

Rusedski slams down a rocket!

BEIJING, Oct 11: A 225 kph serve that sent Greg Rusedski into the quarterfinals of the Beijing Open is likely to remain an unofficial world record because of technical limitations at the event, officials said today, reports Reuters.

Rusedski won a match point against France's Jean-Philippe Fleurian on Thursday with an ace that timekeepers said was faster than the world record jointly held by the British player himself and Australian Mark Philippoussis.

But event officials said the time could not be confirmed because, Information Display Systems, the company that calibrated timekeeping equipment for the ATP Tour, was not at the Beijing tournament.

"Right now it's an unofficial record," said Steve Casey, ATP Tour director of communications. "We are acknowledging that... it must have been close to 225 (kph)."

"It's an unofficial record because (Information Display Systems) wasn't here to calibrate the machines and make sure that everything was standardised as it has been for other events," Casey said. "It's just unfortunate."

He said it was unlikely that the serve would be made an official record in the future.

"I felt it was 225, no question about it," Rusedski said after the match. "I knew when I hit it, it would be close or better than my previous fastest."

C'wealth concedes

DUBLIN, Oct 11: The governing body of track and field got the Commonwealth Games to back down Thursday on the dates for track and field in the 1998 Games in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, reports AP.

Commonwealth Games Federation president Michael Fernell agreed to move the start of track and field back to Sept. 16 from Sept. 14, allowing a short break between the last meet of the IAAF World Cup Sept. 13.

IAAF president Primo Nebiolo announced the deal at the body's calendar conference. Nebiolo warned the Commonwealth Games last month it needed to chance the dates.

"I appreciated your understanding of the importance of the World Cup and your willingness to schedule the Games in harmony with the best interest of world athletics," Nebiolo said.

Munoz Panama's new soccer coach

PANAMA CITY, Oct 11: Panamanian soccer authorities have selected Orlando Munoz, trainer for the national team, as the new coach after sacking Cesar Maturana for a dismal record, local Telemetro Channel 13 reported Thursday, says Reuters.

Munoz, a Panamanian, was placed under contract until December 15, when World Cup elimination games are completed, Channel 13 reported. Salary information was not given.

Maturana, a Colombian, was sacked this week after the Panama team lost to Canada 1-3 August 30, lost to Cuba 1-3 September 22 and drew with El Salvador 1-1 October 6.

Munoz is also the coach of the Panamanian semi-professional team club Eurokickers.

Duisburg chief dies

BONN, Oct 11: The president of Bundesliga side Duisburg Dieter Fischeidick died on Thursday after suffering a heart attack at a news conference, reports Reuters.

The businessman collapsed at the media event to preview his club's match with champions Dortmund this weekend. He was 58.

Fischeidick served as club president for eight years, taking the helm when they were playing regional league soccer and bringing them up to Bundesliga standard.

But he recently announced his intention to quit the post after he was harshly criticised by some fans and members over his plans to reform Duisburg's organisation.

"I'm completely shocked," Funkel said. "We've lost someone who deserved the greatest respect."

Duisburg, who were promoted to the Bundesliga last season, lie fourth from bottom of the table, just above the relegation zone.

Magic's belated wisdom

HONOLULU, Oct 11: Magic Johnson realises his return to the Los Angeles Lakers last season wound up having a negative effect on the team, reports AP.

He says that won't happen again because he has no intention of making another comeback.

Watching his former teammates work out in training camp Wednesday, Johnson also disclosed he had bought back the minority interest in the Lakers that he sold to majority owner Jerry Buss in order to return as a player.

The interest is believed to be a five per cent share of the club, and the purchase price was not disclosed.

Johnson, who turned 37 in August, returned to the Lakers late last January, and averaged 14.6 points, 6.9 assists and 5.7 rebounds in 32 games.

Edberg eliminates Muster



VIENNA, Oct 11: A sickly Stefan Edberg moved a step closer to capturing one more title before his retirement when he beat top seed Thomas Muster in the CA Trophy on Thursday, reports Reuters.

The Swede, who plans to quit the game at the end of the year,

by winning the second set tie break 7-2.

