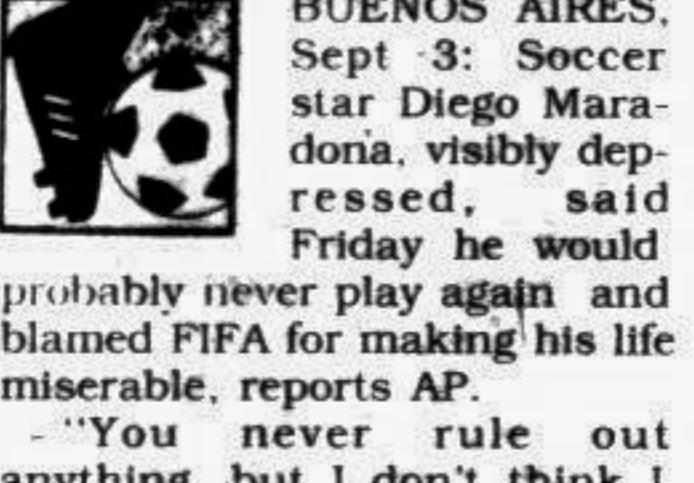


## Sport



Soccer star Diego Maradona whispers something to his agent during a press conference in Buenos Aires on Sept. 2. Maradona talked about his suspension by FIFA and his future as a professional. — AFP photo

## Maradona says it's over



BUENOS AIRES, Sept. 3: Soccer star Diego Maradona, visibly depressed, said Friday he would probably never play again and blamed FIFA for making his life miserable, reports AP.

"You never rule out anything, but I don't think I can start myself up to play again," Maradona said during a news conference at Boca Juniors' Stadium where he played in the early 1980s. "My career has passed."

Maradona, dressed in black from head to toe, looked as if he had come for a funeral and spoke as if it were his own.

"They killed me," he said of FIFA. Soccer's ruling body last month suspended Maradona for 15 months for testing positive for ephedrine, a stimulant found in diet pills, at the World Cup in June.

The suspension ends on Sept. 29, 1995. Maradona turns 34 next month and has had problems with his weight.

Many of Maradona's comments were nearly inaudible, coming between long and frequent sighs.

"I would only be happy again if they lift the

sanction," he said. "I feel empty as a man."

With Captain Maradona as their leader at this year's World Cup, Argentina won their first two games. He scored a goal, set up two others and pumped adrenaline into the team.

Without Maradona, Argentina were eliminated in the round of 16 by Romania. It was a disappointing showing for a country that had played in three of the previous four World Cup title matches.

Maradona's career has been a spectacular rollercoaster.

His professional career started when he was a 15-year-old from the Buenos Aires slums and signed a 100 dollars a week contract with local team Argentinos Juniors.

At his best in the mid-1980s, Maradona played with the ball as if it were a yo-yo attached to his foot. He froze defenders in their tracks, and the precision of his passes often surprised even his teammates.

On the biggest stage of all, the World Cup, Maradona took on an aura of invincibility, leading Argentina to the title in 1986.

In 1990, with defenders shadowing his every move,

## Jansher, Nicol in HK final

HONG KONG, Sept. 3: World champion Jansher Khan earned a chance for revenge against Peter Nicol of Scotland as both posted convincing semifinal victories in the Hong Kong Open squash tournament on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Jansher beat third seed Peter Marshall of England 15-9, 15-8, 12-15, 15-7 in 77 minutes, while 21-year-old Nicol, the seventh seed, scored a superb 15-7, 15-14, 17-15 victory over world number four Rodney Eyles of Australia in 38 minutes.

Jansher was beaten by the Scot when they last met in the second round of the Welsh Classic in Cardiff in February. It was Jansher's only defeat this year — and it still rankles.

"I was not very fit then and I remember," he said. "I was getting fat. I did not like that, or getting beaten, so I am really looking forward to playing him now I am strong."

Nicol appeared unmoved. "I am very confident," he said.

"I think Jansher is looking a wee bit flabby again, just like in Cardiff."

