

FINALISTS' PROFILES

LONDON, July 5 (Reuters): Biographies of Steffi Graf and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario who contest the Wimbledon women's final on Saturday:

Steffi Graf (Germany)

Age: 27
 Seeded: One
 Career official prize money: 18.2 million dollars.
 Singles titles: 19 Grand Slam titles, 99 overall.
 Coach: Heinz Günthard.
 Grand Slam records: Won the Australian Open in 1988, 1989, 1990, 1994; the French Open in 1987, 1988, 1993, 1995, 1996; Wimbledon in 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995; the US Open in 1988, 1989, 1993, 1995.

Path to final: Beat Ludmila Richterova (Czech Republic) 6-4, 6-1; Nathalie Baudone (Italy) 7-5, 6-3; Nicole Arendt (US) 6-2, 6-1; Martina Hingis (Switzerland), 6-1, 6-4; Jana Novotna (Czech Rep) 6-3, 6-2; Kimiko Date (Japan) 6-2, 2-6, 6-3.

Playing style: Right-handed, athletic. One of the quickest and strongest players on tour. Relies heavily on her powerful forehand and a consistent sliced backhand. Has won at least one Grand Slam title and at least seven tour titles in every season since 1987. Won last five Grand Slams she has entered.

Personal: Born in Bruehl, Germany, on Jun 14, 1969 began playing at age of four. Height 1.75 metres. Has had turbulent year with father arrested for alleged tax evasion. Younger brother Peter is a Formula Three racing car driver. Owns three German Shepherd dogs and a boxer and collects shorts and T-shirts. Enjoys pasta, impressionist art, reading and photography.

Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario (Spain)

Age: 24
 Seeded: Four
 Career official prize money: 10.7 million dollars.
 Singles titles: Three Grand Slam titles, 24 overall.
 Coach: David de Miguel Lapedra.
 Grand Slam record: Won the French Open in 1989, 1994; US Open in 1994.

Path to final: Beat Adriana Serra-Zanetti (Italy) 6-3, 6-4; Miriam Oremans (Netherlands) 7-5, 6-3; Naoko Sawamatsu (Japan) 6-4, 6-1; Sabine Appelmans (Belgium) 3-6, 6-2, 6-1; Judith Wiesner (Austria) 6-4, 6-0; Meredith McGrath (US) 6-2, 6-1.

Playing style: Right-handed, two-handed backhand. Solid all-round baseline game and excellent mobility around court. Gritty and determined player who will never surrender before the bitter end. Grass is her least comfortable surface, but she reached final here last year, losing to Graf in absorbing three-set match. Renowned for her mental toughness and consistency.

