

Baudone sends Appelmans' packing

BRISBANE, Australia, Jan 3: Italian Natalia Baudone upset 10th-seeded Sabine Appelmans of Belgium 7-5, 6-3 in searing heat Monday in the first round of the dls 150,000 Australian women's hardcourt tennis championship, reports AP.

Baudone, who was born in Belgium, coped better with the blazing sun than did her opponent and gave credit to the six days she spent preparing in Brisbane prior to the event.

Appelmans' compatriot, Sandra Wasserman, enjoyed better fortune when her Austrian opponent, Barbara Schett, withdrew because of heat exhaustion.

Schett won the first set 6-3, lost the second 5-7 and was down 0-3 in the third when she was overcome by the oppressive heat and could not continue.

The temperature on the Milton Tennis Centre's Rebound Ace courts was later measured at around 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit).

Australian Michelle Jaggard-Lal, a semifinalist last year, advanced with a 6-4, 6-0 victory over American Jolene Watanabe, while Petra Begerow of Germany had to save four match points before defeating Australian Lisa McShea 2-6, 7-6 (6-3), 6-2.

In other matches, 12th-seeded Linda Ferrando of Italy beat American Caroline Kuhlman 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, No. 13 Irena Spirlea of Romania defeated compatriot Catalina Cristea 6-4, 6-1, and 14th-seeded Mexican Angelica Gavaldon swept past German Karin Kschwendt 6-4, 6-2.

Teen-age stars Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria and Lindsay Davenport of the United States are the top two seeds, but both had first-round byes.

Audra Keller of the United States earned a second-round meeting with Maleeva by defeating Petrea Ritter of France 7-5, 6-1. Lea Ghirardi of France will play Davenport after ousting Ruxandra Dragomir of Romania 6-4, 2-6, 6-4.

The 56-woman tournament continues through Sunday. It is one of a series of events before the Australian Open, which starts Jan 17 at the National Tennis Centre in Melbourne.

Deportivo stretches lead

MADRID, Jan 3: Deportivo Coruna extended their Spanish First Division lead to two points after Barcelona crashed 2-0 on Sunday at Sporting Gijon, who move up to third place, reports Reuter.

Barcelona were pushed back by a sparkling Sporting side that created more chances than the champions, who once again were also let down by poor finishing.

Dutch coach Johan Cruyff gambled on attack after going 1-0 down to a 33rd minute header by Abelardo Fernández, taking off defender Ronald Koeman in the 64th minute for Bulgarian striker Hristo Stoichkov. He also switched two strikers, Quique Estevez for Aitor Begiristain.

But the changes failed to pay off and Barcelona were frequently caught out by Sporting counterattacks that exposed jittery goalkeeper Andoni Zubizarreta, playing his 450th First Division game in 14 seasons.

Barcelona pressed hard up front but Sporting made it safe with a well-deserved 75th minute goal by Ivan Miner.

Deportivo drew 0-0 away to Rayo Vallecano in a scrappy game on Saturday, with only a brilliant performance from home team keeper Wilfredo denying Coruna a deserved victory.

The Nigerian saved at least three certain goals, two of them from Deportivo's Brazilian striker Bebeto, and was easily his side's best player.

Leaders Deportivo now have 25 points, two ahead of Barcelona and three ahead of Sporting. Athletic Bilbao and Real Madrid follow on 21 points.

