

# Martina moves ever closer

**PARIS, Feb 19:** Martina Navratilova moved closer to the 167th title of her career on Friday when she put down Belgian challenger Sabine Appelmans in the quarter-finals of the Paris Open, reports AFP.

But the 37-year-old Czech-born American, 16 years older than an opponent clearly oozing confidence after a series of wins, needed to pace herself carefully through three tough sets.

Navratilova, who eventually scored a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 victory over her fellow left-hander in the Pierre de Coubertin Stadium, appeared to have tamed Appelmans with a series of stretch volley winners in the latter stages of the opening set.

But after going 3-1 clear in the second, she lost concentration and the seventh-seeded Belgian surged back to win five consecutive games.

"I went to sleep," admitted Navratilova, who revealed she became so worried she was going to lose she began to find

herself thinking about Moscow where she is to play an exhibition on Monday.

"She was playing great and I couldn't pick up my game at all," she said, adding: "I suddenly realised I could lose the match and I found myself asking what I would do if that happened — stay in Paris a couple of days or travel to Moscow immediately to practice."

"After that match I'm ready for anything now. But I still wasn't getting the half-volleys right. I was still trying to swing at them too much."

With alarm bells ringing and finding herself a break down at 1.2 in the third, Navratilova fortunately put her tennis back on the rails.

But it was a close-run thing and Navratilova needed extreme vigilance against the ever-dangerous 23rd-ranked Appelmans, who won the fourth major title of her career at Linz last weekend.

In fact the defending champion had to produce her very best shots to stop an opponent whose groundstrokes seemed to hone in on the lines

as though attracted by radar.

Appelmans, who won only nine games in two previous matches against Navratilova, said afterwards: "I think I showed her too much respect. I'm disappointed, obviously, but happy with the way I've been playing."

The world number-three, who beat Monica Seles in last year's final, now plays sixth-seed Lella Meskhi of Georgia in the semifinals.

Meskhi dropped only one game as she ruthlessly saw off Dutch qualifier Caroline Vis, who 24 hours earlier notched up her biggest-ever win by putting out third-seeded Mary Pierce of France.

Today's other semi-final will be between fifth-seeded Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria and eighth-seeded Julie Halard — France's last surviving competitor.

Maleeva was made to pull out all the stops by Belgian newcomer Laurence Courtois who led 2-0 in a tense, deciding third set before fading.

And the 23-year-old Halard managed to fight back from 2-6, 2-4 to score a 2-6, 7-5, 6-4.

# Zico's job is done

**TOKYO, Feb 19:** Brazilian football veteran Zico, who helped launch Japan's first professional league, said Saturday he is retiring from play because his Japanese mission is accomplished, reports Xinhua.

It is not because he is angry with alleged refereeing favoritism which helped Verdy Kawasaki beat his club, the Kashima Anters, last month in the two-match championship playoff of the inaugural J-League season.

"It has nothing to do with it," Zico, 41 next month, said in a telephone interview published Saturday by the Tokyo Chunichi sports newspaper.

"Japan's soccer culture has only a short history. In that sense, I am not sure whether my intentions have been fully understood or not," he said.

Zico came out of retirement to sign up for Kashima in 1991. Participant in the 1978, 1982 and 1986 World Cup tournaments, Zico said, "Anyway, I have done my best in the past three years, and I am confident that I have left some mark, however small it may be."

"That is why I have decided on my retirement. My mission in Japan is accomplished," he said by telephone from Rio de Janeiro where he is vacationing.

Kashima's management announced on Monday Zico would leave the team and retire from playing when the first half of the 1994 J-League season ends on June 18.

But Zico's older brother, 47-year-old Edu, was to pilot the team in the new season opening on March 12.

Zico said that he would train youngsters, aged between eight and 16, at a soccer school to be opened in Rio de Janeiro in September and also continue supporting Kashima 'from outside' after his retirement.

# Rush in no mood to move

**LIVERPOOL, Feb 19:** Liverpool marksman Ian Rush has rejected a two million-pound move to English Premiership rivals Manchester City, reports AFP.

The 32-year-old Welsh international was close to quitting Anfield two months ago, but the appointment of Roy Evans as manager has changed his outlook and he has pledged his future to Liverpool.

Evans said: "We received two inquiries from Manchester City about doing a deal for Ian Rush."

"Because of Ian's great feeling and love for the club I felt it was right and proper to inform him. I spoke to him about it and I must stress we didn't even get as far as talking about a fee."

"He's not interested in moving and I'm absolutely delighted. It gives me great encouragement so early in my period as manager that Ian has stressed he wants to play for Liverpool."