In the final set of a superb match, Edberg profited from Muster's first double fault of the match to seal victory in a little over two hours.

French Open champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov continued his pursuit of his fifth title of the year with an emphatic 6-4, 6-3 win over Italian qualifier

Fifth seeded Boris Becker required three sets to knock out fellow German Michael Stich 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 to increase his lead in the head-to-head between the pair 8-4.

Becker had also a slow start, dropping serve in the sixth game to lose the first set, before regaining his form and taking the second set with a thundering ace.



Tennis world's true gentleman-player Stefan Edberg makes backhand slice against Australian clay-court specialist Thomas Muster (not in the picture) during his Vienna ATP tennis tournament on October 10. The illustrious Swede defeated the world number three Austrian. —AFP/UNB photo

edged out the Austrian world number three 6-4, 6-7, 7-5.

Edberg, still recovering from a bout of flu which forced him to pull out of last week's tournament in Lyon, stretched his run of victories over clay court specialist Muster to nine.

Muster dropped his serve in the opening game to lose the first set but levelled the match

Omar Camporese.

Kafelnikov had a slow start against Camporese, dropping serve in the seventh game, before stepping up a gear for two consecutive breaks to claim the set.

He clinched the match with a second set break at 5-3 in a little over an hour.

In the decisive set, Becker's form wavered slightly and he dropped serve at 3-4 when he was forced to change rackets just after breaking Stich's serve.

But the three-time Wimbledon champion broke back immediately to clinch the match on serve a game later.

Number niggles Nebiolo



DUBLIN, Oct 11: World athletics chief Primo Nebiolo hinted on Thursday at radical changes to the Grand Prix circuit from 1998 with a reduction in the number of meetings, reports Reuters.

"We don't have difficulty with having great meetings on the Grand Prix," Nebiolo told a news conference after the International Amateur Athletic Federation's (IAAF) annual calendar meeting.

"The difficulty is to stop the number, if it will be possible to have a great super league."

Nebiolo did not elaborate on the format of a new super league but IAAF sources said he apparently wanted a smaller circuit of elite meetings.

In a statement released after the news conference, the IAAF president said the 1997 circuit would be the last in the present form.

"The IAAF is studying a new concept and philosophy for the 1998 Grand Prix and the IAAF Grand Prix commission will meet again in April to discuss and propose details."

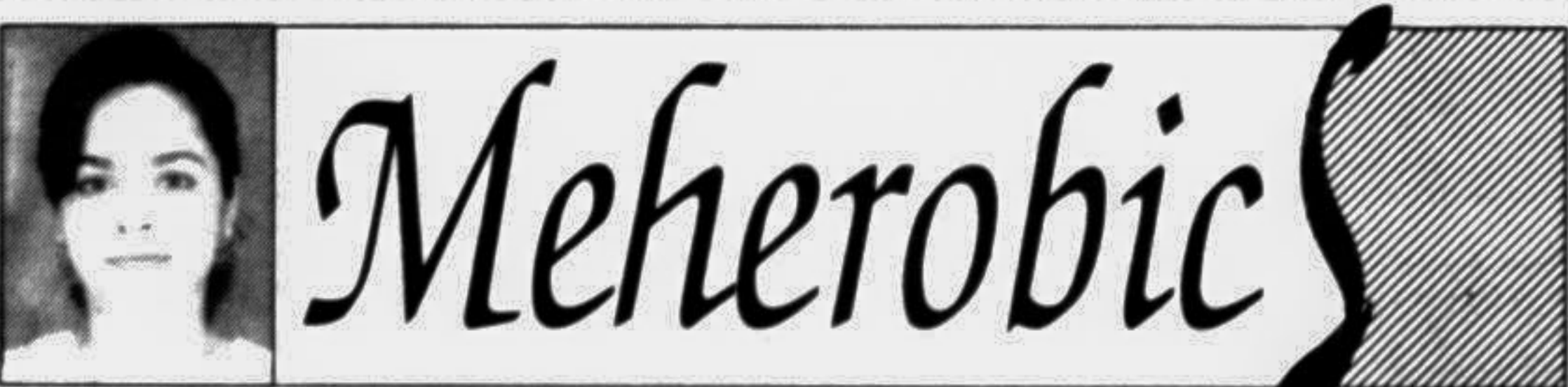
For the first time next year prize money will be available at the World Indoor Championships scheduled for Paris from March 7-9 and at the World Outdoor Championships in Athens from August 1-10.

