Agassi waits for Sampras



Jan 27: Andre Agassi reached the Australian Open linal on Friday

when Aaron Kricksiein defaulted with a groin injury moments before ankle-



ANDRE AGASSI

deep water from overflowing drains flooded Center Court. reports AP.

that moment, behind 6-4, 6-4. 3-0 - the end of the match would have had to been postponed to Saturday. The result, however, would not have been in doubt.

It may have been an Australian Open semifinal, but Agassi treated it as routine. The colorful No 2 seed was completely dominant.

Agassi controlled the match with his whiplash groundstrokes and will now face defending champion and top seed Pete Sampras in Sunday's final.

The match was play under the retractable Center Court roof because of the storm that subsequently flooded areas of the stadium with water from the nearby Yarra River and left the rubberized Rebound Ace center court and media areas

Agassi's coach Brad Gilbert said he felt the remainder of the tournament could be in doubt

I don't know what they are going to do here, because think they ve got a serious problem about finishing this tournament on that court. Gilbert said

Canada ride on Bunbury

TORONTO Jan 27: Alex Buffbury scored in the 8th minute Thursday night, lifting Canada to a 1-1 draw with Portugal in the SkyDome Cup exhibition soccer tournament reports AP

Bunbury, a Montreal native who plays for Maritimo of Portugal's First Division, scored off a header from a Geoff Aunger free kick to give Canada their first goal of the three-game tournament

"I feel great for Canada, said Bunbury They deserve the equalizer in the final game Sunday

Portugal play Denmark, who beat Canada 1-0 Tuesday. A tie or win against Portugal will give Denmark the inaugural SkyDome Cup. & "Technically, I have to com-

pliment both teams," said Bunbury resting legs sore from pounding the artificial turi Technically you have to be

so alert, because at any moment they can zip by you."

That's what happened early in the match when Antonio Folha jumped into a pass from Agostinho Caetano during a scramble around the net, faked defender Rudy Doliscat and dropped a soft shot past keeper Pat Onstad

Half the crowd of 13,000 cheered and waved Portuguese

FAM gets tough

KUALA LUMPUR. Jan 27 The Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) said on Thursday it would suspend indefinitely soccer players suspected of taking bribes, reports Reuter

It also hit out at Singapore. accusing the football authorities there of not doing enough to stamp out match fixing.

FAM deputy president Tengku Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, said the suspensions would be lifted only if police cleared the players or there was insufficient evidence to

prosecute them. He also accused Singapore of a lack of cooperation with Malaysian police in investigations into soccer corruption which began late last year

Police so far have sumfnoned 112 players to help in the investigations some 71 were detained for various periods but most have since been released.

Tengku Abdullah said the players to be suspended would be from among those who were detained previously, but that he expected the list to be

very much less than 71. Two coaches and six bookmakers have also been de-

tained.

'Once the water gets under a surface like that, when it dries out, the court will bubble. We've already seen it happen in various places including Key Biscayne."

Tournament officials, however, were confident the both men's and women's finals will be played as scheduled.

"Our experience indicates that the court will be absolutely fine," said Tennis Australia president Geoff Pollard. We do not anticipate any problem with the court surface." Agassi joked: "You kind of

think that when you've got a stadium with a roof you've got all the angles covered." Agassi, the US Open cham-

pion, has won all six of his matches at the National Tennis Centre in straight sets. "It's exciting to come down

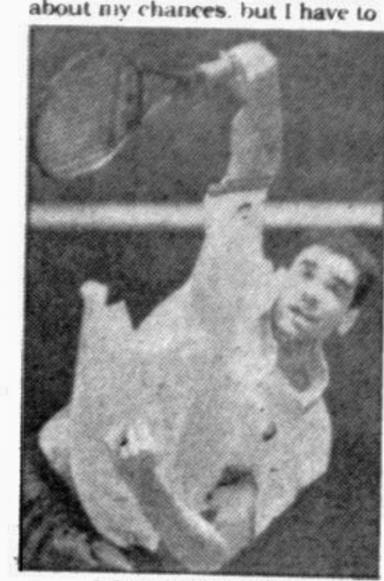
here for the first time and make the final," Agassi said. But he expressed sympathy for Krickstein's sudden injury in his first Grand Slam semifi-

