

Mixed bag on new rule

MACCLESFIELD, England, June 22 (Reuters): Germany captain Juergen Klinsmann believes the new sudden-death system in extra time at Euro '96 is a major boost to the game even though his boss Bert Vogts has called it "ridiculous and unfair."

For the first time at a major championship the team scoring first in extra time wins.

While Germany coach Vogts strongly believes officials should have kept the traditional 30-minute system, his best striker said on Friday that the change would make the game more attractive.

"I think it will make things more exciting. It's a good idea," the Bayern Munich forward said. "It certainly will make things interesting for the fans. They know that any second something could happen and one team will have won it."

Vogts' main opposition to the rule is that a team does not have the chance to rectify a mistake made in the first minutes of extra time which he said was against the concept of fair play.

"It's ridiculous," the German trainer complained on Thursday. "There is this talk of fair play. A player only has to make one mistake in the second minute of extra time and it's all over."

There seems to be a difference of opinion between strikers and defenders about whether the rule is positive. Certainly this was the case in the German camp as they prepared for Sunday's quarter-final with Croatia at Old Trafford.

Vogts, who played in West Germany's 1974 World Cup-winning team, was a defender. Klinsmann's clubmate Thomas Helmer, another defender, did not agree with his captain either.

The defender makes one mistake and that's it. It is very harsh on the losing team," Helmer said. "I am not necessarily a friend of all this."

If no team has scored what officials are calling the "golden goal" at the end of 30 minutes of extra time a penalty shoot-out will follow.

The rule seems to be aimed at reducing the number of penalty shoot-outs which are regarded as controversial. There was a great deal of disappointment when the 1994 World Cup final between Brazil and Italy was decided in the fashion.

Klinsmann said he did not think the rule would make extra time too tactical and boring with both teams worried that they might give away a goal.

"After 90 minutes the fitness is not as strong as during normal time. There is more space to exploit and there are more mistakes," Klinsmann said.

Atlanta welcomes the world

WASHINGTON, June 22: With millions of visitors expected to attend the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia, this summer, Spurgeon Richardson, president of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, told an international television audience May 30: "You will have a minimum amount of problems when you come to this city."

Taking questions from viewers in Madras, Kaduna, Yaounde, and Port Louis, Richardson said: "People from around the world will be coming here, many of them for the first time. They are going to love our city and they will want to come back many times in the upcoming years."

Richardson was joined in the discussion by Shirley Franklin, senior policy adviser of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. The programme was broadcast worldwide by the US Information Agency (USIA) Worldnet satellite film and television service.

Franklin noted that with 197 nations having accepted invitations to participate in the Atlanta Games.

Atlanta, often called the "Gateway to the South," has been a major transportation and commercial hub for the region. In addition, its large, diverse population has created a melange that makes the city an intellectual and cultural center for the South. The city is both the headquarters for the Martin Luther King Jr. Centre for Social Change and the Home of The Carter Centre, former President Jimmy Carter's conflict resolution institute.

Asked about the level of security during the games, Richardson said, "We feel that during the period of the Olympics, Atlanta will be the safest place on the earth."

The centre point of the Games will be a two-and-one-half kilometre area of downtown Atlanta called "The Olympic Ring." Within this complex, 16 of the Olympic sports will take place, making the Atlanta games one of the most compact in history, according to a promotional video shown during the interview.

The crowning achievement of Atlanta's new Olympic construction is the 83,000-seat stadium built to resemble an old-fashioned American baseball park from the turn of the century. All of the major track and field events will take place in stadium, as well as the games' opening and closing ceremonies.

None of the new structures built for the games are temporary. All of the athletic facilities, like dormitories used to house the 10,000 athletes, will be put to other uses after the Games are closed.

—source: USIS/News Network



England striker Alan Shearer (R) is tackled by Spain's Fernandez Abelardo during their Euro '96 quarterfinal encounter at Wembley Stadium yesterday.