# Becker silences Stich

**STUTTGART, Feb 19:** Boris Becker raved the service of German rival Michael Stich to score an important victory in his comeback campaign here on Friday, reports AFP.

Becker won 6-3, 7-6 (7-4) in the Stuttgart Open quarter-final for his fifth victory over the man who has often been his biggest critic.

The defeat will cost Stich the number two spot in next week's world rankings as he won the title last year. Becker's triumph will undoubtedly boost his 14th ranking after he retained the Milan title last weekend.

Becker scored his first break when leading 5-3 in the first set. Stich went 40-0, saved one set point and then hit Becker's return into the net.

The second set saw more of a battle. A Becker double fault cost him a service game but then Stich's service also let him down. In the tiebreak Becker led 5-1 at one stage before wrapping up 7-4.

The two players may have met in a new crossroads in their careers.

The two have often clashed over Becker's attitude toward playing for Germany in the Davis Cup. But Becker, with the crowd back on his side, seems to have halted the slump in his tennis with the seven-week break to coincide with the birth of his son.

After rising to second in the world with a strong finish to 1993, Stich was knocked out of the Australian Open in the first round and the second round at Milan last weekend. Fatigue has jolted his concentration.

Becker will now play Goran Ivanisevic, who had to overcome another moment of anger before beating France's Henri Leconte and get into the semi-finals of the 2.25 million dollar event.



US speed skater Dan Jansen is congratulated by his happy wife Robin Wicket after he won the gold medal in the Winter Game men's 1,000m race in a new world record on Feb 18. — AFP photo

# Daehlie, Norway's darling



**LILLEHAMMER, Feb 19:** America's tough cookie Tonya Harding crumbled and cried on Saturday, but it was smiles all the way for Olympic hosts Norway when they picked up two more nuggets of Nordic gold to go top of the medals table, reports Reuters.

Norway's cross-country king, Bjorn Daehlie, rewrote the record books in the 15 km pursuit, blowing kisses to the adoring crowd and prouetting across the line as he became the greatest Nordic skier in Olympic history.

In the premier women's event, the downhill, Katja Seizinger thundered to a commanding victory to give Germany their second Alpine title of the Lillehammer Games and make amends for her failure in the super-giant slalom.

UP to 140,000 people — many of them Norwegians waving national flags and with their faces painted in the country's red, white and blue colours — swarmed into the Olympic region for the women's downhill, two-man bob and other weekend events.

But it was at the cross-country course, beneath a piercing blue sky, that Norwegian reserve was truly abandoned as Fred Boerre Lundberg in the Nordic combined event and Daehlie added more gold to the host country's haul.

Norway took back the overall medals lead from Russia, with Italy third followed by the United States.

Raucous cheers and clanking cowbells resounded round the Birkebeineren stadium twice in just two hours as Norway's Viking raiders powered home.

Daehlie became Norway's biggest Olympic winner and is just one title away from equalling the overall Winter

Games record.

It was his second win and third medal at Lillehammer, but a first Olympic gold for Lundberg.

Japan's Takanori Kono prevented a Norwegian one-two in the Nordic combined, squeezing out Bjarte Engen Vik at the finish.

In the pursuit, Kazakhstan's charismatic Vladimir Smirnov took the silver ahead of Silvio Fauner of Italy.

Lundberg was so far ahead of Kono and the rest in the Nordic event that he slowed to pluck a Norwegian flag from the crowd and then skied with it in a jubilant show of nationalism.

"People were shouting 'victory' all the way round the last circuit," he said. "All I had to do was float in."

At the Hamar skating venue, the emotions were flowing, too, but for Tonya Harding it was tears of anguish rather than joy.

The controversial 23-year-old figure skater aggravated the injury to her right ankle which has been troubling her recently.

She left the ice following an awkward takeoff for a triple toe loop jump 25 minutes into her 45-minute practice.

After chatting with her coaches at rinkside with her back to journalists, Harding was seen wiping away tears with her hand.

Team manager Gale Tanger consoled her and she returned to the ice for some spins and

# Yeltsin salutes them

**MOSCOW, Feb 19:** President Boris Yeltsin called the head of Russia's Olympic Committee on Saturday to congratulate Russia's athletes, who were leading the standings with the most medals, reports AP.

footwork routines, but no jumps.

She was disconsolate when she finally left the ice.

"They keep telling me it's going to get better but it doesn't," she told her coaches. "I skated worse than yesterday."

Harding said at a crammed news conference on Friday that she worked best under pressure. There has been plenty of that since her rival, Nancy Kerrigan was clubbed on the knee on January 6.