nal since 1989. "Aaron worked so hard to get this far, he deserved to be out there and be healthy." If Krickstein had not quit at . Agassi said. "He hurt his groin in the first game of the match. I kind of sensed he wasn't at his best, so I pulled off a lot of my shots. I made some errors because of lack of concentration on what I was doing. I was more concerned with the

other side of the net, unfortu-

Krickstein said the groin injury was on the same right leg as he had suffered a

hamstring strain earlier in the tournament. "I felt pretty confident



PETE SAMPRAS

be 100 per cent to beat him." Krickstein said. "I would have quit (earlier) at any other tournament.

Agassi said he wasn't concerned about going into the final without a tough match under his belt.

The dynamics of the match on Sunday will bring out the best in me regardless of what happened today," he said.

AUSSIE OPEN NOTEBOOK

MELBOURNE. Jan 27 (AP): Mary Pierce heads into Saturday's Australian Open final against Arantxa Sanchez Vicario with an unenviable record in title matches.

The French fourth seed contested five tournament finals in 1994 - including the French Open - and was unable to come up with a win. But WTA Tour veteran Pam Shriver is among those who think it's only a matter of time.

"Mary can do it." Shriver said. "But she has not shown great form in finals. She is going to win a Grand Slam at some point and it could very be on Saturday."

Shriver described the final as "extremely hard to call." ' 'Arantxa's more consistent. She's won three Grand Slams before, but on form its close to a toss up. It's as interesting matchup. They're the two players, who've shown the best

FRED AND VIJAX STAR: Fred Stolle, better known as a television tennis commentator, and film star partner Vijav Amritraj won a hard-fought senior men's doubles final at the Australian Open on Friday.

A two-time Grand Slam singles winner during his career. Stolle and former Wimbledon quarterfinalist Amritraj - who appeared in the James Bond film Octopussy - took the first set against Australian duó Bob Carmichael and Kim Warwick 7-6 and 7-5 in the tiebreaker.

They then lost the second set 2-6 before fighting back to clinch the match in a sudden death tiebreaker, which they won 7-5

PRIZE MONEY POT: The winners of the men's and women's singles titles at this year's Australian Open will walk away with US dlrs 360,000 each.

It is a long way from the equivalent of US dlrs 7.500 Ken Rosewall got at today's exchange rates for beating Arthur Ashe in the 1971 final

Those were also the days when equal prizemoney did not exist, and Margaret Court earned the equivalent of just US dirs 1,350 for her three-setswin over Evonne Goolagong the

AUSSIE SUCCESS: No Australian woman made it into the third round of the women's singles at the Australian Open

but the local junior women are doing a whole lot better. Two Australians will meet in the junior girls final -Annabel Elwood and Siobhan Drake Brockman

No 2 seed Elwood beat Jeon Mi-ra of South Korea 4-6, 6-4 6-3 in her semifinal and will play No 3 seed Drake Brokman. a 4-6, 6-3, 6-3 winner over Yvette Basting of the Netherlands.

EARTHQUAKE HELP: WTA Tour players have been collecting items for an auction to be held next week in Tokyo to benefit victims of the Kobe earthquake. Among items already collected for the auction to be held during the Pan Pacific tournament, are hats and T-shirts signed by Jim Courier. Pete Sampras and Todd Martin and three Australian Open posters signed by leading men's and women's players



surveys the damage after a heavy downpour flooded the Centre Court at the Australian Open yesterday. A power failure caused the water pump to malfunction. - AFP photo

Arantxa, Novotna take doubles

MELBOURNE, Jan 27: Arantxa Sanchez Vicario gained a timely boost to her bid to secure a first Australian Open singles crown when she teamed with Czech Jana Novotna to win the women's doubles crown Friday, reports

Sanchez Vicario, who faces France's Mary Pierce in Saturday's women's final, and Novotna beat defending champions and top seeds Gigi Fernandez and Natasha Zvereva 6-3. 6-7 (3-7), 6-4 in a rain-interrupted final.

