

Stefan going great guns

NEW YORK, Sept 4: Stefan Edberg is conjuring up the magic of Jimmy Connors at the US Open.

In his own quiet, yet fiery way, Edberg surged into the quarterfinals Tuesday with a fist-pumping 6-7 (7-2), 7-6 (7-2), 6-4, 6-4 victory over Britain's Tim Henman, report agencies.

Not since Connors' amazing run to the 1991 semifinals here at age 39 — the year Edberg won for the first time — has a player been such a sentimental favourite with the crowd.

He's only 30, but he's playing in his 54th consecutive and final Grand Slam event. They roar for him on each winning point, clap for him when he's down. They've been doing it all tournament, and they can be expected to do it Thursday when he plays No. 4 Goran Ivanisevic.

"The crowd was behind me once again," said Edberg, a little surprised because he never heard such cheers here in his prime when he was respected but not quite so revered. "It does help, but at the same time you need to play good tennis in the match to get them behind you. As long as you win the last one that's what counts."

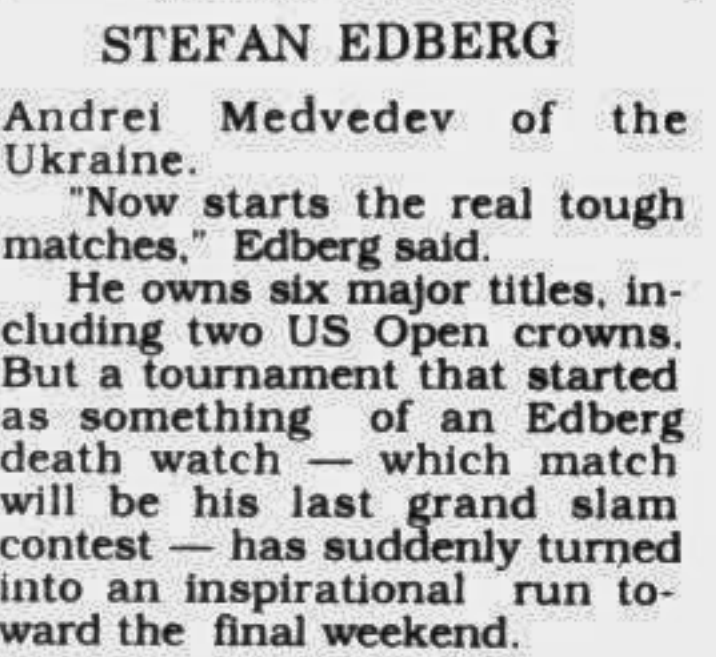
Edberg, who has decided to retire after this year, had the crowd screaming for him at the end against Henman by sweeping the final 12 points. Edberg, who hadn't gone this far at the Open since winning it for the

second straight time in 1992, now must find a way to cope with the brutal serves of Ivanisevic.

The Croatian served 20 aces — one at 130 mph (210 kph) — to reach the Open quarters for the first time with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7-2) victory over unseeded Andrei Medvedev of the Ukraine.

"Now starts the real tough matches," Edberg said.

He owns six major titles, including two US Open crowns. But a tournament that started as something of an Edberg death watch — which match will be his last grand slam contest — has suddenly turned into an inspirational run toward the final weekend.



STEFAN EDBERG

"I saw my chance here since beating Krajicek," he said of his win over the fifth-seeded Wimbledon champion that helped capture the imagination of the New York tennis fans.

The draw has opened up a little bit but you still have to win your matches. I had to fight really hard to win today," he said of his more than three-hour struggle with the 21-year-old Henman.

"I feel good about my game. I feel I have a chance in my next match. That's all I need," added the soft-spoken Swede.

With his every match being played on Centre Court and with the fans hanging on every swing of his racket, Edberg acknowledged, "It's the way you want to finish. You want to finish strong."

"I sort of see the light at the end of the tunnel. I know I've got so much time to push myself. I'm ready to push myself," he promised.

Edberg's longtime coach Tony Pickard, who reunited with the Swedish star this summer, feels he is calling it quits prematurely.

"I told him I thought he was three years too soon," Pickard said.

But even if Edberg's run ends with a fairytale victory on the final Sunday, he insists he will not return to defend the title.

