

Sport

Crowe bids cricket adieu

HAMILTON. New Zealand. Jan 16: Martin Crowe, one of New Zealand's greatest batsmen, Tuesday announced his retirement from international cricket, reports AP.

Crowe, 33, has been troubled by a chronic knee injury for the past three years and has not been a regular member of the Kiwi squad.

Doig said Crowe's personal fitness adviser Bryce Hastings had confirmed the earlier opinion of surgeon Barry Tjetjens that the chronic ligament and residual joint irritation is such "that it will continue to severely hamper his further participation in sport of this nature."

New Zealand coach Glenn Turner said he was not surprised by Crowe's decision.

Wellington Cricket Association executive director Rodney Moore paid tribute to Crowe's professionalism.

"Martin set standards in a playing sense that puts him among the greatest, if not the greatest, of all New Zealand players," Moore said.

"The tragedy is that he would probably have been good enough to have played another five or six years at the top level."

Crowe played 77 Tests, scoring a New Zealand record 5,444 runs at an average of 45.36, and has recorded 17 centuries.

He played 247 first-class games for 19,608 runs at an average of 56.02 with 71 centuries. His highest score was 299 against Sri Lanka at Wellington in 1991.

Only two New Zealanders — Glenn Turner and John Wright — have scored more runs at first-class level.

Crowe hadn't played since aggravating the knee injury in the latter stages of New Zealand's tour of India last November.

Crowe had been keen to see out his international career by attending the forthcoming World Cup in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India, followed by New Zealand's tour to the West Indies, which starts in March.

He was unable to meet a deadline imposed on him by the national selectors to prove his fitness, prompting his decision.

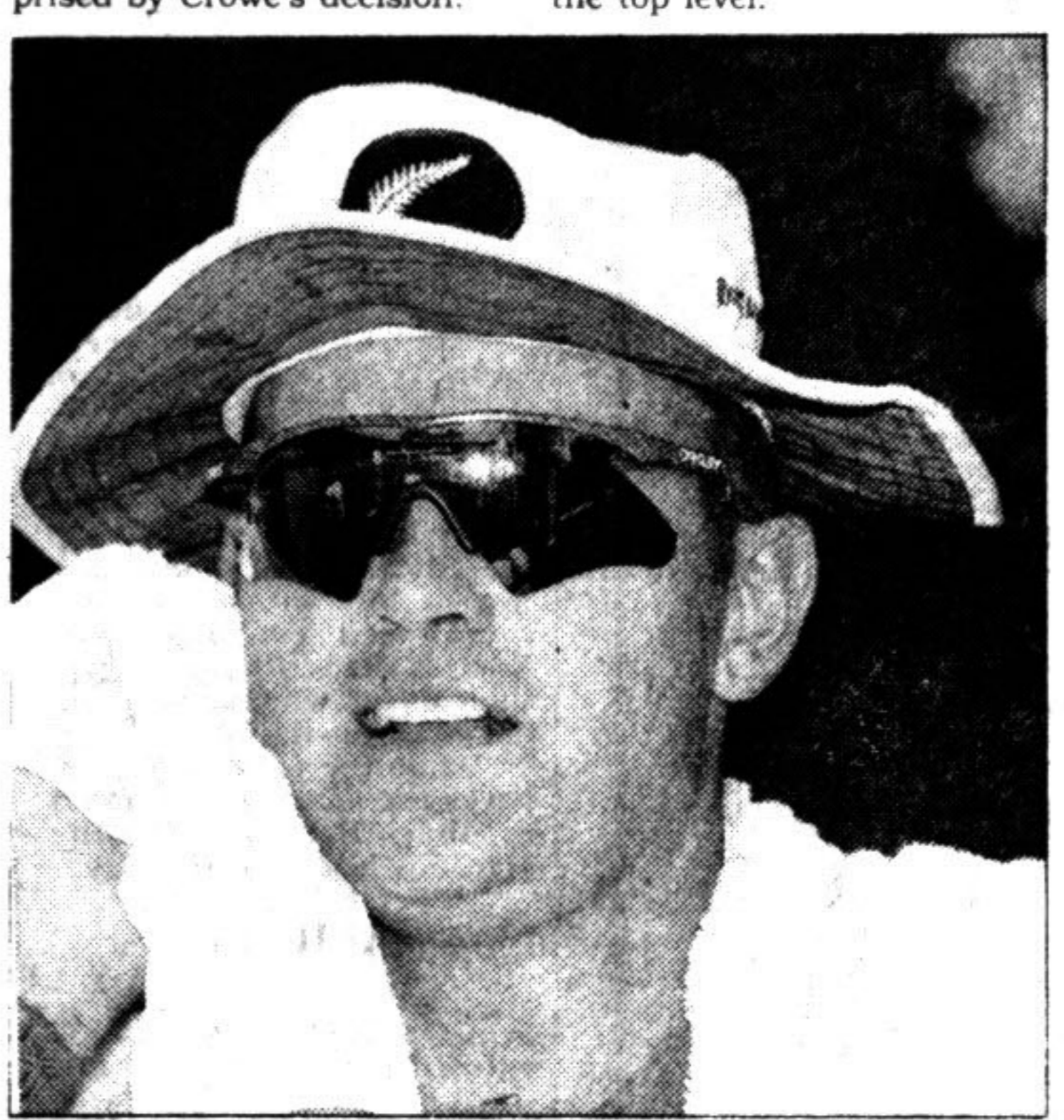
"I haven't been able to get it right in time for the (Shell) Trophy games, which rules me out of the World Cup," said Crowe.

