

Refs empowered to act

LONDON, June 8: Euro '96 referees are under orders from UEFA to crack down on violent play and send off players making dangerous tackles from behind or committing so-called professional fouls, reports Reuters.

UEFA media director Frits Ahlstrom said on Friday the 24 referees selected had been told during a special course in February in Seville, Spain, that they should follow the same tough line advocated by FIFA at the 1994 World Cup.

"But we have also told them they must use good sense. They have to be flexible as well. They should treat the players with respect but they have to be fair, consistent and strict," he said.

Ahlstrom said referees had been told they should show yellow cards to players who jump over perimeter fencing or remove their shirts in the excitement of celebrating a goal.

"We do this because this sort of action can cause problems among the crowd," he said. "But it's for the referee to judge the situation as he sees it."

Ahlstrom said the referees would officiate at one match each in the 24 to be played during the group stage of the competition, flying in on the day of the match from their home country and returning home the day afterwards.

"We wouldn't want them hanging around for 10 days getting bored," he said.

Each of the 24 will be accompanied by a team of three assistants from the same country — two linesmen and an assessor in the stand.

"Since Seville they have already been officiating as a team at important European Cup matches but they have not been allowed to referee at matches for international teams," said Ahlstrom.

The seven referees who officiate at the four quarter-finals, two semifinals and final will be chosen after the group games are over.

The decision will probably reflect their performance in their first match, said Ahlstrom.

Baggio's belated bravura

HONG KONG, June 8: Spurned Italian star-striker Roberto Baggio put on a wonderful display here Friday to show the Italian team what they will be missing in Euro '96, reports AFP.

Baggio and his AC Milan colleagues put seven goals past Hong Kong champions Instant-Dict without reply in the display that would have graced the game at the highest level.

Baggio, left out of the Italian squad for the European Championships, scored one and created two. But the real star of the night was 20-year-old Tomas Locatelli who scored four of the remaining six goals.

The coup de grace was supplied after 89 minutes by Riccardo Maspero.

Locatelli has just finished his national service and therefore had limited opportunities to play on the Milan team last season.

He said he would never forget this day after coming in as a substitute at half-time and scoring in the 51st, 66th, 74th and 81st minutes.

Nicola Cacciari opened the scoring in the 16th minute with a close-range shot after being set up by Gianluigi Lentini.

In the 26th minute, Baggio pounced after the Hong Kong goalie parried a long shot.

The teams went in at half-time 2-0.

Milan, Italian Serie A champion, were playing without world-footballer George Weah, sidelined with a knee injury.

Montenegrin playmaker Dejan Savicevic is undergoing tests for a heart problem and sweeper Franco Baresi was left out of the club's Asian tour due to sickness.

Earlier, Baggio scored one goal and created another in his team's 2-0 victory over the northern China side Changchun.

Milan began their tour of the Far East with a 3-2 defeat at the hands of South Korea.

Milan's players were on a goal difference bonus of 10,000 US dollars a goal.

JU football trials

Sports Reporter

Selection of the Jahangir Nagar University football team for the inter-university competition, to be staged at the Islamic University, will be held on June 14 and 15 at the university's central playground at 4 pm, says a press release.

Training will commence from June 16.

Dole's double standard

CHICAGO, Illinois, June 8: Republican presidential hopeful Robert Dole attended game two of the National Basketball Association finals here Friday, rooting for the home club he rooted against two weeks ago, reports AFP.

