

American Bruce Seldon (R) lands a right against compatriot Tony Tucker during their third round bout for the WBA heavyweight championship title at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas on Saturday. Seldon won the vacant title after the fight was stopped in the seventh round. — AFP/UNB photo

Seldon too good for Tucker

LAS VEGAS, Apr 9: About four years after he thought about giving up boxing, Bruce Seldon became the WBA heavyweight champion Saturday night when his battle with Tony Tucker was stopped after seven rounds, reports AP. Seldon pounded Tucker's left eye closed and ringside physician Dr Flip Homanski also thought Tucker's nose was broken. After going to Tucker's corner at the end of the seventh round, Homanski advised referee Mills Lane to stop the fight, angering Tucker's corner. "He was just getting his second wind," complained George Benton, Tucker's trainer. "He wasn't taking a beating. The fight was as competitive as hell." The scheduled 12-round bout for the vacant WBA title outdoors at Caesars Palace was one of five title fights on the card. Seldon's big punch was his jab to the head. He often missed with his right to the head but did land that hand effectively to the body.

Although his eye began to close early, Tucker made things close throughout. He shook Seldon with a right hand early in the second round and outpunched him in the most action-packed round of the fight. Tucker, who weighed 243 pounds (109 kilograms), seven pounds (three kilograms) more than Seldon, also hurt Seldon in the third and sixth rounds with rights to the head. Although Homanski said he believed Tucker's nose was broken, he said he based his decision to tell Lane to stop the fight on Tucker's cut left eye. "The eye was the concern," Homanski said. "He lost vision totally." Tucker, who bled from the nose and mouth, was taken to Valley Hospital as a precaution. Seldon also bled from the mouth. At the end of the seventh round, The Associated Press card had Seldon ahead 67-66. Seldon led 67-66 on two of the official cards and 68-65 on the third. Seldon went into the fight ranked No 2 by the WBA, a ranking he fought his way to

after his career appeared to be over in 1991. On April 18 of that year, he was stopped in the ninth round by McCall and on Aug 9, 1991 was knocked out in the first round by Riddick Bowe. "I almost wrote myself off after the Bowe fight," Seldon said before this fight. "I thought maybe I'd gotten as far as I could go." Once Seldon realized the fight was over, he leaped into the air and fell to the floor. One of his cornermen then reached down and grabbed him and said, "Champion, stand up." Tucker, 35, was trying to become a champion almost eight years after he lost the vacant IBF title on points to Mike Tyson in a fight for the undisputed heavyweight championship on Aug 1, 1987. It was only the third loss against 52 victories for Tucker, who lives in Las Vegas. Seldon, 28, of Atlantic City, is 32-3 with 28 knockouts. Seldon and Tucker each earned \$250,000 but Seldon now could be in line for a rich fight against Tyson.

McCall dashes Holmes' hopes

LAS VEGAS, Apr 9: Oliver McCall retained the WBC heavyweight championship against 45-year-old Larry Holmes when Father Time got into the act in the second half of the fight Saturday night at Caesars Palace, reports AP. Holmes used all the tricks and knowledge of his long career, but his aging legs finally did him in as McCall came on to score a unanimous decision. Holmes dictated the first half of the fight as McCall refused to be aggressive, letting Holmes rest his legs. At the end of six rounds, promoter Don King bellowed at McCall: "You'd better not blow this fight, brother." Then McCall's aggression and Holmes' age combined to put the fight firmly in McCall's hands. "He came out more courageous than George Foreman," McCall said. "I had the better jab and I felt that made the difference." The victory put McCall into the Mike Tyson sweepstakes along with Bruce Seldon, who won the vacant WBA heavyweight title by stopping Tony

Tucker after seven rounds earlier on the card. Holmes was bidding to become the second-oldest heavyweight champion, behind Foreman, who won the IBF and WBA titles on a 10th-round knockout of Michael Moorer last Nov 5. Foreman, who turned 46 on Jan 10, was far behind Moorer on points, but he had the power to pull out a victory. Holmes didn't. McCall and Seldon both are promoted by King, who also promotes Tyson, the former undisputed champion who was released from prison March 25. Tyson was in Las Vegas but didn't attend the five title-bout card. Immediately after the fight, Holmes announced his third retirement from boxing. This time, he obviously means it. "There's no sense for me to go any more," said Holmes, who lost a fourth consecutive bid to become a champion again. He was a champion from 1978 to 1985 when he lost to Michael Spinks. "Larry Holmes came to fight; he fought his heart out,"

