

UEFA dwells on wild cards

MONACO, Aug 29 (Reuters/Internet): UEFA is considering wild cards in the European Cup, president Lennart Johansson said on Saturday.

"I reacted negatively at first to this, but then found out teams like Borussia Dortmund and AC Milan were concerned," he told a news conference.

UEFA's executive, discussing the threat of the proposed breakaway Super League, approved a task force to look at ways of further modernising the European game.

Johansson said: "Wilds cards are perhaps something the task force must study... to give credit to some teams that have won five titles in 10 years."

Johansson also confirmed that next season's Champions' League would switch to four groups of six instead of six of four, increasing the number of games and revenue.

Johansson promised: "We will look again at the whole distribution of money."

UEFA officials, including general secretary Gerhard Aigner, would comment no further on their plans, although spokesman Guido Tognoni said four days ago they might merge the UEFA and Cup Winners' Cups.

A "redesign" of European competition is expected by the end of the year but the task force will report before that, at the next UEFA meeting in Lisbon on October 6-7.

Inter-college handball

Shaheed Ramizuddin College and Dhaka Polytechnic Institute won their respective matches in the Power inter-college handball competition at the Outer Stadium handball court yesterday, reports UNB.

In the first match, Shaheed Ramizuddin College beat BAF Shaheen College 17-10 after leading the first half 7-4.

Jangir netted 6 goals and Sumon 5 for the winners while Shamim scored 5 goals for the losers.

In the second match, Dhaka Polytechnic Institute outplayed Mirpur College by 16-5 goals after dominating the first half 9-3.

Ariful Haq scored 6 goals for the winners while Saidur and Nizamuddin netted 2 goals each for the losers.

Today's matches: Rifles School & College vs Government Shaheed Sahrawardy College (3:15 pm), BCIC College vs Government Titumir College (4:15 pm).

German Cup soccer

BONN, Aug 29: European heavyweights Borussia Dortmund needed a penalty shoot-out to squeeze past amateurs Saarbrücken in the first round of the German Cup on Friday, reports Reuters.

The 1997 European Cup Champions, who fell to amateur side Eintracht tried in the third round last season, narrowly avoided another embarrassing early exit.

Midfielder Christian Nierlinger, who joined from Bayern Munich, put Dortmund in front after 21 minutes with a superb volley.

But shortly before the interval, Saarbrücken striker Sambo Choji levelled from close range to the delight of the home fans.

Extra time produced no goals and Dortmund had to live through a penalty shoot-out, which they won 3-1 with Swiss striker Stéphane Chapuisat scoring the decisive spot-kick.

First Division VfL Wolfsburg also survived a fright, needing a late goal from Ghanaian midfielder Charles Akonnor to move past Second Division Karlsruhe SC 4-3.

Karlsruhe, who were relegated at the end of last season, were 3-1 up with 37 minutes remaining but then conceded three goals, Akonnor scoring the winner from a free-kick two minutes from time.



Indian President K R Narayanan decorating master batsman Sachin Tendulkar with the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award at a ceremony at the presidential palace in New Delhi yesterday.

Rs meeting in semis

COMMACK, New York, Aug 29: The rivalry between Greg Rusedski and Patrick Rafter will continue in the semifinals of the Hamlet Cup.

Rusedski, who lost to Rafter in the finals of the US Open last year, beat Daniel Vacek of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-3 Friday, then Rafter needed just 54 minutes to beat Nicolas Escude of France 6-3, 6-2, reports AP.

The other matchup in Saturday's semifinals of the tuneup for the US Open will be Felix Mantilla of Spain meeting Marat Safin, the 18-year-old tour rookie from Russia.

Mantilla, ranked 19th on the ATP Tour, outlasted Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil, last year's French Open champion, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 Friday, while Safin, who upset Andre Agassi and Kuerten in consecutive five-set matches in this year's French Open, his first ever Grand Slam competition, ousted Germany's David Prinosil 6-1, 7-6.

