

## Steve keeps a straight face

MELBOURNE, Jan 22: Australian limited-overs cricket captain Steve Waugh says South Africa is vulnerable in the best-of-three tri-series finals starting Friday at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, reports AP.

South Africa won all four preliminary round one-dayers against Australia, who scraped into the finals courtesy of three wins against New Zealand. But Waugh said the Proteas' recent history suggests they do not perform well in finals.

"They've got a good record in one-day cricket and I consider them the No 1 one-day side in the world but I guess they haven't done justice to their performances over the years," Waugh said Thursday.

South African skipper Hansie Cronje was clearly annoyed by Waugh's suggestion his side did not perform in important one-day games.

"We've played in five (one-day competition) finals and won four," was Cronje's reply when told of Waugh's comments.

"It doesn't offend me — he has just got his states wrong."

Cronje said his team took great pride in its discipline in one-day cricket and, like Australia in Test cricket, expected to win each time it took the field.

### TEAMS

**AUSTRALIA** (from): Steve Waugh (captain), Michael Bevan, Adam Gilchrist, Ian Harvey, Stuart Law, Damien Martyn, Paul Reiffel, Darren Lehmann, Tom Moody, Ricky Ponting, Shane Warne, Mark Waugh, Paul Wilson.

**SOUTH AFRICA** (from): Hansie Cronje (captain), Darryl Cullinan, Allan Donald, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Gary Kirsten, Lance Klusener, Brian McMillan, Shaun Pollock, Dave Richardson, Jonty Rhodes, Pat Symcox.

### Anand rebounds

WIJK AN ZEE, The Netherlands, Jan 22: Viswanathan Anand of India crushed Bulgarian Vesselin Topalov to share the lead for the first time with Russian Vladimir Kramnik who suffered a shock defeat at the hands of Alexy Shirov in the fifth round of the Hoogevens Grand Masters tournament yesterday, reports PTI.

The world number three, coming back from a surprise draw against lowly rated Jeroen Picket of the Netherlands, was at his attacking best when he played with white using the Spanish opening.

With a brilliant attack on black's queenside knight, Anand gained good advantage and from there he continued to maintain his superior position against the Bulgarian. The Indian had the highly rated and talented Topalov struggling who made quite a few mistakes as the game progressed till he was forced to resign after 29 moves.

Anand with his third win in five games has four points to his credit now.

## Barca players favoured by Clemente

MADRID, Jan 22: Coach Javier Clemente has placed seven Barcelona players on his 18-man squad for Spain's friendly with France next week, the game that will inaugurate the Stade France, reports AP.

Clemente announced the team Thursday, saying he was taking seven players from Barcelona, three each from defending league champion Real Madrid, Atletico Madrid and Athletic Bilbao and one from both Valencia and Betis.

The side is to travel to Paris on Jan 26, two days before the game at Saint Denis.

**ROSTER:** Andoni Zubizarreta (Valencia); Alfonso Perez (Betis); Rafael Alkorta, Imanol Exteberria, Roberto Rios (Athletic Bilbao); Carlos Aguilera, Kiko Narvaez, Jordi Lardin (Atletico Madrid); Santiago Canizares, Fernando Hierro, Raoul Gonzalez (Real Madrid); Abelardo Fernandez, Guillermo Amor, Albert Ferrer, Luis Enrique Martinez, Miguel Angel Nadal, Juan Pizzi, Sergi Barjuan (Barcelona).

## Rafter crawls, Chang crashes

MELBOURNE, Jan 22 (AP): Once again a stubborn American tried to bring down US Open champion Patrick Rafter. Once again the energetic Aussie scraped through in his own country's biggest tennis tournament.

The second-seeded Rafter reached the third round of the Australian Open with a 2-6, 7-6, 6-7, 6-4, 6-3 victory Thursday over Todd Martin, a former top 10 player who missed most of 1997 with injuries.

No 3 Michael Chang, meanwhile, couldn't pull off one of his trademark comebacks and became the highest seed to lose so far. He fell 6-4, 7-6, 7-6 to Guillaume Raoux, one of six Frenchmen to reach the third round.

But one big name that survived was Andre Agassi, whose campaign to return to the top of men's tennis took a dramatic leap when he beat 16th seed Albert Costa 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 7-5 in a two-hour 26 minute battle that offered flashes of the American back at his best.

"It was good win for me because I haven't established myself against really good baseliners, but it also reminded me what makes it better for me," said Agassi.

"It feels good to kick some butt again — that's nice," added Agassi, now ranked at 87 after bottoming out at 141 in his horser year last year.

