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Saive, European men's champ

BIRMINGHAM, England, Apr 4: Belgium's Jean-Michel Saive lost the first game but hit back to win the next three against Sweden's Olympic table tennis champion Jan-Ove Waldner Monday to win the European Championship, his first major title, reports AP.

Saive, ranked World No 1, won 23-25, 21-10, 21-17, 21-16 in the men's final at the National Indoor Arena.

In the women's final, Marie Svensson, No 9 seed from Sweden, overpowered unseeded Dutch player Gerdina Koen 21-12, 21-14, 21-18.

Earlier, Olympic champion Jan-Ove Waldner had to make a magnificent recovery from within two points of defeat against World Cup winner Zoran Primorac to keep alive his dream of the European title.

The Swede's 21-18, 26-28, 17-21, 21-19, 21-16 victory over the Croatian came only after Waldner had been 18-19 down in the fourth game and in danger of sliding to a surprise defeat after three times losing good leads.

The elegance and timing of Waldner's backhand and forehand loops was breathtaking, but the fighting qualities of Primorac saved him three game points in the second game.

And it brought him back from 8-12 in the third and from 13-17 in the fourth.

Primorac then advanced to 19-18 in the fourth game only for a tight service return from the joint fifth seed to take a net cord and jump off.

Had it found the table, Waldner would almost certainly have been two match points down.

Instead, a backhand block down the line got him to 20-19, and he escaped to a fifth game with a serve-forehand loop-smash sequence.

Waldner tightened his concentration in the final game, but still saw a five-point advantage slip to 14-13 and then to 17-16 before he found the inspiration in some wonderful 'loop-the-loop' forehand ral-

lies to quell Primorac's fight.

The two players embraced at the end but it left the Olympic champion wondering if he could recover his physical and mental resources for another big battle in the final only two hours later with the world number one Jean-Michel Saive.

The top-seeded Belgian, who has never won a European or world men's singles title, was much too powerful in attack for the surprise French semifinalist Patrick Chila, winning 21-12, 21-15, 21-8.

Waldner has also been seeking the European title to fill the one big gap in his trophy cabinet.

Primorac's honourable defeat left his dream of becoming triple European champion.

He contests the men's doubles final in partnership with Saive and won the mixed doubles on Sunday with Hungary's Csilla Batorfi.

Primorac was, however, certain of standing on the podium on the last day. When he and Batorfi received their trophies, the Israeli national anthem was played by mistake.

An apology has been made and the ceremony is to be per-

Costa coasts

LISBON, Apr 4: Third seed Carlos Costa of Spain staged a spectacular recovery in the second set of Sunday's Estoril Open tennis final to beat Ukrainian title-holder Andrei Medvedev 4-6, 7-5, 6-4, reports Reuter.

The seconds-seeded Medvedev, returning to the courts for the first time since a knee operation in January, dominated the first set and looked set to regain the title when he went 5-2 up in the second set.

But Costa, Estoril champion in 1992 made an inspired comeback to win the next five games and take the second set 7-5 against the world ranked number seven.

The Spaniard broke the dispirited Ukrainian's serve early in the third set to snatch the fifth title of his career after two hours 20 minutes of play.

He added: "I'm not disappointed. I played a fantastic tournament. I was the best player in the team event and before the tournament I was injured, so for me this was one of my best ever singles performances."

Waldner said: "When I was ahead I had to keep my nerve. Rosskopf made a lot errors off my serve."

The Swede's semifinal opponent will be joint fifth seed Zoran Primorac of Croatia who outlasted unseeded Greek Daniel Ciocla 15-21, 21-18, 23-21, 21-23, 21-13.

Earlier, Ciocla beat Saturday's giant-killer Solopov in four games, the Estonian's champagne touch against Gatten falling distinctly flat.

Chila staged a brilliant comeback on Sunday to beat Saive's younger brother Philippe 19-21, 20-22, 21-18, 21-6, 21-19.

Saga of an eternal fighter

NEW YORK, Apr 4: He boxes through more than 80 professional fights, advancing age, financial famine and, most recently, a subway shooting, he boxes, reports AP.

Saoul Mamby, 46, knows almost nothing else. Even in the emergency room, the ring beckoned.

"I asked the doctor if I would be able to fight again, and he looked at me like I was crazy," Mamby said in gentle voice.

"He said, 'You just got out of a fight. That's why you got shot.' I said, 'No I mean will I be able to box again?'

The question arose after Mamby, a former world champion, was shot late last month in a Bronx subway station during a scuffle with an armed teenager.

A bullet meant for Mamby's 21-year-old son instead tunneled through the boxer's shoulder. Somehow, it caused only minor damage.

Box again? The answer, his doctors now say, is yes; if he must, yes.

Until the shooting, Mamby made a career out of dodging bullets — lethal punches thrown by the likes of Roberto Duran and Buddy McGirt.

Never a puncher himself, the native of New York City's tough South Bronx neighborhood mastered the art of self-defence. He was so good at it, they began calling him "Sweet Saoul," the boxer who won with a toothsome tango of evasion.

"I'm clever, I'm slick," said Mamby, his svelte build like that of a dancer, his wispy facial hair like that of a teenager.

"I'm just not there for you to beat on."

The style has helped extend his career into a fourth decade — long enough to win a championship in 1980 and lose it, to win a small fortune and spend it, to be promoted by Don King and dumped by him, to go the distance with Duran and stay on his feet.

Even though he lost, "that fight really made me because everyone thought I'd get knocked down," Mamby said of the 1974 bout.

