

An unwelcome return for Maradona

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 17: Not everyone was thrilled when Pele announced that Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona wanted to play for Brazil's Santos club, reports AP.

pressed his desire to play for Santos, Pele's old club, when his world-wide suspension for testing positive to stimulants ends in September.

But some question whether the 34-year-old Maradona, who played in the World Cups of 1982, 1986, 1990 and 1994, can still run with the youngsters.



DIEGO MARADONA

AFP adds: Former Argentinian international Diego Maradona will return to top-class football in between condition than he was in the 1994 World Cup, according to his fitness coach.

Larsson left in the cold

CORAL SPRINGS, Florida, May 17: Ivan Baron, the unseeded son of the tournament director, knocked off the top-seeded Magnus Larsson of Sweden on Tuesday night in a first-round upset at America's Red Clay tennis championship, reports AP.

of the year. Mark Baron, who has invited his son to play this tournament (a tuneup for the French Open) since its inception in 1992, said he felt no remorse after losing his highest ranked player and potential top drawing card.

for winners to take the first set tiebreaker. In the second set, Baron achieved the first break of the match for a 5-3 lead when Larsson's floating drop shot drifted wide.

Baron, a local favourite from Plantation, made the 32-player draw with a wild card from the tournament director — his father Mark Baron. The stunning 7-6 (7-5), 6-3 victory was his first official ATP Tour victory since turning pro in 1992. He was 0-7 prior to Tuesday's match.

"I don't lie," Baron said. "I rooted for my son all the way. He's my son and a tournament is just a tournament."

Baron, who features a two-handed backhand, served out the match at 40-15 with a carefully-placed volley and punched the air in celebration.

"I just needed a break and I think this could be it," said Baron, 22, who was the top junior in the world in 1990 but has struggled on the circuit since leaving the University of Georgia after his freshman year.

Larsson, who reached a career-high rank of 10 after a spot in the finals at Barcelona last month, is now ranked 11th in the world, while Baron is a lowly 285.

Wheaton, ranked 25th, lost in the 1993 final to Todd Martin, while the 128th-ranked Morgan fell to Luiz Mattar in last year's final. Mattar is injured, and Martin is playing the Italian Open.

Second-seeded Thomas Enqvist, who won last week's US Clay Court championship in Pinehurst, North Carolina, coasted to a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Radomir Vasek of Czech Republic. Enqvist saw his ranking drop from 19 to 20 despite winning his third title

The 6-3 Larsson had 11 aces to Baron's two, but he was attempting telegraphed drop shots from the baseline at the most critical junctures of the match. Baron easily ran them down and knocked several off

In other matches, sixth-seeded Greg Rusedski of Canada, slammed 10 aces in his 6-4, 6-4 victory over Alex O'Brien, while Argentine Javier Frana, the eighth seed, coasted to a 6-2, 6-4 victory over Tommy Ho of the United States. Fourth-seeded Mark Woodforde of Australia defeated Mauricio Hadad of Colombia 6-7 (2-7), 6-1, 6-4.

Garcia's injury a mystery

LAS VEGAS, May 17: Boxer Jimmy Garcia may have set himself up for injury by having to lose 30 pounds (14 kilograms), or nearly 20 per cent of his body weight, in the two months leading up to his ill-fated fight with Gabriel Ruelas, his promoter says, reports AP.

weight loss. Arum said, "This is an issue that needs to be addressed immediately."

he said. Garcia was battered throughout the fight and seemed to have little punching power. He made it into the 11th round before the fight was stopped, and then collapsed in his corner.

Promoter Bob Arum said Tuesday he believes Garcia was dehydrated and vulnerable to injury after being forced to go from 160 pounds (72 kilograms) to 130 pounds (59 kilograms) in the two months leading up to his May 6 fight with Ruelas.

Arum noted that Gerald McClellan, who suffered a similar injury Feb. 25 in a fight against Nigel Benn in London, was notorious for having to lose large amounts of weight in the weeks before a fight.

Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission, said the issue of weight loss needed to be studied. He said he would recommend the commission's medical advisory board look into it.

"My theory is he didn't have enough time to replenish the fluid in his brain after taking diuretics to make the weight," Arum said. "His brain didn't have protection."

It was obvious he was having problems with the weight,"

Arum's comments came as Garcia remained in critical condition at University Medical Centre, where he was on life support systems.



Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina celebrates her 25th birthday at the start of the Berlin international tennis tournament on May 16. She was presented a cake upon her arrival.

Garcia's kidney function improved Tuesday and he moved when pinched, indicating there was still brain activity, said Dr. Albert Capanna.

Arum, meanwhile, called for doctors to examine the impact of losing weight on fighters, and for active boxers to be weighed on a weekly basis by their local commissions.

