

Sport

W Province move ahead

CAPE TOWN, Apr 26: Western Province beat Natal by six wickets in the first match of the best of three series in the Standard Bank Cup final at Newlands on Friday, reports Reuter.

SCORES: Natal 174 in 42.1 overs (Neil Johnson 49, Eric Simons 3-24); Western Province 175-4 in 42.3 overs (Gary Kirsten 62, Jacques Kallis 43).

The second match is in Durban on Sunday.

Ronaldo's denial

RIO DE JANEIRO, Apr 26: Brazil's world-footballer-of-the-year Ronaldo said here on Friday that he had not signed, a new contract with Barcelona as had been reported earlier in the week, reports AFP.

"Nothing has been decided. All that concerns me is that we do our best and win the title," the 20-year-old Ronaldo said.

Barcelona president Jose Luis Nuñez had said on Wednesday that a contract had been agreed which included a 107-million-dollar payment to the club if Ronaldo leaves before the end of 2006.

Nuñez added that the deal with Ronaldo, who emulated compatriot Romario's feat of three years ago scoring 30 goals for Barcelona in a season last Sunday, would be financed by Nike Adidas Kappa and were in talks with a fourth unnamed company.

Alexandre Martins, Ronaldo's manager, said at the airport where Ronaldo arrived to join up with the Brazilian squad ahead of Tuesday's friendly with Mexico in Miami, Florida, that nothing was settled.

"A final decision must be taken by June 28. It is necessary for us to look at other offers," Martins said.

Martins, who has also been approached by Serie A side Lazio with a 30 million dollar transfer offer, did add that it would be nice if Ronaldo stayed with the Catalan side as they were one of the world's biggest clubs.

De Silva dampens Pak spirit

COLOMBO, Apr 26: Aravinda de Silva's supreme batting touch saved Sri Lanka from a humiliating Tolla-pse on the opening day of the second cricket Test against Pakistan here today, reports AFP.

Electing to take first strike in perfect batting conditions, the Sri Lankans fell from a comfortable 124 for one to 144 for five before recovering to post 281 for seven by stumps.

De Silva, who struck a masterly 168 in the first Test, saw off the middle-order crisis with an unbeaten 101 — his 10th Test century in 59 matches.

The 31-year-old, who came in soon after lunch at the fall of the second wicket, defied the Pakistani bowlers for the rest of the day and reached the three-figure mark two overs before stumps with the help of 15 boundaries.

Chaminda Vaas was unbeaten on nine having stayed an hour to add a valuable 57 for the eighth wicket with De Silva.

There was little hint of the trouble to follow when openers Sanath Jayasuriya and Russell Arnold batted through the morning session during a 95-run stand for the first wicket.

Jayasuriya's attacking strokeplay fetched him 13 boundaries and a six in 72 off 96 balls, before his dismissal in the third over after lunch triggered off a dramatic collapse.

Pakistan overcame both the absence of their injured bowling spearheads Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis and sultry weather to grab four wickets in the space of 26 deliveries midway through the afternoon session.

Jayasuriya had added a single to his lunch score of 71 when he edged off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq to Mushtaq Ahmed in the slips.

New man Marvan Atapattu helped the 23-year-old Arnold take the score to 124 for one, before the unexpected slump began.

Leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed had Atapattu caught at silly point by Salim Elahi for 14. Two balls later, Arnold was run out for 37 in responding to De Silva's call for a sharp single.

Tillekeratne, who scored a century in the drawn first Test, made only 10 with the help of two boundaries.

De Silva and wicketkeeper Romesh Kaluwitharana added a brisk 64 in 67 minutes for the sixth wicket to revive the home team, before another two quick wickets fell soon after tea.

Kaluwitharana was bowled round his legs for 22 trying to sweep left-armer Asif Mujtaba.

