

Rafter rafters Courier

INDIAN WELLS, California, Mar 2: Unseeded Australian Patrick Rafter upset second-seeded and defending champion Jim Courier of the United States 7-6 (7-2), 6-2 in the second round of the 1.720.000 dollar Champions Cup on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Top-seeded Pete Sampras of the United States played nearly perfect and beat Spain's Emilio Sanchez 6-1, 6-1 in 82 minutes in his second-round match at the 56 player, hard court tournament, where in top eight seeded players receive first-round byes.

Unseeded Andre Agassi of the United States, fresh from taking the title in Scottsdale, Arizona, eliminated compatriot Richey Reneberg 6-3, 6-3.

Seventh-seeded Todd Martin of the United States used his powerful first serve, which delivered eight aces and 10 service winners, to hold off Marcos Ondruska of South Africa 6-0, 4-6, 6-1 in one hour, 55 minutes in a second-round match.

First-round winners included tenth-seeded Petr Korda of the Czech Republic, eleventh-seeded Marc Rosset of Switzerland, 13th-seeded Wayne Ferreira of South Africa, and fifteenth-seeded American Malival Washington. Third-

seeded Stefan Edberg of Sweden plays his first match on Wednesday.

Rafter, 49 in the world, belted 10 aces on his first

Bates basted

COPENHAGEN, Mar 2: Third-seeded Magnus Larsson of Sweden needed just 55 minutes Tuesday to oust Britain's Jeremy Bates 6-3, 6-0 and advance to the second round of the dhrs 188,750 Copenhagen Open men's tennis tournament, reports AP.

Fourth-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia also won 6-7 (5-7), 6-4, 6-0 over Frenchman Stephane Simian, but No. 7 Brett Steven of New Zealand was beaten 6-3, 6-3 by Alex Antonitsch of Austria.

In other first-round action, Czech player Daniel Vasek beat French opponent Rudolphe Gilbert 6-4, 6-2, and Thomas Carbonell of Spain easily defeated Venezuelan Maurice Ruah 6-3, 6-1.

The winner of the last year's Copenhagen Open, No. 8 Andrei Olhovskiy, ousted Swede Peter Lundgren 7-5, 6-3.

Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman, visibly stronger, outplayed wild card Dane Frederik Fetterlein 6-2, 7-6 (7-5).

Danish ace Kenneth Carlsen easily defeated Italy's Omar Camporese 7-5, 6-3.

serve and gave the third-ranked Courier trouble with his high-kicking second serve through the match.

Rafter and Courier each held serve in the first set to force a tiebreak. The Australian took a 3-2 lead and held it by hitting a service winner for 4-2 and an ace for 5-2, and then winning the last two points on errors from Courier's normally reliable forehand.

Rafter, who defeated Sampras last Summer, broke Courier for 3-1 in the second set and then again in the final game of the match, as Courier had difficulty finding the mark with his service returns.

Courier, who won titles here in 1993 and 1991 and maintains a home near the tournament, said that he never played his way into the match.

"I played a couple of bad points in the tie breaker and the first set was gone, and Pat played a tight second set," Courier said. "He served really well and I couldn't get my return going. I was prepared to play, but I was unable to work my way into the match."

Sampras, first in the world, served seven aces and repeatedly handcuffed the 46th-ranked Sanchez with his second serve on the way to a routine victory over the clay-court specialist.

Stars sparkle

KARLSRUHE, Germany, Mar 2: China's Sun Cayan and Germany's Nicole Rieger set a new women's world indoor record in the pole vault Tuesday by soaring 4.08 metres (13.38 feet) at the Karlsruhe international track meet, reports AP.

A few minutes before both women broke Sun's old mark by a centimetre (0.4 inch), England's Linford Christie had blazed to a new European record of 6.48 seconds to capture the 60 metres.

The 1992 Olympic gold medalist in the 100 metres broke out in front at the start, then leaned into the tape two-hundredths of a second ahead of indoor world record-holder Bruno Surin of Canada.

"Finally everything worked right from the start," Christie said. "I knew I had it in me — it's great that it happened today."

His performance bettered the 6.51-second mark he shared with several others.

Kenya's Paul Ereng ran his best time in a year, finishing the indoor 800 metres in 1:46.19.

