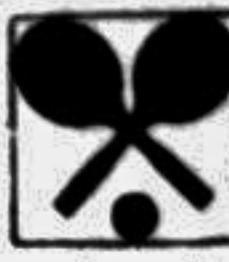


## Sport

Graf faces Sanchez today

## Sampras, Martin in final



MELBOURNE, Jan 28: It's an all-American final between two all-American guys.

It's the top player in the sport — Pete Sampras — against no-name Todd Martin at the Australian Open, reports AP.

Sampras was awesome in ending the two-year reign of his friend and rival Jim Courier, winning 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 in the semifinals on Friday without dropping serve.

Martin was methodical, and occasionally inspired, as he defeated two-time champion Stefan Edberg of Sweden, the No. 4 seed, 3-6, 7-6 (9-7), 7-6 (9-7), 7-6 (7-4) to progress to the first Grand Slam final of his career.

Sampras, the world's top-ranked player, kept on track for his third successive Grand Slam title. He already is the Wimbledon and US Open champion.

He took just 2 hours, 2 minutes to outplay Courier, his friend and sometime golf partner.

Sampras will be bidding to become the first man since Roy Emerson in 1964-65 to hold the Wimbledon, US Open and Australian titles simultaneously.

It will be the first all-American men's final at the tournament since Johan Kriek beat Steve Denton in 1982.

So complete was Sampras' dominance over the defending champion that Courier did not get a break point until the fourth game of the third set. Courier had only four forehand

## Rafter included

MELBOURNE, Jan 28: Patrick Rafter was included in an Australian Davis Cup team for the first time when he was named to a seven-man squad Friday by new captain, John Newcombe, reports AP.

Rafter, who has risen from 301st to 54th in the world rankings over the past 12 months, was named in the training squad alongside Richard Fromberg, Wally Masur, Jamie Morgan, Jason Stoltenberg, Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde.

Newcombe said the Australian team to face Russia in a first-round World Group match in St Petersburg from March 26-27 would be selected from the squad, although Masur has said he will not be available.

"Wally has said he would like to take a few months to freshen up," Newcombe said. "But he has assured us he will remain an integral part of Australia's Davis Cup challenge."

Newcombe and coach Tony Roche were last week named to lead the Australian team after the retirement late last year of Neale Fraser.

## Olympic flame due in Sweden Feb 4

STOCKHOLM, Jan 28: The Olympic flame will arrive in Stockholm on February 4 and stay for one week before being transported to Norway February 11 for the Lillehammer Winter Olympic Games, which begin February 12, reports AP.

The flame, which will arrive from Helsinki, will be carried from the airport to Stockholm's Olympic Stadium carried by several of Sweden's most prolific athletes.

Flame carriers include skier Thomas Waisberg, who won the gold medal in the 15-kilometer cross-country race at the 1980 Olympics, and 1976 gold medal cyclist Bernt Johansson.

winners in the entire match. That was one of the better matches I've played so far in my career," said Sampras. "Everything really clicked today. I really couldn't play any better."

Both finalists are laid-back, deliberate and oh, so polite. Their Mom and Pop and Apple Pie images are a far cry from the brashness of their predecessors Jimmy Connors, John McEnroe and Andre Agassi.

Martin capitalised on Edberg's below-par serve to beat the 1988 and 1987 champion. The fast-rising former college star said he was "pretty excited."

Edberg missed the opportunity to play in his sixth Australian Open final. He had been runnerup three of the previous four years.

Martin, a 23-year-old from Lansing, Michigan, has risen from 73rd to 12th in the world rankings over the last 12 months.

The No. 9 seed sent service returns rocketing past Edberg on both the forehand and backhand sides and frequently was able to pass Edberg when the Swede charged the net.

"He read my serve," conceded Edberg, who said he served at only 85 to 90 percent of his ability.

The win took Martin 3 hours, 50 minutes.

"I've believed I could do this for a long time," said Martin, who has won only one title in his professional career.

Edberg was 24-13 in tiebreakers last year — the fifth best average in tennis — but Martin kept his nerve after squandering first a service break in the fourth set and then four match points in the final tiebreaker. He clinched victory with an ace.

Sanchez Vicario, a semifinal loser at Flinders Park for the past three years, took the elusive extra step in style with a 6-1, 6-2 annihilation of a disappointing Gabriela Sabatini.

World number one Graf had already registered an equally comfortable 6-3, 6-3 win over Japan's Kimiko Date, reaching the 22nd Grand Slam final of her career with plenty to spare.

Martin served consistently well throughout the match, hammering down 13 aces and only one double-fault. He hit 93 winners to Edberg's 74.

"He put up a very good performance," Edberg said. "He played three very solid sets and maintained a very high standard of play. I played a good match, but it wasn't enough to win."