"I make a decision. I stick to it. You can't go on forever," he said.

"Maybe I'll come back next year and watch."

Surrey wag tail well

LONDON, Sept 4: England newcomer Adam Holloake and Australian pace bowler Brendon Julian combined to rescue title-chasing Surrey with hard-hitting centuries in the county championships on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

Holloake hammered his hundred off 115 deliveries and Julian reached three figures in 141 balls putting Northamptonshire to the sword in a seventh wicket stand of 181.

They led a fightback which lifted Surrey from 147 for six to 378 for nine at the close on the first day of the four-day match at The Oval.

Melbourne-born Holloake, who has lived in England long enough to have qualified for his impressive international debut in the weekend one-dayers against Pakistan, filled his 129 with a sequence of stunning shots.

Holloake lashed hit 14 fours and hit two sixes off West Indies fast bowler Curtly Ambrose. He made his runs from 164 deliveries.

Julian, who struck 14 fours and one six on the way to his century, finished with 117, his second hundred in first-class cricket.

Fourth-placed Surrey, who went into the current round of matches 10 points behind leaders Kent with a game in hand, are among five sides still with realistic title ambitions in one of the most open championships for many seasons.

With Kent not playing second-placed Derbyshire swiftly closed the one-point gap at the top with a vigorous batting display to earn four bonus points on the first day against Somerset at Taunton.

Opener Adrian Rollins led the way with 127 off 230 balls, hitting 19 fours, as Derbyshire punished a depleted Somerset attack to reach 389 for seven at the close.

Rollins was effectively supported by England paceman Dominic Cork, who smashed 10 fours and a six in his 77, and ex-England seamer Phillip DeFreitas, whose 60 included three sixes.

Third-placed Leicestershire, nine points adrift of the leaders, experienced mixed fortunes as Nottinghamshire recovered from 111 for five to end the day on 320 for nine at Trent Bridge.

West Indian Phil Simmons who took three for 64 with his medium pacers, helped to give Leicestershire the initiative before a sixth wicket stand of 117 between Kevin Evans (71) and Chris Tolley (40) restored Nottingham's fortunes.

Essex 13 points behind Kent in fifth spot, were dismissed for a moderate 238 by defending champions Warwickshire before hitting back late in the day at Edgbaston.

Neil Williams snapped up two wickets and left-armers Mark Ilett took one as the new-ball pair reduced Warwickshire to 14 for three at the close.

All-rounder Ronnie Irani is 69 was the highest innings for Essex, leading a revival from 87 for five as seamer Gladstone Small captured his season's best of four for 41.

West Indian all-rounder Vashbert Drakes blasted his maiden century for Sussex to haul his side out of trouble against Worcestershire at Worcester.

Drakes scored 103 off 134 balls hitting 16 fours and two sixes, which took Sussex from 64 for five to 219 all out.

Sampras, Monica move up

NEW YORK, Sept 4: Pete Sampras and Monica Seles lit up the New York night on Tuesday, advancing at the US Open with emphatic victories, report agencies.

The Spaniard cruised to a 7-6 (8-6), 6-0 victory over Linda Wild, the conqueror of Olympic champion Lindsay Davenport.

Philippoussis, the big-serving 19-year-old who upset Sampras at this year's Australian Open, then lost to him at Wim-

set — and then failed to convert it.

"I didn't hate my rhythm today," said Philippoussis, who also lost to Sampras in his first US Open appearance last year. "I think I was trying to go for a bit too much. I've got to learn how to reach it."

Philippoussis served 17 aces, but Sampras was merciless on his second serve.

"His serve is so hard, you almost have to guess," Sampras said. "You have to, when you get that second serve, make him play. I'm a better player than he is in the rallies."

Sampras advanced to a quarter-final clash with another unseeded player, Spain's Alex Corretja. Corretja moved into the last eight with a 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (7/5) victory over Veteran Frenchman Guy Forget.

Seles, who says playing under the lights before the Stadium Court crowd energises her, made just two unforced errors in the opening set, which she completed in 18 minutes.

Coetzer, who had never before played a night match at the Open, admitted it took her too long to get accustomed to the situation, and to Seles.

