

De Silva remains invincible

Lanka lord over Aussies

COLOMBO, Sept 7: Sri Lanka lived up to their reputation as the kings of one-day cricket with a rousing 50-run victory over Australia in the Singer World Series final here today, reports AFP.

Riding on an explosive start and Aravinda de Silva's genius, the Sri Lankans piled up 234 for three after being sent to bat in a match reduced to 35-over-a-side because of bad weather.

The Australians looking to avenge their defeat in the World Cup final in March, were shot out for 184 with Steve Waugh top-scoring with 55 off 53 balls.

Roshan Mahanama signalled the emphatic victory with a stunning one-handed diving catch on the long-on fence which ended Australia's innings.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga led some 25,000 screaming home fans in celebrating Sri Lanka's win against the team which boycotted their World Cup match here in February due to security concerns.

The Australians, without their injured trio of skipper Mark Taylor, star spinner Shane Warne and fast bowler Craig McDermott, were outplayed from start to finish.

Openers Sanath Jayasuriya and Romesh Kaluwitharana provided a typically rollicking opening, hammering 42 off the first 28 deliveries from seamers Glenn McGrath and Damien Fleming.

Then De Silva and skipper Arjuna Ranatunga, Sri Lanka's two most experienced cricketers, took over with a 103-run stand for the undefeated fourth wicket.

De Silva blazed his way to 75 not out off 64 balls to take his aggregate in the four-nation event to 334 without being dismissed even once. He was named man-of-the-series.

Ranatunga scored an unbeaten 39, as the pair took 18 runs off Paul Reiffels' final over, which included two sixes by De Silva.

Jayasuriya picked up a superb diving catch on the mid-wicket boundary to remove Ricky Ponting for 17 and reduce Australia to 48 for three by the ninth over.

Steve Waugh and Stuart Law (31) retrieved the situation with a 56-run stand before another great catch at mid-wicket — this time by Muttiah Muralitharan — accounted for Law.

Leg-spinner Upal Chandana, one of the four slow bowlers in the Sri Lankan team, ended Australia's slim chances by removing Steve Waugh with a diving return catch in the 23rd over.

Chandana picked up four wickets, while seamer Chaminda Vaas and off-spinner Kumara Dharmasena claimed two each.

The Sri Lankans received a glittering gold-plated trophy and the winners' cheque of 50,000 dollars, while the Australians took home 25,000 dollars.

India and Zimbabwe were the other teams in the two-week event. Sri Lanka's first home engagement since the World Cup triumph.

Jayasuriya smashed six boundaries in a robust 27 off 20 balls before top-edging an in-

tended pull off McGrath to Stuart Law at mid-wicket. Kaluwitharana, however, continued the run spree and by the time the field restrictions ended after 10 overs, he had raced to 48 in a score of 86 for one.

The assault prompted Australian captain Ian Healy to call his entire team for a rare mid-field chat, probably imploring them not to buckle under pressure.

The pep talk appeared to work as the Australians conceded just one boundary between the 11th and 20th overs.

SINGER WORLD SERIES 1996 table with columns O, M, R, W for Sri Lanka and Australia.

AUSTRALIA bowling table listing players like M Waugh, Slater, Ponting, S Waugh, Law, and Dharmasena with their figures.

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former used car salesman, told the court on Thursday he had once been close to moving his family abroad to avoid high taxes but decided to stay because local political leaders had assured him of tax relief for his daughter.

Prosecutors allege Graf and Eckardt failed to declare to authorities 42 million marks (28 million dollars) worth of income between 1989 and 1993 and failed to pay 19 million marks (13 million dollars) in taxes from the late 1990s.

Eckardt, who has spent the last 11 months in custody, is also facing a tax evasion conviction. The two men have separate defence teams but are being tried at the same time.

Eckardt testified on Friday that Steffi had been informed about a plan through which her tournament winnings and sponsorship income was paid into a holding company in Amsterdam known as Sunpark as a way of avoiding high German taxes.

The entire operation, the way it was set up and the amounts from the sponsors in-

cluded, were openly discussed," Eckardt said, adding that Peter, his wife Heidi, and Steffi were present at the meeting.

Asked by the court whether the family was aware the scheme was questionable from a tax standpoint, he replied: "That was obvious."

The Hirsute Eckardt described how Peter had often picked up appearance money from German tennis tournaments in cash sacks and carried it to the Netherlands.

There was always more money there than what was taxed," Eckardt said. "Of course we knew that we had to turn this 'black money' into 'white money'."

The money was "pushed back and forth, and stored in different countries," he said.

He described how the Sunpark was quickly liquidated in mid-1995 immediately after authorities raided the Graf house in Bruehl.