The latest French winners also included Nicolas Escude, who ousted French Open champion and No 12 seed Gustavo Kuerten 5-7, 6-3, 6-1, 7-5 qualifying Jerome Golmard, who beat Dutchman Jan Siemink 7-6, 7-5, 6-7, 3-6, 6-1 in his second consecutive five-setter and Lionel Roux, who beat Sweden's Jan Apell 6-3, 6-7, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3. Cedric Pioline and Fabrice Santoro already had advanced to the third round.

With two rounds nearly completed, half of the 16 men's seeds are out.

Thirteen of the women's seeds remain in contention, and No 7 Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario had the easiest path into the third round, beating Elena Makarova 6-0, 6-0 in 48 minutes. She allowed the Russian only 27 points.

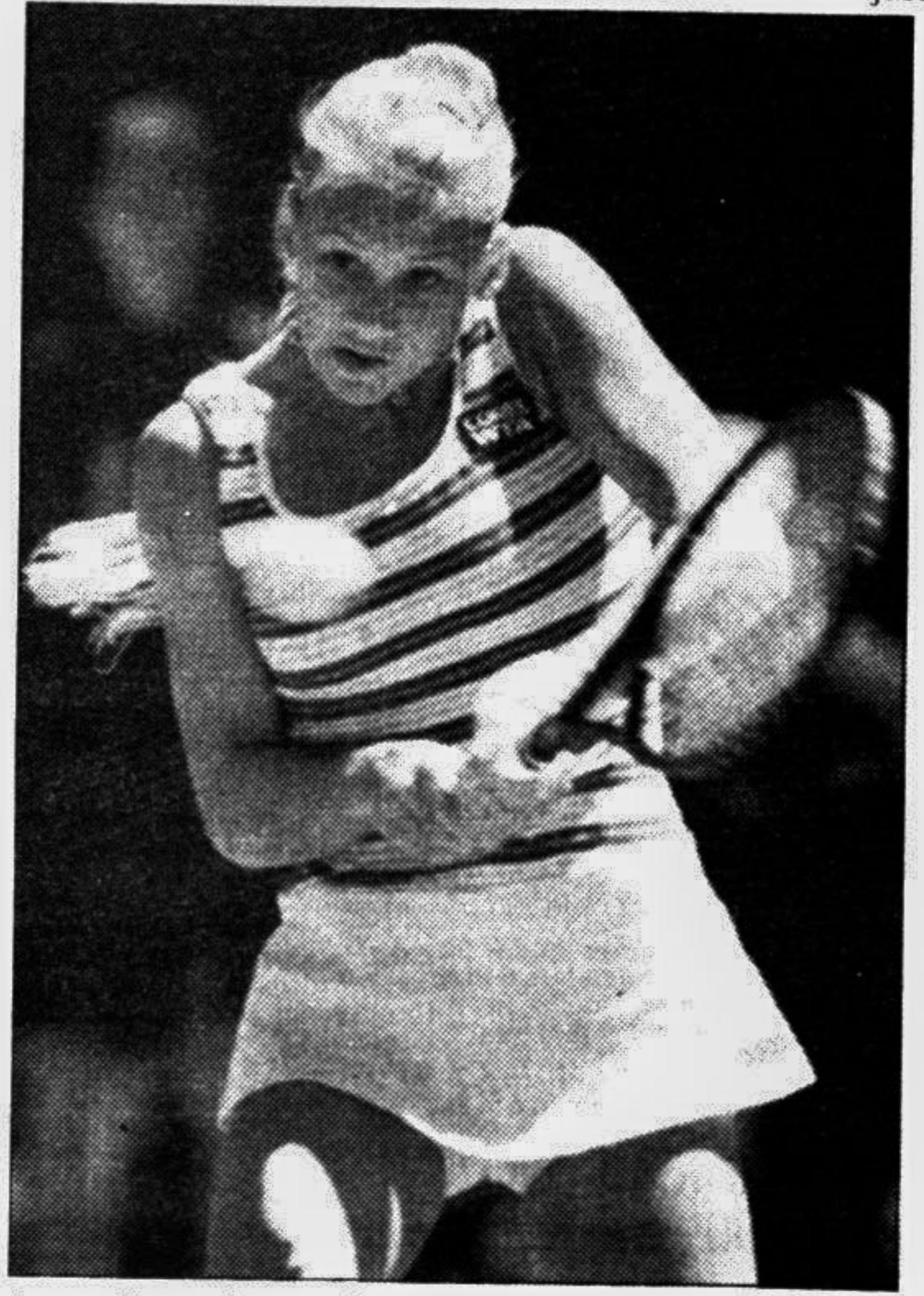
Rafter next plays No 25 Alber Berasategui of Spain a 6-4, 7-6, 6-4 winner over Ukraine's Andrei Medvedev.