Ruwan Kalpage, one of the three Sri Lankan replacements for the match, struggled for 27

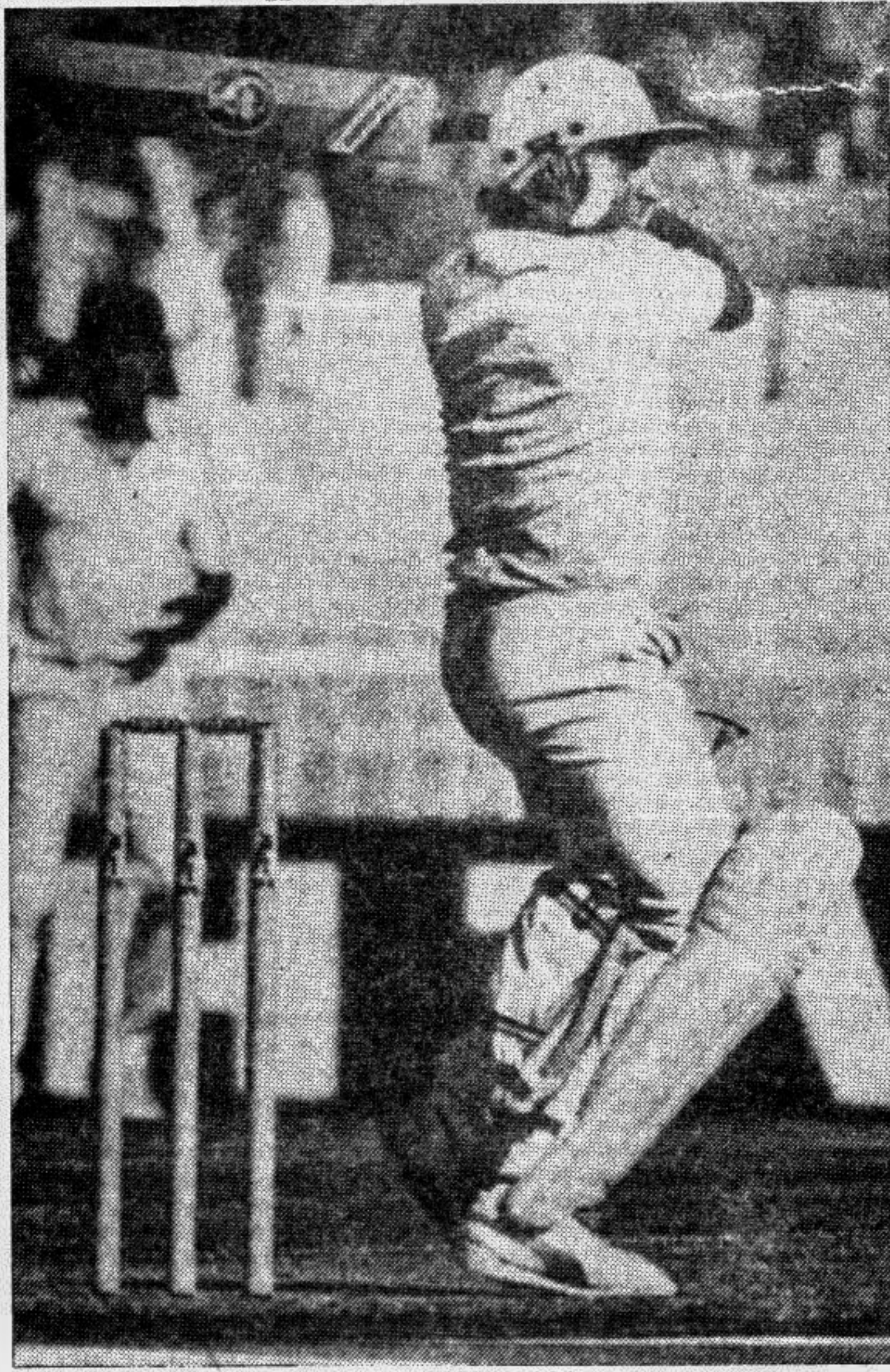
Silva and seamer Sajjewa de Silva in place of Kumar Dharma and the injured Muttiah Muralitharan and Nuwan Zoysa.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the second and final cricket Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Colombo Saturday:

