

Graf regains Wimbledon crown

Vicario so close yet so far

From Tawfiq Aziz Khan

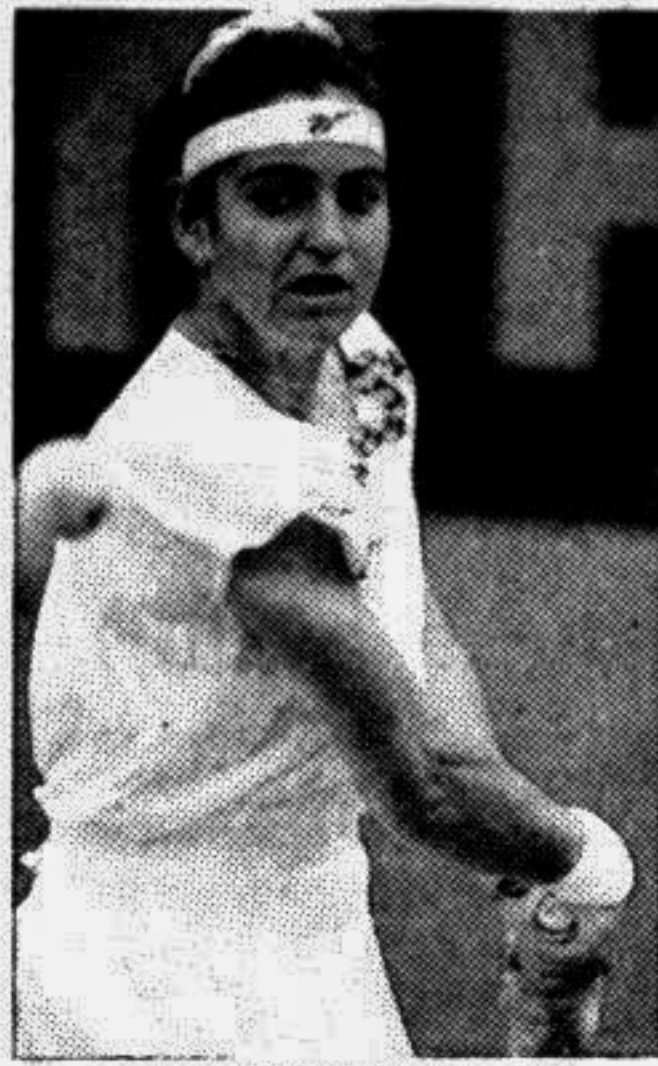
LONDON, July 8: Steffi Graf won the women's singles title at the Wimbledon Championships for the sixth time in her career defeating Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario 4-6, 6-1, 7-5. The two dominant players of world tennis fought it out in warm sunshine for exactly 118 minutes. It was the third Grand Slam they have contested out

of the last four. This has been the first final for Vicario whose previous best here was a quarterfinal appearance. Like in the semifinal against Jana Novotna the world number one started with the first set down. In the seventh game she was broken as she hit too many wild forehands which is essentially her strong point. Vicario held her serve with powerful forehand and sliced backhand crosscourt with lot of spin. She served for the set and won it 6-4. But Graf had summoned all her skill and power in the second set and even with her faltering forehand won five games in a row having broken Vicario twice to take the set 6-1 in only 26 minutes as the Spanish powerhouse relaxed. It was the third set that set the Centre Court afire. Having won both their first game Vicario was broken in the third and then Graf was broken in the fourth.