At his peak in the early 1980s, Sweet Saoul successfully defended his junior welterweight title four times. In those days, he fought in exotic locations like Indonesia.

Today, long after most fighters are pummeled into retirement, Mamby labours in an underworld purgatory, fighting up-and-coming boxers half his age. He was knocked out for the first time in his career during a fight last summer in Maryland.

He set his sights on running the New York Marathon. It was a minor detour.

"I was up to six miles (10 kms) a day," he recalled. "I thought if I can run six miles (10 kms) a day, I can fight again."

The man who boxed his way around the world now trains in a small East Harlem office building, in a gym that shares the third floor with a Nation of Islam mosque.

A single ring with red, white and blue ropes sits in the middle of the gym, surrounded by tattered punching bags held together with layer-upon-layer duct tape.

"I started in a place like this," Mamby said. "You never forget where you came from. I feel at home here."

Mamby, a father of four children, still lives in the Bronx. He was on his way to the gym with his oldest, Saoul Mamby Jr. on March 24 when

they ran into a teenager who was blocking a subway turnstile.

According to Mamby, he politely asked the teen to move. When the teen showed his father with obscenities, the son responded off.

Mamby took his first professional fight in 1969 so he could earn enough money to buy friends beer. He wanted no part of this one.

The father stepped in only after one of the teen's friends joined the fray. But before he could throw a punch, he felt the barrel of a handgun against his chest.

Mamby's quick hands managed to push the gun away as it went off, deflecting the bullet into his shoulder. His assailants fled.

"The wind is cold, but it still blows strong at times," he said, closing his right hand into a fist.

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Jager ends up winner, frustrated

FEDERAL WAY, Washington, Apr 4: Three-time Olympian Tom Jager won the 50-metre freestyle at the US Spring National Swimming championships on Sunday, but was embarrassed with his performance, reports Reuter.

The 29-year-old record holder, after nearly two years away from the sport, apologized for winning in 22.52 seconds, a time he considered not worthy of a top American swimmer.

"To be the number one seed with a time of 22.4 I had in the morning prelims is pretty bad, to be blunt," said Jager, whose world record is 21.81 seconds.

"Matt Biondi is laughing right now and he's not swimming anymore," he said of his former American rival.

"Russian Alexander Popov is laughing and that's serious," he said of the Olympic champion. "This is sending out a pretty sorry statement for US swimming."

It was Jager's first win since the January, 1991 world championships in Perth, Australia, and his first race since the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, where he won bronze in the event.

Jager is training for his fourth Olympic team. He will be 31 when the 1996 Atlanta Games roll around.

Four-time Olympic champion Janet Evans picked up her 39th national title and third victory of the meeting with a decisive win in the 1,500 metres freestyle.

Evans won in 16:19.13, well off her world record time of 15:2.10, but nearly 14 seconds faster than Trina Jackson, who finished second in 16:33.48.

"I'm not preoccupied with time anymore. I'm just going out for the win. I'm having more fun that way," said Evans, who is eight titles shy of tying Tracy Caulkins on the all-time US list.

Evans earlier in the meeting won the 800 and 400 metres freestyle races. She still holds world records in both events.

Nineteen-year-old Attila Czene of Hungary, one of a handful of non-US swimmers competing here, won the 200-metre individual medley in a US record time of 2:00.17.

Sites for eves soccer WC named

STOCKHOLM, Apr 4: The Swedish Soccer Association on Friday selected five sites for the FIFA women's world championships in Sweden June 5-18 next year, reports AP.

Pending approval from FIFA, the matches will be played at Olympia Stadium in Helsingborg, Arosvallen in Vasteras, Tingvalla in Karlstad, Stromvallen in Gävle and Rasunda Stadium outside Stockholm.

Rasunda Stadium will host the June 18 final. The other 25 games will be played in the other four Swedish cities. Rasunda is Scandinavia's most famous soccer stadium and was the site of the 1958 World Cup final between Brazil and Sweden as well as several games in 1992 European Championship finals.

"There was a lot of interest in hosting the games. We had bids from 16 Swedish cities," said Lars-Christer Olsson, secretary general of the Swedish Soccer Association.

Twelve teams will play in the tournament with three four-team groups in the preliminary round. The top two teams in each round-robin group plus the two teams with the best third-placed records will advance to the quarterfinals.

The United States, led by Michelle Akers-Stahl, won the inaugural women's World Cup three years ago in China, beating Norway 2-1 in the final. Akers-Stahl, as well as fellow US national team members Julie Pipitone, Kristine Lilly and Mary Harvey, have signed to play for Tyreco in the Swedish First Division this season.

Fabulous flight of a paper plane

TOKYO, Apr 4: The world's largest paper plane smashed another world record Sunday, when it flew almost 40 metres (132 feet) in a gymnasium near Tokyo, reports AFP.

The aircraft, made of cardboard and Japanese paper, weighing 23 kilograms (50.6 pounds) and with a wingspan 13.5 metres (45 feet), is expected to win a place in the Guinness Book of World Records.

Built by members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Tokorozawa city, about 30 kilometres (20 miles) northwest of Tokyo, its 39.1 metre flight.

Residents of Bangladesh, subject to these rules, will be eligible to participate in The Daily Star World Cup Quiz'94. All personnel of The Daily Star, Unilever (advertising agency) and Transcom Electronics Ltd. and all its affiliate companies shall be deemed disqualified to participate in The Daily Star World Cup Quiz'94.

Participants are to cut the original form along the indicated dotted lines. All entries must be submitted on the original form printed in The Daily Star. Photocopies or reproductions in any form will not be accepted.

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