"The money — I can't remember the exact amount — was transferred in four or five trunks to some island somewhere," Eckardt said.

even including when it was known as they US Championships.

In both 1992 and 1993 Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere reached the semifinals.

The two have something else in common.

Meanwhile, Hunt said he had an offer from a Canadian promoter to stage a one-on-one race between Johnson and 100-metre Olympic champion Donovan Bailey over the mutually satisfactory distance of 150 metres.

In Atlanta, Canada's Bailey set the 100 record of 9.84 seconds, while Johnson won the 200 in a world-record 19.32 and took the 400 in an Olympic-record 43.48.

The event would be staged in Toronto's SkyDome with 1 million dollars going to the winner 250,000 dollars to the loser, Hunt said.

Johnson wants to run the event, which would be billed as determining 'The World's Fastest Man,' on or before Oct 15.

It's party time in Lanka

COLOMBO, Sept 7: Jubilant fans danced, hugged each other and burst fire crackers as Sri Lanka devastated Australia to win the Singer World Series and galvanise the world champion status earned just six months ago, reports AFP.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga brushed aside security advice to make an unscheduled visit to the Premadasa Stadium to see the home team thrash Australia which boycotted their World Cup opener in February.

"Sri Lankans played like champions," said Sri Lanka's best known journalist Dalton de Silva. "Now that we have beaten the Aussies once again, there is no doubt that Sri Lankans are world champs in the one-day game."

Most shops in the capital Colombo closed early as workers left home to watch the match shown live on television. Australian skipper Ian Healy had arrived here vowing to avenge their World Cup defeat.

"It was great cricket," De Silva said. "I am going to open a second bottle of arrack (the local spirits)."

Australian skipper Healy, who was booed by home fans throughout the series, ignored the hostile reception and congratulated Arjuna Ranatunga's men.

Healy said Sri Lankans had put his side under more pressure than they could handle. "We were under a lot of pressure a lot of trouble."

Ranatunga was constantly cheered as he walked up to accept the gold-plated Singer Trophy from Sri Lanka's Sports Minister SB Dissanayake.

Ranatunga, who is often teased about his slow running between the wickets, led his team around the tightly-guarded Premadasa Stadium before the 25,000 appreciative home crowd.

"This is what the crowd has been waiting for," Ranatunga said. "I hope we will have their support in the next couple of years too."

Man-of-the-series Aravinda de Silva was offered a choice of a Sedan car or an four-wheel drive vehicle and was quick to choose the red-colour four-wheel drive gifted by the sponsors.

Waugh's worst one-day!

COLOMBO, Sept 7: Australian vice-captain Steve Waugh may like to forget all about a milestone in his illustrious career — his 200th appearance in one-day cricket international, reports AP.

Nothing seemed to have gone right for the Australian all-rounder on Saturday in Colombo, in the four-nation Singer World Series final which his team lost to Sri Lanka.

A luckless Waugh bowled seven overs and was hit for 31 runs without taking any wicket.

As Australia suffered early setbacks in run chase, much depended on Steve Waugh who appeared to be in good form. He raised hopes of the tightly-guarded Premadasa Stadium before the 25,000 appreciative home crowd.

He apparently suffered a loss of concentration and got out playing Sri Lankan spinner Apul Chandana. The bowler gleefully accepted a simple return catch.

Australia never recovered from this reverse. Waugh went into Saturday's game after he was reprimanded and given a suspended fine for showing dissent during Friday's match against India.

Sri Lankan umpire BC Cooray indicted Waugh for violating the code of conduct.

The banishment was handed out after an inquiry was conducted by International Cricket Council match referee John Reid of New Zealand.

The suspended fine is 30 per cent of his match fees if he transgresses again in the next six months.

Johnson's fear

MILAN, Sept 7: While Michael Johnson on Saturday weighed whether it was safe to compete in Sarajevo, he also contemplated a showdown in Toronto to determine the fastest man on the planet, reports AP.

The world and Olympic champion at 200 and 400 metres is one of 120 top athletes the IAAF hopes will be at its Solidarity for Sarajevo meet Monday, the first major sports event to take place in the city since the war ended in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

But the American, here for Saturday's IAAF Grand Prix finals, had concerns about security and still had not decided whether to attend, according to his agent, Brad Hunt.

"You'll have to wait and see who gets on the plane tomorrow," Hunt said.

IAAF chiefs are providing a free charter flight to bring athletes, managers and journalists from Milan to Sarajevo Sunday.

