

# An excellent Slam ender

**NEW YORK.** Sept 12: It was a final Grand Slam weekend that soared with emotion and excellence, played out brilliantly by the most compelling sets of rivals tennis has to offer, reports Reuter.

Seles and Graf, Agassi and Sampras — fabulous foursome that lifted the 1995 US open to wondrous heights.

One hundred and twenty-six matches in the men's draw and 126 matches in the women's draw in the end produced the finals everyone wanted to see.

Number one versus number two on the men's side. Co-world number ones among the women, forever linked by a knife-wielding lunatic.

And, incredibly, they did not disappoint.

The return of Monica Seles and the triumph of Steffi Graf, a saga so full of twists, turns and irony that it could easily fill a mini-series, delivered a fascinating final that somehow satisfied everyone.

A star was reborn as Seles, playing in her first major in nearly 32 months, hit the Grand Slam stage with all the subtlety of one of her two-fisted forehand drives accompanied by a blood-curdling shriek.

After 28 months in seclusion healing the physical and emotional wounds of a stabbing in the back by a deranged fan of Graf's, Seles was startlingly read. Loveable, larger, full of life, yet more mature and still the great player who dominated women's tennis before the unimaginable assault.

Embraced by an adoring, supportive public, Seles emerged as a hungry tiger on court. Starved so long of competition, her appetite for victory was plain, her stinging groundstrokes and serves fiercer than ever.

By the time the showdown came against Graf, after Seles

had played and won just 11 matches in her return, she actually appeared stronger than the German, who had lost only one match all year claiming the French Open and Wimbledon in the process.

Graf was 38-1 entering the final, but it was the German who seemed most vulnerable. A chronic bad back and a foot injury during the fortnight weakened Graf physically.

More importantly, her father's imprisonment in Germany on charges of tax evasion connected with his handling of her finances put

the weight of the world on her shoulders.

Graf prevailed in a gripping, tension-packed three-setter in which she converted just one break point but pulled out victory through a first-set tie-breaker during which Seles ran off at one point thinking she had won with an apparent ace.

Graf, winner of 18 Grand Slam titles, called it her greatest triumph. Later she broke down in tears when grilled about her chances of visiting or speaking to her father.

Seles' spectacular return was also triumphant.



STEFFI GRAF



MONICA SELES



PETE SAMPRAS



ANDRE AGASSI

# US Open sets new score

**NEW YORK.** Sept 12 (AP): Television ratings for the semifinals and finals of the US Open skyrocketed from last year, and the stadium and grandstand were sold out day and night for two weeks, continuing a trend of bustling business seen at all the Grand Slam tennis events.

Anyone at the US Open during the past two weeks could feel the buzz back in the game, thanks largely to the return of Monica Seles and the blossoming rivalry between Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi.

"People have stopped lamenting the fact that Jimmy Connors and John McEnroe are no longer playing," said Page Crossland, spokeswoman for the US Tennis Association. "Fans were cheering for Pete Sampras, 'boring old' Pete Sampras. And they're cheering for Michael Chang and Todd Martin and a whole new generation of players."

More fans than ever roared

the scene with grounds passes, and a new 23,000-seat stadium is under construction that should significantly boost attendance.

"Fans are coming out earlier and staying later," Crossland said, "and when we have the new stadium in 1997 it should be better than ever."

The Open provides most of the USA's 95 million dollars annual budget — up from 340,000 dollars at the start of Open tennis in 1968 — and it fuels a broad junior development programme.

Even if this year's US Open was devoid of truly great matches between top players performing at their best, it had Seles' giggles and grunts and Steffi Graf's tears and guts in a dramatic women's final, and enough good matches to woo millions of television viewers.

Beyond US borders, tennis is becoming ever more popular, especially in Asia. The Grand Slam events all drew record audiences this year in the worldwide broadcasts, purses rose on the men's and women's tours, and atten-

dance was at an all-time high.

And a new generation of players is emerging from all over the globe, none more promising than a giant Aussie teen nicknamed 'Sead', whose missiles had Sampras reeling in the second round. Mark Philippoussis is his name, speed is his game. At 18, the biggest problems he has are adding a little finesse to his power and getting people to pronounce and spell his name right.