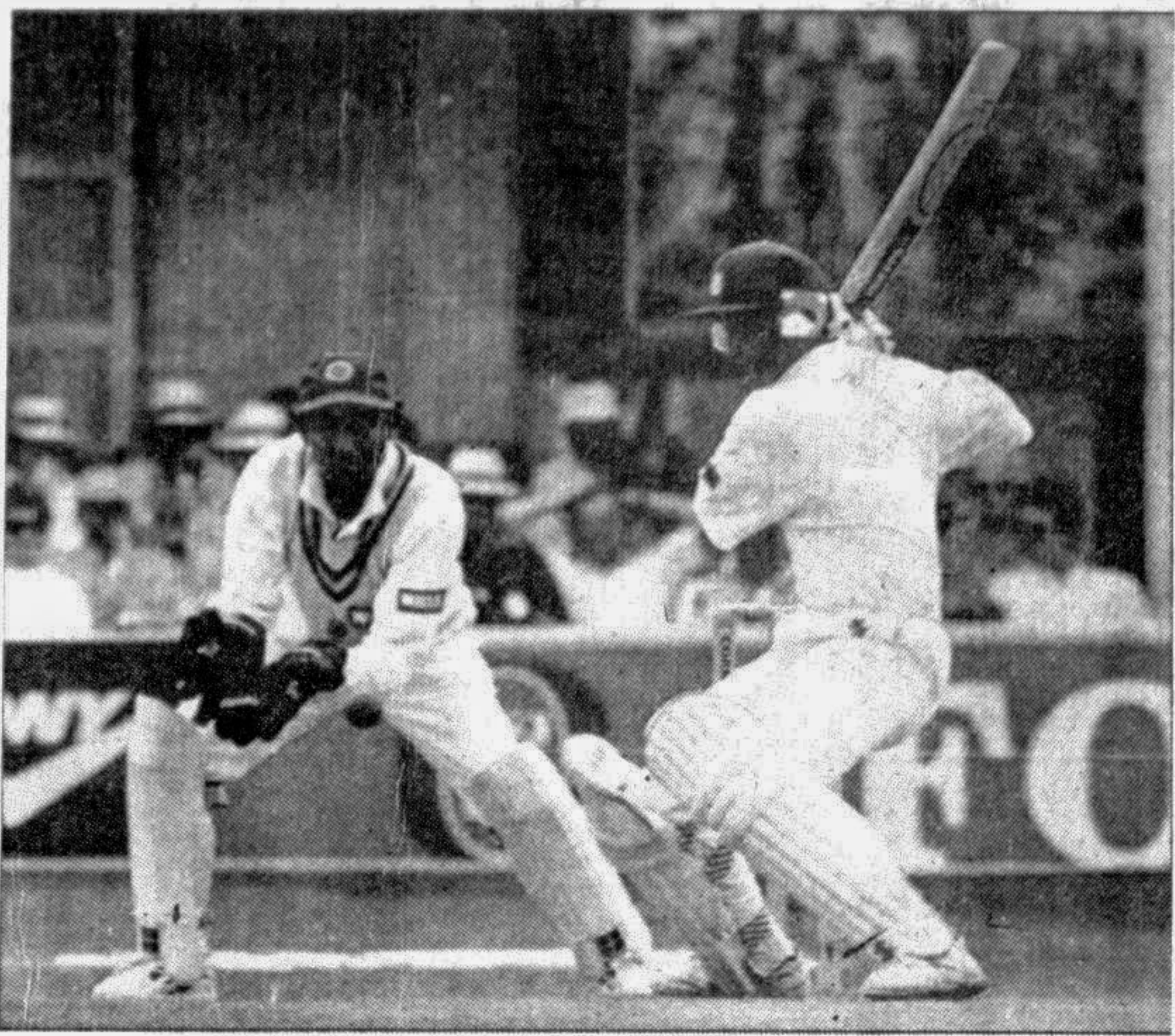
Some Chicago Bulls fans were unhappy at seeing Dole on television cheering for Orlando and against the Bulls in the NBA semifinals while he attended a game in Florida last month.

"I told him, he shouldn't be so partisan because people everywhere love their sports teams," said US representative Henry Hyde, a Republican from Illinois.

De la Hoya claims Chavez's crown

LAS VEGAS, June 8: Outside the ropes, Mexican Boxing legend Julio Cesar Chavez was and remains American Oscar de la Hoya's hero.

Inside the ropes on Friday, during their World Boxing Council super lightweight title fight, it was an entirely different story, reports AP.



