

Handsome start for hosts

KANPUR, India, Nov 8: Hosts India made an impressive start in the five-nation Hero Cup limited-overs tournament, thrashing Sri Lanka by seven wickets in the opening match here today, reports AFP.

Lanky seamer Javagal Srinath took a career-best five for 24 in 6.4 overs as Sri Lanka were bundled out for a paltry 203 after being asked to bat first at the overflowing Green Park Stadium here.

India backed by 35,000 boisterous fans raced to victory in the 45th over with Vinod Kambli striking a breezy 78 and skipper Mohammad Azharuddin an unbeaten 75.

The Sri Lankan innings failed to gain momentum as India struck vital blows at regular intervals after a 43-run opening stand between Roshan Mahanama and Asanka Gurusinha.

From a comfortable 116 for two in the 33rd over Sri Lanka lost their last eight wickets for the addition of only 87 runs as India bowled and fielded superbly.

Mahanama topscored for Sri Lanka with an attractive 73. Aravinda de Silva made 33 and Hashan Tillekeratne contributed 35, but the other batsmen fell like nine pins.

Srinath, whose previous best figures were five for 41 against England earlier this year, generated bounce and movement on the slow wicket to trouble the batsmen. He was later named man-of-the-match.

Sri Lankan seamer Pramodaya Wickramasinghe raised his team's hopes when he removed Indian openers Manoj Prabhakar and Woorker Raman by the 11th over with the score at 40.

Left-handed Raman, playing instead of the injured Navjot Sidhu was trapped leg before with the first ball he faced in the opening over. Prabhakar made 20 before he was caught by Ruwan Kalpage.

Kambli and Azharuddin thwarted the Sri Lankans with a 100-run stand for the third wicket after Wickramasinghe left the field due to a knee injury while fielding.

Left-handed Kambli struck nine boundaries before he was caught in the deep off seamer Dilip Lyanage in the 34th over.

Azharuddin and his deputy Sachin Tendulkar (26 not out) easily knocked off the remaining runs against the seven-man Sri Lankan attack.

It was Azharuddin's fourth successive one-day half century against the Sri Lankans, having achieved the feat in all the three internationals India played on the tour of the island in August.

South Africa, West Indies and Zimbabwe are the other teams taking part in the three-week tournament being organised to celebrate the diamond jubilee of the Cricket Association of Bengal.

Each team will play the other once in the round-robin league, with the top four teams qualifying for the semifinals. The final is slated for November 27 at Calcutta's Eden Gardens. In the next match on

Tuesday, Sri Lanka will meet the West Indies at Bombay's Wankhede Stadium.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the first innings in the Hero Cup one-day international between India and Sri Lanka being played in Kanpur on Sunday:

SHRI LANKA:
RS Mahanama lbw 73
P A de Silva run out 33
A Ranatunga c and b Tendulkar 1
HP Tillekeratne c Srinath b Prabhakar 35

INDIA:
M Prabhakar c Kalpage b Wickramasinghe 20
W U Raman lbw b Wickramasinghe 0
VG Kambli c Ramanayake b Lyanage 78
M A Azharuddin not out 75
S R Tendulkar not out 26
Extras: (lb4, w2) 6
Total: (for three wickets 44.4 overs) 205

Fall of wickets: 1-43; 2-53; 3-116; 4-117; 5-147; 6-175; 7-188; 8-200; 9-202.

Bowling: O M R W
Prabhakar 7 2 27 1
Kapil 7 0 30 0
Srinath 6.4 1 24 5
Tendulkar 10 2 27 1
Kumble 10 0 46 0
Chauhan 6 0 28 2
Sharma 3 0 16 0

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Fall of wickets: 1-1; 2-40; 3-140.

Did not bat: K Dev, A Sharma, A Kumble, V Yadav, J Srinath, RK Chauhan.