Every case we've had of a boxer suffering brain injuries has been as a result of extreme

Arum said he is preparing to challenge WBC titlist Oliver McCall in London July 22 and used his fight against Jesse Ferguson, Rodolfo Marin and Mike Evans as warm-ups.

Ferguson and Marin each failed to last a round with the muscular British heavyweight and Evans went as far as round two on Saturday before he was knocked out.

The results have led to derision from fight fans and also the British media about the choice of Bruno's opponents.

Bruno vs teddy bear

LONDON, May 17: World heavyweight title contender Frank Bruno got to grips with a giant teddy bear as part of a store's promotion campaign Wednesday. Some observers thought the bear gave him more trouble than his last three opponents, reports AP.

Bruno said he is preparing to challenge WBC titlist Oliver McCall in London July 22 and used his fight against Jesse Ferguson, Rodolfo Marin and Mike Evans as warm-ups.

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DMFA to shift venue?

Sports Reporter

The organisers may shift the venue for the two semifinals and the final of the Nirma DMFA Cup if the inclement weather prevailing over the country for the last couple of days, does not improve.

"We are considering to shift the matches from the Dhaka Stadium to Mirpur" said the tournament committee secretary Shah Alam Chowdhury. But he promptly added: "We will have to decide tomorrow's meeting any possible change."

But whatever may be the outcome of today's meeting, the authorities pray for a sunny day to make the Dhaka Stadium playable. Because they must roll the cricket pitch which the ground sub-committee had earlier replaced by grass.

According to the revised fixture, defending champions Abahani Krira Chakra are scheduled to meet Brothers Union in the first semifinal on Friday. While, Mohammedans will take on Muktiyoddha Sangsad in the other semifinal on the following day.

The final has been scheduled to be held on May 22.

FIFA rankings

ZURICH, May 17: World champions Brazil maintained their lead in the latest world soccer rankings issued by FIFA on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Ranking (1994 positions in brackets)	Points
1. Brazil (1)	66.05
2. Italy (4)	62.23
3. Spain (2)	61.26
4. Norway (8)	60.08
5. Germany (5)	59.97
6. Sweden (3)	59.19
7. Netherlands (6)	58.84
8. Argentina (10)	57.61
9. Mexico (15)	57.54
10. Ireland (9)	56.89
11. Romania (11)	56.63
12. Bulgaria (16)	56.46
13. Switzerland (7)	55.13
14. Denmark (14)	55.02
15. Russia (13)	54.26
16. Portugal (20)	53.21
17. France (19)	52.82
18. Belgium (24)	50.82
19. Colombia (17)	50.44
20. Nigeria (18)	50.17

Words of fire from Brazilian World Cuppers

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 17: Brazilian soccer players, led by World Cup heroes Romario and Branco, threatened to go on strike on Tuesday over what they described as the theft of gate money at Rio de Janeiro Championship games, reports Reuter.

"We are all being hit, the clubs and the players and the supporters who go and pay to get in," said Flamengo full-back Branco, best known for his stinging left-foot shot.

"It's unacceptable when you can see that there are 80,000 to 100,000 people at the game and at the end they announce attendance of fifty or sixty thousand."

"Something is wrong, nobody has solved the problem. As the principal artists in the show, we have to do something about it," said Branco, adding that a strike would be a last resort.

There have been allegations for years about the theft of gate money in Brazil but authorities have never managed to get to the bottom of the matter.

Fans at games sometimes jeer when the official attendance is announced.

"We have to sit down and talk and find a solution," said Branco's teammate Romario, adding that he also backed a strike if nothing was done.

PSG give Valdo the shove

PARIS, May 17: Brazilian Valdo was told by Paris St Germain trainer Luis Fernandez on Tuesday he would not play again for the club for the rest of the season, a sign that the midfielder is likely to move on this summer, reports Reuter.

Valdo, 31, who has had four successful years with PSG since signing from Benfica, was surprisingly left out of last week's French Cup final team and was not named by Fernandez for today's league match with Caen.

Indicating Valdo would not be playing in any of the club's four league games till the end of the season, an irritated Fernandez told reporters: "I don't feel like justifying this decision. I'd rather discuss the match with Caen."

Valdo said recently he would like to stay with the club but felt that PSG management wanted him to leave so that they could sign new players. He made no comment about being dropped.

Fernandez did name his two other Brazilians — Rai and Ricardo — in the team. There has been speculation recently that either or both could be moving too. Stopper Ricardo, like Valdo, was not selected for the French Cup final.



Arsenal players David Seaman (L), Ian Wright (C) and skipper Tony Adams enjoys an informal practice session at Beijing's 'Forbidden City' in the morning yesterday. The English Premier side are scheduled to take on Guoan in the evening on their first stop of a Euro-Asia Cup tour. This is the first time Arsenal is playing in Asia.