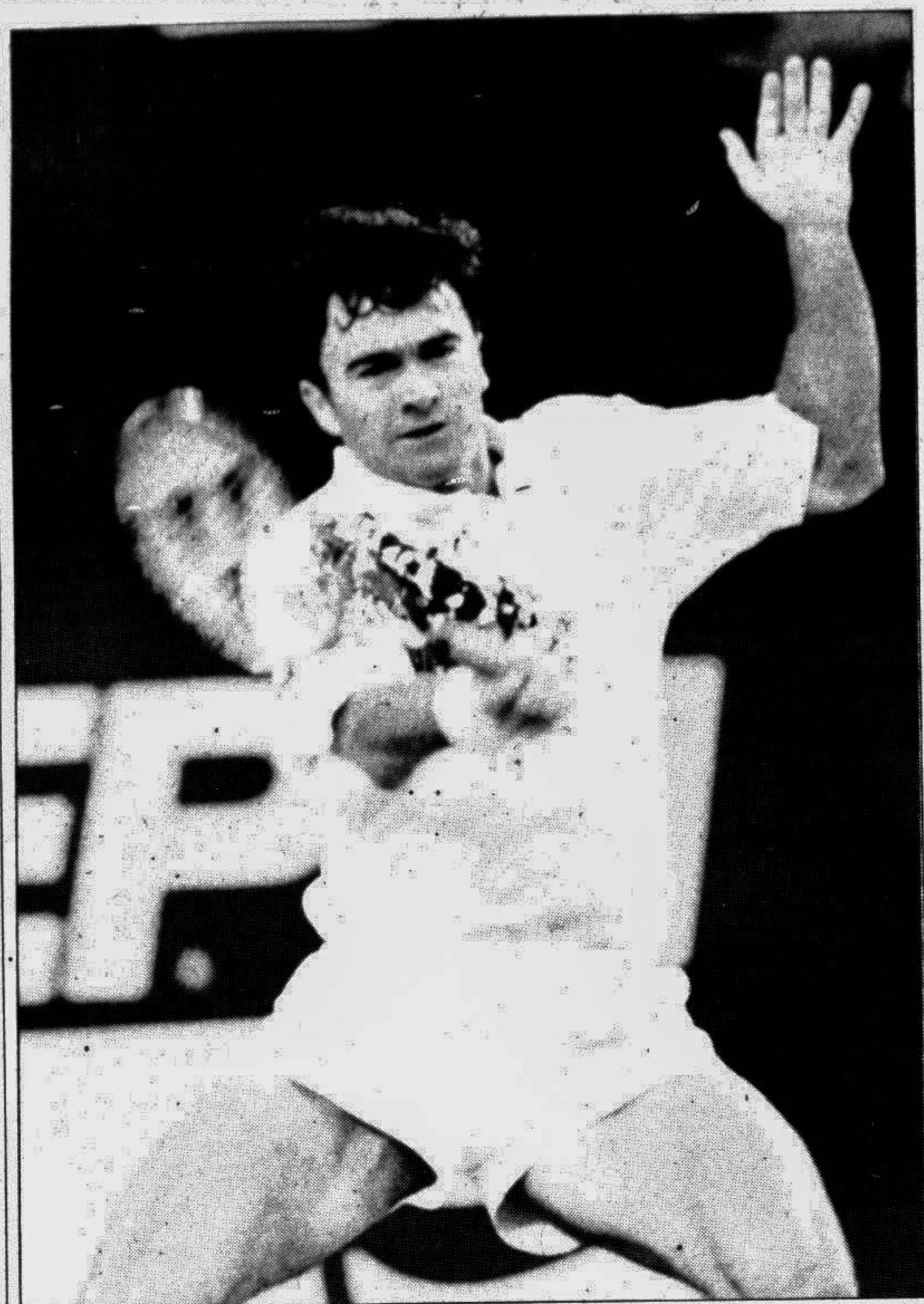
Real Madrid struggled to beat an improving Albacete 2-0 at home, with a 51st minute goal from Emilio Butragueno and an own goal by defender Santiago Denia.

Butragueno's goal was virtually the only bright spot in Madrid's victory, the striker beating two defenders in the area and blasting home a powerful shot.

First division newcomers Racing Santander shocked third-placed Athletic Bilbao with a 2-1 away win, after trailing 1-0 to a 54th minute goal from Jose Zigmund.

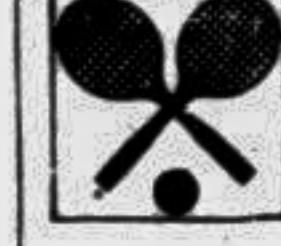
The goal forced a change of strategy that paid dividends as the Santander team dominated totally in the last 20 minutes.

They equalised with a 77th minute goal from Michel Pineda and grabbed victory after 88 minutes when new Russian signing Radchenko jinked through the Bilbao defence to lob the ball over keeper Juan Valencia.