Bowling: O M R W
Wickramasinghe 6 1 13 2
Ramanayake 5.4 0 31 0
Lyanage 7 0 40 1
Ranatunga 3 0 19 0
Kalpage 8 0 27 0
Jayasuriya 6 0 32 0
Tillekeratne 9 0 39 0

Result: India won by seven wicket
Man-of-the-match: Javagal Srinath

J SRINATH...man-of-the-match

AP Gurusinha c Yadav b Srinath 11
ST Jayasuriya c Sharma b Srinath 7
P A de Silva run out 33
A Ranatunga c and b Tendulkar 1
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Clean sweep for Indonesia in Thai Open

BANGKOK, Nov 8: Defending champions Joko Suprianto and Susi Susanti, both of Indonesia, successfully retained their respective men's and women's singles titles in the 90,000 US dollars Thailand Open badminton championships which ended Sunday, reports AFP.

In the men's singles final 1993 world champion Suprianto defeated compatriot Hermawan Susanto in straight sets 15-11, 15-3 to win the top 5,850 dollars in prize money.

The women's singles final saw two-time Thai Open champion Susi Susanti win the title for the third straight year when she beat Thailand's Somharuethai Jaronsiri 12-10, 11-3 to receive the 4,500-dollar prize.

In the women's doubles final unseeded Chinese pair Gu Fei and Gu Jun beat compatriots Li Qi and Han Jingua 15-5, 15-10.

The mixed doubles title was won by Chinese pair of Chen Xiangdong and Sun Man with a 15-5, 15-11 win over Liu Jianjun and Wang Xiaoyuan of China.

In the men's doubles finals Indonesia's Guanawan and Bambang Suprianto beat Indonesia's Imay Hendra and Dicky Purwosugiono 15-5, 15-7.

Stark on a roll

PARIS, Nov 8: Jonathan Stark may not be doing as well as his old doubles partner, but he's making good progress, reports AP.

The American from Medford, Ore, has won six consecutive weeks on the pro tour. Stark and Byron Black of Zimbabwe defeated Czech Cyril Suk and Dutchman Tom Nijssen, 4-6, 7-5, 6-2 to win the Paris Open doubles title Sunday along with 127,000 dollars.

Since the beginning of October, Stark has won doubles championships in Basel, Switzerland, Toulouse, France, Vienna, and Paris. He won a singles crown in Bolzano, Italy, and took a challenger tournament last week in Brest, France.

"After six Sundays in a row, I'm pretty tired," Stark said. "Singles is really what I want to do but sharing victories is good too."

Six years ago, Stark was on the US junior team with Jim Courier and David Wheaton. That year, he won the French Open junior doubles title with Courier.

Courier has gone on to win two Australian and two French Open singles titles and hold the No. 1 world ranking for a while.

Wheaton won the 1991 Grand Slam Cup, worth 2 million dollars. Stark started the year ranked 85th, but jumped to 57th when he beat Courier in Tokyo in April. He is now 37th in the world.

Since forming a doubles team with Black, he has won four titles and made the semifinals in the other tournament.

"It's pretty amazing considering we had never played together before," Stark said. "It's a good combination with his return and my serve."

Cash plans a comeback

SYDNEY, Nov 8: Former Wimbledon champion Pat Cash is to return to the tennis circuit with a singles wildcard entry at the New South Wales Open in January, reports Reuter.

Cash, 28, who won the men's title at Wimbledon in 1987, has had recurring knee problems that has kept him out of the sport this year and languishing outside the top 200.

The Australian serve and volley specialist will play at the tournament, held between January 10-16 the week before the Australian Open in a men's field which includes Andrei Medvedev, Thomas Muster, Ivan Lendl, and Petr Korda.

A spokeswoman for the Australian Open said a wildcard was available for Cash to playing the Grand Slam event providing he was match fit.

Kremlin Cup tennis

MOSCOW, Nov 8: Marc Rosset, Bjorn Borg and other famous tennis players will compete in the fourth Italtel Kremlin Cup tournament opening here Monday, reports AP.

Rosset, the Swiss Olympic champion, is considered a favourite in the 350,000 dollar tournament. He won it last year.

Other competitors from 15 countries include the Russian player Andrei Cherkasov and Israeli Amos Mansdorf.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin, an amateur tennis player greeted participants Sunday with a special message he signed as a "long-time tennis fan".

The tournament ends November 14.



