

UEFA assures tight security

GENEVA, Nov 30 (Reuters/Internet): European soccer's governing body UEFA said on Monday the politically-charged Champions' League clash between Turkey's Galatasaray and Italy's Juventus would go ahead on Wednesday with increased security.

A UEFA spokesman said the Turkish club would be providing tighter security than normal and would face severe punishment if promised security measures failed to materialise.

FIH allows England

BRUSSELS, Nov 30: The FIH, world governing body of field hockey, announced here on Sunday that England would be allowed to compete in the 1999 Champions Trophy despite pulling out of this year's event, reports AFP.

The ruling means that England, who withdrew from November's tournament in Pakistan after the foreign office advised Britons not to travel there as a result of anti-western feeling following the Americans bombing of neighbouring Afghanistan, will replace Germany in Brisbane, Australia, next June.

FIFA leaves it upto ROK

SEOUL, Nov 30: Stalinist North Korea could host some of the 2002 World Cup final matches, Sepp Blatter, president of world football governing body FIFA, hinted here today, reports AFP.

He told reporters while it was not possible to change FIFA statutes to allow the North to formally host any games, if the South as co-host made its own contacts "FIFA, at least, will not close the door."

"We are open to any dialogue," he said.

The 2002 finals are being co-hosted by South Korea and Japan.

Blatter, in Seoul for the first time since he replaced his longtime boss Joao Havelange in June last year, said he was planning to visit the communist state next fall at the invitation of Pyongyang.

Feyenoord triumph

AMSTERDAM, Nov 30: Julio Ricardo Cruz scored late and Feyenoord won the Rotterdam derby at Sparta 2-1 Sunday, taking a four-point lead over Ajax atop the Dutch First Division, reports AP.

Ajax lost ground after losing giving up their first half goals at Vitesse Arnhem and losing 3-2.

Sunday's other scheduled fixture saw FC Utrecht defeat Willem II Tilburg 2-0.

An unfit pitch after an early-morning inspection meant Saturday's postponed NEC Nijmegen-RKC Waalwijk match still could not be played and had to be put off a second time.



General manager of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel San Amalan (C) receives the trophy from Brigadier Jahir after a friendly match against Hotel Sonargaon at the Army Stadium on Friday. Between them is Sonargaon GM EJ Mac Ewan. Sheraton won the match 1-0.

Sampras sees no new foes

HANOVER, Germany, Nov 30 (Reuters/Internet): Tennis will remain stuck in a rut next year -- the same few players challenging top man Pete Sampras, according to the world number one himself.

Sampras, the best player around for a record sixth consecutive year, said newcomers were nowhere to be seen.

"I think you're going to see pretty much the same guys," he said at the season-ending ATP Tour world championship. "I don't see anyone ranked 40 or 50 that's going to be in the top 10 by this time next year."

Sampras has not been quite as dominant as in previous years, partly because of injury. But he still won Wimbledon, his 11th Grand Slam title, and three other tournaments.

Only Australian Roy Emerson has won 12 majors.

"I'm not that old and I've still got plenty to look forward to," said Sampras, 27. "I know that if I'm fit and if I play my best tennis, it's going to be very hard for other guys to beat me."

Obviously, Sampras wants a couple more grand slam victories. With 248 weeks at world number one, he could also beat Ivan Lendl's record 270.

Sampras fell to eventual winner Alex Corretja of Spain in the semifinals in Hanover but his only rival in the race for number one, Chilean Marcelo Rios, had already pulled out injured.

"I regard this as an ultimate achievement," Sampras said of his record. "I don't think it will ever be broken."

The world's finest player also said he sometimes felt he did not receive all the attention and the respect he deserved.

The fact that Sampras, often criticised for his perceived lack of charisma, keeps outclassing the opposition may be a handi-

cap for the sport but there are others.

Lack of personalities, a complicated ranking system and the high number of tournaments also explain why fans, sponsors and media are becoming

tired of men's tennis.

Aware of that, the ATP Tour, which runs the men's professional circuit, is working on a series of measures aimed at keeping everybody interested.

A new elite series comprising the current Super-9 events and the season's finale will be launched in 2000.

The ATP Tour and the Super-9 tournaments -- the highlights of the season outside the Grand Slams -- have signed an agreement with marketing agency ISL/Octagon to market the rights of the events in the series.

The news practically means that the Super-9 tournaments have agreed to keep working together with the ATP Tour and its marketing partner.

