

## Sport

## Sampras on top of the world again

NEW YORK, Sept 12: Second seed Pete Sampras served his way past Russian Alexander Volkov on Saturday to complete his return to the US Open final and the top of the tennis world, reports Reuter.

With his 6-4, 6-3, 6-2 semifinal victory over the 14th seed, Sampras regained the number one ranking and is poised to become the first man since Boris Becker in 1989 to win Wimbledon and the US Open in the same year.

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"The last couple of matches... I hit the ball really well," added the second seed, who dropped just two sets on his way to the final.

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The dashing Frenchman opened the day with an impressive 6-1, 6-7, 7-6, 6-1 victory over unseeded Australian Wally Masur.

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The men's semifinals of the super Saturday programme on a windy autumn-like day sandwiched the women's singles final in which top seed Steffi Graf dismantled 12th seed Helena Sukova 6-3, 6-3 to claim her third Grand Slam title of the year and third career US Open crown.

"It is a great achievement to have been able to win three Grand Slams and be in the final

of the other one," said Graf, who earned \$35,000 for the win.

Sampras moved quietly through his match, keeping the points short and holding his serve with ease throughout.

The left-handed Russian gave a far better account of himself than in last year's quarter-final with Sampras when the American accused him of quitting after one set.

"He came out ready to play. He was serving very well," Sampras said.

But the second seed, who became the youngest ever US Open champion at 19, three

years ago, made the most of his break opportunities.

Sampras converted the lone break point of the first set. Unfortunately for Volkov, it came at set point.

The Russian, playing his first career Grand Slam semifinal, saved two break points in the second set. But Volkov fell behind again in the eighth game and Sampras drilled a backhand crosscourt winner that caught the line for 5-3 and he served out the set.

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his groundstrokes and passing shots gave Masur no chance as Pioline smacked winner after winner — 17 in the first set to just two for Masur and 62 in the match.

If Volkov didn't know he was in trouble after two sets, it became painfully obvious when Sampras opened the third set with another service break.

He broke Volkov once more for good measure at 5-2 and served out the match with a love game, ending it with his 16th ace, a 117-mile per hour (188 kph) sizzler.

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