Rafter, the 25-year-old Australian who is 24-3 with three titles since mid-June, holds a 4-1 career advantage over Rusedski, 24, who is playing his first tournament following a seven-week layoff with an injured left ankle.

"Tomorrow's match will probably bring a little bit of pressure," said Rafter, the second seed in the tournament who is ranked third in the world. "It's an important match and one I don't want to lose. Mind you, I don't need the win to know where I'm at as far as the US Open is concerned. I've done my work."

"I'm very impressed with Greg. He has bounced back and reached a semifinal so fast."

Rafter dominated Escude, winning 12 of 26 first return points, compared to three of 28 for the Frenchman.

"I served very well and that takes a lot of pressure off your game," said Rafter, who had three service breaks.

Rusedski, who was born in Canada but is now a resident of Great Britain, didn't have smooth sailing in his victory.

"Still I have a weakness, my difficult because of the swirling winds," said Rusedski, the No. 4 seed and sixth-ranked player in the world.

"I don't think about the ankle at all. I have it strapped up. Also, I have no complaints about my game at all. I'm moving better. My volleys are good and I'm able to move them. Hopefully everything will continue."

Mantilla reached his first

Grand Slam semifinal at this year's French Open.

"There has been a complete turnaround in my game the last two months," he said.

"I have regained my consistency and I'm extremely confident. I'm going into the US Open in good frame of mind. Why wouldn't I? I reached the top 10 for the first time ever this year and this tournament marks the first time I'm in a semifinal in the US."

Kuerten, who felt he didn't deserve to win his second-round match, thought he had a chance of beating Mantilla.

"My serve was no good today but I still thought I was going to beat him," he said. "Now I'll use the two days rest to get ready for next week."

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Libregts appointment Top boss not at all happy

LAGOS, Aug 29 (Reuters/Internet): Nigerian sports minister Emeke Omeruah is angry he was not consulted over the appointment of Dutchman Thijs Libregts as national soccer coach.

"The honourable sports minister is angry and embarrassed the football association did not brief him before picking Libregts," Banji Adepoju, the minister's aide said on Friday.

Libregts, 57, who has coached the Dutch national side and Greece's Olympiakos, was appointed on Tuesday.

He said on Thursday that his Rotterdam home that he met only three Nigerian Football Association (NFA) officials who told him they were considering him for the job.

"So the announcement that I had been made coach was a surprise..." Libregts said.

"The minister described the appointment process a shame because he heard about it in the foreign and local media," Adepoju said.

"He feels the appointment was rushed and broad consultations were not made with us who will pay the coach's wages."

"The minister considers the Libregts' issue as part of improper planning."

The Nigerian job had been vacant since the contract of former coach Serbian Bora Milutinovic ended after the World Cup finals in July.

As Olympic champions, much was expected from the Nigerians in France. But their campaign ended in the second round when they were trounced 4-1 by Denmark.

The Nigerians are rebuilding their team for the 2000 African Nations' Cup in Zimbabwe. They play their first qualifying match against Burkina Faso on October 4 in Ouagadougou.

Joppy retains WBA belt

LAS VEGAS, Aug 29: William Joppy of the United States retained his World Boxing Association (WBA) middleweight championship by stopping Roberto Duran of Panama with six seconds left in the third round on Friday, reports Reuters.

Joppy dominated the 47-year-old Duran from the opening bell, and was battering his head relentlessly when referee Joe Cortez mercifully halted the one-sided bout.

Lucic versus Lucic

NEW YORK, Aug 29 (AFP/Internet): Croatian teen-ager Mirjana Lucic, who this week accused her father of abusing her in his bid to mould her into a tennis star, is seeking US court protection from him, the New York Times reported on Friday.

Lucic, 16 and ranked 50th in the world, went public with her accusations in the Croatian newspaper Slobodna Dalmacija on Monday.

Lucic also charged that her father, former Yugoslav Olympic decathlete Marinko Lucic, stole part of her prize money along with his nephew, Milan Lucic.

Marinko Lucic denied the accusations in the Zagreb newspaper Vecernji List on Thursday.

