

Graf plans to carry on until 2000 Games

BONN, Dec 25 (Reuters/Internet): Former world number one Steffi Graf plans to continue playing tennis until the 2000 Olympics in Sydney.

"When I look at the calendar I see that the 2000 Olympics are not that far away," Graf, 29, told German monthly Tennis Magazin in an interview released on Wednesday.

"I will not be persuaded to quit by anyone as long as I'm still enjoying playing tennis."

Graf, who has been plagued by injury over the past two years, said being number one again was "not an obsession."

"My goal is only to play some good tennis."

Klos joins Rangers

GLASGOW, Dec 25 (Reuters/Internet): Rangers finally ended their long pursuit of Stefan Klos on Thursday when they signed the Borussia Dortmund goalkeeper in a 700,000 pounds (\$1.1 million) deal.

The German agreed to a 4-1/2 years contract.

Rangers chairman David Murray said that Klos had been so anxious to join the Scottish club — which he was prevented from doing by a German court six months ago — that he paid some of the transfer fee himself.

Klos had agreed to go to Rangers at the end of last season when his contract expired, but was forced to remain with Dortmund after the Bundesliga club took him to court to enforce a year's option that they held on the player.

Murray said: "Stefan was so keen that he contributed towards the fee himself."

"This is the longest transfer deal I have been involved in 10 years at Rangers. It has taken 15 months and the German court ruled that any contract between us was illegal, but we did our deal on a handshake and Stefan has proved he is a man of strong principle."

Klos, who spent all his career with Dortmund and won the European Cup with them in 1997, said: "I had 10 years at Dortmund and they are building a new team now, so I felt it was time to move."

Vandals at work

BARCELONA, Dec 25: Fans caused more than 30 million pesetas (210,000 dollars) worth of damage to the Montjuic Olympic Stadium after Catalonia's 5-0 thrashing of Nigeria on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

The pitch was left in a poor state by an invasion of around 2,000 celebrating supporters, more than 1,000 seats were broken and some toilets were wrecked, stadium managers said on Thursday.

Spanish First Division club Espanyol use the ground and emergency repairs are underway before their next home game on January 17.

Sanchis: 20 years with Real and kicking

MADRID, Dec 25 (Reuters/Internet): Real Madrid captain Manuel Sanchis is set to celebrate 20 years with the Spanish first division team after being guaranteed another year's contract on Thursday.

Club president Lorenzo Sanz announced the extended deal for the 33-year-old defender, holder of the Real Madrid record for most appearances whose present contract runs out at the end of this season.

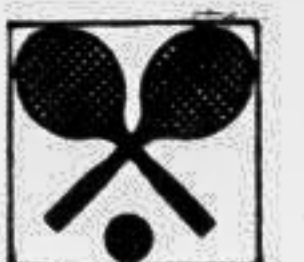
Sanchis joined the club in September 1979, made his first team debut in 1983 and has played 484 first division games, the most by an outfield player. He is third in the Spanish record books for appearances behind goalkeepers Andoni Zubizarreta and Paco Buyo.

Although he has lost a little of the speed that brought him 48 Spain caps, he is still a first-choice central defender for Real coach Guus Hiddink.



Chilean tennis star Marcelo Rios (R) listens to his new coach Luis Lobos during practice in Santiago on December 23. The world number two has started training for the 1999 season. —AP/UNB photo

Korda to defend Aussie Open



MELBOURNE, Dec 25 (Reuters/Internet): Petr Korda will defend his title at next month's Australian Open despite testing positive for steroids during this year's Wimbledon tennis championships.

A spokeswoman for the first Grand Slam tournament of the season, starting in Melbourne on January 18, said the Czech star was also entered for a warm-up tournament the previous week.

Open organisers also issued a statement to say that Korda had been tested for drugs after beating Marcelo Rios in this year's final and "the result was negative."

"As far as we're concerned everything's fine. Petr is booked to play in the Colonial Classic the week before the Open and will defend his title after that."

the spokeswoman said. Korda, 30, won his first ever Grand Slam title when he beat Rios in this year's final.

But Korda was embroiled in a doping scandal when the International Tennis Federation (ITF) announced on Tuesday that he had tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone at this year's Wimbledon championships.

Korda said in a statement he had been notified in August that he had failed the test after losing in the quarter-finals to Briton Tim Henman.

