

Lloyd shown mercy

LONDON, Sept 4: David Lloyd's popularity among the England cricket players and the team's recent Test-series win over South Africa saved him from being fired as national coach...

Lloyd was Friday concentrating on England's preparations for their visit to Bangladesh and the subsequent Ashes tour of Australia but only after escaping with another warning about his conduct from the English Cricket Board...

The ECB summoned Lloyd to explain his criticism of Sri Lanka off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan's bowling action and his public spat with television commentator and former batting star Geoffrey Boycott during the one-off Test at The Oval...

Sri Lanka captain Arjuna Ranatunga attributed Muralitharan's remarkable 16-wicket haul in the tourists' 10-wicket win over England on Monday to Lloyd's attack on the spinner's unusual bowling action...

Muralitharan, the leading international bowler this year with 68 wickets, has a rare condition which means he cannot straighten his arm and his action has been cleared by the International Cricket Council...

This action caused some controversy two years ago in Australia but medical tests have proved his action does not breach the rules of cricket, which do not allow deliberately throwing the ball with a bent arm...

Lloyd's confrontation with Boycott, a former England captain, came after the team's disastrous loss when he reacted to the pundit's comment that "England should get a coach who keeps his mouth shut..."

As the Sri Lankan team left England Thursday, Ranatunga said he didn't care if Lloyd was fired...

He wasn't fired but he was given every indication by the ECB that he will get no more warnings...

"David Lloyd has been severely reprimanded, warned again about his conduct and left in no doubt as to the responsibilities which go with such a high-profile position," ECB chief executive Tim Lamsaid...

Lloyd, who was given a warning for his conduct after making accusations about the tied Test between England and Zimbabwe two years ago, issued an apology after his meeting with Lamsaid...

"I am sorry for the offense that I have caused," he said. "I am glad this whole business is over and I am looking forward to the Willis International Cup and to the Ashes tour..."

Real top early club rankings

LONDON, Sept 4 (Reuters/Internet): European champions Real Madrid took the early lead in the European club rankings after opening their Spanish league campaign with a 4-1 win over newly promoted Villarreal...

Spain was the penultimate league championship to get underway with only Italy left to go -- the Italian league opens on September 12...

Italian teams dominated last season's rankings but do not figure in the latest table which only takes into account this season's results...

Table with 2 columns: Rank, Club Name, Points. Includes Real Madrid Spain (117.29), Real Zaragoza Spain (105.37), Bayern Munich Germany (102.14), etc.

TOP 10 CLUB RANKINGS

Points: 1 Real Madrid Spain 117.29, 2 Real Zaragoza Spain 105.37, 3 Bayern Munich Germany 102.14, 4 Girondins Bordeaux France 98.11, 5 Lokeren Belgium 97.52, 6 Kaiserslautern Germany 94.42, 7 Espanyol Spain 93.46, 8 Valencia Spain 93.46, 9 Dinamo Bucharest Romania 87.15, 10 Olympique Lyon France 86.15

BTV

Morning session: 9:00 Opening announcement, Holy Quran, programme summary 9:10 Moner Mukura 10:00 Pramnana Onustar 10:25 Pusti Taltha 10:45 Movie of the Week 12:15 Programme summary for second session

BBC

8:00am BBC News Followed by Weather 8:30 Asia Today 8:45 World Business Report 9:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 9:30 Hardtalk 10:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 10:30 World Focus: 11:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 11:30 World Focus: Ray Meers' World of Survival 3/6 - Savail 12:00noon BBC World News Followed by Weather 12:30 World Living: Airport 1:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 1:30 Hardtalk 2:00

