

Leach, Zvereva win mixed doubles

MELBOURNE, Jan 29: American Rick Leach and Natasha Zvereva of Belarus upset fifth seeds Gigi Fernandez and Cyril Suk to win the Australian Open mixed doubles title on Sunday, reports AP.

Leach and Zvereva, playing together for the first time, triumphed 7-6 (7-4), 6-7 (3-7), (6-4).

The win provided some compensation for Zvereva, 23, who was runnerup in the women's doubles on Friday.

Zvereva and regular doubles partner Fernandez lost to Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Jana Novotna.

Zvereva also made the quarterfinals of the singles, losing to eventual champion Mary Pierce.

The win was her 14th Grand Slam doubles title, all but Pugh.

18 was Leach's sixth Grand Slam doubles title and his third at the Australian Open.

He teamed with Pugh to win the Australian Open men's doubles in 1988 and 1989. His others are the 1990 Wimbledon men's and mixed titles and the 1993 US Open men's doubles.

"I had my 30th birthday just before I came to Australia and I wondered whether I was going to get the chance to win another Grand Slam title," said Leach.

"It was a tough match. They're such good doubles players and we had to work for every point. I was lucky to be playing with Natasha. She's a wizard. She does everything so well and has great court sense."

Leach and Zvereva gained the decisive break against American Fernandez and Suk, from the Czech Republic, in the 11th game of the final set for a 6-5 lead when Fernandez dumped a backhand into the net.

Zvereva then clinched the title on the first match point with a forehand winner.

The pair shared US dlr \$62,250. Fernandez and Suk split US dlr \$31,125.

Asian success at Flinders Park

MELBOURNE, Jan 29: Asia's upcoming players took the spotlight in the Australian Open which closed here Sunday with Japan's plucky Naoko Sawamatsu felling two seeded stars, reports AP.

The 21-year-old downed fellow Japanese Kimiko Date, the seventh seed, in the third round and then accounted for 11th seeded American Mary Joe Fernandez in the fourth.

The wins helped make Sawamatsu, ranked 26 in the world, one of the most remarkable stories of the 1995 Open with her family home destroyed by the Kobe earthquake and friends killed.

She appeared inspired by her troubles, her best results in previous slams had been three fourth-round appearances at Paris and Wimbledon.

But Sawamatsu's run ended in the quarterfinals when Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, the top seed, took 65 minutes to cut her down.

The Flinders Park venue here is good for the Japanese as Kimiko Date made the semifinals last year.

There were 11 Japanese women entered in the tournament and four got through to the third round.

One of the Kyoko Nagatsuka came close to upsetting Belarusia's eight seed Natasha Zvereva in a three-set fourth-round fight.

The one Japanese man, Shuzo Matsuoka a 27-year-old from Tokyo who is ranked 131 in the world, went down in five sets in the opening round in one of the longest games in the tournament, 3 hours and 44 minutes.

Tszyu floors 'The Snake'

LAS VEGAS, Jan 29: Kostya Tszyu, a long-time amateur star in the former Soviet Union, followed Jake "The Snake" Rodriguez's advice, and Rodriguez has to be very sorry he did.

"If he wants to be champion, he's going to have to fight, and I'll be there for him," Rodriguez had said before defending the IBF junior welterweight title Saturday night at the MGM Grand hotel, reports AP.

Rodriguez, noted for his swarming style and a granite chin, spent most of the time backing up and he simply couldn't deal with the heavy-handed Tszyu, who now resides in Sydney, Australia, where he turned pro after winning the world amateur 139-pound (63 kg) championship in 1991.

Tszyu came out fighting, knocked down Rodriguez in the first round, then knocked him down four times in the sixth round to stop him at 1:50 and become a world champion in his 14th pro fight.

Dream debut for Agassi

MELBOURNE, Jan 29: Swaggingly confident Andre Agassi defused the power of Pete Sampras on Sunday and won the Australian Open men's singles title at his first attempt, reports AP.

Agassi, the No. 2 seed, beat his fellow American 4-6, 6-1, 7-6 (8-6), 6-4 in two hours, 36 minutes, absorbing a barrage of aces and wearing him down from the baseline.

It was Agassi's second successive Grand Slam title following his victory in the US Open late last year.

The 24-year-old clinched his win in a typically flamboyant fashion — with an ace.

Agassi had not previously played in the Australian Open, but he went through the tournament dropping only one set.

"He was just too good for everyone and he deserves all the success he's got," Sampras said. "Andre hits the ball so early. I fought as hard as I could for two weeks and I came up a little bit short today."

"If he stays healthy he'll be a threat in every major tournament of the year."

