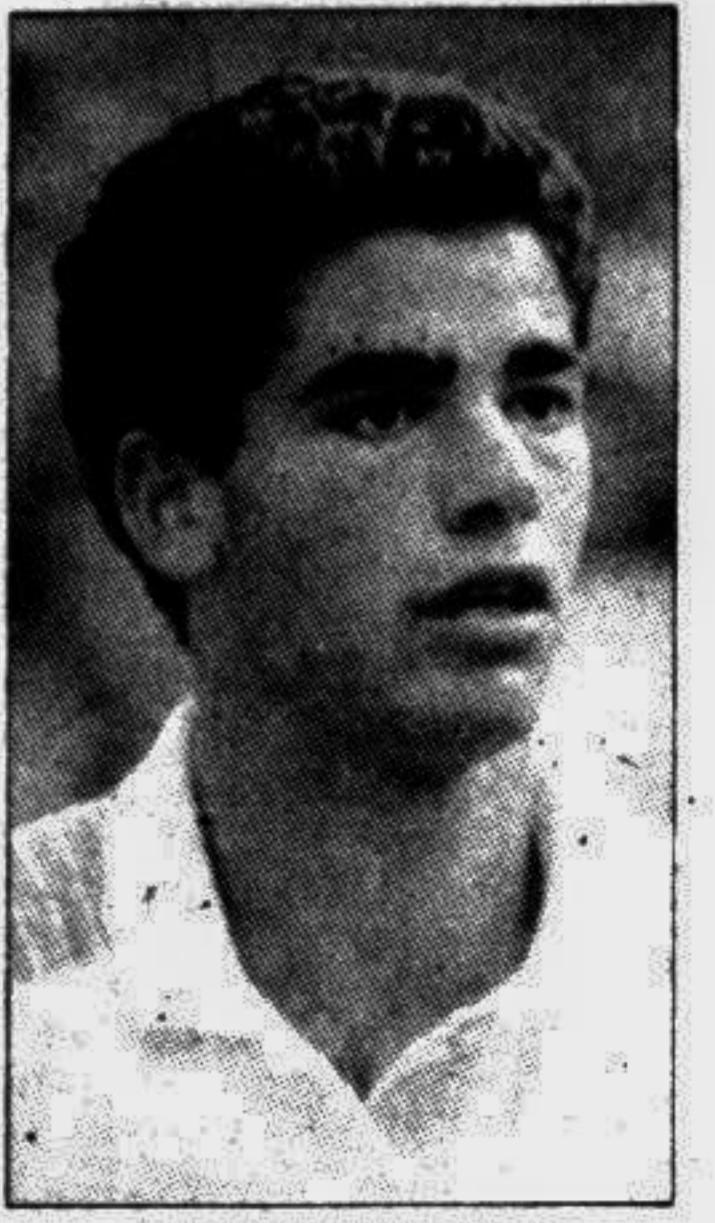


Sampras, Martin harbour similar thoughts

MELBOURNE, Jan 29: Fighting Todd Martin seems to extend the best winning streak of his Grand Slam career here Sunday with an upset victory of seismic proportions over world number one Pete Sampras, reports AFP.



PETE SAMPRAS

This clash on the Centre Court here in the year's first Grand Slam tournament is the first all-American final in the Australian Open since 1969.

And in the match Sampras will be bidding for an elusive hattrick — to become the first player in the Open era to win the previous year's Wimbledon and US Open titles and then

ICTVTR athletics

Sports Reporter

The sixth annual athletics competition of the Islamic Centre for Technical and Vocational Training and Research (ICTVTR), a subsidiary organ of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was held yesterday at the playground of the centre at Board Bazar, Gazipur.

Some new records were created during the competition participated by students of the centre.

Md Yaqub Ali Khan from Bangladesh and Cameroon's Nsangu Issah became overall champion and runner up respectively.

State Minister for Science and Technology, Prof MA Mannan gave away prizes at a simple ceremony attended by guests from Muslim embassies and high commissions based in the capital.