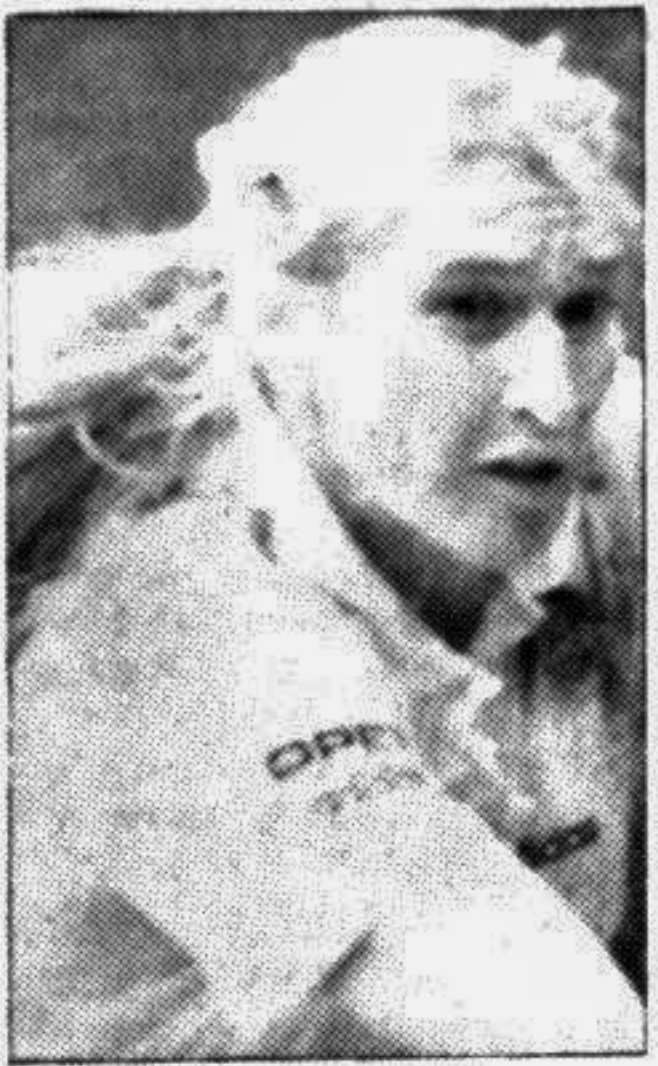
Though Graf hit a number of long balls with her forehand there were goal rallies and at 5 all on Vicario's service 'deuce' was called and it went on for more than 20 minutes. The Spaniard lost seven game points but Graf on her sixth breakpoint forced Vicario to hit the net after a long rally and the German destroyer sunk the flagship of Spanish Armada on her serve (7-5) and added the 17th Grand Slam title to her credit. The last set lasted 62

minutes. Reuter adds: In seven finals, Graf has lost only once, to Navratilova in 1987. She is now equal third in the all-time Wimbledon singles list behind Navratilova (9) and Helen Wills Moody (8).

As well as the title, Graf walked away with a winning cheque of 328,000 pounds (\$525,000 dollars). Her beaten opponent received 164,000 pounds (\$262,500 dollars).



SANCHEZ-VICARIO



STEFFI GRAF

Becker baffles Agassi

WIMBLEDON, July 8: Ten years since he dazzled the tennis world as a 17-year-old Boris Becker is back in the finals for the seventh time at the place he calls "home," report agencies.

"Nobody should underestimate me when I play here," said the three-times champion after scoring a magnificent 2-6, 7-6 (7-1), 6-4, 7-6 (7-1) Centre Court victory exactly ten years to the day after his historic first title win.

He now plays defending champion Pete Sampras who beat Goran Ivanisevic 7-6 (9-7), 4-6, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 in a gruelling power-match which contained 59 aces — 38 of them coming from the oft-ain (1m94) Croatian.

Becker, who had lost eight of 11 previous matches with Agassi, looked down and out and heading for one of the most humiliating defeats of his life when he trailed 2-6, 1-4.

Everything the 1992 champion touched seemed to be turning to gold. Becker's best serves were being returned with interest and his efforts to reach the net thwarted by bullet passing shots down both flanks.

"I felt at that stage I was playing someone from outer space," admitted Becker after his win.

"It seemed to me I had been playing a pretty good match until then. But I had never seen anybody hitting the tennis ball the way Andre was hitting it."

"But even when I am down, I al-

ways believe I have a chance. I am always going to fight until the end. I did more running out there today than I have ever done on a grass court.