But he added: "I wish to state categorically that I am not a dope cheat."

The Czech player said he had appealed against the result and an ITF appeals committee had heard the case on Monday before announcing its decision on Tuesday.

An ITF statement said Korda had committed an offence un-

der its anti-doping regulations.

"Following a test that was conducted in July 1998 at the Wimbledon championships and a subsequent independent Appeals Committee hearing held on 21 December 1998 in London, the ITF announced today that Petr Korda committed a doping offence under the tennis anti-doping programme," the ITF said.

"The sample provided by Korda was found to contain nandrolone metabolites which is categorised as a class one prohibited substance under the programme."

The statement said Korda had been stripped of his ranking points and the US\$94,629 he had earned in prize money during the tournament.

"No further sanctions should be imposed on the player," the ITF statement said.

"The appellant has established that exceptional circumstances exist in that the appellant did not know that he had taken (or been administered) the relevant substance and he acted reasonably in all the relevant circumstances."

In his statement released in London, Korda said he had made exhaustive efforts to find the source of the substance but had had no success.

"I wish to state categorically that I am not a drugs cheat and would never seek to obtain a competitive advantage over my fellow professionals by such means," he said.

"I am delighted that the committee has vindicated me. The allegation came as a tremendous shock and caused considerable distress to me and my family."



Santa Ryan makes their day



UNDATED, Dec 25 (Mirror/Internet): Ryan Giggs played Father Christmas to the schoolboy club that rocketed him into a millionaire's wonderland.

The Manchester United star now enjoys a life of luxury a world away from the kids who dream of following in his footsteps. But he has never forgotten his roots around his old home town of Swinton.

And when hard-up Deans Sports asked their most famous former player for a helping hand, Giggs, who dressed as Santa to promote shopping at Manchester's Arndale Centre, was quick off the mark.

He sent a cheque for 1,000 pounds to buy a full kit and tracksuits for every one of the Under-12 squad who now

proudly wear the new strip with the emblem: Sponsored by Ryan Giggs.

But Santa's goodies don't stop there. David Beckham is happy to act as one of Giggs' little helpers to splash the same cash on the Under-11s.

Manager Peter Griffin said: "I know players like Ryan and David earn fantastic sums of money, but it's still a marvelous gesture."

"I've since sent Ryan a photo of the team he's sponsoring and his mum says he's delighted to see his name on the back of the shirts."

"He often pops in to have a chat to the lads and says he always looks for our results. We're second from bottom right now, but when the boys pull on those shirts they feel like champions."

PARIS, Dec 25 (AP): Professional cycling began 1998 in expectancy and ended it, according to the Tour de France's race director, facing extinction.

The doping scandals that marred the Tour were of such magnitude that they not only overshadowed cycling, but proved to be a catalyst for doping controversies in other sports, such as soccer, and at the International Olympic Committee.

Other sports have had their image tarnished by drug scandals, but none depends so heavily on a single event for its global reputation, as cycling does on the Tour.

The Tour's travails began July 8, three days before the first leg, when French customs officials caught Festina physiotherapist Willy Voet with a stash of anabolic steroids and erythropoietin (EPO).

The team was expelled from

Tarango targets McEnroe

NEW YORK, Dec 25 (Reuters/Internet): Tempestuous Jeff Tarango threw down a 200,000 dollars challenge to John McEnroe last Thursday in response to claims by the former tennis champion that he could still beat most players on the tour.

"I'm putting out a challenge to McEnroe for saying he could beat almost everyone on the tour. That's ridiculous and I'm willing to put up 200,000 dollars of my own dollars to prove it," Tarango, ranked 72, told Reuters in a telephone call from California.

McEnroe was quoted by London's Daily Mail last month as saying he was still the best doubles player in the world, and as far as singles players go, on a given day "could beat most of them. They'd be sorry guys."

The fiery McEnroe, 38, last played a full season on the ATP Tour in 1992 but has continued competing on the senior circuit, with earnings this year of 296,500 dollars. His career winnings from the regular circuit exceeded 12.5 million dollars.

The 30-year-old Tarango earned 443,009 dollars this season.

Tarango is known for stirring things up. He caused outrage in 1995 by storming off the court at Wimbledon, questioning the integrity of a chair umpire, who was also slapped in the face by Tarango's wife.