The Pakistani, who has won

### Morceli pulls out

PARIS, Sept. 3: Algerian Nouredine Morceli withdrew from the World Grand Prix athletics final on Saturday because of a stomach bug, reports Reuter.

"I am sick. I have been up all night, and I am not running," he told Reuters on Saturday morning just a few hours before he was due to run in the event.

An IAAF spokesman confirmed Morceli's withdrawal, adding "As late as two o'clock in the morning he only had a 50-50 per cent chance of running. He has had the bug for the last few days."

The decision not to run will cost Morceli, the men's overall points leader in the Grand Prix standings, more than 100,000 dollars in lost prize money. He was set to win 100,000 dollars as the overall prize winner and 30,000 dollars as an individual event winner but will now pick up only a fraction of that amount.

In Morelli's absence the overall title will be won by one of six men — Americans Derrick Adkins (400 metre hurdles), Mike Conley (triple jump), Dennis Mitchell (100 metres), Cuban Javier Sotomayor (high jump) or 1500 metre runner Venuste Niyongabo of Burundi.



Italy's Andrea Gaudenzi exults after ousting former world number one Jim Courier of the United States in the second round of the US Open on Sept. 2. Gaudenzi won 7-5, 6-2, 3-6.

### Computer mates Nikolic

LONDON, Sept. 3: The chess computer that defeated champion Garry Kasparov vanquished Bosnian Grandmaster Predrag Nikolic on Friday at the Intel World Chess Grand Prix, reports AP.

Premium Chess Genius 2 progressed to the next round with a 2-0 victory over Nikolic, who had beaten Nigel Short in the first round.

Nikolic had a clear advantage in the first game at the Sedgwick conference centre in West London, but was confused by the computer's accurate defence in the final stages of the game. With many at this stage expecting a draw, Nikolic ambitiously played for a win but was outplayed.

In the second game, Nikolic again held a clear advantage throughout the game but the computer's stubborn defence again forced the Grandmaster to overreach and he resigned on move 71.

The computer has so far amassed 15,000 dollars and will play either Indian Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand or Viktor Korchnoi in the semifinal stages of the chess challenge. All prize money will be donated to a charity.

### Fantastic Fu

ROME, Sept. 3: China's defending titlist and Olympic champion Fu Mingxia produced a stunning final dive to snatch the gold medal from countrywoman Chi Bin at the World Swimming Championships Saturday, reports AP.

Needing to score over 62 points on her final dive in the 10 metre highboard, Fu brought gasps of admiration from the crowd with an inward 3 1/2 somersault.

It earned her scores of 8.5 and four 8.0s to collect 75.48, easily the highest of the competition, as she became the first woman to win back-to-back highboard world titles.

Fu totalled 434.04 points to take first place. Chi collected



FU MINGXIA

silver with a score of 420.24 and Maria Jose Alcalde became the first Mexican woman to win a World Championship medal by placing third with 396.48.

Chi not really satisfied with my scores," Fu said. "I didn't get as good a score as I did at the Olympic Games."

Fu also won the title in Perth, Australia in 1991 when she was age 12.

Three years ago I was rather small," she said. "Now I have grown up and I think I am more sophisticated."

The American challenge faded although Eileen Richemont placed fourth with 395.86 after a poor start to the eight dive final.

Going into the competition which was suspended Friday by a thunderstorm, the Americans were second and third behind Fu and ahead of Chi.

### Qatar's appeal

DOHA, Sept. 3: Qatar has urged Gulf states to welcome Iraq back to the Gulf Cup football tournament in the United Arab Emirates in November, reports AFP.

Qatar Football Federation president Mohammad Ben Hammam said Qatar would support any effort to bring Iraq back to the tournament.

Gulf states froze all sporting ties with Iraq in 1990 when Baghdad invaded Kuwait in August and launched the Gulf War.

BRUSSELS, Sept. 3: AC Milan's Dutch striker Marco Van Basten has undergone yet another operation on the ankle which has kept him out of football for 18 months, it was reported here Friday, reports AFP.

Basten, once rated the best footballer in the world, was operated on by professor Marc Martens in Antwerp on Thursday. La Derniere Heure said.

