

Column One

DID U' KNOW?

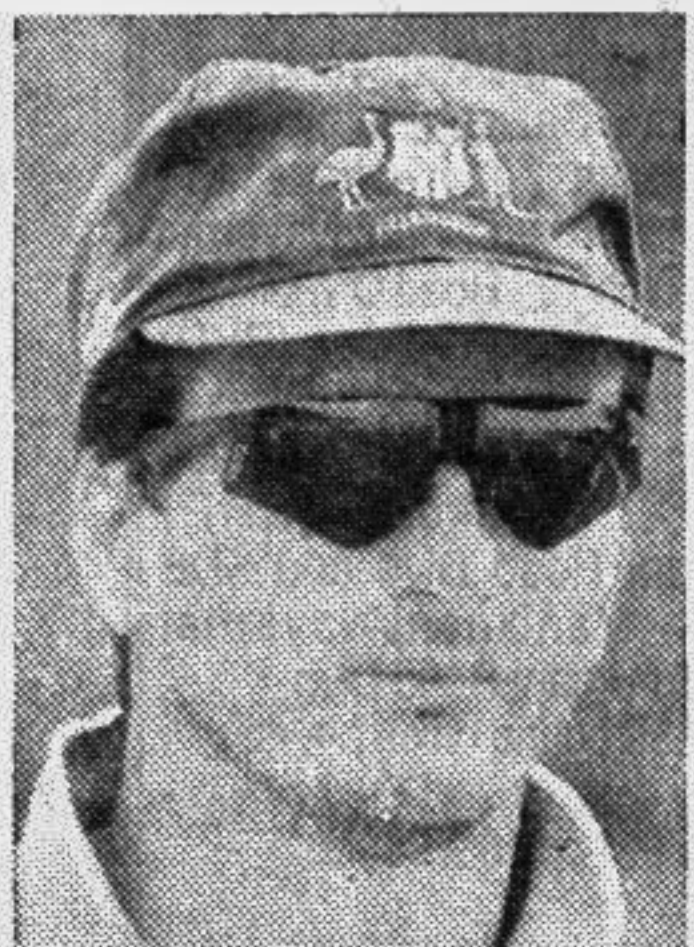
(The Professor does)

That there are three major organisations that govern professional tennis — the ITF, the ATP and the WTA. The ITF has jurisdiction over the four so-called Grand Slam tournaments — the just-concluded Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia; the French Open in Paris; the Lawn Tennis Championships, commonly called Wimbledon, in London; and the US Open in New York City — as well as over the Grand Slam Cup, a season-ending event involving the most successful players each year in Grand Slam events.

The ITF also governs the Davis and Federation cups, annual international competitions held between national teams. The ATP Tour (formerly the Association of Tennis Professionals), located in Ponte Verde Beach, Florida, has jurisdiction over the men's professional events except the Grand Slam tournaments. The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Tour, located in Saint Petersburg, Florida, governs women's professional tennis.

I am not concerned with the number of tennis associations; rather I am puzzled how professional men and women could end up in two different associations despite the Florida sun.

SPORTS TALK



Steve Waugh

(Australian cricketer) "Being dropped is always a huge moment in your career."

BOOST sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN Competition-87

Tick the Correct Answers Competition closes at 8 pm on Feb 6, 1998

- 1 Which Kiwi batsman scored the only ODI century against Pakistan?
2 Which is the highest ODI individual score?
3 How many ODI centuries has Azharuddin hit?
4 Who scored the only half-century for Bangladesh in the Independence Cup?
5 Who is leading Bangladesh in the World Youth Cup cricket in South Africa?

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (if any)

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid and clues. Includes 'ACROSS' and 'DOWN' sections with various clues and a 'CRYPTOQUIP' section.



Fernando Redondo (L), Real Madrid's Argentine star playmaker outfoxes Fernando Valencia during their Spanish First Division league encounter in Madrid on Feb 2. Valencia shocked the giants 2-1. — AP/UNB photo

Africa's nations renew rivalry

JOHANNESBURG, Feb 3: The African Nations' Cup comes of age this week in Burkina Faso with the 21st edition of the biennial 16-country showpiece, reports AFP.

Apart from Olympic champions Nigeria, suspended for refusing to defend the title in South Africa, the giants are present, including World Cup qualifiers Cameroon, Morocco, South Africa and Tunisia.

Morocco are the popular choice to lift the trophy because they can field a settled side, employ an experienced coach in Frenchman Henri Michel, and have been ranked No 1 in Africa since last May.

