

Narrow squeak for Sampras

MELBOURNE. Jan 22: Defending champion Pete Sampras shook off his lethargy just in time, rallying from two sets down Sunday to defeat Sweden's Magnus Larsson and seal a place in the quarterfinals of the Australian Open tennis championships, reports AP.

He was joined by fellow Americans Michael Chang and Jim Courier as the tournament took on a distinctly star-spangled look.

Sampras was twice within two points of defeat in the third set against Larsson, but recovered to win 4-6, 6-7 (4-7), 7-5, 6-4, 6-4 in three hours and seven minutes. It was one of the best comebacks of his career after a strangely sluggish start.

The American reversed his loss to Larsson in last month's Grand Slam Cup final in Munich. It was only the second time in his career that Sampras had come from two sets down to win and it was his 39th win in his last 41 Grand Slam matches.

"I knew going into this match that I'd have to fight hard," Sampras said. "He was playing too good for me and if he'd maintained that level he would have pulled it out."

"I just hung in there. I wasn't playing my best tennis, but I found a way to pull through."

Sampras' coach Tim Gullikson was admitted to hospital two days ago after suffering from dizzy spells that could relate to two strokes he suffered late last year.

Sampras talked with Gullikson before the match, gleaned some advice. "It's ironic. He was also in hospital when I played (Larsson) in Munich," Sampras said.

Larsson, who also led Sweden to victory over Russia in last month's Davis Cup final, served 19 aces, while Sampras slammed down 18 himself — 13 of them in the last three sets.

Chang, the No. 5 seed, continued his impressive run by advancing with a 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 win over unseeded Frenchman Olivier Delaitre.

"It's been a good first four rounds," Chang said after breaking Delaitre's serve six times. "I still feel very fresh."

Courier, the ninth seed and two-time champion, scored his fourth straight-sets victory by defeating Karel Novacek of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-3, 6-2 and will now face his friend and rival Sampras in the quarterfinals.

Courier broke Novacek's serve five times and won in just 85 minutes.

"I'm playing very well. Courier said, 'I couldn't be happier with the I'm hitting the ball. (I've been) sneaking through the draw.'"

Only Andrei Medvedev, the 20-year-old No. 13 seed from Ukraine, spoiled the American party, advancing to his first Australian Open quarterfinal.

Medvedev took 3 1/2 hours to defeat unseeded American David Wheaton 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-7 (5-7), 10-8 and now plays Chang.

"It's one of the most important wins in my career and will stay in my mind for a long time," Medvedev said. "David was very unlucky not to finish it off (when he served) at 5-4 in the fifth."

The 6-foot-3-inch (1.92 meters) tall Larsson broke Sampras' serve twice in the first set, using clubbing forehand winners to take it in 33 minutes.

There were no service breaks in the second set, but Larsson moved 5-2 ahead in the tiebreaker and served it out.

"He was playing flawless tennis the first two sets," Sampras said. "When I won the third set that was a huge turning point."

The third set went on serve until Sampras broke in the 11th game and the American needed just one break — in the seventh game — to take out the fourth, which he clinched with an ace.

Sampras then took an early

break in the decisive set and held on. Larsson, who had been so judicious with his placement in the first two sets began to make a catalogue of errors.

"I can't play much better than I did today. I don't think I would have lost to too many players, but he's No. 1 in the world," Larsson said.

"I don't know if he was playing badly or not, but I put a lot of pressure on him."

Conchita Martinez, the No. 2 seed from Spain and the current Wimbledon champion, made the last eight of the women's singles with a 6-2, 6-7 (3-7), 6-2 win over Irina Spirlea of Romania and was joined by No. 4 Mary Pierce of France, a 6-2, 6-4 winner in just 80 minutes of baseline slugging over No. 10 Anke Huber of Germany, who dou-

ble faulted on match point.

Huber had won all three of her meetings with Pierce, but was let down by her serve. She sent down eight double faults and dropped serve five times.

"I really wanted to win today. I tried not to think about the occasion, or who I was playing," Pierce said.

"Anke should never have got into a shootout with Pierce," said Huber's coach Klaus Hofsaiss. "But now I think Mary has a good chance of winning the tournament."

