

## Wiranata's plight!

CHELSEHAM, England, Apr 4: Ardy Wiranata, silver medalist at the Barcelona Games in 1992 when badminton made its Olympic bow, has not qualified for Atlanta, although a player from Mauritius, ranked 179 places lower, will be there, reports Reuter.

Wiranata, one of the sport's great artists and entertainers and a former All England champion, is ranked world number seven.

But such is the strength of Indonesian badminton that he is rated only fourth in his own country. As only a maximum of three players from any one country are permitted, Wiranata misses out in favour of world champion Heryanto Arbi, world number one Joko Suprianto and Olympic champion Allan Budi Kusuma.

The full list of qualifiers, based on the latest world rankings, was released on Wednesday by the International Badminton Federation (IBF).

Referring to Wiranata, a spokeswoman said: "Being part of the world's most successful badminton country does have its drawbacks."

Ironically, as each continent must supply at least one player, world ranked 186 Eddy Clarisse of Mauritius, will be in Atlanta, fulfilling the African requirement.

Compatriot Martine de Souza, ranked 149 among the women, will also make the trip, pitched against such as world champion Ye Zhaoying of China and titleholder Susi Susanti of Indonesia.

The mixed doubles, being staged for the first time, features South Korean doubles specialist Park Joo-Bong, who has come out of retirement to try to add gold to the men's doubles title he won in Barcelona.

## Krajicek's no to Atlanta

THE HAGUE, Apr 4: Dutch tennis star Richard Krajicek has become the latest player to refuse to play in the Atlanta Olympics, reports AFP.

Instead the 24-year-old has decided to compete in the Los Angeles Open, where he reached the semi-final's last year.

World number one Thomas Muster of Austria, American Michael Chang, Sweden's Stefan Edberg and Chile's Marcelo Rios have already turned down the chance to compete in the Olympics.

Dutch Olympic delegation head Andre Bolhuis said on Wednesday that Krajicek, who had already been selected, was the first person to pull out of a Dutch Olympic team.

"It's his choice, but it's a shame. He is not motivated by the Olympic spirit," said Bolhuis.

## Opinion

# Change the WC format



The World Cup 1996 fixture was prepared in such a way that there were two groups, A and B. Regarding the overall performance there was a big debate about which group was the stronger. The general view was that Group B was much stronger than Group A. But, unfortunately none of the teams could qualify for the second round from the Group B. Therefore, the judgement of cricket fans was incorrect.

The fixture and the playing conditions are to blame for this. Therefore, the next World Cup should follow the Australia format of 1992. In that way the Champion of the World Cup will actually be the best team amongst the participating nations. In the World Championship the participating teams should play each other. The team which will win most of the matches would be declared the World Champion. There will be no argument about the best team of the tournament as they would have won by playing against all the participating teams. This will also test the strength of each team against all the other participating nations.

It would be a matter of great satisfaction for the win-

ning team as they would have proved their superior skills against all comers.

The next World Cup, therefore, should be played on a league basis and the top two teams should play the final.

The World Cup of 1996 has left the supporters of this sub-continent with a heavy heart



Tanvir Haider, former national cricketer

because for the first time a game of cricket, the semi-final at Calcutta, was abandoned due to crowd trouble. In the past there was no such incident. This is a great shame for India and it will be very difficult for this region to gain back the World Cup Tournament. It will also be remembered for a long

time that another nation, Sri Lanka, already having suffered because of the security reasons with Australia and West Indies refusing to play their first round matches. This was also a great blow to this region, where this game of cricket has got life and respect.

During the World Cup 1996, it has been observed that a high-value game can be decided by wrong means on the table rather than in the field. Teams of this region has shown a new trend of selling a match for huge amounts of money. The nation is host to a bunch of idiots who trade their nation for their personal benefits without respecting the sentiment of the nation. In various national dailies of Pakistan it has been alleged that their players have taken bribes and this has demolished the respect of the former world champions. In Calcutta, too, after the semi-final there were similar charges against India.

