

Bilardo cracks the whip

BUENOS AIRES, Aug 17: Boca Juniors coach Carlos Bilardo, who on Wednesday announced he would ditch three key players, said on Friday more changes were on the way after the team's failure to win the Argentine clausura championship, reports Reuters.

Boca's title challenge ended with a 1-0 defeat at home to Racing Club last week and has already resulted in Diego Maradona announcing he would quit the club.

Bilardo, who as coach led Argentina to World Cup triumph in 1986 and the runners-up place four years later, said that up to five more players could be leaving the club before the new championship which begins in September.

"We are doing everything we can to build a great team because the only necessity we have is to be champions. To come second is no good in a club like Boca," he said.

"There could be developments next week but I cannot say what they will be."

On Wednesday, he had a meeting with goalkeeper Fernando Montoya, full-back Carlos Macallister and midfielder Fabian Carizo, all Boca stalwarts. The players said Bilardo had told them: "you are not in my plans any more."

Boca, Argentina's best supported club, have not won a title since 1992, an eternity by their standards. In the meantime, they have been forced into the shadow of relatively modest Velez Sarsfield, who have won two Argentine titles and claimed the South American Libertadores Cup since 1993.

Much was promised at the start of the championship when directors managed to persuade Maradona and Bilardo, who had been feuding for several years, to work together again and signed international striker Claudio Caniggia.

Maradona was Argentina's captain and enjoyed his finest international performance under Bilardo.

Boca, despite some awful moments that included a 6-0 home drubbing by Gimnasia Yessgrima La Plata and recent injuries to Maradona, stayed in contention until just over a week ago.

The title will be decided over the weekend between leaders Velez Sarsfield, who are at home to Independiente, and second-placed Gimnasia, who are one point behind and play away to Estudiantes.

Mitsubishi win Rally New Zealand

Richard Burns and Robert Reid the two-man British crew of Mitsubishi has taken the lead by winning Rally New Zealand, the first of the three-round series to be followed by other two at Australia, Hong Kong and Beijing, says a press release.

It was their maiden success and also the opening victory outside Europe, after their joining Mitsubishi this year.

Only 38 out of 71 starters could survive 3 days and eighteen hundred kilometres of hard driving, heavy rains forced organisers to cancel three stages before the start, but the crews made their way through the 27 high speed stages totaling a 460 kms spread across north island of Auckland. The first two days were dry, cold and bright, although the gravel were slippery due to the persistent rainfall which made the final area crucial one.

"Once again the lancer has been totally reliable" was the immediate comment made by Phil Short the manager of Mitsubishi Ralliarts team.

Richard Burns and Robert Reid has topped the overall classification scoring 04:34:25 with Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution III followed by K Eriksson S Parmander having +00:33 with Subaru Imprezza and P Liatti F Pons with Subaru Imprezza and +00:40 points respectively.

GHI Bronx Tennis results

NEW YORK, Aug 17: Unseeded Maurice Ruah of Venezuela advanced to the semifinals of the GHI Bronx Tennis Classic with a 2-6, 6-2, 7-5 victory over Diego Nargiso of Italy on Friday, reports AP.

"I lost the first set in all three of my matches this week, but I really can't complain as long as the results turn out positive," Ruah said.

"Naturally I would like to get off to better start. It's just a matter of figuring out a way. My confidence is very high, and when I lose, I know that I can still pull it out."

Also reaching the men's semis were fifth-seeded Ben Ellwood of Australia, who ousted Brazilian Jaime Oncins 7-5, 7-5. Egyptian Tamer El Sawy, who upset seventh-seeded Eyal Ran of Israel 4-6, 6-1, 6-2 and Pablo Campana of Ecuador, 6-3, 7-6 (7-5) winner over second-seeded Yahya Doumba of Senegal.

In women's quarterfinal play, top-seeded Karin Kechwendt of Austria defeated Erika deLone, 6-4, 6-3; fifth-seeded Virginia Ruano-Pascual of Spain topped second-seeded Jana Kandar of Germany, 6-3, 6-3; France's Amelie Mauresmo beat Luxembourg's Anne Kremer, 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (8-6), and third-seeded Sarah Pitkowski of France advanced when Melanie Schnell of Austria retired after trailing 5-2 in the first set.

Goodbye Egerszegi!