—AFP/UNB photo

Wimbledon sick of speed



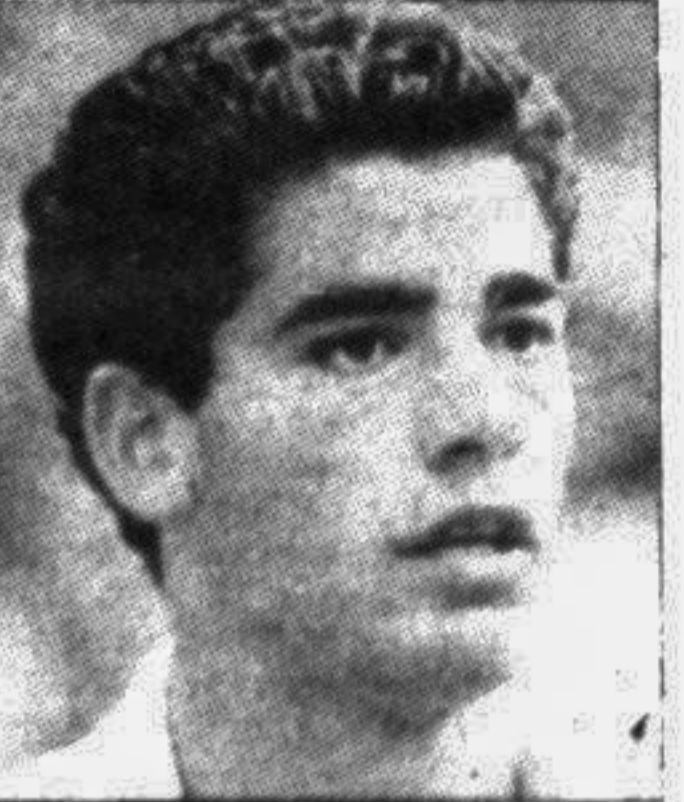
WIMBLEDON, June 22 (AP) The "Stop Sampras Movement" is raging at Wimbledon, where the grand poobahs of the All-England Club are reacting as if they were in the grip of mad ball disease.

Fear of boredom, personified by the prospect of Pete Sampras acting his way to a fourth straight Wimbledon title, is relegating the plain, old yellow balls into oblivion.

Softer balls last year did nothing to slow down the game, change the champions or cut down on aces, so now the poobahs have come up with a kind of Day-Glo yellow felt that might make the missiles a tad easier to track at 120-plus mph.

"New balls, please," the traditional call from the umpire, will be taken quite literally.

The basic idea is to inject more rallies into the grass game so players such as Sampras, who starts on Centre Court at 2 pm Monday, won't keep winning games like this—



PETE SAMPRAS

acc. serve-return-volley, service winner, ace.

The poobahs think that if the ball is visible a millisecond sooner, players will hit it back and forth more often. Maybe it will be so easy to spot that even an Englishman will be able to see it enough to win here for the first time since before World War II. Though probably not.

Nothing short of the most flagrant shenanigans is likely to keep the usual suspects from ruling Wimbledon again.

That means, among the men, Sampras, three-time champion Boris Becker, two-time finalist Goran Ivanisevic, former champions Michael

Stich and Andre Agassi, and the latest Grand Slam winner, French champ Yevgeny Kafelnikov. For a dangerous floater, there's Mark Philippoussis, who sometimes lives up to his nickname, Scud.

Among the women, there's defending champion and six-time winner Steffi Graf—and no one else—unless Martina Navratilova makes a last-minute comeback.

If Graf is healthy—she took last week off to recover from her latest ailment, a touch of tendinitis in the knee—don't expect anyone to beat her on Centre Court, even if they can see the balls better as they fly by.

Monica Seles, last seen here in the final against Graf four years ago, has three major problems—head, shoulder and belly—that are likely to thwart her bid for a first Wimbledon title.

Seles' once-unparalleled tenacity is less intimidating these days after all the starts and stops she's been through in her comeback from the stabbing three years ago. She's had a bum left shoulder since winning the Australian Open in January. And the weight she gained during her layoffs is slowing her down and throwing off her timing.

All that may not mean much for Seles most days against most players, but she's more vulnerable now in any given match.

Maybe this will be the year that Jana Novotna finally breaks her habit of choking and gets to cry happily on the Duchess of Kent's shoulder. Or maybe Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario will make the leap beyond the final she barely lost last year. Or perhaps Conchita Martinez will rediscover the magic of 1994. But, alas, it still looks like Graf.

The reason for the limited list of who can win the men's or women's trophy at Wimbledon is tied to their styles more than any special affinity they may have for Centre Court and the crowd.

Tennis evolved in the 1980s from finesse to brute power, and it is evolving again to a blend of both. The contenders for Grand Slam titles now, whether on hardcourts, clay or grass, are those players who can do it all—crush opponents with a serve-and-volley game stay back patiently and rally, flick drop shots and lobs, work their way shot by shot

through each point, and point by point through each match.