England centurion Nasser Hussain plays a square cut during the first Test against India at Edgbaston on June 7. — AFP/UNB photo

Indians knocked off for 219 England set for victory

BIRMINGHAM, England, June 8: England, set a target of 121 to win by India, were 73 for one wicket in their second innings on the third day of the first Test at Edgbaston today, reports Reuters.

Scores: India 214 and 219, S. Tendulkar 122, England 313 and 73-1.

On Friday, Nasser Hussain survived some early scares to steer England to a 99-run first innings lead with his maiden Test century.

When bad light stopped play 15 overs early, India had reduced the deficit by five runs without losing a wicket.

Hussain overcame a nervous start when he could have been out three times but at the other end wickets fell at regular intervals before he became the last victim with his score on 128 and England's total on 313.

After resuming at 60 for nought, England started the day disastrously losing opener Nick Knight to the second ball of the day to Javagal Srinath.

The Indian seamer struck again shortly before lunch bowling Graham Thorpe for 21.

Earlier, Mike Atherton had added just two singles in 10 overs to his overnight score of 31 when he edged Paras Mhambrey to second slip.

The second session belonged to Test newcomer Venkatesh Prasad who bagged four wickets to leave the Test evenly poised at tea.

Prasad finished with 4-71 after dominating England's middle order, taking three wickets at a cost of four runs in only eight deliveries just before the tea break.

Soon after lunch Graeme Hick, on eight, attempted to hook Prasad but instead spooned a catch Mhambrey at long-leg.

All rounder Ronnie Irani scored a quickfire 34 before he gloved a short ball from Srinath to wicketkeeper Nayan Mongia.

Prasad then had England on the rocks at 205 for seven with two wickets in successive balls.

Jack Russell, having scratched around for 22 minutes and faced 14 balls, was bowled for a duck and then Chris Lewis edged a ball, again to Vikram Rathore at second slip.

Dominic Cork prevented a Prasad hat-trick, but on four he tried to drive a wide delivery from the seamer and was caught by Ajay Jadhava at third slip.

At 205 for eight, India looked like they might even steal a first innings lead, but with the assistance of debut-making tailenders Min Patel and Alan Mullally, who contributed to two 49-run stands, Hussain rode his early luck to bring up his hundred in 271 minutes. He struck a total of 18 fours and one six before finally falling to Srinath.

The Indian had been disappointed much earlier when Hussain, then on 14, appeared to glove a chance to Mongia down the leg side but Australian umpire Darrell Hair turned down the appeal.

Hussain, born in Madras, looked set for a bright future after making 71 against Australia at Trent Bridge three years ago.

But, after finishing that Ashes series in the doldrums, he has had to wait a long time for this moment of glory.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the second day of the first Test between India and England on Friday:

INDIA: First innings 214 (J Srinath 52; D Cork 4-61)

ENGLAND: First innings (overnight 60-0)

N Knight	c Mongia b Srinath	27
M Atherton	c Rathore	33
M Mhambrey	b Srinath	128
N Hussain	sub b Srinath	128
G Thorpe	b Srinath	21
G Hick	c Mhambrey b Prasad	8
R Irani	c Mongia b Srinath	34
J Russell	b Prasad	0
C Lewis	c Rathore b Prasad	0
D Cork	c Jadhava b Prasad	4
M Patel	lbw b Kumble	18
A Mullally	not out	14
Extras	(b-16, lb-3, nb-7)	26
Total	(90.2 overs)	313

Fall of wickets: 1-60: 2-72: 3-109: 4-149: 5-195: 6-205: 7-205: 8-215: 9-264

Bowling	O	M	R	W
Srinath	29.2	6	103	4
Prasad	27	8	71	4
Kumble	24	4	77	1
Mhambrey	10	0	43	1

INDIA: Second innings

V Rathore	not out	5
A Jadhava	not out	0
Extras		0
Total	(2.2 overs)	5

Bowling (to date)	O	M	R	W
Lewis	1.2	1	5	0
Cork	1	1	0	0

(Incomplete)

David's double delight

LONDON, June 8: New England coach David Lloyd had a double reason to celebrate on Friday after watching Nasser Hussain hit his maiden Test century and then hearing of his son Graham's record breaking double century for Lancashire against Essex in a county championship match, reports Reuters.