If this bribery thing has at all happened then there should be a law to punish such players and officials; so that no such unhappy incidents can take place in the next World Cup. Thereby, the cricket-loving fans can enjoy the game by being assured that cricket is being played in the ground and not on the table.

## Maradona's six-minute parody

BUENOS AIRES, Apr 4: For a fleeting six minutes, a heavily-protected Diego Maradona swapped his soccer boots for boxing gloves to fight former world flyweight champion Santos Laciar, reports AP.

Maradona, entering the ring Wednesday night dressed in a blue-and-yellow gown to match the colours of his team Boca Juniors, held his own for the scheduled three rounds with a little help from Laciar, who had promised not to hit the soccer idol in the head.

Maradona and Laciar spent much of the time laughing rather than fighting and few serious punches were traded, according to the Diarios Noticias news agency. The referee was Argentine comedian Miguel del Sol.

The lack of combat didn't impress some among a capacity crowd of 4,000 in the city of Cordoba, 710 kilometres north of Buenos Aires.

"It was a parody," one spectator said, who left the ringside after the first round. "In a serious fight, someone weighing as much as Maradona wouldn't have lasted a second."

It was not the first time the 35-year-old former Argentine captain had tried his hand at boxing.

During his preparation for the 1994 World Cup finals, from which he was expelled for drug abuse, Maradona often boxed against retired fighters in a Buenos Aires Gymnasium.

While playing for Italy's Napoli in the 1980s Maradona also fought against Junior light-middleweight champion Patrizio Oliva in an exhibition bout.

The fight was part of a celebration to mark the 15th anniversary of Laciar winning the world title against South Africa's Peter Mathebula in Johannesburg.

## All-star fund raising gala

PHOENIX, Apr 4: An international field of 450 swimmers, including the Olympic swim teams of Canada, Portugal and the United States, will warm up for the Atlanta Olympics with a fund-raising meet in Phoenix, reports AP.

The May 15-19 event, sponsored by Speedo, includes a golf tournament, dinner and auction.

"It's a Grand Prix meet," said a hopeful Gary Hall Jr., medal Wednesday. "There are going to be swimmers from around the world here. It's pretty much going to be top-of-the-line racing."

He said all 46 members of the US team would participate. Proceeds will help support the American Olympic effort and the race-training programme of the host Phoenix Swim Club.

The swimming events in Atlanta are all sold out, club director Bob Hubbard said. This meet will give Arizona a chance to cheer Gary Hall Jr. and see the entire US swim team.

Hall, who won the 50 metres freestyle, placed second in the 100-metre freestyle and won a third Olympic berth in a relay at the recent US Olympic Trials has begun a new training programme to build speed and power.

One new technique is "assisted training" that involves a tow rope.

"It's 50 metres long and it runs across the pool," Hall said. "You hook up this belt to your waist, and it pulls you at any given speed. Eventually you become familiar with that speed, and it becomes recreational in a race."

## Koeman calms down

ROTTERDAM, Apr 4: Former International captain Ronald Koeman, 33, has decided to play one more year for Dutch First Division side Feyenoord, reports Reuter.

Koeman, famous for his fierce free kicks, had been thinking of retiring at the end of this season because he was disappointed by the quality of the Rotterdam side.

But after talks with Feyenoord chairman Jorjen Van Den Herik Koeman is to play for a further year after promises that the club would be strengthened.

"Otherwise it would have been over in five, six weeks, that is a bit quick," Koeman told Dutch television.