Meanwhile, Hunt said he had an offer from a Canadian promoter to stage a one-on-one race between Johnson and 100-metre Olympic champion Donovan Bailey over the mutually satisfactory distance of 150 metres.

In Atlanta, Canada's Bailey set the 100 record of 9.84 seconds, while Johnson won the 200 in a world-record 19.32 and took the 400 in an Olympic-record 43.48.

The event would be staged in Toronto's SkyDome with 1 million dollars going to the winner 250,000 dollars to the loser, Hunt said.

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Seles sails into final

NEW YORK, Sept 7: Lighter serves and sore shoulder aside, Monica Seles is back in the US Open final, grunting as loudly as ever and slugging two-fisted winners the way she did in her two championship years, reports agencies.

Seles, runner-up last year to co-No. 1 Steffi Graf ran her record against Conchita Martinez to 9-0 Friday in a wind-blown 6-4, 6-3 semifinal victory before rain interrupted their other semifinal between Graf and 15-year-old Martina Hingis.

Hingis led 1-0 after coming back from 0-40 on serve in the first game against Graf. After 3.2 hours of intermittent showers, and several moppings of the court in the hope of resuming play, the match was suspended until Saturday.

With rain forecast for Saturday, and the women's match now scheduled along with the two men's semifinals, officials

worried about getting all those in before Sunday's scheduled finals. If any of the matches are rained out, the tournament will be extended at least until Monday.

Nursing a shoulder injury that has held her back this year, Seles, 22 consistently served in the 70 mile-per-hour (113 kph) range against the fourth-seeded Spaniard.

"I need to get back in the 90s," said Seles. "I need my 90 serves to play against the top players and have an easier chance of holding my serve against somebody like Steffi (Graf)."

Seles, the 1991 and 1992 champion, lost to Graf in three tense sets in last year's final.

The start of the first women's semi-final was delayed briefly by rain, but was played without interruption.

Seles broke Martinez in the opening game of the match, and although Martinez was able to apply some pressure, she was never able to break back.

Martinez didn't take advantage of Seles' weak first serve, standing far behind the baseline to receive. But her tactic of slicing a lot of backhands to Seles' forehand worked well.

"I think I was pushing a lot of balls back," Seles said. "I had a very difficult time with the wind and she would sometimes have some weird stuff on it and sometimes she would give me a clean slice."

Whatever Martinez tried, however, was not enough. "I played some good shots, but she always gets one ball over the net, one ball more over the net," Martinez said.

In the second set, Seles went up 2-1 with a break in the third, and although Martinez fought off six break points in the seventh game to hold, she was again unable to break back and get on terms.

Seles ended the match in style, with a one-handed forehand volley winner. "It was a great way to end it," Seles said.

Martinez, at least went away happier from this semifinals loss. "Finally, I could play my own game against Monica," she said. "Before, I couldn't even play, so today it was good."

"I just have to take my chances when I have them. When I have a break-point, try to make it instead of rushing or making a stupid mistake."

Typically, Seles wasn't satisfied with her performance. "I was holding my serve, and I was pleased about that," she said, "but I wasn't as aggressive as in previous matches and I'll work on that. I was pushing the ball back. The wind was swirling, it was hard getting my timing. When I came in, I was pretty successful."

Seles started the Grand Slam season with a bang by winning her fourth Australian Open title and running her career record in Melbourne to an astonishing 28-0.

Then came the shoulder worries open and a second-round ouster at Wimbledon.

Seles is unsure whether doctors will recommend rest or surgery for her ailing shoulder, but she is determined to get back for 90s persona.

"You see some people who are 5-foot-4 (1.62 m) serving 102s (164 kph). At 5-foot-10 (1.78 m), I should be able to serve 95s on average."

Service speed aside, Seles is eager for another sampling of the sublime pressure of a Grand Slam final.

"I love the matches that are close because as a player that is one of the things you work hard for. When it comes down to close matches, a couple of points will decide it and you love that."

"That is the excitement. That is the rush."

Seles reflected upon Ali and the former world champion's influence on the reigning World Boxing Council heavyweight champion, who faces World Boxing Association champion Bruce Seldon here today.

All's success in the ring and the anti-Vietnam War stance that cost him prime years of his career has made the fighter a hero beyond his sport, so much so that he was chosen to light the torch at the Atlanta Olympics.

"He was the highlight of the Olympics. It was emotional when he lit the torch," said Tyson, who lamented the Games' commercialism and emphasis of boxing in US television coverage.

"Overall, it was a horrible Olympics," Tyson said. "Everything was advertising and selling. And I couldn't believe they didn't show any fights."

Tyson was 11 years old when he saw Ali during the fighter's great visit to a reform school.