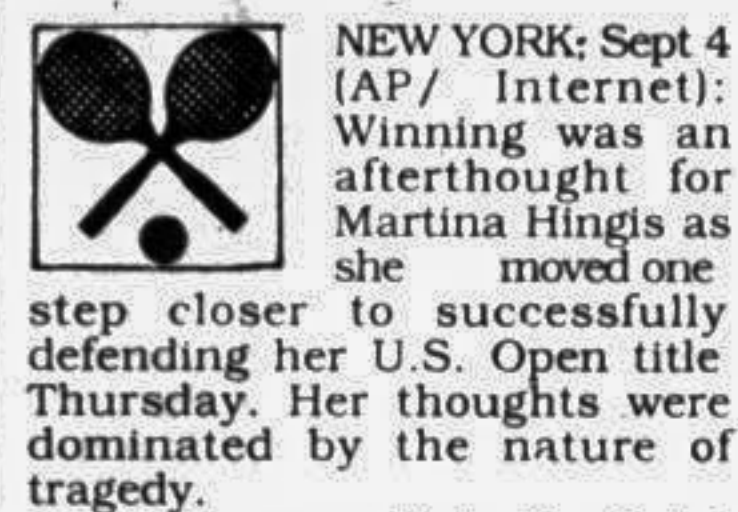
BBC

8:00am BBC News Followed by Weather 8:30 Asia Today 8:45 World Business Report 9:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 9:30 Hardtalk 10:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 10:30 World Focus: 11:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 11:30 World Focus: Ray Meers' World of Survival 3/6 - Savail 12:00noon BBC World News Followed by Weather 12:30 World Living: Airport 1:00 BBC World News Followed by Weather 1:30 Hardtalk 2:00

CHANNEL V

6:00 Turn On T [V] 6:30 V

Swissair crash shocks Hingis



World No 1 Martina Hingis stretches for a forehand against Iva Majoli of Croatia at New York on September 3. Hingis won 7-6, (7-4), 6-0.

NEW YORK, Sept 4 (AP/Internet): Wining was an afterthought for Martina Hingis as she moved one step closer to successfully defending her U.S. Open title Thursday. Her thoughts were dominated by the nature of tragedy...

Hingis moved into the third round with a 7-6 (7-4), 6-0 win over Iva Majoli a few hours after hearing about the crash of Swissair Flight 111 off the Canadian coast, killing all 229 people aboard...

Hingis, a national heroine in her homeland of Switzerland, said she knows many Swissair flight attendants. "It was terrible to hear it," Hingis said. "It's the airplane I fly the most. When I heard I was safe, it was a relief. It's terrible to know you don't have any chance up there..."

Marc Rosset, the top Swiss male player, had been set to return to Geneva on Flight 111 Wednesday night after losing in the first round at the U.S. Open. Instead, he stayed an extra day to practice with players still in the country...

"It was a strange feeling when you know you just realize that for just changing your mind you are still alive," he said. "I think I am a little afraid, when you realize you were close to dying..."

Joining Hingis in the third round were No. 2 Lindsay Davenport, No. 4 Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, No. 5 Venus Williams and No. 13 Amanda Coetzer. Hingis' match had been scheduled for Wednesday night, but was wiped out by torrential rain and strong winds. She was inconsistent in the first set, bringing back memories of her loss to Majoli in the 1997 French Open final. That was the only Grand Slam title Hingis failed to win last year...

"I was very nervous in the beginning," Hingis said. "It was very strange coming from last night not having played and having to play the next day." Majoli was the aggressor in the first set, moving Hingis from side to side and slamming groundstrokes past the defending champion. Hingis sighed loudly in exasperation as she netted a forehand late in the first set, and her soft second serve was pummeled by Majoli. But, just as the green concrete of Arthur Ashe Stadium seemed to be turning into the red clay of Roland Garros, a jet flew noisily over the court to return the New York feeling and Hingis made it clear this would be no Paris replay...

After needing 45 minutes to win the first set, Hingis swept through the second set in 20 minutes. "Just like the fly she swatted away in her post-match news conference, Hingis had little trouble with Majoli after the tiebreaker. "I loosened up and everything started to go in," Hingis said. "I was strong and I didn't let her back in the game..."

Real denied home advantage

MADRID, Sept 4: Real Madrid will open their European Cup defence against Inter Milan on September 16 in Seville after losing their second appearance against a one match home ban on Thursday, reports Reuters...

UEFA imposed the punishment after spectators tore down goal posts before the start of last season's semifinal against Borussia Dortmund. The Spanish club originally appealed against the ban to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne, Switzerland...

On Tuesday CAS said it did not have jurisdiction to over-ride the punishment and so the UEFA suspension would remain in force. Real Madrid immediately made a special request to UEFA to delay the ban until their champions' League match against Sturm Graz on October 21...