Tarango's tantrums have often invited comparisons to McEnroe, but never his game.

Neither McEnroe nor his agent could be reached for comment, but the former world number one's father, John McEnroe Sr., reached at his law office in New York, said: "I think it's all very funny, rather humorous."

"On the other hand, maybe John would see it as an easy way to pick up 200,000 dollars."

Trading places

DORTMUND, Dec 25: Borussia Dortmund are set to swap goalkeepers with Jens Lehmann arriving from AC Milan to replace Stefan Klos, who on Thursday joined Glasgow Rangers, reports AFP.

Lehmann has struggled to make an impression at Milan since his summer move from 1997 UEFA Cup winners Schalke 04, while Klos had long sought a move from the Bundesliga side.

Dortmund said on Thursday that they expect the Lehmann deal to be finalised over the next few days. Klos is already in Scotland and is set to make his debut for Rangers against St Johnstone on Saturday after signing a four-and-a-half-year contract.

Klos trained with the club on Thursday morning and manager Dick Advocaat will decide in the next 24 hours whether to axe Finnish ace Antti Niemi, who was outstanding in the 3-2 victory against Hearts last weekend.

The arrival of Klos puts an end to the long chase to find a replacement for injured Frenchman Lionel Charbonnier.

Sampras dejected at end of record-breaking year



LONDON, Dec 25 (Reuters/Internet): Another record-breaking year for Pete Sampras in 1999 and the American could lay claim to be the athlete of the decade.

Yet Sampras, world number one for a sixth year after winning his fifth Wimbledon title, appears increasingly disillusioned with tennis and searching for a good reason why he should keep playing 27 weeks a year.

Money is not an issue for a man who won four million dollars in 1998 to add to the 32 million he has accumulated since turning professional 10 years ago.

His peers have voted him best player of the past 25 years and Sampras himself reckons no one will repeat his six years at number one. Jimmy Connors managed five years in the 1970s.

Another place in the record books will be sealed if, in 1999, he matches the achievement of Australian Roy Emerson who won 12 grand slam titles. The five-set defeat of Croatian Goran Ivanisevic at Wimbledon was Sampras's 11th major title.

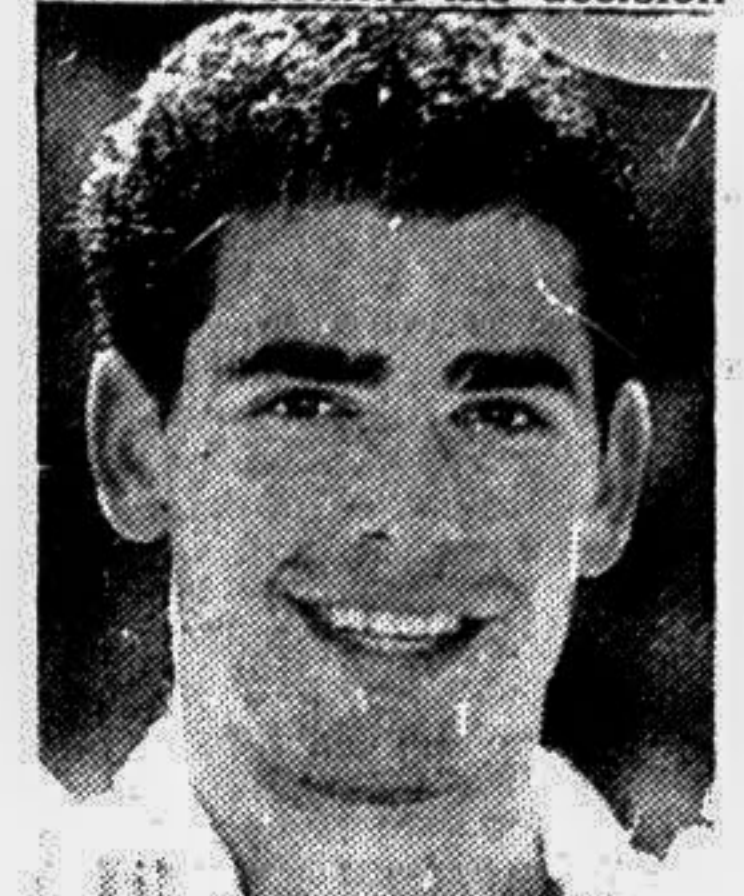
But what Sampras still craves is respect in his home country which has become

blase about Pistol Pete and rarely bothers to trumpet his achievements on court.