The win give Sanchez Vicario and Novotna their second straight Grand Slam doubles title. They teamed to win the US Open final last September. That win stopped Fernandez and Zvereva from completing a Grand Slam of doubles titles. They had won the Wimbledon, Australian and US Open crowns earlier in

Sanchez Vicario and Novotna took Friday's final when the Spaniard whipped a high backhand volley past the world No 1 pairing on their second championship point - after dropping one in the second

"It's always nice to come and play in two Grand Slam firials," said Sanchez Vicario of making both the singles and doubles deciders. "I'm very happy, and now I will be able to rest and be ready for the next one. It's very exciting." Sanchez Vicario and

Novotna had their first match point on their opponents' serve at 5-6 in the second set. but an overhead by Zvereva saved it and the titleholders went on to clinch the tiebreaker and level the match

Play was halted for 40 minutes when rain led officials to close the retractable roof at the National Tennis Centre with the match locked at 4-4 and deuce on Fernandez's serve in the third set.

When play resumed. Sanchez Vicario and Novotna took charge, broke for 5-4 and then Sanchez Vicario served it

"I think it (the rain delay) helped us a lot to sit down and relax and to come back stronger and finish them off." said the Spaniard, who was not troubled by the tendinitis in her right arm.

Novotna said they had altered their tactics after their past defeats by the top seeds. but refused to be more spe-

"We've lost to them many times and had to do something different, and that's what we did." Novotna said.

Sanchez Vicario and Novotna shared US dirs 150,000 for the win. Fernandez and Zvereva split US dlrs 75.000.

McCall sued

MIAMI, Jan 27: A Fort Lauderdale woman sued WBC heavyweight champion Oliver McCall on Thursday, claiming he pushed her down and seriously injured her knee after she rebuffed his attempts to kiss her, reports AP.

Lisa Braziel, 34, accuses McCall of battery and negligence in the incident that she said occurred Dec 26 at a surprise birthday party for her in her cousin's Plantation home.

"The message that we want to convey to McCall in that he ought to pick on somebody his own size and grader said her attorney Ellis Rubin at a news conference attended by Braziel, who wore a heavy brace on her left knee and walked with a limp

Rubin said his client suf lered 'permanent' ligament damage that will require

surgery Rubin also said Braziel, a nurse has been unable to work since the incident and that her suit filed in Broward County ircuit Court seeks more than dlrs 15,000 for bodily injury suffering, mental anguish medical costs and loss of earn

Braziel said she met McCall. 29, two weeks before the party and called him the "kissing bandit for his constant attempts to date and kiss her She rejected his advances beause he was married and she interested in dating him, she said.

Braziel said that at the party. McCall came up behind her grabbed her waist and tried to kiss her. She claims that when she pushed him away, he picked her up, set her down and then threw her on the ground. Her knee crumpled beneath her, she

Titas sports

The annual sports competition of Titas Gas Company was held at the Rajarbagh Police Line ground here yesterday. reports BSS

Finance division became champions while administration division became runners-Energy and Mineral Re-

sources Secretary M Faizur

Razzak witnessed the meet as

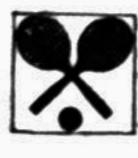
the chief guest and distributed

the prizes.



Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain L. and Czech Jana Novotna display the Australian Open women's doubles trophy on Jan 27. In the final, Sanchez-Vicario and Novotna beat American Gigi Fernandez and Natasha Zvereva of Belarus 6-3, 6-7(3/7), 6-4. - AFP photo

Pierce in Sanchez's way



MELBOURNE. ending Grafs 19-month reign Jan 27: Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, so long the courtier to

the queen of the courts. Steffi Graf, can at last wrest the number one crown from the injured German if she wins Saturday's Australian Open title, report agencies.

But standing in her way as a new pretender to the throne is France's Mary Pierce. only 20 and in irresistible form in her progress to the year's first Grand Slam final Neither the fourth-seeded

Pierce nor top-seed and world number two Sanchez Vicario has dropped a set in six matches at this tournament... though the Spaniard has yet to play a seed.

