

Sport



Diego Maradona (L) of the Newell's Old Boys and Moas of Independiente fight for the ball during an Argentine soccer league match in Buenos Aires on October 10, Maradona's new team lost 1-3.

Maradona would have liked it otherwise

BUENOS AIRES, Oct 11: Diego Maradona must wish his official comeback to Argentine soccer on Sunday had gone as well as his informal return only three days earlier, reports Reuter.

The stocky star, who has chosen Newell's Old Boys as the vehicle for his return to Argentine league soccer after nearly 12 years away, was exultant last Thursday after scoring the goal in Newell's 1-0 win in a friendly against Ecuador's Emelec.

But on Sunday, Independiente beat Newell's 3-1 in a championship match and though Maradona engineered his side's goal, it fell to his teammate Carlos Morales to score.

Cheered on by fans from both clubs, Maradona must still have felt a pang of jealousy as Independiente's Raul Alfaro Moreno scored three times — all with headers.

The result hoisted Independiente to third in the 20-strong First Division with seven points from five games and left Newell's struggling in 18th Place with three points.

Local commentators thought they detected gestures of annoyance in the former Argentina captain when his teammates' skills let them down.

"May be someday, when Maradona's teammates can reach his level of speed, his team will surge ahead," one commentator said.

There was no immediate reaction from Maradona, who was bursting with enthusiasm and self-confidence after the friendly against Emelec.

FAZ appeals to FIFA for re-match

LUSAKA, Oct 11: Zambia appealed to FIFA world soccer's governing body, on Monday for their World Cup qualifier against Morocco to be replayed, reports Reuter.

The Zambians blamed the Gabonese referee for their 1-0 defeat in Sunday's match in Casablanca which eliminated them from the World Cup.

A draw would have seen Zambia through to the finals being staged next year in the United States.

"We hope FIFA will agree to our suggestion that we have a re-match," Adrian Bauleni, the general secretary of the Football Association of Zambia (FAZ), told Reuters.

Bauleni criticised the Gabonese referee and linesmen for being "poor, biased and intimidatory."

The move is the latest in a war of words between Zambia and Gabon. Zambia lost 18 of their top players and officials in a plane crash just off the Gabonese coast in April.

Since then Zambia has accused Gabon of failing to cooperate in investigating the crash and last month Zambia asked FIFA to appoint a new referee for the match in Morocco, saying Gabonese officials would not be neutral.

Soccer fans flocked to the FAZ offices on Monday, many angry about the way the match was officiated.

The majority of them felt Zambia should have been awarded a penalty in the dying moments and that the referee had ignored several fouls on Zambians.

Top-seeded Edberg will take on either American Chuck Adams or Japanese Hideki Kaneko in the upper half, which also includes his compatriot Jonas Svensson, Richard Krajcevic of the Netherlands, Chang and Korda.

Second-seeded Becker has a chance to avenge his loss in Sydney to Neil Borwick of Australia, who plays Japan's Gouchi Motomura.

Also in the bottom half with Becker are Lendl, Mikael Pernfors of Sweden, Alexander Volkov of Russia, Ivanisevic, Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine and Henrik Holm of Sweden.

The top 16 seeds received first-round byes before making their appearances on the indoor courts at the Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium to vie for the top prize-money of 143,500 dollars and 230 points.

Other winners included Canadians Greg Rusedski and Chris Pridham, American Chuck Adams, Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden and Japanese qualifier Ryuzo Tsumino.

The tournament, with a prize of 143,500 dollars for the singles winner, started quietly as the top 16 seeds — led by former world number ones Stefan Edberg of Sweden and Boris Becker of Germany — received first-round byes.

Becker, who crashed to Borwick in the first round in Sydney after coming down with a stomach complaint a week ago, has a chance to avenge his loss Tuesday, while Edberg plays Adams on the artificial indoor courts at the Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium.

Not a day for Australians

TOKYO, Oct 11: The 1991 world champion doubles pair of Anders Jarryd and John Fitzgerald ended the opening day quite differently in the one million dollar Seiko Super men's tennis tournament here Monday, reports AFP.

Jarryd of Sweden displayed a series of sizzling returns to score a 6-3, 6-3 win over Markus Zoeke of Germany to earn a second-round meeting against 10th-seeded Todd Martin of the United States.

Fitzgerald, who survived the qualifying rounds, at the weekend, failed to keep momentum, losing to another quilter, fellow-Australian Michael Tebbutt, 6-4, 6-4.

Jarryd and Fitzgerald will take part in the 32-draw doubles event as the second seed.

Australia suffered another setback with Todd Woodbridge, defending doubles champion and also the Wimbledon doubles title-holder with Mark Woodforde, going down to American Steve Bryan 3-6, 1-6.

