front.

Guingamp.

league for five seasons.

World Cup in Mexico.

ons Cup win in 1994.

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: Hosts India yesterday started their campaign in the Kanishka World Cup cricket for the blind on a healthy note, thrashing England by ten wickets in the opening match at Harbaksh

stadium here, reports PTI.
Pakistan beat Sri Lanka and Australia cruised to an easy victory over their continental rivals New Zealand in the other matches played yesterday in the inaugural World Cup for the blind.

India, favourites in the seven-nation tournament, also featuring South Africa, over-hauled England's paltry total of 87 for nine wickets by scoring 89 without losing a wicket. India now the toss and put England in to bat.

Player-of-the-match Balaji Damor claimed three vital wickets to skittle the visitors for paltry 87 with extras (41) be-ing the highest contributor to the English total. Heindrick Swanepaul (25) was the only respectable scorer as other batsman failed to reach double

Replying to England's total, Indian openers Rajesh Singh (15 n.o.) and Anand Sharma (57 n.o.) saw the team through.

BRIEF SCORES

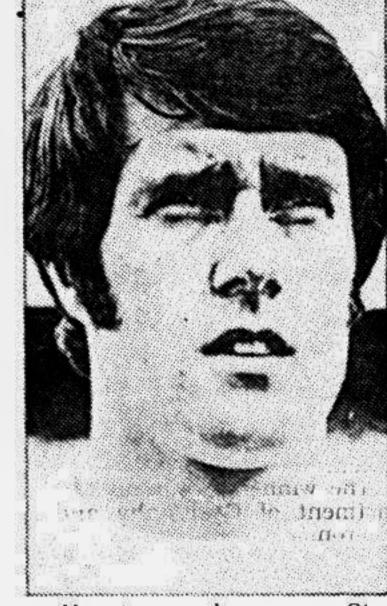
England 87 for 9 in 38 overs (Heindrick Swanepaul 25; Balaii Damor 3/19) lost to India 89 for no loss in 17.2 overs (Anand Sharma 57 n.o.).

Sri Lanka 180 all out in 38.4 overs (V Jayawardena 76; Sultan Shah 2/53, Abdul Razzaq 2/16. Mohd Ahmed 3/21) lost to Pakistan 181 for 1 in 20.1 overs (Masood Jan 134 n.o.).

Australia 207 for 9 in 39 overs (Chris Backstorm 11) n.o.) beat New Zealand 107 for 9 in 39 overs (James Dunn 31; Paul McKenna 2/11).

Sir Geoff!

LONDON, Nov 18: Geoff Hurst, the only player to score a hattrick in a World Cup final, was knighted by Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday, reports Reuters.



Hurst, now known as Sir Geoff, was part of the England side which won the cup at Wembley in 1966 after beating West Germany 4-2.

He told Sky News: "You could argue they all should get something but we are all good friends and wish me well for it."

ACB's Hair dilemma

SYDNEY, Nov 18: The Australian Cricket Board (ACB) has denied that controversial umpire Darrell Hair will not be allowed to officiate in matches involving Sri Lanka during an international limited-overs tournament next year, reports

Hair outraged Sri Lankan officials during the 1995-96 season when he continually no ball off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan for throwing. In an autobiography released this week, Hair calls Muralitharan's action "diabolical," saying he would do the same again.

Following the tour of Australia, International Cricket Council experts assessed the Sri Lankan's action and approved it. He has not been no-balled for throwing since.

Despite a Sydney newspaper report that ACB Chief Executive Malcolm Speed will recommend Hair be stood down from Sri Lankan matches, an ACB spokesman said no decision had yet been taken. But he admitted that the ACB would discuss the issue at its board meeting Thursday.

"The issue of Darrell Hair and his book is up for discussion at the ACB board meeting tomorrow," the spokesman

Dhammika Ranatunga, chief executive of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka, told the Sydney Morning Herald that Hair should not officiate "because his comments on Muralitharan's action contravene the ICC's code of con-

duct." Hick reaches down under

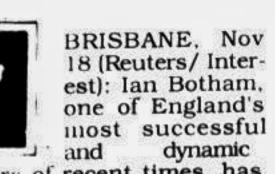
BRISBANE, Oct 18 (Reuters/ Internet): England batsman Graeme Hick arrived in Australia on Wednesday to help bolster the tourists' chances of winning the Ashes from Australia.

A surprise omission from the squad, Hick was added to the team because of concerns over the fitness of batsmen Michael Atherton and John Crawley.