"He was the focal point of the '60s and '70s. I never really saw him in his prime," Tyson said. "(Ali) came in and showed the movie 'The Greatest' and I was made because somebody told me to get me in there. Me and my friend were thinking how we were going to get that guy."

"But we saw Muhammad Ali and it changed my life. I still got in trouble and did things after I left that place. But I always had that thought in mind, that I would like to be like that guy."

Tyson later did follow Ali into Islamic faith, although he admits he began the studies as a way to pass time during his three-year prison sentence for rape.

While no comparison to the self-sacrificing stance of Ali, Tyson's situation has cast him in a similar defiant role.

"I always admired rebellious people. I always wanted to be like those guys who fought oppression," Tyson said. "I didn't want to be arrogant."

'Woodies' wrest doubles

NEW YORK, Sept 7: Australians Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde won the US Open men's doubles title Friday, defeating Jacco Eltingh and Paul Haarhuis of the Netherlands 4-6, 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (7-2), reports agencies.

Eltingh double-faulted on the final point. Haarhuis and Eltingh never lost their serve and broke the 'Woodies' once.

Woodforde and Woodbridge became the first doubles team to repeat as US champions since Roy Emerson and Fred Stolle, also from Australia, won consecutive titles in 1965-66.

Woodbridge and Woodforde were top-seeded in the 64-team field, while Eltingh and Haarhuis were seeded eighth.

This was the fourth time the two teams have played in a Grand Slam tournament and their third US Open match, with Eltingh and Haarhuis winning in the 1994 final at the National Tennis Centre. The two teams last met in the semifinals of the Olympics, with Woodbridge and Woodforde winning 6-5, 7-18, 16-16.

While being only the second US Open title for the Woodies, the Australian pair won the 1992 Australian Open and Wimbledon for the last four years, 1993-94-95-96. They also added the Olympic gold medal to the growing list of titles.

In Friday's final they dominated each of the tiebreakers, surging from 3-4 to win the second-set tiebreak 7-5 and racing out to a 4-0 lead on the way to winning the deciding 2 and clinching the 240,000 dollars first prize.

Winners of 38 career titles, the Woodies will undoubtedly go down in history as one of the best doubles teams.

"I guess it is a combination of points, of strengths and weaknesses that we have, and we communicate very well on the court," Woodforde said when asked about their success.

"We are able to cover each other's weaknesses."

"It was a very satisfying win," Woodbridge said. They beat us in the final here two years ago."

Haarhuis said of the Australians: "They have all the shots you need for doubles."

The victory gave the Australians a 6-4 edge over the Dutch duo.

TYSON'S TRIBUTE TO ALI LAS VEGAS, Nevada, Sept 7 (AFP): Mike Tyson has found a fighter he cannot defeat for all his strength and power.

The legend's name is Muhammad Ali.

"He is the greatest," Tyson said. "Our relationship is good. I consider him a fine man and a great brother. When he went through as a man and how he had to persevere is totally intriguing."

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52 pc Swedes against hosting of Olympics STOCKHOLM, Sept 7: One out of every two Swedes is against Sweden hosting the 2004 Summer Olympics, according to a poll published Wednesday, reports AP.

Fifty two per cent of 1,100 Swedes, age 15 or older, said no when asked "Are you for or against Stockholm organising the 2004 Summer Olympics?" Thirty-six per cent said they would like to see the Games in Sweden.

The poll was conducted Aug. 21-28, after the Atlanta Olympics. The survey was carried out by the Tempo public opinion research organisation and published in the Dagens Nyheter daily newspaper.

A margin of error was not mentioned.



ARAVINDA DE SILVA, man-of-the-series

Kaluwitharna went on to score 58 off 45 balls, sharing a 62-run stand for the second wicket with Asanka Gurusinha, before falling in the 15th over to a sharp return catch by left-arm spinner Darren Lehmann.

After Gurusinha (29) became McGrath's second victim in the 21st over, De Silva and Ranatunga ensured that Australia faced a still victory target of 6.7 runs an over.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Singer World Series final between Sri Lanka and Australia in Colombo today.