"I was just struggling to get into the match," she said. "It's definitely not a nice feeling. These are the times you wish may be the women played five sets, you had a little bit longer out there."

"I felt that I was starting to read the ball better. I really struggled in the beginning, to see where she was going to hit it ... just getting used to the atmosphere."

Seles was aware of a shift in Coetzer's game.

"Tonight it was pretty easy until three-love. After that, it was very close. It could have gone either way, could have been four-or-five-all."

Seles was pretty tough on Martinez who has never taken a set in eight matches against her.

Seles is not taking anything for granted in the rematch.

"For sure she is a tough player," Seles said of the 1994 Wimbledon champion, who now has reached the semifinals of every Grand Slam this season. "I have to hit a lot of winners. If they're not, then I'm in trouble."

Martinez was in trouble in the first set when Wild had three set points in the tiebreaker. But the Spaniard won the next five points.

"What was going through my mind was: Just keep fighting," said Martinez of being down 6-3 in the tiebreaker. "If you keep fighting, you can always come back."

The other two semifinals lots were to be decided today when top seed and defending champion Steffi Graf was to take on unseeded Austrian Judith Wiesner, and 16th-seeded Swiss teen sensation Martina Hingis was to face seventh-seeded Czech Jana Novotna.



An obese Monica Seles hits her trademark double-fisted backhand against South African Amanda Coetzer during their quarterfinal clash at the US Open on September 3. — AFP/UNB photo

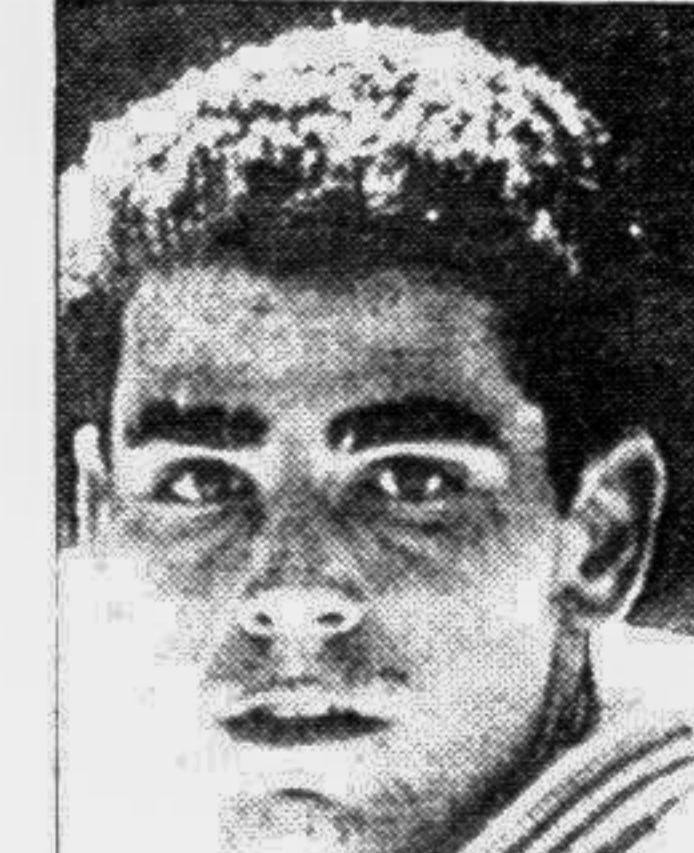
Sampras, the world number one and defending champion, defused the Australian scud missile, Mark Philippoussis 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 to reach the men's quarter-finals.

There was nothing tough about Seles' 48-minute, 6-0, 6-3 crushing of South African Amanda Coetzer in the women's quarterfinals. Coetzer didn't even come within a point of winning a game until she finally won one to make it 3-1 in the second set. Coetzer won only five points in the first set.

Throughout the tournament, I always have one bad in each match," Seles said, thinking of her second set against Coetzer as bad. "At this stage they can take advantage of it. I have to start to focus on every set. (Coetzer) is a great fighter, one of the best. It could have been really close."

It wasn't.

Seles, No. 2, goes to the semifinals Friday against the player she beat in last year's semis — No. 4 Conchita Mar-



PETE SAMPRAS

bledon, shot himself in the foot with his booming serve. He dropped his serve with four double faults in the third game of the opening set and never recovered.

