

Sport

Story US Open fans hate to hear

NEW YORK, Sept 7: The sad look in Martina Navratilova's eyes, the weak, final wave to the crowd, the disgust in her voice, all told the story US Open fans hated to hear, reports AP.

Suddenly, she was gone in the round of 16 Monday, beaten by Helena Sukova again at a crucial moment in her career. This time, Sukova won 7-5, 6-4, her long arms reaching out to swat returns that Navratilova was a bit too slow to catch. Once before, Sukova was there to stop Navratilova's bid for a Grand Slam, in 1984 at the Australian Open, and end her 74-match winning streak.

The loss left the United States without a women's singles quarter finalist for the first time in the tournament's history, dating to 1887.

Navratilova, a month shy of 37, was the oldest player in the Open and she gave it more life than anyone. Fans packed her matches, cheered her almost the way they cheered Jimmy Connors when he made his final charges at 39 and 40. They wanted her to win a fifth Open, show everyone she wasn't too old, too slow to do it again.

In truth, she was. She couldn't get to the net quickly enough to pick up Sukova's returns. She couldn't volley with the agility and sharpness she had for so many years. She hit too many shots just a tad wide or long, and she couldn't put pressure on Sukova's serves.

"They just weren't falling," Navratilova said. "I felt like I was playing golf. They weren't going in by inches. I didn't make one lob. I tried that shot too many times. If I play well, I win easily. If I'm a little off it's always a struggle. There wasn't any luck for me today. She made some great shots and I didn't."

The crowd was fantastic. This is what I always wanted. To have the chance and the crowd. Then I blow it. I was tied up in knots. I didn't let myself go and play with reckless abandon.

Last American hope blown off

NEW YORK, Sept 7: Martina Navratilova's exit from the US Open on Monday marked the first time no American woman had reached the quarter-finals since women began playing in the tournament in 1887, reports Reuter.

The third-seeded Navratilova suffered a frustrating 7-5, 6-4 loss to 12th-seeded Helena Sukova of the Czech Republic in the round of 16.

The three other most promising American hopefuls didn't make it as far as Navratilova.

Sixth-seeded Mary Joe Fernandez pulled out of the Open at the last minute, citing abdominal problems.

Seventh-seeded Jennifer Capriati was upset by Lella Meskhi of Georgia in three sets in the first round.

And 16th-seeded Zina Garrison-Jackson was a third-round loser to Natalia Zvereva of Belarus.

Navratilova, a Czech-born US citizen, said her position as the lone possibility for an American to reach the quarter-finals came to mind during her loss.

"I started thinking Jennifer is out, Mary Joe is out and I am the last American hope."