SRI LANKA: First Innings

Jayasuriya c Mushtaq b Saqlain	72
Arnold run out	37
Atapattu c Elahi b Mushtaq	14



DE SILVA... 101 n.o

De Silva not out	101
Ranatunga c Elahi b Saqlain	4
Tillekeratne b Zahid	10
Kaluwitharana b Mujtaba	22
Kalpage c Elahi b Saqlain	5
Vaas not out	9
Extras: (b-1, lb-3, nb-3)	7
Total (for 7 wickets)	281
Fall of wickets: 1-95; 2-124; 3-124; 4-129; 5-144; 6-204; 7-224	

Bowling

Zahid	0	M	R	W
Nazir	12	1	44	1
Mushtaq	8	1	50	0
Saqlain	21	6	67	1
Mujtaba	34	9	93	3
	15	3	23	1

minutes to score five before falling to a disputed decision by Zimbabwe umpire Ian Robinson.

Kalpage was declared caught at short-leg off Saqlain Mushtaq when TV replays showed the batsman's boot rather than his bat.

Earlier, Pakistan retained the same team that drew the first Test at the Premadasa Stadium earlier in the week.

Sri Lanka overhauled their bowling attack by bringing in spinners Kalpage and Jayantha

Michael, Jason reach semis

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Florida, Apr 26: Michael Chang advanced to the semifinals of the US Men's Clay Court championships Friday night, beating Zimbabwe's Byron Black 7-5, 6-3 in a mistake-filled match, reports agencies.

Chang, who will move up to No. 2 in the world when the ATP Tour releases its rankings next week, broke Black five times only to lose his own serve in the very next game. Finally after breaking Black for a 4-2 lead in the second set, the top-seeded American managed to put together a pair of solid service games to finish off the match.

Chang will face fifth-seeded Jason Stoltenberg of Australia, a 6-7 (3-7), 6-4, 6-4 winner over Uruguay's Marcelo Filippini.

In the other quarterfinals, sixth-seeded Chris Woodruff beat fourth-seeded Alex O'Brien 6-4, 6-7 (5-7), 6-4 and South Africa's Grant Stafford defeated Brazil's Fernando Meligeni 6-3, 6-4.

The struggle between Woodruff, the 1993 NCAA winner for Tennessee, and O'Brien, the 1992 winner for Stanford, lasted for nearly three hours.

"It felt like we were out there an eternity," Woodruff said.