At Edgbaston, Hussain almost single handedly put England into a winning position with a knock of 128 as the home side took a 99-run first-innings lead over India in the first Test.

Later he learned of his son Graham's career-best 227 not out at Chelmsford. Lloyd rewrote his county's record-books by plundering 12 sixes, beating the previous best of 10 by Graeme Fowler against Leicestershire in 1983.

Lloyd junior also recorded the fastest century of the season so far, reaching three figures off just 70 balls. His second 100 came from 71 deliveries and by the close he had helped himself to 22 fours.

Lloyd's partner as Lancashire closed on 387 for three in reply to Essex's 509 was Steve Titchard, who was on 112 after an unbeaten fourth-wicket partnership of 332 runs — another Lancashire best.

An outstanding all-round performance by Michael

Vaughan enabled Yorkshire to take control of their match at Middlesbrough, where they lead Surrey by 344 runs with five second-innings wickets in hand.

The 21-year-old off-spinner claimed career-best bowling figures of four for 62 as Surrey were dismissed for 197 and then made a stylish 91 as Yorkshire reached 236 for five in their second innings.

All-rounder Matthew Fleming hit the seventh century of his career to put leaders Kent back in control against Leicestershire at Grace Road.

Fleming finished the third day on 111 not out having shared an unbroken opening stand of 185 with David Fulton (62 not out), a partnership that transformed the game after Leicestershire had gained a first-innings lead of 107.

Ben Smith was at the heart of Leicestershire's total of 431 with an unbeaten career-best 174 in a marathon innings lasting eight hours and 40 minutes.

Durham face an uphill battle at Hove after Ian Salisbury took six for 15 as the visitors were routed for 159.

Leg-spinner Salisbury had a spell of five for nought in 18 balls as Durham, replying to Sussex's mammoth 552 for eight declared, lost their last eight wickets for 40 runs and now enter the third day having to follow on 393 behind.



Russia's rising star Yevgeny Kafelnikov (R) shakes hands with American world No 1 Pete Sampras after their French Open semifinal encounter on June 7. Kafelnikov put pay to any hopes of Sampras claiming his maiden Grand Slam title on clay. — AFP/UNB photo

Hosts held in Euro '96 opener

Sports Reporter

England and Switzerland played out a 1-1 draw in the opening match of the European Football Championships at Wembley Stadium, according to a BBC sports bulletin monitored here last night.

England took an early lead through striker Alan Shearer. But the Swiss were handed an equaliser eight minutes from time when defender Stuart Pearce headed the ball in the dreaded zone.

Eusebio lauds Laudrup

SHEFFIELD, England, June 8: Eusebio, whose skills carried Portugal to the semifinals of the World Cup in England 30 years ago, said on Friday that the Laudrup brothers could wreck their attempts at a repeat performance in Euro '96, reports Reuters.

A bad result in their opening Group D match on Sunday against defending champions Denmark, whose side features Brian and Michael Laudrup, would seriously undermine confidence in Portugal's young team.

"The Laudrup brothers will make it very tough," said Eusebio, who is officially accompanying the squad. "The first game will be the most important. But if we do well in this game maybe we can do better than we did in 1966."

Portugal were beaten 2-1 in the 1966 semifinal by eventual winners England.

"I believe in this team because we have everything from Vitor Baia in goal to the last man," he said.

Portugal's last major international tournament was the 1986 World Cup when they were knocked out in the first round.

Eusebio said he enjoyed visiting England. "They never ask for my passport here but they do in Portugal," he said.

With a talented team that includes some foreign-based players and an impressive qualifying campaign behind them, Portugal are seen as dark horses at Euro '96.

Team sources said that there were no injury worries for Sunday's game. But coach Antonio Oliveira was struggling to find the most suitable striking partner for Joao Pinto in attack.

Although the team pass the ball around well in midfield, they are seen as lacking firepower.

