

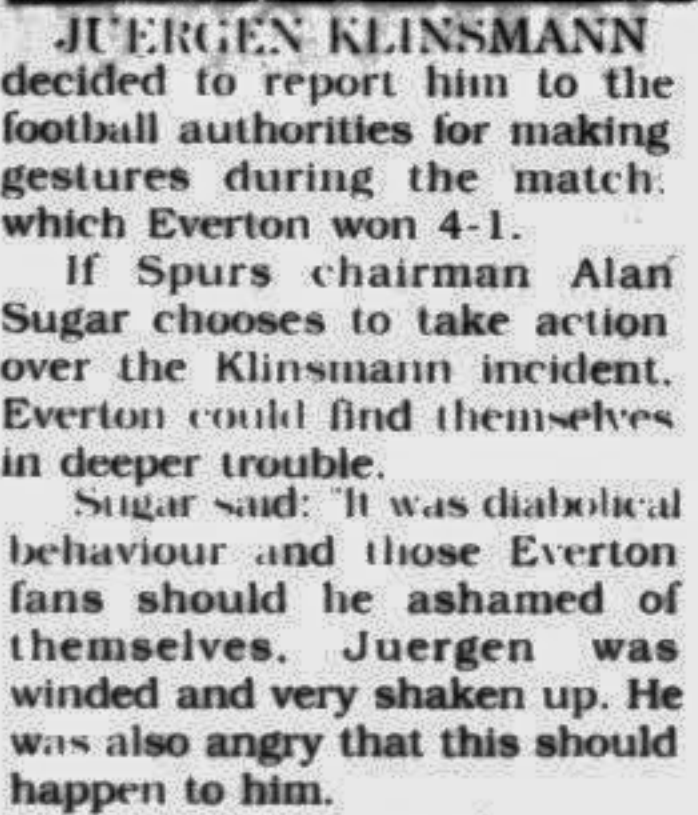


Siggi Reich (R) of German Second Division club VfL Wolfsburg celebrates with teammates after scoring the winner against First Division club FC Cologne during their German Cup semifinal in Cologne on April 11. Wolfsburg won by a solitary goal. — AFP/UNB photo

Klinsmann staying at Spurs

LONDON, Apr 12: German international striker Juergen Klinsmann has pledged to stay at Tottenham Hotspur next season, the London club's manager said on Wednesday, reports Reuter. "Juergen has told myself and (club chairman) Alan Sugar that he will stay here next season. As far as we know, that is how it will be," Gerry Francis said.

Following Sunday's FA Cup semifinal match at Elland Road. So far there has been no official complaint from the German striker or the club but if one is sent to the FA, the Merseysiders could land in trouble. Everton left-back Andy Hinchcliffe already faces the prospect of an FA charge of insulting an official after police officers intervened at the stadium.



JUERGEN KLINSMANN decided to report him to the football authorities for making gestures during the match, which Everton won 4-1.

ach as he tried to get off the pitch, I do not see why football should tolerate such pitch invasions and behaviour like this." FA spokeswoman Clare Tomlinson, who was at the match, said: "We are aware of what is alleged to have happened and it was clear that Juergen Klinsmann was in some distress when he came off the pitch. "So far we have not received an official complaint from the player or Alan Sugar, but if one arrives then we would investigate."

Tomlinson added: "Technically, it is a criminal offence to encroach on the pitch, save for reasons of crowd safety, and supporters are also running the risk of having their club charged." The Klinsmann incident, with its echoes of Eric Cantona's problems in England, will worry Spurs on another level as well.

For Bundesliga clubs Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund are both targeting the striker and this sort of trouble may shake Klinsmann's resolve to stay with the Premiership club.