An all Japanese affair

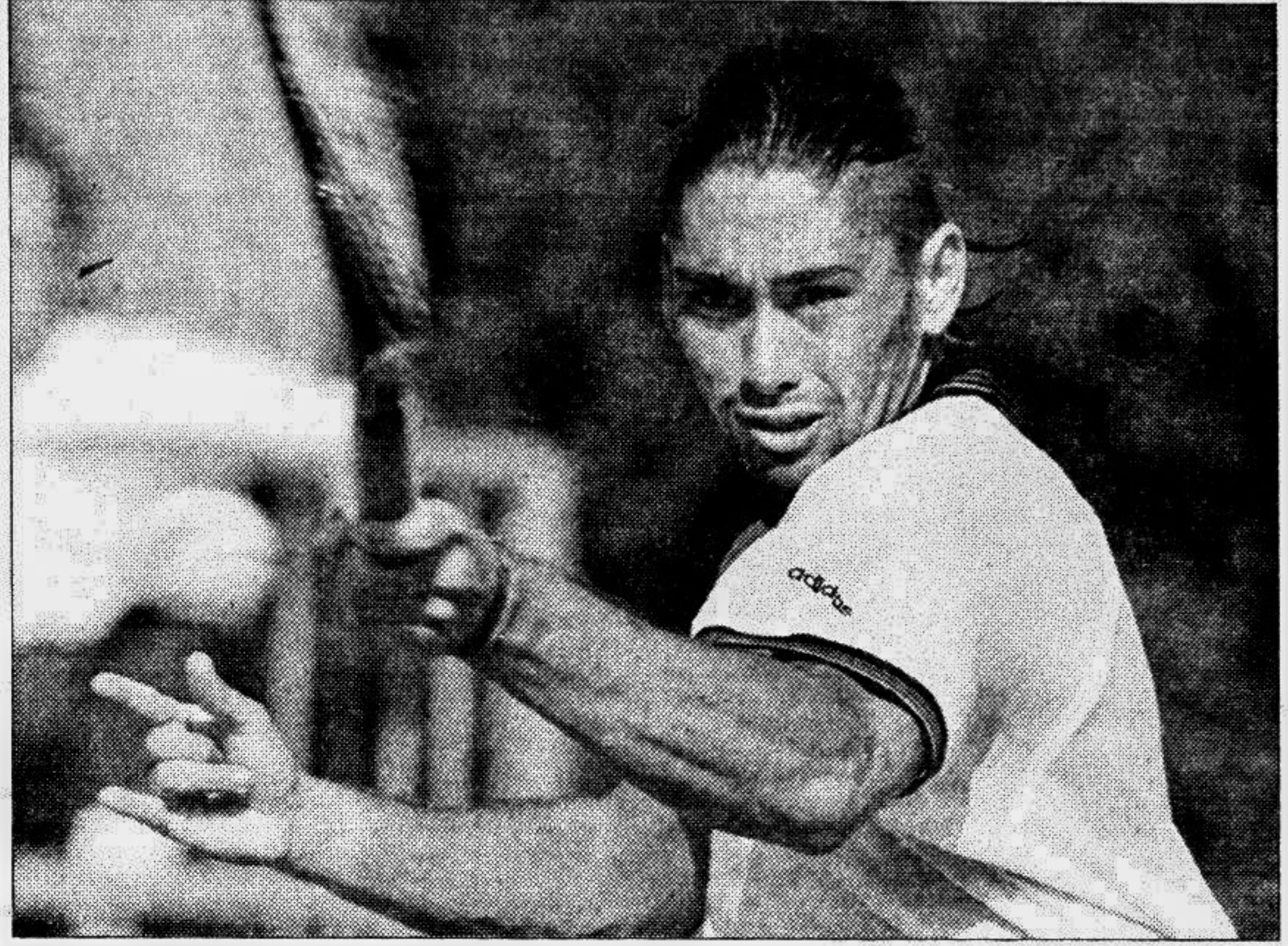
JAKARTA, Apr 26: Japan's Naoko Sawamatsu is set to challenge fellow countrymate Yuka Yoshida in the Sunday final of the 107,500 dollars Coral WTA women's tennis tournament here, after they defeated Italy's Rita Grande and France's Alexis Dechaume-Balleret respectively today, reports AFP.

Sawamatsu, seeded second in the tournament, beat Italy's Rita Grande, seeded sixth, 7-6, 3-6, 6-1 in two hours and 11 minutes.

Sawamatsu, ranked 43 in the world, trailed 2-4 in the first set before a narrow 7-6 victory. The second set Grande reversed the situation with an easy 6-3 win, but her stamina waned in the final set and Sawamatsu, with her powerful two-handed backhand finished off the game 6-1.

Yoshida, the tournament's seventh seed, won 3-6, 7-6, 6-1 from Dechaume-Balleret in two hours and five minutes.

The French player easily won the first set, and led 3-0 in the earlier part of the second set, but Yoshida slowly edged forward although she never led until she won the tie break 7-6 (2). Dechaume-Balleret had two match points in the tie break before she lost.



Chilean Marcelo Rios plays forehand against Magnus Larsson of Sweden during their Monte Carlo Open quarter-final engagement on Apr 25. Rios won 6-2, 6-1. — AFP/UNB photo

Spaniards keep going up

MONTE CARLO, Monaco, Apr 26: Carlos Moya and Alex Corretja kept up what is becoming a Spanish tradition — dominating the early clay court season, reports AP.

Moya, who lost to Pete Sampras in the Australian Open final, and Corretja who pushed Sampras to five gruelling sets in the US Open last year, made the semifinals of the Monte Carlo Open Saturday with contrasting victories.