"The pain hasn't settled — it's a big disappointment."

Crowe captained New Zealand to the semifinals of the World Cup in 1992, when he was named player of the tournament.

New Zealand Cricket chief executive Christopher Doig said that he realized after discussions with Crowe that the decision was appropriate both for the team and for Crowe himself.

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MARTIN CROWE

"After seeing him in India — after all the work he put in over the winter to get back to top level fitness — it was apparent he had real problems," Turner said.

After a big performance he wasn't able to come back for four or five days. I'm not surprised it's finally taken its toll on him.

"For the past couple of years he's struggled with his fitness and we haven't seen the best of him in that time; we've only seen glimpses of what he's capable of."

Crowe leaves the game holding most New Zealand domestic and international batting records, and he shares the world record for highest test partnership of 467 runs with Andrew Jones, achieved when he scored his career-best 299 against Sri Lanka.

Turner said his World Cup plans hadn't hinged on Crowe being available.

"You always want your best players available, but we have to more on now," he said.

Hamilton Test nicely set

HAMILTON, New Zealand. Jan 16: New Zealand extended their lead to 163 by the close of play of the fourth day of the first cricket Test today, reports Retur.

At stumps, New Zealand were 129 for four in their second innings having earlier dismissed Zimbabwe for 196. New Zealand scored 230 for eight wickets declared in the first innings of the rain-affected Test.

Adam Parore, 23, and Chris Cairns, 6, were the not out batsmen.

New Zealand made clear from the start of their second innings that they intended to score quickly to try to force a result.

They were 44 for one wicket at tea having lost opener Craig Spearman for 27, leg before wicket to Heath Streak.

Spearman was aggressive in his short innings, hitting Eddo Brandes for six over mid-wicket in the second over of the innings.

Streak, who took his 50th Test wicket in New Zealand's first innings, was again the pick of the bowlers, extracting pace and considerable movement from the pitch.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at the close of play on the fourth day of the first Test between New Zealand and Zimbabwe at Hamilton today:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 230 for eight wickets declared (Stephen Fleming 49; Heath Streak 46-52).