In his denial, Marinko Lucic charged that his daughter was being manipulated by an unnamed third party with interests in her career.

Mirjana Lucic has been in the United States since July. She played a WTA Tour tournament in San Diego in August and has spent the past two weeks training at the Bolleteri

Nicol reaches HK Open final

HONG KONG, Aug 29: World number one Peter Nicol of Scotland reached his second Hong Kong Open final with a hard-fought victory over world champion Rodney Eyles today, reports Reuters.

Top seed Nicol twice came back from a game down to defeat the Australian fourth seed 11-15, 15-5, 15-17, 15-8, 17-14 in 81 minutes.

Last year's runner-up Jonathan Power of Canada, the number three seed, will meet Nicol in the final after his 13-15, 15-8, 15-12, 15-11 triumph over Simon Parke of England.

Left-hander Nicol, 25, lost to Eyles in the World Open final last year but his superior control gave him the edge this time in a tight contest.

The in-form Power, winner of his previous matches here in straight games, was stretched by Parke, who won the first game. But the all-action Power took charge by mixing up his shots and consistently wrong-footing his opponent.

"He took me a little bit by surprise in the first game and it took me a while to readjust my game. But I ended up winning by playing good squash and that's important to me," said Power.



MIRJANA LUCIC

Steffi stops Lindsay

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut, Aug 29: Steffi Graf beat Lindsay Davenport 6-3, 7-6 Friday night in the Pilot Pen International, snapping the defending champion's 13-match winning streak and advancing to her first final since knee surgery 14 months ago, reports AP.

"It's been a while," Graf said. "I'm thrilled to be in the finals."

Her last title came in May 1997 on the clay courts of Strasbourg. A month later she had surgery on her left knee. All three of her semifinal appearances this year were against Davenport, who beat her at Indian Wells and at Stanford.

Graf will meet Wimbledon champion Jana Novotna on Saturday's title match. Novotna advanced with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over unseeded Julie Halard-Decugis.

Davenport nursed a strained right wrist through most of the match and had to call for a timeout midway through the first set. Graf, the No. 4 seed, took advantage of the ailing

Davenport to win the first set easily.

She built a 5-2 lead in the second set but Davenport began to loosen up and pin her with powerful groundstrokes and aggressive serves.

"I just started hitting my shots more and trying not to worry about it..." Then all of a sudden I was back in the match," Davenport said.

Serving at 5-5, Davenport hit a couple of aces and battled through two deuces to go up 6-5. Graf tied it on her next service, forcing a tiebreaker that initially appeared to be all Davenport's.

The 22-year-old Californian won the first five points and suddenly Graf was looking ahead to a third set.

"I kind of thought already about going back to the changing room and changing my shirt for third set. That maybe helped. I didn't start to worry about the match anymore," said Graf, who won the next five points.

She served out for the match and won it when Davenport's return landed in the net.

Halard-Decugis, who missed all of last year with wrist, knee and shoulder injuries, had not beaten Novotna in their previous five matches but quickly had the 29-year-old down a break in the first set for a 3-0 lead. Her strong baseline play and crosscourt winners kept Novotna off the net.

"My game plan was to come in much more, but unfortunately I couldn't do that," Novotna said.

Instead, she countered with pinpoint passes and deep-angled winners to move the rangy Halard-Decugis around the court.

"I just needed to be more consistent, move her around a little bit and let her work for her shots," Novotna said.

Novotna battled back from 0-30 in their final game, hitting two straight sideline winners. Halard-Decugis forced a deuce with a blistering crosscourt shot. Novotna regained the next point with a deft drop shot and won on her next serve when Halard-Decugis' return was long.

Sebastien stuns Jonas

BROOKLINE, Massachusetts, Aug 29: Top-seeded Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden suffered a embarrassing loss to French qualifier Sebastien Grosjean in the quarterfinals of the \$15,000 US dollar MFS Pro Championships on Friday, reports Reuters.

The veteran Bjorkman, who came into the tournament ranked 12th in the world, was eliminated by the 20-year-old, second-year pro 7-6, 6-1.