Still it put a pair of Spanish players in the semifinals of another clay court tournament. At Estoril, Portugal two weeks ago and Barcelona last week, Spanish players took up all four slots of the semifinals.

Moya rallied to beat Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek, 1-6, 6-2, 6-4.

Corretja routed Norwegian Christian Ruud, 6-2, 6-0 in another quarterfinal.

There is a chance that the Spanish players can be in the final as they are in separate semifinals Saturday.

The sixth-seeded Moya takes on seventh-seeded Marcelo Rios in one of Saturday's matches. Rios beat Magnus Larsson of Sweden, 6-2, 6-1 in 49 minutes.

The 12th-seeded Corretja

meets unseeded Fabrice Santoro of France who continued his surprising run by beating Carlos Costa, 6-3, 7-5.

Moya cut back on his serve a bit to counter Krajicek's rushes to the net. That helped him have a first serve percentage of 81 per cent.

"I didn't serve as fast as I could because I wanted to put the serve in," Moya said. "He comes to the net very easily. I tried to avoid it because he is very good when he comes to the net."

Although Krajicek easily won the first set, he said the result of a long journey from Tokyo, where he won the tournament last Sunday, took its toll.

Moya was able to advance to his second consecutive semifinal on clay. He lost last week to eventual champion Alberto Costa at Barcelona.

Corretja, who won the Estoril had no trouble with Ruud.

"I don't think I could play better. I almost didn't miss any shot," Corretja said. "When I had the chance I was coming to the net and it was almost perfect."

He has won four of his eight winning sets by 6-0.

"It means I am playing good tennis," said Corretja.

Ruud didn't help himself by committing 32 unforced errors of Corretja's 53 points.

Rios raced through Larsson, who beat Sampras three days ago in the tournament, to gain his second consecutive Monte Carlo semifinal.

Santoro, ranked 90th in the world, takes on his third Spanish player in a row in meeting Corretja Saturday.

Santoro needed a wild card invitation to get into the tournament. But he justified the organizer's decision by eliminating Thomas Muster and Sergi Bruguera, who have won five Monte Carlo and three French Open titles between them.

Samaranch may visit SA in August

CAPE TOWN, Apr 26: Cape Town's Olympic Bid Committee is hoping to lure International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Juan Antonio Samaranch to the city before the end of August as part of its efforts to win the race for the 2004 Summer Olympics, reports AFP.

Bayer, Bayern share lead

BOON, Apr 26: Bayer Leverkusen drew level on points with Bayern Munich at the top of the Bundesliga on Friday with an effortless 2-1 win over 10-man Werder Bremen, reports Reuter.

Two goals by Ulf Kirsten ensured that last season's no-hopers put pressure on Bayern to win their home fixture against struggling Fortuna Duesseldorf today.

With Bayern having just six matches left to play, Leverkusen have begun to look like the only side with a real chance of catching the 13-times champions.

Kirsten latched on to a headed pass from Eric Meijur to score his 16th goal of the season on the 23rd minute.

Werder, missing a host of key players, suffered another blow in the 21st minute when Jens Leliek was set off for a clumsy tackle on Kirsten.

The former international was back in action in the 64th minute to underline Leverkusen's dominance after Dieter Ellits brought down Ze Elias.

Werder pulled one back with a penalty 14 minutes from time.

In the night's other match, 1860 Munich came from behind to beat Duisburg 3-2 away and maintain their challenge for a UEFA Cup place next season.

Today European Champions' Cup finalists Borussia Dortmund, lying third, travel to Arminia Bielefeld and fourth-placed VfB Stuttgart visit Borussia Moenchenglabach.

River's homage to 'dirty war' victims

BUENOS AIRES, Apr 26: Argentine soccer club River Plate on Friday struck off its list of "honorary members," the leaders of Argentina's 1976-83 military regime, including former Gen Jorge Videla and adm. Emilio Massera, reports Reuter.

"This is the best homage River can make to the victims of the military dictatorship," said Alfredo Bravo, a Member of Congress and an ardent River fan who detected the "dirty war leaders' names on club lists and demanded their removal.