BUDAPEST, Aug 17: Hungary's five-time Olympic gold medalist swimmer Krisztina Egerszegi announced her retirement from top flight competition on Friday, her 22nd birthday, reports Reuters.

"Swimming is a hard job, but I have five gold medals to show for it," Egerszegi, the first swimmer to win five individual event golds, told 2,000 people who braved rainshowers to cheer her outside the Hungarian Parliament.

Egerszegi said she would continue swimming for another year to allow her body to taper down but would not compete in major events.

"I am not going to swim in any big competitions," she said.

Egerszegi burst on the international scene when she won Olympic gold in the 200 metres backstroke in 1988 aged just 14. She won three golds in Barcelona and took the 200 metres backstroke for a third time in Atlanta last month.

In a ceremony inside the Parliament building, Hungarian President Arpad Goncz presented Egerszegi and the country's other Olympic winners with Crosses of Honour.



KRISZTINA EGERSZEGI

Yevgeny, Krajicek exit

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut, Aug 17: Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the No 1 seed and French Open champion, and Richard Krajicek, seeded second and the Wimbledon winner, were shockingly beaten in straight sets in the quarterfinals of the Pilot Pen International on Friday, report agencies.

Wildcard Alex O'Brien ousted Kafelnikov of Russia, 6-4, 6-4, while Jan Siemerink, the 10th seed, upset Krajicek of the Netherlands, 7-6 (7-3), 6-2.

The departures of the top two seeds came a day after No 3 Jim Courier lost.

Fourth-seeded Wayne Ferreira was the highest seed left after outlasting No 12 Daniel Vacek 6-2, 6-7 (6-8), 6-3. Ferreira will face Siemerink in the semifinals.

O'Brien needed just 66

minutes to dispose of Kafelnikov, breaking his serve twice and never dropping his own.

He took a 5-4 lead in the first set with a break in the ninth game then held for the set.

He broke in the first game of the second set and never looked back.

"I felt like I could take advantage of his second serve, because he started missing a lot of first serves," O'Brien said.

"I tried to come in and put pressure on him. I've seen him play enough times to know what he's going to do. I just felt I could take my chances and it paid off today."

O'Brien, who had won only three matches this year coming into the tournament, has won four this week and advanced to a semifinal for the first time since 1994.

"I didn't falter," O'Brien said. "I hope I can keep my game on even keel and keep this thing going...."

O'Brien will face No 14 Mark Philippoussis, who used his big serve to eliminate sixth-seeded Marc Rosset 6-2, 6-3.

Kafelnikov, who is ranked No 4 in the world, lost his service once in each set before losing the match to O'Brien, a former NCAA champion at Stanford who is ranked 169th.

Siemerink breezed past his fellow countryman in just 62 minutes, losing just three points on his first serve in the match. Krajicek was broken in the opening game of the second set, and was broken again in the seventh game.

Siemerink closed out his first career victory over Krajicek in four tries by knifing a backhand crosscourt volley into the open court on match point.

"I have to say Jan served very well," Krajicek said.

Indian squad named

COLOMBO, Aug 17: India has named a 14-member squad led by new skipper Sachin Tendulkar for the four-nation Singer Trophy one-day series beginning next Saturday in Sri Lanka, the board of control for cricket here said, reports AFP.

Squad: Sachin Tendulkar (captain), Anil Kumble (vice captain), Vikram Rathore, Ajay Jadeja, Sourav Ganguly, Mohammad Azharuddin, Vinod Kambli, Rahul Dravid, Nayan Mongia, Javagal Srinath, Venkatesh Prasad, David Johnson, Sunil Joshi and Ashish Kapoor.

Healy being diplomatic

BRISBANE, Aug 17: Acting Australian cricket captain Ian Healy says diplomacy will be the order of the day to help restore strained relations with Sri Lanka when his side travel to the country on Monday, reports AP.

Healy was named as replacement skipper for the injured Mark Taylor for the two-week tour to Sri Lanka when the Australian Cricket Board announced the trip would proceed, even though safety concerns remain.

The 32-year-old is confident relationships with the Sri Lankan team are nearly rebuilt, but admits there could still be work to be done with the island nation's public.

"We've definitely got to build bridges not only with their team but with the public," Healy said at an Australian team training camp Saturday.

"We've got to be seen to be enjoying ourselves, which in the past in Sri Lanka has not been a problem. There's no such thing as a right or wrong impression, it's just the impression they gain."