But his compatriots Neil Borwick and Jamie Morgan comfortably went through, beating Japanese wildcard entrants Gouchi Motomura and Yasufumi Yamamoto 6-3, 6-3 and 6-4, 6-3 respectively.

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Tommy Ho, ranked 160th this week, shocked a partisan crowd to beat Shuzo Matsuoka 6-4, 7-5, although the Japan's top player hit 12 aces against the American left-hander's four.

With the win, Ho reserved a seat against Czech-born American Ivan Lendl, the ninth seed, in the second round.

In the last match of the day, Patrick Rafter of Australia breezed past Kim Bong Soo of South Korea 6-4, 6-4.

A chance to silence critics

TOKYO, Oct 11: Struggling former world number one Stefan Edberg, Boris Becker and Ivan Lendl will have to do their best to silence their critics as they spearhead the seedings in the one million dollar Seiko Super men's tennis tournament this week, reports AFP.

Happiness for Edberg off-court, following the birth of a daughter in July, has not been matched by success on-court, with the Swede managing only one title, in Madrid, this season.

Edberg, 27, who failed to defend his US Open title last month, continued his poor performance, losing two singles matches to Michael Stich and Marc Goeller in the Davis Cup semifinal meeting against Germany two weeks ago.

Becker, after a two-month layoff with a stomach virus in mid-February followed by a disastrous claycourt season, showed signs of recovery by reaching the Wimbledon semifinals, the US hardcourt final and the US Open fourth round.

But the German, who pulled out of the Basle tournament in Switzerland with a hamstring injury two weeks ago, crashed out of the Australian indoors in the first round after coming down with another stomach complaint last week.

It is also a miserable story for defending champion Lendl, the Czech-born American who has had his worst season in 10 years, crashing in the first rounds at the Australian, French and US Opens as well as in the second round at Wimbledon, and in Sydney last week.

Perhaps the hottest players to compete in Tokyo are Michael Chang of the United States and Jaime Yzaga of Peru.

Chang, a Chinese-American, captured his first victory in Asia winning in Jakarta in January, and added others in Osaka, Los Angeles, Cincinnati and Kuala Lumpur this season.

Yzaga eliminated American world number two Jim Courier

and Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia and went on to win the Australian indoors, beating Petr Korda of the Czech Republic in the final Sunday.

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Graf won't be off for long

ZURICH, Oct 11: Steffi Graf, out of action after foot surgery, said on Sunday she expected to return to the tennis circuit in time for the Virginia Slims championship starting at Madison Square Garden on November 15, reports Reuter.

The 24-year-old German, the world's top woman player, said the operation she underwent last Monday for a chipped bone in her right foot had been more serious than either she or doctors had expected.

"The bone was splitting in a few places and I think that if I played a few more days, there'd have been a chance that maybe the nerve would have been cut," she told journalists in Zurich by telephone from Germany.

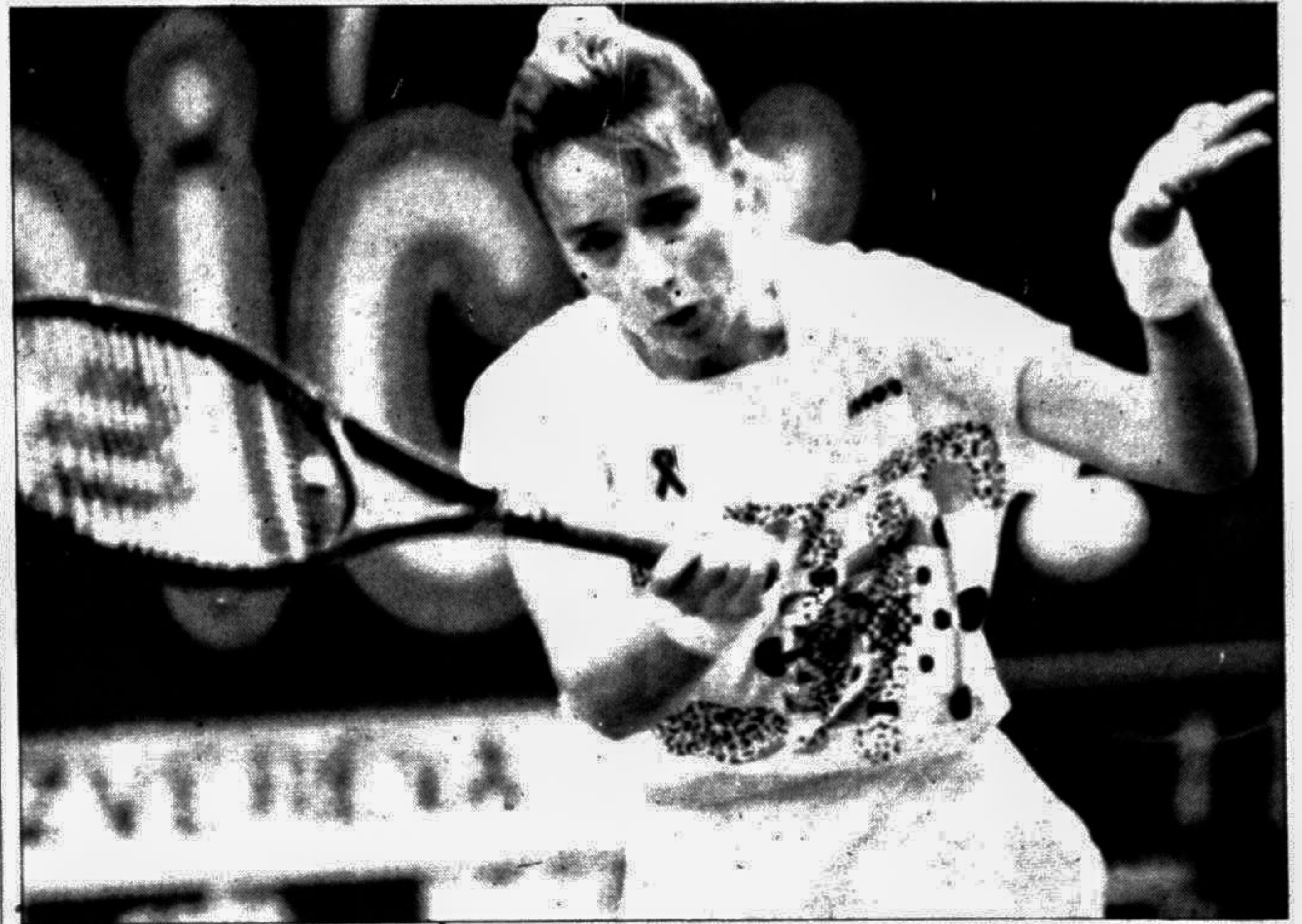
Graf, who missed the current European Indoor Championship in Zurich and is also out of a tournament in Brighton, England, starting on October 18, was uncertain exactly when she would come back.