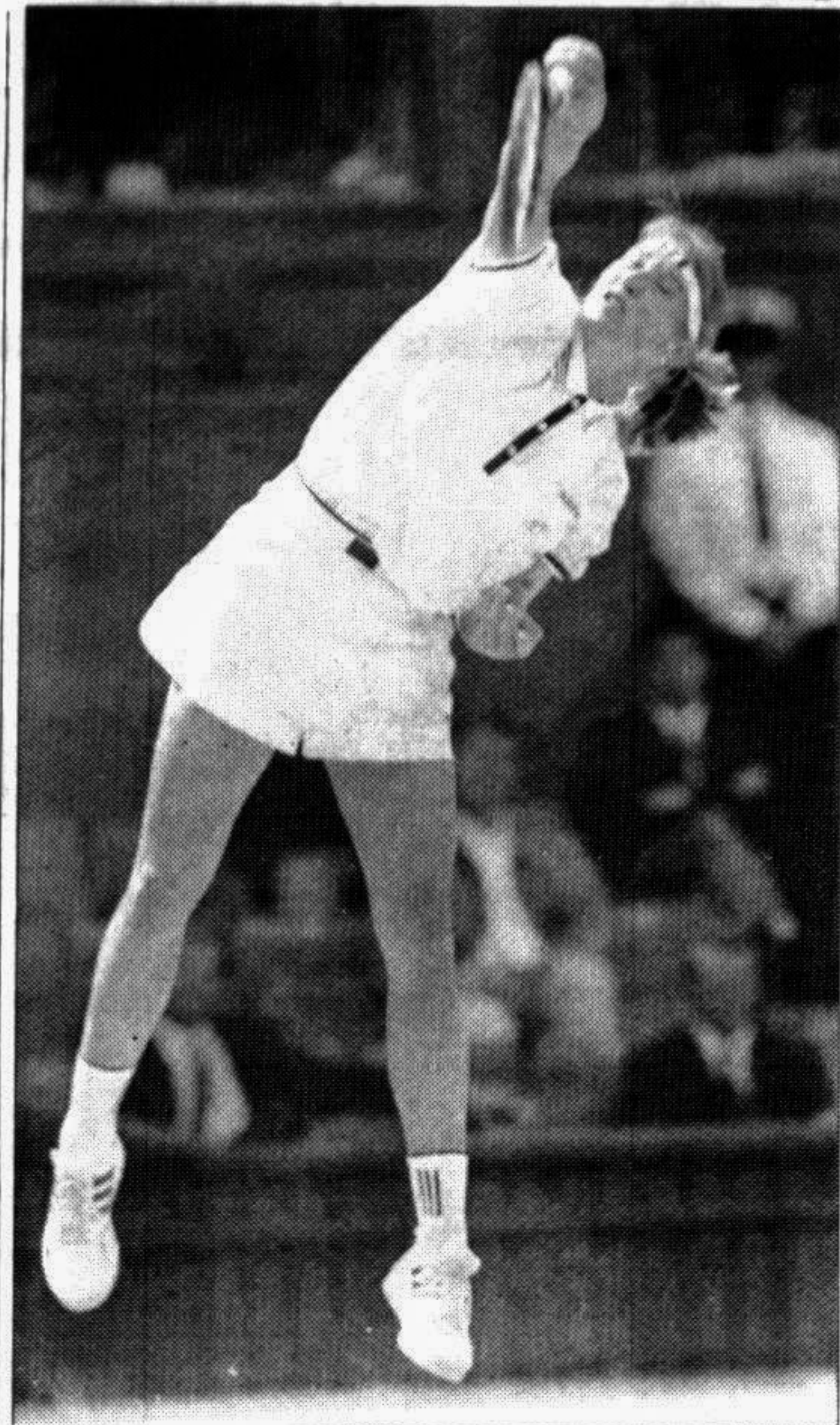
Personal: Born in Barcelona, Spain, on December 18, 1971. Father Emilio, mother Marisa. Height 1.69 metres. Started playing at the age of four. Youngest in family of tennis-playing professionals. Elder brothers Emilio and Javier compete on men's tour. Sister, Marisa, works as a sports reporter on Spanish television. Named her two dogs Roland and Garros. Enjoys soccer and basketball, listening to The Beatles and Phil Collins.

Wang ready to roll

BEIJING, July 5: Wang Junxia, one of China's hottest hopes for a gold medal in the Atlanta Olympics, underwent 12 doping tests in the last 12 months and is on track for a strong performance, officials said Friday, reports AFP.

Rain plays foul at Wimbledon

Sports Reporter
 Rain interrupted the first of the scheduled men's semifinals of the Wimbledon Championships last night, according to BBC.



World number one Steffi Graf of Germany hurtles down a fierce service against Kimiko Date of Japan during her semifinal encounter at the Wimbledon on July 5. — AFP/UNB photo



Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain celebrates her consummate semifinal victory over Meredith McGrath of the United States at Wimbledon on July 4. — AFP/UNB photo

Old foes renew rivalry today

WIMBLEDON, July 5: Steffi Graf advanced to her eighth Wimbledon final Friday when she completed a three-set victory over Japan's Kimiko Date, report agencies.

The defending and six-time champion defeated the 12th-seeded Date 6-2, 2-6, 6-3 to set up a replay of last year's final against Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain.

Sanchez-Vicario cruised into the final Thursday by beating Meredith McGrath 6-2, 6-1 in 61 minutes.

quickly ran out the set. But she didn't lose her sense of humour. As she prepared to serve in the seventh game, a man shouted from the stands, "Will you marry me?" Graf chuckled and yelled back, "How much money do you have?"

ATLANTA NOTEBOOK

ATLANTA, July 5 (Reuters): Following is the Games notebook on Thursday:

ACCOUNTING SCAM
 An accountant working for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) allegedly stole 60,000 dollars by diverting cash into a bogus bank account.

POLICE PUZZLE
 Police launched a hunt for a suspected sniper after a national guardsman was wounded while posted at an Olympic site, but said later the man might have only been hit by a firecracker.

"I wonder how much longer she could have kept up at that level," Graf said. "All things were favouring her a little bit. At least I felt like I was serving much better than I was yesterday, so I didn't worry too much."