## Lopez retains WBC crown

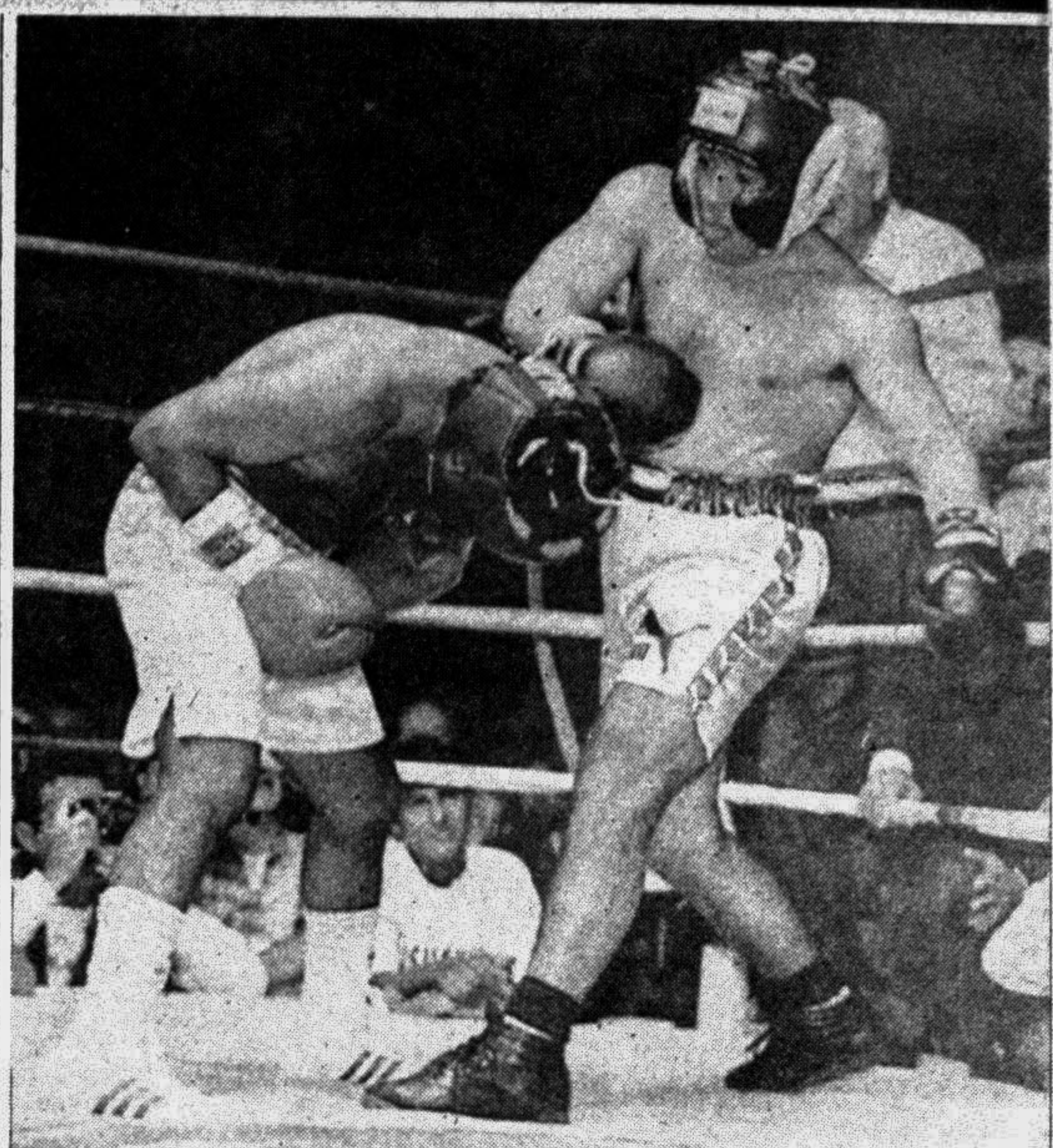
LAS VEGAS, Apr 4: Unbeaten Ricardo Lopez of Mexico, extended boxing's longest active world title reign here Saturday, by knocking out Filipino southpaw Ala Villamor to retain the World Boxing Council (WBC) strawweight crown, reports AFP.

Lopez, who has now won 41 pro contests, dropped the 25-year-old Villamor 40 seconds into the eighth round with a superlative left uppercut.