Aching from a deep bruise under a big callous, Rafter said that halfway through the second set "I was hating life, I was hating the sun, I was just hating the whole situation, hating to get my butt kicked, and it was just good to get through that."

Besides the foot, he mentioned "the body, the cramps and things, and a bit of stress in my lower back. But I think that will all go in the next couple of heat exhaustion."

Martip said his feet also were bleeding a bit. "It's inhumane what these courts do to our feet," he said.

Martin out-aced Rafter 18-13.



Anna Kournikova of Russia plays backhand against American Corina Morariu during their second round clash at the Australian Open in Melbourne on Jan 22. The teenaged Russian won 7-5, 6-2.

— AP/UNB photo

loses it," Rittner said.

Hingis next meets 16-year-old Russian Anna Kournikova, who beat American Corina Morariu 7-5, 6-2.

In other women's matches, No 3 Amanda Coetzer downed Latvia's Larisa Neiland 2-6, 6-1, 6-0; No 5 Mary Pierce breezed past Cristina Torrens-Vaaler of Spain 6-1, 6-2; No 10 Anke Huber beat Anne Miller, United States, 6-4, 6-0; Henrieta Nagyova beat No. 11 Brenda Schultz-McCarthy 6-1, 6-4; No 16 Ai Sugiyama beat Japanese compatriot Miho Saeki 6-7, 7-5, 6-1.

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## Nagano hangs 'no' sign

NAGANO, Japan, Jan 22 (AP): Athletes at Japan's Winter Games face a strict "no drinking, no smoking" rule in the Nagano Olympic Village — but condoms and video game machines will be in ready supply.

"Although it's not the first time, everybody here is required to follow the rule of no drinking and no smoking," said Kanichi Ogushi, director of the Olympic

## Poor response to free homestay

TOKYO, Jan 22: An association sponsoring free homestays during the upcoming Nagano Olympics is hoping for last-minute applicants, despite a disappointing response so far, an official said Thursday, reports AP.

About 820 families in the Nagano, Japan area have offered to open their homes to family members and friends of Olympic athletes and officials attending the Games, said Hirokuni Miyajima, an official with a private association sponsoring the homestays.

But so far, only 91 people have applied to take part, he said.

Athletes can relax at free

The ban has been enforced even through Japan's Kirin Breweries Co Ltd is a major sponsor of the Games along with other top local firms and international names such as McDonald's and Eastman Kodak.

Olympic official sponsors, who paid four billion yen (31 million dollars) for the privilege, are allowed to open a commercial booth inside the Games.

But the nation's largest brewer has to be content with pursuing its Olympic campaign outside the village due to the no-alcohol policy.

Athletes can relax at free

A scuffle between two soccer players sparked a riot between rival teams and their fans, leaving 72 people injured and a score of cars wrecked at the capital's Mateo Flores soccer stadium, authorities said. reports AP.

72 injured in soccer fight

GUATEMALA CITY, Jan 22: A scuffle between two soccer players sparked a riot between rival teams and their fans, leaving 72 people injured and a score of cars wrecked at the capital's Mateo Flores soccer stadium, authorities said. reports AP.

It's good to have the long course and now the short course record as well," he said.

— AP/UNB photo

## Sport

### AUSSIE OPEN AT A GLANCE

MELBOURNE, Jan 22 (AP): Highlights of Thursday's fourth day of the 6.7 million dollars Australian Open:

**Weather:** Hot. Afternoon temperature was 95 degrees (35.5 C).

**Results:** Men's Singles, Second Round: No. 1 Martina Hingis beat Barbara Rittner 7-5, 6-1, 6-0, 6-3; Guillaume Raoux beat No. 3 Michael Chang 6-4, 7-6, 6, 6, No. 5 Greg Rusedski beat Jonathan Stark 6-4, 6-1, 10-6.

**Women's Singles:** Second Round: No. 1 Martina Hingis beat Barbara Rittner 7-5, 6-1, 6-0; No. 3 Amanda Coetzer beat Larisa Neiland, Latvia, 2-6, 6-1, 6-0; No. 5 Mary Pierce beat Cristina Torrens-Vaaler of Spain 6-1, 6-2; No. 10 Anke Huber beat Anne Miller, United States, 6-4, 6-0; Henrieta Nagyova beat No. 11 Brenda Schultz-McCarthy 6-1, 6-4; No. 16 Ai Sugiyama beat Miho Saeki 6-7, 7-5, 6-1.

