

**Boban remembers the pain**

MILAN, Apr 3: AC Milan's Croatian star Zvonimir Boban claimed today that NATO's bombardments of Yugoslavia's pain suffered by his people during the civil war there, reports AFP.

Yugoslav footballers in Italy, led by Lazio's Sinisa Mihajlovic have made well-publicised calls for an end to the NATO attacks and many were expected to wear black armbands today in protest.

But Boban, who was due to face Mihajlovic in a crunch Serie A match in Rome today afternoon, claimed bitterly that people appear to have forgotten the suffering of Croats under Serb fire.

The former Dynamo Zagreb midfielder, particularly remembers his arrival at Italian club Bari in November 1991, amidst the fighting in his homeland.

"I remember the anxiety, the wait for news, the feeling of desperation at the death of a friend and the anger at being unable to do anything about it," he told Tuttosport newspaper.

"And it took years before the international community divided the aggressors, i.e. them, from those who had been attacked, i.e. us."

NATO's bombardments means that war has returned to Yugoslavia, but Boban said, "just wait a moment, NATO is hitting factories and military targets, not the civilian population, which is what happened to us."

"As far as I know, there haven't been any civilian casualties."

Asked about the reason for the bombardments, he said, "I am a Croatian, I don't want to talk about Serbia. I don't know the details, I only know as much as anyone else in Italy I read the papers and watch the TV."

"But the Serbs ought to explain why, whenever there is a war, they are always involved."

Boban, who captained Croatia to third place at the 1998 World Cup final, understood the support given by Yugoslav sportsmen in Italy to their president Slobodan Milosevic.

**I'nesian soccer league final not in Jakarta**

JAKARTA, Apr 3 (AFP): The Indonesian football league final might be cancelled or played in a military stadium after fears of violence forced Jakarta police to overturn plans for it to be staged in the capital, reports said today.

As the one responsible for the security of the capital, Jakarta, the final match will not be held in Jakarta, Jakarta police chief Nugroho Jayusman said, according to the Media Indonesia daily.

The match, pitting the Surabaya team from East Java and the Semarang team from central Java, had been scheduled to be played at the Senayan Sports Stadium in south Jakarta tomorrow.

About 3,000 special troops and police were to be on duty for the championship finals after a series of violent incidents involving Indonesia's notoriously rowdy football fans.

At least seven supporters of the Semarang team were killed Thursday when they tried to evade security efforts to keep them away from the stadium shortly after their arrival here by train.

Six of the fans were hit by a train they tried to board while another was electrocuted by an electric train.

Violence also broke out between security forces and supporters of the Medan team from north Sumatra on Thursday when their team lost to Surabaya in the semifinals.

There have also been reports of violence by fans in and around the stadium during matches this week.

The decision on the new location for the finals is entirely left to the Indonesian Football Association, Jayusman said.

**Villa, West Ham's UEFA Cup hopes fade**

LONDON, Apr 3 (Reuters/Internet): Aston Villa and West Ham saw their hopes of a UEFA Cup place fade even further on Friday after they fought out a goalless draw at Villa Park.

Villa created more chances in a match played positively by both sides but, in the end, they had to settle for a point apiece in this premier league battle.

The Birmingham side remain sixth in the standings with 45 points on the back of a disastrous run which has seen them lose seven of their last nine games.

West Ham stay fifth on 47 points -- and both teams know that fourth place or better is needed to qualify for a UEFA Cup place.

The match began badly for the visitors when England squad defender Rio Ferdinand was stretchered off in only the sixth minute with damaged ankle ligaments after being fouled by Mark Draper.

Then, despite gaining better possession before the break, the Hammers saw Villa three times come close to scoring.

A curving long-range shot from striker Dion Dublin was neatly saved by goalkeeper Shaka Hislop and later Ian Taylor just failed to slide onto the end of a precision Draper cross.

In the 44th minute, Villa enjoyed their best chance of the half when Dublin out-jumped the West Ham defence only to see his header bounce back off the left post.

Then West Ham, looking for their fifth win in seven league games, came even closer to going one-up a minute later when Cameron signing Mark Vivien Foe split the Villa defence with an angled through ball.



Cedric Pioline of France in action during his Davis Cup fixture against Paul Haarhuis of the Netherlands on April 2 at Nimes, France. Pioline won 2-6, 6-7, 3-6. — AFP photo

**Sweden in thick soup**

LONDON, Apr 3 (Reuters/AP): Davis Cup holders Sweden were left staring defeat in the face after falling behind 2-0 at home to Slovakia on Friday in the start of their bid to win the coveted trophy for a third successive time.

Last year's beaten finalists Italy also looked like possible first round casualties as they trailed Switzerland 2-0 at Neuchatel.

But a supposedly undermanned United States team thwarted Britain's ambitions in Birmingham when Jim Courier and Todd Martin scored victories over Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski respectively.

Australia fought back from the defeat of Mark Philippoussis by Byron Black in the opening match to stand 1-1 with Zimbabwe in Harare as Patrick Rafter beat Black's brother Wayne in the second singles.

The other four first round ties, Germany v Russia, France v the Netherlands, Spain v Brazil and Belgium v Czech Republic were all level at 1-1.

In Trollhattan, world number 31 Dominik Hrbaty contributed the most unexpected point for Slovakia with a 7-5, 4-6, 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 victory over 15th-ranked Swede Thomas Enqvist in a 3-1/2-hour marathon.

Karol Kucera had earlier disposed more easily of Swedish number two Thomas Johansson 6-1, 7-6, 2-6, 6-3.

"We have a good chance to make it to the second round, I said to Karol that he should win only one point and I will win the two other points," Hrbaty said.

The Swedes have not abandoned hope. "I am always optimistic. I have a very good team. We are favourites for the doubles and we will have two very open matches on Sunday," said Swedish captain Carl-Axel Hageskog.