He didn't earn a break point against Sampras until the third

Goran in marauding mood

NEW YORK, Sept 4 (Agencies): Goran Ivanisevic has a tip for anyone looking to knock him out of the US Open.

Open. It is not going to be easy.

Goran had become so accustomed to early exits at the Open that when he arrived at the National Tennis Centre on Tuesday, he had to remind himself why he had come.

"Whoever wants to beat me, the guy has to play unbelievably," Ivanisevic said, after advancing to the quarterfinals Tuesday with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7-2) victory over Andrei Medvedev.

Next for the No. 4 seed Ivanisevic is Stefan Edberg.

"I have played him a lot of times," Ivanisevic said. "I know how I have to play to beat him. He has nothing to lose. He's very loose. He's very relaxed. He has all the crowd behind him. He's really very pumped."

Against Ivanisevic, however, Edberg will find someone just as pumped.

Ivanisevic has frequently hit speed bumps on the hard courts of the National Tennis Centre. His last two opens resulted in one-round wipeouts that left the Croatian literally talking to himself. Those conversations, he said, have helped craft this year's success.

"I had a press conference with my head," he said. "I said, 'I have to make progress. There is no problem.' And just like that, his troubles vanished."

The second week of the Open is new territory for Ivanisevic.

"The second week, usually I was coming here to pick up my prize money and leave," he said. "When I came here today, I said, 'What are you doing here?'"

Then I said, "Ok, you play." "It is coming to my mind that I can do well. The country, the surface, now I start to like it more and more. Now I feel better and I play better. I can do a lot of good things here. I'm in a good mood."

Ivanisevic, regularly pushing 130 mph (210 kph) with his serve, was the opening act for fast-serve day at the US Open.

The main event was Tuesday night between Pete Sampras, who frequently hits 125 mph (200 kph), and Mark Philippoussis, who had a serve of 137 mph (220 kph) early in the tournament.

Because he's considered something of an expert on such matters, Ivanisevic was asked about the best servers on the Tour.

"I think," he said, "Mark, Pete, (Michael) Stich, Boris (Becker) and (Richard) Krajicek."

And what about Ivanisevic? "For sure," he said, grinning. "I am leading there."



GORAN IVANISEVIC

the quarters and I'm playing very good tennis."

His combustible nature has often gotten Ivanisevic in trouble. He had some tricky moments against Medvedev that required self control, and although he had a few spirited words with the chair umpire, there were no blowups.

"I got my confidence back. First time in my life I believe I can do really well here."

Although he made only 48 per cent of his first serves, Ivanisevic double-faulted only once. Medvedev served 12 aces and six double-faults.

"I mean, now anything is possible, even winning," said Ivanisevic, twice a Wimbledon

Dahlin scouting around

STOCKHOLM, Sept 4: Swedish international striker Martin Dahlin is unhappy at his new Italian club Roma and has talked to several interested clubs, including Paris St Germain and his former team, Borussia Monchengladbach, he said Tuesday, reports AFP.

Speaking to the Swedish press agency TT in Rome, Dahlin said he did not believe he had the support of coach Carlos Bianchi and was troubled by his lack of playing time in pre-season matches.

Five players are competing for two places in the Roma attack, including the Argentine Abel Balbo and the Uruguayan Daniel Fonseca.

Dahlin said Paris St Germain was interested in signing him along with Monchengladbach AC Milan and English Premiership clubs Chelsea and Blackburn Rovers.

QPR sack Wilkins

LONDON, Sept 4: Queens Park Rangers, relegated from England's Premier League after last season, Wednesday fired manager Ray Wilkins, reports AP.

The club, with only one loss in its first four matches in the First Division, said it had held long talks with Wilkins before deciding to remove the former England international midfielder.

Ray and the board of QPR — headed by the new owner, Chris Wright — and the chief executive, Clive Berlin, reluctantly came to the decision that it would be in the best interests of both parties to start afresh whilst the season is still in its early days," the club said in a statement.



MARTIN DAHLIN

Milan Michael's last stop?