ZIMBABWE: First innings (overnight 82 for five wickets)

	O	M	R	W
G. Flower	24	7	56	4
S. Carlisle	17	5	51	1
A. Campbell	12	4	28	3
D. Houghton	5	1	14	0
A. Flower	16	5	44	2
G. Whittall	17	5	51	1
H. Streak	17	5	51	1
P. Strang	12	4	28	3
E. Brandes	5	1	14	0
H. Olunga	16	5	44	2
H. Olunga	16	5	44	2
H. Olunga	16	5	44	2
H. Olunga	16	5	44	2
H. Olunga	16	5	44	2

Extras: (lb-3, nb-6, w-2) Total 196

Fall of wickets: 1-8; 2-13; 3-21; 4-41; 5-56; 6-98; 7-189; 8-189; 9-191.

Bowling:

	O	M	R	W
Cairns	24	7	56	4
Allott	17	5	51	1
Kennedy	12	4	28	3
Twose	5	1	14	0
Patel	16	5	44	2

NEW ZEALAND: Second innings

C. Spearman lbw Streak 27

R. Twose run out 8

S. Fleming c A. Flower b P. Strang 21

A. Parore not out 23

N. Astle c Olunga b Strang 32

C. Cairns not out 6

Extras: (lb-4, nb-5, w-3) 12

Total (for four wickets) 129

Fall of wickets: 1-36; 2-63; 3-64; 4-121.

Bowling:

	O	M	R	W
Streak	13	2	37	1
Brandes	10	1	34	0
B. Strang	5	1	19	1
P. Strang	15	6	28	1
Flower	3	1	7	0

SL stage rousing rally

MELBOURNE. Jan 16: Sri Lanka booked their passage to the World Series Cup finals with only two balls to spare after a stunning contribution by opener Romesh Kaluwitharana to their thrilling three-wicket victory over Australia on Tuesday, reports

dramatically eased the pressure on the later batsmen.

His efforts completely overshadowed Australia all-rounder Steve Waugh's first century for his country in a limited overs international.

"This win is perhaps our finest moment in one-day cricket," Sri Lanka captain Arjuna Ranatunga told reporters against the back-

Cricket Ground today:

AUSTRALIA:

	O	M	R	W
M. Taylor	c	Kaluwitharana	b	32
Wickremasinghe	b	6	6	
M. Waugh	c	Mahanama	b	102
R. Ponting	c	Kaluwitharana	b	5
Wickremasinghe	b	102		
S. Waugh	not out	47		
S. Law	c	Ranatunga	b	43
Pushpakumara	b	7		
M. Bevan	not out			
Extras:	(nb-2, lb-3, w-2)			



S WAUGH ... 102 n.o

ground noise of a post-match dressing room party.

"It is really great to get to the finals," said Ranatunga, who praised Kaluwitharana's vital contribution.

Kaluwitharana was particularly savage on McGrath, whose 9.4 overs cost 76 runs, with the wicket of opener Sanath Jayasuriya as his only reward.

Kaluwitharana eventually fell with the total on 108 when he pulled a short ball from leg-spinner Shane Warne to mid-wicket, where Mark Waugh took a spectacular diving catch.

Earlier, Steve Waugh struck an unbeaten 102 from 116 balls, eclipsing his previous highest one-day international score of 86 against South Africa two years ago.

Australia qualified for the best-of-three finals, starting at the MCG on Thursday, with 10 points from their eight games, two points clear of Sri Lanka.

West Indies ended their dismal tour at the bottom of the table on six points.



R KALUWITHARANA ... 86

Man-of-the-match Kaluwitharana, thriving in his new role after being promoted from the middle order in the latter stages of the triangular competition, set up the victory by hitting 74 runs from 69 balls in a savage assault.

The victory booked the Sri Lankans a berth in the best-of-three games final series against hosts Australia at the expense of the West Indies.

Kaluwitharana went on the offensive from the first over, reaching his fifty in 32 balls, including seven fours, with a succession of drives and pull shots.