FC Porto's Domingos de Oliveira, top scorer in the Portuguese Championship this year, and Sa Pinto of Sporting Lisbon are the most likely contenders to play alongside Joao Pinto.

Sampras sinks into despair

PARIS, June 8 (AP): Pete Sampras has had enough of the clay. He just wants some rest before returning to the friendly grass Wimbledon.

"I've decided to go home, put the racket up and not see a court for a while, especially a clay court," Sampras said after losing 7-6 (7-4), 6-0, 6-2 to Yevgeny Kafelnikov in Friday's French Open semifinals.

Sampras wilted in the 93-degree (34 C) heat against the Russian. He said he ran out of energy after playing three five-set matches, including victories against two-time champions Sergi Bruguera and Jim Courier.

"I just didn't have the spring in my legs that I had against Jim or Sergi," Sampras said. "I felt physically tired after some matches in the summer. But I think this is probably the worst I've felt."

Sampras also gave credit to Kafelnikov, who played a solid match to reach his first Grand Slam final. He'll face Michael Stich in Sunday's championship match.

"He's got a good shot of winning this thing," Sampras said. "He's a very talented guy."

Sampras said he was pulling out of the Queens Club tournament in London next week, the main grass-court tuneup for Wimbledon, where he's won the title for three straight years.

"I need some rest right now, mentally and physically, to get geared up to hopefully make it a four-set at Wimbledon," Sampras said. "That's what I've got to try to do here. Try to rebound as best I can."

Graf fetches the fifth

PARIS, June 8: Graf won the French Open singles title for a fifth time here on Saturday when she survived a major mid-match crisis to Beat her old rival Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain 6-3, 6-7 (4/7), 10/8 in the longest and one of the most thrilling finals in tournament history, report agencies.

Playing in front of 17,500 enthralled spectators, it took 40 games and 3hrs 3 minutes to separate the two players.

The previous longest final was in 1955 when Britain's Angela Mortimer needed 56 games to beat Dorothy Knodel of the United States.

Graf's forehead was setting up winners for forcing Sanchez-Vicario out of position to give short returns that Graf pounced up to pace the way in the 37-minute opening set.

Graf won the opening game as both struggled through five deuces and unforced errors before Graf won on a forehand.

She then had to climb back into the match when Sanchez-Vicario was serving for the title at 5-4 in the final set.

It was Graf's 27th win over the fourth-seeded Spaniard in 35 meetings.

Graf's 19 Grand Slam titles ties her for third on the all-time singles list with Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova. Helen Wills Moody has 19 and the women's singles leader is Margaret Smith Court with 24.

The German won three Grand Slam titles last year, beating Sanchez-Vicario at the French Open and Wimbledon and taking the US Open over Seles, who lost in the quarter-finals.

Sanchez-Vicario last year made it to three Grand Slam finals and reached No 1 early in 1995. But she lost in the Australian Open quarterfinals this year and has slipped to No 3.

Sanchez-Vicario, twice a winner here, defeated Graf in the 1989 final but was beaten by the world number-one in last year's final.

Graf's other French title wins came in 1987, 1988, 1993 and 1995. The showdown on the Roland Garros Centre Court, started under grey skies, survived a bout of drizzle, enjoyed sunshine and was finally threatened by new black clouds.



STEFFI GRAF ... the princess of German tennis clinched her 19th Grand Slam trophy yesterday.

A contest of contrasts

PARIS, June 8: Few would have bet on Michael Stich and Yevgeny Kafelnikov reaching the French Open final but the clash between the former Wimbledon champion and the rising Russian promises to be an exciting one, reports Reuters.

Neither has appeared on Centre Court in Paris for the final showdown before but the kind of form both have shown so far in the tournament should lead to a spectacular fight on Sunday.

Germany's Stich, the 15th seed, demolished Swiss 14th seed Marc Rosset 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 in the semifinals with an impressive display of attacking tennis that the best was still to come.

"My game is getting better and better," he said after becoming the first German to make it to the men's final since Henner Henkel won in 1937. "I just did everything the way I wanted and it worked."