Agassi seemed to burn himself out after his bright start. "Mentally I had a hard time shaking off the fact that I let a 4-1 two service break slip away," he admitted shortly before leaving the All-England Club in a chauffeur driven car with girlfriend Brooke Shields.

"My confidence just dropped. I wasn't hitting the ball the same and that's going to be highlighted against someone who plays as well as Boris."

It was clear, as things lurched from bad to worse that Agassi was becoming increasingly distracted and irritated.

Watched from the players' box by former coach Nick Bolletieri, the man who has launched Becker's career, the American was particularly upset when British umpire Mike Morrissey decided to overrule several line calls.

"I don't want to make it a big issue, but I think Mike has a tendency to overrule way too much in a match."

"As far as calls are concerned you get some and you lose some but unfortunately I felt most of them went against me today."

Agassi said he didn't expect to stay around to see the final or watch it on television.

"Your first priority after a loss like this is to try to get your mind away from the thing that hurts most-which

is not being out there." But the circumstances of Friday's victory made it even more special for Becker.

"With him being on top of his game and being No 1 in the world, that must be probably the best tennis match I have even had at Wimbledon," he said.

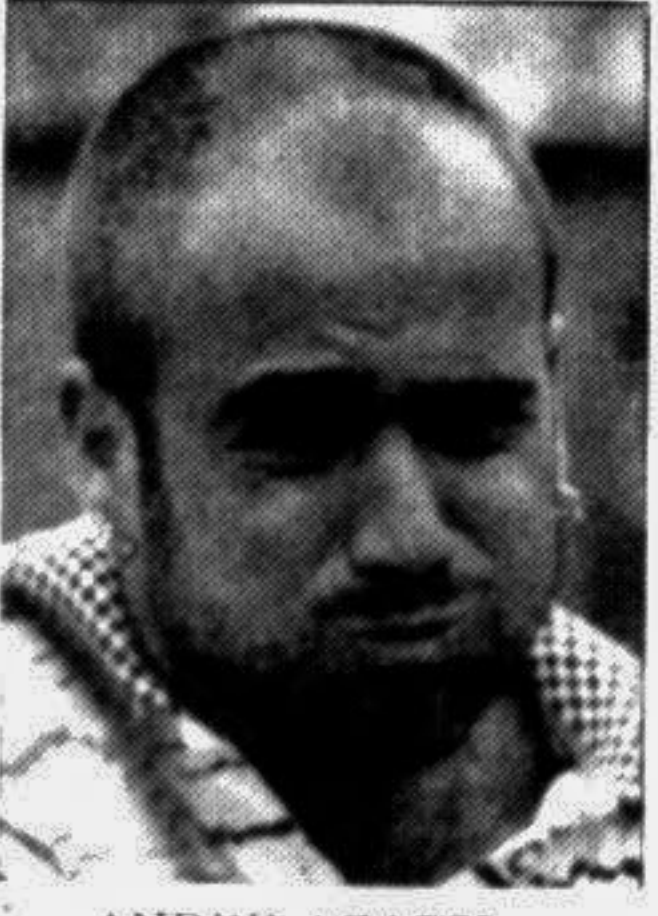
That's saying a lot from a man who has won 62 matches at Wimbledon over the past decade, more than any other active player. He's also the first man to reach the final seven times since Arthur W Gore made his eighth appearance in 1912.

Becker reacted sharply to a questioner who asked whether he was surprised to make the final over the heavily-favoured Agassi, the 1992 Wimbledon champion who had beaten him in their last eight matches.

Becker dominated not only with his serve-and-volley game but managed to hold his own in furious baseline rallies with Agassi, considered the best backcourt player in the game.

"I raised my game to an incredible level," he said. "I don't think I have run that much on a grass court ever in my life like I did today. I felt like I was stroking the ball very well. I felt he's going to be a little better than me from the baseline but I'm still able to play with him."

Agassi said he never recovered after losing the second set.