The victory ended an 11-month lay-off by the 28-year-old Lopez. It was his 15th successful defence of the crown he won by knocking out Japan's Hiroyuki Ohashi in Tokyo in 1990.

It was Villamor's second defeat against 29 wins and his first contest outside of Asia.

Lopez is now looking for a big-money showdown with new International Boxing Federation (IBF) junior-flyweight champion Michael Carbajal.



Diego Maradona has Santos Laciar at his mercy during their exhibition bout in Cordoba, Argentina on April 3.

— AFP/UNB photo

## Davis Cup quarterfinals

# Americans' tricky tie



LONDON, Apr 4: A US team again lacking Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi face a tougher time than they had in the opening round as they continue their defence of the Davis Cup title against the Czech Republic in Prague this weekend, reports Reuter.

The two stalwarts of the American success last year declined to be available because of scheduling and travel problems as they arrange their years around the battle for the world number one ranking.

Though the Americans whitewashed Mexico 5-0 without them in the first round in Carlsbad, California, this tie looks more testing.

Todd Martin spearheaded them in Carlsbad and will do so again in Prague, where he will open against Daniel Vacek on the fast supreme court at Prague's Sportovní Hala on Friday. Malivi Washington, a replacement for Michael Chang, will face Petr Korda in

the second singles.

The Czechs are looking to a fit-again Korda to provide the spark. He helped the Czechs sweep Hungary 5-0 in the first round, won the Qatar Open in January and stretched Chang to three sets last week in the fourth round of the Lipton Championships.

"The key to our team moving on is if Korda can beat Martin."

"He (Korda) is a player of the elite class and when he has an 'on' day, he can beat anyone," said Czech Tennis Association president and former Wimbledon champion Jan Kodeš.

In Saturday's doubles, Patrick McEnroe and Patrick Galbraith face Jiri Novak and Martin Damm.

US captain Tom Guzikson expressed full confidence in his team.

"We have come with the best team we could of the players who could come and we've come to play the best tennis we can," he said.

Boris Becker has pulled out of Germany's Davis Cup quarterfinal match against France in Limoges because of a virus.

Becker's withdrawal is a major blow to the German team which has already lost Michael Stich, forced to withdraw because of a foot operation.

David Prinosil and Hendrik Dreckman will play the singles instead of Becker and Stich.

The French are in good form, captain Yannick Noah was optimistic without being overconfident.

"The Germans beat Switzerland 5-0 in the first round without Stich and Becker," Noah said.

"But I think we have a good chance. I have a good feeling going into this match. I'm confident."

In Calcutta, 1994 champions Sweden will have to cope with increasing heat and humidity against an Indian side happier in the conditions.

"It is getting more humid and hot everyday. I wish it cools down from tomorrow," Swedish captain Carl-Axel Hageskog said on Thursday.

Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman will take on Leander Paes in the opening singles with Thomas Enqvist meeting Mahesh Bhupathi in the second on the grass courts at Calcutta's South Club.

The doubles will pit Paes and Bhupathi against Bjorkman and Nicklas Kulti.

Swedish captain Carl-Axel Hageskog, who has lost Mikael Tillstrom to a knee injury, liked the draw with Bjorkman playing in the first match.

"He will play each day so this will give him more rest," he said.

Feelings have been running high ahead of the tie, with Hageskog saying on Wednesday it could become "a hate match."

"The Indians have been really difficult. It feels like they want to muck us around on purpose," Hageskog was quoted as saying in the Swedish daily Svenska Dagbladet.

Paes' triumph over Jan Siemierink was crucial in India's 3-2 first round triumph over the Netherlands and his higher-ranked victims in past Davis Cups include Swiss Jakob Hlasek, Frenchmen Henri Leconte and Arnaud Boetsch and South African Wayne Ferreira.

"I am really happy that I am playing in my home town. I am looking forward to this tie," he said about meeting the Swedes.