The Spanish club claimed they were having difficulty organising the high-profile match against Inter away from home and faced a 1.3 million US dollars loss in reduced ticket sales for the guaranteed sell-out by playing at a smaller stadium. But that final chance of a reprieve was lost and the club announced that Seville's Sanchez Pizjuan stadium would host the match...

Seville is 542 km from Madrid -- 200 km further than Valencia, the other city under consideration -- but the club has opted for the Andalusian capital because of the high-speed rail link between the two cities and the greater hotel capacity there...

"I guess I felt this country really didn't notice. It was one of the best efforts and I felt it went unnoticed in this country. If people in this country aren't crazy about Davis Cup and don't understand it, it is hard to really get behind it." Sampras said he still wants to be a part of Davis Cup, but wishes it were conducted in fewer rounds or every other year so as not to be so demanding...

Agassi, a Davis Cup stalwart since 1988, lashed out at U.S. officials for not considering player needs and specifically for not accommodating him by holding the semifinal near Las Vegas, where he is staging his annual charity event on the same September 25-27 weekend as the tie in Milwaukee. "If it was in my backyard I wouldn't walk out the back door (to play in it)," said Agassi about upcoming Davis matches. "Rafter put a whole different spin on the competition. "I guess there are so many other sports that just take over here," he said about the U.S. sports scene. "We have our big sports too. We have cricket. But Australians, I don't know, I think they are more into their sports..."

"They are very passionate about their country, very proud of it." "I don't know what the crowds are like in America, but I know in Australia we get great crowds. They are very supportive so it is a good feeling."

Rafter thinks otherwise

NEW YORK, Sept 4 (Reuters/Internet): American stars Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras vented their Davis Cup discontent at the U.S. Open on Thursday, sentiments clearly not shared by Australian Patrick Rafter...

Agassi, upset over the U.S. Tennis Association's site selection for this month's semifinal against Italy, hinted that he may be through playing Davis Cup, while world number one Pete Sampras said the team competition was overbaked and underappreciated. Rafter, after winning his second match in defence of his U.S. Open title on Thursday, said winning the Davis Cup was his next great goal as a tennis player...

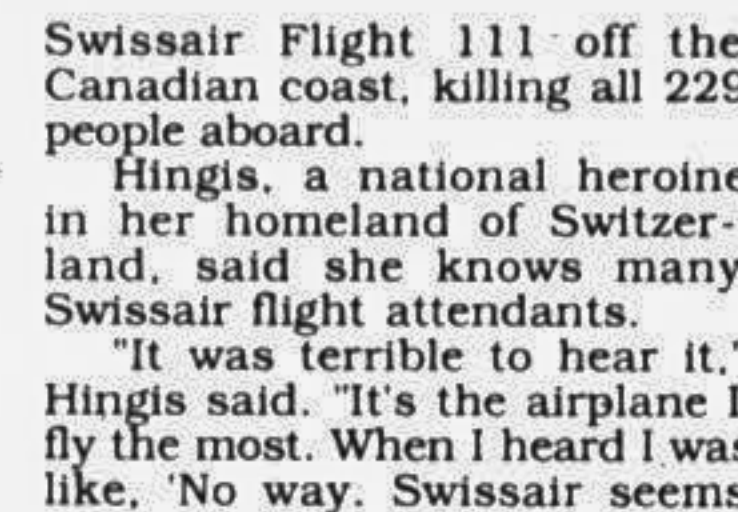
"For me, it's my next biggest goal -- my next biggest achievement that I would love to be part of, to be part of a winning team," Rafter said about the Davis Cup. "It is very big in Australia." Sampras said the lack of enthusiasm in the United States for the international team competition was one reason he had soured on it and not made himself available so far this year. "The way I feel about Davis Cup is what happened a couple of years ago in Moscow was one of the best efforts I have put in tennis," Sampras, winner of 11 Grand Slam singles titles, said about his hand in all three points that brought the U.S. victory in the 1995 finals against Russia...

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BCCI boss clears the air



Mumbai, Sept 4: Indian cricket control board (BCCI) chief Raj Singh Dhangar yesterday refuted the statement of his counterpart from the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) Suresh Kalmadi that the board was put under pressure vis-a-vis team selection for the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games by the IOA, reports PTI.