"I haven't the slightest idea. It depends on how quickly the wound heals. Whether it's two, three or four weeks is impossible to tell," she said.

But when she was asked if she would be back in time for the season ending Virginia Slims meeting in New York, she replied: "Oh yes, I certainly believe that."

Graf, this year's leading women's money winner with 2.5 million dollars in prize-money, said she was resting at home with her leg heavily bandaged and supported by a plastic splint. She was spending her time telephoning, reading and seeing friends.

She said she was pleased to hear that Monica Seles, out of action since being stabbed by a spectator at a tournament last April, would return to competitive tennis in Dublin in December.



Manuela Maleeva-Fragnera of Switzerland makes a forehand return during the Zurich Indoors final against American Martina Navratilova on October 10. Maleeva beat Navratilova 6-3, 7-6. — AFP photo

Seles on the threshold of return

MELBOURNE, Australia, Oct 11: Monica Seles aims to return to big-time tennis and defend her Australian Open title at the National Tennis Centre next January, reports AP.

Seles has not played in a Grand Slam event since being stabbed in the shoulder by a deranged fan in Hamburg, Germany, in April.

She currently is recuperating in Boca Raton, Fla, and plans to return to action in an exhibition event in Dublin, Ireland, in December.

"All indications are that Seles will defend her title, despite her long break due to the horrific stabbing," said Tennis Australia president Geoff Pollard.

"I spoke to her management

last week and they told me that Monica has her sights set very definitely on a comeback before the Open. She has a lot of computer points at stake and doesn't want to miss another Grand Slam."

Seles, a Yugoslav-based in Florida, will be aiming to win her fourth straight Australian Open title. She also may play in the New South Wales Open championships in Sydney the week before the Australian Open.

Seles has lost her world number one ranking to Steffi Graf of Germany during her enforced absence.

Pollard was speaking at the official launch of the 1994 Open, which will be held from Jan 17-31 and will offer record prize-money of 8.15 million Australian dollars (dhs 5.37 million US).

He said security at the tour-

nament would be increased as a result of the Seles incident.

"The issue of player and spectator safety has unfortunately put high on the agenda this year," Pollard said. "We have made plans to increase security, but those details will remain strictly confidential."

Prize-money has been increased by over 12 per cent in Australian dollar terms over the 1993 tournament. The winners of the men's and women's singles each will earn dhs 460,000 Australian (dhs 303,000 US).

"It is a substantial increase, but I believe it is a responsible one," Pollard said.

Reigning men's champion Jim Courier, Pete Sampras, Stefan Edberg, Goran Ivanisevic and Andre Agassi all have indicated they will contest the event, although Boris Becker has said he will be unavailable due to the imminent birth of his

first child.

Seles' rivals in the women's singles will include Graf, Gabriela Sabatini, Jennifer Capriati and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario. Martina Navratilova will again miss the event, saying it does not fit in with her scheduling.