Sampras, the top seed and defending champion, had two set points for a 2-1 lead during the third set tiebreaker and looked dispirited after Agassi rallied to take it.

Sampras fell behind 3-0 in the tiebreaker, won the next four points and served for the set at 6-4 with a brilliant reflex volley past a stunned Agassi.

But Agassi then ripped a forehand return that nicked the net cord and skipped past Sampras for a winner. That was the first of four straight points Agassi won as he closed out the set with a backhand volley drop shot that spun away from Sampras.

"I think it came down to the third set. If I could have come back to win the tiebreaker it could have been different," Sampras said.

"I can walk out of here with my head up high that I fought hard and lost to a better player. I can accept that."

Sampras served 28 aces to 10 from Agassi, but he lost all five tiebreakers he played during the first Grand Slam tournament of the year.

Agassi made just 26 unforced errors to 50 by Sampras and frequently left the No. 1 seed rooted to the spot with his searing passing shots from both sides.

Sampras had 13 aces in the fourth set, but also made 15 errors.

Agassi, variously dubbed "Andre the Giant Killer" and "The Pirate King," earned US dlr \$360,000 for his victory, while Sampras took home half that amount.

"I felt like it was a strange match," Agassi said. "You could never be sure who had the

momentum." It was Agassi's third Grand Slam title. He also won Wimbledon in 1992.

Sampras paid tribute to his seriously-ill coach Tim Gullikson, who had to return to the United States from Australia after a setback in the first week of the tournament.

Gullikson suffered an apparent stroke when he became dizzy and lost his speech and vision for most of a day.

"I just want to let him know I keep thinking about him and that I wish he was here," Sampras said. "I've been praying for him the last couple of weeks."

Gullikson watched the match at home in Wheaton, Ill., after being discharged for the weekend from the University of Illinois at Chicago Medical Center. More tests were scheduled Monday.

Agassi said he had great wild, colored clothing and wore a gypsy-style bandana, said he had benefited from his self-belief.

"It's the first time I've come to a Grand Slam and really believed I could win it," he said.

"I got over a real big hump with the US Open victory. That was a real big step for me."

Sampras, who still has an 8-7 career edge over Agassi, said he believes the two can develop a great rivalry.

"It has to be good for the game," he said. "Andre's the one guy who can get tennis on the front page of the newspapers and tennis needs that."

The Australian title was won by an American for the fourth year in a row. Jim Courier taking the title in 1992 and '93, and Sampras last year. It was also only the third time in the Open era since 1968 that the Australian Open had an all-



Andre Agassi poses with the champions trophy and kangaroo during the awards ceremony after beating world number one and fellow-American Pete Sampras in the final of the Australian Open yesterday. Agassi won his maiden Grand Slam title Down Under 4-6, 6-1, 7-6 (8/6), 6-4.

admiration for Sampras' reaction to the trauma of Gullikson's illness, saying his resolve had been "absolutely inspiring."

"We can all learn something from what Pete has managed to do," he said. "He's a class act. He's shown over the past couple of weeks why he is No. 1 in the world."

Agassi, who dressed throughout the tournament in

American final. Sampras beat Todd Martin a year ago, and in 1982 newly naturalized American Johan Kriek beat Steve Denton.

"He's played well the whole tournament," Agassi's coach, Brad Gilbert said. "He came out and did what he wanted. He beat the guy he wanted to beat. He's improved a lot since the US Open."

— AFP photo

Pirate King for French Open

MELBOURNE, Jan 29: It was the Grand Slam that Andre Agassi was expected to win first. But now it's the only one to elude him.

The red clay of the French Open in Paris loomed large in Agassi's mind moments after the beat No 1 Pete Sampras 4-6, 6-1, 7-6 (8-6), 6-4 Sunday to win the Australian Open at his first attempt, reports AP.

"Andre The Pirate King," read a banner in the stands. And after two hours, 36 minutes that is exactly what the bandana-wearing Agassi was — swiping his second straight Grand Slam and third overall with an ace.

As Agassi, 24, sat at court-side, up in the stands his coach of 10-months, Brad Gilbert, held up two fingers.

Agassi has now won two Grand Slam titles — last year's US Open and the Australian Open — since Gilbert became

his coach. Gilbert then held up three fingers to indicate his desire to see Agassi win a third straight Grand Slam event.

With his 1992 success at Wimbledon, Agassi needs only the French Open to give him victories in each of the four majors. No American has won all four in a career since Don Budge completed a sweep in 1938. Australians Rod Laver and Roy Emerson are the only other two to achieve it.