Earlier Dr A M Patwari, Director General of the (ICTVTR) inaugurated the

Aussie Open schedule

MELBOURNE, Jan 29: Featured matches Sunday at the Australian Open (seedings in parentheses): Centre Court (Play begins 0100GMT).

Gigi Fernandez, United States, and Natalia Zvereva (1), Belarus, vs Patty Fendrich and Meredith McGrath (7), United States.

Pete Sampras (1), United States, vs Todd Martin (9), United States.

IOC, UNICEF join forces

LAUSANNE, Jan 29: The International Olympic Committee and United Nations Children Fund on Friday signed a collaboration agreement to step up work on programmes that highlighting and easing problems facing the world's young people, reports AFP.

The accord was signed by IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch and UNICEF executive director James Grant.

Doubles title for Dutch duo

MELBOURNE, Jan 29: Dutch pair Jacco Eltingh and Paul Haarhuis won the Australian Open men's doubles title here today when they downed second seeds Byron Black and Jonathan Stark, reports AFP.

Eltingh and Haarhuis, seeded three here, beat the Zimbabwean-American combination, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.

"It's a great feeling to win this Grand Slam event," said Haarhuis. "We didn't do so well last year and the gold for us was to do well in the Grand Slam events."

To start off the new year with a Grand Slam win is fantastic."

It was Eltingh and Haarhuis' ninth career title.

The top seeds, the North American combination of Grant Connell and Patrick Galbraith, were knocked out in the first round.

go on to the win the Australian Open at the dawn of the new year.

"Winning major titles is the most important thing in my mind in tennis," stressed Sampras.

But he nearly missed the final here when 19-year-old Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov got to two points from victory in their second round five-setter.

The 22-year-old Sampras may have hit top form just at the right moment to win the \$32,000 US dollar first prize and the crown.

He demolished his friend and fellow-American Jim Courier 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 in the semifinal Friday and said it was one of the "better matches" of his career.

"Everything clicked," he said. "The rhythm of my serve was great, I was hitting my groundies as well as I've hit for a while... I really could not play any better."

Sampras has reached speeds of 200 kph (124 MPH) with his service here and it was flawless Friday.

"When my serve works, my whole game follows through behind it," he added.

Martin, who has won six games in a row for a career-best Grand Slam streak, may take some cheer from the record books — they show that the top seed has won the Australian title only seven times since 1969.

The 23-year-old Martin, at 1.98 m (6ft 6ins) and 86 kilograms (190 pounds) one of the biggest men on the tour, uses his height to strike a mean serve.

But he used his flat, whiplash forehand return to topple Swedish star Stefan Edberg in a major semi-final upset Friday. The same weapon could trouble Sampras.

"Todd has some of the best returns in the world, he serves well and is obviously playing some of the best tennis of his career," Sampras said.

Martin, who was world number 12 at the tournament's start, has been one of the most underestimated players here.

But he nearly missed the final here when 19-year-old Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov got to two points from victory in their second round five-setter.

The 22-year-old Sampras may have hit top form just at the right moment to win the \$32,000 US dollar first prize and the crown.

He demolished his friend and fellow-American Jim Courier 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 in the semifinal Friday and said it was one of the "better matches" of his career.

"Everything clicked," he said. "The rhythm of my serve was great, I was hitting my groundies as well as I've hit for a while... I really could not play any better."

Sampras has reached speeds of 200 kph (124 MPH) with his service here and it was flawless Friday.

"When my serve works, my whole game follows through behind it," he added.

Martin, who has won six games in a row for a career-best Grand Slam streak, may take some cheer from the record books — they show that the top seed has won the Australian title only seven times since 1969.

The 23-year-old Martin, at 1.98 m (6ft 6ins) and 86 kilograms (190 pounds) one of the biggest men on the tour, uses his height to strike a mean serve.

But he used his flat, whiplash forehand return to topple Swedish star Stefan Edberg in a major semi-final upset Friday. The same weapon could trouble Sampras.