Among promising US players, Justin Gimelstob showed the potential to be a contender in future years, beating David Prinosil of Germany in the first round before losing to No 12 Richard Krajicek.

Martina Hingis, a 14-year-old sensation from Switzerland, showed improvement in getting to the fourth round before falling to Gabriela Sabatini. And waiting in the wings are other teens like Venus Williams and her talented younger sister, Serena, whose parents have not yet let them play the major tournaments.

# Bartova better than own mark

**SALGOTARJAN, Hungary.** Sept 12: Daniela Bartova of the Czech Republic set a world record in the women's pole vault of 4.22 metres on Monday, the official MTI news agency said, reports Reuter.

She improved on her own record of 4.21 metres set on August 22 in Linz, Australia.

The 21-year-old Czech cleared the height on her first attempt before about 3,000 spectators at an international athletics gala in Salgotarjan, a northern Hungarian mining town.

Hungary's Zsuzsanna Szabo was a distant second with a height of 3.46 metres, with Linda Stanton of Britain, who cleared the same height with more failures, third.

Bartova has set nine world records in the event this year, starting with 4.10 metres at a meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in May.

# Wilander recalled

**STOCKHOLM.** Sept 12: Veteran Mats Wilander was selected for Sweden's team that plays the Davis Cup semifinal against the United States on Sept 22-24, reports AP.

Davis Cup captain Calle Hageskog also named Stefan Edberg, Thomas Enqvist and Jonas Bjorkmarf.

Wilander's last Davis Cup appearance was against Italy in February 1990.

"It's great to be named for the team and though I don't reckon I'll be selected, I'll fight for a spot to play one of the singles," Wilander said late Monday.

"It is fun that Mats is back," Hageskog said.

The Swedes, who won the Davis Cup last year, are preparing for the semifinals in California.

The venue for the semifinals is Nevada, where world No 1 Andre Agassi is based.

The United States will be represented by the world's two top players — Agassi and Pete Sampras — as well as Todd Martin and Jonathan Stark.

# Chen's magic potion!

**BEIJING.** Sept 12: In the 1996 Olympics, China's divers may no longer suffer the effects of exhaustion caused by a tight schedule, thanks to obscure Tibetan herbs, according to a southern Chinese newspaper seen in Beijing on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Chen Yiming, chief coach of China's national diving team, is mixing up a fatigue-relief tonic with extracts from Tibetan herbs, Mguangzhou's Yangcheng evening news reported.

Chen plans to test his potion on divers in competition next May and to begin regular use at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, it said.

# Steffi sidelined

**BONN.** Sept 12: Steffi Graf, who added the 1996 US Open title to her collection at the weekend, has pulled out of this month's WTA tournament in Leipzig, citing injury, reports AFP.

Organisers of the event, which starts on September 25, did not give details of the injury. The German has had back problems for most of the year.

Czech player Jana Novotna, winner of last year's tournament, takes over as top seed, with France's Mary Pierce second seed and Bulgarian Magdalena Maleeva third.

# WTA rankings

**ST PETERSBURG, Florida.** Sept 12: Top 20 women's tennis players, according to computer rankings issued by the WTA tour Monday, reports Reuter.

1. Steffi Graf (Germany)
2. Monica Seles (US)
3. Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario (Spain)
4. Conchita Martinez (Spain)
5. Jana Novotna (Czech Republic)
6. Mary Pierce (France)
7. Kimiko Date (Japan)
8. Gabriela Sabatini (Argentina)
9. Magdalena Maleeva (Bulgaria)
10. Lindsay Davenport (US)
11. Anke Huber (Germany)
12. Mary Joe-Fernandez (US)
13. Natasha Zereva (Belarus)
14. Iva Majoli (Croatia)
15. Brenda Schultz-McCarthy (Netherlands)
16. Chanda Rubin (US)
17. Martina Hingis (Switzerland)
18. Amy Frazier (US)
19. Naoko Sawamatsu (Japan)
20. Helena Sukova (Czech Republic)
21. Nathalie Tauziat (France)



FOR HER SKY SEEMS TO BE THE LIMIT: Czech pole vault ace Daniela Bartova soars over the bar to better her own world record by 0.1 metres at an athletics meeting in Salgotarjan, Hungary on Sept 11. Bartova cleared 4.22 metres. — AFP/UNB photo

# Brit clubs face tall orders

**LONDON.** Sept 12: Civil war, Banditry, Disease. That's the backdrop for Britain's top soccer clubs late Monday.

when they travel to remote parts of the former Soviet Union this week for the opening round of European Cup competition, reports AP.