Croatian Goran Ivanisevic (R) and Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev (L) pose with their trophies after the Paris Open final Nov 7. Ivanisevic defeated the Ukrainian teenager 6-4, 6-2, 7-6 (7/2). —AFP photo

Ivanisevic blazes with aces

PARIS, Nov 8: Goran Ivanisevic continued his late-season comeback by blasting 27 aces to overpower Andrei Medvedev, 6-4, 6-2, 7-6(7/2) and win the 2.1 million dollar Paris Open Sunday, reports AP.

It was the ninth-seeded Croatian's ninth career title and third this year. It was also the third consecutive final for Ivanisevic, who won in Vienna two weeks ago and lost in Stockholm last week. Medvedev, seeded eighth, was in his first indoor final.

The 22-year-old Ivanisevic has made a strong comeback on the tour after a stress fracture in his right foot at the start of 1993. He won his first singles title of the year at the inaugural Bucharest Open on clay in September.

"This year I have been struggling a lot," Ivanisevic said. "But I have been playing well the last two months and this is like a gift for the hard work."

"After the US Open I went to practice more," he said. "I started to play with more fun."

Ivanisevic gave a hint of things to come against Medvedev when he blasted four aces in his first service game, two more than 200 kilometres an hour (125 mph). He ended with 97 aces for the tournament with a fastest speed of 206 kph

(128 Mph).

The crowd occasionally booed Ivanisevic's show of power which made short work of Medvedev. "I don't care. They want five sets but I don't want to play five sets," he said.

"On clay I would have a lot of chances," said Medvedev, who has won five titles on clay. "But indoors it is very hard."

Ivanisevic had been impressive in beating No. 1-ranked Pete Sampras, No. 6 Stefan Edberg, No. 7 Michael Chang and No. 8 Medvedev in the last four matches.

"To beat four top 10 guys in one tournament is not easy so you have to play good," said Ivanisevic, who won 314,000 dollars to put his official 1993 earnings just short of 1 million dollars.

He did however have to save a match point against Swede Jonas Svensson in his first match of the tournament.

Ivanisevic's only worry in the first set came when Medvedev had a break point in the sixth game. Ivanisevic swatted that aside with a service winner and won the game an ace.

Ivanisevic took the lead with a service break in the next game, passing Medvedev at the net.

From then on it was a race to the finals. Ivanisevic ended the first set in 32 minutes, and had two breaks and five more

aces in the 26-minute second set.

"I was playing great. Every time I wanted to hit an ace, I hit an ace," the Croatian said.

Medvedev thought he had the answer to stop the left-handed Ivanisevic.

"Maybe there was something I could do — to come to him on the changeover and ask him to serve with the right hand," Medvedev joked.

Ivanisevic served for the match and had his only laps when he double-faulted to allow Medvedev to even it at 5-5 and eventually force a tiebreaker.

However Ivanisevic had two aces in the tiebreaker to move to a 6-1 lead and then won with a delicate ball, ending the one-hour 45-minute match.

Ivanisevic increased his chances to gain a spot in the season-ending ATP World Championships, which gathers the top eight players of the year.

Six of the eight slots are already clinched by Sampras, Jim Courier, Sergi Bruguera, Michael Stich, Edberg and Medvedev.

Ivanisevic, last year's champion Boris Becker, Chang and France's Cedric Pioline are still in contention for the two remaining spots. Ivanisevic, Becker and Pioline are entered in this week's European Community Championships in Antwerp, Belgium.

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Tauziat's first since 1991

QUEBEC CITY, Nov 8: Nathalie Tauziat of France won her first title since 1991 with a 6-4, 6-1 victory over Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria in the final of the 150,000 dollars Bell Challenge tennis tournament on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The third-seeded Tauziat seized momentum with a crucial first-set service break and rolled to victory over the fourth seed in 68 minutes.

"I played well all week," said the 18th-ranked Tauziat, whose last title came at a lower-echelon event in Val D'oise, France in 1991.

Tauziat said she was determined to overcome a pair of disappointment earlier this year when she narrowly missed reaching finals at Schenectady, New York and Filderstadt, Germany.

"I'd had my chances at two other tournaments this year and I missed them. I really wanted to win this time," added Tauziat who earned 27,000 dollars.