Van Basten undergoes surgery

## A day for lesser stars



NEW YORK, Sept. 3: There was Jim Courier getting clobbered in the stadium, Wimbleton champ Conchita Martinez and Mary Joe Fernandez on Court 16.

Feeling pretty fantastic, too, were Californian Ginger Helgeson, who topped women's No 3 Martinez 3-6, 6-4, 6-1, and Ohio native Ann Grossman, who upset No 9 Fernandez 6-4, 6-4.

Not all the seeded players fell. No 4 Michael Stich looked strong and quick in a 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 victory over Steve Bryan, and No 5 Stefan Edberg looked even tougher in a 6-2, 6-3, 6-2 victory over Jeff Tarango.

Three women's seeds cruised comfortably. No 2 Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario beat Sandra Cecchini 6-2, 6-1; No 5

Kimiko Date beat Lisa Raymond 6-4, 6-2 and No 8 Gabriela Sabatini beat Isabelle Demongeot 6-0, 6-2.

Helgeson, who turns 26 three days after the Open ends, lost to Martinez a few weeks ago in San Diego.

Grossman, who pulled the other big surprise among the women, also cited belief in herself as the key to victory.

"Before, I've always really been hard on myself," said the 23-year-old. "If I miss one shot, I go crazy. Everyone says I'm an angry player, and now I'm just enjoying myself."



Unseeded Ginger Helgeson of USA hits a backhand to third seed Conchita Martinez of Spain during their third round match at the US Open in New York on Friday. Helgeson upset Martinez 3-6, 6-4, 6-1.

— AFP photo

### US OPEN NOTEBOOK

NEW YORK, Sept. 3: The ATP Tour Fan Headquarters is offering US Open spectators an opportunity to correspond with a few famous pen pals, reports AP.

Fans who stop by the ATP Tour's booth can send letters to their favourite players via a computer Think Pad Pen — an electronic device that is like a sophisticated notepad.

The booth has also had a number of players — Stefan Edberg, Todd Martin, Brad Gilbert and Richey Reneberg — stop by and answer questions in person.

One fan had a very personal question for Edberg — one President Clinton would remember well from a televised town meeting in which he was queried on the same topic.

"Do you wear boxers or briefs?" asked an inquisitive passerby.

With a wink to let everyone know he was kidding, Edberg said, "Actually, I don't wear anything."

The men's tour, which is deep into their new "fan-friendly" policy, said the letters will be delivered to the players and they will encourage the athletes to send replies.

★ ★ ★

**STEFAN SEEKS SCENERY:** Stefan Edberg says that after tennis his other sport of choice is golf.

That's not unusual on the tennis tour. Ivan Lendl is known to play golf after a match and Mats Wilander spent much of his two-year hiatus perfecting his swing.

Edberg, who won his second-round match over Jeff Tarango in straight sets, explained the appeal of golf.

"That's probably the sport that a lot of tennis players do," the Swedish star said. "I do it because it is not physically tiring at all. And you can go out in the nature and see some trees. It's really a great relaxation. To golf and play nine holes is two hours of fresh air, to get away from the tennis courts and buildings."

★ ★ ★

**NATURE CALLING:** Ginger Helgeson, who sent Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez packing in three sets Friday, is doing quite nicely at the US Open. However, she's not about to pack up and relocate to New York.

Helgeson, who grew up in St. Cloud, Minn., now lives in Alpine, Calif.

"It's very, very peaceful and beautiful, and it's 25 miles (40 kilometres) east of San Diego," said Helgeson, who is getting married in three weeks. "It's in the mountains — up 2,000 feet — and there's a lot of land out there. The houses aren't on top of each other and you wake up to the birds."

★ ★ ★

**CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer**

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### CRYPTOQUIP

D N Z Z B M J U P U F Q J S F  
G S P P L L X S Y Q P Z S Y Z B M  
A B I ' Q X N I Q Q B G U

E U D Q S I Q O U A N J E

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: NO ONE BELIEVED I HAD INVENTED ELASTIC BECAUSE I STRETCHED THE TRUTH A BIT.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: D equals P

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