Atherton was in doubt for the first Test starting in Brisbane on Friday after aggravating an old back injury while Crawley was beaten up while walking back to the team's hotel

on the weekend. However, both were cleared on Wednesday to play in the opening match. Hick was not named in the 12 for the first

Botham warns Aussies



dynamic cricketers of recent times, has issued a stern reminder to Australia before the start of the Ashes series -- write off England at your peril.
The former Test captain said

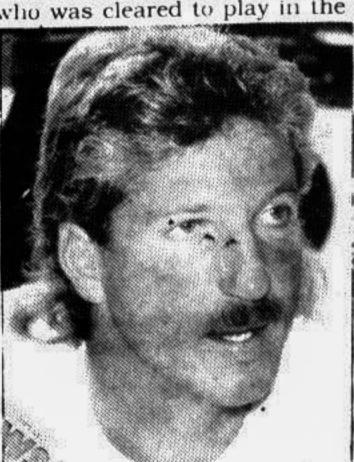
England's current crop of players would provide the Australians with stiff opposition, although he stopped short of predicting an England victory.

"You've got to be realistic. Australia are the best side in the world, so England come here knowing that and it's up to them to do the best that they can do," Botham said. "I'm actually quite pleased

with the way they've started and I think a lot of people at home are pleasantly surprised. So who knows?"

Botham dismissed sugges-

tions that England top-order batsmen would not be up to the



first Test after passing a fitness test on Wednesday, was a

opener Mark Butcher would rise

to the occasion "I'll just take you back to the (1997) series in England when a lot of your so-called experts and ex-players were calling for Mark Taylor's head," said Botham, who is in Australia working as a commentator.

shout too much about Butcher Botham said the key to an improved English performance was in the selectors' faith to

"They had that shoved back

down their throats so I wouldn't

stick with the same line-up. "The big problem England has had, particularly under (former manager) Ray Illingworth, was the fact that we didn't play the same side for three years, so how we were meant to get any kind of continuity. I

"So, if you go out there with the right attitude and you go out there to compete, of course you can win."

don't know," Botham said.

Lehmann remains hopeful

Warne skates on thin ice

against umpires after Victoria's

MELBOURNE, Nov 18 (AFP/ Internet): Shane Warne is to be investigated by the Australian Cricket Board for an outburst

Sheffield Shield defeat by Western Australia. Warne, the Victoria skipper, was livid after his side was beaten by two runs in Perth on Monday ending their unbeaten

start to the season. The star leg spinner, making his return after major shoulder surgery, was particularly incensed over a lbw decision against Graeme Vimpani claiming "everybody in the ground knew he hit it, barring the um-

Warne went on: "I'll probably get into trouble for saying that but I don't care because everyone in the whole ground knew he hit bar him.

ACB communications manager Michael Hogan confirmed Tuesday the ACB had received a transcript of Warne's post-

by the players on Tuesday for

urites for the championship in

August, Simoni's men are still

only sixth after last weekend's

victory over Sampdoria that

ended a run of three defeats and

dogged by a knee injury, still be-

Harbhajan

sees a brighter

future

off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

who came under International

Cricket Council (ICC) scrutiny

for suspect bowling action and

was subsequently cleared by

Fred Titmus of England re-

cently, has said he would not be

under any sort of pressure while

the Board President's Eleven's

practice at the Cricket Club of

India (CCI) here yesterday, the

18-year-old offie, who has been

recalled in the Indian team for

New Zealand tour, said, "My

problem was that I was slating

my head during the time of de-

livery and Titmus corrected it

by asking me to keep the head

England I have found that my

line and length has improved

and I was able to take seven

wickets against Delhi and eight

"I know that I will be under

scrutiny whenever I bowl in an

international match. However,

I will not be under any pressure

whatsoever as I know that there

is nothing wrong with my bowl-

ing action as such," said a very

relaxed looking lad from Pun-

WC soccer

top seeds

against Services," he added.

"After coming back from

straight.

Speaking to reporters after

bowling in future, reports PTI.

MUMBAI, Nov 18: Indian

Ronaldo, who has been

the Italian league season.

a draw.

