

Silver Scherbo's solace

SABAE, Japan, Oct 8. Lilia Podkopayeva of Ukraine put together four flawless routines Sunday and won the women's individual all-around gold medal at the World Gymnastics Championships, reports AP.

A fall on landing off the balance beam by China's mighty mite, Mo Huilan, cost China a sweep of both golds after Li Xiaoshuang won the men's all-around in a swift-paced, high flying performance. Vitaly Scherbo of Ukraine, the 1993 world champion, placed second.

Podkopayeva, last year's sixth placer, scored 39.248, clinching Ukraine's first World Championships gold medal with a 9.799 on the vault. She also had 9.812 on the uneven bars, 9.787 on the balance beam and 9.850 in the floor exercises.

Mo, who had scored 39.499 in the team finals, lost 5 point for a sit-down landing after a flawless routine on the balance beam. She finished sixth with 38.754, including a 9.862 on the uneven bars.

Soon after that, Russia's Svetlana Chorkina scored 9.912 on the bars and finished second with 39.130.

Last year's silver medalist, Lavinia Milosovici of Romania's gold medal women's team, came through with a 9.737 on her final routine, on the balance beam, and edged teammate Simona Amanar for the bronze medal, 39.086 to 39.049. American national champion Dominique Moceanu was fifth at 38.886, and teammate Kerri Strug was seventh with 38.749.

American Shannon Miller, the 1993 and 1994 champion, came in with a foot injury she had ignored in helping the US team to a bronze medal Saturday. She managed only 12th place with 38.386.

In the men's final, Li, who earlier had led the Chinese men's team to its second straight world championship, scored 57.998 for his nation's first all-around title, well ahead of the 57.499 of Scherbo.

Scherbo, winner of six gold medals at the 1992 Olympics, needed 9.462 to take silver on his final event, the horizontal bar. He scored 9.12, bumping Russia's Evgeni Chabaev, on 57.248, into third place.

Scherbo won bronze last year, while Chabaev placed fifth.

Li 21, led by half a point going into his last event, the floor exercises, in which he won a 1992 Olympic gold medal, and cemented victory with a 9.612.

He also scored 9.700 on the pommel horse, 9.662 on the rings, 9.675 in the vault, 9.712 on the parallel bars and 9.637 on the horizontal bar with some one-arm acrobatics.

"I displayed the very best of myself," he said. "Every time I compete in Japan, I win gold medals, not one, but

VITALY SCHERBO

Italyan strongman Yuri Chechi had the best mark of the day, a 9.837 on the rings, and added 9.637 with some one-arm maneuvers on the horizontal bar. But he slipped to seventh with mistakes on the vault and in the

two or three."

Li won the individual all-around gold at last year's Asian Games in Hiroshima.

China had the two top placers after three of the six events, but Zhang Jinjing fell out of contention with an error on his next event, the pommel horse. He ended a eighth.

floor exercises.

Scherbo who has a record 12 gold medals in World Championships, scored 9.650 in the floor exercises 9.500 on the pommel horse, 9.375 on the rings, 9.562 in the vault and 9.700 on the parallel bars before his silver medal-clinching high bar.

At a rowdy news conference, Li said he thought Scherbo's biggest weakness as a gymnast was the rings.