TODD MARTIN

He is improving rapidly and developing into an all-court player with a calm temperament who relishes tight corners and long odds.

Sampras leads 2-0 in their head-to-head record but had to come back from two sets to one down to beat Martin in the second round of the 1992 US Open.

"I have to play my game and be aggressive and make (Sampras) beat me," Martin said.

His first Grand Slam final has him very excited.

"I just can't wait till the sun rises," he said.

Becker backs down

NEW YORK, Jan 29: Boris Becker, who recently criticised the drug testing policy in men's tennis, now says he is satisfied with the system, reports AP.

In December, a German newspaper ran a story in which Becker reportedly called the ATP's drug testing "a joke" and claimed that some players were using illegal drugs.

Becker, a three-time Wimbledon champion, says his comments were "misinterpreted." But he admitted he didn't know about the details of the ATP's current drug policy until January, when he spoke to ATP chief executive officer Mark Miles. The rules were revised in March 1993.

"I was not fully aware of the extent of those changes, and after a lengthy conversation with Mark Miles, I am now satisfied that it is administered with integrity by competent medical officials," Becker said.

However, Becker added that his earlier remarks were taken out of context.

"I did not say that doping was widespread on the ATP Tour or that the Tour was concealing positive tests, as several in the media have reported, and I did not accuse any tennis player of drug wrongdoing," he said in a statement issued from Monte Carlo.

"I view that everybody is innocent unless proven guilty."

Miles criticized Becker for questioning the ATP's drug rules without knowing what they were.

"I believe Boris was wrong in making his public comments with having first armed himself with the facts," Miles said Friday.

His first Grand Slam final has him very excited.

"I just can't wait till the sun rises," he said.

How many make a Grand Slam?

MELBOURNE, Jan 29: The International Tennis Federation says it's a Grand Slam. The Women's Tennis Association agrees. Steffi Graf begs to differ, reports AP.

Graf crushed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario 6-0, 6-2 in just 57 minutes to win Saturday's Australian Open women's singles final — her fourth consecutive victory in a Grand Slam event.

The 24-year-old German as won the French Open, Wimbledon, the US Open and the Australian Open in succession — but she doesn't regard it as a Grand Slam because the four victories didn't "come in a calendar year."

Graf had a calendar-year Grand Slam in 1988 and is adamant that's the only one that counts.

"It's very special at any time to win four Grand Slams in a row, it's incredible, but in one year — it's harder. The 1988 one counts," she said.

Graf is consistent in her belief. She also does not believe Martina Navratilova's six Grand Slam tournament wins in a row between 1983-84 should be counted as a Grand Slam because Navratilova did not win three consecutive tiebreaks.

Pete Sampras: "Winning major titles is the most important thing in my mind in tennis and the No 1 ranking just kind of comes with it."

Todd Martin: "Thank God. You know, it's sort of a crapshoot when you've had so many chances against Steffi Graf in the women's final."

Goran Ivanisevic: "I don't know what happened with my supporters. Maybe it was too hot," (musing about his missing vocal Croatian supporters from his quarter-final with Jim Courier).

Alexander Volkov: "All the match I was thinking about how hot it is, how much sun and how warm it is and I can't get into the match."

That guy, K-K-K-Kafelnikov: Did I say it right?" (asked who his toughest opponent was so far).

Stefan Edberg: "Not quite as bad. I didn't lose my serve, but it was a little bit similar to the way the match went, and it's always tough to lose in three

tiebreaks."

Jim Courier: "She's beatable. She's human, she's not a machine," (one her chances against Steffi Graf in the women's final).

"I just think that the players know how to play her. He's definitely playing the same game she has in the past," (on Gabriela Sabatini).

Steffi Graf: "That's what I prepare for and that's what I'm looking forward to. It's what I work hard for and I'm still excited about it," (on whether she is still excited playing in her 22nd Grand Slam final).

Goran Ivanisevic: "I don't know what happened with my supporters. Maybe it was too hot," (musing about his missing vocal Croatian supporters from his quarter-final with Jim Courier).