In a signed press statement here yesterday the board president also denied news reports that he had a meeting in Delhi with the Minister of State for Sports Uma Bharti by reiterating, "I want to state that I never even remotely attempted to seek an appointment, much less, meeting the minister of sports..."

"It would be proper for me to state that at no time there was any discussion with any official of the Indian Olympic Association, regarding the composition of the Indian cricket team to be sent for the Commonwealth Games," he said. "It would be appropriate to mention that no pressure at any time was built on me or any member of the board by the government or the Indian Olympic Association. The BCCI has acted within the framework of its autonomy and the national selection committee addressed itself to a task in the best interest of Indian cricket and above all national interest, Raj Singh stated..."

Kalmadi, in a press meet at Delhi yesterday had claimed that only due to pressure from the IOA had the board selected top-notchers like Ajay Jadeja, who is to lead the team. Sachin Tendulkar and Anil Kumble for Kuala Lumpur.

Surrey losing ground

LONDON, Sept 4: County championship leaders Surrey suffered a jolt to their hopes of winning the title for the first time since 1971 when Yorkshire shot them out for only 147 at Headingley on Thursday, reports Reuters...

That gave the home side a first innings lead of 103, which they extended to 245 by the close, with six wickets left. The rapidly improving Scottish bowler Gavin Hamilton, who collected only 18 wickets in nine matches last season, did the damage by taking seven for 50...

That followed his six for 50 against Essex and 10 wickets in the match against Glamorgan over the past month. Even before, the current round of matches, Surrey's long standing lead had been cut to 15 points over Leicestershire, who continued to prosper...

They bowled out Warwickshire for 276 and set them an unlikely target of 405 to win. Victory for Leicestershire today would mean a change of leadership even if Surrey held out for a draw against Yorkshire...

Third placed Lancashire kept the pressure on by beating Derbyshire with a day to spare at Old Trafford. The margin was an innings and eight runs. Graham Lloyd made 212 not out and John Crawley 100 in Lancashire's total of 487...

Derbyshire were then all out for 198, Wasim Akram taking four wickets. Champions Glamorgan suffered a shock defeat by Sussex, having been set only 146 to beat them...

Sussex's Robin Martin-Jenkins, the son of one of England's leading cricket writers, had career-best figures of seven for 54 to dismiss them for 127. Hampshire raced to a seven-wicket victory over Middlesex, scoring the 301 they needed at almost five an over, with 105 from John Stephenson...

Contenders on course

NEW YORK, Sept 4 (AFP): Defending champions Martina Hingis and Pat Rafter won with ease, world number one Pete Sampras struggled a little and Andre Agassi and 1997 runner-up Greg Rusedski struggled a lot. But all advanced to the third round of the U.S. Open with victories here Thursday, continuing an adherence to form that Hingis dispatched Iva Majoli 7-6, 6-0, in a rematch of a 1997 French Open final won by the Croatian to deny Hingis a Grand Slam sweep...

Hingis has won five titles this year, including the Australian Open, but none since the Italian Open in early May. She overcame early jitters to win another rain-out match. "I was nervous in the beginning," Hingis said. "I was up 4-1 but I didn't feel in control of the match. I felt nervous in the first set. It was strange."

Australia's Rafter, showing few ill effects from a five-set opening victory over Morocco's Hicham Arazi, trounced 104th ranked Argentinian Hernan Ganku 6-4, 6-1, 6-2. "It was tough. Today I found it tough to get up," Rafter said. "It was important to get off to a good start. If I got down I would have been very hard on myself. You feel a little mentally drained..."

Britain's Rusedski rallied past Czech Bohdan Ujihrad 4-6, 6-3, 4-6, 6-2, 7-5, his second five set triumph in a row. He saved one match point after having rescued two earlier against South Africa's Wayne Ferreira. "I want to make sure I give women's third-round play opens today with Hingis facing 31st-ranked and French Open champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain beat Colombia's Fabiola Zuluaga 6-3, 6-2. "I feel comfortable," Sanchez said. "When you win a Grand Slam, that gives you a lot of confidence, what's important is winning Grand Slams. That's what I'm looking for now. I don't have to prove anything..."