MILAN, Sept 4: Double Olympic champion Michael Johnson said he was gearing up for Saturday's IAAF Grand Prix final in Milan — a 400-metre likely to be his last race of the season, reports AP.

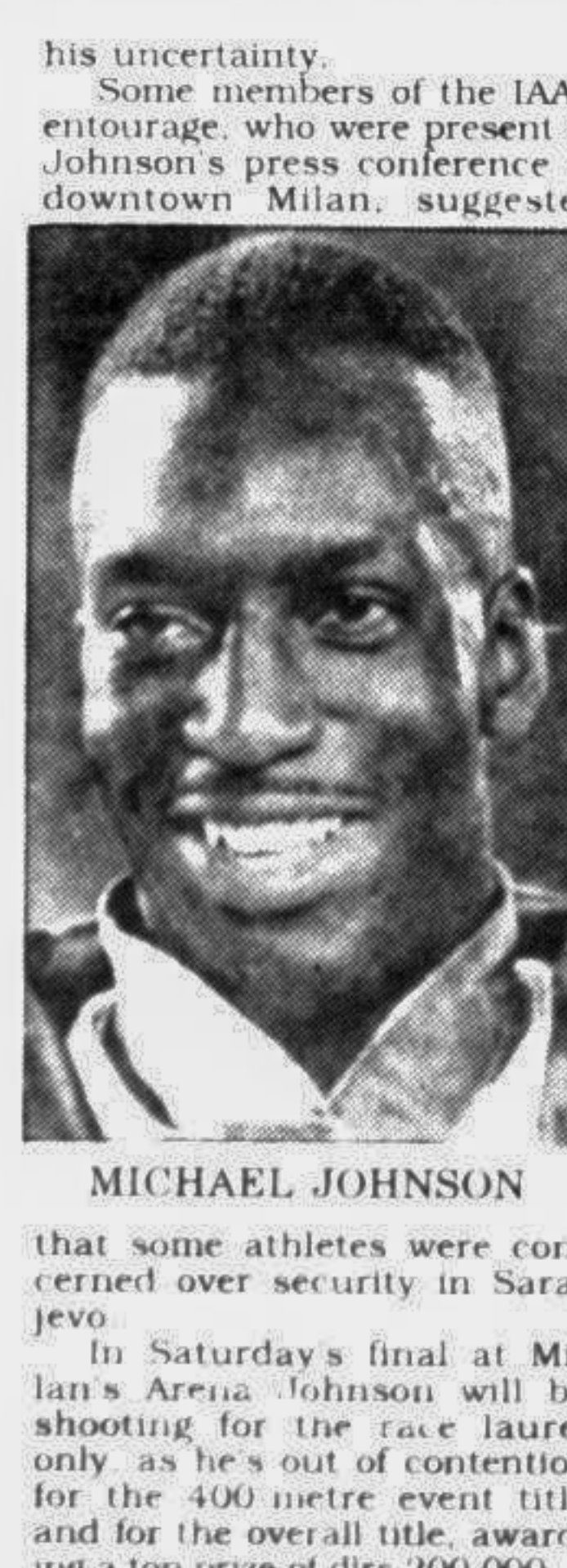
The 28-year-old American, who won both the 200 and 400 metres at the Atlanta Games, said Wednesday he still was uncertain on whether to compete in a track meet at Sarajevo Monday.

"I'll discuss the matter with IAAF officials tomorrow. I'll make a final decision by Saturday," Johnson said. "If I'm not going, the Milan final will be my last race this season. I need to take some vacation," he added.

The Sarajevo event, called the IAAF Solidarity Meet and the first major sports event to take place in the city since the war ended in Bosnia-Herzegovina, is expected to be attended by more than 100 athletes.

Olympic champions Nuredine Morceli, Kenny Harrison and Charles Austin and world triple jump champion Jonathan Edwards were among the announced starters at the rebuilt Kosevo Stadium.

While praising IAAF and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for organising the Solidarity Meet, Johnson did not elaborate the reasons for



MICHAEL JOHNSON

his uncertainty.

Some members of the IAAF entourage, who were present at Johnson's press conference in downtown Milan, suggested that some athletes were concerned over security in Sarajevo.