"Ironically the one I haven't won yet is the one I left I should have won first," said Agassi, who was runnerup in Paris in 1990 and 1991.

"I was favourite in both my finals there so that's a bit disappointing. It's very important to me to win the French. I want it. I want it as bad as I can want a title."

Gilbert, a former top 10 player, believes Agassi is playing better than at the US Open— where as an unseeded player he defeated five seeds en route to winning the title— and can still improve further.

"He's gotten to the (French Open) final twice, and there is no reason he can't do it again," said Gilbert. "He's got a great

chance, but there is a lot of tennis between now and then."

Gilbert was thrilled with Agassi's Australian Open performances. The Las Vegas star dropped just one set during the tournament.

"He played well the whole tournament. He came out and did what he wanted. He beat the guy he wanted to beat," said Gilbert. "He's a lot better player than Jimmy (Connors) was, but it's a different era now."

Agassi, who has risen from No 24 at the end of 1993 after undergoing wrist surgery to No 2, raised his arms in triumph after his victory over the defending champion.

"I got over a really big hump with that US Open victory because I had to dig down deeper than I ever had to beat all those players," Agassi said.

"That was a big step for me, to come down here and be able to start the year off well. I've never really had two good years back-to-back."

He was asked about completing a Grand Slam of all four majors.

"I don't worry about winning all of them. I just worry about winning each one," said Agassi.



Former national skipper Roquibul Hasan and Partha receive the Hassan memorial double wicket cricket trophy from Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman yesterday.

AUSSIE OPEN: AT A GLANCE

MELBOURNE, Jan 29 (AP): Highlights and key information Sunday from the Australian Open tennis championship.

Weather: mostly sunny, high of 28C (82F). Attendance: 14,920; total for tournament 312,221.

Results: Andre Agassi won the men's singles championship in four sets over Pete Sampras; Rick Leach and Natasha Zvereva won the mixed doubles title.

Injuries: none reported. Stat of the day: Pete Sampras had 28 aces in the men's final, including 13 in the fourth and final set.

Quote: "What Pete did over the past two weeks with the difficulties over his coach, his courage on the court as well as off is absolutely inspiring. We can all learn from what he did. He's a class act." Agassi on Sampras, who had concerns over his ailing coach Tim Gullikson.

Uninspiring Romario

RIO, DE JANEIRO, Jan 29: While uninspiring in his first match back in Brazil in six years, Romario at least avoided the wrath of the usually hypercritical sports media Saturday, reports AP.

Rio newspapers Saturday headlined Romario's "frustrated" debut for Flamengo, an exhibition game against Uruguay Friday night which ended in a 1-1 draw.

"Romario does little in his debut," read the headline in the sports section of Rio's Jornal do Brasil newspaper Saturday.

The forward who turns 29 on Sunday was playing in his first match for Flamengo after a dlr \$4.5 million transfer loan to FC Barcelona returned him to his native country after six seasons in Europe.

Romario was held scoreless and was substituted in the 60th minute because of stomach pain.

Rio's O Globo newspaper guessed that Romario was under severe stress as thousands of fans, expecting the best, chanted his name every time he neared the ball.

"Quiet, eyes bugged out and withdrawn, he did not seem his usual jester self," wrote the newspaper.

Flamengo are scheduled to play against Volta Redonda on Monday in their first game in this year's Rio state championship. Romario is not expected to play.

Blackburn, third round victims of northern neighbours Newcastle, took the opportunity to open their Premier league lead over second-placed Manchester United to four points with Alan Shearer notching a hat-trick in their 4-1 win over struggling Ipswich.

Manchester United's awful week looked to be sinking to further depths when Wrexham went ahead.

The unpretentious north Wales side rocked their illustrious opponents with three early corners before Barry Jones played the ball down the left flank to Kieron Durkan, who advanced into the box and exchanged passes with Gareth Owen before slipping the ball left-footed past Peter Schmeichel.

It was a glorious moment for the 6,000 Welsh fans, but like most dreams only fleeting. Seven minutes later United were level. Paul Ince and Gary

Mas, of Puerto Rico, survived a mid-fight assault from Aranda. Lead left jabs to Aranda's head enabled Mas to secure the victory, which improved his record to 15-0. Aranda is 14-1.

After a sluggish period during the bout's middle rounds, Mas rebounded by using his lead left to open a cut in Aranda's nose to start the 10th round. Mas remained busy with the lefts and distanced himself from Aranda's assault.

— AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 43 Speed 3 Canal 25 Brother of Er 1 Prefix for comfort or concert 44 Wild goat zone 26 Hump-backed cattle 4 Poke 50 Equitable 4 Rapture 5 Spirited steed 6 Fools 27 Rams' mates 7 Seniors' event 55 Director Unger, e.g. 7 Felix 28 Cunning 11 Creditor's stack 56 Reply of under-standing 8 Sartorial woe bread 30 " 14 Peit 57 Wish 9 Praiseful verse 31 Nosh 15 Dance lesson 58 Disgusting sign 35 Tasseled topper 16 Red Sox star Carl, to fans 60 Had a bite of 12 Oscar Madison, e.g. 38 She's coming out 17 Available to all 61 Ol' Blue Eyes' monogram 19 Bran source 40 Lagniappe 18 Jug-band instrument 21 Three — match 42 Actress Winger 20 Italy's silhouette 1 Frisbee, e.g. 23 Mr. Ziegfeld 45 Delete 22 Flyers O.H.M.S. 2 Jot 47 Norwegian name 48 Famed ship of 1492 49 Runs up the phone bill 50 Leprechaun's dance 51 Put to work 52 Cousteau's milieu 54 Spelldown

CRYPTOQUIP Z T U T G X Z D E - X D P H E W P H W X U N T S E Q P A D P A X R D G U X D K K M N X Q S O R H P A O X T O K X Saturday's Cryptoquip: OUR CLUMSY ROOFER LOST HIS FOOTING AND CAME DOWN WITH THE SHINGLES. Today's Cryptoquip clue: U equals R 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.



Manchester United goalie Peter Schmeichel makes an acrobatic save from Wrexham striker Gary Bennett (C) during their FA Cup tie at Old Trafford on Jan 28. United ran out 5-2 winners.

M United sail sans Cantona

LONDON, Jan 29: Manchester United clawed some comfort from a traumatic week with a 5-2 FA Cup fourth round trouncing of Second Division Wrexham on Saturday despite conceding an early goal, reports Reuter.

Still in turmoil from the suspension of Eric Cantona for leaping into the crowd to attack a Crystal Palace fan in a league match on Wednesday, United were shocked by a Wrexham strike in the 10th-minute.

They recovered to take the lead before the interval and added three more after half-time. An 89th minute goal by Wrexham was deserved consolation.

A Paul Kitson hat-trick put Newcastle through to the fifth round as they beat Swansea 3-0 at home but First Division Portsmouth lost their chance of upsetting bottom-placed Premier league Leicester when they ended with only nine players after having two men sent off.

John Gittens was dismissed for a professional foul after 31 minutes and 20 minutes from the end goalkeeper Alan Knight was also shown the red card after handling the ball outside his area.

Even so, Leicester squeezed through to the next round only through a single goal, scored by striker Iwan Roberts seconds before the interval.

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The Liverpool goal enjoyed several fortunate escapes, chiefly caused by a lacklustre defence and careless clearances. Although they created several chances for themselves, striker Steve McManis had an off-day with his finishing.

London clubs Millwall and Chelsea fought out a grim, goalless draw at the New Den and there was more action after the final whistle.

Mounted police were called

Great day for Ruelas brothers

LAS VEGAS, Jan 29: The Ruelas brothers, Rafael and Gabriel, spent a happy Saturday night in this good-time town by retaining their world boxing championships, reports AP.

Actually, Gabriel had more fun than Rafael, as he needed six fewer rounds to win.

Rafael, in the final fight of the night at the MGM Grand hotel, sliced bad cuts over both of Billy Schwer's eyes and stopped the Briton after eight rounds in defense of the IBF lightweight title.

Gabriel knocked down Fred Liberatore of New York in the first round and cut him over both eyes in stopping him after the second round to keep the WBC super featherweight title.

The Mexican-born Ruelas, from Sylmar, California, are the first brothers to retain world championships on the same card. They are only the second set of brothers even to appear in title fights on the same card.

Last Nov. 12 at Mexico City, Orlin Norris knocked out James Heath in the second round to keep the WBA cruiserweight title. But brother Terry Norris was disqualified in the fifth round and lost the WBC super welterweight title to Luis Santana.

Dr. Flip Horbansky advised stopping both of the Ruelas fights.

Rafael Ruelas, now 43-1 with 34 knockouts, was shaken a couple of times with hard rights by Schwer, but was simply too busy for the challenger.

Police took up positions to keep the rival groups apart

at least one policeman was injured when he was hit by a missile.

A second half winner from recent signing Iain Dowie with a thumping header gave visiting Crystal Palace a 2-1 win over Premier league rivals Nottingham Forest.

It was a victory Palace just about deserved although Forest, despite lacking their usual fluency, had enough chances to have at least taken the tie to a replay.