Lindsay Davenport of the United States, seeded sixth, defeated No. 12 Brenda Schultz of the Netherlands 6-2, 3-6, 6-2, while Natasha Zvereva of Belarus rallied from a set and 1-3 down against Kyoko Nagatsuka of Japan to win their fourth-round match 3-6, 6-3, 6-1.



Pete Sampras of the US grimaces as he stretches a cramped leg during his match against Swede Magnus Larsson at the Australian Open yesterday. Sampras won 4-6, 6-7 (4-7), 7-5, 6-4, 6-4. — AFP photo

South Korean Open Susanti's

SEOUL, Jan 22: World and Olympic badminton champion Susi Susanti won the South Korean Open women's title on Sunday, defeating local hopeful and big rival Bang-Soo-Hyun 3-11, 11-7, 11-8, reports Reuter.

After surrendering the first game, Susanti fought back brilliantly to beat the Asian Games gold medalist Bang, who had the home crowd very much on her side.

Bang again had troubled breaking Susanti's pattern defence, marked by high and long strokes, and some misjudgements in the final game settled the South Korean's fate.

On Saturday, Susanti's Indonesian compatriot Heryanto Arbi, the All-England champion, won the men's crown beating Fuqiang Permadi 15-12, 15-6.

Nat'l bridge on

The robin league stage of the Orion national team bridge championship '95 began at the Officers' Club on Saturday, reports BSS.

Earlier on Friday eight teams qualified for this stage of the championship being organised by the Bangladesh Bridge Federation and sponsored by the Orion Group.

The teams have been divided into two groups. They are: Group X — Air Com (rtd) Qudus and Partners, Bridge Pair, Azimpur Community Centre and Bridge Blues and Group Y — Bangladesh Bank Club Green, Bangladesh Bank Club Red, Barnali Sangsad and Concerned Friends.

The robin league will continue till January 24. Four teams will qualify for the semi-finals to be played with 48 boards divided into three sessions of 16 boards each. The final with 96 boards will be played at the Officers' Club on Friday, January 27 from 10 am.

Abahani's third

KHULNA, Jan 22: Abahani Krira Chakra emerged unbeaten champions in the Khulna Coca-Cola First Division football league today, reports UNB.

It was Abahani's third consecutive league title.

In the last league match Abahani KC drew goalless with their traditional rivals Mohammedan SC at the local stadium this afternoon.

Abahani bagged 41 points from 15 matches while Mohammedan SC finished runners-up with 36 points.

Khulna Newsprint Mills with 35 points became third among the 16 teams who took part in the two-month competition.

Abahani KC: Milon, Pradip, Aminur, Nasim, Tariqul (Kamall), Labloo, Munna, Kamal, Abu (Zia), Masud Rana and Humayun.

Mohammedan SC: Nippon, Badal, Hafizul, Younus, Tuhin, Quasem (Rahman), Farooq, Rappi, Zahir, Sumon and Hejal. Referee: S M Mansoor.

Football fracas

TEHRAN, Jan 22: Rioting broke out at a football match between Iran's two top teams and fans set seats on fire at a Tehran stadium, newspapers reported on Saturday, reports Reuter.

They said that five minutes before the end of the game on Friday night, rival players from the popular Perouzi and Esteghal teams started fighting and were joined by fans.

Jehan Islam newspaper said "trouble-makers" in the 100,000-strong crowd set some seats in the stadium on fire.

The two teams are Iran's most popular and have a long history of rivalry.

Iranian television, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, said on Saturday night the football federation "suspended nine players for between six months and three years."

Lyon climb

PARIS, Jan 22: Lyon beat Cannes 3-1 in France's match of the day on Saturday to shoot up to second place above Paris St Germain after garnering six points in the space of just 48 hours, reports Reuter.

Lyon, only sixth two days earlier, received a surprise bonus of three points from the league on Thursday but did all their own spadework against Cannes, another candidate for a UEFA Cup berth.

Florian Maurice gave Lyon the lead in the first minute and though Croatian striker Ardan Koznicku equalised midway through the first half, Lyon took a deserved victory through goals from Stephane Roche and Claude-Arnaud Rivinet.

Lyon moved above PSG on number of goals scored. Both are on 41 points, 10 adrift of runaway leaders Nantes.