Liverpool travel to the border of war-ravaged Chechnya to play Russian club Spartak Vladikavkaz in Tuesday's UEFA Cup first round, while Scotland's Celtic tread a careful path into Georgia's civil war to play Dynamo Batumi in the Cup Winners' Cup opener on Thursday.

Manchester United are also in soccer's wilderness, playing remote Rotor Volgograd in the UEFA Cup Tuesday, and Blackburn complete the British-Soviet connection visiting Spartak Moscow in the Champions' Cup first round Wednesday.

Vladikavkaz is situated in the North Ossetia region of Russia, 25 miles (40 kilometres) from the Chechnyan border and 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometres) south of Moscow.

North Ossetia itself is currently embroiled in an ethnic conflict with neighbouring Ingushetia and security has been tightened throughout the area, and local police, and even army units, have been put on high alert.

Security at Vladikavkaz airport and railway stations has been tightened, while local border guard and police units are patrolling the republic's major motorways, with 1,000 security guards deployed.

The Liverpool players may have found Old Trafford or Leeds threatening in the past but this is a real war zone.

"We are as prepared as we can be, but it's a bit of a journey into the unknown," Liverpool manager Roy Evans said. "The main thing is we go there and concentrate on the football. That doesn't change."

Vladikavkaz manager Valery Gazzaev concedes Liverpool will be more experienced team, but hopes the tense atmosphere and a packed 40,000 stadium full of passionate locals will give him the edge.

"I estimate our chances as 50-50," Gazzaev said. "The second-leg game in England will be decisive. But that does not mean that the final success is guaranteed to Liverpool."

Without the injured Ian Rush, Evans said Liverpool may be forced to go extra defensive to secure a difficult draw, leaving striker Stan Collymore alone at the front.

Celtic will be confronted with war and a diphtheria epidemic in Butami, a Black Sea resort six hours drive from Georgian capital Tbilisi.

The British Foreign office had warned Celtic of security worries, that bandits were carrying guns and of the fears of diphtheria. Celtic, and even their fanatical supporters, wanted the match moved to another country, but a UEFA delegation visited the country last week and approved its security.

Inconvenience is the greatest concern facing Manchester United after travelling to remote Volgograd.

The team left almost immediately after its 3-2 win over Everton on Saturday to avoid anticipated delays, and Ferguson is confident the early arrival is the best preparation.



Chelsea's Dennis Wise is delighted after netting the first goal against West Ham during their English premiership clash at Upton Park, London on Sept 11. Chelsea won 3-1. — AFP/UNB photo

# Tyson ends another trauma

**NEW JERSEY.** Sept 12: Former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson has reached a settlement agreement with a woman who accused him of sexual assault, his attorney said Tuesday, reports AP.

The settlement means Tyson would not have to interrupt his training in Las Vegas to appear in court Tuesday, when the civil trial was to begin.

His accuser, Phyllis Polaner, former publicist for Tyson's ex-wife, and Tyson's attorneys agreed on a settlement Monday night, said John Trombadore, his New Jersey attorney.

"The case is closed. Mike is in training for his next fight and is very focused on staying on track," Trombadore said.

Polaner filed the civil suit against Tyson on Aug. 17, 1990, accusing the boxer of sexually assaulting her, beating her and threatening to kill her at different times during 1988. Polaner was working for Tyson's then-wife, actress Robin Givens, at the time.

# Brazilians flock foreign all-star team

**TOKYO.** Sept 12: Brazilian defender Jorginho won the most votes from fans choosing the players for a Japan Professional Soccer League "dream match" between the J-League's foreign and Japanese stars, reports AP.

The JOMO Cup '95 match is scheduled Oct 10 at the National Stadium in downtown Tokyo.

Jorginho, who helped Brazil win last year's World Cup soccer final, collected 324,567 votes, the league said Tuesday. Fans helped select 15 foreign players from among the more than 50 on the 14 J-League teams.

Jorginho joined the Kashima Antlers this season and so far has scored seven goals in 34 games. The Antlers now stand seventh in the season's second stage.