The match was evenly contested through the first nine games of the opening set. But Tauziat broke Maleeva at 5-4 to take the first set and she was on her way.

Maleeva felt the turning point came a bit later when she failed to convert game points in both the third and fourth games of the second set.

"If I had gone ahead 3-1 instead of being down 1-3 in the second set it might have been a different story," Maleeva said. "On the important points, when she was down, Nathalie served well."

Tauziat credited her coach Regis de Camaret with the improvement in her delivery. "He has really been helpful," Tauziat said.

"For this whole tournament I served well and backed it up with my volleying.

"It makes me laugh because three years ago everyone said I had a lousy serve. Now all the players say that it's great."

Lu's best ever

OTTAWA, Nov 8: Lu Chen of China won her first major international figure skating championship Sunday, capturing the Skate Canada International, reports AP.

In a performance that bodes well for the Lillehammer Olympics, Lu, the bronze medalist at the 1993 world Championships, prevailed in the concluding women's free skate programme.

Olya Markova of Russia, with her second straight highly theatrical and effective programme, finished second and Karen Preston of Canada took third.

Preston, expected to win the silver behind Lu, delivered a clean short programme to sit second entering Sunday's long programme. But she came out wooden, landing most of her jumps but showing little grace or emotion.

"I was really relaxed until after the warmup and then it hit me like a rock in the stomach," Preston said. "I was fighting for the technical elements. We don't live in the Peggy Fleming era when a spiral wins it. You have to have your technical elements. It was brutal work."

Canada's Kurt Browning, the four-time world champion, claimed the men's title Saturday night with his familiar Casablanca long programme. He landed five triples but wobbled on the landing of three.

"I expected it to be a little lumpy, but I felt better than I looked," Browning said. "It just needs more running, I guess."

Topguns set out for Antwerp

ANTWERP, Belgium, Nov 8: Goran Ivanisevic is going for his third win in a month — and a place in next week's ATP World Championships — at the 1.11 million dollar European Community Championship, reports AP.

The top opposition standing in the way of his deadly serve this week will be Pete Sampras, the world's No. 1, and Germans Michael Stich and Boris Becker.

And in a preview of next month's Davis Cup final, both Germany and Australia have their top players entered in the last ATP event before the World Championships in Frankfurt.

"I've been playing great for two months now," Ivanisevic said Sunday after winning the Paris Indoor Open with an awesome display of 27 aces.