The earlier bonus for Lyon came when the league awarded them the points for an away match at Metz interrupted by snow after 63 minutes when they were leading 2-1 earlier this month.



The Princess of Wales, Lady Diana, gets a few pointers from French Rugby Federation president Bernard Lapasset during the Five Nations' tournament match between France and Wales at the Parc des Princes in Paris on Jan 21. France won 21-9. — AFP photo

Change of name, fortune

MELBOURNE, Jan 22: Natasha Zvereva is hoping a change of name will bring her a change of fortune after she Sunday advanced to her first Australian Open quarterfinal, reports AP.

Zvereva, 23, changed her first name from Natalia three weeks ago. She fought back from what looked a likely defeat and recorded a 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 fourth-round win over Kyoko Nagatsuka of Japan.

Zvereva has not progressed beyond the quarterfinals of her last 25 Grand Slam tournaments since being crushed by Steffi Graf in the 1988 French Open final.

"I'm very pleased with my performances," said Zvereva, the No. 8 seed from Belarus who is known as one of the most vivacious players on the WTA Tour.

Zvereva, playing in her sixth Australian Open, has in recent years been known around the WTA Tour as Natasha — and decided to make the change official.

"I'm always looking for a change. I change my hair, change my name. It's something exciting," she joked.

"Natalia is a passport name and I think it's way too serious. So Natasha is kind of nice and soft and mellow."

She admitted she was initially surprised by the attacking style of Nagatsuka, whom she was meeting for the first time.

The Japanese player led by a set and 3-1 before slumping dramatically.

Zvereva broke back to level at 3-3 and then won her opponent's next five service games for victory as Nagatsuka sunk under a flood of unforced errors.

"The match was a complete turn around. I made so many unforced errors and then she

More surgery on Papin's knee

BONN, Jan 22: Former European footballer-of-the-year Jean-Pierre Papin will have another knee operation in southern French city Marseille on Monday, reports AFP.

However the length of time till the Frenchman trains again with Bayern Munich teammates was not revealed.

did," Zvereva said.

"I didn't have confidence in my whole game and just tried to hang in there."

Nagatsuka, a 20-year-old ranked 72 in the world, said she had cost herself the match. Adding to the disappointment was the fact her sister had flown out from Japan specially to watch the match.

"Natasha was attacking my backhand and I couldn't get any rhythm," said the Husei University student, who had never progressed beyond the second round in her previous

eight Grand Slam tournament.

"The ball was coming so slowly and I couldn't concentrate as well as I have in the earlier rounds. I could not serve well, that was the worst thing."

Despite the loss, the Japanese right-hander was pleased with her performances over the week.

"In the past during Grand Slams I sometimes played quite well in the first and second rounds and then lost. But this time I was more consistent," Nagatsuka said.



Natasha Zvereva of Belarus sporting a fashionable pair of sunglasses prepares to serve to Japan's Kyoko Nagatsuka during her match at the Australian Open yesterday. Zvereva who was down a set, abandoned the glasses and eventually went on to win 3-6, 6-3, 6-1. — AFP photo

AUSSIE OPEN NOTEBOOK

MELBOURNE, Jan 22 (AP): Angelica Gavaldon has an added incentive to win matches at the Australian Open — prize money to help pay for her shopping bills.

"I'm really bad with money," said Gavaldon, 21, who plays No. 3 seed Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic in the fourth round on Monday.

"I spend so much it's a joke. My dad has to take care of it otherwise I would have none. I love spending money on clothes."

Gavaldon, whose best Grand Slam performance was making the quarterfinals of the 1990 Australian Open, said she had set herself a target of rewarding herself each time she won a match at the Australian Open.

"There's a shop next to my hotel and after each win I treat myself to a piece of clothing," said Gavaldon, who planned on buying a blazer after her 2-6, 6-3, 8-6 third round win over American Lori McNeil.

Gavaldon said she also had to win to cover the costs of long distance phone calls to her family and boyfriend.

ARANTXA'S OPINION: French and US Open champion Arantxa Sanchez Vicario rates the Australian Open the hardest of the four Grand Slam tournaments to win.

"It's the hardest one because you have to be able to be strong in the hot weather and the other conditions that you may not have at the other tournaments," said the Spaniard, who is top seed in the absence of injured world No. 1 Steffi Graf.