That's why it doesn't matter if the ball is a little softer or a little brighter. As long as it's the same for both players, the ones who are leading the evolution toward the ultimate all-court game are the ones who will triumph.

Sampras showed that when he outlasted Agassi in their spectacular 22-shot rally in the US Open final last year, a corner-to-corner, baseline-to-baseline duel that demonstrated Sampras' versatility as much as his endurance.

Becker showed the same balance of power and patience, winning from the baseline and the net as he took the Australian Open title in January. Kafelnikov did exactly the same thing in winning the French.

"One weapon is not going to be enough anymore," said Nick Bolleteri, the most prominent coach in tennis. "For a while, you could get by on grass with just a big serve, or you could win on clay with a strong baseline game. In to-



GORAN IVANISEVIC

day's game, you have to be able to do it all because so many of the players are bigger and stronger and the equipment makes the game much faster."

He likened pro tennis to the NBA, where the Chicago Bulls dominated this year because of their all-court attack.

"It wouldn't matter if the baskets were two inches higher or if they took some of the air out of the balls," Bolleteri said. "The Bulls would win because they do everything so well, and they can adjust to the situations. That's what the top players in tennis do. Changing the balls isn't going to make a difference."

Pete Sampras in his 7-6, 6-0, 6-2 semifinal victory in Paris impressed a lot of people. Even though Sampras seemed exhausted after five-set battles in three of his previous five matches, Kafelnikov displayed a lot of aggression in attacking the American's service throughout the match.

That positive approach will stand the sixth seed in good stead in a draw that begins against rising Briton Tim Henman and which could see a fourth-round clash with South African 11th seed Wayne Ferreira, an accomplished grass court player.

If he comes through his early challenges, there is the mouth-watering prospect of a meeting with Agassi in the quarter-finals.

The hardest-working member of the tennis fraternity—not many of the top players also play doubles at Grand Slam events—Kafelnikov has not rested on his laurels since the French, playing this week in the Halle grass court tournament in Germany to hone his game for Wimbledon.

Kafelnikov rarely takes time off from the game. "I took two weeks off once then I was out of shape for the next three weeks," he explained.

Playing so many tournaments, so many matches really helps me to keep my confidence at a really high level.

On the rare weeks off he likes fishing and soccer, but now that Russia have been eliminated from Euro '96, there is one less distraction for him to deal with.

Still, he is aware of the expectations placed on him after his triumph in Paris, which boosted him to fifth in the world rankings.



YEVGENY KAFELNIKOV

His grass court appearances have brought him enough success to suggest the Wimbledon title is not beyond his capability.

He reached the third round in his first appearance in 1994 and last year made it to the quarter-finals before he was blasted away by the big serves of Goran Ivanisevic.

But the way he dealt with reigning Wimbledon champion

Euro '96

England in last four

Hosts England reached the semifinals of Euro '96 after beating Spain 4-2 on penalties in first quarterfinal played at Wembley Stadium last night.

The sides finished goalless after 120 minutes. — source: BBC

TODAY'S EURO '96 FIXTURES

QUARTERFINALS

Germany vs Croatia
Venue: Old Trafford
Time: 8:00 pm (BST)

Portugal vs Czech Republic
Venue: Villa Park
Time: 11:30 pm (BST)

Japanese spikers keep going

FUKUOKA, Japan, June 22: Defending champions Japan eased through a challenge from Vietnam, with a three-set victory to remain unbeaten at the Asian Pacific Cup men's volleyball tournament on Friday, reports AFP.

Good news for Lewis

ATLANTA, June 22: US men's coach Ery Hunt hinted strongly on Friday that eight-times Olympic champion Carl Lewis could be on the Americans' 4x100-metre relay team for the Atlanta Games, reports Reuters.

Hunt, asked if he would like to see Lewis anchor the relay in his last Olympics although finishing last in the 100-metre final, said: "Under certain circumstances that would be great."

The US coach then added: "Unfortunately right now we have not actually decided on our relay pool. Hopefully he (Lewis) will be in the pool."

Hunt, perhaps tipping his hat to a Lewis selection, also said, "I'm really looking for people who have international experience. I think that's very important."

Lewis anchored the United States to a world-record 37.40 seconds at the Barcelona Olympics and has been on four other teams that set world records in the event.

US 100-metre trials winner Dennis Mitchell and runner-up Michael Marsh also were on the Barcelona team along with world recorder-holder Leroy Burrell, who finished sixth in the trials.