Pollard said he expected 18 of the top 20 ranked players in both men's and women's singles to contest the tournament.

He also announced that Mats Wilander of Sweden, the only player to have won titles at the former venue of Kooyong and current venue at the National Tennis Centre, had been guaranteed a wildcard entry into the event.

The Ford Motor Company announced at the function that it has extended its sponsorship of the tournament through to 1997.

End game of an obsession play

HAMBURG, Oct 11: Guenter Parche, an obsessed fan of Steffi Graf who changed women's tennis with a stroke of a kitchen knife, goes on trial Tuesday in the stabbing of Monica Seles, reports AP.

Parche, a 39-year-old unemployed lathe operator from the east German town of Nordhausen, is charged with causing grievous bodily harm. The charge carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison.

Seles has not played tournament tennis since Parche stabbed her in the back on April 30, during a changeover in her quarterfinal match against Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria in a Hamburg tournament.

Seles suffered a wound 1.5 centimeters (a half-inch) deep.

Seles, clutching her back, screamed in pain as shocked security officials wrestled Parche to the ground. Parche leaped from the spectators' section at Hamburg's trendy Rothenbaum courts to bury his knife in Seles' back.

Parche told police he wanted to harm Seles because he could not bear to see her dominate the game over his favourite, Germany's national heroine Steffi Graf. Horrifyingly, Parche achieved what he set out to do.

In the five months since the stabbing, Seles has already dropped from No. 1 to No. 4 in the world rankings. Graf has regained the top ranking and is closing in on record earnings for a year that could reach dhs 3.7 million.

And more than dhs 1 million of that can possibly be traced directly to the absence of Seles, who was unable to defend her French and US Open titles. Graf collected more than dhs 1 million for winning the two titles.

Seles had won the French Open three years in a row, the US Open twice.

In between, Graf also defended her Wimbledon title.

The stabbing changed the game in other ways as well.

Bodyguards standing behind the players and facing spectators during changeovers are now a common sight, and security has been tightened at tournaments in other ways as well.

The trial comes just as Seles seems to be preparing to return to the game.

She reportedly started practicing with her father, Karolj, earlier this month.

Seles is recuperating in Boca Raton, Florida, and reportedly will play an exhibition in Dublin, Ireland, in December.

Officials say Seles will make her Grand Slam comeback at the Australian Open in January.

"I spoke to her management last week and they told me that Monica has her sights set very definitely on a comeback before the Open. She has a lot of computer points at stake and doesn't want to miss another

Grand Slam," Tennis Australia president Geoff Pollard said.

Organizers of the tournament said Monday that Seles also may play in the New South Wales Open championships at Sydney the week before the Australian Open.

After the stabbing, Seles went into seclusion while she was being treated by Dr Richard Steadman in Vall, Colorado.

Seles, an ethnic Hungarian, was born in Novi Sad, capital of the Serbian province of Vojvodina. She has lived in the United States since 1986 and lists her residence as Sarasota, Florida.

Parche is being tried before the Hamburg District Court.

Seles is a co-plaintiff in the trial, but will not appear in court. She will be represented by her lawyer, Gerhard Strate, who said it was "impossible to understand" that Parche was charged only with causing grievous bodily harm, instead of attempted murder.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS
1 Hell — no fury...
5 Intricacy of intrigue
8 Big vessel
12 The Morning Watch
13 Nest-egg acct.
14 Now's partner
15 Horse race units
17 Pinnacle
18 '30s child star
19 Wicker-work material
21 Lisa, to Bert
22 Deborah Kerr role
23 It's often served au vin
26 Lummax
28 Jones of 'Monty Python'
31 Responsibility
33 Space-craft compart-

- ment
35 Stationer's unit
36 One of Franklin's certainties
38 Snapshot
40 Resort
41 Finger-paint
43 'Gotcha!'
45 Fred's pal
47 1992 film, 'Mississippi —'
51 'Zounds!'
52 2,000 pounds
54 Melody
55 A billion years
56 Teased
57 Detest
58 Build on
59 Skip DOWN
1 Sword handle
2 Malarial symptom
3 Word
4 Lends a hand
5 Apple variety
6 Work unit
7 Iraqi port
8 'T.J. Hooker' star
9 Metric units
10 'La Douce'
11 Hammer head part
Solution time: 21 mins.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-33 indicating starting positions.

CRYPTOQUIP puzzle grid with letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP puzzle text: C Q G V H - K P W Q F I Y Q W B Q I J G Y A P G R J H C S O A B V P R S P G S I W W F I O K P Y J O A J W F I S Y. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AFTER A HAIR-DYEING BLUNDER, I MIGHT BEGIN TO SEE THE ROOTS OF MY TROUBLES. Today's Cryptoquip clue: Y 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.