Argentines in doldrums

BUENOS AIRES, Apr 12: Drab city streets surround a grey, decaying stadium in Avelandana, home of famous Argentine side Independiente, reports Reuter. Most of the 30,000 fans who flock to the ground look as if they could barely scrape enough money together for a ticket. "They blend into the grey-ness of the stadium, the oldest in South America built of concrete. It was constructed in the 1930s when the game in Argentina turned professional and was badly in need of a facelift. "But in the middle of the ground is a tangle of brilliant emerald green and on it some of the richest talent in South American football, wearing bright colours styled by a major world sports gear manufacturer. "Still, the economic crisis is biting hard at Argentine football with President Carlos Menem's taxman unflinching in his quest for revenue that in the past club officials always managed to keep flowing within the game. "They still try. Tickets that should have been put through a counter at the turnstile are instead collected in a neat pile in total disregard of the new standard procedure. "But the game's lifeblood young talent that helped Argentina win two World Cups since the last two decades, is undiminished. "On that Avelandana field earlier this month, River Plate, inspired by 1994 World Cup revelation Ariel Ortega, play a superb second half to win 4-1. "The Argentine game had last year barely recovered from a wave of violence before it was hit by the country's latest financial crisis. "Firm action by judges, deemed too lenient in the past, stemmed the trouble which claimed several lives.

But crowds at most games in all divisions are sparse — down more than 30 per cent from the golden era of the 1940s and 1950s — with fans unable to afford tickets and also afraid of the violence simmering below the surface. The Argentine Football Association (AFA) suspended the First Division B championship — effectively a Third Division — last month because most clubs were on the brink of bankruptcy. The clubs are considering returning to amateurism for survival. "The top clubs are not much better off. Boca vice-president Carlos Heller, interviewed by a national daily, said: "We try to meet the basic needs, wages, taxes, social charges. Investing in infrastructure is always put off till further ahead." "The recently introduced format of two championships in one season has arguably added to the pressure, doubling the frequency of the relegation battle and increasing the number of titles a successful big team, like Diego Maradona's Racing Club, misses out on. "Paradoxically, the Argentine game has seen a wave of imports from around the world in recent years, in stark contrast to the near empty coffers and Argentina's historic role as an exporter of footballing talent. "But the match in Avelandana was an entirely Argentine affair

and proof that, even in times of crisis, the country's flow of talent is undiminished. River Plate never booted the ball out of defence, always preferring to attack down the flanks through their full backs and stretch the independent defence with flowing passing movements. The cleanness of the game owed much to the firm hand of Javier "lawman" Castrilli, the most controversial referee in the country and often accused of "abusing the red card." But not every match in Argentina is of the same quality. Boca coach Silvio Marzolini, Argentina's elegant left back in the 1966 World Cup in England, says the overall standard of play is appalling. "Today they mark as in basketball, they grab the rival. In my time there were also players who went for the man, but few. Now referees allow dirty play," said Marzolini, who guided Boca to their last league title with Maradona's inspiration in 1981. "If we compare it with other tournaments in the world, Argentine football is very bad, maybe the worst in the world — because of the friction, the hitting. You can't play like that." "People in influential positions are looking to streamline the game, said former national coach Carlos Bilardo, who is now a consultant with Argentina's major television broadcasting company. "He said one idea being floated is for a new national league, with only the top six Buenos Aires clubs plus the best from other provinces. "There are too many First Division clubs in Buenos Aires, 13, and the smaller ones aren't attracting enough people," Bilardo said. "But resistance to any such move would probably be too strong from the smaller clubs, accustomed to regularly playing in the First Division, for it to succeed."

Botha's record intact

LAS VEGAS, Apr 12: Heavyweight Francois Botha of South Africa remained undefeated Saturday with an uninspired eight-round decision over Willie Jake of Indianapolis, reports AP. Botha, ranked No. 3 by both the WBA and WBC, improved to 35-0 despite the lacklustre performance against his journeyman opponent.

Juventus in Italian Cup final

TURIN, Italy, Apr 12: League leaders Juventus defeated 10-man Lazio 2-1 on Tuesday to qualify for the Italian Cup final on a 3-1 aggregate, reports Reuter.