THE HEAD-TO-HEADS
 WIMBLEDON, England, July 5 (AP): Head-to-head matches of the women's finalists at Wimbledon (seedings in parentheses):

Tournament	Surface	Round	Winner	Score
1988 United Jersey	hard	R16	Graf	6-2, 6-0
1989 Family Circle Cup	clay	S	Graf	6-2, 6-4
1989 Bausch and Lomb	clay	S	Graf	6-3, 6-2
1989 French Open	clay	F	Sanchez V.	7-6 (8-6), 3-6, 7-5
1989 Wimbledon	grass	Q	Graf	7-5, 6-1
1990 Pan Pacific	carpet	F	Graf	6-1, 6-2
1990 Bausch and Lomb	clay	F	Graf	6-1, 6-0
1990 Citizen Cup	clay	F	Graf	5-7, 6-0, 6-1
1990 US Open	hard	S	Graf	6-1, 6-2
1990 Leipzig	carpet	F	Graf	6-1, 6-1
1991 Luffthansa Cup	clay	F	Graf	6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (8-6)
1991 French Open	clay	S	Sanchez V.	6-0, 6-2
1992 Bausch and Lomb	clay	S	Graf	6-7 (3-7), 6-4, 6-3
1992 Citizen Cup	clay	F	Graf	7-6 (7-5), 6-2
1992 Luffthansa Cup	clay	F	Graf	4-6, 7-5, 6-2
1992 French Open	clay	S	Graf	0-6, 6-2, 6-2
1992 Federation Cup	clay	R5	Graf	6-4, 6-2
1992 US Open	hard	Q	Sanchez V.	7-6 (7-5), 6-3
1992 Virginia Slims of Philadelphia	carpet	F	Graf	6-3, 3-6, 6-1
1993 Australian Open	hard	S	Graf	7-5, 6-4
1993 Virginia Slims of Florida	hard	F	Graf	6-4, 6-3
1993 Lipton	hard	F	Sanchez V.	6-4, 3-6, 6-3
1993 Family Circle	clay	F	Graf	7-6 (10-8), 6-1
1993 Citizen Cup	clay	F	Sanchez V.	6-3, 6-3
1993 San Diego	hard	F	Graf	6-4, 4-6, 6-1
1993 Virginia Slims of Philadelphia	carpet	F	Graf	6-1, 6-4, 3-6, 6-1
1994 Australian Open	hard	F	Graf	6-0, 6-2
1994 Deyair	hard	F	Graf	6-3, 7-5
1994 Hamburg	clay	F	Sanchez V.	4-6, 7-6 (7-3), 7-6 (8-6)
1994 San Diego	hard	F	Graf	6-2, 6-1
1994 Canadian Open	hard	F	Sanchez V.	7-5, 1-6, 7-6 (8-6)
1994 US Open	hard	F	Sanchez V.	1-6, 7-6 (7-3), 6-4
1995 French Open	clay	F	Graf	7-5, 4-6, 6-0
1995 Wimbledon	grass	F	Graf	4-6, 6-1, 7-5
1996 French Open	clay	F	Graf	6-3, 6-7 (4-7), 10-8

LABOUR SHORTAGE
 Food concession booths at the Olympics will likely feature long lines because thousands of temporary jobs serving Games visitors are going unfilled.

Borg beyond reach!
 WIMBLEDON, England, July 5: Bjorn Borg's record of five straight Wimbledon victories in the Open era is safe for now.

Workers are in great demand. Nearly 100,000 volunteers and employees will work for Olympic organisers. Private companies have hired another 30,000 people for banquet halls and hospitality rooms.

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Havelange usurps UEFA



ZURICH, July 5: The balance of power in world soccer snifted subtly back towards FIFA president Joao Havelange on Thursday when the sport's governing body weakened Europe's grip on its decision-making executive committee, reports Reuter.

A single-vote victory at FIFA's biennial congress handed an extra seat each on the executive to Africa, Asia and Oceania and brought accusations of foul play from the Americas.

Under the new executive, they would need the support of two, rather than one, other confederation.

UEFA now has eight of 24 seats on the executive, while Africa and Asia were both increased to four. South America and the North and Central American and Caribbean region remained unchanged with three apiece.

Diego Japan's bete noire
 TOKYO, July 5: A Japanese soccer team said today that it is holding talks with former Argentine captain Diego Maradona, but has not signed a contract and is doubtful he can get a Japanese visa because of a drug arrest, reports Reuter.

Adidas' aid to Marseille
 BEZOGENAURACH, Germany, July 5 (Reuters): German sportswear giant Adidas confirmed on Thursday it had made "a major financial commitment" to Marseille, ensuring the French club could realise its "ambitious five-year development plan."



JOAO HAVELANGE



Action from yesterday's schools Kabaddi championship match between Dholaiar High and Ram Krishna Mission High at the Kabaddi court of Dhaka Stadium. — Star photo