Harding has denied accusations that she was involved in the plot to injure Kerrigan, who skipped practice on Saturday.

The event begins with the technical programme on Wednesday.

In the downhill, Seizinger's technical skills returned and she clocked an unbeatable one minute 35.93 seconds. Four days ago, she crashed out of the Super-G she had been tipped to win.

Seizinger's win gave Germany another 'Alpine' title following Markus Wasmeier's surprise victory in the men's Super-G on Thursday. Picabo street took the silver behind Seizinger to secure the fourth US medal in as many Alpine events.

### MEDALS TABLE

Medals table after four of the five medal events scheduled for Saturday at the Winter Olympics.

	G	S	B	Total
Norway	7	3	2	12
Russia	5	5	3	13
United States	4	3	0	7
Italy	3	3	6	12
Germany	3	1	4	8
Canada	2	1	2	5
Austria	0	2	1	3
Kazakhstan	0	2	0	2
Netherlands	0	1	2	3
France	0	1	1	2
Japan	0	1	1	2
Belarus	0	1	0	1
Finland	0	0	2	2

# Blair blazes

**LILLEHAMMER, Feb 19:** American Bonnie Blair won the 500m Olympic speedskating title at Hamar on Saturday to become the first woman to win gold medals at three successive Winter Olympics, reports AFP.

The reigning world sprint champion clocked a new track record of 39.25 sec for her fifth medal. She won 500m and 1,000m titles in Albertville, and 500m and 1000m bronze in Calgary in 1988.

Canada's Susan Auch was 0.1 sec off her personal best as she took the silver with 39.61 sec. Germany's Franziska Schenk took bronze with 40.44.

Blair, 29, supported by her large Irish-Catholic family, yet again took centre stage.

Blair thought her best days were over a year ago, but new coach Nick Thometz helped to re-ignite her enthusiasm.

So far Johann Koss has won the 5,000m and 1,500m, while Russian Alexander Gouloubev and Svetlana Bazhanova have won the men's 500m and women's 3,000m.

But Blair, expected to take 1,000m gold on February 23, is also set to make a major impact.

# Unolympic!

**LILLEHAMMER, Feb 18:** An Iranian who said he was headed for the Lillehammer Games was detained in Oslo with three kg (6.5lb) of raw opium in his car, officials said on Saturday, reports Reuters.

A police spokesman said the Iranian, who was not named, would appear in court later on Saturday and then be placed in investigative custody.

The Iranian arrived in Norway on a ferry from Kiel in Germany on Friday and told customs officials who found the drugs during a spot check that he had intended driving to the Olympics.



Russia's Yevgeny Platov and his partner Oksana Griachtchuck perform the second part of their compulsory dance routine in the Hamar Olympic Amphitheatre on Feb 18. — AFP photo

# CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1	Chelsea's cat	38	Alter the graph	initials	19	After-dinner treats	
6	Find the total	41	Mult.'s opp.	2	Mel of Coopers-town	21	Absolutely
9	Agent	43	Squabble	3	Rye seed	22	Every last iota
12	Hacked	44	Saharan	4	"Birth of a Nation"	24	Tenor
13	Hope/Crosby "Road"	45	Locust	5	Group	26	Battle
14	Mr. Baba	47	Venezuelan	6	Old photo	28	Beet-crown's output
15	Watch-band	49	Flushed with anger	7	Old phone feature	30	Sample the sherry
16	Candy-apple coating	52	Linguistic suffix	8	"Le Coq"	32	Pack of camels
18	Beast	53	Past	9	Novarro of old movies	33	Id counter-part
20	Peacenik	54	Florida city	10	Sorbonne student	34	A mere handful
21	Veer off course	55	Embar-rassed	11	Stacks	36	He had a bright idea
23	Football fill	56	Cob's mate	17	Hand-some youth	38	Al Unser, e.g.
24	Smith's neighbor?	57	Get more issues			39	Demagnitize a tape
25	Panache					40	Covered in mud
27	"— is an island"					42	It's mostly discretion
29	Most cunning					45	Zoo structure
31	Halloween charity					46	Chuck-a-luck needs
35	Work-bench attachments					48	Outdo
37	Sapient					50	— de France
						51	Margery of rhyme