With his side facing a rate of almost five runs an over to win, Kaluwitharana's boldness

Total: (for four wickets, 50 overs) 242

Fall of wickets: 1-12; 2-28; 3-54; 4-156.

Bowling:

	O	M	R	W
Vaas	10	2	43	1
Pushpakumara	10	0	47	1
Wickremasinghe	8	0	33	2
Dharmasena	8	0	42	0
Jayasuriya	8	0	44	0
De Silva	6	0	30	0

SRI LANKA:

S. Jayasuriya c Healy b McGrath 3

R. Kaluwitharana c M. Waugh b Warne 74

Bowling:

	O	M	R	W	
A. Gurusinha	c	Healy	b	Raiffell	17
H. Tillakaratne	c	Healy	b	Warne	0
A. De Silva	lbw	b	Warne	45	
R. Mahanama	b	Waugh	b	31	
A. Ranatunga	run out	8			
K. Dharmasena	not out	24			
C. Vaas	not out	13			
Extras:	(lb-1, lb-18, w-2)	21			
Total:	(for seven wickets, 49.4 overs)	246			

Fall of wickets: 1-35; 2-96; 3-107; 4-108; 5-180; 6-196; 7-222.

Did not bat: P. Wickremasinghe, R. Pushpakumara

Bowling:

	O	M	R	W
McDermott	10	3	27	0
McGrath	9.4	0	76	1
Reiffell	10	1	36	1
M. Waugh	2	0	11	0
Warne	10	0	40	3
Bevan	2	0	9	1
Law	6	0	28	0

Result: Sri Lanka won by three wickets.

Loveridge doubtful for World Cup

HAMILTON, New Zealand. Jan 16: New Zealand leg-spinner Greg Loveridge is almost certain to miss the World Cup cricket tournament after an x-ray on his injured index finger revealed a fracture, reports AP.

Loveridge was hit on the hand by a delivery from Zimbabwe fast bowler Henry Olunga on Monday but an initial X-ray of the middle knuckle showed no break.

New Zealand coach Glenn Turner said Tuesday that Loveridge still was in pain and went for another X-ray of the top joint of his finger.

"It's a nasty fracture and he'll have an operation tomorrow to put a pin in it," Turner said.

"We don't know how long he will be out of action but it could be as many as six weeks. It doesn't look good and it looks like he's out of the World Cup."

Loveridge, who was "very much," part of Turner's World Cup plans, was making his Test debut in the first test against Zimbabwe.

The World Cup will be played in Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan from next month.

All-rounder Gavin Larsen was later Tuesday recalled to the New Zealand team for the second Test against Zimbabwe, which begins on Saturday in Auckland.

Bryan Young, who was in the original squad of 13 for the first test, was left out of the 12-man party.

Monica just too good for Lee

MELBOURNE. Jan 16: Joint world number one Monica Seles ignored the pain from a lingering groin strain today to extend her perfect record at the Australian Open with a typically ruthless first-round performance, reports Retur.

Seles, 22, a three-time winner at Flinders Park as a teenager, beat qualifier and fellow American Janet Lee 6-3, 6-0 in a one-sided Centre Court tussle lasting 46 minutes.

Seles, the number one seed, said she felt twinges of pain from an injury she sustained on her way to winning the Peters International title in Sydney on Sunday.

"There were a few times when I felt it a little bit but I tried to use a bit of mind over matter out there," Seles told reporters later.

"It was still sore when I had to move quickly for a few shots. It's not the greatest but I was just telling myself I can do it — to tough it out."

Seles said she restricted her movement at times to eliminate the risk of aggravating the muscle strain, adding "There were a few occasions when I felt a ball go rather than lunge at it."

"I still practise wearing some strapping and I am still having treatment twice a day."

Seles was playing her fourth tournament since returning to tennis following a 28-month absence after being stabbed by a crazed fan in April 1993.