Almost four million dollars in prize money will be available at the Grand Prix final in Fukuoka Japan, on September 13, the first time the final has been staged outside Europe

since the circuit started 11 years ago.

1997 CALENDAR

May 4: Rio de Janeiro
May 10: Osaka, Japan
May 18: Charlotte, US
May 25: Eugene, US
June 5: Rome
June 8: Moscow
June 25: Paris
July 2: London
July 4: Lausanne, Switzerland
July 7: Oslo
July 16: Stockholm
Aug 13: Nice, France
Aug 16: Zurich
Aug 16: Monaco
Aug 22: Brussels
Aug 24: Cologne, Germany
Aug 26: Berlin
or Sept 5: Berlin
Sept 13: Final, Fukuoka, Japan



For a good triceps stretch, try this. Grasp one elbow — your upper arm is vertical, and your elbow is flexed — and pull it gently backwards. If you bend sideways, you will get a stretch from your triceps all the way down one side of your trunk. Hold for 15 seconds, then repeat on the other side (Figure 1-1).

To stretch your arms, shoulders, and upper back — interlace your fingers (your arms should be straight overhead, with palms facing up); then gently press your arms up and back (Figure 1-2).

To stretch your calves, stand back from a support (like a wall), and lean against it. One leg should be forward, and with the knee bent. The other leg is straight, with the foot flat on the floor, and behind you. Press your hips toward the support, and feel the calf stretch. Hold for 30 seconds, then switch legs and repeat the stretch (Figure 1-3).

A variation is to slightly bend your rear leg — to stretch the Achilles tendon and soleus muscle, which is behind the more visible gastrocnemius muscle in the calf.

A good groin stretch, which also stretches the lower back, is to sit on the floor with your knees bent and the soles of your feet together. Holding your feet, gently press your knees down with your elbows, by leaning forward. Remember to keep your back "flat", and never, with any stretch, move to the point of pain. Never, Never! (Figure 1-4).