Juventus remain in the running for a treble this season as they meet Germans Borussia Dortmund next Tuesday with a place in the UEFA Cup final at stake. The first leg in Italy ended 2-2. Tuesday's semifinal turned on the controversial dismissal of Lazio's Mauro Bonomi just before halftime. Stopper Bonomi was sent off for a professional foul on Roberto Baggio but Lazio protested bitterly that Baggio was off-side when he received the ball.

Lazio, beaten 1-0 in the first leg in Rome, levelled the aggregate score in the 15th minute when Giuseppe Signori fired a long-range free kick which deflected off the defensive wall and flew past wrong footed goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi. Juventus made their extra man count two minutes after halftime when midfielder Giancarlo Marocchi slotted home the equaliser following a headed pass from Alessandro Del Piero. Lazio, who had recalled Dutchman Aron Winter at the expense of England midfielder Paul Gascoigne, almost grabbed what could have been a decisive second away goal in the 89th minute when defender Roberto Cravero headed against the post.

Juventus immediately swept to the other end of the field and the unfortunate Cravero gave away a penalty when he felled winger Angelo Di Livio. Baggio converted the spot kick to assure Juventus a flattering 3-1 aggregate success. The Turin team will face either Parma or Foggia in the two-legged Italian Cup final. Parma entertain Foggia in their second leg on Wednesday. The first leg ended 1-1.

Van Basten will know his fate sooner or later

MILAN, Apr 12: Marco van Basten will learn this month whether he has any chance of returning to soccer after two years' absence because of a chronic ankle injury, an AC Milan spokesman said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Milan spokesman Ugo Allevi dismissed reports that the Dutchman had already been told his career was finished. "These reports are based on unfounded rumours," he said. "Van Basten is following the programme set down by doctor (Marc) Martens but his latest check-up has been delayed until towards the end of the month. It was put off because improvement in his condition has been slower than expected."



VAN BASTEN

Allevi admitted that Belgian surgeon Martens may have to tell Van Basten, who has not played since the 1993 European Cup final, that he had reached the end of the line. "That possibility exists. We hope it will not be the case," he said. Milan are hoping Martens would give Van Basten the go-ahead to begin running again. The three times European footballer-of-the-year is currently in Amsterdam where he is working out in a gymnasium. Van Basten had an initial operation on his ankle in December 1992. He came back for three matches, including Milan's European Cup final defeat by Olympique Marseille, but fresh surgery was required a few weeks after that appearance.

Celtic one match away

GLASGOW, Apr 12: Celtic are just 90 minutes away from ending their six-year trophy drought after storming to a 3-1 win over Hibernian in their Scottish Cup semi-final replay on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Stand-in striker Willie Falconer, former Hibernian ace Joahn Collins and substitute Phil O'Donnell scored as Celtic swept into next month's final with a powerful display at Ibrox. They face First Division underdogs Airdrie at Hampden on May 27.

Agassi makes a fine debut

TOKYO, Apr 12: Andre Agassi debuted as world No 1 Wednesday by overpowering fellow American Tommy Ho 6-3, 6-2 in the second round of the Japan Open, reports AP.

Agassi, who overtook Pete Sampras in rankings announced Monday, blasted some of his cannonballs long or wide, but never was threatened by Ho, ranked No 103.

As for being atop the rankings, Agassi said the important thing is staying there, but "even to be No. 1 for an hour feels pretty good."

It didn't make him play any different, he added, saying: "Whatever your ranking is, you want to go out and win."

Agassi said he felt he played well Wednesday "considering that I came from the Davis Cup on clay and traveled across the world." He said he still was struggling a bit with a lower back injury suffered in the Davis Cup in Italy on March 31. The United States swept Italy, with Sampras and Agassi each winning in singles.

Agassi has beaten Sampras in two of three matches, all finals, they've played this year, which was a major factor in accumulating enough ranking points to surpass his fellow American.