## Gabby, Maleeva go down



HILTON HEAD, South Carolina, Apr 4: Fourth seeded Gabriela Sabatini and fifth seeded Magdalena Maleeva were upset in the second round of the 926,250 dollars Family Circle Cup tennis tournament on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Top seed Conchita Martinez of Spain, who won three clay court titles last year, had little trouble advancing with a 6-1, 6-2 victory over Silvia Farina of Italy.

Spain's Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, seeded second, was blown out in the first set, before rallying to beat 15-year-old Martina Hingis of Switzerland 0-6, 6-2, 6-2.

It appeared that Sabatini and Maleeva had difficulty adjusting from fast surfaces to the slower clay courts of this tournament.

Sabatini, still tired from her quarterfinal run at Key Biscayne, seemed to lose her concentration against a red-hot Irina Spirlea of Romania. Spirlea, ranked 23, defeated Sabatini 6-4, 6-2.

Maleeva, a finalist here last year, fell just short in a saw-saw, nearly two-hour slugfest with Barbara Paulus of Austria.

Paulus, finally healthy after three years of problems, squeaked out a 3-6, 7-6, (7-5), 6-4 victory.

Spirlea, also a Key Biscayne quarterfinalist, used her powerful game to perfection against Sabatini. Serving strongly and attacking at every opportunity, the 22-year-old Romanian forced her opponent into numerous mistakes.

"She seemed confused (with the fast surface), like I did, at the beginning," said Spirlea, who beat Sabatini at the Italian Open two years ago.

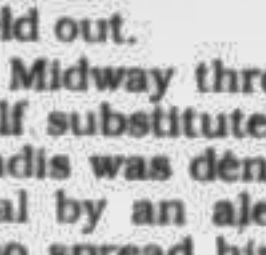
"I was trying to prevent her from playing lots of high balls to my backhand. I wanted to slice and come in at every chance," Spirlea said.

"In the last three years here, I can't win a round," said the sixth-ranked Sabatini, who won this tournament in 1991 and 1992. "It's funny, because I love to come here and I feel very comfortable. I was off today, and didn't do much with my game."

The lead changed hands often in the encounter between Maleeva and Paulus, 25, who missed most of the 1992-1994 seasons due to surgeries on both wrists, left ankle and left knee.

"I began well again in the third set, and was up 3-0, but then I lost 8 points in a row to make it 3-2. Then it was 3-3, 4-3, 4-4. Finally, it was 5-4 for me, and I served with new balls and won four points in a row. In the end, I won the important points," Paulus said.

## Panathinaikos draw first blood



UNDATED, Apr 4: A stunning display of individual brilliance by Polish striker Krzysztof Wryzcha broke the hearts of Ajax fans as Panathinaikos triumphed 1-0 in Amsterdam while Juventus inspired by veteran Gianluca Vialli blanked Nantes 2-0 in Turin in Champions League semifinal first leg fixtures on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Panathinaikos, the Greek champions, successfully suffered out wave after wave of Ajax attacks and stole a precious away win with a goal by Wryzcha four minutes from Time.

Mercurial winger Georgios Donis, reportedly watched by English Premier league leaders Manchester United, made a surging 30-metre solo run before splitting the Ajax defence.

Wryzcha lofted the ball over Edwin van der Sar for his sixth goal of the campaign, ending Ajax's record 19-game unbeaten run in Europe's premier competition.

The late win bore out Panathinaikos coach Juan Ramon Rocha's pre-match prophecy of a "rendezvous with history."

The defeat was the Amsterdam club's first in European competition since March 16, 1994, when they went down to Parma of Italy in the quarterfinals of the Cup Winners' Cup.

The Greek side are now in pole position to reach their first final for 25 years. They were beaten in the 1971 final at Wembley 2-0 by Ajax.

The Dutch league leaders, who have lost only once in six semifinals, created enough chances to have won comfortably, but Patrick Kluivert and Nwankwo Kanu were consistently off target.