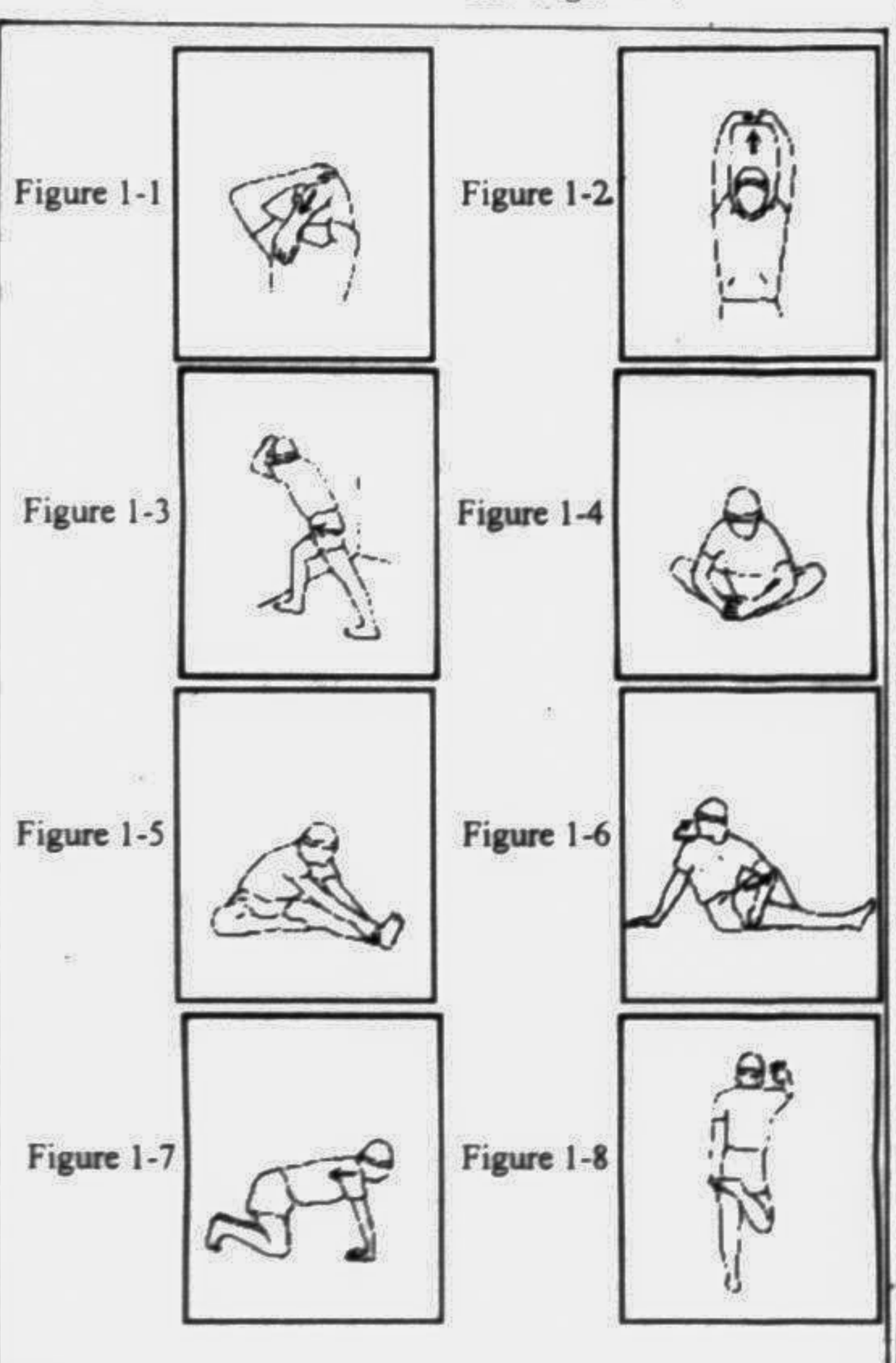
For your hamstrings and lower back, sit with one leg straight out in front of you, and the other leg bent so the sole of the foot rests against the inner thigh of the straight leg. Hold a foot, ankle or a towel looped around your foot; then lean forward (flat back) as you simultaneously pull back on your foot, or keep the foot of the straight leg pointing up. Keep your neck "neutral." Hold for 20 seconds, then increased the stretch and hold for another 20 seconds. Repeat on the other leg (Figure 1-5).

For your back and rib cage, do the following spinal twist. Sit on the floor with one leg

straight out in front of you. Bend your other leg and cross it over the straight leg. Your foot should be flat on the floor, and just outside of your knee. Now twist your trunk and place your elbow against the outside of your flexed knee, and press against it so your trunk is twisted sideways, as far as you can comfortably go. Your head should turn in the same direction as your trunk. Hold for 15 seconds. Repeat on the other side (Figure 1-6).

For forearms and wrists, start on all fours, but with your fingers pointing backward (thumbs out). Lean back slightly to intensify the stretch. Hold for 20 seconds (Figure 10-7).

For the front of the thigh (quadriceps), hold the top of one foot with the opposite hand, and gently pull your heel toward your buttocks as you simultaneously try to extend that leg (but don't). Hold for 30 seconds, then repeat on the other side (Figure 1-8).



Another feather in Jansher's cap

DOHA, Oct 11: Seven-time world champion Jansher Khan won his fifth successive Qatar International squash tournament on Thursday by defeating Australia's Rodney Eyles 15-10, 15-7, 13-15 and 15-10, reports Reuters.

It took the Pakistani first seed 72 minutes to overcome the second seed in a re-match of the 1994 and 1995 finals here. "I played some fantastic volleys today, and I was trying to finish the match quickly," Jansher said. "Eyles is always my toughest opponent and he's improved a lot."