Videla and Massera were members of the first military junta after the 1976 coup against the elected government of Isabel Peron. They waged a "dirty war" against suspected leftists in which tens of thousands of people "disappeared" — abducted, tortured and killed by the military.

Bravo, who came across a 1979 club list giving the heads of the regime honorary membership of Argentina's second most popular club, said River Plate members voted unanimously to kick out the former junta leaders, who were tried and jailed in the 1980s but granted a pardon in 1989.

"I believe we have to give words back their meaning. These characters cannot be honorary members if they have been condemned by the courts," Bravo told.

Mandela bucks up booters

LOME, Apr 26: President Nelson Mandela has come to the aid of the crisis torn South African national team ahead of a World Cup qualifier against Zaire here on Sunday, reports AFP.

Mandela sent a message to long serving captain Neil Tovey just hours after the African champions arrived in the sweltering Togolese capital for a match moved from Kinshasa because of the Zairean civil war.

The encounter with Zaire is obviously the biggest challenge to your illustrious leadership of the national team," he told the defender who has won a record 44 caps.

"My hope is that you will bring glory to our people as has been done so often since South Africa became part of the international football community," Mandela wrote.

South Africa, who defeated Tunisia last year to lift the African title, saw their hopes of reaching the 1998 finals in France severely jolted when losing in Congo this month.

The Congolese upstarts lead Group Three with seven points at the halfway stage of the mini-league followed by South Africa with four and Zaire and Zambia with two each.

National coach Clive Barker said shortly before leaving Johannesburg on Friday that he was considering quitting even if his team reach the finals for the first time.

Although South Africa have lost only five matches out of 32 since he took control three years ago, Barker has come under frequent fire from officials, supporters and the media.

Many critics blamed his reliance on the bulk of the Nations' Cup-winning team and defensive tactics for the loss in Congo while calls were made for Tovey and midfielders Eric Tinkler and innocent Buttelezi to be axed.

Italian based Philemon Masinga comes out of retirement to bolster an attack

Army hockey

JESSORE, Apr 26: Six more robin league matches of the Bangladesh Army hockey championship were held today (Saturday) at the Jessore Cantonment, reports BSS.

Dhaka Infantry defeated Dhaka Engineers by 4-0 goals. Saver Area beat Comilla Area by 2-0 goals. Momenshabhi Area outplayed Jessore Area by 2-0 goals and Bogra Area defeated Rangpur Area by 4-1 goals.

Earlier, Air Defence Artillery overwhelmed Dhaka Infantry by 3-0 goals and Chittagong Area beat Momenshabhi Area by 4-1 goals yesterday (Friday).

Errata

In the Tribute to Denis Compton published in these columns yesterday, Pakistan's tour to India was erroneously printed to have taken place in 1992-93. In fact it will be 1952-53. The error is regretted. — Sports Editor

Football flips as crazy goalies go on the offensive

Phil Minshull from London

A goalkeeper's job is to keep the ball out of the net. But a new generation of Latin American number ones have redefined the role, reports Gemini News Service, by jostling with their own strikers to get their names on the score sheet.

The rest of the world has christened them Loco — Spanish for crazy — but to soccer fans in Latin America they are heroes.

These goalkeepers are beginning to win renown in sports pages around the world for their daredevil exploits and, in some cases, outstanding talent.

The father of the present breed of crazy goalkeepers was Hugo Gatti. He played in the Argentine first division from 1962 to 1988 and won 18 national caps. He became famous for his Bermuda shorts and headband and for his equally colourful sprints up the field with the ball at his feet.

His career did not start auspiciously. He let in four goals, including one lobbed over his head when he was well off his line. He left the stadium in the back of a car with a blanket over his head.

But his club stuck by him and he became a firm favourite with soccer-mad Argentinitians.

"I feel sorry for goalkeepers who live under the posts. They don't know what they are missing!" Gatti once said.