Panathinaikos matched Ajax for endeavour and were well-organised at the back, inventive in midfield and fast on the break.

Ajax, back at full strength but for the injured Marc Overmars, began brightly, with Finn Jari Litmanen going close early on. But the Greek defence soon settled to their task.

With Donis threatening on the right and Argentine midfielder Juan Borelli teasing in the middle, the two sides were evenly matched, although the Dutch side had most of the possession and territorial advantage.

Kanu put the two best chances of the first half agonisingly wide of Jozef Wandzik's upright, while Finidi George and Ronald de Boer kept up a constant barrage of crosses. But the Panathinaikos defence

held out.

Midway through the second half substitute Georgios Georgiadis was denied a breakthrough by an alert van der Sar who spread himself to smother the low shot.

In the end it was fitting that the Greek side came away with the spoils from the last night of European soccer at Amsterdam's Olympic Stadium before its demolition.

Georgios Georgiadis was shown his second yellow card of the competition and will miss the return leg in two weeks.

Ajax skipper Danny Blind, playing his 400th game for the club, was philosophical in defeat.

"We tried everything but it was not on ... there it will be very difficult," he said.

Striker Gianluca Vialli scored his first European Cup goal of the season as Juventus beat 10-man Nantes of France 2-0 to stay on course for the final in Rome.

Nantes were reduced to 10 men on the stroke of halftime when midfielder Bruno Carotti was sent off for a second bookable offence. Defender Serge Le Dizet will also miss the home leg after picking up a second half booking.

Vialli, widely expected to leave the Turin team when his contract expires at the end of the season, broke the ice with a close-range glancing shot in

the 50th minute after Pietro Vierchowd fired the ball into the area.

Yugoslav midfielder Vladimir Jugovic made it 2-0 in the 66th minute with a powerful shot from the edge of the area. The match was former champions Juventus sixth European Cup semifinal but their first meeting with Nantes.

Juventus coach Marcello Lippi had warned his team, champions in 1985, not to underestimate the French newcomers.

His words seemed wise in a first half in which Juventus, missing suspended French midfielder Didier Deschamps and injured striker Fabrizio Ravanelli, had the upper hand but both teams had chances to score.

Nantes striker Nicolas Oudec, scorer of five goals in the competition so far, had a shot parried in the ninth minute while Juventus forward Michele Padovano was perfectly positioned in the 30th minute but headed over the bar.

Juventus captain Vialli had the best chance of the first half with a bicycle kick that would have been a spectacular goal had Dominique Casagrande not made an equally fine save.

Oudec had the ball in the back of the net in the 40th minute but the shot was ruled offside.

Carotti was then sent off for a foul on Padovano after picking up an earlier yellow card.

"He had to speed things up a bit by taking risks in the second half, and we got the goals," said Lippi, who started off with a determinedly attacking lineup by moving defender Gianluca Pesotto up into midfield.

"I had hoped for a third goal and we could have got it at the end," the coach added.

"Now our chances of going through are 51 per cent although the match at Nantes will be very different," he said, mindful of Milan's 3-0 UEFA Cup defeat at Bordeaux.

They played a very good first half. We started slowly and they had three very good defenders.

In the second half Lippi took off Vierchowd and brought on midfielder Giancarlo Marocchi for more firepower, substituting Angelo Di Livio for attacker Attilio Lombardo.

Nantes coach Jean-Claude Suaudeau was involved in a minor incident with Lippi after the match when he angered the Italian by seemingly refusing to shake his outstretched hand.

"We had a good first half but in the second there was not much 10 men could do against 11," he said. "The result was fair but we can make it up on the home leg."



DREAM GOAL: Panathinaikos' Polish international Krzysztof Wryzcha (L) placing the ball past Ajax custodian Edwin van der Sar to score a scintillating goal that won the Champions' League semifinal first leg encounter in favour of the Greek champions in Amsterdam on April 3.

— AFP/UNB photo

## The Daily Star PHILIPS

# Cricket World Cup Quiz '96

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