ANDRE AGASSI

although Becker rated his opponent's form in the opening stages as the best he'd ever seen.

"Losing any way here is disappointing but I think Boris has been on the other end of that feeling against me," Agassi said.

"By the end of the match you'd have to say he deserved to win. He picked up his level and I never managed to pick up mine."

Agassi and his girlfriend Brooke

Ivanisevic's irony of fate

LONDON, July 8: Lady luck smiled on Wimbledon champion Pete Sampras on Friday and he did not let her down, reports Reuter.

After squaking past Goran Ivanisevic 7-6, 4-6, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 in the semifinals, Sampras said he had suffered and struggled against the bulky Croat's huge serve.

"Today was a match that could have gone either way and I got a little bit lucky in the end," he said.

A former Ivanisevic, twice a semifinalist and twice runner-up here, moaned that good fortune never came his way, especially during big matches.

"Probably I was born unlucky," the 23-year-old Croat said. "All the match I was unlucky — so many chances and every time unlucky. I was really unlucky today and I don't know why I can't have luck just one time in a big match."

cial moments that went marginally away. "Every time when I thought I'm in but I had bad luck. I missed something or he played some good shots



IVANISEVIC

but most of the time he played a lucky shot.

Sampras did not disagree. "I don't think I dominated today. I just got a little bit lucky at the end." But the 23-year-old American, son

of a Greek immigrant father, also made his own luck, keeping a cool head at times under the Croat's serving onslaught and gobbling up the smallest chance.

Ivanisevic, famed for a volatile temperament which he has managed to keep fairly well in check this tournament, lost his nerve at key moments.

After a mighty second set during which Sampras could not win a single point on the big man's serve, Ivanisevic lost his first service game of the third.

He did the same in the fifth set and against a player seeking to become the first man since Bjorn Borg to win three Wimbledon championships in a row, these were fatal lapses.

Sampras could not enjoy a match that ran so close. "It's not a lot of fun but it's a huge challenge ... when you're playing Goran it's like riding a roller-coaster," he said.

Happy to have had luck on his side this time, Sampras, a dollar millionaire 17 times over and winner of five Grand Slam titles already, shows no sign of losing his luster to win.

Tunstall stays in saddle

SYDNEY, July 8: Controversial administrator Arthur Tunstall retained his Australian Commonwealth Games Association post Saturday when a new constitution that would have abolished his job was defeated at a meeting, reports AP.

Tunstall, the group's secretary-treasurer, argued against inclusion of disabled athletes at the Commonwealth Games in Victoria last year, saying their presence was an embarrassment.

Also in Victoria, Tunstall criticised Australian sprinter Cathy Freeman's waving of an aboriginal flag along with an Australian flag after she won two gold medals.

Earlier this year, Tunstall was criticised after it was revealed that he told a racist joke about Freeman and former Australian boxer Lionel Rose. The joke, made in private, came during a break in an association meeting.

Although government officials — including Federal Sports Minister John Faulkner — called on the association to fire him, Tunstall managed to retain his position for at least another year, his 41st in the job.

"I think the very fact I'm there shows people have faith and confidence in me," Tunstall said following the meeting.

Tunstall was not challenged in the ballot for secretary-treasurer but it was expected that an updated constitution would be voted in later in the day, replacing Tunstall's role with a full-time executive director. But the vote did not receive the required 75 per cent support of the meeting.

Marinos beat Osaka

TOKYO, July 8: The front-running Yokohama Marinos beat Cerezo Osaka 1-0, snapping their losing streak at three, while Verdy Kawasaki scored their eighth straight victory in Japanese League matches Saturday, reports AP.

Argentine striker Bisconti struck a free-kick into the goal four minutes into the second half for the only goal in the Marinos' victory before 11,469 spectators in Yokohama.

Yasuhiko Niimura blasted the winning goal with four minutes left in the second extra period, giving JEF United Ichihara a 3-2 triumph over the Yokohama Flügels at Ichihara, southeast of Tokyo.

The Marinos are 14-8 and second place JEF United are 13-9.