"Americans expect me to win every match I play. That's the way it has gone for years," Sampras said at the ATP championship in Hanover where he secured his number one ranking.

"For so long people have just taken what I have done for granted. To win Grand Slams year in, year out and to be the number one is not an easy thing to do."

Pique at the lack of recognition was behind his decision



PETE SAMPRAS

not to play in the Davis Cup semifinal against Italy.

With Andre Agassi also withdrawing, the United States were thrashed 4-1. Former players such as John McEnroe lambasted Sampras's lack of patriotism and there is little doubt his absence hurt the standing of a competition celebrating its centenary in 1999.

Sampras said that if Americans wanted him to continue flying the flag as the world's best player, they could not expect him also to play Davis Cup.

"You can't win Grand Slams, be number one and be in Davis Cup. I physically can't do it or mentally can't do it," he said.

Far from madding crowd



COLOMBO, Dec 25: Sri Lanka's controversial sprinter Susanthika Jayasinghe is set to go abroad amid

growing opposition after her last minute withdrawal from the Asian Games, press reports and officials said today, reports AFP.

Jayasinghe, the world 200m silver medalist who is at the centre of a doping inquiry, pulled out after wrenching a hamstring in the 100m semifinals at this month's Asian Games in Thailand.

However, the Sri Lankan contingent was clearly unhappy with her withdrawal but the last minute substitute Damayanthi Dharsha took the gold in Jayasinghe's main 200m event.

Dharsha, who also won gold in the 400m event, has now replaced Jayasinghe as Sri Lanka's new sprint queen.

The English language The Island newspaper said that Jayasinghe, 23, is now planning to go to Australia or an European country for training because she was "harassed" by local officials.

"There was a lot of discrimination against me at the Asian Games," Jayasinghe was quoted



JAYASINGHE

as saying. "This aggravated my injury. Even my coach was harassed."

Sri Lanka's athletic officials confirmed that Jayasinghe was planning to go abroad and undergo training as her coach of less than a year has also quit.

When she joined the world elite by winning Sri Lanka's first world track medal last year she became an instant heroine among the 18.3 million people in Sri Lanka.

But things soon soured, first it was reported she was an army deserter.

Then she failed drugs test for an anabolic steroid, she claims she is the victim of Sri Lankan sports officials trying to control her. She was painted as struggling to make ends meet after being ditched by her sponsors.

In August, however, the tide turned in her favour when an independent Sri Lankan appeals panel cleared her of drugs abuse. But she is far from being in the clear.

The sport's world governing body, the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF), is unhappy with the panel's decision, and have set up a new board to reopen the case.

1998: Cycling ends with uncertain future

the race when sporting director Bruno Roussel admitted to the systematic use of banned drugs.

But cycling's image continued to be tarnished with almost daily drug revelations.

Cyclists began to complain of brutal police tactics.

Their frustration boiled over July 29, when they staged an unprecedented sit-in before the 17th stage to Aix-les-Bains.

"I can't race in this climate of permanent suspicion where we are taken for criminals," world No. 1 Laurent Jalabert said.

Some rivals saw it differently. Jan Ullrich, the 1997 Tour winner, said that Jalabert and others were disrupting the race because they had no chance of winning it.

The Tour seemed in jeopardy, but somehow limped on.

By the end, six out of the 21 teams had pulled out, citing police tactics, leaving fewer than

100 riders from the original 189.

Four months on, the affair remains shrouded in mystery.

Why, for instance, did French authorities only begin investigating TVM in July, when it had seized banned substances from the Dutch team back in March?

In the courtroom and in the media, claim and counter-claim continue to damage the image of the sport.

Festina team leader and 1997 Tour runner-up Richard Virenque, one of two cyclists to maintain that the never knowingly took banned substances, took legal action against Voet, who had publicly accused him of taking EPO and other substances.

Voet response was to accuse Festina of "facilitating and inciting doping," outraging the Spanish watchmaker, and tell a French tabloid that Virenque

received up to 100 injections a year.

The pressure proved too much for Virenque, who was forced to quit the sport at the age of 29, unable to find a team to back him after breaking with Festina.