Mehdi's eyes on Europe

HONG KONG, Feb 3: International midfielder Mehdi Mahdavia looks set to lead the second wave of Iranian players moving to Europe after the World Cup finals later this year, reports Reuters.

Mahdavia, who plays his club football for Tehran side Piruzi and was with the national side in Hong Kong for a four-team tournament, said he was likely to join a number of compatriots in Germany.

He has been linked with a possible move to European champions Borussia Dortmund and confirmed that the club had been in touch with his club and the Iranian federation about a possible transfer.

Iranians Ali Daei, Karim Bagheri and Asian player-of-the-year Khodadad Azizi are already playing in the Bundesliga and the belief is that Mahdavia would also settle well in Europe.

Also likely to leave Iran following France '98 are goalkeeper Nima Nakissa and midfielder Hamid Reza Estili.

Nakissa, who like Mahdavia plays for Piruzi, is currently the reserve goalkeeper for the national side and has attracted the interest of relegation-threatened Cologne who currently have Azizi on their books.

Anderlecht of Belgium have also made enquiries about the player while Estili's agent has been speaking to clubs in Austria.

first-class accommodation and facilities may struggle here. While the organisers have spared no effort to host a memorable 22-day event, Burkina Faso is one of the poorest nations in the world and cannot hope to match the glitz of South Africa two years ago.

Ouagadougou, the capital city in the heart of the landlocked country, and the southwestern town of Bobo-Dioulasso play host to teams from the north, west, centre and south of the continent.

The Chinese-built, 40,000-seat August 4 Stadium stages the opening ceremony, they first game between Burkina Faso and Cameroon Saturday, and the final on February 28.

Matches in Ouagadougou are divided between the National Stadium and the smaller Municipal Stadium while Bobo-Dioulasso boasts the new, French-built Omnisport Stadium.

Crowds at games not involving Burkina Faso are expected to be much larger than in South Africa, where only fixtures featuring 'bafana bafana' (the boys) drew big attendances.

Expectations are high that the finals could match those of 1984 in Ivory Coast, where the 'indomitable lions' of Cameroon won what is widely regarded to be the most exciting of the 20 tournaments.

If the presence of stars guarantees success then Burkina Faso can hardly fail as veterans, established internationals and young hopefuls strive to capture the attention of spectators and a worldwide television audience.

The 'old guard' includes Abedi Pele of Ghana, who collected a winners' medal in Libya

16 years ago, and fellow-midfielder Kalusha Bwalya from Zambia, the strongest team never to have finished first. Noureddine Naybet of Morocco and Hani Ramzy of Egypt in defence, Moussa Saib of Algeria and Zoubeir Beya of Tunisia in midfield, and 'Paulo' of Angola and Patrick Mboma of Cameroon in attack are proven performers.

No continent encourages youth more than Africa and much is expected of strikers Benni McCarthy of South Africa, 'Akwa' of Angola and Ibrahim Babayoko of Ivory Coast.

Only Group B, where four-time champions Ghana and 1996 runners-up Tunisia should have the measure of the ill-prepared Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) and limited Togo, appears clearcut.

A dramatic improvement by Burkina Faso since the arrival of French coach Philippe Troussier could spell problems for Cameroon and Algeria in Group A with Guinea the outsiders.

Ivory Coast borders Burkina Faso and the 1992 champions can expect huge support in Group C against South Africa, without a win in seven matches, potential giantkillers Angola and dark horses Namibia.

Every tournament has a group of death and a pool containing Morocco, Zambia and Egypt certainly fits the bill with Mozambique completing the Group D line-up.

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Argentina's WC warm ups

BUENOS AIRES, Feb 3: Argentina will begin their World Cup preparations by playing Romania in a friendly international in Mendoza on February 19 — the Argentina Football Federation confirmed here Monday, reports AFP.

Argentina's other international matches before the World Cup will be against Yugoslavia (in Mar del Plata on Feb 24), Bulgaria (in Buenos Aires on March 10), Ireland (in Dublin on April 22), Brazil (in Rio de Janeiro on April 29), Cameroon (in Buenos Aires on May 14) and Chile (in Buenos Aires on May 19).

Valencia spoil Real's plans

MADRID, Feb 3 (AP/Reuters): Valencia pulled off a surprise 2-1 victory over defending league champions Real Madrid on Monday, allowing FC Barcelona to stay atop the Spanish First Division.

It was Madrid's second loss at home this season. The team stays No. 2 with 43 points, one less than Barcelona who won their 23rd-round game Sunday 2-1 against Sporting Gijon.