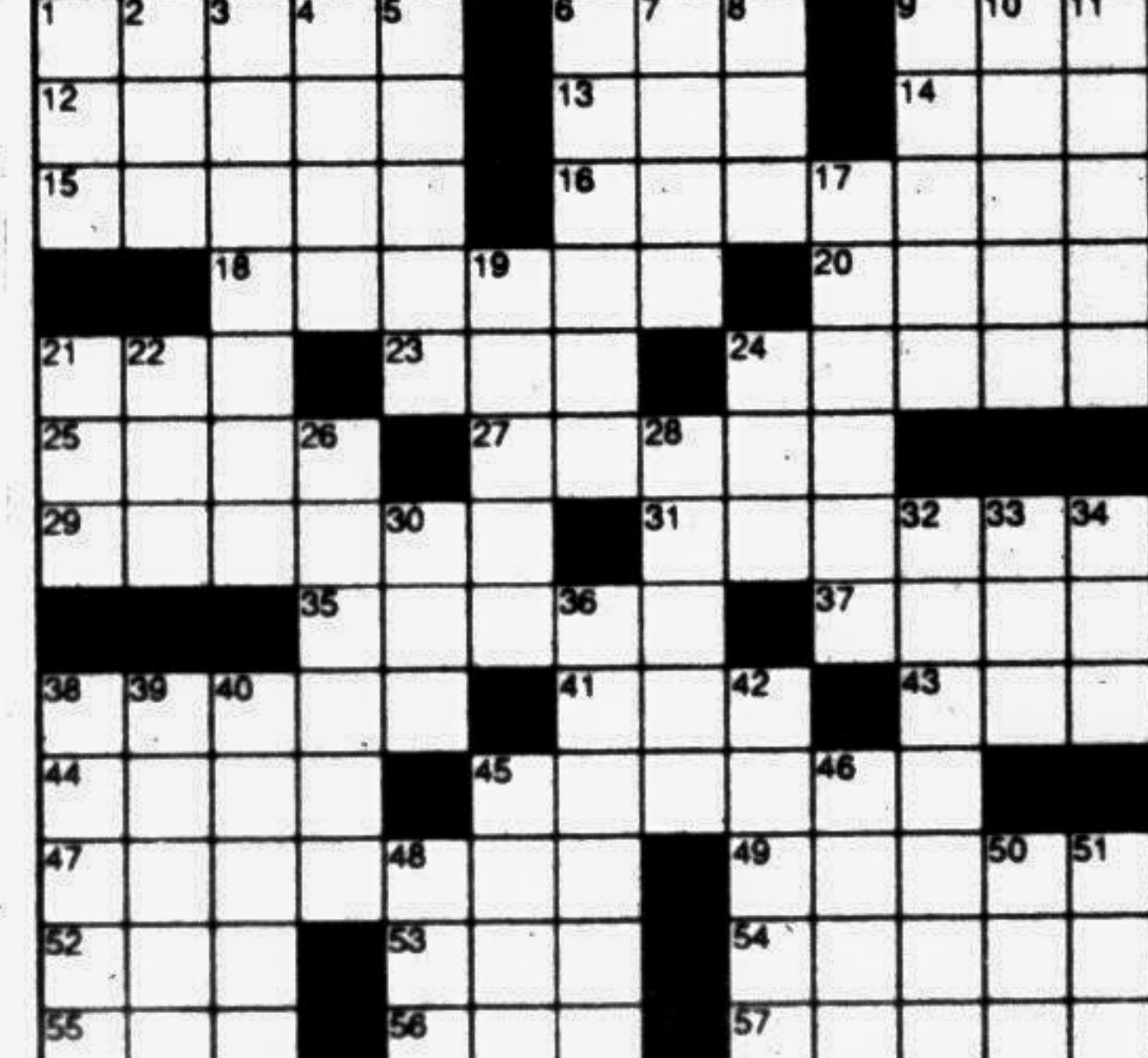
**DOWN**

1 Draft

**Solution time: 26 mins.**

S	L	A	M	H	A	S	C	H	A	W
T	I	R	E	A	W	L	H	A	L	E
E	M	I	R	R	E	O	R	E	L	
P	A	L	M	E	R	W	A	R	M	E
C	A	H	N	S	T	H	E	L	E	N
O	V	A	O	R	A	S	I	E		
G	A	R	D	N	E	R	I	S	L	E
A	R	T	P	A	M					
H	O	N	I	N	G	A	M	A	Z	O
E	D	G	E	R	I	G	R	O	L	E
F	O	U	R	A	D	O	E	N	D	S
T	R	E	S	B	O	N	T	E	S	T

Yesterday's answer 7-9



**CRYPTOQUIP**

PLZ HIUMITS, AFIQTSB  
 M X F U P V F Z H I Z A R ,  
 R X P L M R , " I Q Q X I S A R  
 P S A F H V !"

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: MY TAILOR, A PARTICIPANT IN MARATHON RACES, USUALLY PANTS.  
 Today's Cryptoquip clue: H 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.