In Saturday's final at Milan's Arena Johnson will be shooting for the race laurel only as he's out of contention for the 400-metre event title and for the overall title, awarding a top prize of \$200,000.

Swedes change their minds

STOCKHOLM, Sept 4: Most Swedes do not want Stockholm to host the 2004 Olympics after witnessing the bomb blast and organisational chaos which marred the Atlanta Games, reports Reuters.

A survey of 1,100 Swedes by Pollster Tenon found opposition to hosting the Olympics jumped to 52 per cent in late August.

Before the Atlanta Games, which ended a month ago, only one in three Swedes were opposed to their capital staging the event in eight years time.

It is the effects of Atlanta, all the bad press on the organisation of the Games," Olof Stenhammar, head of Stockholm's 2004 bid, told Swedish newspapers.

FIFA's code to fight 'foulballs'

ZURICH, Sept 4: FIFA, football's international governing body, announced plans Tuesday that it hopes will stop child labour being used in the production of footballs, reports AFP.

FIFA and representatives of international trade unions have agreed on the text of a code of labour practice for footballs carrying the FIFA logo in an effort to eliminate child labour and other exploitative practices.

The code will be presented to the world federation of the sporting goods industry, which will hold a special conference on child labour in London in November.

An estimated 80 per cent of the world's footballs are made in Pakistan.

Clinton's Olympic concern

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Sept 4: The US federal government should consider helping US cities pay for major infrastructure improvements needed to host future Olympics, President Clinton said, reports Reuters.

In an interview in "Olympic Review," the bi-monthly magazine of the International Olympic Committee, Clinton said the massive finances of staging and organising the Games can strain private sources.

"I think that when an Olympic city is confronted with significant infrastructure expenses that cannot be met through private investments, the federal government should be willing to look at the situation," the President said. "The whole country benefits when the world sees us in the positive light of the Olympic Games."

Unlike many sites in Europe and Asia where governments underwrite a majority of the costs, federal spending on US Olympics traditionally has been limited to security and immigration control.

Atlanta, which hosted the Centennial Games this summer, raised 1.7 billion dollars from private funds and paid for significant stadiums and other building projects without any government funding. About a third of the budget of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games went for construction.

Although ACOG expects to show a small surplus on its financial books, its focus on raising money was criticised by some prominent IOC members who questioned whether a Games ever again would be awarded to a city without a financial safety net provided by governments or business consortiums.

Critics also said that the need to raise so much money from private sources led to commercialisation of Atlanta that overshadowed the Games themselves.

Salt Lake City will host the 2002 Winter Olympics with a budget of 798 million dollars. State and local governments are helping with infrastructure improvements, but just as in Atlanta, there's no government underwriting of the Olympic organisation.

In the interview, to be published this month, Clinton talked about watching the Summer Games on TV at the White House and being touched by personal meetings with athletes in the Olympic Village.

"What inspired me most of all was the athletes' earnest love for peace and concern for the well-being of their peoples," he said. He talked about meeting athletes from Palestine and Ireland, and watching competitors from North Korea and South Korea having a friendly chat.

"I've been trying to cross that breach for four years, to get the North and South Koreans talking, and these athletes had taken that incredibly important step over dinner," Clinton said.

The President, who recently celebrated his 50th birthday, is a sports fan who said he wanted to improve his time in jogging and lower his golf handicap. He said the bowling alley in the White House basement should get more of a workout, too.

"I've got to take advantage of the fact that I'm one of the few men in America with a bowling lane installed right in the middle of his house," Clinton said.

Only for two evening ties

BUCHAREST, Sept 4: Spartan Romanian stadiums will get temporary floodlights for two European soccer clashes next week, local officials said on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

A Swiss television company, which plans to show the Rapid Bucharest vs Karlsruhe match and the Gloria Bistrita vs Fiorentina game, had offered to provide lights to allow the matches to be staged in the evening, they said.

Neither Rapid's stadium in Bucharest nor Gloria's in central Transylvania has floodlights.

Rapid Bucharest are playing in the UEFA Cup first round against German side Karlsruhe on September 11 and Gloria Bistrita face Italy's Fiorentina in the Cup Winners' Cup less than 24 hours later.