The Australian argued with the referee throughout the contest and at one stage demanded the tournament referee be summoned to court.

But after the match he played down his complaints.

"It was all a heat of the moment thing," he said. "But you have to give Jansher credit. I was trying to push and hound him but he keeps coming back."

Jansher said it was "75 per cent" certain he would play in the Mahindra Challenge in India in December, a tournament he has avoided for the last three years because of fears for his safety.

Thursday's victory was Jansher's second against his old rival in recent weeks. He won the Al Gezira event in Egypt to avenge his shock defeat by Eyles in Hong Kong in August.

Ref to face raucous protest!

MADRID, Oct 11: Real Zaragoza fans armed with 15,000 whistles will give the referee at Saturday's home game against Athletic Bilbao a noisy reception in protest over a disputed penalty during last week's match with Barcelona, reports Reuters.

On the advice of a linesman, the penalty was awarded by the match referee who sent off a Zaragoza defender. Barcelona then equalised on their way to a 5-3 victory.

Television replays suggested the decision was wrong and Zaragoza have launched an appeal to force a replay of the last twenty minutes of the game.

"We want our unhappiness to be known without violence... we also ask fans to bring along their own whistles. The more of us the better," said a representative of the Ligallo Fondo Norte supporters' group, which will distribute the whistles.

Fans will add to the protest by displaying a giant banner, with references to the fateful and obscenity-charged conversation between referee and linesman.

The controversy seems to have stimulated interest in Zaragoza where the first sell-out game of the season is expected.

Michelle exits

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 11: In one of the biggest shocks in years, three-time title holder Michelle Martin crashed out of the women's World Championship here on Friday, succumbing in four sets to fellow Australian Liz Irving, reports AFP.

Irving turned in a scintillating performance after losing the first set of the quarter-final clash to go through 4-9, 10-9, 9-5 and 9-5.



World number one Jansher Khan of Pakistan receives the Qatar International squash cup for a record fifth successive year from Sheikh Mohammed Bin Eid Al Thani in Doha on Oct 10. —AFP/UNB photo

IOC learns a lesson



LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Oct 11: No more official Olympic TV game shows. No more steet vendors turning the games into a giant bazaar. No more marketing free-for-all.

Alarmed by excesses in Atlanta, the International Olympic Committee says it will tighten its rules to keep the Games from being degraded by unchecked commercialization and "junk merchandising."

"We consider the Olympic Games as something of a franchise," IOC vice president Dick Pound said Wednesday, reports AP.

"We are going to take a little more active role in ensuring our franchisees don't do anything to damage the Olympic Games or the franchise."

The IOC sells its own official corporate sponsorships and has rules on marketing, merchandising and advertising of the games.

Pound, the IOC's top marketing official, accused Atlanta's municipal government of undermining the summer games by allowing vendors to turn parts of the city center into a junk market.

"Based on this recent experience, we will take a look at the host city contract to deal with the ability of a host city to ambush the local organizing committee," Pound said. "It never occurred to us that a host city would do something like that."

Cities bidding to host future games could be ruled out of contention if they refuse to abide by the IOC's marketing rules.

"We could say, 'If you want this programme that much, you may have to do without the games,'" Pound said.

The rule would first be written into the contract for the 2004 Games, which will be awarded next September. Contracts for the 1998 Winter Games in Nagano, 2000 Summer Games in Sydney and 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City have already been signed.

Atlanta gets on Nagano's nerves

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Oct 11: Organisers of the next Olympics in Japan acknowledged on Thursday that they were under extra pressure to run a trouble-free event after the calamitous organisation of the Atlanta Games, reports Reuters.

Officials from Nagano, which hosts the 1998 Winter Games, were warned by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) at a meeting to avoid the accreditation, transport and computer problems which caused problems for athletes, officials and the media in Atlanta.

Asked if there was more pressure after the Summer Games problems, Nagano director Makoto Kobayashi said: "Yes, especially regarding transport and information."

In Atlanta competitors, officials and the journalists were often obliged to wait for hours at the airport to get their accreditation cards and were frustrated by the inefficient bus system taking them to venues.