On Reiger's second attempt, she set the new world record and clinched the meet victory, while forcing Sun to match her height moments later on her final leap.

Rieger jumped 6 centimetres (2.4 inches) over her personal best and European record, which she had set last weekend in Dortmund, Germany.

"It's crazy — I can hardly believe it," the German said. Both women failed at attempts to clear 4.12 metres (13.51 feet).

Germany's Heike Drechsler also won the long jump in a rematch against her strongest competitor at the Stuttgart world championship.

The Barcelona gold medalist leaped 7.06 metres (23.16 feet) to easily outdistance Larissa Bereshnaja of Ukraine whose best jump was 6.62 (21.72 feet).

Jamaica's Merlene Ottey won the women's 60 metres in 7.11 seconds and Canada's Mark McCoy the 60-metres hurdles in 7.52.

Ereng, the 1988 Olympic champion in the 800 metres, raced from far behind to erase a 20-metre (yard) lead by Germany's Nico Mutschekon on the last lap. The German ran a time of 1:46.83.

British skaters retire

MILTON KEYNES, England, Mar 2: Disillusioned by their Olympic experience in Lillehammer, Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean announced Wednesday their retirement from competitive skating, reports AP.

The British couple, who finished a disappointing third in Norway amid controversies over the sport's rules, said they would not take part in this month's World Championships in Japan. They instead plan to concentrate on a fund-raising event for Sarajevo, where they won the Olympic title in 1984, and another professional tour.

"We have had a long hard think about it and we have decided that we will not, repeat not, be going to Japan," Dean said. "We couldn't skate any better than we skated (at the Olympics). It was one of those memorable performances. We were disillusioned a little bit about how it happened but we were elated by the reaction. The audience were our judges."

"I think it was a good note for us to end on," Torvill said. "That is what we will remember about our return to competition skating."

The couple spoke at a local ice rink to help launch a nationwide Skate-a-thon event in aid of the British Red Cross Appeal for the former Yugoslavia.

"It is unbelievable that the city we grew to love can have been devastated in this cruel way," Dean said. "The people of former Yugoslavia were so kind and friendly towards us. It is this that has provided us with a personal motivation in the development and success of Skate-a-thon."

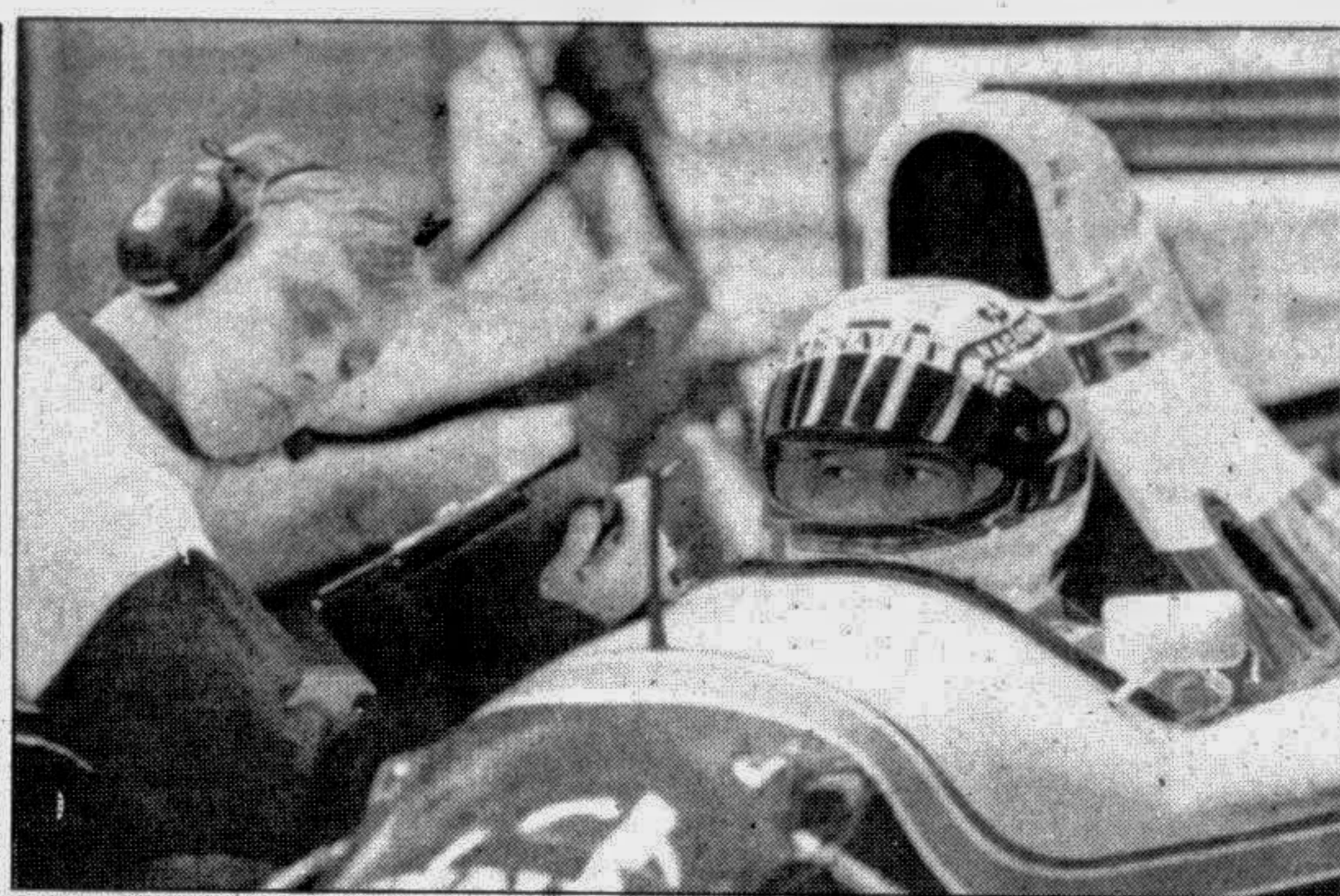
Organisers said they hope the Skate-a-thon, scheduled for the weekend of April 23-24 at ice rinks throughout the country, would raise more than 10,000 pounds (dhs 150,000).