John Drummond placed third and Jeff Williams was fourth in the trials. But US coaches have said that anyone who makes the US Olympic team would be eligible for the relay.

Lewis would like to run in the relay final, but has said he did not want to compete in just the preliminary rounds.

The team will train in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, prior to the Games and will compete in an international meeting in Durham, North Carolina, on July 13. It may also run in a meeting in the Bahamas on July 15.

Reneberg makes Pete guessing

HALLE, Germany, June 22: American Richey Reneberg sounded a warning to Pete Sampras, his first-round opponent at Wimbledon next week, by sweeping aside Jim Courier on Friday to reach the semifinals of the Halle grass-court event, reports Reuters.

Reneberg, who won last week's pre-Wimbledon warm-up tournament at Rosmalen in the Netherlands, produced a blistering array of volleys to overwhelm Courier 6-7, 6-4, 6-2.

He broke his compatriot's service three times in the final set alone, leaving no doubt that he would be a formidable opponent for three-times Wimbledon champion Sampras when they meet in the tournament's opening match on Monday.

Another top Wimbledon contender, newly crowned French Open champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov, had to fend off five match points to overcome Sweden's big-serving Magnus Larsson 4-6, 7-6, 7-6.

Larsson produced 16 aces, one of them to secure his fifth match point at 11-10 in the final set tie-break.

But when it mattered most the Russian, seeded fifth at Wimbledon, always managed to produce passing shots from Larsson's less-than-perfect volleys.

Larsson finally put a smash just wide on Kafelnikov's second match point to give the Russian the tie-break 13-11.

Kafelnikov now meets Daniel Vacek of the Czech Republic, who beat another Swede, Magnus Gustafsson, 6-2, 4-6, 6-2.

Reneberg faces Nicklas Kulti, also of Sweden, who disposed of New Zealand's Brett Steven 7-6, 6-3.

Rivals hold a summit

CHEJU ISLAND, South Korea, June 22: Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and South Korean President Kim Young-Sam on Saturday held out the dream that co-hosting the 2002 World Cup could help heal the wounds of history, reports AFP.

The two leaders, wearing open-necked shirts to emphasise relaxed atmosphere, greeted each other with smiles and handshakes at the lobby of the Hotel Shilla, the venue of summit talks Saturday and Sunday.

"I hope the two countries make the best use of this event to bury their dark past... and strengthen cooperative ties," Kim told Hashimoto over an informal dinner.

Hashimoto, speaking to journalists on the plane carrying him to the Cheju summit, said the co-hosting could make a 30-year-old dream come true.

"I dreamed that we'd make friends (when he met Kim in 1965) when I was a young parliamentarian. I hope it will come true through the joint hosting of the World Cup," Hashimoto said.

Hashimoto's trip is the first by a Japanese Prime Minister since July 1994, and came as relations, long embittered over Japan's harsh 1910-1945 occupation of the Korean Peninsula, were further strained by a series of disputes including a bitter territorial row over barren islands in the sea of Japan.

Officials said the two leaders will try to steer around sensitive issues and focus on the problem of North Korea and the soccer finals.



Decathlete Dan O'Brien soars of the bar to win the high jump event at the US track and field trials in Atlanta on June 21.

—AFP/UNB photo

Bailey outsprints Surin



MONTREAL, June 22: In their first outdoor encounter in nine months, world champion Donovan Bailey beat world silver medalist Bruny Surin on Friday to win the 100-metre dash at the Canadian Olympic trials, reports Reuters.

Bailey overtook the field at the 60-metre mark and won with a time of 9.98 seconds. Surin was second in 10.04 and Glenroy Gilbert, Bailey's training partner in Texas, was third in 10.18.

Bailey, Surin and Gilbert—members of Canada's gold-medal 4x100-metre relay team at the 1995 World Championships—earned the right to run the 100 metres at the Olympics next month. And all three were selected for doping controls after the race in what Canadian drug testers insisted was a random draw.

Bailey, 28, who trains in Austin, Texas, said it would not have been possible for him to race without the help of physiotherapist Mark Lindsay, husband of Canada's 1993 world downhill ski champion Kate Pace, has helped Bailey deal with an assortment of nagging injuries since last autumn.

"Without Mark I couldn't possibly have run today," said Bailey. "Any day when there's pain in my back or hamstring, he gets it out."

Surin also has been bothered by injuries. He missed the early part of the outdoor season due to a groin pull and then had a hamstring injury.

