JOSE, Calif., Aug 6: The Volvo tennis tournament, held for the past four years in San Francisco, is moving to the new San Jose Arena for 1994, reports AP.

The downtown arena, the new home of the San Jose Sharks, is set to open Sept. 7 and will seat 10,500 for the Jan. 31 tennis tournament.

The event will feature 32 top pros and a purse of about dlr 700,000.

Testud delays Graf's march



CARLSBAD, Calif., Aug 6: Steffi Graf let a three-game lead slip away in the first set Thursday then went on to rout Sandrine Testud 7-5, 6-1 and advance to the quarterfinals of the dlr 375,000 Mazda Classic, reports AP.

The top-ranked German said she had no recurrence of the dizziness and sore jaw that caused her to withdraw from doubles play Tuesday night after a singles victory.

Instead, she blamed a lack of concentration for allowing Testud, a Frenchwoman ranked 95th in the world, to come back in the first set.

Testud used an effective serve to win three straight games and tie the score 4-4 and again 5-5. Then Graf regained control by winning the last two games of the set in only nine points.

"At 5-5, I started to step into my shots and I played the

points a lot better," Graf said. "Before, I didn't really think ahead about what I would do."

Graf will play No. 7 seed Mary Pierce in Friday's quarterfinals. Pierce advanced by beat-

ing No. 9 Naoko Sawamatsu 6-1, 6-4 in the third round.

In the night's featured match, No. 3 seed Conchita Martinez opened strongly and

then overcame a second-set deficit for a 6-1, 6-3 victory over No. 16 Ros Fairbank-Nideffer.

Martinez controlled most of the rallies and displayed some strong passing shots. Her main trouble arose early in the second set when she lost her only two service breaks of the match and fell behind 1-3.

"She came to the net a lot and I passed her quite often, but it was hard to do it all the time," said Martinez. "In the second set, I had trouble with my serve, but I just thought, 'Keep playing. It will get better.'"

Martinez has won her last seven matches, each in two sets, including last week's US Hardcourt championship.

In upsets involving seeds, No. 11 Ann Grossman pulled away from No. 6 Helena Sukova 5-7, 7-5, 6-0, and qualifier Elena Likhovtseva downed No. 15 Natalia Medvedeva 5-7, 6-3, 6-0.

No. 2 Arantxa Sanchez Vicario routed Petra Ritter 6-2, 6-1 and No. 5 Magdalena Maleeva dropped Jennifer Santrock 6-3, 6-1.

Jennifer Capriati, the two-time defending tourney champion, had her pulled back muscle examined Thursday. The injury caused her to withdraw before her first singles match Wednesday night.

She also withdrew from doubles Thursday but said she expects to play in a Toronto tournament that begins Aug 16. She was advised to treat the injury with rest and ice.

Graf opened her match by winning three consecutive games, but with a 4-1 lead, began to play unevenly. During Testud's comeback, Graf suffered her only service break of the match, losing four of the five points on unforced errors.

At 5-5, Graf won her service in five points, including three service winners, and then hit an impressive return forehand to start on the way to winning the next game.

Likhovtseva, a qualifier who beat No. 8 Nathalie Tauziat in the second round, has a chance to reach the semifinals in the bracket vacated by Capriati.

The 17-year-old from Kazakhstan, ranked 244th, will play in the quarterfinals against Germany's Marketa Kochta, who topped Tatiana Ignatieva 6-0, 6-2.

Pierce, although slowed by a strained tendon in her right leg, will play Graf for the first time.

Gustafsson going great guns

PRAGUE, Aug 6: Magnus Gustafsson of Sweden defeated Massimo Valeri of Italy Thursday in their second round match at the dlr 365,000 Skoda Czech Open men's tennis championship in Prague, reports AP.

Gustafsson, the second-seeded player at the tournament, came back to beat Valeri 6-3, 6-1, after losing the first three games of the first set.

"I was a little tired at the beginning, but then I caught myself and all went fine," he said.

In other second round matches Thursday, sixth-seeded Carlos Costa of Spain outplayed Ctislav Dosedel of Czech Republic 7-6 (7-5), 6-4; Sweden's Niclas Kult, seventh-seeded at the tournament, defeated Felipe Rivera of Chile 6-2, 6-1; and Andrei Cherkasov of Russia beat David Skoch of Czech Republic 6-2, 6-0.

"I don't remember I have ever won that easily, it usually takes longer," Cherkasov, who beat Skoch in only 51 minutes, said after the match.

Beijing's latest bid to win IOC nod



BEIJING, Aug 6: Beijing has resorted again to flattery in its bid to woo the 2000 Olympics, publishing a brochure of Inter-national Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch's stamp collection, reports Reuters.

The booklet will be sold to the public and copies are being sent to Samaranch and other "members of the Olympic family," the official Xinhua news agency said.

The books, Chinese Olympic Committee officials said, will be sent to the members of the International Olympic Committee, who will meet on September 23 to decide whether to award the

2000 games to Beijing or to Sydney, Manchester, Berlin, Brasilia or Istanbul.

"The publication helps the Chinese people understand the Olympic spirit even better and will promote Beijing's bid for the 2000 Olympic Games," Chinese Olympic Committee chief He Zhenliang said.

Beijing treats visiting IOC members like royalty and politely reminds those from many developing countries of the sports facilities China has built for them over the years.

Samaranch wrote a prologue for the new book, featuring reproductions of his Olympic-theme postage stamp collection and published by the Postal Ministry, Xinhua said.



A young couple walk past a billboard in a Beijing park on Aug 4 showing Chinese goddesses floating over the vision of a modern Beijing where the sports stadium is pictured. The faded text at the bottom of the painting reads "Beijing is so nice that even the immortal fairies fly to Beijing." — AFP photo

British govt for tight security



LONDON, Aug 6: Central government will provide about 100 million pounds (150 million dollars) to improve safety at British soccer grounds by extending a tax break for five years, Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke said on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

Clarke said he hoped the move would help attract the 1996 European Championships to England.

In 1990, after 95 people died in Britain's worst sports disaster at Hillsborough Stadium in the northern English city of Sheffield, the government announced it would renounce its claim to a slice of tax paid by the promoters of soccer pools.

Instead the pools companies, which offer weekly competitions based on picking wins and draws in league soccer, were to donate this money — around 20 million pounds (30.05 million dollars) a year — to clubs to help them improve antiquated grounds.

The government said in March 1992 it would be prepared to extend this tax break, which ran until 1995, if the football authorities made progress with paying their own contributions towards funding the costs of ground improvements.

Clarke said in a statement he was satisfied this condition had been met and he would extend the tax break until 2000.

"The money will go first to finance all-seater or safe terracing at Second and Third Division clubs in England, and at First and Second Division clubs in Scotland," Clarke said.

These improvements will cost around 295 million pounds (443.2 million dollars) between 1995 and 2000, of which 175 million pounds (262.9 million dollars) will be provided by the clubs and 22.5 million pounds (33.80 million dollars) by

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British soccer authorities.

An inquiry into the April 1989 disaster at Hillsborough recommended significant improvements should be made to soccer grounds to improve safety and combat hooliganism.

Ninety-five people were killed and at least 200 injured after a crowd surge crushed fans against barriers at the English Football Association Cup semi-final match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest held at the Hillsborough Stadium.

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