After that, said Dean: "I think there is one more tour left in us."

World champions from 1981-84 and Olympic champions 10 years ago, Torvill, 36, and Dean, 35, were reinstated as amateurs for this year's Olympics and World Championships under a new International Skating Union rule.

While their return wiped out the Olympics hopes of the country's younger ice dance couples, a top-three finish by the pair at the Worlds, March 22-27 in Makuhari, Japan, would have given Britain three places instead of one at the competition next year.

Torvill and Dean will be replaced by Marika Humphre. Justin Lanning, runners-up at the British Ice Dance Championships in January,



A mechanic checks the brand new Williams-Renault FW16 driven by Brazilian Ayrton Sena during trials at Le Castellet, southern France on Feb 28. The new F1 session will start in Sao Paulo on March 27. — AFP photo

Harding's hearing next week

PORTLAND, Ore., Mar 2: As Tonya Harding slept late on her first day home from the Olympics, the US Figure Skating Association proceeded Tuesday with plans to subject her to a disciplinary hearing next week, reports AP.

A five-member USFSA panel will determine whether Harding should be kicked out of the association for any possible role in the Jan 6 attack on rival Nancy Kerrigan.

The hearing will begin March 10 in Colorado, said Bill Hybl, the panel's chairman. Harding's attorneys had asked for an indefinite delay of the hearing, which could last as long as three days.

One of Harding's attorneys, Bob Weaver, would not say whether his client would attend. "We will respond in some fashion but I can't make any comment beyond that," Weaver said.

Harding is scheduled to meet with her lawyers Wednesday. Hybl said the USFSA wants

in on or knew of the Kerrigan plot. The committee ordered a hearing be held to determine what disciplinary action, if any, should be imposed.

The most severe potential penalties are suspending her association membership or banning her from the organization for life. Either action would bar her from the World Figure Skating Championships, scheduled for March 22-27 in Chiba, Japan.

"She really wants to go to the worlds, if they let her," Harding's coach, Diane Rawlinson, said Tuesday.

The panel is to meet with USFSA attorneys on March 9 to lay the groundwork for the hearing, which could last as long as three days.

Harding is scheduled to meet with her lawyers Wednesday. Hybl said the USFSA wants

Harding to participate. She did not take part in the earlier hearing.