The current deal runs until 2000 and other organisations, notably Boris Becker, together with marketing agency Prisma, had approached the organisers of the most prestigious tournaments, offering to promote their events.

Becker said his proposals were more lucrative for both the tournaments and the players but ATP Tour boss Mark Miles disagreed.

"To those who say that they can add value to the game, we say that with ISL/Octagon, we have," he said.

Miles said the commercial rights of the events in the new series will be pooled for a long period which has not been determined yet but should run for some 10 years. He said the value of the new package would be around \$100 million a year.

Miles also confirmed that from 2000 there would be a 12-month rankings race with all the players beginning the season at zero and accumulating points throughout the calendar year.

Changes could also be brought to the rules to make the sport more exciting to watch, said Miles. He declined to give details.

North Korea must march after South

BANGKOK, Nov 30 (Reuters/Internet): North Korea's demand that its team should parade ahead of South Korea at Sunday's Asian Games opening ceremony has been rejected by Thai organisers.

"We are organising the march in accordance with the Thai alphabet, so South Korea will come first," organising committee vice-chairman Santiparb Tejavanjia said on Monday.

"The slogan of the Asian Games is 'Friendship beyond Frontiers', so the march is organised in accordance with the order of the Thai letters. It has nothing to do with politics."

He said South Korea would be the fourth or fifth team into Bangkok's Hua Mark stadium. North Korea would appear 35th or 36th.

But a spokeswoman from JSL Production House, which is directing the opening and closing ceremonies, said North Korea would enter the stadium right behind its southern rival.

North and South Korea are technically at war and separated by a heavily militarised border.

"The management of the athletes village is keeping the teams quartered well apart from each other."

"In order to avoid direct confrontation we have separated them," said a senior village official. "We hope they will appreciate our arrangement."

Alex, an Ivan idolater

HANOVER, Germany, Nov 30 (Reuters/Internet): Spain's Alex Corretja said he had been inspired by memories of Czech legend Ivan Lendl after battling back from two sets down to defeat compatriot Carlos Moya in the final of the ATP Tour World Championship on Sunday.

"I was thinking about Lendl and that French Open final against (John) McEnroe (in 1984), when he came back from two sets down and won in five sets," said Corretja, who did just that to beat Moya 3-6, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3, 7-5 in an all-Spanish thriller.

"Lendl was my hero and I was saying to myself 'come on, do like him'."

"I was also thinking about members of my family who died," added the 24-year-old, who recently lost an aunt and an uncle.

"I was talking to them in my head, asking them to give me the power to finish the match. This victory is for them."

Winning the longest final of the year and one of the most exciting was sweet revenge for Corretja, crushed in straight sets by Moya in the French Open final last June.

"I was not focused then," he said. "I was playing against a friend in a big match and all that was a bit confusing. I knew that if I was to meet him again in a final I'd have to be mentally stronger, today, I was."

Victory moved Corretja three places up to third in the year's final rankings.

"It's a great way of ending the year," he said. "Now my goal is to fight for the number one ranking but I'm not obsessed with it."

In the middle of the post-match news conference, somebody brought him a mobile telephone.

"Excuse me, I think it's the King of Spain who wants to talk to me," Corretja said.

In fact it was Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar.

"He's nice too," said Corretja. "The king will probably call later."

Leading ATP prize-money winners

MONACO, Nov 30 (Reuters/Internet): Leading prize money winners issued by the ATP Tour on Monday:

PLAYER	DOLLARS
1. Sampras	3,931,497
2. Rios	3,420,054
3. Rafter	2,867,017
4. Corretja	2,702,569
5. Moya	2,572,553
6. Yevgeny	2,543,077
7. Bjorkman	1,916,237
8. Rusedski	1,860,437
9. Agassi	1,836,233
10. Ivanisevic	1,641,177
11. Henman	1,448,770
12. Kucera	1,402,557
13. Korda	1,387,393
14. Philippoussis	1,272,620
15. Krajcek	1,219,624
16. Chang	1,164,314
17. Costa	1,013,446
18. Haahrulla	930,522
19. Mantilla	823,916
20. Pioline	808,688