Inter Milan's wretched start to

Tipped as runaway favo-

MILAN, Nov 18

(AFP/ Internet):

Ronaldo blamed

team coach Gigi

Simoni and a

poor performance

match media conference and would be having a close look at

Warne could face a fine or even suspension if the ACB de-

where to go with it, it may be that there is nowhere to go," said Hogan.

cause it was a pretty exciting conclusion to the match." Meanwhile, Darren Lehmann insisted Tuesday that

he would regain his spot in the

Lehmann, who was replaced for the first Test against England in Brisbane by Ricky Ponting, said he was disappointed by his exclusion, but he would concentrate on getting

"It's disappointing but now it's a case of me just getting back and making runs, putting my case forward and getting picked again, that's all I can really do," 28-year-old Lehmann said.

possible.

"There's no use worrying about it too much. it's gone now. I've got to get forward with what's going on in my career. whether it's with the state or Australia and play as well as I

The South Australia captain said he hoped selectors would take into account the fact that he had scored a lot of runs in Perth and pick him for the second Test there from November

"That's definitely not out of my goals. I've just got to hope things go my way, and the best way of doing that is putting runs on the board," he said.

Lehmann, who was rated the best overseas player to have played for English county Yorkshire this year, played first class cricket for 11 years before getting his chance at Test level, making his debut against India earlier this year.

And on Australia's recent successful tour of Pakistan, he averaged 42 in two Tests, with a top score of 98.

four-nation Independence Cup football tournament with a match to spare, reports PTI. India, who defeated Malaysia 3-1 in their first outing.

scored through Karunakar Ray and Abbas Ali Rizvi to take a 2-0 lead at half-time. Maldives, who started their campaign well by holding Sri Lanka 2-2 in their opening match, pulled one back when Sabbir Ali scored in the dying minutes of the match, accord-

India enter

final

India top the table with six points from two matches followed by hosts Sri Lanka, who beat Malaysia 2-1 yesterday. with four points.

India play the hosts in their last league match tomorrow.

Tips from 'Beast of Barcelona'

NEWCASTLE. Nov 18 (AFP) Internet): Barcelona defender Miguel Angel Nadal on Tuesday touted himself as the solution to the defensive problems of English Premiership side Newcastle United.

The 32-year-old Spanish international, nicknamed the 'Beast of Barcelona', believes he could do a job for Newcastle's Dutch manager Ruud Gullit. "I know that Newcastle

United are looking for my type of player, and I would love to go to England and play for them.

"My agents have been in touch with Newcastle, and I'm told they could have reservations about my age but I am still only 32 and I know I have plenty to offer them,' he told the Newcastle Chronicle.

Gullit has been trying to bring in new players ever since he took over at St. James' Park in August but has yet to get out the chequebook.

A combination of unavailability and a run of poor form has done him no favours, but the club's supporters are growing impatient at the lack of transfer activity.

Iran weighing **US** invitation

TEHRAN, Nov 18 (Reuters/ Internet): Iran's soccer federation is weighing an invitation to play friendly matches in the United States, a federation official said in remarks published on Wednesday. "This proposal has been sent

to us but we have to study it first...We have not replied yet,' the daily Zan quoted Nasser Noamouz, manager of Iran's national soccer team, as saying. The newspaper Zan said the

U.S. soccer federation had invited Iran's national team for friendly matches next June. "We would have to go to

America with our best players and best national team, Noamouz said. Iran's 2-1 win over the United States in the World Cup

finals in June prompted mass

celebrations in the Islamic re-

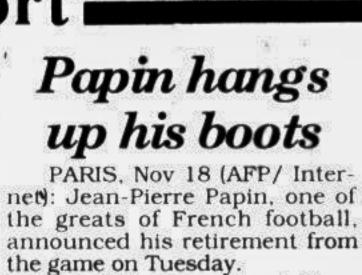
Direct sports contacts between the two arch-enemies, broken after the 1979 Islamic revolution, resumed in February when U.S. wrestlers at-

nament in Tehran. The event evoked analogies with the "ping-pong diplomacy" of the 1970s, which helped normalise U.S.-China ties.

tended an international tour-

Grassroots contacts between Iran and the United States have 27 "Caught been on the rise since President Mohammad Khatami's landmark message to the American people in January, calling for dialogue between the people of the two countries.