"She can either appear, she can send us a videotape or she can submit a statement," Hybl said.

The panel also plans to hear from Jeff Gillooly, Harding's ex-husband, who has admitted his role in the Kerrigan attack. Gillooly, who has pleaded guilty to racketeering in a deal with prosecutors, says Harding was in on the plot and gave the final OK — allegations the skater denies.

Multnomah County Circuit Judge Donald Londer refused to let Gillooly travel to Colorado for the hearing. But Gillooly could submit a video or written deposition.

The hearing will be closed, Hybl said. But any evidence and testimony could be used by Norm Frink, the lead prosecutor in the case in Portland, to help in his investigation.

The grand jury investigating the Kerrigan attack is to submit its final report March 21. Frink has said he doubts there will be any developments before then.

Pugilist's close shave

INGLEWOOD, Calif., Mar 2: Cecilio Espino of Los Angeles stopped Miguel Mercedes of New York in the 10th round of their super flyweight bout Tuesday night, leaving Mercedes seriously injured, reports AP.

Early in the final round, Mercedes was hurt by a right hand, and after a follow-up combination, referee James Jen-Kin stopped the bout at 45 seconds of the round.

Shortly later, Mercedes collapsed in the ring and nearly lost consciousness. Fifteen minutes after that, he was carried from the ring on a stretcher and taken to Westside Hospital in nearby Los Angeles.

Mercedes, 33, recovered enough to walk to his dressing room, where he was examined by ringside physician Dr. Robert Karns, who determined the boxer should be hospitalized immediately.

A brain scan at the hospital found bleeding on Mercedes' brain, according to Karns, who said surgery may be necessary. Karns said the boxer was in serious but stable condition.

Espino, 23, was distraught after Mercedes was carried from the ring. Following a fight with Espino in Tijuana, Mexico on May 28, 1989, Hector Ruiz died from injuries suffered in the bout.

Espino, ranked as the seventh-leading super flyweight challenger by the World Boxing Council, raised his record to 27-3-1 with 23 knockouts. He weighed 115 pounds (51.75 kilograms).

Vazquez retains WBA title

TOKYO, Mar 2: Champion Wilfredo Vazquez of Puerto Rico knocked down Japanese challenger Yuichi Kasai three times in the first round Wednesday to post a knockout victory and retain the World Boxing Association junior featherweight title, reports AP.

The knockout came two minutes and five seconds into the first round of the scheduled 12-round match.

Vazquez felled Kasai three times, surprising the 9,500 spectators at Tokyo Metropolitan gym. WBA rules stipulate that a boxer who knocks down his opponent three times in one round automatically scores a knockout victory.

Vazquez felled Kasai with a right cross early in the first round. He continued to attack with quick powerful lefts, rights and one-two combinations, making Kasai stagger and then fall. Vazquez chased Kasai around the ring, punishing him with a flurry of punches to down him for the third time.

Kasai, taking his first crack at the world title, had no chance to unleash his effective punches.

The 33-year-old Vazquez, in his sixth defense of the title, improved his mark to 39-6-3, with 31 knockouts.

For the 24-year-old Kasai, WBA's second-ranked contender, it was his first defeat after winning 18 bouts, with 12 KOs.

Vazquez and Kasai both weighed in at 122 pounds (55.3 kilograms).

Graf's scare of a small stake

DELRAY BEACH, Florida, Mar 2: Defending champion and top-seeded Steffi Graf came close to losing her first set of the year, but pulled off a 6-0, 7-5 second-round victory on Tuesday over American

Marrine Werdel at the 400,000 dollar Virginia Slims of Florida, reports Reuter.

The top-ranked Graf, who has won this event four times, is now 18-0 this year. She has won 22 straight matches — the last time the German lost a match was to Spaniard Conchita Martinez in the final of the Virginia Slims of Philadelphia last November.

The 48th-ranked Werdel, who took a 4-1 lead in the second set, is the first player of the year to push Graf into playing more than 10 games in a set.

"In the three tournaments I've played (this year), I've been very good, very solid," Graf said. "Today when I was

down 4-1 in the second set, I thought I might lose a set here."