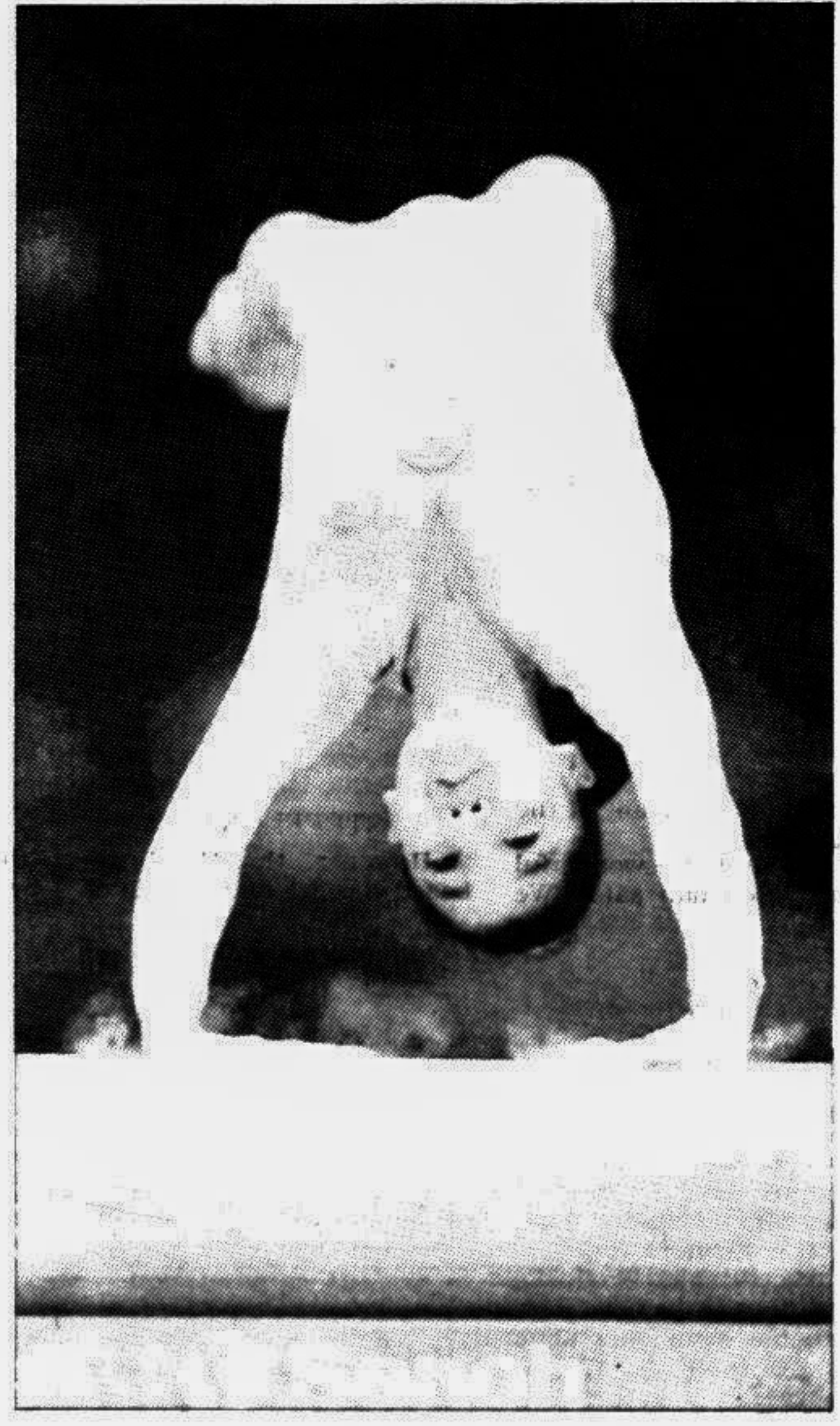
"I don't care about the rings," Scherbo replied, laughing.

Scherbo added that he did not think Li would have coped as well if he had been afflicted with the shoulder problems bothering Scherbo. He added that he plans to retire from major international competitions after next year's Olympics.

Russia's Alexei Voropaev, last year's silver medalist, placed fourth with 57.212. Germany's Valeri Belenki was fifth with 57.198 and Japan's Yoshiaki Hatakada sixth with 56.999.

Ivan Ivankov of Belarus, last year's champion but troubled recently by shoulder injuries, finished 18th with 56.300.

On the US team, Blaine Wilson placed 25th with 55.750. John Roethlisberger, who ranked eighth in qualifying, ended 30th at 55.300 and Jair Lynch was 31st at 55.262.



China's Mo Huilan displays her artistry on the vault during the World Gymnastics Championships Sabae, Japan on Oct 7.

Lewis mauls Morrison

ATLANTIC CITY, New Jersey, Oct 8: Lennox Lewis, known for his right-hand punching power, scored three of four knockdowns with his left hand and stopped Tommy Morrison in the sixth round of a heavyweight bout Saturday night at Convention Centre, reports AP.

The 30-year-old Lewis, a former WBC champion, was too strong for Morrison and dominated the bout from the outset, knocking Morrison down in the second, fifth and sixth rounds, cutting him over the right eye and under the left eye, and almost closing the right.

The end came when referee Mills lane stopped the bout at 1:22 of the sixth round after Morrison got up from the second knockdown of the round.

Lewis showed that he definitely is not just a one-handed fighter as he did tremendous damage with his left. He did score in the fifth round with a right uppercut, but the left was his big weapon on this night before a crowd of 8,369 fans.