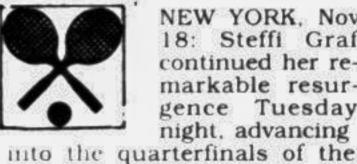
Diplomatic ties between Iran and the United States were severed after militant students stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran in 1979 and held 52 Americans hostage for 444





Steffi Graf executes a backhand return against Jana Novotna at the Chase Championships. -AFP photo

Graf, Hingis reach qtrs



18: Steffi Graf continued her remarkable resurgence Tuesday night, advancing

Chase Championships with a 6-7, 6-4, 6-1 victory over thirdseeded Jana Novotna, reports

After suffering a series of injuries and surgeries. Graf is playing again like the woman who dominated women's tennis for a decade. Since undergoing wrist

surgery in September, Graf has won 11 consecutive matches and two tournaments.

The top three players in the world have been among her last four victims. And she has won her last nine matches in the season-ending Championships at Madison Square Garden, having won the title in both 1995 and 1996 before missing last year while recuperating from knee surgery.

Also advancing into the quarterfinals Tuesday were second-seeded Martina Hingis and No 8 Nathalie Tauziat. Hingis beat Swiss Fed Cup teammate Patty Schnyder 4-6. 6-0, 6-3, while Tauziat ousted Natasha Zvereva of Belarus 6-3, 6-1 earlier in the day.

Novotna became the championships' first defending champion to lose in the first round. But she ran into one of the best players in history in Graf, who because of a lack of matches, wasn't seeded. And Novotna suffered cramps in both calves, taking an injury timeout in the opening game of the final set.

With the Garden crowd solidly behind her, cheering loudly every time she won a point. Graf put her feared forehand on display, spraying winners all around the court.

But Novotna, who captured her first Grand Slam tournament titles this year when she won Wimbledon, was up to the task, matching Graf stroke for stroke, point for point.

She won the first-set tiebreak when her forehand down the line hit the top of the net and bounced over Graf. landing just inside the baseline.

position

cry "Alas"

45 Incursion

48 Intricate

52 Moreover

53 Take ten

Arthur

56 Indigent

58 In need of

DOWN

1 Buss

irrigation

2 Scoundrel

ACROSS

4 Ernesto

Guevara

12 Stylish, to

Powers

15 Past

16 Explain

19 Nagano

20 Dungeon

22 Opposite

of pos.

23 Be aware

29 Trouble-

31 Laissez

34 Packed

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35 "Mistress of

the Dark"

37 Head of st.

38 Methods

March

foe Luthor

1 Madrid Mrs. 41 Bridge

7 "Ulysses" 47 Reason to

13 Superman 54 Actress

14 Attu dweller 55 "Awe-

18 Newsroom 57 Sun.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

3 Pueblo

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capital

6 Ooze

7 "Mono-

poly"

9 Verily

11 Seine

season

17 "Face/Off"

actor

21 Helen's

POSTMARK

Yesterday's answer

Solution time: 25 mins.

captor

corner

8 Vintage

23 Jack

trophy

wench

30 Writer

32 In the

style of

climber

36 Cupid's

40 Saudis,

e.g.

43 Sub

46 Calendar

37 Chin

material 24 Little louse

4 Skelton's 25 Indivisible

Kadiddle- 26 Took the

5 Montana's 28 Yon

10 Director's 33 Wall

Novotna blew a kiss skyward as she walked off the court. Graf didn't delay letting Novotna know she was in a bat-

tle. The German broke Novotna to begin the second set. It was the only break of the set, but the only one she needed. Then came a long and decisive game to being the third set.

Graf won the first point with a perfectly placed forehand down the line. Novotna fotlowed with a fault on the next point and immediately walked

to umpire Mike Morrissey and requested an injury timeout. A trainer came on the court and worked on both calves. The Czech Republic righthander held serve, raising her arms in mock triumph when

she won the final point on an overhead. It was the last game she would win. Schnyder and Hingis en-

gaged in long baseline barrages. Hingis pulled off the first service break, in the fifth game of the opening set when Schnyder made two forehand errors. But the second-seeded Hingis gave the break right back in the next game when she double-faulted on the last two points.

Both struggled to hold serve before Schnyder finally did in the 10th game to close out the first set, much to the displeasure of Hingis. When a shot by Schnyder that appeared to hit the baseline was not called long, Hingis whined, "Come on.

The loss of the set was like a wakeup call. Hingis ripped through the next set as her penetrating groundstrokes kept Schnyder back on her heels behind the baseline. She was only getting her sec-

ond wind.

The third set produced excellent tennis as both players found the lines. Schnyder broke Hingis in the second game after the two battled through three deuces. On the final point of the game, both were at the net when Schnyder lofted a perfect lob volley over the head of Hingis. The Madison Square Garden

crowd roared its approval. Hingis broke right back. then won the next three games for a 4-2 lead, and after Schnyder held at love in the seventh game, Hingis wrapped up the

first-round victory by losing only three points in the next two games.