Third-seeded Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina, a three-time champion at the slims of Florida, won a 6-4, 6-2 second round decision over Italy's Elena Savoldi.

The top eight seeds received first-round byes.

In the first set of the 59 minute match, Graf only lost a total of 10 points — five on her own serve, five on Werdel's.

But in the second set, Werdel jumped ahead to a 4-1 lead in the fourth game. Graf surrendered a 40-0 lead as Werdel played impressive tennis to break serve.

"She hits everything and takes a lot of risks," Graf said of Werdel.

Graf evened the score to 4-4. At 30-30 in the 11th game, Werdel executed two forehand errors, to lose her serve and give Graf the winning edge.

In contrast to Graf, the fifth-ranked Sabatini has been in a serious drought.

Sabatini hasn't won a title since the Italian Open in May 1992. Not including this event, she's played 29 tournaments without reaching the winner's circle.

But she's had success here at the slims of Florida. Sabatini even has a 8-2 winning edge over Graf in the state of Florida.

"If there's one place I feel confident and have a lot of motivation it would be here, Florida," said Sabatini, who trails Graf 26-11 in their overall career head-to-head.

Sabatini allowed the 187th-ranked Savoldi, a qualifier here to break her serve once in the one hour, 22 minute match. The Argentine started with a 3-1 lead in the first set, but was broken in the sixth game to even the score at 3-3.

Sabatini recouped her lead immediately, breaking Savoldi at 0-40 in the seventh game.

Sabatini took a 3-1 lead in the second set and captured a second service break in the seventh game.

Clinton greets Super Bowl champs

WASHINGTON, Mar 2: A year ago, the White House greeted the world champion Dallas Cowboys with AstroTurf, mock goal posts and banners, reports AP.

This year, an unadorned Roosevelt Room was the site for the president's traditional welcome of the Super Bowl winner.

With back-to-back titles, neither the Cowboys nor the White House were putting on the splashy show of 1993.

A year ago, the entire team was greeted in the East Room, which had been decorated for the occasion with a vast expanse of AstroTurf complete with hash marks. A fake goal post hung between the ornate portraits of George and Martha Washington.

A small, albeit stellar, squad returned Tuesday. Quarterback Troy Aikman, running back Emmitt Smith, receiver Michael Irvin and defensive tackle Russell Maryland represented the team, joined by owner Jerry Jones and coach Jimmy Johnson.

"This is the most expensive foursome there is in this country today," Jones joked, referring to his high-priced players.

During a visit to the Oval Office prior to Tuesday's ceremony, Maryland said he had to set Clinton straight on who was responsible for the Cowboys' 30-13 victory over the Buffalo Bills on Jan 30.

"He was recapping the Super Bowl game, talking about how Troy and Emmitt moving down the field on the Bills made the difference in the game," Maryland told reporters later. "I'm the only guy here from Dallas on the defense. I had to say something, you know... I said it was the defense."

"I think it stuck with him," Maryland added.

Nastase for more Nastase

LONDON, Mar 2: Ilie Nastase, one of the most controversial characters in tennis history, believes there should be more people like him in the modern game, reports AP.

Speaking at a news conference at the Hurlingham Club here to boost the ATP seniors tournament, which will be held from June 15-18, Nastase said: "There were no rules in my day. No-one said that you could not complain or swear."

Clinton didn't allow himself to be drawn into the offence vs defence argument. He praised the entire team during his brief remarks.

"I think that it is just the beginning of what will doubtless be years and years and years of stunning achievement if they can just keep their goals high and keep working for them," the president said.

"Coach Johnson, your team has a knack for coming to the White House."

It's a knack the Cowboys will repeat if Jones has any say in the matter.

As he handed Clinton a copy of the Lombardi Trophy given to the Super Bowl winner, Jones said: "We'd like to put on this trophy 1993 Super Bowl

champions, 1994 Super Bowl champions, and we're going to leave a little space open."

Jones also presented the president a fist-sized replica of the Cowboys' diamond-studded Super Bowl ring. "If you can find someone that fits, send him to the Dallas Cowboys," Jones told his fellow Arkansan.

Clinton admitted to "a bit of parochial pride" that the team is owned by a native of Arkansas. The Arkansas ties don't end there. Texas native Johnson, like Jones, played on the 1964 national champion Arkansas Razorbacks team.