**Stat of the Day:** 7 hours — the time needed by Pat Rafter to win his first and second round matches at the Australian Open.

**Quote of the Day:** "I just took off my socks, and it's inhumane what these courts do to our feet," Todd Martin, after his 3-1/2-hour match against Pat Rafter in sweltering conditions.

### Amazing!

DERBY, England, Jan 22: In what is believed to be a world record, it took 66 penalty kicks to decide the outcome of a soccer match between two teams of 9- and 10-year-olds in this central England city, reports AP.

The shootout lasted 90 minutes, as long as the match itself.

With the game tied 1-1 after regulation time in competition for Derby's Community Cup, the Micklesover Lightning Blue Sox and Chellaston Boys B went into a less-than-deadly penalty shootout.

Both teams began firing blanks as the first 60 kicks missed the goal altogether or were saved.

"After the first 56 penalties, the referee suggested moving the spot a bit closer," said Blue Sox coach Neal Blatherwick.

Finally, Chellaston's Richard "Deadeye" Smith broke through.

Unfortunately, he then had to watch as the Blue Sox's John Blatherwick and Sam Gadsby began to shoot straight, netting the team's 32nd and 33rd penalty tries. Chellaston missed its 33rd and the game was finally over with the Blue Sox winning 2-1 on penalties.

Team coaches suggested that Chellaston's 9-year-old losing goalkeeper, Ben Hodder, now holds the world record for the most penalty saves in a match.

British newspapers said the world record for a shootout was held by Argentine teams Juniors and Racing Club, which played out a 20-19 thriller in 1988.

The previous British record shoot-out was a 28-penalty marathon between Aldershot and Fulham in the 1987 Freight Rover Trophy.

Last year players complained bitterly about the courts as air temperatures soared and the court surface temperature rose to more than 60 degrees.

The Rebound Ace surface consists of a thin rubber compound spread over a concrete base.

It is similar to other hard-court surfaces such as that used at the US Open.

But on a hot day the rubber coating can become slightly tacky and players moving at high speed and then stopping sharply risk injury when their shoes stick.

They also suffer severe blistering because their feet move inside their shoes when the sole sticks to the court.

Earlier in the tournament other players said their shoes were sticking to the surface, with Frenchman Guillaume Raoux suffering severe blistering.

Rafter said, "That court was bloody hot today. I was feeling the bottom of my soles halfway through the match and I thought I'm on fire."

**DRUG TESTING:** Tennis is one of the cleanest sports in the world when it comes to drug abuse by players, despite the temptation of vast amounts of money, an International Tennis Federation official says.

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**TARANGO IN TROUBLE AGAIN:** Outspoken Jeff Tarango is in trouble with officials again over his behavior during his first-round match with Patrick Rafter.

Tarango was fined 3,000 US dollars for unsportsmanlike behaviour during the compelling four-set loss on Centre Court Tuesday.

The American questioned several calls and was given a warning for unsportsmanlike behaviour by the umpire. Tarango then called tournament referee Peter Bellenger onto the court for a futile attempt to have the warning revoked.

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Tarango's most notable spat

with officials was at Wimbledon in 1995 when he walked off during a third round match and was subsequently fined and banned from playing there for one year.

Croatian Goran Ivanisevic, meanwhile, went into red at the championships when he collected second fine.

Ivanisevic was fined 5,000 US dollars for failing to conduct a post-match press conference after his first round loss.

He was given another fine Thursday for 4,000 US dollars for unsportsmanlike behaviour during the match.

Ivanisevic only earned 6,000 US dollars for his first-round loss.

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**RIVERBOAT PETE:** After winning his first two matches comfortably, Pete Sampras wouldn't comment on the odds of his winning the Australian Open. But that doesn't mean he's not a betting man.

"I've been gambling every night," Sampras said, adding that he plays blackjack in the local casinos. "I've got to do something on my free time."

And, he said, he's currently in the black. "It's been a good week."

Asked if the stakes might

reach half the prize money in this tournament, where the men's singles champion receives 412,000 US dollars, Sampras replied.

"Oh, no ... I'm trying to make a living, you know. I just have some fun."

His career earnings already exceed 32 million US dollars.

"A thousand dollars a hand?"

"It depends," he said.

## Guy named for greatness

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