His only outdoor race in the last month was in Japan in early May, where he ran 10.28 seconds.

Injury torments Torrence



ATLANTA, June 22: Gwen Torrence's Olympic dream took a painful turn Friday as the 1992 gold medalist's left thigh tightened up in her first 200 metres race at the US Olympic trials, reports Reuters.

"My left thigh hurts really bad, but I'm going to gut it out and try to make the team," said Torrence, the Atlanta native who hopes to become the hometown heroine of next month's Olympics by winning three, maybe four gold medals.

But she stood only 10th among 24 qualifiers for today's double round of the 200 after easing home third in her preliminary race and noticeably favoured the leg during a post-race jog.

Her agent, Brad Hunt, said Torrence, who won the trials' 100 metres in the year's fastest time last weekend, would "be all right."

"Nobody in the field can beat her at 80 per cent," Hunt said.

But Torrence, who was timed in 23.07 seconds, said the thigh really hurt when she raced the curve.

"My thigh tightened in the 100 metres, especially in the last 15 metres," said Torrence, who had ice applied to the leg. "It hurts the worst on the turn."

Even without the injury, Torrence was going to have a workout today with the quarter-finals and semifinals of the 200 within 90 minutes.

Already the trials' 400-metre champion, Johnson was timed in 20.61 seconds to win his race.

He, too, hopes to earn multiple medals at the Games, seeking to become the first male to win the 200 and 400 metres at the same Olympics.

Lewis finished second to little known Ramon Clay in 20.30 seconds in an earlier race, but said he felt strong.

"I'm not going to go down easy," said Lewis, who Wednesday made the US team in the long jump and gained an opportunity to win his fourth consecutive Olympic gold medal in the event.

Michael Johnson is a great sprinter, but I can run with anybody," Lewis said.

Jeff Williams had the fastest qualifying time of the opening round, 20.10 seconds, and 1992 Olympic champion Michael Marsh advanced in 20.34.

O'Brien, who bombed out of the 1992 US Olympic trials when he failed to clear a height in the pole vault, trailed Huffins by 69 points in the decathlon.

"Chris has really got to do some good things tomorrow to beat me," said Brien, who had 4,618 points to Huffins's 4,687.

Mark Croghan won the men's 3,000-metre steeplechase finals in 8:18.80 despite hot, humid conditions, and heptathlon world record-holder Jackie Joyner-Kersey gained a chance to make the US team in a second event.

—AFP/UNB photo

Bailey's main problem is caused by a hip imbalance which has persisted since he injured his tail bone as a youngster. "Since it happened, when I was young, my body just grew imbalanced. My body is spaced out and the pain is just tendons stretched and muscle clumps separating."



DONOVAN BAILEY

Surin also has been bothered by injuries. He missed the early part of the outdoor season due to a groin pull and then had a hamstring injury.

His only outdoor race in the last month was in Japan in early May, where he ran 10.28 seconds.

Mitchell, who ran 9.92 seconds to win the US trials and was the 100-metre bronze medalist at the 1992 Games, said he considered himself the man to beat in Atlanta.

"I don't think I'm the favourite going in," said Bailey. "If Dennis wants to shoulder all the problems and show he's the big dog, well that's it. I like the underdog status."

And Darnette Young and Zundra Feagins are certain to make her run. Young clocked 22.32 seconds and Zundra Feagins ran 22.95 in their preliminaries for the second and third fastest times in the world this year.

World champion Michael Johnson and eight-time Olympic gold medalist Carl Lewis easily advanced through the first round of the men's 200 metres, and world record-holder Dan O'Brien appeared on course for an 8,700-point decathlon despite training Chris Huffins after the first day.

"The most important thing was getting out of the blocks hard and being more aggressive," said Johnson, who ran a blazing first 100 metres before easing up over the last 60 metres of the race.

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Joyner-Kersey overcame a cramp in her left leg to advance to Sunday's women's long jump final, leaping 6.94 metres (22 feet), 9 1/4 inches.

"Her body is going through the shocks it needs in order to be ready for the Olympic Games," said her husband and coach, Bob Kersee.

EVERGREEN JACKIE: Veteran Olympian Jackie Joyner-Kersey sails through the air during the women's long jump event at the US track and field trials in Atlanta on Friday.

Joyner-Kersey embarks on another campaign after her leap of 6.94 metres secured a place on the American squad.

—AFP/UNB photo