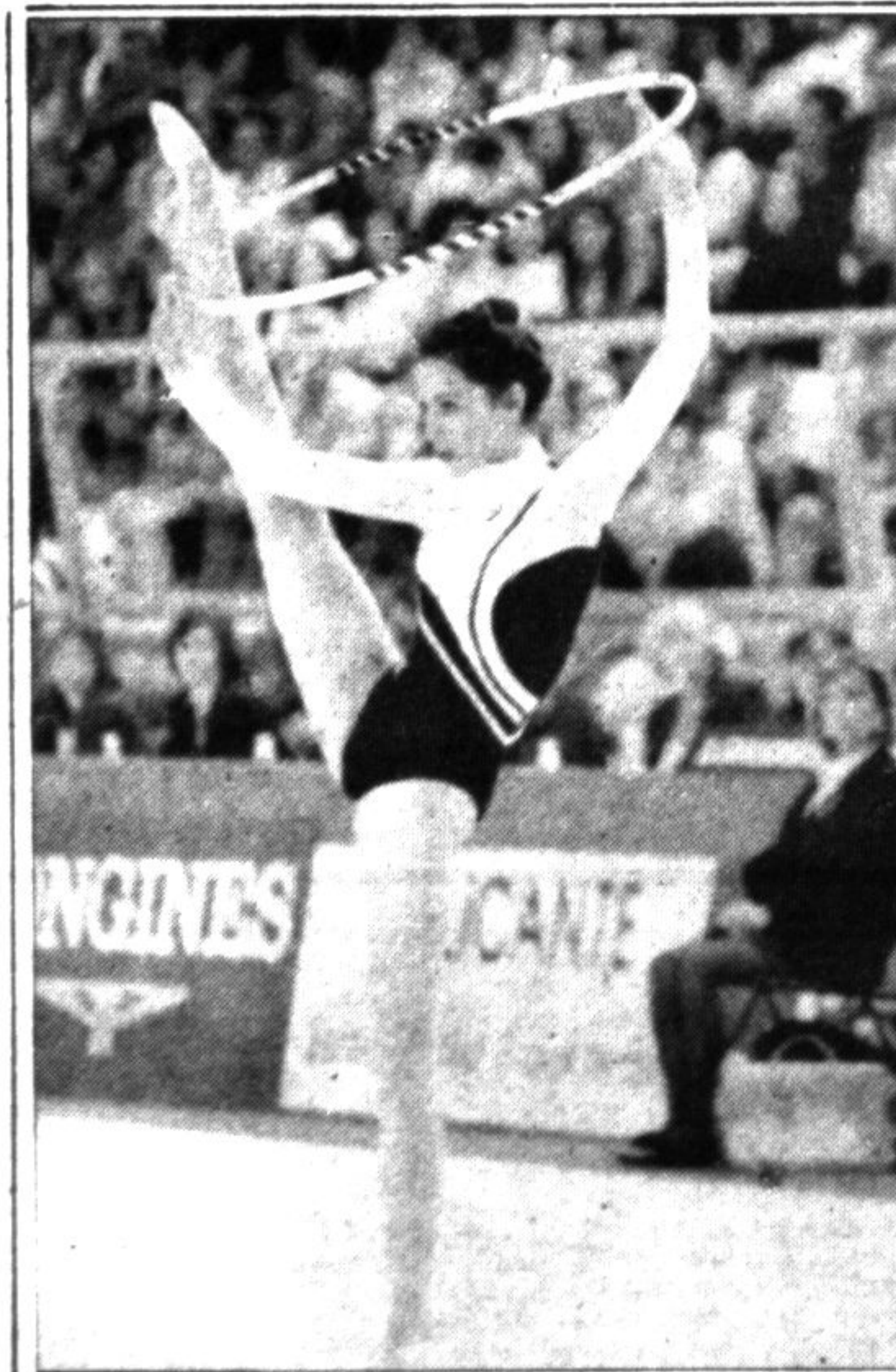
He will need to continue that this week at the ECC, which opens Monday.

The Croatian asked the Antwerp organisers for a wildcard into the tournament to make sure he would get into the World Championships, which brings together the top eight players of the year.

By winning the Paris event, he is certain to improve on his world ranking of 11th.

Six of the eight slots are already held by Sampras, Jim Courier, Sergi Bruguera, Michael Stich, Stefan Edberg and Andrei Medvedev.

Ivanisevic, Becker and France's Cedric Pioline will be in Antwerp trying to clinch one of the two remaining slots. American Michael Chang, still ranked seventh going into the week, could be ousted by one of them since he won't be playing at Antwerp.



Bulgaria's Maria Petrova performs at the rhythmic gymnastics World Championships in Spain on Nov 7. Petrova won all five events to become the world champion. —AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Gets smart, with "up" 6 Spider-Man's logo 9 "Bully!" 12 From square one 13 Jackie's second 14 Actor Vigoda 15 Escargot 16 Backyard play area 18 Dressing situation 20 Hangover? 21 Urban transport 23 About to arrive 24 Cracker spreads 25 Infinitesimal bit 27 Glitch 29 J.R. Ewing et al. 31 J.R. Ewing et al. 35 Attendance count 37 Harvard's rival 38 Finished parade 43 "Get By" 44 Cruising 45 Illustration, e.g. 47 Hat style 49 Catarrh remedy 52 Mrs. Nixon 53 Actress MacGraw 54 Bakery byproduct 55 Reply: abbr. 56 LBJ pooch 57 Strained DOWN 1 "How Green — My Valley" 24 Luau gunk Solution time: 26 mins.

CRYPTOQUIP B V K V O B D M N V Z A P F S C D O Z V F ' J F V J S F X B V J X P O D X P S O : K D N C M V D Z A Yesterday's Cryptoquip: OUR NEIGHBOR, THE DOCTOR, HAD A FAVORITE MOVIE: "OF HUMAN BANDAGE." Today's Cryptoquip clue: M equals B 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.