The results' computer also failed to work at the start of the Games and drew furious worldwide media criticism.

Nagano chiefs have already held talks with the multi-national computer firm IBM about the technological problems and are working to make sure athletes are not forced to wait for hours to get accredited after long flights to Japan.

deals with "a number of products which didn't do much good for the Olympic image."

Pound and IOC marketing director Michael Payne cited Atlanta's "official Olympic game show category" — which went to the TV game show "Wheel of Fortune."

Payne said other licensed products "trivialized" and "devalued" the games.

"I'm not sure we had the commemorative toilet seat cover — but close to it," he said.

Pound praised the marketing programmes undertaken by Nagano and Sydney organisers. But he voiced frustration at Salt Lake City's delays in finalizing a joint marketing agreement with the US Olympic Committee.

"The progress is not as much as we would like to have seen," Pound said. "These things appear to be proceeding at glacial speed."

Salt Lake City organizers were expected to present details of a "framework" agreement to the executive board Thursday. The deadline for final agreement is the end of the year.

The deal establishes how Salt Lake City and the USOC share revenues from corporate sponsorships over an eight-year period.

Also Wednesday, Olympic officials dismissed French news reports that the Atlanta Games had incurred a deficit, possibly running in the tens of millions of dollars.

Privately run Atlanta Committees for the Olympic Games had a budget of 1.7 billion dollars. ACOG's final financial report is not due until early December.

"We have no indication yet as to the financial outcome of the Atlanta Games," IOC director general Francois Carrard said. "But the information we have so far seems to indicate ACOG hopes to clear their accounts not with a loss. We understand ACOG is pretty close to making ends meet and talking about a possible modest profit."

European football landscape

PARIS, Oct 11: Spanish champions Atletico Madrid face a tough home match with third-placed Betis on Sunday as they attempt to stay in the early running to retain their title, reports AFP.

Atletico, seventh and four points behind leaders Real Madrid, are unbeaten in the Champions League, in which they are leading scorer, but have been more inconsistent in the league.

Their last two league games have illustrated their season. They gained a facile 3-0 win at home to struggling newcomers Hercules followed by a disappointing scoreless draw away at relegation candidates Sevilla.

Atletico, coached by Yugoslav Rado Antic, once sacked by Real Madrid for lacking charisma, rely heavily on the inspiration and goals of Argentinian playmaker Diego Simeone while they hope that Simeone's compatriot, close season signing, Juan Esnaider will start scoring goals more regularly.

Betis, who lost their early season league lead a fortnight ago going down 2-1 at home to Deportivo La Coruna, are only a point behind Real Madrid and Barcelona.

While Spanish international Alfonso provides the goals, three so far, it is the unlikely pairing of Nigerian Finidi George and Croatian Robert Jarni who provide the creativity in the midfield. Unlikely because the much travelled Jarni, a veteran of Yugoslavia's 1990 World Cup squad, normally plays at left back for Croatia.

Atletico's bitter rivals real travel to Santander on Sunday, with teenager Raul hoping to add to his four goals, despite not scoring in his international debut against the Czech Republic in midweek.

Santander won their first two matches, but have since fallen away and only managed to beat pointless Extremadura 2-1 with an 86th minute winner from former Werder Bremen striker Vladimir Bestchastnykh. Vladimir

Barcelona, who failed to take the outright lead in drawing 1-1 with Tenerife.

travel to third from bottom Compostela on Saturday and should return with the three points.

The only threat to the Barcelona defence should be Bulgarian international Liubomir Penev, transferred from Atletico in the summer, who scored their goal against Sporting Gijon in the last round of league matches.

ITALY

In Italy, Serie A leaders Juventus travel to Vicenza on Sunday missing a quartet of injured players.

The Zebras have reached the summit thanks to the efforts of striker Alan Boksic, playmaker Alessandro del Piero, skipper Antonio Conte and goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi. But all four are out of Sunday's match.

Boksic is suspended. Del Piero end Peruzzi have not recovered from injury, while Conte damaged knee ligaments in Italy's laboured 1-0 win over Georgia on Wednesday night and could be out for six months.