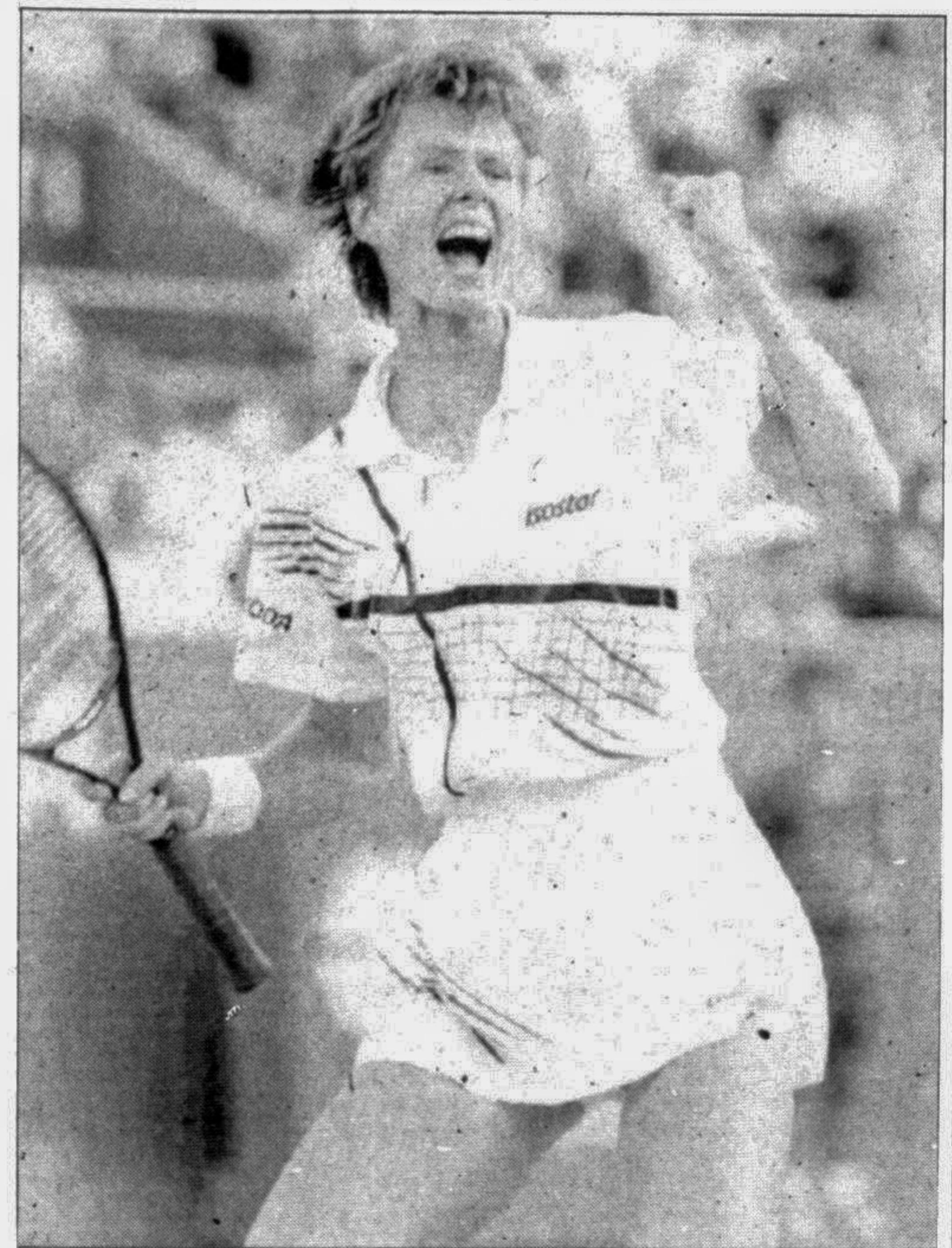
Navratilova, a four-time US Open champion, was the last American woman to win here, in 1987.

don." It was Sukova, 6-foot-2 (1.88-metre) with long pipestem arms, who had the lucky net cords, the shots that nicked the edges of the lines, the calls that went her way. She needed all

Sampras and Michael Chang set up a quarter-final match and got to ruminate on old times. Alexander Volkov also advanced to the quarters, beating Chuck Adams 6-2, 7-6 (7-2), 6-1. Volkov will play No. 12

any volleys then."

Instead of ribbons and trophies, the stakes this time go far beyond the \$153,000 to the Open winner or the \$10,000 to an Open quarter-finalist.



Helena Sukova of the Czech Republic emits a cry of joy after carving an upset 7-5, 6-4 victory over third-seed Martina Navratilova of the United States in the fourth round of the US Open tennis at the National Tennis Centre, Flushing Meadow on Monday.

— AFP photo

Thomas Muster, who beat Brad Gilbert 6-4, 7-5, 6-7 (5-7), 6-2.

Fourteen years ago, Sampras and Chang played each other for the first time on a school court in Poway, Calif. near San Diego. They were about 7 years old, toting big rackets and that would significantly raise his status in tennis.

Sampras, the 1990 Open champion who is coming off a Wimbledon victory, is trying to regain the No. 1 ranking he held so briefly this year. Chang, the 1989 French Open champion, is going for a second Grand Slam Trophy final on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The Barbados-born player, 34, made just three runs and conceded 15 in the final over of the match as Sussex suffered an extraordinary defeat off the last ball against Warwickshire.

Stephenson is currently in his second year as Sussex's overseas player. He also plans to play another two winters in South Africa with Orange Free State.

Harper called back in West Indies squad

BRIDGETOWN, Sept 7: West Indies have recalled Guyanese all-rounder Roger Harper for their tour of Sharjah, India and Sri Lanka this year, reports Reuter.

Harper, 30, last played for his country in 1988 although he was included in the squad for West Indies' first ever Test against South Africa last year.

Barbadian batsman Roland Holder, who hit three centuries in the last West Indies' season, has also been selected.

WEST INDIES: Richie Richardson (captain), Desmond Haynes, Phil Simmons, Brian Lara, Carl Hooper, Keith Atherton, Jimmy Adams, Roland Holder, Roger Harper, Junor Murray, Curly Ambrose, Courtney Walsh, Kenneth Benjamin, Winston Benjamin and Anderson Cummins.

Stephenson to stay in Sussex

LONDON, Sept 7: West Indian all-rounder Franklin Stephenson has agreed to another season in English county cricket with Sussex, two days after a traumatic experience with bat and ball in the Natwest Trophy final on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The Barbados-born player, 34, made just three runs and conceded 15 in the final over of the match as Sussex suffered an extraordinary defeat off the last ball against Warwickshire.