The 23-year-old winner of three Grand Slams, two of them last year, does not regard the unprecedented ease of her passage to a Grand Slam final as giving her opponent any advantage. "It puts even more pres

sure on you because, even though the seeded players are not there, these (unseeded) players are playing well and make it tough, said Sanchez Vicario. The tenacious Spaniard whose fighting spirit has

made her a favourite among the fans, was hammered 6-0. 6-2 by Graf in last year's final but much has happened in the women's game since then. She went on to win her first

Grand Slam of the year by beating Pierce 6-4. 6-4 at the French Open in early June then followed that up with vic tory over the formidable Graf at the US Open. But her second title was

against a Graf who, seriously affected by a back injury, let slip a 6-1. 3-2 lead to lose in three sets. Grafs subsequent struggle

to regain fitness has given the resilient Sanchez Vicario, so long in the shadow of Graf and the absent Monica Seles, the opportunity to grab the top ranking for the first time.

To hear her speak over the past week, however, Saturday's match her seventh Grand Slam final is just another game and she will not be thinking about the dream of

37 Peeved

Nobelist

41 'Treasure,

monogram

has eyes

sufferer's

Hornblower

WOITY

49 Accustom

53 Not square

divisions

52 Mamie's

54 Algerian

coin

56 Cent.

47 Alger or

for ewe

44 Vacation-

45 Allergy

Island*

43 He only

1 'The Merry 38 Begin's co- DOWN

ACROSS

Widow*

6 Reticent

9 Capp and

Capone

12 Seek out

a J.P.

maybe

13 "Ulalume"

poet

15 Ersatz

18 De-

20 Micro-

21 Wood-

23 Patriotic

24 Polister's

25 Prop in a

dog act

27 TV, radio,

domain

piece of

35 Imitation

gems

hardware

29 Byrd's

31 Small

find

shaping

swings

16 Testoster

creased?

wave, e.g.

14 Marceau

character

composer

as number one.

"It would be great if I do it but it's not on my mind. I will just try to go and play my best and see what happens," she said after beating 47th-ranked American Marianne Werdel-Witmeyer in a one-sided semi

She has also rejected any psychological advantage from her defeat of the Canadian



MARY PIERCE

born Pierce in Paris after her opponent had made French Open history by becoming the

Hira Lal's Jabbar memorial tennis crown

National champion, Hira Lal clinched the men's singles title of the Jabbar memorial tennis tournament defeating Jhelan 6-1, 6-2, in the final played at the Engineers' Club court vesterday, reports UNB.

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman attended the closing function as the chief guest and gave away the

Hira Lal received Tk seven thousand as prize money while runner up Jhelan Tk four thousand.

list items

aunt Ena,

"Wayne's

World*

26 Tropical

fruit

28 Reside

30 Tit for --

32 Packers

1957-66

star,

33 Historic

period

nomenon

personnel

38 Master, in

39 Stirred

40 Had the

45 Harbor

COT 46 Markey or

old India

42 Playground

structure

Bagnold

father..."

48 "Honor -

50 Actress

21 Oohs'

mates

22 Bambi's

e.g.

57 Borders

1 Tennis

ence

2 Actor

3 Where

meets

the sky

4 Mimic

5 Fix the

lawn

7 A bon-

net," in

8 End for

9 Over

17 Swamp

19 Sen.

55 Foundation 11 Squander

Solution time: 26 mins.

CARD SAW RAID

ALLAH PHE HNDY

SIMP IRE PYLE

TIIPPER KIIPPER

USSRTIAMARACK

EITIA

HOUNDDOG HEWS

GI I PIPER ZI I PIPER

CAN

AMI

ELLI

MIIO

BOEREWE

the States

10 Irish export 36 Enlisted

6 Ball

interfer

Wallach

the earth

first player to drop only 10 games on her way to the final.

"It's a different surface here. I think whoever is tougher, more aggressive and stronger will be the one who will win the match," said Sanchez Vicario. She is confident of handling

the firepower of Pierce.