Santoro stuns Sampras

ROME, May 17: Pete Sampras lost more than a first round match at the Italian Open.

Against Santoro, ranked 39 in the world, Sampras summed up the match as "all in all, a bad day at the office."

"I just didn't hit the ball well. I dug myself a really big hole and couldn't get out of it."

Only once in the match did Sampras seem on the verge of taking command. Up 3-2 in the first set, he had two break points on Santoro's service. But he failed to convert them and never really threatened again.

Now, after a humiliating first round loss in Rome at the hands of a journeyman Frenchman, Sampras isn't sure what awaits him Paris.

Two other former Italian champions also made quick exits Tuesday.

"I don't know what to expect," said Sampras, after the top seed was humbled Tuesday by Fabrice Santoro, 6-4, 6-3 and left the Foro Italico Centre Court to whistles and jeers, reports AP.

Jim Courier, No 9 seed and titlist in 1992 and 1993, fell to another Frenchman, qualifier Thierry Guardiola, 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7-3).

"I hope to get through the first week and go from there. I'll give it my best shot."

Mats Wilander, titlist in 1987 and trying to launch a comeback on the tour at age 30, lost to Jacco Eltingh, 6-3, 6-2.

That was Italian qualifier Carrado Borroni's victory over No 6 seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3.

One upset Tuesday drew appreciative roars from the crowd.

It was the 22-year-old Italian's first appearance in a major tournament and brought a rare moment of rejoicing for a crowd long hungry for an Italian champion.

The lone seeded Italian, No 13 Andrea Gaudenzi, also advanced.

Leading matches Wednesday include No 3 seed Goran Ivanisevic against unseeded American Vince Spadea, No 12 Stefan Edberg against Marcelo Rios and No 2 Michael Chang against Tomas Carbonell.

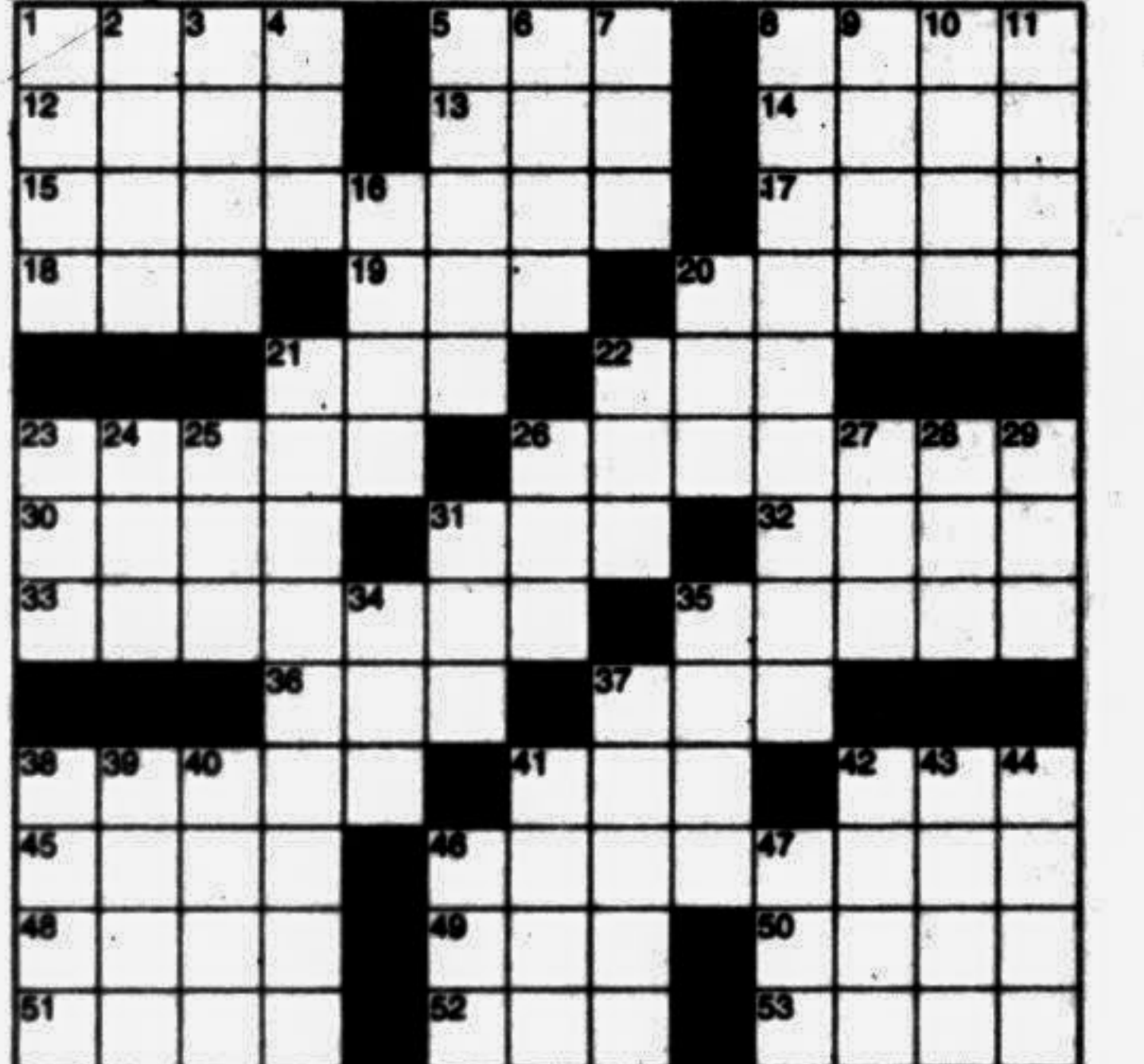
The last Italian titlist was Adriano Panatta in 1976.