Italian star Schillaci made a pair of goals in the second half, powering Jubilo Iwata to a 2-1 victory over the Shimizu S-Pulse before 19,069 spectators at Iwata, southwest of Tokyo.

Schillaci leads the league with 21 goals.

Masahiro Fukuda struck the winning goal in the first extra period, giving the Urawa Red Diamonds a 3-2 triumph over Sanfrecce Hiroshima at Omiya, northeast of Tokyo.

More than 19,000 spectators in Osaka saw Tetsuji Hashiratani head in the game's only goal 13 minutes into the second half as Verdy Kawasaki, the 1993-1994 league champions, beat Gamba Osaka 1-0.

With goals by Hidetoshi Nakata, Brazilian striker Betinho and Koji Noguchi, Bellmare Hiratsuka edged Kashiwa Reysol 3-2 before 11,560 spectators at Matsuyama, southwestern Japan.

Yugoslavian player Drajan Stojkovic and Yasuyuki Moriyama scored one goal each three minutes apart in the second half as the Nagoya Grampus Eight blanked the Kashima Antlers 2-0 before 21,794 spectators in Nagoya in central Japan.

It was the Grampus' seventh consecutive victory.

Two Boomers' tussle today

WIMBLEDON, July 8: Boris Becker can already claim to be the greatest player at Wimbledon since Arthur W Gore. He wants more.

Pitted on Sunday against two-time defending champion Pete Sampras, Becker will play in his seventh Wimbledon men's final, the most since the long-forgotten Gore made it for the eighth time in 1912, reports AP.

Gore won three titles. Becker won the first of his three championships 10 years ago at age 17 to become

expense. "It was basically the thing everybody, especially in Germany, talked about the past two weeks," Becker said. "I had a hard time not thinking about that."

The stakes are considerable for Sampras as well. He could become the first player to win three consecutive Wimbledon men's titles since Bjorn Borg earned his fifth in a row in 1980.

"I'm ravenous," said Sampras, who sprawled Becker-like onto the grass in pursuit of shots five times during his semifinal victory over Goran Ivanisevic.



Germany's Boris Becker punches the air in delight after eliminating top seed Andre Agassi in the semifinals of the Wimbledon Championships on July 7. An inspired Becker came back from a set down to win 2-6, 7-6, 6-4, 7-6.

— AFP/UNB photo

Wimbledon's first unseeded and youngest champion.

Now, Becker hopes to stage an anniversary celebration at Sampras'

"This is the biggest tournament in the world, and you do whatever you can to win it. You give, you scrap, you claw and do whatever you can to

GRAND SLAM: FACTS & FIGURES

From Our Sports Correspondent

LONDON, July 8: Highlights of some interesting facts from previous men's singles Grand Slams:

If Boris Becker wins tomorrow, it will be ten years since his first title here in 1985. The last Wimbledon champion to have a ten-year span between titles was Bill Tilden who won his first title here in 1920 and his last title here in 1930.

Ken Rosewall has the longest span (20 years) at Wimbledon between final appearances but did not win the title. He reached his first final here in 1954, losing to Jaroslav Drobný, and his last in 1974, losing to Jimmy Connors.

At the Australian, Rosewall won his first title in 1953 and his last in 1972, an 19 year span.

At the French, Rosewall won his first title in 1953 and his last in 1968, a span of 15 years. He also reached the final in 1969, losing to Rod Laver.

At the US, Bill Larned won his first title in 1901 and his last in 1911, a span of ten years. Ken Rosewall won

his first title in 1956 and his last in 1970, a span of 14 years. Rosewall also reached the final in 1974, a span of 18 years.