Corretja clinches title



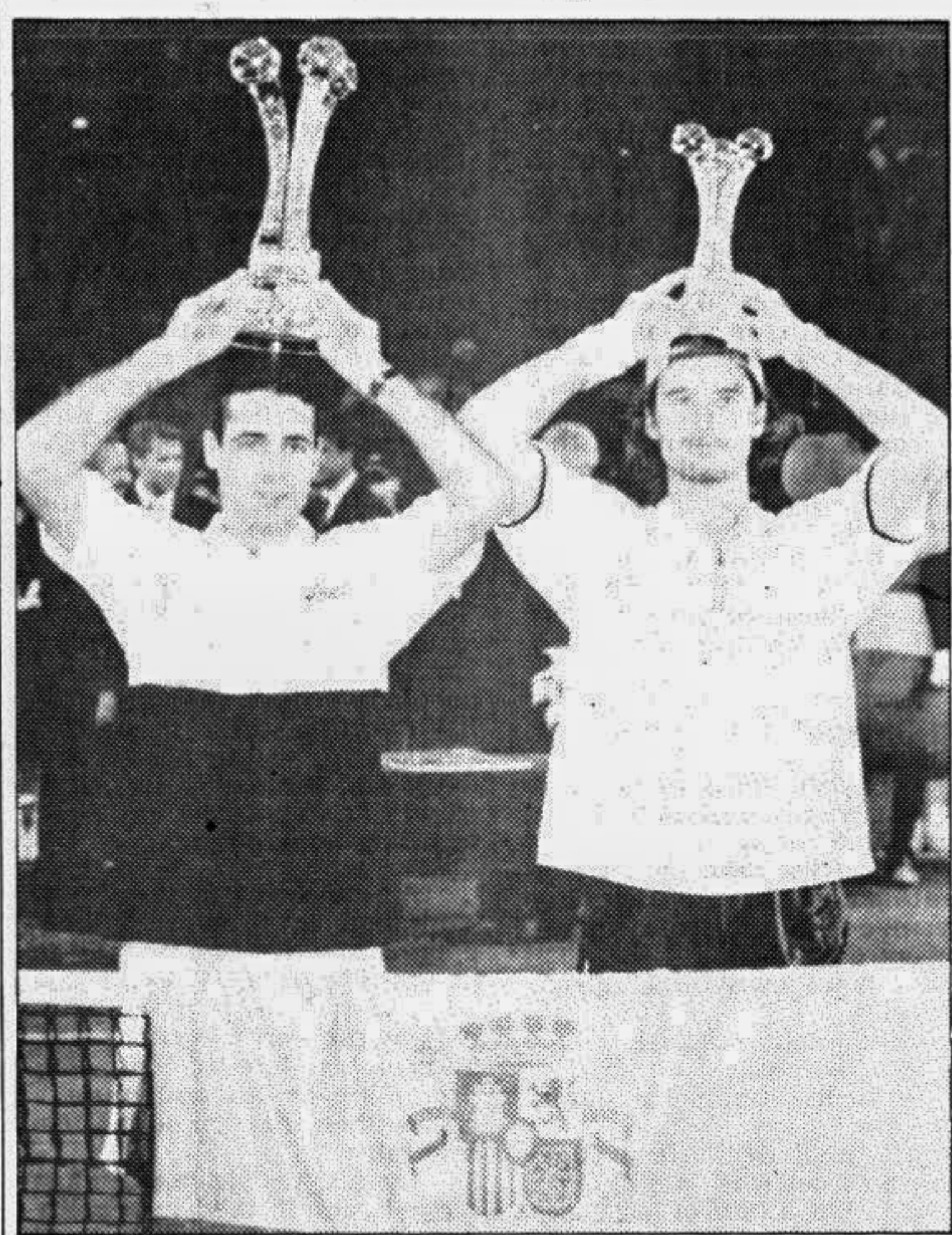
HANOVER, Nov 30: Alex Corretja staged a remarkable comeback to tame Carlos Moya in five sets in their all-Spanish ATP Tour World Championship final on Sunday, reports Reuters.

Corretja, who was crushed in straight sets by Moya in the French Open final last June, took revenge by pulling off a 3-6, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3, 7-5 win after a tense four-hour battle.

chances and, for two sets at least, I played better tennis than he did. But I was not able to maintain that level and he just got better and better."

Corretja, who had upset world number one Pete Sampras in their semifinal on Saturday, made a clumsy start, dropping serve straight away by hitting a backhand volley.

He survived three sets points but on the fourth, Moya wrapped it up with a forehand volley.



SPANIARDS TAKE IT ALL: Alex Corretja (L) and Carlos Moya hold aloft the champion and runner-up trophies respectively at the ATP World Championship in Hanover on November 29.