The two stadiums are 425 kms apart but Bistrita club president loan Horoba said he was optimistic that there would be no problems on Romania's notoriously bad roads to delay the four lighting trucks which require six hours to set up.

Tyson talks about 'Tyson'

LAS VEGAS, Nevada, Sept 4: Heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson considers himself a better fighter than when he unified the title in 1987, but said even he would be unable to defeat his younger self, reports AFP.

"I'm a better fighter now than I was back then, but I couldn't beat that guy," Tyson said. "That guy was awesome. He was a wild man. My lifestyle now is totally different. That is what makes me a better fighter."

World Boxing Council champion Tyson faces World Boxing Association champion Bruce Seldon here Saturday in the first meeting of heavyweight kings since Tyson beat Tony Tucker nine years ago to unify the titles.

Only the WBA crown is at stake. Britain's Lennox Lewis has a court order mandating he be the next WBC title challenger.

Tyson (44-1, 38 knockouts) is an overwhelming favourite to beat Seldon (33-8, 29 knockouts), but he shrugs off such notions.

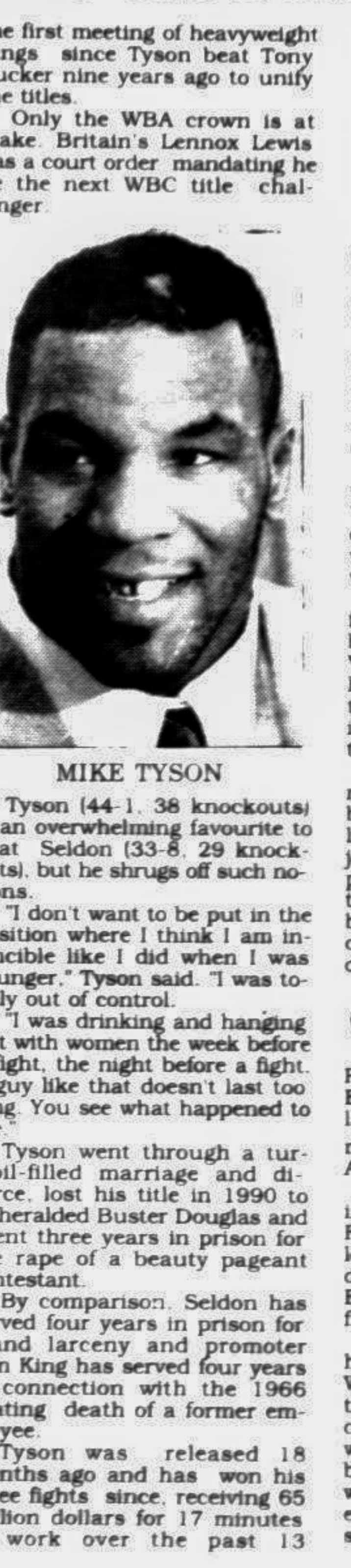
"I don't want to be put in the position where I think I am invincible like I did when I was younger," Tyson said. "I was totally out of control."

"I was drinking and hanging out with women the week before a fight, the night before a fight. A guy like that doesn't last too long. You see what happened to me."

Tyson went through a turmoil-filled marriage and divorce, lost his title in 1990 to unheralded Buster Douglas and spent three years in prison for the rape of a beauty pageant contestant.

By comparison, Seldon has served four years in prison for grand larceny and promoter Don King has served four years in connection with the 1966 beating death of a former employee.

Tyson was released 18 months ago and has won his three fights since, receiving 65 million dollars for 17 minutes of work over the past 13



MIKE TYSON

months. Tyson was to have fought Seldon in July but Tyson caught bronchitis.

"I have been through a great deal," Tyson said. "You can't expect somebody to deal with in a year what it took three years to live."