He won all his caps under Argentina's World Cup-winning manager Carlos Luis Menotti and would have played in the famous 1978 side but for injury.

In Menotti, Gatti found a rare manager prepared to tolerate his eccentricities. "Nowadays a goalie is an extra player who can control the ball with

his feet and hit accurate passes," Menotti replied when asked why he continued to select El Loco.

Since Gatti's retirement there have been plenty of players queuing up to inherit his mantle, not least of whom has been the Colombian keeper, Rene Higuita. His tight shorts and paunch would make him stand out even in a local park game. He also stands out for preferring to dribble the ball upfield rather than kick it over the half-way line.

In 1989, he scored in two internationals and, at the other end, his spectacular saves helped Colombia to qualify for their second World Cup finals the following year.

However, his eccentricity also helped seal their exit from that competition when he mistimed a tackle on the Cameroon legend, Roger Milla, who went to score the decisive goal.

Time has not mellowed Higuita. Last year he stunned the soccer world by unleashing his "scorpion kick" on England's home ground, Wembley.

He dived forward under a shot — striking the ball in mid-air with his heels and knocking it back upfield. After the match, he admitted he had long been practicing the spectacular stunt.

When Higuita has scored for Colombia it has usually been in friendlies. But more goalkeepers' shooting skills are now be-

ing trusted when it matters.

In last year's World Cup qualifier between Argentina and Paraguay, the latter's goalkeeper, Jose Luis Chilavert, scored from the penalty spot to secure a 1-1 draw. For the luckless Argentine keeper, German Burgos, it was the second time in a week that he had conceded a goal to Chilavert, who plays his league football in Argentina for South American club champions Velez Sarsfield.

On the previous occasion, Chilavert had beaten Burgos with a tremendous free kick from almost the half-way line. In his three-and-half years at Velez Sarsfield, Chilavert, who wears a black jersey with a snarling bulldog on it, has scored 12 goals. His solid record between the posts also won him recognition as the world's top goalkeeper last season and Argentina's club player of the year.

Not to be outdone, Venezuela's Rafael Dudamel scored from open play last October in a World Cup qualifier, yet again against Argentina. Perhaps Dudamel should have concentrated his efforts in defence, as his team lost 5-2.

The eagerness of South American goalkeepers to get their name on the score sheet has become even more contagious this year. Barely a week goes by without news of another one scoring in the top flight of Argentine and Brazilian soccer — two of the best leagues on the

continent.

Most are from penalties or free kicks. But in February, Guarani, high fliers in the Brazilian league, clinched a crucial 3-3 draw with defending champions Palmeiras when keeper Gomez headed home a last-minute goal.

However, Gomez, Chilavert, Dudamel and the rest still have some way to go to emulate the flamboyant Mexican Jorge Campos. He is still the only man in modern international football to start a game as a goalkeeper and at half time change into a number nine shirt and join the strike force.

Nowadays, instead of wearing the lurid goalkeeping strip that made him a favourite, Campos wears the same kit as his teammates in order to move forward and create havoc in his opponent's half.

Not all Latin American goalkeepers have the urge to wander far from their penalty area. "I'm not thinking about it [scoring goals]. I prefer to stay in my goal," says the Brazilian incumbent, Carlos Germano.

But nowadays, Germano is becoming the exception to the rule as Latino goalies go Loco.

— Gemini News

Ginola leaves England?

NEWCASTLE, England, Apr 26: French winger David Ginola had a transfer request accepted by his English Premiership side Newcastle United on Friday, reports AFP.

The 30-year-old former French international, who has never been forgiven by the French fans for losing the ball which led to Bulgaria beating them in the final minute of their 1994 World Cup qualifier eliminating France from the finals, is likely to join either Olympique Marseille or Cup winners' cup holders Paris St Germain.

Ginola, who cost Newcastle 2.5 million pounds (3.75 million dollars) from Paris Saint Germain in July 1995 has fallen out with Newcastle boss Kenny Dalglish since the Scot took over following Kevin Keegan's departure in January.

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Lessons in Loco motion: Four easy steps to new-wave goalkeeping