Her victory took her record to 22-0 in Melbourne, where she won the last of her eight Grand Slam titles three years ago, three months before the stabbing in Hamburg.

Although Lee engaged Seles in a succession of lengthy rallies from the baseline, the tournament favourite gradually improved her timing and accuracy as the match progressed.

In the second round Seles will play Katerina Stutenkova of Slovakia, an opponent she has never faced before.

Date overwhelmed Mexico's Angelica Gavaldon 6-2, 6-0, while Majoli took marginally longer to overcome Russian Flana Makarova 6-4, 6-2.

Date was surprised by her margin of victory in her first game after hurting her hip in the Sydney tournament last week.

"I didn't think it was going to be that easy, but it turned out that way," she told reporters.

Pierce prances into Round 2

MELBOURNE. Jan 16: Defending champion Mary Pierce brushed aside Austrian Petra Schwarz in her Australian Open first round match here Tuesday, reports AP.

The fourth seeded Frenchwoman beat Schwarz, the world number 108, 6-3, 6-1 in the opening match of the night session on Centre Court.

Pierce downed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario in last year's final to become the first French woman to win a Grand Slam title since Francoise Durr at the 1967 French Open.

She will play Russian Elena Likhovtseva in the second round on Wednesday.

In 17 matches at Flinders Park, 21-year-old Pierce has lost only twice and only given up five sets.

Mushie: Matured, motivated

LAHORE. Jan 16: Mushtaq Ahmed has returned to Test cricket in prime form after a year in the wilderness — and attributes his revival partly to studying rival leg-spinner Shane Warne.

Mushtaq returned from Pakistan's recent tour of Australia and New Zealand with a haul of 28 wickets from three Tests to erase the memory of 12 months on the sidelines because of poor form and injury.

He played in the last two of three Tests against Australia and captured 18 wickets, one less than his more acclaimed counterpart Warne, who had to take a back seat as the little Pakistani spun his team to a 74-run win in the final Test at Sydney.

Mushtaq's match haul of nine for 186 salvaged a measure of pride for the beleaguered touring team after suffering heavy defeats in the first two Tests.

However, it was in the one-off Test against New Zealand at Christchurch where Mushtaq reached the pinnacle of his short international career with a 10-wicket match haul, including his best Test figures of seven for 56, as Pakistan triumphed by 161 runs.

With the World Cup approaching, nothing could be better for the defending champions than the form of the dapper Mushtaq, who is expected to play a crucial role on the slow and turning home pitches.

"Before the recent two-leg tours, Mushtaq had only 44 wickets from 18 Tests, but said he learned something valuable from his wrist-spinning rival Warne with who he dominated the series in Australia.

"Warne has more patience than me," Mushtaq says. "When I take a wicket I think I can bowl the whole side out, which is just not possible. You have to be persistent but not tense."

Mushtaq says he feels he was justly rewarded in his

last three Tests because he kept clam and composed.

"He is much more patient now and he is one of the best spinners around," said Pakistan captain Wasim Akram.

Mike Gatting's 1987 England touring team will not forget their first encounter with Mushtaq's accurate and deceptive flight.

Seeking respite from Leg-spin maestro Abdul Qadir, who was their tormentor with 30 wickets in the three-Test series, they travelled to Mushtaq's home town of Sahiwal, 70 kms south of the Punjab province capital Lahore, to play the Punjab Chief Minister's XI.



MUSHTAQ AHMED

Yet England found themselves up against the whiles of the emerging Mushtaq, who snapped up six for 81 in the first innings in his first representative game.

"Since my school days I have enjoyed copying the action of other players," he says.

"I've always been good at imitating people and I can bowl like almost anybody I want. One day while we were playing in the neighbourhood, I noticed that rolling the ball from hand to hand and licking my fingers like Qadir were becoming a natural part of my action. It began to feel right. From that point onwards I stopped experimenting."