"I think to be No. 1 is the accomplishment, but without the rivalry it isn't quite as special. To pass Pete Based on me beating him is what's special. I would miss something if it weren't for Pete," he said.

Agassi also said he thought the competition between the two was good for tennis, which has been reported as suffering from lagging popularity.

"I think the things that fuel the sport the strongest are first rivalries and then personalities. This has all the ingredients. It's nice to be a part of it," he said.

In his match Wednesday, Agassi broke Ho in the sixth game of the first set, and in the first and fifth games of the second.

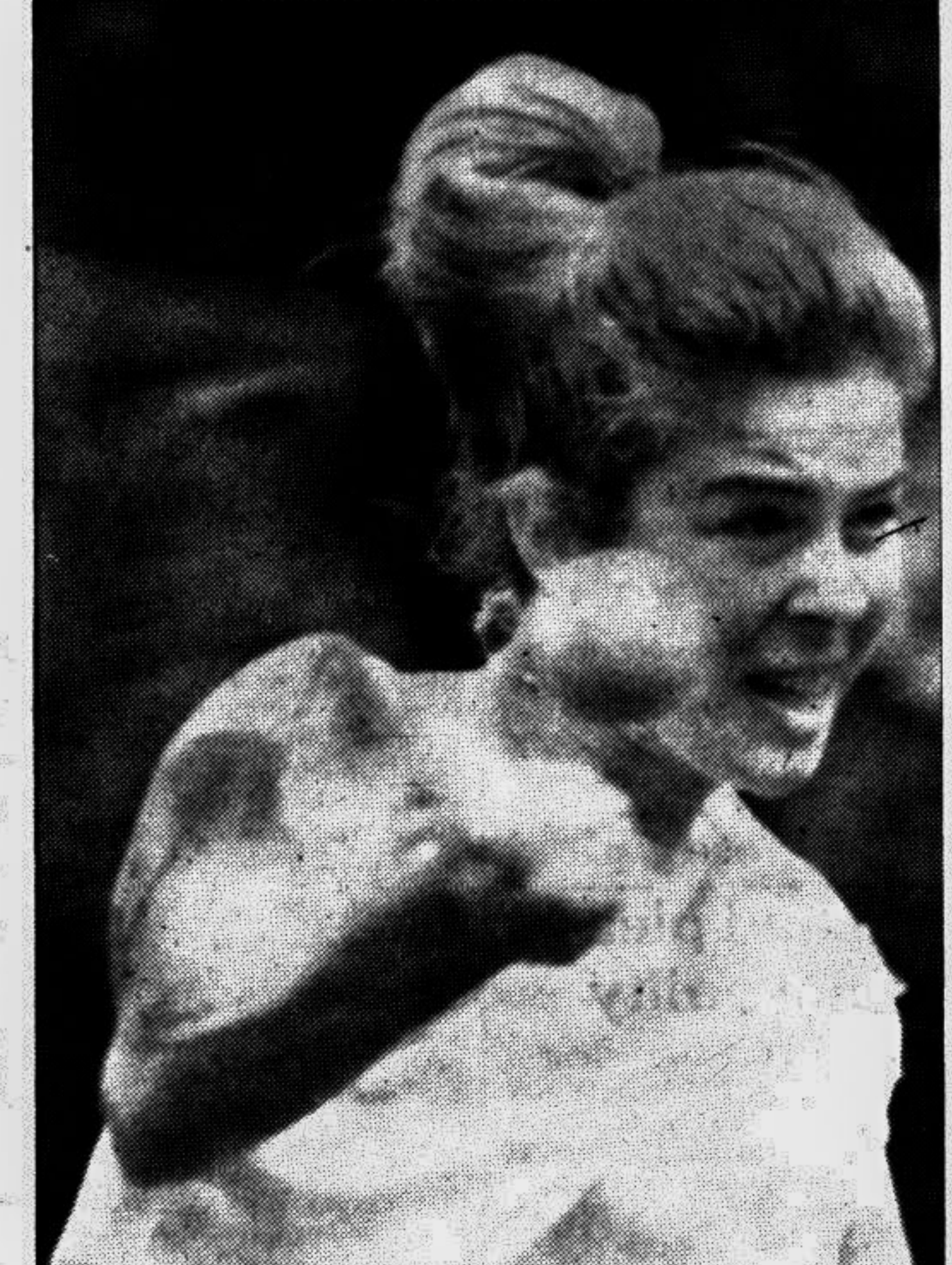
Earlier, No 2 seed Michael Chang, down 1-4 in the first set, reeled off nine straight