"I has to be my best career win," said Grosjean, ranked 96th. "I played a great match I served well and my ground strokes were working."

"When you play against a guy that's better than you, you always seem to play better. I figured there was no pressure on me — I had nothing to lose."

Bjorkman, obviously crushed, said: "I lost the match more than he won it. I came here to win the tournament, so naturally I'm disappointed."

After being down set-point twice at 4-5 in the first set before recovering, the sluggish-looking Bjorkman again got into trouble in the tiebreaker, falling behind 6-3.

Grosjean let three set points get away and the Swede then had his only set point at 7-6, but double-faulted. Grosjean finally ended the set with a forehand winner down the line and a

backhand bullet that forced Bjorkman to miss at the net.

After an exchange of breaks in the first two games of the second set it was all Grosjean. He won the rest of the games with a steady baseline game, and when Bjorkman tried to rush the net, the Swede was passed off.

"This has been the case for me for a long time," said Bjorkman. "I play one or two good matches then I break down. I just didn't play at my best level today."

"I didn't have enough power in my volleys and I gave him too many second chances. I missed too many easy shots, you can't do that and expect to beat people."

Third-seeded Cedric Pioline of France won a duel of baseline batters against fifth seed Thomas Muster of Austria 7-5, 6-3. Pioline trailed 3-1 and 4-2 in the first set before overcoming the harder-hitting Muster.

"I know I had to be very consistent against Muster," said Pioline. "I had to hit some good shots tonight."

Forth-seeded Michael Chang fought off some second-set lapses before turning back Italian Gianluca Pozzi 6-4, 2-6, 6-1.

"I think I got a little impatient in the second set," said Chang. "I was hurrying my shots. We had a lot of long rallies and the third set wasn't really as easy as the score sounded."

With a break in the second game, Chang was off to a 3-0 lead in the final set and he remained in control the rest of the way.

"He didn't give me any chances to get back into the match," said the 33-year-old Pozzi, "no free points in the last set."

In a battle of unseeded Dutchmen, Paul Haarhuis put out defending tournament champion Sjeng Schalken 6-6, 6-3.

Haarhuis got the deciding break in the third set, winning at love on a pair of winners and two Schalken errors to go up 4-3.