Mushtaq was tipped by

Imran Khan as being not just Qadir's natural successor but one of the most exciting players on the international circuit.

After his success against England's touring side, Mushtaq picked up 16 wickets in four matches of the 1987-88 domestic season.

It was enough to earn him a place in the squad to go to Australia for the World Youth Cup in early 1988. Pakistan lost to Australia in the final, but Mushtaq reaffirmed his potential by taking 19 wickets in nine matches at just over 16 runs apiece.

A year later, playing against the Indian under-19 team in Pakistan, Mushtaq was the highest wicket-taker on either side with 26 victims in four matches. The Indians, no strangers to spin bowling, had real problems trying to read him.

Mushtaq played a significant role in Pakistan's 1992 World Cup triumph in Australia and New Zealand, taking 16 wickets in nine matches, and followed that with 15 wickets in the Test series in England the same year.

Recognising his talent, English county Somerset signed him on a three-year contract.

However, Mushtaq's fortunes dipped during the 1992-93 tours of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and West Indies. After initial success in the regional games, he had to pull out of the Caribbean tour because of back trouble.

The turning point of his career was the 1995 English season when he took 95 wickets at 29.69 in 17 matches for Somerset.

"County cricket provided me with an excellent opportunity to experiment with my variety and helped me a lot in polishing my skills," he said.

The sight of Mushtaq, Warne and India's Anil Kumble seeking to lure batsmen to destruction in their web of deception is one of the most fascinating prospects of the forthcoming World Cup.

Ashfaq's double delight

Sydney. Ashfaq Haque clinched double crown in The Daily Star badminton competition '96 when he won both the finals of the singles and doubles events at The Daily Star badminton court yesterday.

Playing under artificial lights in the chilly winter evening, Ashfaq, a sub-editor at the Sports Desk, defeated Anisur Rahman 15-11, 15-11 to win the singles title.

Cheered on by his colleagues at sports, Ashfaq dominated the game throughout mixing his powerful smashes with delicate touches at the net. Anis, a staff photographer, wailed under his opponent's delightful display.

Earlier, Ashfaq and fellow sub-editor Rumi Noman defeated Anis and his photographer partner Sk Enamul Huq 15-6, 15-12 to run away with the doubles trophy.

Managing Editor Tawfiq Aziz Khan distributed the trophies during a brief ceremony after the finals.

Talking to this correspondent, Ashfaq commented on his triumphs. "I am over the moon," he added. "I did it for my colleagues at the sports desk."

Becker had a close shave

By Tawfiq Aziz Khan

Boris Becker was at his wit's end against the Canadian-born Englishman Greg Rusedski in his first round match at Flinders Park Tuesday.

What started as an innocuous-looking first set in front of a full house in the

senses but lost his touch by then. He looked shattered and desperate in the fourth set as he shouted at himself for committing the most foolish errors. He had to summon all his energy and look towards his experience to bail him out of a desperate situation.

The 1991 Australian Open champion produced one of the best forms to break the 6 feet 3 inches Englishman twice in his service games and finally sealed the set a 6-3.

In the final set the number four seed brought out some of his old flames which he showed the world as a teenager in 1985 when he won the Wimbledon Championships.

Becker gave the spectators a run for their money.

Goran Ivanisevic was full of confidence as he took on unseeded Bernd Karbacher in his opening match. One could call it a cakewalk for the big serving Croat who has yet to win a Grand Slam title. Last year Ivanisevic played a 5-set thriller in the semifinal against the ultimate champion Pete Sampras at the Wimbledon and then unfortunately withdrew early from the US Open with ankle injury. He was definitely unlucky on both occasions.

Turned pro in 1988, Ivanisevic twice became runner-up at Wimbledon in 1992 & 1994 in his 7-year-career as

a professional.

True he was far superior to the little-known unseeded German, three years older than him, Bernd Karbacher rallied round in the second set eventually losing 6-