Stephenson is currently in his second year as Sussex's overseas player. He also plans to play another two winters in South Africa with Orange Free State.

Hughes sidelined with bad knee

MELBOURNE, Sept 7: Australian fast bowler Merv Hughes may be sidelined for up to three months after undergoing a weekend knee operation, reports AP.

Hughes told the Channel 10 television news on Tuesday that he did not expect to be back in action until December.

Channel 10 said the operation was more complicated than expected and that calcified bone had to be removed from Hughes' knee.

It was the second knee operation Hughes has undergone this year.

Hughes has been one of the mainstays of the Australian attack since making his Test debut in 1985.

He was one of the stars of Australia's recent 4-1 Ashes series victory over England, where his flamboyant personality made him a popular figure with the fans, who call him "Sumo" because of his expansive girth.

The knee injury is almost certain to rule Hughes out of a three-test home series against New Zealand.

Hughes was not immediately available for further comment.

Yoo puts off harness

SEOUL, Sept 7: World Boxing Association junior flyweight champion Yoo Myung-Woo said Tuesday he is retiring from the ring, reports AP.

Yoo, 30, said he had been in a dilemma since his offer to fight World Boxing Council champion Michael Carbajal of the United States was rejected.

He is adamant that this

SA ensconced at Colombo



COLOMBO, Sept 7: South Africa's frontline batsmen struck timely form to propel their side to a commanding position on the second day of the second Test here Tuesday, reports AFP.

South Africa secured a 112-run first innings lead as they moved to 280 for 2 at the close following two century-stands against a helpless home attack.

Shri Lanka, who made a dismal 168, are now faced with the prospect of another thankless day on the field with South Africa determined to pile up a massive match-winning total on the third day.

Skipper Kepler Wessels played a captain's innings with a sedate 92 on a lucrative day that saw three more half-centu-

ries, suddenly regained its fluency here.

After Wessels had set up a 137-run opening wicket stand with Andrew Hudson, vice-captain Hansie Cronje and Darryl Cullinan took control to produce a further 101 runs in 163 minutes for an unfinished third wicket.

Shri Lankan skipper Arjuna Ranatunga tried eight bowlers including himself in a bid to dislodge either of them but the two talented South Africans batted remorselessly to give their side the whip-hand with three more days to go.

Resuming from an overnight 48 for zero, the opening combination of Wessels and Hudson once again gave their side a solid start.

The left-handed Wessels, in particular, showed his best form on tour with a 304-minute knock that contained seven boundaries and a freak six through overthrows.

Both openers were content to play quiet roles as they gradually exposed a tame attack that had its task made more difficult by a pitch that was full of runs.

Their partnership ended in the eighth over after lunch when seamer Framodha Wickremasinghe had right-hander Hudson leg-before for 58.

Hudson had nine fours in his 177-ball knock.

Wessels then saw South Africa pass the Shri Lankan total in the 70th over before he was dismissed two overs later by trying to drive off-spinner Muttiah Muralidharan and offering a catch to wicket-keeper Pubudu Dassanayake.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the second day of the second Test between Shri Lanka and South Africa at the Sinhalese Sports Club grounds on Tuesday.

SHRI LANKA: First innings

(168 all out)

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (overnight 48 for no loss)	Wessels c Dassanayake	92
b Muralidharan		
Hudson lbw b		
Wickremasinghe	58	
Cronje not out	54	
Cullinan not out	52	
Extras: (b-1, lb-11, nb-11, w-24)		24
Total: (for two wickets)		280

Fall of wickets: 1-137; 2-179

To bat: Jonty Rhodes, Brian McMillan, Dave Richardson, Pat Symcox, Richard Snell, Allan Donald and Brett Schultz.

Bowling:

O	M	R	W
Ramayake	16	5	42
Wickremasinghe	22	4	63
Hathurusinghe	7	4	12
Dharmasena	32	10	67
Muralidharan	24	9	37
Jaysuriya	7	1	34
De Silva	3	1	7
Ranatunga	2	0	6

Extras:

Cronje reached his first century in his sixth Test with his seventh boundary, an

easy back-cut off left-arm spinner Sanath Jayasuriya.

Cullinan, playing in just his third Test, reached his 50 in the next over after batting for 131 minutes.

Shri Lankan skipper Arjuna Ranatunga tried eight bowlers including himself in a bid to dislodge either of them but the two talented South Africans batted remorselessly to give their side the whip-hand with three more days to go.

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