No. 4 Jim Courier of the United States, matching his big forehand against Swede Anders Jarryd's agile serve and volley game, won 4-6, 6-4, 7-5 in slightly more than two hours.

Meanwhile, two of the women's seeds bowed out. No 3 Marianne Werdel Witmeyer of the United States lost 6-2, 6-4 to Italy's Rita Grande, and

No 4 Mana Endo of Japan lost 4-6, 7-6 (7-3), 6-3 to qualifier Tang Min, a native of China now living in Hong Kong.

No 7 men's seed Alexander Volkov of Russia lost to Japan's bureaucracy. Two weeks after his visa application, he still lacked permission to enter Japan. His place was taken by qualifying round lucky loser Henrik Jan Davids of the



Second seeded Amy Frazier of the United States is in action against Japan's Rika Hiraki at the Japan Open tennis tournament in Tokyo on April 11. Frazier defeated Hiraki 6-1, 6-2.

games in a 6-4, 6-2 second-round victory over Japan's Shuzo Matsuoka, who fell victim to errors and Chang's passing shots.

No 3 Wayne Ferreira of South Africa advanced to the third round by beating Dimitri Pollakov of Ukraine 6-1, 6-3.

Netherlands, who lost to Michael Joyce of the United States 7-5, 6-3.

Sweden's Jan Apell ousted eighth seed Jan Siemertink of the Netherlands 6-4, 6-4, while another Swede, No 6 seed Jonas Bjorkman, beat Libor Nemecek of the Czech Republic 6-3, 6-3.

American qualifier Steve Campbell beat No. 12 seed Lionel Roux of France 6-4, 5-7, 6-2.

Wally Masur of Australia, a 1993 US Open semifinalist who has slipped to No 139 in the rankings, continued his comeback with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 victory over Lionel Barthez of France. He eliminated No 11 seed Patrick McEnroe of the United States on Tuesday.

Also advancing to the third round were Canadians Greg Rusedski seeded 14th, and Sebastian Lareu, seeded 15th.

Rusedski beat Slovakia's Jan Krosiak 6-3, 7-6 (7-3), and Lareu beat Germany's Carsteh Arriens 7-5, 6-1.

Lareau faces Agassi on Thursday. American Jeff Tarango, the 13th seed, downed Sule Ladipo of Nigeria 6-2, 6-3. No 16 Kenneth Carlsen of Denmark edged Swiss player Jakob Hlasek 6-4, 7-5.

Two qualifiers who ousted seeds in the first round had mixed fortunes. Scott Draper of Australia, who eliminated No 9 Martin Damm of the Czech Republic, moved on with a 7-6 (7-5), 6-4 victory over Germany's David Prinosil. Stephen Noteboom of the Netherlands, who ousted No 10 Jonathan Stark of the United States, fell to Japan's Kataro Miyachi 6-3, 7-6 (7-4).

Garrison-Jackson bites dust

HOUSTON, Texas, Apr 12: Zina Garrison-Jackson wanted to put on a good show in her final tournament before her hometown fans, but the fourth seed instead was upset at the Houston women's tennis championships on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Garrison-Jackson, who plans to retire at the end of the year, saved two match points before losing her second-round match to South African Joannette Kruger 6-2, 6-7 (5-7), 6-2.