T've played against Mary six or seven times," Sanchez-Vicario said. "She hits the ball hard, but I can tell you that Werdel Witmeyer hits the ball harder than she does. That's what made the match perfect preparation for the final." Pierce, born in Montreal to

an American father and French mother, has long been regarded as one of the most promising younger players. Now she aims to fulfill that promise on the rubberised Rebound Ace surface, where the high bounce and slower pace suits her game. Pierce, who is bidding to

become the first Frenchwoman since 1967 to win a Grand Slam, believes she can improve on her form. Winning the Australian

Open would mean a lot," said Pierce, who appears to have put the controversies surrounding her father behind her. T've worked hard this winter, physically, It would give me a lot of satisfaction." Pierce will be playing her

first major tournament without the presence of her mother. Yannick, who has stayed at their Florida home to be with her brother. Also absent is American coaching guru. Nick Bolletieri

who left after her quarterfinal

win over Natasha Zvereva be-

cause of prior commitments. But she insists the nerves that hit her in Paris will not reappear.

"Before the final at Roland Garros I had problems getting to sleep," Pierce said. "I know that won't happen here. I'm much more relaxed. There was more pressure at Roland Garros. When I played Arantxa was nervous. I was thinking about a lot of different things at once.

Both Pierce and Sanchez Vicario go into the final the niggling injuries but they are unlikely to affect their per formance.

AUSSIE OPEN AT A GLANCE

MELBOURNE. Jan 27. (AP): Highlights and key information Friday from the Australian Open tennis championship:

Weather: Rain forced several delays in play and a flash flood covered centre court with water. Attendance: 11, 792.

Results: Andre Agassi ad-

vanced to the men's final when his opponent. Aaron Krickstein, defaulted. Upsets: None.

Injuries: Aaron Krickstein was forced to default his semifinal match due to a groin injury in his right leg.

Stat of the day: An estimated three inches (7.5 centimetres) of water covered centre court after a flash flood during a thunderstorm.

Quote: "You think that when you have a stadium with a roof you have all the angles covered:" Andre Agassi after Centre Court was flooded.

Saturday Highlight: Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Mary Pierce play the women's singles final.

Clinton gets impatient

NEW YORK, Jan 27: President Clinton has set a Feb 6 deadline for players and owners to settle the Major League baseball strike, reports AP.

But it is uncertain what will happen if that deadline passes without an agreement. As the US Senate scheduled

a new hearing on baseball's antitrust exemption. Clinton ordered both sides back to the bargaining table. Mediator WJ Usery, appointed by Clinton on Oct 14, said talks will resume Wednesday in Washington. The president said if a settlement doesn't seem imminent by his deadline, he will ask Usery to recommended a solution. "I hope it doesn't come to that." Clinton said ominously.

players to give their full support to this mediation effort. and to settle this unfortunate dispute themselves. It is time to put behind us the rancor and cynicism that are shadowing the American ideal of baseball. It is time to let all the excitement that the 1995 season can offer sweep away that tarnished image. It's time to play Management negotiator

"I urge the owners and the

John Harrington, chief executive of the Boston Red Sox. welcomed Clinton's statement. "It creates a deadline and maybe that's good for both sides," he said

The strike, baseball's eighth work stoppage since 1972, is in its 169th day Friday. The core of the dispute is the owners' desire for a wage ceiling and the players bitter opposition to it.

Owners broke off talks Dec 22 and the following day implemented a salary cap. No talks have taken place since. and the sides have filed unfair labor practice charges against each other. Owners plan to open spring training Feb 16 with replacement players.

In Washington, the Senate Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on antitrust, business rights and competition called a Feb 15 hearing on baseball's exemption, which was created by a 1922 Supreme Court decision. Union head Donald Fehr and acting commissioner Bud Selig are expected to testify.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer McCarthy's 24 Carrere of 32 33 34 law or saw 34 Sleep phe-CRYPTOQUIP OPDYUZD KG GSL CQDM

OSWZES

R Q P T S W Z U U T .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BEAUTY-SALON COL-ORIST COULD DEVELOP VERY HIGH BLONDE PRES-

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

SURE. Today's Cryptoquip clue: R equals H

Charlotte 51 Stammer ing sounds locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.