If nothing else, coach Marcello Lippi will find just how much strength he has in depth as his squad tries to win back the championship from AC Milan.

Michael Padovano will lead the attack, alongside either of Lippi's under-21 strikers Nicola Amoroso or Christian Vieri.

Milan, a point behind Juventus, head south to face Roma on Saturday night for one of three matches brought forward because of next Tuesday's UEFA Cup ties.

The champions will be without injured Dejan Savicevic or suspended Zvonimir Boban, but will have midfielder Demetrio Albertini back from injury.

They can also count on Italy's top strike partnership of Liberian George Weah and Marco Simone. Frenchman Christophe Dugarry, yet to start after knee surgery in the summer, is fit but will probably play with the reserves.

Third-placed Inter will have their various World Cup internationalists back for the game against Piacenza at the San Siro on Saturday, when Fiorentina will host Lazio.

Fiorentina, who do not play again until Thursday in the European Cup Winners' Cup, will be hoping Argentine skipper Gabriel Batistuta has a relaxing flight back from World Cup qualifying duty in South America.

FRANCE

In France, leaders Paris Saint Germain are boosted by the return of Brazilian playmaker Rai for their away match on Saturday with League Cup winners Metz.

Paris, leading Monaco by six points, will be missing French international defender Alain Roche, although he will not need an operation for his injury.

Metz are harder hit as their international striker Robert Pires is suspended following his sending off at Lens, so more pressure will be on Brazilian sales to trouble a Paris defence that has only conceded three goals all season.

Monaco have serious injury problems as they prepare for Sunday's match away at third-placed Bastia.

Internationals Eric di Meco and Enzo Scifo are both out injured. Di Meco with a knee injury and Scifo has an injury to his big toe.

Bastia will be delighted to welcome back the league's joint leading scorer Anton Drobnyak from international duty with Yugoslavia. Bastia have only managed a point in the two matches that Drobnyak has been absent.

Olympique Marseille, who trail Paris by nine points after a mixed start to their comeback season in the French First Division, are at home to fellow newcomers Caen, who have made a dreadful start and are second from bottom.

Marseille are likely to keep faith with the strike partnership of Xavier Gravelaine, four goals this season, and Marce Libbra, a leading light in their promotion campaign last season.

It means that veteran Republic of Ireland striker Tony Cascarino misses out, despite scoring twice in midweek for the Republic at home to Macedonia in their World Cup

qualifying tie.

GERMANY

In the German Bundesliga, leaders Stuttgart will expect to maintain their momentum as they travel east to face Hansa Rostock, now 14th after a poor recent run.

Second-placed Bayer Leverkusen have a tougher-looking away to crack as they host Karlsruhe, standing fourth. Karlsruhe are one of the form sides around in the Bundesliga, thanks mainly to the goalscoring exploits of South African-born Sean Dundee.

Dundee, top scorer in the league, hopes to obtain German nationality and a place in Bert Vogts side soon.

Perennial title favourites Bayern Munich meanwhile go to sixth-placed Cologne in a match which is crucial to their championship campaign.

The Bavarians' traditional in-fighting is already threatening to get the better of them and with European competition a distant memory following a UEFA Cup first round defeat to Valencia.

Giovanni Trapattoni's men need to stop the rot before their season collapses around them.

Champions Dortmund host MSV Duisburg in what will be a keenly fought local derby as the hosts try and catch up ground on the leading quartet following last week's reverse at Bochum.

Dortmund are hoping for a speedy return of injured international stars Matthias Sammer and Andreas Moller, who missed Germany's midweek win in Armenia.

ENGLAND

In England, Dominic Matteo is winning his battle to play in the heart of Liverpool's defence in Saturday's Premier League clash with Manchester United.

Matteo, 22, who won a place in Glenn Hoddie's squad for Wednesday's match against Poland, is recovering from an injury to his right knee.

After being sidelined for almost two weeks, he is hoping to oust Neil Ruddock from the team to face the defending champions at Old Trafford.