This is Becker's seventh Wimbledon final. He is third on the all-time Wimbledon list for most finals achieved, as follows:

Arthur W Gore 9 finals 3 titles (1901, 1908-09)

William Renshaw 8 finals 7 titles (1881-86, 1889)

Boris Becker 7 finals 3 titles (1985-6, 1989)

H Laurie Doherty 6 finals 5 titles (1902-06)

Wilfred Baddeley 6 finals 3 titles (1891, 1892, 1895)

Bjorn Borg 6 finals 5 titles (1976-80)

Jimmy Connors 6 finals 2 titles (1974, 1982)

Herbert Lawford 6 finals 1 title (1887)

Becker is the oldest Wimbledon finalist (27 years, 7 months) since Jimmy Connors in 1984 (Connors was

31 years, 10 months). Ivan Lendl in 1987 and Kevin Curren in 1985 but were both 27 years, 4 months old. If Becker were to win, he would be the oldest champion since Connors in 1982 (29 years, 10 months).

Americans have won the gentlemen's singles title 28 times in history (10 in the Open era):

1972 Stan Smith

1974 Jimmy Connors

1975 Arthur Ashe

1981 John McEnroe

1982 Jimmy Connors

1983 John McEnroe

1984 John McEnroe

1992 Andre Agassi

1993 Pete Sampras

1994 Pete Sampras

This is the 17th time in the Open era that, at least, one American has reached the Wimbledon singles final and the fourth consecutive year. Americans have won the title the last three years: Sampras in 1993-4 and Agassi in 1992.

Indonesians in last four

KUALA LUMPUR, July 8: World champion Heryanto Arbi sweated his way to a 15-6, 12-15, 18-17 victory over South Korea's Lee Kwang-Jin on Friday in quarter-final action at the star-studded Malaysian Open badminton championships, reports Reuter.

Ardy Wiranata and Olympic champion Allan Budi Kusuma also won as the talented Indonesian men booked three of the four slots in today's semifinals.

Arbi needed 71 minutes to overcome the stubborn Korean and now faces Kusuma for a place in the final. Wiranata takes on second-seeded South Korean Park Sung-Woo in the other semifinal.

Arbi again complained of the heat at the indoor stadium in Kuala Lumpur.

"I've had two tough matches now and it's going to be difficult to beat Allan," said Arbi who just survived a three-set victory against Malaysia's talented Ong Ewe Hock on Thursday night.

"My leg muscles feel sore and unless I recover fully, I don't think I have a chance of beating Allan," he added.

Kusuma beat Arbi the last time they played, in the semifinals of the World Grand Prix in Bangkok last year.

Kusuma said: "I think Heryanto must be feeling tired now. He's the better player, but fitness will count."

In the women's event, defending champion Susi Susanti of Indonesia, steamrollered South Korea's Ra Kyung-Min 11-4 11-2.

"I'm playing well, but the tournament is not over. It's going to get more difficult and I will face my true test against Lim Saoqing," Susanti said.

Sweden's Xiaoxing, the reigning All-England champion, takes on Olympic champion Susanti in one semifinal, while the other is between world champion Ye Zhaoying of China and top seed Bang Soo-Hyun of South Korea.

McRae leads in Indonesia

555 Subaru world rally team driver Colin McRae came back from a shaky start in the 1995 rally of Indonesia to finish the first day 11 seconds ahead of his nearest rival, Kenneth Eriksson, says a press release yesterday.

28-year-old McRae broke a drive shaft on his powerful Subaru Impreza 555 car during the second time stage of the 27-stage event — threatening to put him and co-driver Derek Ringer



out of the rally altogether. But the pair struggled to the finish, where mechanics sweated in blistering heat to repair the problem in time for the start of Stage Three.

The problem, combined with McRae's lack of experience on the Indonesian event, meant that he trailed Possum by a full 25 seconds by the end of the four morning stages. However, after lunch he drove superbly — recording the fastest time in all four afternoon stages. Possum was not so fortunate.

After leading from the rally from the start, he landed heavily after a jump on the 31km Stage Six breaking the front, left-hand suspension strut. With 10km of the stage remaining, Possum could do no more than limp to the finish, losing more than 75 minutes to Colin and dropping to 10th place.

China's Lu Ning Yun — also with the 555 world rally team — drove well, finishing the day in 26th place.