McCall said. Holmes, who weighed 236 pounds (107 kg), used all his guile to control the first half of the fight against the 231-pound (105 kg) McCall. But guile wasn't enough as Holmes, ago took a toll. Judge Barabar Perez scored it 114-113 for McCall while Tomi Iharra had it 115-114 and Chuck Giampa had it 115-112. The Associated Press favoured McCall 115-112. "I had to show the people that Oliver McCall could do a few things," said the champion. "A sparring partner can't do those things, but a champion can." The 29-year-old McCall, a former Tyson sparring partner, didn't do much of anything the first six rounds but came on when it appeared his title might be at risk. He really put the fight away in the ninth round, when he hurt Holmes badly with a series of head shots and slashed a deep cut on his left cheek. McCall, who earned \$1.5 million, is 26-5 with 18 knockouts. Holmes, whose purse was \$350,000, retires with a record of 61-5 with 40 knockouts.

IBF crown Trinidad's

LAS VEGAS, Apr 9: Felix Trinidad wasn't supposed to have much trouble with 12-1 underdog Roger Turner. He didn't need less than six minutes Saturday night to retain his IBF welterweight title against the outclassed Turner, reports AP. Turner survived a left hook that knocked him down in the second round, but not an onslaught that prompted referee Mitch Halpern to stop the scheduled 12-round fight at 2:28 of the second round. It was the 26th win in as many fights for the Puerto Rican champion, and Turner became the 22nd fighter that Trinidad has stopped. "I wanted to throw a right and a left in combination because I thought his defence was his weakness," Trinidad said. "I know what to do in the ring every time." The fight was part of a five title bout card at Caesars Palace topped by Oliver McCall's defense of the WBC heavyweight title against former champion Larry Holmes. Turner, ranked No 9 by the IBF, barely landed a punch in the fight, which was uneventful until Trinidad launched a left hook midway through the second round that put the challenger on the canvas.



Austrian Thomas Muster plays a backhand return against Spaniard Emilio Sanchez during their semifinal match of the Estoril Open tennis tournament in Lisbon on Saturday. Muster won 6-2, 6-4. — AFP/UNB photo

Evert ends Martina's run

WESLEY CHAPEL, Florida, Apr 9: Martina Navratilova was shouted out on the clay courts of Saddlebrook Resort on Saturday, losing two doubles matches and a singles matchup, with longtime rival Chris Evert, reports AP. In the first stop on the Virginia Slims Legends Tour featuring former tennis stars, Navratilova and Francoise Durr fell 6-4 to Tracy Austin and Betty Stove. Then they were whipped 6-2 by Evert and Hana Mandlikova. Later, Evert beat Navratilova in three pro sets 7-3, 6-7, 7-6. The first player to reach seven points is the winner. "I've been playing on hard courts. I haven't played that much on clay," Navratilova said. "But I thought I got better as I went on." Team Evert — Mandlikova, Olga Morozova and Evert — dominated the round-robin action, going undefeated in their matches. In Sunday's semifinal, Evert will team up with Morozova to take on Austin and Stove. Navratilova and Durr will face Billie Jean King and Wendy Turnbull in the other semifinal. "We wanted people to see that we can still play," Navratilova said. The Evert-Navratilova singles shootout was the highlight of the day, offering the rebirth of one of the best rivalries in sports history. The match was indicative of their close encounters during the 1970s and 1980s. Evert, despite being retired from the Women's Tennis Association Tour for five years, looked sharper than Navratilova, who retired after the Virginia Slims Championships last November. Evert, now 40 and a mother of two boys, quickly took a 5-0 lead in the first tiebreaker and a 6-1 advantage in the third tiebreaker, which she nearly lost as Navratilova roared back to even things at 6-6. "I thought I gassed one or two (points)," Evert said. Evert came through big on the deciding point at 6-6 when she ripped a running forehand passing shot. She raised her arms in victory, but was more subdued in her post-match interview. "She played better as we went on and I'm sure she'll be even better (Sunday)," said Evert, who will face Navratilova in another shootout on Sunday.