Festina's Voet, Roussel and team doctor Eric Ryckaert, and two TVM officials — sporting director Cees Priem and doctor Andrei Mikhailov — remain under formal investigation, one step short of being formally charged.

Now, professional cycling enters perhaps the most important year in its history, with federations desperate to repair the sport's tarnished image in the eyes of the public, sponsors and governments.

Some are disappointed by the sport's initial response.

International Cycling Union rules allow federations to ban cyclists who take drugs for up to

a year.

But the Swiss federation only handed out eight months to Alex Zülle, Laurent Duforex and Armin Meier — allowing them to win the Tour of France and the Tour of Italy in the same year since Miguel Indurain in 1993.

In the Tour de France, Jan Ullrich, the defending champion, came in second, with American Bobby Julich third.

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Saturday 26th December

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

BTV

Morning Session

9:00 Opening announcement, Al-Quran, Programme summary 9:05 Patriotic songs 9:10 Nijer Janya 9:25 Documentary programme 10:00 Dipto Uchcharon 10:45 Movie, of the Week 12:30 Close down

Evening Session

3:00 Opening announcement, Al-Quran, Programme summary 3:10 Recitation from the Tripitaka 3:15 Patriotic song 3:20 Fulkoli 4:00 Khabar 4:05 Film show, The Legend Continues 4:45 Open University 5:00 Mahe Kamadan 5:25 Kishor Mancho 6:00 Nibedon 6:30 Khabar 6:40 Programme from Chhangong centre 7:05 Geetimallo 7:30 Documentary programme 8:00 News in Bangla 8:40 Drama of this Week 10:00 News at Ten 10:30 Film Show: Harcules 11:15 Khabar/The News 11:30 Close down

BBC

6:00 BBC World News 6:05 USA Drama 6:30 World Living: Earth Report: Going Going 7:30 BBC News Headlines 7:30 Asia Today 8:00 BBC World News 8:30 World Focus USA/India/Asia Today 9:00 BBC World News 9:30 Hard Talk 10:00 BBC

News 10:30 World Focus: USA Direct, Reporters 11:00 World News 11:30 World Focus: World Review '98 12:00 World News 12:30 World Living: Earth Report: Going Going 1:00 BBC News 1:30 Hard Talk 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 World Focus: Correspondent 3:00 World News Headlines 3:05 World Weekend 4:00 BBC World News 4:30 World Living: Holiday 5:00 BBC News 5:30 This Week 6:00 World Headlines 6:05 World Weekend: Proves 4/4: End Game 3:00 BBC World News 7:05 World Weekend: The American Visions: The Age Of Anxiety 8:00 BBC World News Headlines 8:30 World Living: The Big Catch 4/6: Marlin 9:05 World Weekend: 10:00 World News 10:30 Style! 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 World Living: The Travel Show: Holiday 12:30 This Week 1:00 World News 1:30 World Focus: Correspondent 2:00 World News Headlines 2:10 World Weekend: 2:30 BBC World News 3:00 World Focus: Top Gear 4:00 BBC World News 4:05 World Weekend: The American Visions: The Age Of Anxiety 5:00 BBC News 5:30 Simon's World

News 10:30 World Focus: USA Direct, Reporters 11:00 World News 11:30 World Focus: World Review '98 12:00 World News 12:30 World Living: Earth Report: Going Going 1:00 BBC News 1:30 Hard Talk 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 World Focus: Correspondent 3:00 World News Headlines 3:05 World Weekend 4:00 BBC World News 4:30 World Living: Holiday 5:00 BBC News 5:30 This Week 6:00 World Headlines 6:05 World Weekend: Proves 4/4: End Game 3:00 BBC World News 7:05 World Weekend: The American Visions: The Age Of Anxiety 8:00 BBC World News Headlines 8:30 World Living: The Big Catch 4/6: Marlin 9:05 World Weekend: 10:00 World News 10:30 Style! 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 World Living: The Travel Show: Holiday 12:30 This Week 1:00 World News 1:30 World Focus: Correspondent 2:00 World News Headlines 2:10 World Weekend: 2:30 BBC World News 3:00 World Focus: Top Gear 4:00 BBC World News 4:05 World Weekend: The American Visions: The Age Of Anxiety 5:00 BBC News 5:30 Simon's World