World junior v'ball results

KUALA LUMPUR, July 8: Brazil, Poland and the Netherlands won their first-round matches on the opening day of the eighth men's world junior volleyball championships which began in the southern city of Johore Baharu Saturday, reports AP.

Sixteen nations are participating in the meet, which ends July 16. They are divided into four groups and the winners of each group will go into the quarterfinals.

Defending champion Brazil defeated Puerto Rico 15-5, 15-2, 15-8 in 65 minutes in the Group C match.

In a Group A match Poland defeated Malaysia 15-10, 15-3, 15-0 while in Group D the Netherlands beat India 15-11, 13-15, 15-10, 15-13, according to the national news agency, Bernama.

The Group B match between Cuba and Venezuela was not held because the Cuban team failed to show up. It may be held later if the Cubans arrive, organizers said.

Puerto Rican chief coach Carlos Figueroa and captain Ricardo Soler were happy with their team's effort despite the defeat.

"We arrived here at 8 pm last night and after a long journey it is not right to blame the players for the defeat. If we had arrived here two days ago the story would be different," Figueroa said.

Colombia, Peru split points

RIVERA, Uruguay, July 8: Colombia struggled to a 1-1 draw against Peru in their opening Group B Copa America match here on Friday night, reports AP.

It was not until the 67th minute that they managed to break the deadlock when their World Cup star Faustino Asprilla found the net with a blistering shot.

1995 WIMBLEDON FINAL PLAYER STATS

	No 2 Pete Sampras-USA	No 3 Boris Becker-GER
Birthplace	Washington, DC, USA	Leimen, Germany
Birthdate	12 August 1971	22 November 1967
Age	23	27
Residence	Tampa, FL, USA	Leimen, Germany
Height	6'1" 1.85	6'3" 1.90
Weight	170 77	187 85
Plays	Right	Right
'95 Prize Money	832,900	681,000
Career Prize Money	17,277,762	16,400,037
'95 Match Record	36/9	32/10
'95 Grass Court Record	11/0	9/1
Career Grass Court Record	49/11	98/18
Career Grand Slam Singles Titles	5	5
'93/'94 WIM '90/'93 USA/'94 AUS		'85/'86/'89 WIM '89 USA, '91 AUS
Career Singles Titles	33	43
Grand Slam Final Record	5/2	5/3
'95 Grand Slam Record	12/2	8/2
'95 Wimbledon Record (Games)	136/94	133/96
'95 Wimbledon Record (Sets)	18/5	18/5
Career Five-Set Record	15/7	28/13
Total Length of Matches	12 Hrs 54 Mins	15 Hrs 34 Mins
Current Ranking	2	4
Highest Career Ranking	1	1
Ranking (12 April 1993)		(28 January 1991)
Coach	Tim Gullikson & Paul Annacone	Nick Bolletieri

Castro injured Bowe, Holyfield ready to rock

BUENOS AIRES, July 8: WBA world middleweight champion Jorge Castro of Argentina was slightly injured in a car crash in Patagonia that killed his sister-in-law, hospital officials said today, reports Reuter.

Castro, nicknamed "the train engine", suffered slight bruises to his face and head and two broken knuckles on his left hand when his car crashed into a pickup truck in his native province of Santa Cruz in southern Argentina.

WASHINGTON, July 8: Riddick Bowe and Evander Holyfield, who split 12-round decisions in world heavyweight title bouts, appear ready for a third matchup as both try to regain their place atop the boxing world, reports AP.

Promoters Dan Duva for Holyfield and Rock Newman for Bowe are close to a deal for a November fight that could bring each boxer a 10 million-dollar payoff.



A jubilant Pete Sampras celebrates his hard fought semifinal victory over the big-serving Croatian Goran Ivanisevic at the All-England tennis championships in Wimbledon on July 7. Second-seed Sampras won the thrilling five-setter 7-6 (9-7), 4-6, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3.

— AFP/UNB photo