Morrison, on the other hand, known for his left hook, threw few of them, landing several rights to the head and working well with both hands to the body.

"He was tough, very tough," said the 26-year-old Morrison. "Trying to fight guys like that with that reach is tough, especially with one eye. I'm not used to fighting with one eye."

The right eye was cut in the second round when Lewis landed a left hook to the head that also put Morrison down briefly. Lewis then worked on that eye with

suff left jabs and it was all but closed by the fifth round.

Morrison seemed to have an edge in the first round when he circled and got in a couple of jabs and got to the head. Then Lewis took charge in the second round and by the fourth it seemed to be just a question of when Lewis would finish it and not whether he would win.

Lewis hurt Morrison badly with a left hook and right hand early in the fifth round, and then knocked him down with a right uppercut at about 2:25 in the round. Morrison jumped up quickly from that knockdown, as he did from the two in the sixth.

A Lewis left jab scored the first knockdown early in the sixth and then a left hook produced the final knockdown.

"I was real relaxed out there," Lewis said. "I relied on my patience and a good jab. I was taking my time because I knew Tommy was getting tired."

It was Lewis third victory since he lost the WBC title when he was stopped in the second round by Oliver McCull Sept. 24, 1994, at Wembley, England. His record is 28-1 with 24 knockouts. Morrison lost for the first time in nine fights dating back two Oct. 29, 1993, when he was stopped in the first round by Michael Bentt.

Lewis earned 2.4 million dollars while Morrison made 2.1 million dollars.

Lewis gave his virtuoso performance with promoter Dino Duva promising the winner a crack at new WBC champion Frank Bruno, also of Britain.

"My priority is Frank Bruno," said Lewis. "Then the winner of Holyfield/Bowe."

said Lewis of the match-up between former champions set for November 4 in Las Vegas.

"I don't care who I fight, I just don't want any Mickey Mouse fights."

"I believe I have the superior jab in the division and during the first couple of rounds he handled it," said Lewis.

"But then after the third round it began getting in. I just realized that if I was patient and used my jab and combinations it wouldn't last long."

Morrison dismissed speculation of retirement. "A lot of people are very quick to count me out. I've only had two losses before tonight.



Champion Jeannie Longo (C) of France stands on the podium with compatriot Catherine Marsel (L) and Lithuania's Edita Pucinskaite after the medal ceremony of the women's individual road race at the World Cycling Championships in Duitama, Colombia on Oct 7.

Rameez retains captaincy

ISLAMABAD, Oct 8: Rameez Raja will lead a 14-member Pakistan squad at the upcoming three-nation tournament in Sharjah, reports AFP.

The squad also includes fast bowlers, Waqar Younis and Wasim Akram even though cricket officials said Saturday that Wasim would not be available for the competition.

The West Indies and Sri Lanka will also compete in the Sharjah tournament, scheduled to start Wednesday.

Mushtaq Mohammad will be tour manager while Majid Khan cricket manager.

SQUAD

Rameez Raja (capt), Salim Elahi, Saeed Anwar, Aamir Sohail, Inzamamul Haq, Basit Ali, Moin Khan, Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis, Aaqib Javed, Mushtaq Ahmed, Saqlain Mushtaq, Mohammad Akram and Zafar Iqbal.

Reserves: Aamir Hanif, Aamir Nazir, Wasim Yusuf, Nadeem Khan and Aatur Rehman.

Schultz recalled

JOHANNESBURG, Oct 8: Eastern Province fast bowler Brett Schultz has been called into the South African squad for the one-off Test against Zimbabwe in Harare starting Tuesday, reports Reuters.

Schultz comes into the side in place of Northern Transvaal paceman Fanie de Villiers who withdrew on Saturday because of a strained right hamstring.

De Villiers, though, will travel with the team because he may be fit for the two one-day internationals which follow the test.

A hairy mess!

ROME, Oct 8: Italian minor league soccer player Domenico Onofrio has been suspended for refusing to get his hair cut as ordered and then talking to the media about it, newspapers reported today, reports Reuters.

The Gazzetta Dello Sport said southern club Matera had ordered its long-haired players to get a cut.

When Onofrio turned up following the deadline with his hair as long as before, he was barred from training.

The 19-year-old player then got his hair cut but told the media about the incident, prompting the club to suspend him on Saturday and impose a press silence on other players.