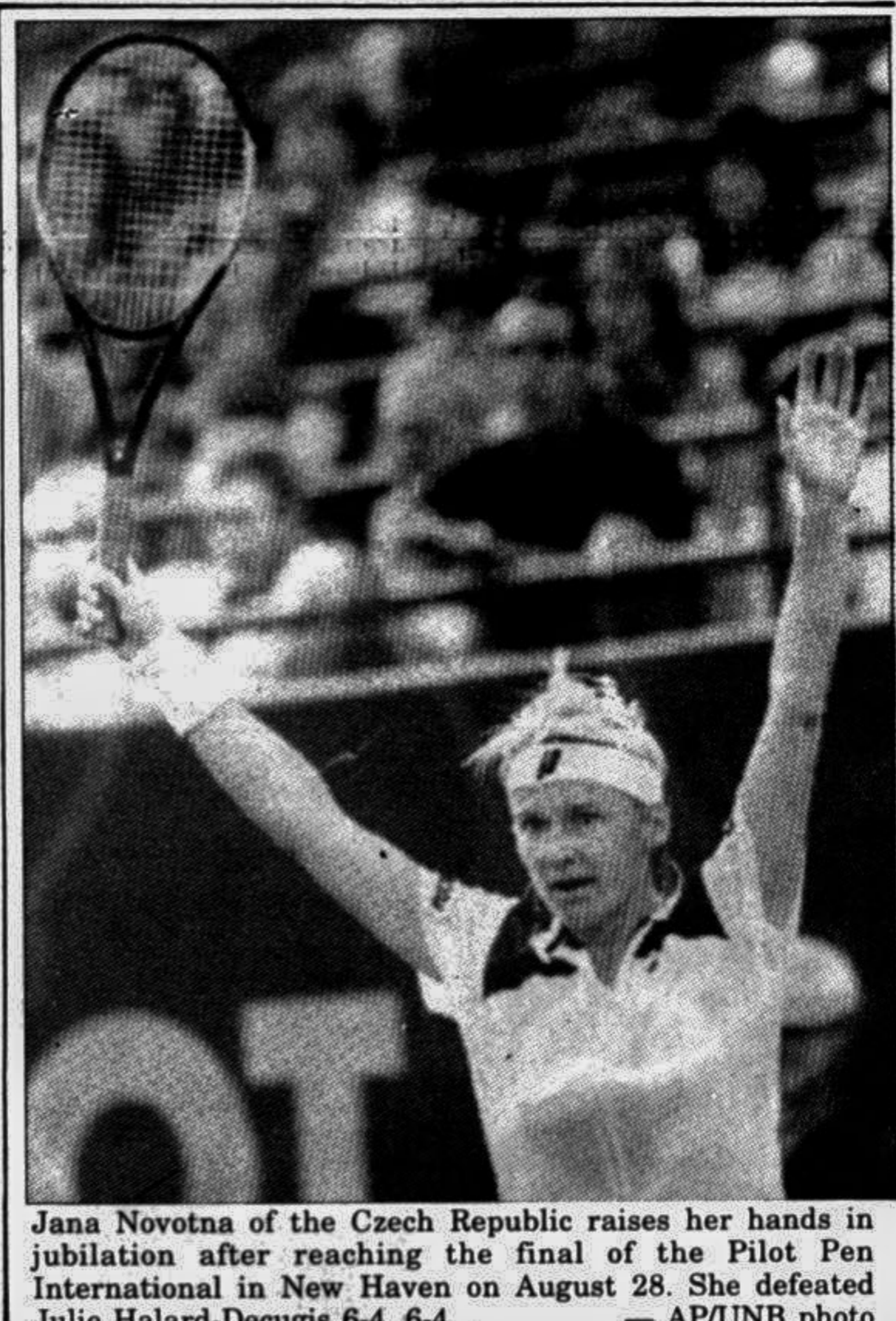
In today's semifinals, Pioline will be playing Haarhuis and Chang will face Grosjean.

Russian spikers beat Italians

BANGKOK, Aug 29: Defending champions Russia defeated Italy in straight sets in the opening match of the women's volleyball World Grand Prix Pool D tournament here Friday, reports AP.

The Russians outpointed the Italians 15-12, 15-9, 15-10.

In the other game, China comfortably beat the United States 15-2, 15-4, 15-5.



Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic raises her hands in jubilation after reaching the final of the Pilot Pen International in New Haven on August 28. She defeated Julie Halard-Decugis 6-4, 6-4.

The Daily Star TV Guide

Sunday 30th August (All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.)

BTV 3:00 Opening announcement, Holy Quran, programme summary 4:00 Reflection from Bible 3:15 Patriotic song 3:20 Animation Film: 3:40 Pusti Talya 4:00 Khabar 4:05 Moram 4:45 Open University 5:25 Aupon Voomee 6:10 Programme of Chittagong Centre 6:45 Khabar 7:00 Health programme 7:25 Mati-o-Manush 8:00 News in Bangla 8:35 Ilhas Katha Koy 8:55 Packed Drama 9:30 Film Show: The New Adventure of Robin Hood 10:00 News in English 10:25 Srujee Namdan 11:30 Khabar/The News 11:40 Tomorrow's programme summary 11:45 Close down

BBC 8:00am BBC News Followed by Weather 8:30 Simpson's World 9:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 9:30 Hardtalk 10:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 10:30 This Week 11:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 11:30 India Business Report 12:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 11:05 Weekend World: Legendary Trails — The Gift of Incentive 12:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 12:30 Simpson's World 1:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 1:05 Weekend World: The High Andes To Patagonia 2:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 2:30 World Focus 3:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 3:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 3:30 World Focus 4:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 4:30 World Focus 5:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 5:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 5:30 This Week 6:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 6:30 World Living 7:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 7:30 World Living 8:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 8:30 World Living 9:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 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