Australia's Wally Masur returns the ball during his 7-5, 6-4 win over France's Cedric Pioline in the quarter-finals of the Hopman cup in Perth yesterday. — AFP photo

Aussies wipe France out



PERTH, Australia, Jan 3: Wally Masur downed Cedric Pioline in straight sets Monday, leading Australia to a 3-0 Hopman Cup quarterfinal victory over France, but then denounced the new electronic line-calling system being used at the tournament, reports AP.

Masur beat US Open finalist Pioline 7-5, 6-4 in the men's singles after Nicole Provis defeated France's Nathalie Tauziat 4-6, 7-6, (7-4), 6-2.

Masur and Provis won the mixed doubles 8-4 in one pro set.

But Masur's revenge for losses to Pioline at the US Open and Wimbledon last year came in a singles match that saw the Tennis Electronic Lines system fail four times.

On each occasion, the machine made a loud bleeping noise in the middle of a point. Masur asked for the system to be turned off, but tournament referee Peter Bellenger refused.

"If there are any further problems with TEL we will close it down," said Bellenger.

In the evening quarter-final, unseeded Austria upset third-seeded former champion Spain.

Judith Wiesner opened by defeating Conchita Martinez 6-2, 6-4, and Alex Antonitsch grew in confidence as his match progressed and downed Emilio Sanchez 3-6, 6-4, 6-3.

"I'm more happy with the result than the way I played," said Antonitsch. "I got myself out of trouble."

Wiesner completely dominated a below-par Martinez, who never lived up to her No. 4 world ranking.

"A lot of things came to-

French love Morceli

PARIS, Jan 3: Nouredine Morceli of Algeria, who broke the world record in the mile this year, was named Monday as the top athlete for 1993 by the French sports daily L'Equipe.

Morceli won the world 1,500-metre title for the second time this year in Stuttgart, Germany. He broke the world record for the mile in September with a performance of 3 minutes, 44.39 seconds, nearly two seconds better than the previous mark.

He also had the second-best times in the 1,500 and 3,000 metres and was unbeaten throughout the year.

Morceli had 169 points to beat Linford Christie, the Briton who won the 100 metres at the World Championships in 9.87 seconds, just .01 off of the world record.

Third was American basketball player Michael Jordan, who was L'Equipe's 1992 winner. Jordan led the Chicago Bulls to their third consecutive pro basketball title in the United States then abruptly retired just before the start of the season. He had 147 points.

"Hopefully it won't come down to the mixed doubles," he said. "But this is different to a regular tournament and that is a good thing. Because it is different, it should be fun."

Lendl is using the mixed event as part of his preparation for the Australian Open, which begins Jan 17 at the National Tennis Center in Melbourne.

"I'd seen plenty of tennis balls by the end of last year," said Lendl, who was knocked out in the first round of three of the year's four Grand Slam tournaments.

At Wimbledon, the only Grand Slam he has never won, he made it to the second round.

In a career that has spawned 94 singles titles, Lendl won only two events in 1993 — at Munich and Tokyo.

The lack of success left perfectionist Lendl disillusioned and sparked media talk of imminent retirement. But the Lendl who met the press Monday was cheerful and keyed up, clearly looking forward to the new season.

"I still enjoy hitting the ball," he said. "I have no immediate thoughts of retirement. I'll give myself the whole year and then see how I feel about it."

Czech-born Lendl, who recently took US citizenship, will represent his new nation for the first time when he partners Mary Joe Fernandez in the Hopman Cup teams event.

Lendl and Fernandez play the German combination of

Bernard Karpacher and Anke Huber in their opening match Tuesday.

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Lendl and Fernandez play the German combination of

men's singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles.

"Hopefully we can both win our singles matches so the doubles doesn't matter," said Fernandez.

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Korda not a satisfied customer

PERTH, Australia, Jan 3: Petr Korda ended last year by winning the richest prize tennis has to offer, reports AFP.

But despite collecting US \$2 million for his victory at the Grand Slam cup in Munich last month, Korda has labeled 1993 as the year he wants to forget.