News 10:30 World Focus: USA Direct, Reporters 11:00 World News 11:30 World Focus: World Review '98 12:00 World News 12:30 World Living: Earth Report: Going Going 1:00 BBC News 1:30 Hard Talk 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 World Focus: Correspondent 3:00 World News Headlines 3:05 World Weekend 4:00 BBC World News 4:30 World Living: Holiday 5:00 BBC News 5:30 This Week 6:00 World Headlines 6:05 World Weekend: Proves 4/4: End Game 3:00 BBC World News 7:05 World Weekend: The American Visions: The Age Of Anxiety 8:00 BBC World News Headlines 8:30 World Living: The Big Catch 4/6: Marlin 9:05 World Weekend: 10:00 World News 10:30 Style! 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 World Living: The Travel Show: Holiday 12:30 This Week 1:00 World News 1:30 World Focus: Correspondent 2:00 World News Headlines 2:10 World Weekend: 2:30 BBC World News 3:00 World Focus: Top Gear 4:00 BBC World News 4:05 World Weekend: The American Visions: The Age Of Anxiety 5:00 BBC News 5:30 Simon's World

News 10:30 World Focus: USA Direct, Reporters 11:00 World News 11:30 World Focus: World Review '98 12:00 World News 12:30 World Living: Earth Report: Going Going 1:00 BBC News 1:30 Hard Talk 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 World Focus: Correspondent 3:00 World News Headlines 3:05 World Weekend 4:00 BBC World News 4:30 World Living: Holiday 5:00 BBC News 5:30 This Week 6:00 World Headlines 6:05 World Weekend: Proves 4/4: End Game 3:00 BBC World News 7:05 World Weekend: The American Visions: The Age Of Anxiety 8:00 BBC World News Headlines 8:30 World Living: The Big Catch 4/6: Marlin 9:05 World Weekend: 10:00 World News 10:30 Style! 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 World Living: The Travel Show: Holiday 12:30 This Week 1:00 World News 1:30 World Focus: Correspondent 2:00 World News Headlines 2:10 World Weekend: 2:30 BBC World News 3:00 World Focus: Top Gear 4:00 BBC World News 4:05 World Weekend: The American Visions: The Age Of Anxiety 5:00 BBC News 5:30 Simon's World

News 10:30 World Focus: USA Direct, Reporters 11:00 World News 11:30 World Focus: World Review '98 12:00 World News 12:30 World Living: Earth Report: Going Going 1:00 BBC News 1:30 Hard Talk 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 World Focus: Correspondent 3:00 World News Headlines 3:05 World Weekend 4:00 BBC World News 4:30 World Living: Holiday 5:00 BBC News 5:30 This Week 6:00 World Headlines 6:05 World Weekend: Proves 4/4: End Game 3:00 BBC World News 7:05 World Weekend: The American Visions: The Age Of Anxiety 8:00 BBC World News Headlines 8:30 World Living: The Big Catch 4/6: Marlin 9:05 World Weekend: 10:00 World News 10:30 Style! 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 World Living: The Travel Show: Holiday 12:30 This Week 1:00 World News 1:30 World Focus: Correspondent 2:00 World News Headlines 2:10 World Weekend: 2:30 BBC World News 3:00 World Focus: Top Gear 4:00 BBC World News 4:05 World Weekend: The American Visions: The Age Of Anxiety 5:00 BBC News 5:30 Simon's World

News 10:30 World Focus: USA Direct, Reporters 11:00 World News 11:30 World Focus: World Review '98 12:00 World News 12:30 World Living: Earth Report: Going Going 1:00 BBC News 1:30 Hard Talk 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 World Focus: Correspondent 3:00 World News Headlines 3:05 World Weekend 4:00 BBC World News 4:30 World Living: Holiday 5:00 BBC News 5:30 This Week 6:00 World Headlines 6:05 World Weekend: Proves 4/4: End Game 3:00 BBC World News 7:05 World Weekend: The American Visions: The Age Of Anxiety 8:00 BBC World News Headlines 8:30 World Living: The Big Catch 4/6: Marlin 9:05 World Weekend: 10:00 World News 10:30 Style! 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 World Living: The Travel Show: Holiday 12:30 This Week 1:00 World News 1:30 World Focus: Correspondent