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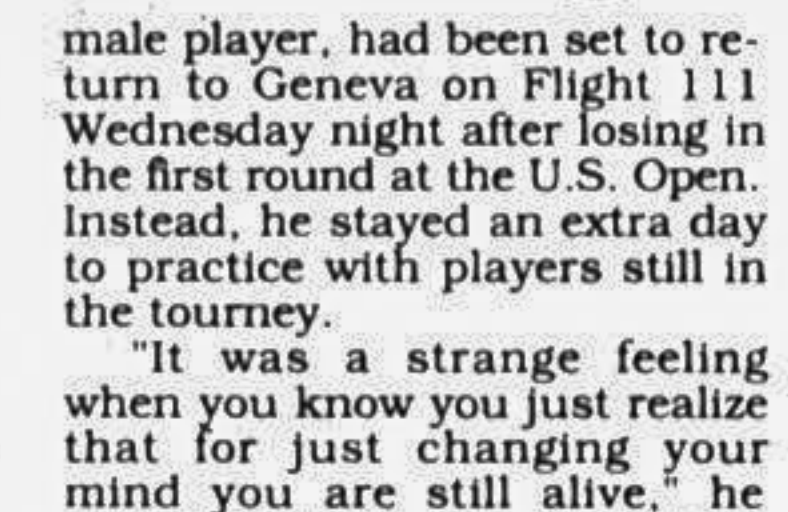
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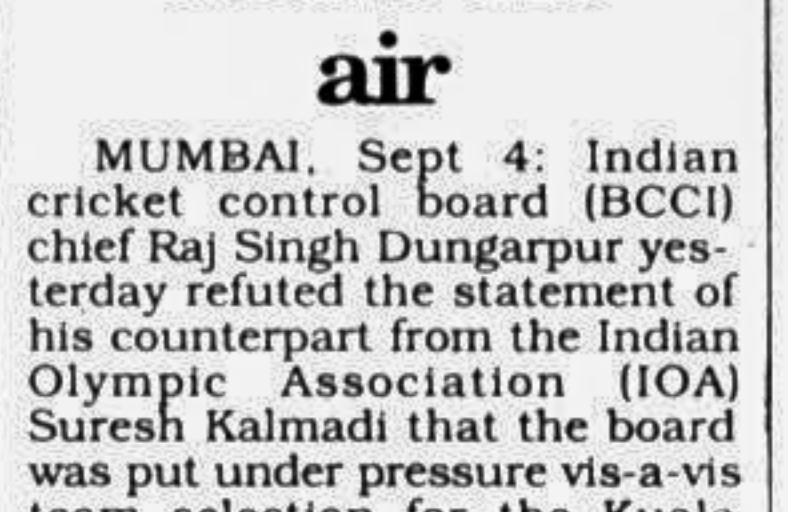
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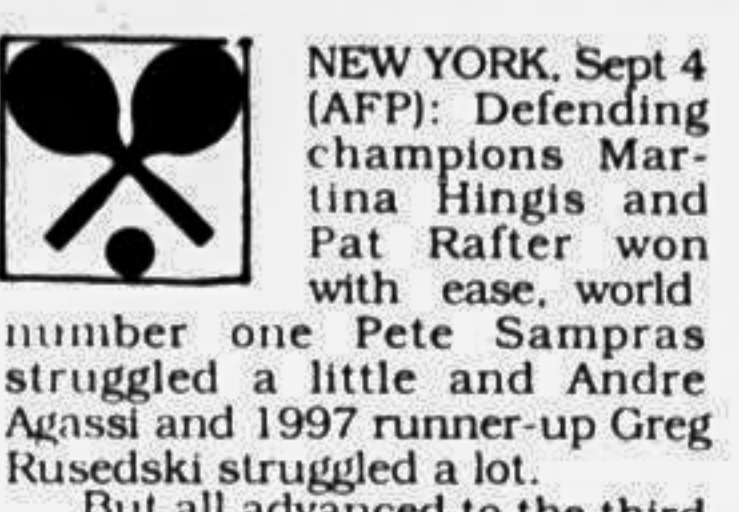
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