Valencia now have 31 points and are at No. 1 in the 20-team division.

Playing on a rain-sodden pitch, Real were out of luck from the start. In the fourth minute, Valencia's Gaizka Mendietta drove the ball home from the penalty spot following a foul by defender Manuel Sanchez on Romanian Adrian Ilie. Ilie himself scored in the 17th minute to give Valencia a 2-0 lead.

Yugoslav Pedrag Mijatovic had penalty saved by Valencia's Spanish international goalkeeper Andoni Zubizarreta.

Croat frontrunner Davor Suker pulled one back for Real with a 68th minute penalty but the home side were never able to get on top.

It was only a ninth win in 21 league matches for Valencia.

Tragic

CARACAS, Venezuela, Feb 3: A rowdy street celebration following a Venezuelan baseball team's championship win left four people dead and 12 injured, police said Monday, reports AP.

The celebration broke out in Barquisimeto, 355 kilometres (210 miles) southwest of Caracas, and neighbouring towns on Sunday after the Cardinals defeated the Caracas Lions in game seven of the Venezuelan professional baseball league final.

Two people were killed by bullets fired by fans and two other victims were run over by vehicles.

Venezuela's baseball league is one of the top winter training grounds for US Major League Baseball prospects and players. This year they included Mark Whiten and Luis Sojo of the New York Yankees and Edgardo Alfonzo of the New York Mets.

The Caribbean Series with Championship teams from Venezuela, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico starts Wednesday in the Venezuelan coastal city of Puerto La Cruz.

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Portuguese international Paulo Sousa (L) receives the award for being the best Portuguese soccer player of the 96/97 season from national team coach Humberto Coelho in Lisbon on Feb 2. — AP/UNB photo

To tackle or not to tackle?

MILAN, Feb 3 (AFP): "Who wants to end up like Ciro Ferrara, with a broken leg and no chance of the World Cup finals?"

That's the question which Italian club coaches are hoping their players won't be asking themselves too often in the coming weeks after the Juventus and international defender ruled himself out of France '98 on Sunday.

The next few months are crucial for Serie A sides, who are vying for the league title, the Italian Cup and all three European Cup competitions.

Their coaches, some of whose jobs could be at stake, will be expecting them to risk everything in the headlong rush towards a trophy.

However, a great many players here in the Serie A, whether they're European, South American or African, are also expecting to play in the World Cup finals soon after the season ends.

Juventus coach Marcello Lippi, whose team is packed with internationals and is on course for the league title, the European Cup and the Italian Cup, also hopes there will be no Ferrara-effect on his team-mates.

"All the Serie A players are true professionals, and are used to the fast and physically demanding football that's being played today," Lippi said.

"They know the risks. I don't think that what happened to Ferrara is going to make people start taking things easier, or make them reluctant to throw themselves at a loose ball. Fear always increases the risks of getting hurt."

Inter Milan's latest hero, Uruguayan striker Alvaro Recoba, also believes that players will still give everything in the months ahead. But he also reckons the injury issue may yet re-surface, this time as an excuse.

"In Italy, even friendlies are played at 100 per cent," said the 21-year-old, whose country failed to qualify for France '98.

"So I don't think the World Cup finals will influence the way people play. I've got the example here from my teammates — Ronaldo, Youri Djorkaeff and Ivan Zamorano will be among the stars of the tournament. They never hold anything back. They're just like Ferrara."

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Wants to rip a thigh muscle two weeks before flying to France? The fear of missing the tournament of a lifetime in a single tackle is very real.

However, players and coaches claimed this week that there were even greater fears for the players — failure to get picked in the first place, or the risk of an even more serious injury by holding themselves back.

Pierluigi Casiraghi, who will lead Italy's attack at France '98, said: "I'm sorry for Ferrara, but no player who's line for a place at the World Cup finals should be influenced by incidents like that."

"In this game, injuries can happen at any time, even in training. A footballer should just concentrate on playing football. End of story."

And he added: "The moment you start being frightened of getting hurt, that's just when you can really get seriously injured."

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Advertisement for Daka City Corporation (ঢাকা সিটি কর্পোরেশন, ঢাকা). Includes logo, text about services, and a list of bus routes (ক্রমিক নং, যান ও যাত্রাপতি এবং আসবাবপত্রের বর্ণনা, যে দেশের তৈরী).

Subaru World Rally Team advertisement. Features the Subaru logo and the slogan 'ABOVE ALL ELSE'.