The fine followed complaints to tournament organisers from television viewers, who said Ivanisevic could be clearly heard swearing in Croatian.

The fine was the third of the tournament for the fiery Ivanisevic, who earlier was fined dls 350 US for ball abuse and dls 500 US for racket abuse.

★★★

DOUBLES DOUBLE BID: Dutch pair Jacco Eltingh and Paul Haarhuis aim to start the new season as they finished the 1993 — as champions.

Eltingh and Haarhuis won the ATP Tour world doubles championship in Johannesburg late last year and now are on target to win the men's doubles at the Australian Open.

Eltingh and Haarhuis will play Byron Black of Zimbabwe and American Jonathan Stark in Saturday's final.

★★★

HÉRMETIC WORLD: Reporters from around the world are at the Australian Open, and it's not easy keeping the time straight back home in the cities they file to. Even the day of the week is tricky, since Australia, across the international dateline, is a day ahead of most of the rest of the world.

So media officials have three clocks on the wall of the press centre to help the tennis "journos," as reporters are called Down Under.

The clocks are marked: Roland Garros, Wimbledon, and Flushing Meadow.

That's the "real world" of the tennis journo, not Paris, London, or New York.

★★★

ANGRY TURNBULL: Wendy Turnbull believes being based in the United States cost her the job of non-playing captain of the Australian Federation Cup team.

Turnbull led Australia to the semifinals in 1992 and the final in 1993 but was earlier this week replaced by Lesley Bowrey.

Turnbull accused Tennis Australia, the sport's domestic governing body, of being unprofessional in the way it handled the captaincy issue.

"The reason I live in Florida is because I can't make a living out of the game in Australia," Turnbull said.

Turnbull said her results with a team that has no stars should have assured her of reappointment.

★★★

The official, Ramesh Desai, said Krishnan had played despite being unfit. The player retaliated that the charge was ridiculous.

"I know Ramesh is hurt by the allegation and I am prepared to mediate," said Mukherjea, who replaced Naresh Kumar after the 0-5 defeat to Australia.

Krishnan was instrumental in taking no-hopes Indian to the last four stage with upset wins over Switzerland and France, their best performance since reaching the 1987 final which they lost 0-5 to Sweden.

He joined rookie Leander Paes bridging a 12-year age difference, and led India back into the elite 16-nation world group after relegation to the zone.

"My aim is to survive in the World Group," said Mukherjea. "If we have Ramesh we may survive. Without him I don't think we have a chance."

He accepted that even if Krishnan is back the future is bleak for the team. "Playing the United States, the odds are stacked against us. And I don't expect us to be a force for the next two years."

Krishnan nicknamed "The Surgeon" for his precise touch game, had been contemplating an exit from the sport before the decision was forced by Desai's allegation.

A bad back that needs constant care, nagging injuries and an expanding waistline have been cited by critics who think he should stop playing.

US figure skater Tonya Harding reads from a prepared text admitting she failed to notify the authorities of knowing about the attack on Nancy Kerrigan at a press conference at the Multnomah County Athletic Club in Portland on Jan 27.

— AFP photo

Martin missed several passing shots by inches in the first set, when Edberg used lob to strand the American at the net.

Both finalists are laid-back, deliberate and oh, so polite. Their Mom and Pop and Apple Pie images are a far cry from the brashness of their predecessors Jimmy Connors, John McEnroe and Andre Agassi.

Martin capitalised on Edberg's below-par serve to beat the 1988 and 1987 champion. The fast-rising former college star said he was "pretty excited."

Edberg missed the opportunity to play in his sixth Australian Open final. He had been runnerup three of the previous four years.

Martin, a 23-year-old from Lansing, Michigan, has risen from 73rd to 12th in the world rankings over the last 12 months.

The No. 9 seed sent service returns rocketing past Edberg on both the forehand and backhand sides and frequently was able to pass Edberg when the Swede charged the net.

"He read my serve," conceded Edberg, who said he served at only 85 to 90 percent of his ability.

The win took Martin 3 hours, 50 minutes.

"I've believed I could do this for a long time," said Martin, who has won only one title in his professional career.

Edberg was 24-13 in tiebreakers last year — the fifth best average in tennis — but Martin kept his nerve after squandering first a service break in the fourth set and then four match points in the final tiebreaker. He clinched victory with an ace.

Sanchez Vicario, a semifinal loser at Flinders Park for the past three years, took the elusive extra step in style with a 6-1, 6-2 annihilation of a disappointing Gabriela Sabatini.

World number one Graf had already registered an equally comfortable 6-3, 6-3 win over Japan's Kimiko Date, reaching the 22nd Grand Slam final of her career with plenty to spare.

Martin served consistently well throughout the match, hammering down 13 aces and only one double-fault. He hit 93 winners to Edberg's 74.

"He put up a very good performance," Edberg said. "He played three very solid sets and maintained a very high standard of play. I played a good match, but it wasn't enough to win."