Brazilian Leonardo of the Antlers had 315,770 votes. German Guido Buchwald of the Urawa Red Diamonds 306,232, and Brazilian Sidmar of the Shimizu S-Pulse 291,390.

# One more slot for Olympic hockey

**NEW DELHI.** Sept 12: Germany's victory in the European Championships has provided an additional slot for teams hoping to qualify for the men's hockey at next year's Atlanta Olympics, reports AP.

Germany, who won the European title last month, were already assured of an Olympic place as defending champions, which leaves the regional slot vacant for the 12 nation competition, hockey officials said here today.

Besides Germany, the other teams which have qualified for the Olympics are world champions Pakistan, the US hosts and regional champions South Korea (Asia), Argentina (Americas) and Australia (Oceania).

The African qualifier will be decided at the All-Africa Games in Harare this month in which South Africa, Kenya and Egypt are the main contenders.

# Spinners sink Leicester

**LONDON.** Sept 12: Spinners Phil Tufnell and John Emburey snatched a one-run victory for

title chasing Middlesex on Monday to set up a fascinating County Championship climax in the final round of matches, reports Reuter.

Slow leftarm Tufnell captured five for 100 and off spinner Emburey grabbed four for 81 as second-placed Middlesex narrowly beat Leicestershire at Uxbridge.

Middlesex had to win to keep their title hopes alive

after defending champions and leaders Warwickshire routed Derbyshire by 10 wickets at Edgbaston earlier in the day.

Warwickshire have 313 points and Middlesex are on 298 both having played 16 of their 17 games, and are now the only two countries who can lift the crown.

Third-placed Northamptonshire beat Worcestershire by five wickets at Northampton but are 27 points adrift of the leaders and cannot make up that deficit in their last match.

In the deciding four-day fixtures that start on Thursday Warwickshire travel to face Kent, next to bottom of the table, at Canterbury while Middlesex are also away, to ninth placed Somerset at Taunton.

Middlesex stayed in the hunt after contriving a definite result to a rain-hit game in which Leicestershire were set a target of 251 to win in a minimum of 60 overs.

With nine deliveries and one wicket remaining, the visitors required only two runs to secure victory.

However, pace bowler Alan Mullally swung Tufnell high on the leg side and Emburey ran in from deep mid-wicket to take the catch and see Middlesex home. Tufnell finished with a match haul of 10 for 202.

England batsman Mark Ramprakash earlier hammered his second century of the match and ninth of the season — 111 not out off 74 balls with 20 fours — to hurry

Middlesex to a declaration at 212 for two that set up the pulsating finish.

Warwickshire wasted little time in completing victory over Derbyshire whose continued collapse from their overnight 31 for three to 122 all out left the champions needing only four to win.

Off-spinner Neil Smith struck twice, captain Dermot Reeve seized three wickets in the space of six balls and South African fast bowler Allan Donald added two wickets to the three he took late on Saturday for a haul of five for 65.

Other players already contracted for the Classic include Yevgeny Kafelnikov, Michael Stich, Wayne Ferreira and Stefan Edberg.

The last place in the tournament will be filled by either Boris Becker, last year's winner Michael Chang or Australian Patrick Rafter.

# Courier to play in Kooyong Classic

**MELBOURNE.** Sept 12: US Open semifinalist Jim Courier will play in the Kooyong Classic, the lead-up event to the January 1996 Australian Open, organisers announced here today, reports AP.

Courier, who lost to eventual US Open champion Pete Sampras at Flushing Meadows, joins Sampras and world No 1 Agassi in the eight-man round-robin event, from January 10-13.

Other players already contracted for the Classic include Yevgeny Kafelnikov, Michael Stich, Wayne Ferreira and Stefan Edberg.

# Salem Open tennis from Oct 22

**BEIJING.** Sept 12: US tennis star Michael Chang, ranked fifth worldwide, will defend his title at the Salem Open in Beijing from October 16-22, the Xinhua news agency said Tuesday, reports AP.

Chang, who has won the last two Beijing tournaments, will face tough competition from compatriot Jim Courier, who defeated him last week in the quarter-finals of the US Open.

Courier, the world's number one in 1992, has moved up four places in the ATP rankings to 11th place after his semi-final defeat against Pete Sampras in New York.