Olaf Thon (L) of Werder Bremen jumps over Borussia Dortmund's Stefan Reuter (R) during their Bundesliga match at the Park Stadium in Bonn on Apr 8. The match ended in a goalless draw. — AFP/UNB photo

Beardsley buries Norwich

LONDON, Apr 9: England veteran Peter Beardsley hit two first-half goals as Newcastle United beat Norwich 3-0 to consolidate their third place in the English Premier League on Saturday, reports Reuter. Striker Paul Kitson added the third against a Norwich side who have won only one of their last 15 league matches and continue to slide dangerously close to the relegation zone. Arsenal, 3-2 winners at home to Sampdoria of Italy in the first leg of their European Cup Winners' Cup semifinal in midweek, crashed 3-1 at Queen's Park Rangers. Fellow Londoners West Ham remained third from bottom and inside the relegation zone after a 1-1 draw at Nottingham Forest, who came from behind with an 80th-minute equaliser by striker Stan Vollymore. Leicester City, next to bottom and almost certain to go

down, lost 1-0 at Sheffield Wednesday. There were only four Premier League matches in a programme truncated by Sunday's FA Cup semifinals in which Manchester United meet Crystal Palace and Tottenham face Everton. Liverpool play Sunday's only Premier League game at home against Leeds. Beardsley followed an 8th-minute penalty with a superb 30 metres chip from out by the right touchline over Norwich goalkeeper Andy Marshall three minutes before the interval. Newcastle look almost sure of a place in the UEFA Cup for the second successive season. They went out to Athletic Bilbao in the second round this season. They are on 67 points, 15 adrift of leaders Blackburn Rovers, seven behind Manchester United and three ahead of Nottingham Forest. Norwich have collected just eight points out of a possible 42 since they went into 1995

in buoyant mood after beating Newcastle on December 31. Forest, who won the European Cup twice under former manager Brian Clough in 1979 and 1980, are also in the hunt for a UEFA Cup place. West Ham looked the fresher outfit after a three-week break from league football and deservedly went ahead when left back Julian Dicks rifled home a free-kick from just outside the box in the 64th minute. But their hopes of three crucial points were dashed when Collymore scored his seventh goal in six games and 22nd of the season 10 minutes from time. The Hammers are on 36 points, equal with Crystal Palace, one behind Southampton and Everton and 14 in front of Leicester. Wednesday, looking to recover from a 7-1 mauling by Forest at home last weekend, ended a four-game losing streak with their one-goal win over Leicester. That will make Agassi world number one for the first time in his career no matter how far he gets at the 1.2 million dollar tournament in Tokyo. The promotion does not give Agassi any satisfaction: he said "I don't want to be number one because I beat some kind of system. If Pete is ranked ahead of me, the bottom line is I want to play him." Agassi will spearhead the Japan Open tournament with fellow Americans Michael Chang, former world number one Jim Courier and Wayne Ferreira of South Africa taking part.

Werder Bremen join Dortmund in Bundesliga

BONN, Apr 9: European stars Borussia Dortmund came down to earth and handed Werder Bremen the perfect chance to join them at the top of the Bundesliga here on Saturday by drawing 0-0 at Schalke, reports AP. That left the leaders, who drew 2-2 away with Juventus in the UEFA Cup in midweek, on 37 points. Werder, who play Munich on Sunday, are just two behind with a game in hand. Freiburg, meanwhile, took the opportunity to edge closer with a 3-0 win over visiting Duisburg, joining Kaiserslautern, who drew 1-1 at injury-plagued Bayern Munich, on 34. Bayern, who had to recall 35-year-old Hansi Pfluger to make up the numbers, earned their 13th draw of the season with an equaliser on half time from Mehmet Scholl. Uwe Spies grabbed two of Freiburg's goals, one after six minutes and the other with four minutes to go. Bayer Leverkusen, meanwhile, who earlier on Saturday sacked Serbian coach Dragoslav Stepanovic after the side's 2-1 defeat to Parma in the UEFA Cup, beat Borussia Muenchengladbach, fifth in the Bundesliga, 3-1. Andreas Thom, Ulf Kirsten and Brazilian Sergio — with a final-minute strike — got Leverkusen's goals.

Agassi to replace Sampras as world No 1

TOKYO, Apr 9: Andre Agassi, who takes part in the Japan Open here this week, will replace Pete Sampras as world number one tennis player on Monday without hitting a ball, reports AP. Agassi, the US and Australian Open champion, trailed his fellow American by only 131 points in the passing week collecting 4,403 points from the best 14 tournaments in the past 12 months. Sampras, who chose to play at Barcelona in preparation for the French Open, will lose 349 points he earned by winning the Japan title last year and add 31 points he gained at Philadelphia to his total ranking points. That will make Agassi world number one for the first time in his career no matter how far he gets at the 1.2 million dollar tournament in Tokyo. The promotion does not give Agassi any satisfaction: he said "I don't want to be number one because I beat some kind of system. If Pete is ranked ahead of me, the bottom line is I want to play him." Agassi will spearhead the Japan Open tournament with fellow Americans Michael Chang, former world number one Jim Courier and Wayne Ferreira of South Africa taking part.