The fine followed complaints to tournament organisers from television viewers, who said Ivanisevic could be clearly heard swearing in Croatian.

The fine was the third of the tournament for the fiery Ivanisevic, who earlier was fined dls 350 US for ball abuse and dls 500 US for racket abuse.

★★★

DOUBLES DOUBLE BID: Dutch pair Jacco Eltingh and Paul Haarhuis aim to start the new season as they finished the 1993 — as champions.

Eltingh and Haarhuis won the ATP Tour world doubles championship in Johannesburg late last year and now are on target to win the men's doubles at the Australian Open.

Eltingh and Haarhuis will play Byron Black of Zimbabwe and American Jonathan Stark in Saturday's final.

★★★

HÉRMETIC WORLD: Reporters from around the world are at the Australian Open, and it's not easy keeping the time straight back home in the cities they file to. Even the day of the week is tricky, since Australia, across the international dateline, is a day ahead of most of the rest of the world.

So media officials have three clocks on the wall of the press centre to help the tennis "journos," as reporters are called Down Under.

The clocks are marked: Roland Garros, Wimbledon, and Flushing Meadow.

That's the "real world" of the tennis journo, not Paris, London, or New York.

★★★

ANGRY TURNBULL: Wendy Turnbull believes being based in the United States cost her the job of non-playing captain of the Australian Federation Cup team.

Turnbull led Australia to the semifinals in 1992 and the final in 1993 but was earlier this week replaced by Lesley Bowrey.

Turnbull accused Tennis Australia, the sport's domestic governing body, of being unprofessional in the way it handled the captaincy issue.

"The reason I live in Florida is because I can't make a living out of the game in Australia," Turnbull said.

Turnbull said her results with a team that has no stars should have assured her of reappointment.

★★★

The official, Ramesh Desai, said Krishnan had played despite being unfit. The player retaliated that the charge was ridiculous.

"I know Ramesh is hurt by the allegation and I am prepared to mediate," said Mukherjea, who replaced Naresh Kumar after the 0-5 defeat to Australia.

Krishnan was instrumental in taking no-hopes Indian to the last four stage with upset wins over Switzerland and France, their best performance since reaching the 1987 final which they lost 0-5 to Sweden.

He joined rookie Leander Paes bridging a 12-year age difference, and led India back into the elite 16-nation world group after relegation to the zone.

"My aim is to survive in the World Group," said Mukherjea. "If we have Ramesh we may survive. Without him I don't think we have a chance."

He accepted that even if Krishnan is back the future is bleak for the team. "Playing the United States, the odds are stacked against us. And I don't expect us to be a force for the next two years."

Krishnan nicknamed "The Surgeon" for his precise touch game, had been contemplating an exit from the sport before the decision was forced by Desai's allegation.

A bad back that needs constant care, nagging injuries and an expanding waistline have been cited by critics who think he should stop playing.

US figure skater Tonya Harding reads from a prepared text admitting she failed to notify the authorities of knowing about the attack on Nancy Kerrigan at a press conference at the Multnomah County Athletic Club in Portland on Jan 27.

— AFP photo

## 'Gazza' lets off steam

ROME, Jan 28: England's temperamental midfielder Paul Gascoigne punched a photographer in the head here on Thursday evening after being followed while on a shopping trip, reports Reuter.

Gascoigne, who plays for Rome club Lazio, was taken briefly to a nearby police station for an identity check, the ANSA news agency reported.

The Englishman was accompanied by a young woman in a city centre square when photographer Lino Nanni, from the International Press Agency, followed them inside a shop and started taking pictures.

Furious, Gascoigne turned round and punched him. Police were quickly on the scene and the incident was reported.

As the couple entered the police station, Nicola Amoroso, a reporter with Rome daily Il Tempo who was with Nanni, and who had also taken a few pictures, was hit several times with a handbag by the footballer's friend.

Nanni went to the nearest hospital, the San Giacomo, for treatment for a bruise on his forehead.

It was Gascoigne's latest unhappy brush with the Italian press.

Last year he belched into a television microphone and also shoved photographers in a Rome bar.

Martin also won the fourth set in a tiebreaker, taking it 7-4 after leading 6-0.

He slammed an ace down the middle, then hit a ball high into the stands and raised his arms in triumph.

Edberg, who had said before the match that Martin had nothing in his armor to worry him, patted the tall American on the back as they met at the net.

Edberg saved three set points in the third-set tiebreaker, including one easy volley at the net that Martin slammed wildly long. But Martin prevailed on his fourth set point, passing Edberg with a forehand shot and punching the air in triumph.

Martin also won the fourth

set in a tiebreaker, taking it 7-4 after leading 6-0.

He slammed an ace down the middle, then hit a ball high into the stands and raised his arms in triumph.