Barcelona move atop

MADRID, Oct 8: Barcelona went top of the Spanish League on Saturday thanks to a splendid 5-1 win away to previously unbeaten Betis, reports Reuters.

The Catalans thus move one point above Alletico Madrid, but have played one match more.

It proved to be a far less difficult trip South than feared. Injuries to foreign stars Giga Popescu, Robert Prosinecki and Meho Kodro, as well as to his own son Jordi, forced Barcelona coach Johan Cruyff to field yet more youngsters from the club's talent-rich junior side. The kids came through the test with flying colours.

Longo bags second gold

DUITAMA, Colombia, Oct 8: Jeannie Longo of France won her second gold medal in three days with a victory in the 85.5-kilometre (53.1-mile) women's individual race in the World Cycling Championships, reports AP.



Diego Maradona leads Boca Juniors into the stadium amidst colourful celebrations in Buenos Aires on October 7. — AFP/UNB photo

Diego ends dark odyssey

Buenos Aires, Oct 8: An outstanding Diego Maradona returned to professional soccer Saturday and his old team Boca Juniors returned to winning ways with an 11th hour goal that defeated Colon 1-0, report agencies.

The goal came just as restless fans began to jeer, despite their idol's blistering efforts, in frustration at Boca's four consecutive draws and the prospect of a fifth.

Dario Scotti scored the winner with a header from a cross in the last minute of play, after a relentless attack driven by Maradona, leaving Boca four points from the top of the league.

Maradona, 34, made an impressive comeback last week in an unofficial friendly against South Korea.

Maradona came to life after a sluggish first half in which he was yellow-carded and helped pile on the pressure against Colon, at times beating his opponents with ease.

After the match Maradona, the driving force behind his disappointing teammates, ran off the pitch to embrace his wife and young daughters,

who were watching on the sidelines.

"This was the most exciting day of my life," he said at a news conference. "I felt the pressure a bit in the first half and the opposition took advantage of the fact that we were a bit jaded after all the celebrations this week."

"But thank God we managed to snatch victory and give the crowd something to shout about," he added.

Although he enjoyed less space and was more tightly-marked against Colon, he showed several glimpses of his old magic, delighting a capacity home crowd.

But the comeback almost ended on a "bad" note when Maradona pushed an opponent during a brawl among a dozen players in a first half in which many of his passes went astray. Maradona escaped with a yellow card.

Colon striker Julio Toresani, who was pushed by Maradona and then sent off, accused the stocky midfielder of intimidating referees.

"Diego influenced the referee's decision and if he wants a fight, he's got one. It's a shame I couldn't do the dope test because I had a few words to say to him,"

Toresani said.

Maradona spent much of the match hotly criticising many of the referee's decisions and admitted after the match he was unjustified: "I must say I made his life difficult because I was always appealing for non-existent fouls," he joked.

In an explosive second half, Maradona kept the team's chances alive with several fine passes, but his colleagues failed to respond and spurned clear opportunities.

The stadium was a festa before the match, with thousands of club flags draped in the stands with the blue and yellow colours of Boca.

The pitch was covered with paper thrown to greet Maradona, who in both comeback matches sported a yellow streak in his hair to match his shirt.

Maradona's return was the fourth of his scandal-stricken career, which seemed over after the star received a 15-month ban for drug use at the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

Club officials said Maradona had been chosen to undergo a mandatory drug test along with three other players after the match.

Pierce, Majoli in final

ZURICH, Oct 8: Second-seeded Mary Pierce of France and No 7 Iva Majoli of Croatia won straight-set victories Saturday to reach the final of the \$86,250 dollars European Indoors women's tennis tournament, reports AP.

Pierce defeated South African qualifier Mariana De Swardt 6-1, 6-4. Majoli ousted Chanda Rubin of the United States 7-6 (7-2), 6-0.

Philippoussis yet to make his mark

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 8: Fifth seed Marcelo Rios of Chile used his blistering returns to beat unseeded Australian Mark Philippoussis and claim his third title this year with a 7-6 (8-6), 6-2 final victory today at the \$14,250 dollars Salem Open, reports AP.

Rios, ranked No. 32 on the ATP Tour computer, refused to be intimidated by the 18-year-old Australian's performance in the past week, producing 91 aces during the title match at the National Badminton Stadium.