Fifth seed and defending champion Sabine Hack played the kind of match Garrison-Jackson has hoped to play, crushing fellow German Silke Frankl 6-0, 6-2 in 59 minutes in a first-round match. "I played very aggressive and I was on top of every point," said Hack.

World number one Steffi Graf, who received a first-round bye, plays her first match today against Sweden's Maria Strandlund, who pounded out a 6-1, 6-2 victory over American Kimberly Po. Garrison-Jackson also received a first-round bye and was playing her first match for the home fans, but no one felt more disappointed than the fourth seed.

The less experienced South African blew her chance to put the veteran away early when she hit easy volleys wide at match point in the second set.

But the 21-year old Kruger regrouped and charged past the sentimental favourite as she built a 4-0 third-set lead and never looked back.

Ghana calls for African boycott

ACCRA, Apr 12: Ghana has called on African countries to boycott the World youth soccer championship starting on Thursday, because the event has been switched to Qatar from Nigeria, reports Reuter.

A Foreign Ministry statement released on Monday said the government felt African countries should not participate in the tournament because it viewed the decision to change the venue as "unfair and unfair to Nigeria" who had gone to "great trouble and expense in her preparations."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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CRYPTOQUIP D C P P C G M E W Z J V M Q B F Q Q M F W V J M W J - D P N M E W F A Z Q C E F L Z A G V E Z C E F J C E V N B C C E . Saturday's Cryptoquip: PLUCKY PLUMBER WHO ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A DOCTOR DIDN'T MAKE HOUSE CALLS. Today's Cryptoquip clue: B equals M 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.

An act of anti Catholicism

VATICAN CITY, Apr 12: The Vatican newspaper on Tuesday criticised Italian soccer officials for scheduling a match on Good Friday, the day Christians commemorate Christ's death, reports Reuter.

"The world of soccer does not appear to have any sensitivity," L'Osservatore Romano said in an editorial. "This was a decision which leaves one speechless."

The editorial was referring to a Second Division match between Atalanta and Udinese in Bergamo, which is scheduled to be shown on the pay television channel "Teletu 2."

The cable television usually broadcasts on Second Division game a day before the rest are played. The remainder of the First and Second Division programming played on Saturday because of the Easter Sunday holiday.

The editorial said it was shocking that the game would coincide with one of the most important and intense moments of the Catholic faith."

Split new bidders for '97 Champions

MONTE CARLO, Monaco, Apr 12: The number of bidders for the 1997 World Track and Field Championships has grown to seven with the Croatian city of Split becoming the latest candidate, reports AP.

The International Amateur Athletic Federation said Wednesday it received a "letter of intent" from the Croatian federation as Monday's deadline for candidatures elapsed.

The IAAF began soliciting bids after Mexico City withdrew last month as host of the championships as a result of the country's financial troubles.

The IAAF said the bidding is now closed. The other candidates are Stanford, Calif; Athens, Greece; Helsinki, Finland; New Delhi, India; Rome; and either Barcelona or Madrid in Spain.

The candidates have until May 17 to complete and return the official application forms. The IAAF Council will select the host city at its May 21-23 meeting in Goteborg, Sweden.

Montana to retire

LOS ANGELES, Apr 12: Joe Montana's long-rumored retirement from football is to become fact next week, according to published reports.

The Washington Post, citing unidentified league sources, said a news conference will be announced Friday to make the retirement official next Tuesday in downtown San Francisco, reports AP.

The Los Angeles Times reported Tuesday that friends and family of the quarterback will be in San Francisco for the ceremony.

Montana, who spent two years with the Kansas City Chiefs after leading the 49ers to four Super Bowl championships, is retiring at age 38 because of aches and pains as well as the wishes of his wife, Jennifer.

The Post, in Wednesday's editions, said Montana was also troubled by the rigorous practice schedule of Chiefs coach Marty Schottenheimer.

By retiring next week, Montana would free his \$2.4 million salary for the Chiefs to use in the NFL draft April 22-23. Steve Bono would be the likely starter if Montana does retire, with Matt Blundin his backup.