Healy and Sri Lankan captain Arjuna Ranatunga clashed heatedly during the World Series finals in Sydney earlier this year.

The incident angered the Sri Lankans, who maintained a gentle demeanour despite throwing and ball tampering allegations, a long and arduous schedule and constant media scrutiny in three months in Australia.

Some wounds were healed when the two teams mixed well during the final Test match in Adelaide before Sri Lanka claimed their biggest cricketing triumph — beating Australia to win the World Cup.

Atlanta flop props up Tokyo building

TOKYO, Aug 17: Stung by its lackluster showing at the Atlanta Olympics, Japan might not develop better athletes right away, but it has plans for the next best thing: a state-of-the-art sports centre, reports AP.

Japanese athletes came home this year with a mere three gold medals, the second worst run for the gold since 1952, when the still war-hobbled nation won a lone gold medal at Helsinki, Finland.

The government announced on Friday it would begin construction next year of a "National Sports Science Centre" outside Tokyo that is expected to open in 2000. No provisional budget has been released.

The centre has been on the drawing board since 1989, but Japan's listless show at Atlanta — where it also won six silver medals and five bronze — was apparently the nudge needed to get the construction moving.

Hiroyoshi Watanabe, an official at the Ministry of Education, said the center was aimed at bolstering the country's athletic level by taking a more "scientific approach" to training.

The 16,200 square-metre (180,000 square-foot) centre will be used for research in sports science, with training rooms, a gym and camp training to provide data and information to top athletes.

Watanabe said the sports science center was first conceived after the Seoul Games in 1988, when Japan was bested by rival South Korea.

Win some, lose some . . .



The Indian captain Md Azharuddin is caught with his new bride Sangeeta Bijlani in Bern, the Swiss capital, by a Bangladeshi tourist Bappi on July 2. Azhar lost his captaincy in the meanwhile. — Photo source: F M Kamal

Saqlain kills off Leics

LEICESTER, England, Aug 17: Pakistan's 19-year-old off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq underlined his immense potential by bowling the touring team to a 101-run win over Leicestershire on Friday, reports Reuters.

Saqlain captured six for 52 as the County Championship title contenders, needing 285 for victory, were dismissed for 183 on the third and final day.

Saqlain bowled 25 impressive overs on a pitch which gave plenty of assistance and Leicestershire wicketkeeper Paul Nixon said: "He looks a class act. All the Pakistani boys say he is one of the best young players coming through."

It was fast bowler Mohammad Akram who won the man-of-the-match award, however, following his first-innings seven for 51 by taking two for 48 for match figures of nine for 99.

Akram's performance pressed his claims for a place in the side for the third and

Pakistan, who began the day at 221 for three, added 41 more runs for the loss of three wickets before declaring at 262 for six, with Shahid Anwar finishing on 89.

After Leicestershire lost both openers in the first 13 overs, they settled for a battle for survival on the turning pitch.

However, they had no effective answer to Saqlain's off-spin and only Ben Smith (43), Aftab Habib (27) and David Mills (26) offered much resistance.

Five wickets tumbled for 37 to reduce the county to 150 for nine before Mills and Matthew Brimston frustrated the Pakistanis with a last-wicket stand of 33.

Mills was then lbw to the left-arm spin of Aamir Sohail, who confirmed his fitness for the third Test after a hand injury ruled him out of the second game of the series at Headingley.

SAQLAIN... 6 for 52 deciding Test against England at The Oval starting next Thursday.

Walker whacks Somerset

LONDON, Aug 17: West Indies captain Courtney Walsh left Yorkshire's championship hopes in tatters on Friday while Matthew Walker scored an unbeaten 275 to boost rival contenders Kent to a massive 616 for seven declared against Somerset, reports Reuters.

Walsh completed match figures of nine for 59 to bowl Gloucestershire to a 10-wicket win inside two days of their four-day match.

Walker, the former England Under 19 captain playing only his third championship game of the season, hit the highest score by a Kent player at Canterbury.

At the close Somerset were 119 for three in reply, still 497 in arrears.

Walker's innings beat the previous best score of 270 set by Frank Woolley in 1923 against Middlesex. He started the day on 176 and lost three partners on the way before he and Dean Headley (63 not out) shared an unbeaten century stand for the eighth wicket.

Headley then claimed all three Somerset wickets to fall before the close.