"I think they (the ATP) should do something about it in their own favour," Muster said after his 6-4, 6-4 first round win over Dutchman Paul Haarhuis at the Italian Open.

Muster said he was glad it was not his job to decide what action should be taken against the three-time Wimbledon champion.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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30 Birthright barber	LAIR MAE OWED	20 Tobacco plug	41 Tobacco plug
31 Use a ray-gun on	AKRON MARG	21 Time of prosperity	42 Time of prosperity
32 Sty cry	FOE DIESEL	22 Demolish	43 Demolish
33 Wool cloth	SALERNO OSAGE	23 "— o'clock scholar"	44 "— o'clock scholar"
35 Pop	AMOS DUG SWAN	24 Woman or girl	46 Woman or girl
36 Long time	FIRST REMINDS	25 Greet the villain	47 Greet the villain
	BODIED MOO		
	OXEN INDIA		
	JOHN TAB ARAB		
	AREA ORO LOGY		
	MEWL XYZ POE		



CRYPTOQUIP
Z Y P A T X L P O E I U G Z O V N
Z P D G P O ' G E D C T O V Z P
Z P U P C V G V T X G Y T A
"N P P U T E E T O Z I X P."
Yesterday's Cryptogram: HE'S A FINE BROTH OF A MAN — TOO BAD SOME OF THE NOODLES ARE MISSING.
Today's Cryptogram clue: E 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.

Barca sign Popescu

BARCELONA, May 17: Carlos Rexach, assistant coach of Barcelona said on Tuesday that Tottenham Hotspur's Rumanian international, Gica Popescu had signed a pre-contract and a final decision would be taken in 10 days, reports AFP.

Rexach said: "We have signed him on a pre-contract and we now have 10 days to confirm it." Popescu, signed from PSV Eindhoven, never settled at Spurs and will replace Dutch international Ronald Koeman who is returning to Feyenoord in the Dutch League.

Barcelona have had a disappointing season by their Standards, losing to Paris Saint Germain in the European Champions Cup quarter-finals and stand only a remote chance of winning the Spanish Championship.

President Jose Luis Nunez is convinced the club's "Golden age" is over, saying recently that hard times lay ahead for the club, he was "astonished" that no foreign players were fielded in Sunday's home draw against Celta Vigo.

Manager Johan Cruyff has already signed Sporting Lisbon midfielder Luis Figo and the Bosnian centre forward Meho Kodro from Real Sociedad.

Cruyff is keen to make further signings from abroad, saying: "At the moment we are in negotiations with two or three foreigners."

Cruyff is known to like Gothenburg's Swedish international Jesper Blomqvist but equally Paris Saint Germain's Daniel Ginola is a possibility.

All this speculation places further in doubt the respective futures of Bulgarian international Hristo Stoichkov and Popescu's international teammate George Hagi.

Agassi fined

ROME, May 17: Andre Agassi was fined 2,500 dollars Wednesday for his angry exchange with a spectator following his quarterfinal loss to Sergi Bruguera at last week's German Open in Hamburg, reports AP.

ATP Tour spokesman Nicola Arzi said Agassi was fined for "unsportsmanlike conduct" for remarks he made to a court-side spectator who complained about the quality of the match.

Leaving the court, Agassi cursed the man and said, "Are you going to get a knife and chase me now?"

Agassi was referring to the April 1993 stabbing of women's tennis star Monica Seles on the same court.

Becker enrages Muster

ROME, May 17: Australian Thomas Muster said on Tuesday that the ATP should take action against Boris Becker after the German made comments that have been interpreted as suggesting Muster was guilty of doping, reports Reuter.

"I think they (the ATP) should do something about it in their own favour," Muster said after his 6-4, 6-4 first round win over Dutchman Paul Haarhuis at the Italian Open.

Muster said he was glad it was not his job to decide what action should be taken against the three-time Wimbledon champion.