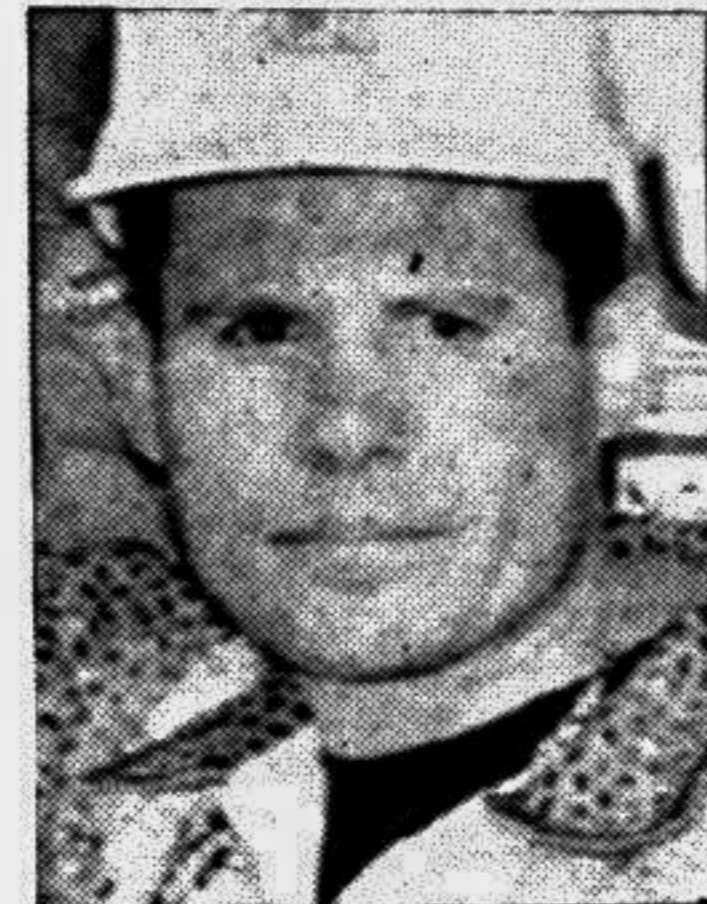
Martina, Graf to team up in Wimbledon

WESLEY CHAPEL, Florida, Apr 9: Martina Navratilova and Steffi Graf will team up in doubles at Wimbledon, reports AP. Navratilova, who retired from the WTA Tour as a singles player last year, made the announcement while playing in the Virginia Slims Legends Tour at the Saddlebrook Resort north of Tampa.

Chavez moves closer to goal

LAS VEGAS, Apr 9: Julio Cesar Chavez moved closer to his goal of 100 fights Saturday night by beating a boxer who barely put up a fight, reports AP. Chavez chased Italy's Giovanni Parisi for 12 rounds, winning a lopsided decision to retain his WBC super lightweight title over a challenger who seemed more interested in surviving than winning. It was the 96th fight for Chavez in a pro career that stretches back 15 years, but Parisi made sure it wouldn't be the most memorable. Parisi waited until the 11th round to try and mix it up with the Mexican champion, trading a flurry after raising his arms to mock Chavez. By then, however, Parisi would have to have knocked out Chavez to win the bout. "All he did was run, run, run," Chavez complained. The fight was so lopsided that judge Terry Smith gave Chavez every round, 120-107.

Judges Lou Filippo and Carol Castellano had it 118-109. The Associated press had Chavez winning 119-108. "I thought the fight was a good fight but Parisi wasn't in my caliber," said Chavez, who dropped Parisi with a left jab in the second round, the only knockdown of the fight. The fight, part of a card of five title bouts at Caesars Palace, was followed by Oliver McCall's defense of his WBC heavyweight title against former champion Larry Holmes. Parisi, a 1988 Olympic gold medalist, was a 6-1 underdog despite bringing a 17-fight winning streak into the bout. The 32-year old Chavez set the pattern of the fight early, patiently stalking the challenger while landing jabs to his head and digging left hooks under his ribs. Parisi fought while going backward continually, trying to stay away from the power of Chavez. Parisi's jabs and occasional right hands, however, did little to keep Chavez off him. Even when he seemingly had Chavez cornered against the ropes late in the eighth round, Parisi hesitated to go forward, ignoring Chavez invitation to press the attack. One rare time Parisi went on the attack was late in the 10th round, when he attempted to throw a combination at Chavez in the champion's corner. Chavez dodged it easily.