The last time Tauziat and Zvereva played was at Wimbledon, with Tauziat coming from behind to earn a hard-fought, three-set victory.

Their match Tuesday had little excitement as Zvereva couldn't do enough with the ball to create problems for the French veteran. Tauziat kept hitting to Zvereva's backhand,

a tactic that worked repeatedly. Tauziat pulled off the first service break in the match in the sixth game of the first set for a 4-2 lead. That was followed by two more breaks of serve, giving Tauziat a 5-3 lead. She closed out the set when Zvereva's backhand down the

line was wide.

It only took 37 minutes for Tauziat to wrap up the opening set, and she sailed through the second set in 31 minutes.

Rios hits the roof

BONN, Nov 18 (Reuters/Internet): Marcelo Rios has blasted the ATP Tour officials for the way they treat tennis professionals.

"They drill us as if we were in the army," the Chilean world number two told German weekly Stern in an interview released ahead of its publication on Thursday.

"If somebody breaks his racket in anger, then a punishment machine is set in motion," he added. "That way, people are reduced to bloodless creatures." Despite his quarterfinal exit

in Santiago last week, Rios could still stop Pete Sampras from ending the year as number one for a record sixth consecutive time. The two will be in Hanover

for the season-ending ATP Tour world championship which features the world's top eight players and starts on Monday.

Rios, who has won seven titles this year and has had two brief stints atop the rankings, told Stern competitive tennis was not exactly a friendly game.

CRYPTOQUIP

GAJMCE, LHAJYV VCN K LKE Yesterday's Cryptoquip: COULDN'T REALLY OBSOLETE TEPEES ACCURATELY BE CALLED PAST

48 Compass point suffix TENTS? Today's Cryptoquip clue: L equals H

PappoThe Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error

Buscaglia 31 Churchill's creditors? specialty adomment 42 Bestow an honor 44 Type of

49 Appomattox VIP **50** Pub offering 51 Naughty

US eves made ZURICH, Nov 18: The United

States, China, Germany and Norway will be the four seeds for next summer's Women's World Cup, FIFA said Tuesday, reports AP. The 16-team tournament will be played in eight US cities

from June 19-July 10. The draw will take place Feb. 14 at San Jose, California during halftime of a game between the US women's team and a FIFA women's All-Star team. Fifteen of the berths in the

tournament have been determined, with the field also including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Ghana, Italy, Japan, Nigeria, North Korea, Russia and Sweden. Games will be played in Chicago; East Rutherford, New

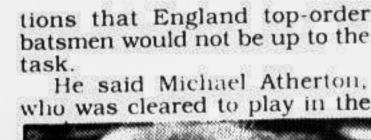
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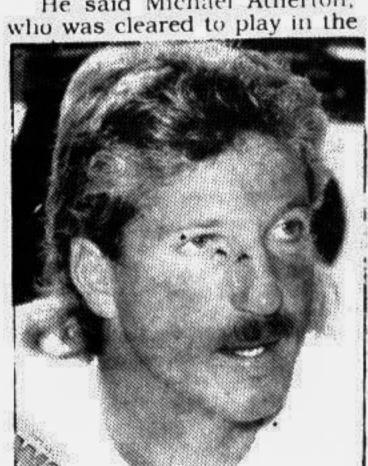
husetts; Landover, Maryland;

Pasadena, California; Port-

land, Oregon; San Jose,

California and Stanford, Cali-Only female referees will be used at the tournament, FIFA





IAN BOTHAM proven performer while fellow

cides to take action. "We'll see if there is any-

"We would have to take into account the circumstances be-

Australian Test team. back into the team as soon as

Gabriel Batistuta's league leaders Fiorentina. "Simoni has his share of the

Rangers back out of Koepke deal GLASGOW, Nov 18 (Reuters/ Internet): Rangers have withdrawn from negotiations to that it's a strange champisign former German interna-

Koepke, blaming his agent for being too greedy. The Scottish Premier League leaders had hoped to have 36year-old Koepke's move from Marseille completed in time to play against rivals Celtic on

tional goalkeeper Andreas

Saturday. However, Dennis Roach, the agent that Rangers have employed to broker the deal, said on Wednesday that Kopke's German agent had broken three separate agreements by asking

for more money. "Unfortunately Andreas will not now be coming to Rangers," said Roach, "Because we have been unable to agree matters "We had three separate

with his representative." rounds of talks and each time he came back and asked for more money. These excessive demands means the matter is now closed."