In an interview, Jones said he decided to bring only a few players this year because he wanted an "intimate" ceremony this time around.



Frank Brickowski of the Charlotte Hornets (R) leaps past Seattle SuperSonics defender Shawn Kemp for a basket in the first half of their match on March 1. The SuperSonics beat Hornets 112-96. — AFP photo

Protean course of ice hockey

LILLEHAMMER, Norway, Mar 2: The future of Olympic hockey is tough to predict. About as tough as figuring out what happened in the tournament Sweden just won, reports AP.

Will there be "Dream Teams," in Nagano in 1998 — Eric Lindros playing for Canada, Jeremy Roenick for the United States, Sergei Fedorov for Russia? That's being discussed.

Will shootouts still decide medal-round games, even when the gold medal is at stake? Maybe that issue should be brought up.

Sweden used that device adopted in 1988, to win their first Olympic hockey gold medal with a 3-2 victory Sunday and destroy Canada's hopes for their first gold in 42 years.

It was a stunning conclusion to a tournament full of surprises.

The loss of talent to the

National Hockey League finally caught up with Russia. Their 4-4 record was worse than any of their predecessors from the Soviet Union and Unified Team that won eight of the previous 10 gold medals, losing just six games along the way. The Russians lost the third-place game to Finland and left without a medal, something that never happened to the Soviets and Unifieds.

The Americans who won the other two golds, also hit a new low with an eighth-place finish. They won just one of eight games, their fewest ever.

Finland's 6-0 start was another shock. So was a 19-minute nightmare against Canada in which it gave up five goals, as many as it allowed in its other 461 minutes. That burst gave Canada, another medal longshot, a 5-3 semifinal win.

Certainly, few could imagine the gold-medal game that

wouldn't end.

Sixty minutes of regulation play. Ten minutes of overtime. A five-round shootout in which each team scored twice. Still no winner. Time for sudden death.

Both teams missed on their first shots. The next round showcased two youngsters tabbed for NHL greatness — 20-year-old Peter Forsberg, who Wayne Gretzky called the world's best young player, and 19-year-old Paul Kariya, whose style has been compared to Gretzky's.

Forsberg scored. Kariya didn't. Sweden won. Canada got its second straight silver.

Even Swedish hero Tommy Salo, the goalie who made the final save, doesn't like it.

"It's too big a tournament," he said. "It takes too much luck."

The tournament could be even bigger four years from now.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ACROSS | wheeler-dealer | 53 Dumb-struck | 16 Isherwood collaborator |
| 1 Derrick boom | 35 "Hail" | 54 It can lead to a broken bone | 20 "But of course, madame" |
| 4 Hemp or jute | 37 Drop the ball | 55 Run up the phone bill | 23 Despondent |
| 8 Tease mercilessly | 39 Garland from 14 | DOWN | 24 Zhivago's love |
| 12 Actress Merkel | 40 Adverb after "sicklied" | 1 Equitable | 25 Potato buds |
| 13 "Believe — Not!" | 41 Humorist Richard | 2 Peruvian ancestor | 26 Excess avoirdupois |
| 14 Hawaiian city | 45 Continuous movement | 3 Pointed remark | 27 Re planes and such |
| 15 Dig frantically with the hands | 48 Hen scratchings | 4 Authoritative texts | 28 Diamond legend |
| 17 In the pre-swan mode | 50 American Beauty, e.g. | 5 Cornered member | 29 "Butterflies — Free" |
| 18 It's sometimes rasa | 51 Clumsy craft | 7 Quiver | 32 Examined |
| 19 Tattooed word | 52 Away from WSW | 8 Ebert's indicator | 33 Scale |
| 21 "L.A. Law" alumna | Solution time: 28 mins. | 9 Peruke | 35 Brewery output |
| 22 Effervesce | | 10 Under the weather | 36 "— the thought!" |
| 26 Confronts | | 11 Fiddle (with) | 38 Emulated |
| 29 "The Greatest" | | | 29 Across |
| 30 Deposit | | | 39 Exaltation members |
| 31 Writer Uris | | | 42 Do what you're told |
| 32 Raw mineral | | | 43 Radius neighbor |
| 33 Dream find of medical science | | | 44 Stench |
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