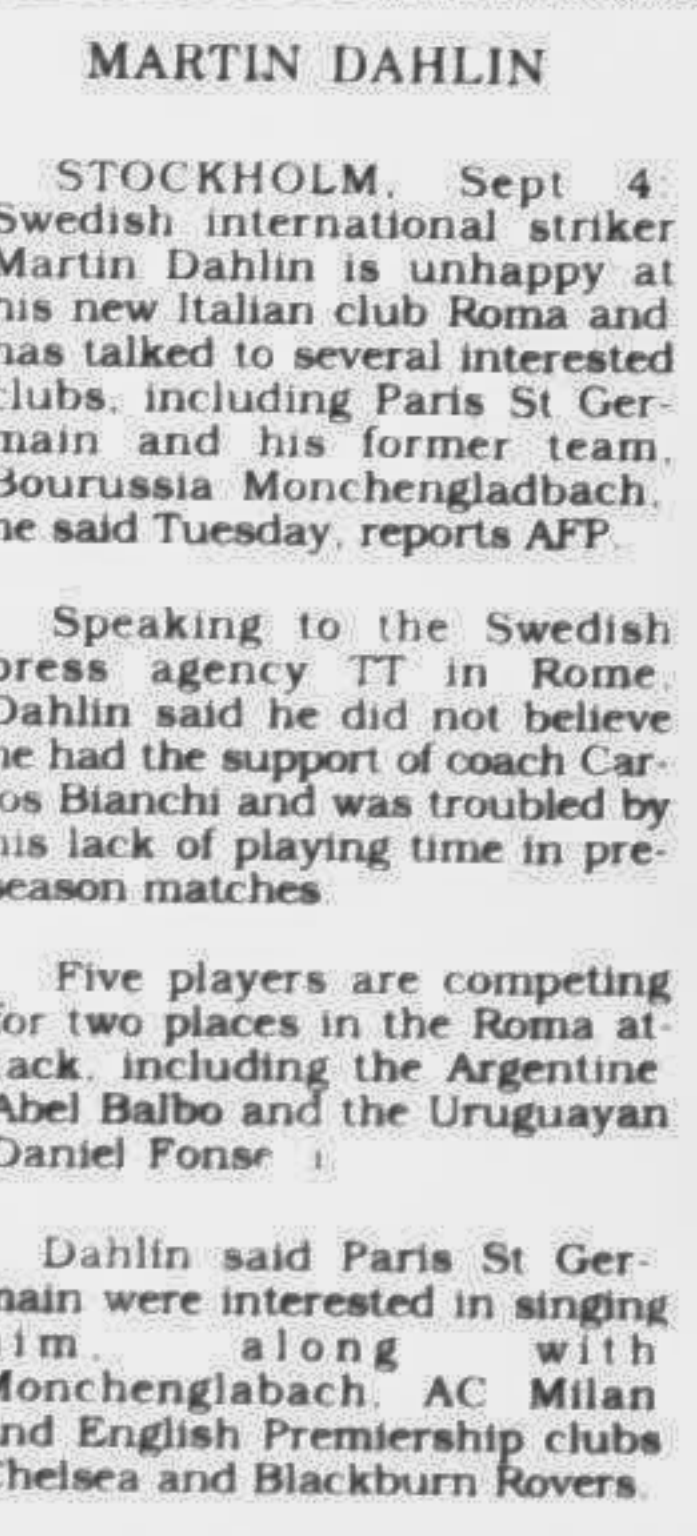
"Look at my situation. Even though I allowed other people to contribute to it, I have to carry the weight of a fool. I didn't create this image alone. But I have to carry it alone."

Tyson talks of himself as two different people in his days before and after prison, which he said taught him a great deal about the world outside his once-structured lifestyle.

"I like that guy I was before I went to prison," Tyson said. "The guy was just foolish. Hell of a guy. But that guy can't survive in this world now. He wasn't tough enough."

Tyson has a steady girlfriend, Monica Turner, who bore him a daughter, Kayna, on Valentine's Day this year. Tyson has settled down. But he refused to call himself happy, even saying he doubts he can ever feel that way.

"I'm just not a happy man by nature," Tyson said. "I have been through some ordeals in life. I am suspicious. I have enjoyed some moments. But I am prepared for anything every time. I'm in love with a woman, but I truly don't believe anyone can make me happy. I have to deal with that myself."



MARTIN DAHLIN



(From L to R) Giselle Prangnell of Wasps and England, Karen Findlay of Richmond and Scotland, and Janice Byford and Janis Ross of Saracens and England pose together in Twickenham, London on Sept 3 where the Rugby Football Union for Women announced the biggest ever sponsorship deal in the game. — AFP/UNB photo