JULIO CHAVEZ my caliber," said Chavez, who dropped Parisi with a left jab in the second round, the only knockdown of the fight. The fight, part of a card of five title bouts at Caesars Palace, was followed by Oliver

Martinez, Sabatini in final

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida, Apr 9: Top-seeded Conchita Martinez and No 2 Gabriela Sabatini posted straight set semifinal victories Saturday and will meet for the Bausch and Lomb championship, reports AP. Martinez needed only 83 minutes to defeat No 3 Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria 6-2, 6-3, while Sabatini beat No 8 Sabine Hack of Germany 6-3, 6-2, in 87 minutes. Sunday's final will be the 14th meeting between world No 4 Martinez, of Spain, and world No 7 Sabatini, of Argentina. Sabatini leads 9-4. Martinez used a powerful ground game to overwhelm Maleeva for the second week in a row, having beaten her in last weekend's final at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. "It was a tough match," Martinez said. "Maggie hits the ball very hard and gets to a lot of shots. I'm glad I was able to continue playing well like I have all week. I haven't played Gabby (Sabatini) in quite a while (since May 1993). True, she holds the lead on me, but I'm very confident going into our match with the tennis I've played the last two weeks." Sabatini is seeking her fourth Bausch and Lomb title. She won in 1989, 1991 and 1992, beating Steffi Graf each time. Sabatini lost in the finals to Arantxa Sanchez Vicario the past two years. Sabatini's serve, often clocked at nearly 100 mph throughout the tournament, was especially effective against Hack. She landed 63 per cent of her first serves, and used one of her four aces to close out the first set. Kriek, Connors to meet for title BOCA RATON, Florida, Apr 9: Johan Kriek and Jimmy Connors advanced Saturday to the final of the \$150,000 Corel Champions men's over 35 tournament, reports AP. Kriek reached the final, to be played Sunday, after No. 2 Bjorn Borg retired after two sets of their semifinal with a sore right shoulder. Kriek won the first set 6-1 and led in the second set 4-2 before Borg rallied to take four straight games and even the match at 1-1. Borg then informed Kriek and the umpire that he couldn't continue. In the late match, top-seeded Jimmy Connors used blistering service returns to oust John Lloyd 6-1, 6-2 in the other semifinal. Sunday's winner collects \$40,000.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Clues include: 1 San Rafael's county, 6 Sample the Sauternes, 9 Police-alert abbr., 12 Hersey's town, 13 First lady?, 14 Numerical prefix, 15 Nick, 16 Knocking sound, 18 Selected, 20 Eat in style, 21 Silver-gray, 23 Pallid, 24 Curtails, 25 Part of Muffet's diet, 27 "When cows fly", 29 Publicize, 31 Spain and Portugal, 35 Jar, 37 Orlando's backup, 38 Initiated, 41 Reveren-; 11 not an island?, 2 Commotion, 3 Toothed wheel, 4 Part of the foot, 5 "Forget it!", 6 Tranquil, 7 Bosky or Lendl, 8 Favorite, 9 House-top?, 10 April 1, 11 Mosquito attacks, 17 Worshipped, 19 He delivers for you, 21 Hole-making tool, 22 Yon wench, 24 Coming-out VIP, 26 The only culture some people have?, 28 Opinions, 30 Grecian vessel, 32 Dangerous snake, 33 — Jima, 34 Wool quantity?, 36 Man of the cloth?, 38 Natasha's partner in crime, 39 Duck, 40 Board, 42 Stick in the mud, 45 New Zealander, 46 Architect Saarinen, 48 — glance, 50 Here (Fr.), 51 Plato's H.

Cryptogram puzzle grid with letters Y T I G J C X G W T C A N N X R G Y J W C R I A — X L K — O I G Q N R Y C X R L N J K Q N R Y N R O G N H G I G O R N C. Below the grid is the text: Y T I G J C X G W T C A N N X R G Y J W C R I A — X L K — O I G Q N R Y C X R L N J K Q N R Y N R O G N H G I G O R N C. Yesterday's Cryptogram: OUR PAL, THE SUCCESSFUL SCULPTOR, DIDN'T TAKE ANYTHING FOR GRANITE. Today's Cryptogram clue: Y equals F.

The Cryptogram 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.