After going two sets down, Corretja, cheered by an enthusiastic 13,000 crowd packing the Hanover Hall, picked up his game to emerge as the winner of the longest final of the year.

"I've been working really hard for years for this kind of win," he said. "I don't know if I'm a great champion but today, I feel like one."

The 24-year-old Corretja, who became the first Spanish player to win the season's finale since Manuel Orantes' triumph in 1976, earned a huge 1.36 million dollars in prize money.

His victory also moved him three places up to third in the year's final rankings.

"It's a great way of ending the year," he said. "Now my goal is to fight for the number one ranking but I'm not obsessed with it."

Moya, 22, pocketed 660,000 dollars and stayed fifth on the ATP Tour list.

"It's a very big disappointment," he said. "I had my

Moya stayed on top in the second set, breaking his opponent to move 2-0 ahead before winning the set on one of Corretja's many unforced errors.

Corretja earned his first break points of the match in the fourth game of the third set, squandering two before converting the third to take a 3-1 lead.

Moya broke back in the following game but Corretja kept fighting until his opponent handed him the set by netting a seemingly straightforward forehand.

Moya virtually collapsed in the fourth set but, refusing to bow out, he picked up his game in the decider, opening up a 3-1 lead.

However, Corretja broke back and served for the match, leading 5-4.

He earned a first match point but Moya saved it with a raging backhand volley and went on to win the game.

Two games later, Corretja

again served for the match and saw Moya surrender by hitting a forehand too long.

"I wasn't tired," said Moya. "The problem is just that I couldn't play well enough at important moments. I felt I should have won this match."

Corretja, who had lost his previous three encounters with Moya this year, said the experience of the French Open final had helped him.

Corretja won his ninth career title and finished 1998 with five titles.

ROLL OF HONOUR

Last 10 winners of the season-ending ATP Tour World Championship men's tennis tournament:

1998: Alex Corretja (Spain)	
1997: Pete Sampras (US)	
1996: Sampras	
1995: Boris Becker (Germany)	
1994: Sampras	
1993: Michael Stich (Germany)	
1992: Becker	
1991: Sampras	
1990: Andre Agassi (US)	
1989: Stefan Edberg (Sweden)	

Note: The event, formerly known as the Masters, became the ATP Tour World Championship when it moved from New York to Frankfurt in 1990, it has been staged in Hanover since 1996.

Men's top 20

MONACO, Nov 30 (Reuters/Internet): Leading rankings issued by the ATP Tour on Monday:

PLAYER	POINTS
1. Sampras	3,915
2. Rios	3,670
3. Corretja	3,398
4. Rafter	3,315
5. Moya	3,159
6. Agassi	2,879
7. Henman	2,620
8. Kucera	2,575
9. Rusedski	2,573
10. Krajcek	2,548
11. Kafelnikov	2,515
12. Ivanisevic	2,137
13. Korda	2,114
14. Costa	1,823
15. Philippoussis	1,792
16. Martin	1,774
17. Johansson	1,761
18. Pioline	1,710
19. Siemerink	1,669
20. Mantilla	1,643

Ban Balakov!

BOON, Nov 30 (Reuters/Internet): German soccer officials have asked VEB Stuttgart midfielder Krassimir Balakov for an explanation after television pictures appeared to show he had knuckered an opponent between the legs in a weekend match.

The German Soccer Federation said the Bulgarian player-maker had been asked to make a submission relating to the incident in Freiburg's 2-0 win over Stuttgart on Saturday.

The pictures, reproduced in Monday's newspapers, appeared to show Balakov kneeling Freiburg's Zoubair Baya as the Tunisian international attempted to run past.

Baya required five minutes of treatment before he could continue.

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Tuesday 1st December

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

BBC

6:00am BBC World News Followed by Weather 6:30 World Living: Earth Report Banking On The

Gene (The planet's plant diversity could prove the key to the greatest challenge of our times -- feeding a world population set to peak in the next twenty years. Yet all over the world plants are under threat. Earth Report investigates) 7:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 7:30 Asia Today (The latest news, analysis and features from the BBC correspondents who live and work in the region) 7:45 World Business Report (The latest business news with informed analysis from the world's financial centres) 10:00 BBC News Followed by Weather 10:30 USA Direct (From New York, Brian Barron and Melinda Wittstock bring the latest in news, entertainment and sport from across the USA. 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