The aggressive Czech left-hander beat the world's two top-ranked players Pete Sampras and Michael Stich — as well a No. 4 Stefan Edberg on his way to a memorable triumph in Munich, but it was the only bright spot in a year that saw him plagued by injury, including a heart ailment that came close to ending his career.

"I had a bad year with a lot of health problems so winning the Grand Slam Cup gave me a lot of satisfaction," he said Monday, adding that "the most important thing, more important than the money, was beating No. 1, No. 2 and No. 4 in the world."

Korda, 24, has so far won only six career titles despite once being ranked as high as fifth in the world. He is currently ranked 12th after a year in which the Grand Slam Cup provided his only victory.

That win alone almost doubled his career prize money, but Korda looks back with disdain.

"It was a year I really want to put behind me and forget," he said. "I've put all the thoughts of injury into a box and thrown it away."

Korda opens his 1994 campaign on Tuesday when he partners Jana Novotna on the Czech Republic team to face former champion Switzerland in the Hopman Cup teams championship.

The pair is using the tournament to prepare for the Australian Open, which begins Jan 17 at the National Tennis Centre in Melbourne.

Korda traditionally plays well in Australia. He made the quarterfinals of the 1993 Australian Open and enjoyed one of his rare IBM/ATP Tour successes when he reached the final of the Australian Indoor championship in Sydney in October.

"It took me 30 hours to get here, so I'm taking a relaxed approach," Korda said.

Novotna, meanwhile, said she has turned the disappointment of throwing away a likely victory over Steffi Graf in last year's Wimbledon final into a learning experience.

Novotna led 4-1, 40-30 in the last set of the Wimbledon final before crumbling.

"I've tried to turn the whole thing around in a positive way and to learn from it," she said.

The 2-hour, 14-minute match was a brave performance for Provis, who was troubled by a painful left shoulder injury that made it difficult for her to hit a double-handed backhand. Provis now is 4-0 in Hopman Cup singles matches.

Tauziat was angered by her lack of concentration.

"I gave her the opportunity to come back," she said.

Masur said he had benefited from playing a first-round match which he lost to Sweden's Mikael Pernfors — while France had a first-round bye.

Provis played pretty much how I played my first round match," Masur said. "He was rushing and playing the wrong shot at the wrong time."

Fifth-seeded Australia will face either the top-seeded Czech Republic or No. 7 Switzerland in the semifinals on Wednesday, while Austria will tackle either the No. 2-seeded United States or unseeded Germany.

The 12-nation tournament is sponsored by Pepsi and continues through Jan 7. The winning pair will collect US \$134,000.

AC can win even without Papin

ROME, Jan 3: The first-half dismissal of French striker Jean-Pierre Papin failed to stop champions AC Milan defeating Reggiana 1-0 on Sunday and increasing their lead in the Italian First Division to two points, reports Reuter.

Marcel Desailly's 28th minute goal, his first since joining Milan from Olympique Marseille last November, proved sufficient for the champions to end Reggiana's unbeaten home record while Papin was sent off after appearing to elbow an opponent in the 37th minute.

Milan lead the table with 25 points from 16 matches, two clear of Juventus and Sampdoria, who have both played a game more.

They travel to struggling Udinese next Thursday but are already assured of finishing the first half of the 34-match campaign on top of the table — as they have done in the previous two championship-winning seasons.

Newly-crowned European footballer-of-the-year Roberto Baggio started 1994 impressively, leading Juventus to their first away win of the season with two goals in a 3-0 win at Udinese.

Sampdoria's Ruud Gullit claimed the first goal of the new year with a sixth minute header against Lazio but Giuseppe Signori equalised from the penalty spot in the 38th minute.

Parma dropped to fourth place in the table with a 1-1 draw at Picenza while an 87th minute goal from Pierluigi Orlandini earned Atalanta a shock 2-1 win over Internazionale, joint fifth with Lazio at the start of the day, at the San Siro Stadium.

Although stuck in the lower reaches of the table, newly-promoted Reggiana started the day with an unbeaten home record to match that of the league leaders.

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