"He's got something to do with it lieves Inter can become chamas well. But even us players pions. But he said it was now time to play their best football could and should do better. starting on Sunday against

"If we really want to win the league, we should be frightened of no-one. And we have to prove that in Florence, even though someone like Batistuta can put blame," said the 22-year-old. the frighteners on people."

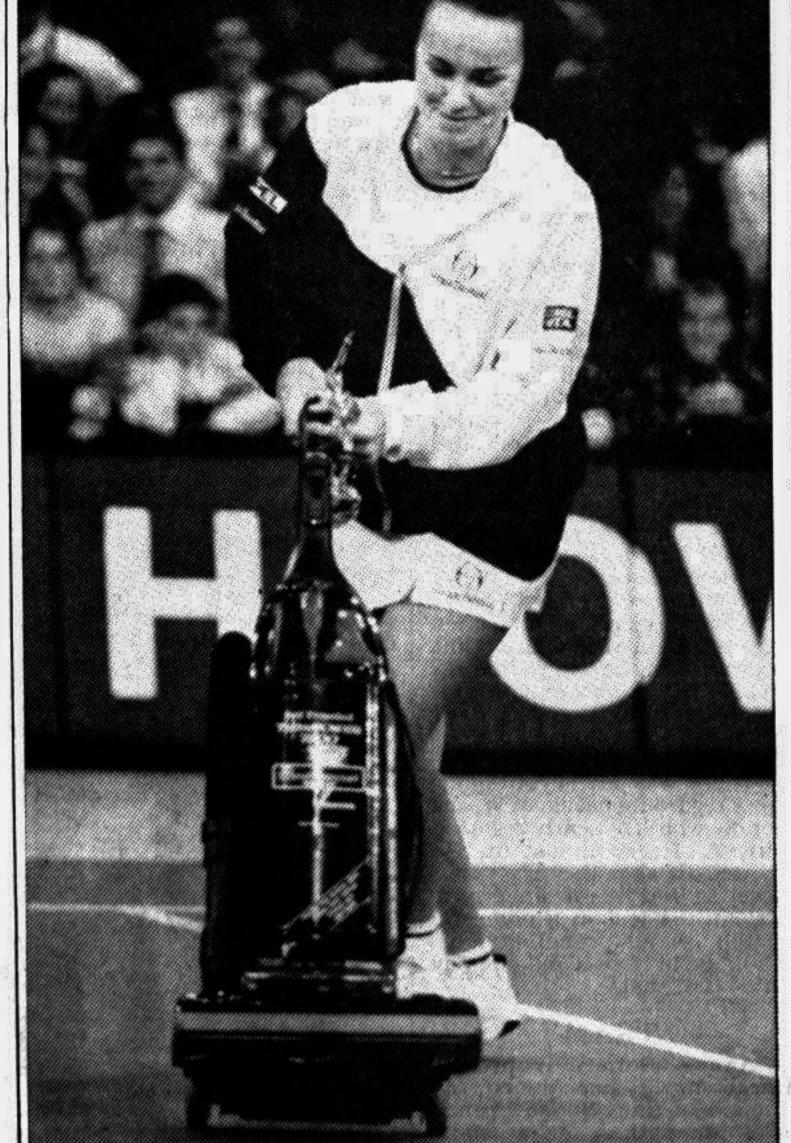
As for Inter's title prospects, after a weekend which saw defeats for pacesetters Fiorentina and Juventus. Ronaldo said: We are still in the race. 'We're also helped by the fact

onship this season. All the teams are up there together and no one is out of the running. Evervone has something to aim "The game against Fio-

rentina will be an important one for us." Batistuta is already teasing his Brazilian rival, with whom he played a memorable exhibition match in Marseille last December before the World Cup

Batistuta wants to renew that strike partnership next month in a Rest of the World side against Italy and wished Ronaldo a speedy recovery from injury - but not before Sunday.

"I thank him for that, it's always a pleasure to play alongside him," said Ronaldo 'But I'm hoping to be there for the match against Fiorentina. Even though there's the game against Real Madrid coming



Martina Hingis of Switzerland fooling around with her new Hoover Vacuum cleaner at New York on November 17 after she was presented with the Clean Sweep award by - AFP photo days. Hoover company .

ing to information received Ronaldo on unimpressive Inter