Alexander Volkov: "All the match I was thinking about how hot it is, how much sun and how warm it is and I can't get into the match."

That guy, K-K-K-Kafelnikov: Did I say it right?" (asked who his toughest opponent was so far).

Stefan Edberg: "Not quite as bad. I didn't lose my serve, but it was a little bit similar to the way the match went, and it's always tough to lose in three

tiebreaks."

Jim Courier: "She's beatable. She's human, she's not a machine," (one her chances against Steffi Graf in the women's final).

"I just think that the players know how to play her. He's definitely playing the same game she has in the past," (on Gabriela Sabatini).

Steffi Graf: "That's what I prepare for and that's what I'm looking forward to. It's what I work hard for and I'm still excited about it," (on whether she is still excited playing in her 22nd Grand Slam final).

Goran Ivanisevic: "I don't know what happened with my supporters. Maybe it was too hot," (musing about his missing vocal Croatian supporters from his quarter-final with Jim Courier).

Alexander Volkov: "All the match I was thinking about how hot it is, how much sun and how warm it is and I can't get into the match."

That guy, K-K-K-Kafelnikov: Did I say it right?" (asked who his toughest opponent was so far).

Stefan Edberg: "Not quite as bad. I didn't lose my serve, but it was a little bit similar to the way the match went, and it's always tough to lose in three

tiebreaks."

Jim Courier: "She's beatable. She's human, she's not a machine," (one her chances against Steffi Graf in the women's final).

"I just think that the players know how to play her. He's definitely playing the same game she has in the past," (on Gabriela Sabatini).

Steffi Graf: "That's what I prepare for and that's what I'm looking forward to. It's what I work hard for and I'm still excited about it," (on whether she is still excited playing in her 22nd Grand Slam final).

Goran Ivanisevic: "I don't know what happened with my supporters. Maybe it was too hot," (musing about his missing vocal Croatian supporters from his quarter-final with Jim Courier).

Alexander Volkov: "All the match I was thinking about how hot it is, how much sun and how warm it is and I can't get into the match."

That guy, K-K-K-Kafelnikov: Did I say it right?" (asked who his toughest opponent was so far).

Stefan Edberg: "Not quite as bad. I didn't lose my serve, but it was a little bit similar to the way the match went, and it's always tough to lose in three

tiebreaks."

Jim Courier: "She's beatable. She's human, she's not a machine," (one her chances against Steffi Graf in the women's final).

"I just think that the players know how to play her. He's definitely playing the same game she has in the past," (on Gabriela Sabatini).

Steffi Graf: "That's what I prepare for and that's what I'm looking forward to. It's what I work hard for and I'm still excited about it," (on whether she is still excited playing in her 22nd Grand Slam final).

Goran Ivanisevic: "I don't know what happened with my supporters. Maybe it was too hot," (musing about his missing vocal Croatian supporters from his quarter-final with Jim Courier).

Alexander Volkov: "All the match I was thinking about how hot it is, how much sun and how warm it is and I can't get into the match."

That guy, K-K-K-Kafelnikov: Did I say it right?" (asked who his toughest opponent was so far).

Stefan Edberg: "Not quite as bad. I didn't lose my serve, but it was a little bit similar to the way the match went, and it's always tough to lose in three

tiebreaks."

Jim Courier: "She's beatable. She's human, she's not a machine," (one her chances against Steffi Graf in the women's final).

"I just think that the players know how to play her. He's definitely playing the same game she has in the past," (on Gabriela Sabatini).

Steffi Graf: "That's what I prepare for and that's what I'm looking forward to. It's what I work hard for and I'm still excited about it," (on whether she is still excited playing in her 22nd Grand Slam final).

Goran Ivanisevic: "I don't know what happened with my supporters. Maybe it was too hot," (musing about his missing vocal Croatian supporters from his quarter-final with Jim Courier).

Alexander Volkov: "All the match I was thinking about how hot it is, how much sun and how warm it is and I can't get into the match."

That guy, K-K-K-Kafelnik