A stigma for lifetime

LOS ANGELES, Oct 8: The family of OJ Simpson's ex-wife has been receiving death threats by telephone since the football legend was acquitted of her murder earlier this week, a police spokesman said on Saturday, reports Reuters.

The family has received a number of malicious telephone calls. Lt Lynn Nehring of the Orange County Sheriff's department said.

The Brown family has been caring for Simpson's two children, Sydney, 9, and Justin, 7, since his arrest on double-murder charges on June 17 last year.

Also on Saturday, the lawyer for the family for murder victim Ron Goldman

said Simpson had been subpoenaed to give a deposition Oct 16 in a wrongful death civil suit against him.

"We expect Simpson to be in our conference room answering questions and there's going to be a lot of interesting questions about statements that were made," Robert Tourtelot, the Goldman family lawyer, told CNN.

Even though Simpson was acquitted Tuesday of criminal charges in June 12, 1994 murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman, he faces wrongful death lawsuits from both victims' families on the charges.

Around the home where the family of Nicole Brown Simpson lives in Dana Point, an ocean-side community south of Los Angeles, security has been heightened. KNBC television reported.

Nehring said the Sheriff's department was not part of that security. "We have had complaints about malicious phone calls to the home and we are investigating them, but as far as security is concerned, we are not a part of that picture," he said.

KNBC said Denise Brown, Nicole Simpson's elder sister, had reported to authorities that she and the murder victim's two younger sisters, Dominique and Tanya, had been the targets of the death threats.

The children under the Brown family's custody were reunited with their father earlier in the week in what Simpson's friend and lawyer Robert Kardashian called "a magical day."

After the visit with their father, the children were taken back to Dana Point. Their maternal grandmother, Judith Brown, has said she will not fight Simpson if he seeks to have his children back permanently, but a Brown family lawyer said during the week there was some question about whether Simpson could be a fit father.

The Brown family is currently the court-appointed guardians of the children.

Kardashian also said Simpson wanted to go on vacation. "He's got to get some peace. He's got to get his life back. I don't know where he could go," he said.

There has been speculation that Simpson might spend some time in Florida, where one of his defence attorneys, F Lee Bailey, recently bought a 1.7 million dollars hideaway.

At his Brentwood estate, where the media has established a second "Camp OJ" — similar to the one that was outside the downtown criminal courts building during the nine-month trial — complete with ladders to afford them a view inside the grounds, Simpson who spent more than 15 months in jail, is still a "prisoner," Kardashian said.

"He's enjoying freedom. He can't go anywhere. No question he's a prisoner. But his life has changed," he said.

TOULOUSE, France, Oct 8: Jim Courier avenged a defeat earlier in the year to Cedric Pioline by beating the Frenchman, 7-6 (7-2), 6-4, in the semifinals of the Toulouse Open Saturday, reports AP.

The top-seeded Courier, who won the Swiss Open last week, lost to Pioline at Wimbledon this year in the second round in straight sets.

Courier will meet France's Arnaud Boetsch in Sunday's final.

The fourth-seeded Boetsch rallied to defeat second-seeded Marc Rosset, 3-6, 7-6 (7-5), in a match that lasted almost 2 1/2 hours.

Courier's reprisal

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France to miss Ginola

CLAREFONTAINE, France, Oct 8: France's vital European Championship qualifier in Romania next week after he had to withdraw from Saturday's training because of a thigh strain, reports Reuters.

"It's very disappointing but I am forced to pull out of training. I have a pain in my right thigh," said Ginola. "I feel all right mentally, but I merely can't play."

Seiko Super tourney from today

TOKYO, Oct 8: Michael Chang and Goran Ivanisevic are on course for a repeat of last year's final at the one-million-dollar Seiko Super tennis tournament, starting on Monday, reports AP.

Ivanisevic won last year's final, but the Croat has not taken a title since then and form is on Chang's side this year.

The Chinese-American has won titles in Hong Kong and Atlanta and reached the French Open final.

Batistuta extends contract

FLORENCE, Oct 8: Argentine striker Gabriel Batistuta has extended his contract with Fiorentina through the year 2000, reports AP.

The 26-year-old Batistuta will get about 1.6 million dollars a year under the new contract, officials of the Fiorentina club reported Saturday.

Batistuta, who joined Fiorentina in 1991, was the Italian league's leading scorer last season. He has only one goal in five rounds this season.