Although Walsh was restricted by a knee injury, he added three more wickets to the six he took in the first innings as Yorkshire again collapsed to be all out for 179.

Gloucestershire, well in command after scoring 329 in reply to Yorkshire's 166, had no trouble knocking off the required 17 runs for victory

without loss.

Walsh also contributed with the bat earlier in the day in Gloucestershire's first innings as he and wicketkeeper Jack Russell put on 34 for the last

Giles, who took a career-best six for 45 against Durham on Monday, took six for 63 in 28.2 overs as Glamorgan slumped from 159 for two to 214 all out.

Made to follow on, Glamorgan lost opener Hugh Morris as they reached 35 for one at the close.

Only Steve James (90) and Matthew Maynard (69), who put on 114 in an attacking third-wicket partnership in Glamorgan's first innings, troubled Warwickshire and it became a solid procession after Maynard was stumped by Keith Piper off Giles.

WALSH... 9-wkt haul

Kazak Olympians reap rich

ALMATY, Kazakhstan, Aug 17: President Nursultan Nazarbayev awarded Kazakhstan's Olympic medal-winners, senior coaches and sports officials with state medals Wednesday, reports AP.

The Olympic Games in Atlanta earlier this month were Kazakhstan's first as an independent country. The team won 11 medals — three gold, four silver and four bronze — to finish 23rd overall and third among former Soviet republics.

The medal-winners returned to the Central Asian country as national heroes, especially those who took gold,



As team Rothmans — Mitsubishi, Richard Burns and Robert Reid drive Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution III to 1st overall in the 1996 New Zealand rally. — Star photo

Sampras sails into semis

INDIANAPOLIS, Aug 17: Pete Sampras put an end to the surprising run by tour newcomer Tommy Haas on Friday with a straight-set victory in the quarterfinals of the RCA Championships, reports AP.

The 18-year-old German, who had beaten two seeded players in his first tour event, lost 6-3, 6-4.

"His game is pretty good," Sampras said. "He handled himself pretty well... but when I'm serving well, I'm pretty hard to break. Right now I feel I'm pretty sharp."

Sampras, who dished out 11 aces against two for his opponent, next faces Czech Bohdan Ullrich.

Haas had recorded straight-set victories over 22nd-ranked Mark Woodforde and 30th-ranked Renzo Furlan, but he said playing Sampras was something different.

"He always came up with the big first point," Haas said. But it was a nice experience.

In other quarterfinal matches, No. 2 Goran Ivanisevic survived a shaky start to outlast unseeded Lionel Roux 7-6 (7-5), 6-7 (5-7), 6-2. No. 13 Bohdan Ullrich staged a mid-upset of No. 11 Alex Corretja, 6-4, 7-5; and No. 5 Todd Martin squandered a triple-match point in the "bird set" before beating No. 4 Thomas Enqvist 6-3, 1-6, 7-6 (7-3).

Martin will play Ivanisevic in Saturday's second semifinal.

"I choked," said Enqvist, the defending champion. "You have two double faults and two lousy points you're not going to win."

"Call me the Comeback

Kid," Martin quipped, referring to an opposite situation at the 1996 Wimbledon semifinals, when he lost a big fifth-set lead to MaliVai Washington.

Ivanisevic struggled with his serve and had problems with Roux, the Frenchman who had defeated No. 7 Jason Stoltenberg and No. 9 Stefan Edberg to earn his spot in the semifinals.

"I didn't believe I could play on hardcourt," said Ullrich, who hasn't lost a set in his four matches here.

Yeah, changing already," he said of his attitude about the hard surface.

The Czech defeated Sampras in May, but that match was on clay and was right after the death of Tim Gullikson, Sampras' coach.

"It will be a big difference here," Ullrich said, "because he is at home."

Wilkens' triple delight

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida, Aug 17: Tom Wilkens, one of the leading US hopefuls for the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, won his third title Friday at the Phillips 66 national swimming championships, reports Reuters.

Wilkens, 20, won the 200-metre individual medley in two minutes, 3.19 seconds. He also won the 200 breaststroke and 400 individual medley earlier in the week.

"I was just coming into this meet hoping to come away with one title and now I'm thinking about the Olympics," Wilkens said.