"You have to be ready because it can be an indoor tournament (when the retractable roof is closed), like has been happening so far."

"You never know how the weather is going to be here. It can change four times in a day. It can be very hot. It can rain and (then) sunshine can come back again."

GREG'S BULLET: Canada's Greg Rusedski headed the big-serving brigade after the first week of the Australian Open.

Rusedski powered down a 130.5 miles per hour (210kph) serve despite lalng to Andre Agassi on Saturday.

Australian Patrick Rafter, who next faces Agassi, is a clear second. The local hero has a top speed of 129.2mph (208kph).

Among the women, Kristie Boogert from the Netherlands and American Debbie Graham are top of the league with serves of 107mph (172kph).

ANKE'S EXCUSE: Anke Huber of Germany had an explanation for her fourth-round loss to Mary Pierce at the Australian Open on Sunday.

Huber had beaten Pierce in their last three meetings and was focusing too far ahead.

"Maybe I just wanted too much," Huber said after her 6-2, 6-4 loss. "I knew that I had won the last three times and it was a good chance in a Grand Slam. Maybe I hurried too much."

Veletta fined

SYDNEY, Jan 22: Western Australia opener Mike Veletta was fined 500 dollars (380 US dollars) for dissent as his side edged ahead in their Sheffield Shield match against Queensland on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Veletta was disciplined for questioning his dismissal in the Western Australia first innings on Friday. He was reprimanded following a similar incident in the match against Tasmania last weekend.

To complete a dismal day, Veletta was out in the second over of the second innings.

But pace duo Jo Angel and Brendon Julian secured a first innings lead for Veletta's side at the Gabba in Brisbane.

In reply to the visitors 214, Queensland were dismissed for 204 and at the close on the second day, Western Australia were 13 for one in their second innings.



Md Nazrul Islam, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources handing over prizes at the end of the two-day inter-office annual athletics meet of the Bangladesh Water Development Board held at the Rajarbagh Police Line ground yesterday. — Star photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 End of a song

5 Puppeteer

8 Complacent

12 Completed

13 Important number

14 Height of fashion?

15 It's north of Kansas

17 "A" — "apple"

18 Stage direction

19 Some Guinness Book data

21 Read superficially

24 Car in a 1964 song

25 Treaty

28 Timberwolf

30 Guitar's cousin

33 Past

34 "Nothing could be —"

35 Prot. or Cath.

36 Animation unit

37 Tackle-box

General

58 Flushed

59 Everything else

DOWN

1 Highway pylon

2 It takes the cake

3 Obligation

4 Check

5 Clear the tables

6 Squid squirt

7 Goldbrick

8 Stylish

9 It's east of Kansas

10 Kondo, e.g.

11 Traps

16 Indy Jones' quest

20 Composer

22 Nastase of tennis

23 Impressionist artist

25 Atl. counterpart

26 Candle tally

27 It's west of Kansas

29 Cohort of Boris and Lon

31 Barbie's beau

32 Wapiti

34 Gratis

38 Word before tongue or superior

40 Throat infection, for short

42 Rebs' org.

43 Punch

44 Melville book

45 "Let's Make a Deal" choice

47 Wander

48 Iowa city

49 Desire

52 Ar predecessor

Solution time: 21 mins.

GAMP FIB FAST
ALOE ANI ERTE
SLEEPING CANE
VAT ACUMEN
BAKES AMAN
URNS SKINDEEP
ICE WHIST GNU
THE BEASTY PATIN
LIDS DADDY
LAMARR POT
AVON AYHINGOP
MICK CHI YINA
ABKS HEL BLEO

Yesterday's answer 5-11

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12					13				14	
15					16				17	
18							18	20		
						21		22	23	
25	26	27				28		29		30
31	32								33	35
36										38
						37				
43	44							41		42
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48	49									46
50								51	52	53
54										56
										58
										59

CRYPTOQUIP
 GFQZS RQZUPVWY ES
 NI XHVASWJ XRVJ KEY
 AH SWHVJR USSQAP
 QASH SKU GHXQR GFQN.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR HIRED MORE MUSICIANS THAN HE COULD SHAKE A STICK AT.
 Today's Cryptoquip clue: P equals G

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.