Sixth seed Kafelnikov could have used that last quote to describe his impressive straight-sets victory over an exhausted Pete Sampras in the other semifinal.

The 22-year-old Russian, appearing in his second consecutive French Open semifinal, used the heavy artillery

which earned him the nickname "Kalashnikov" to beat an out-of-sorts Sampras 7-6, 6-0, 6-2 and advance to his first Grand Slam final.

"I don't think Pete was the same Pete as he usually is," said Kafelnikov, aware that the world number one had to survive three five-set battles in the earlier rounds.

"He was walking behind the baseline with his head down. This is not the way I wanted to win. I'm a little bit frustrated," Kafelnikov, the first player from the former Soviet Union to reach a Grand Slam final since Alex Metreveli at Wimbledon in 1973, did not sound worried at the prospect of having to face Stich in his brilliant best.

"I'm playing with lots of confidence," he said. "Since the start of the tournament my game has exploded. I don't know how my opponents feel on the other side of the net but I do feel strong."

Stich, who underwent ankle surgery last March, hesitated before deciding to come to the French Open as he thought he might not be fit enough.

But he has had a faultless run, knocking out holder Thomas Muster of Austria in the fourth round and playing arguably his best tennis since 1991.

He made his big break-

through that year, reaching the semifinals at the French Open and going on to win Wimbledon straight-sets victory over German Boris Becker.

Stich, 27, written off by many only a few months ago as gifted but far too erratic and often criticised for being arrogant, has found a new enthusiasm and is now surprisingly cool and relaxed.

"My last injury taught me a lot," he said. "I understood that my career could be over in just one second and that changed my attitude towards the game. Now I want to have fun, I just want to enjoy playing tennis."

Sunday's final should be marked by a classic opposition of styles between Kafelnikov's powerful baseline game and Stich's elegant serve-and-volley tennis.

Stich is playing better now than when he won Wimbledon. "I'm much more experienced now than I was in 1991," he said. "I'm more complete. I'm just a better player."

Kafelnikov said: "When I was 20 years old, everybody was saying I would be the number one some day but I was much too young then."

"I'm older and wiser now and I know there is still a lot of room for improving my game."

Clemente's clammy play

LEEDS, England, June 8: Spain's coach Javier Clemente is keeping his players guessing over his line-up for Sunday's European Championship Group B opener against Bulgaria, reports Reuters.

"I have as good a chance as anyone but I'm anxious to know if I'm in the team," Atletico Madrid midfielder Jose Luis Caminero said on Friday.

"Clemente tends to hold back his selection even from the players until a short time before the match," added Caminero who said the week he wanted to leave Atletico despite helping them with the Spanish title last month.

Caminero, a key member of Spain's 1994 World Cup side, was not included in what sources close to the squad have interpreted as the first team line-up in the past three practices.

But Caminero, asked whether his problems with Atletico were affecting his form and attitude for Euro '96, said, "That's already over. I'm not interested in anything except thinking about the national team."

Caminero rates Spain as one

of four favourites for the title, along with Germany, hosts England and France.

"There are several teams with good chances but no clear favourite," he said. "We can reach the final if we get that little quota of luck any team needs to become champions."

Those who criticise

There appears to be total unanimity on defence and attack, however, with Athletic Bilbao's Julen Guerrero as a deep-lying playmaker and Argentine-born Juan Pizzi as sole striker.

Pizzi said his transfer a week ago to Barcelona from Tenerife was a "wonderful present" but well-earned after years of hard work.

Should Brazilian-born Donato be preferred to Barcelona's Guillermo Amor in midfield there will be two naturalised Spaniards in the side.

Bagpipes banned

LONDON, June 8: Scottish fans have been banned from taking their bagpipes to Euro '96 matches because the musical instrument has been included on a list of offensive weapons, reports Reuters.

Anyone found carrying bagpipes to any match will have to leave them at stadium entrances or face a hefty fine. Other offensive weapons include knives, fireworks and gas canisters.

"Bagpipes have been included in the FIFA rules of offences and we have to stick to those rules," Euro '96 spokesman said on Saturday.