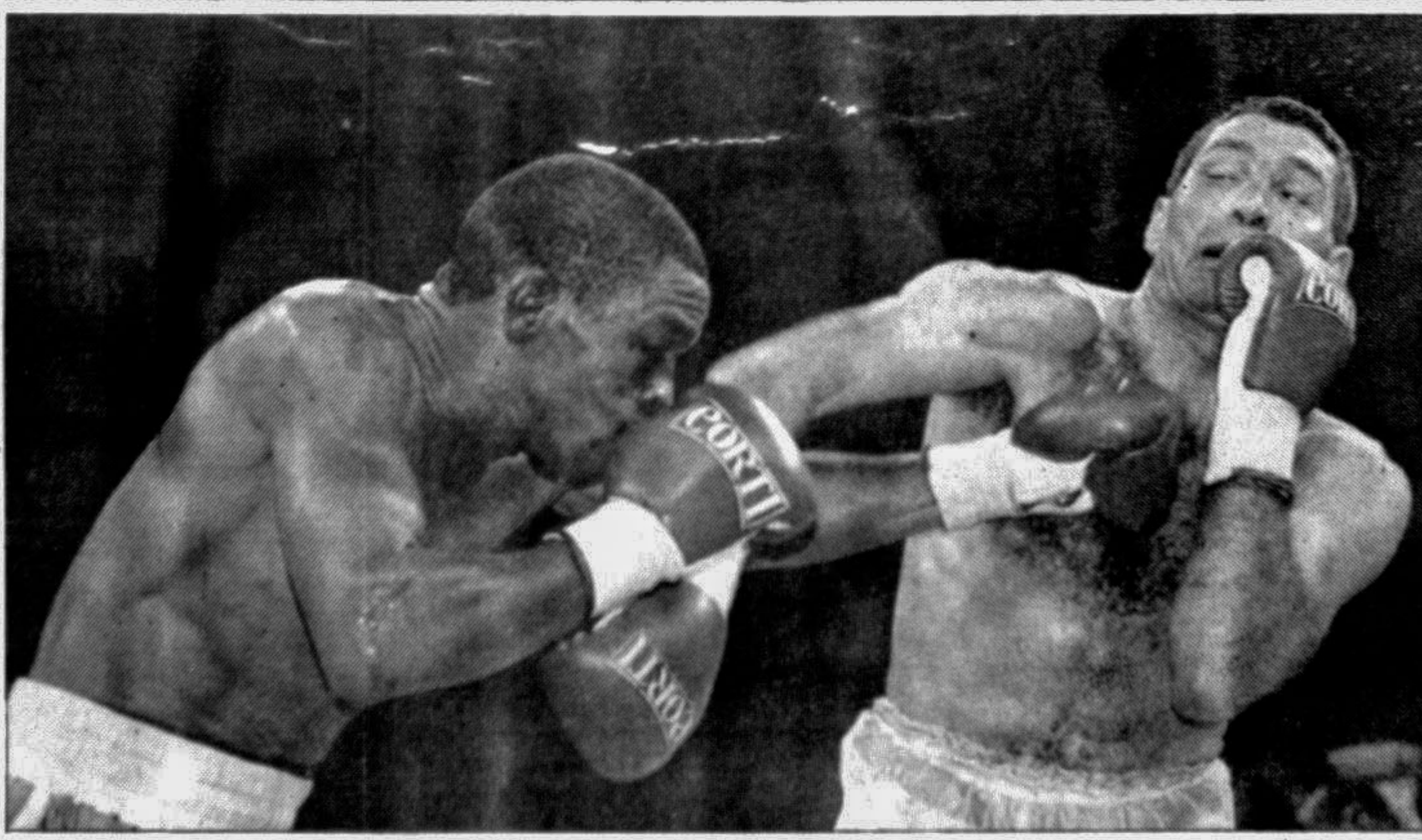
Jennifer Parmenter, 15, another Olympic prospect, also won her third title in the '00 individual medley, in 2:13.3, coming from behind in the last 20 metres. Parmenter also won the 400 in and 400 freestyle.

PETE SAMPRAS quarterfinals.

"I hung in there, started to serve better and played the tiebreaker better than him," Ivanisevic said after the match that lasted 2 hours, 17 minutes.

Both players had their service broken three times in the first set.

"Goran can play unbelievable and sometimes he can make big mistakes," Roux said. "I think that is what happened in the first set."



American Frankie Randall (L) lands a left hook on Argentina's Juan Martin Coggi (R) during their WBA junior welter-weight bout. Randall regained the title. — AFP/UNB photo