SRI LANKA: Jayasuriya c Law b McGrath 27

Kaluwitharna c and b Lehmann 58

Gurusinha c Bevan b McGrath 29

De Silva not out 75

Ranatunga not out 39

Extras: (b-1, lb-1, w-2, nb-2) 6

Total (3 wickets, 35 overs) 234

Fall of wickets: 1-42; 2-104; 3-131;

Did not bat: M Tillekeratne, R Mahanama, U Chandana, K Dharmasena, C Vaas, M Muralitharan

Bowling

McGrath 7 0 35 2

Fleming 7 0 53 0

Reiffel 4 0 43 0

Lehmann 5 0 29 1

S Waugh 7 0 31 0

M Waugh 5 0 41 0

AUSTRALIA

M Waugh run out 9

Slater c Chandana b Vaas 8

Ponting c Jayasuriya b Vaas 17

S Waugh c and b Chandana 55

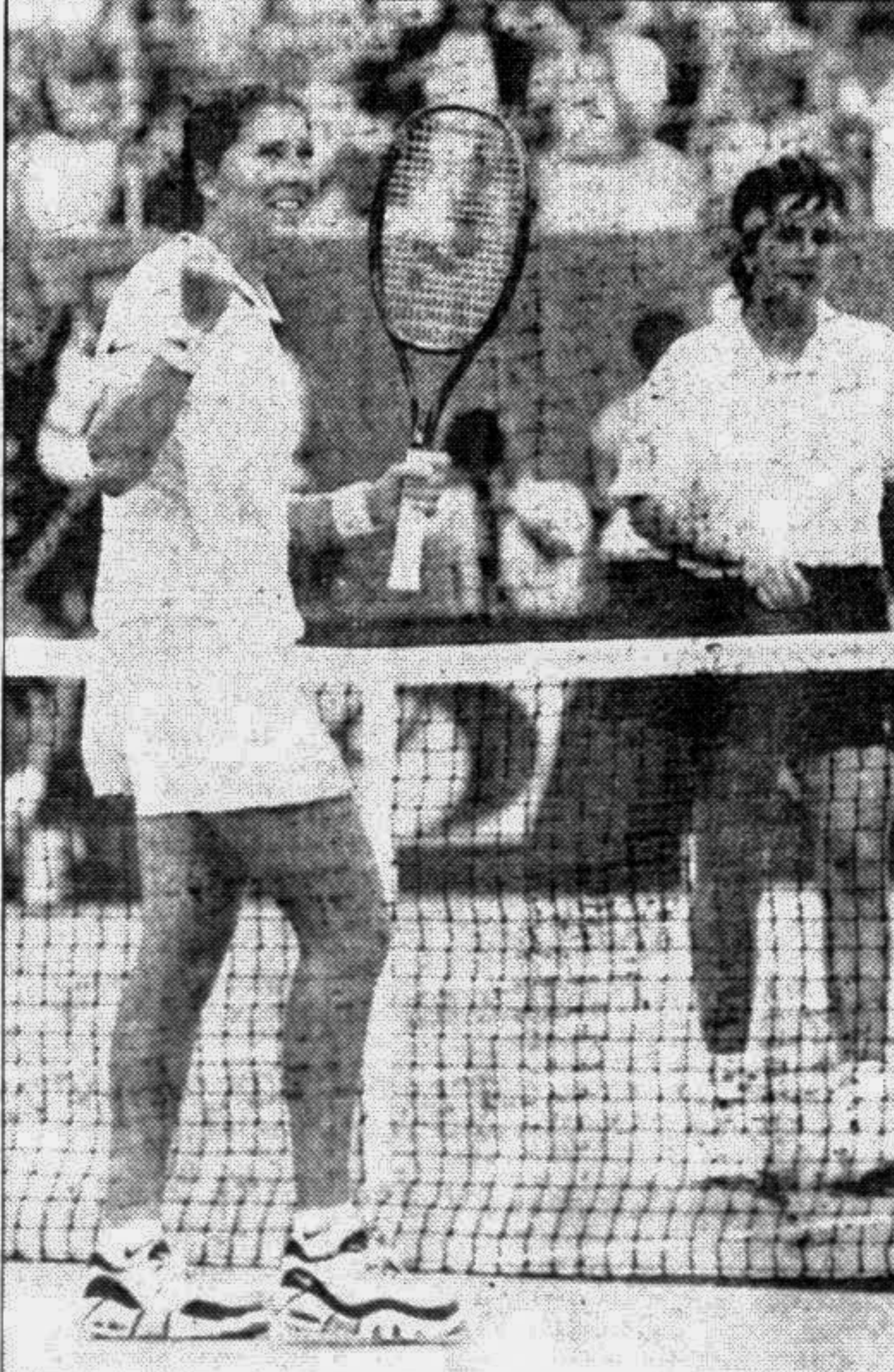
Law c Muralitharan b Dharmasena 31

Bevan b Dharmasena 7

Lehmann at Kaluwitharna b Muralitharan 15

Healy c Muralitharan b Chandana 20

Reiffel c Mahanama b Chandana 12



American Monica Seles(L) mocks a punch after downing Conchita Martinez of Spain in the US Open on September 6.