Neuchatel, Davis Cup vet-

eran Marc Rosset and rookie Roger Federer won their opening singles matches to give Sweden a 2-0 lead over Italy in their World Group first round tie.

Rosset, ranked 27th in the world, opened the Centennial Davis Cup contest with a 7-6, 6-4, 7-6 win over Italy's Gianluca Pozzi, inflaming the 2000 fans filling the Littoral Arena.

Feeding off the crowd's energy and displaying the steely nerve of a seasoned veteran, Federer then took the Swiss team to a comfortable 2-0 advantage with a tough-fought 6-4, 6-7, 6-3, 6-4 victory over Italian Davide Sanguineti.

Though winning in straight sets, Rosset struggled to master a wildly inconsistent serve that earned him 12 double faults and 16 aces, and finished the match drenched and exhausted.

"I came out OK in a very tight, very tense three-set match," Rosset said. "Luckily I was able to constantly keep a small margin and come through off the big points and increase my level of play when it counted."

"I was glad it was only three sets, because I'm dead tired."

In contrast, 17-year-old Federer had little difficulty keeping pace in his first career five-set match, and bounced exuberantly into Rosset's arms following his victory.

"At first I was nervous but then I calmed down," said Federer, who finished last season as the world No 1-ranked junior player. "I didn't do very well in the tie break and took too many risks."

But I think in the end taking a lot of risks combined with the public's support helped me win."

The Italians are playing without their No 1 player, Andrea Gaudenzi, still recovering from a shoulder injury suffered in the final against Sweden in Milan last December.

On Saturday, Rosset and Lorenzo Mantia will team up in

the doubles against Stefano Pescosolido and newcomer Laurence Tierle in an attempt to end Switzerland's Davis Cup losing streak to Italy.

It marks the fourth time that Italy — who lost to Sweden in the final last year — faces Switzerland in Davis Cup play.

The two countries last met in 1980 when Italy won 5-0, extending their perfect record to 3-0 over the Swiss.

Last year, Rosset was responsible for Switzerland's win over the Czech Republic for a place in the quarterfinals, where it was eliminated by Spain.

In England, Todd Martin swept aside Greg Rusedski 6-4, 6-4, 6-2 to give the United States their 2-0 lead in a historic Davis Cup first round tie on Friday.

Martin, ranked eight in the world, played with clinical precision throughout as Rusedski's ferocious serve failed to fire on the indoor carpet surface to the huge disappointment of the 9,500 crowd.

Earlier former world number one Jim Courier used all his courage and experience to beat Tim Henman 7-6, 2-6, 7-6, 6-7, 7-5 in four hours 12 minutes of pulsating tennis.

"This defeat hurts more on a new level. This match was on a different scale," Henman said.

Britain have only once come back from 2-0 down to win a Davis Cup tie in 1930 against Germany.

This World Group tie is a repeat of the first cup match, won 3-0 by the US in Boston, and is being played in the centenary year of the men's team competition.

In Zimbabwe, world number five Rafter brought Australia level with Zimbabwe by subduing Wayne Black 6-3, 3-6, 7-6, 6-2 in a match he did not control until the final set.

Black's older brother Byron had given Zimbabwe the lead by upsetting Philippoussis 6-3, 3-6, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.

**Davis Cup roundup**

UNDATED, Apr 3 (agencies): New Zealand took a 2-1 lead in its Asia-Oceania Davis Cup second-round tennis tie against South Korea when Brett Steven and James Greenhalgh won Saturday's doubles.

Steven, a double replacement for Alistair Hunt, teamed with Greenhalgh to beat Lee Hyung-Taik and Yoon Yong-Il 6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 at the WestpacTrust Centre.

Steven won his opening singles rubber while Lee won his singles against Mark Nielsen. Steven and Lee will meet in the first of the reverse singles Sunday followed by Nielsen against Song Hyeon-Keun.

In Salinas, Ecuador, Argentine Mariano Zabaleta fell to the ground clutching his left ankle and bowed out of the Davis Cup match Friday, giving Ecuadorian Nicolas Lapentti the win and tying the series at 1-1.

Lapentti was winning the Davis Cup first round singles match 6-3, 7-6, 5-0 when Zabaleta withdrew saying he had injured the ankle during training and aggravated it in the match.

The match was tight until the third set when the 40-degree Celsius heat at the Ecuadorian beach resort of Salinas tired Zabaleta who started limping and showing signs of fatigue.

Argentine Mariano Puerta beat Ecuadorian Luis Adrian Morejon 6-4, 7-5, 6-4 earlier in the day to give Argentina a 1-0 series lead.

Peru defeated the Dominican Republic in both matches in quarterfinal Davis Cup action of Friday in Santo Domingo.

In the first match, Luiz Horna of Peru defeated Genaro De Leon 6-2, 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.

In the second match, Americo Venero defeated Rodrigo Vallejo 7-5, 2-6, 7-6, 6-2.

The doubles match is scheduled for Saturday. Peru needs just one more point to advance to the semifinals in Group II, Zone A, to face the winner of the series between Costa Rica and Paraguay.

**Tennis rituals!**

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, Apr 3 (AP): Don't step on the court lines. Use the same shower every day, even if you have to wait for it. And sit on the same side of the umpire as when you won your last match — even if you have to run to the chair.

Those rituals may seem far-fetched, but for some of the top players on the Women's Tennis Association Tour, they're important.

"When you're winning, you have to use the same shower, same chair, same side of the umpire," said Renna Stubbs, who is playing doubles this week at the Family Circle Cup. "If you do something different, you freak out."

"Every single player does it." The No 1 player in the world admits to one little superstition: She tries not to step on the lines on the court.

"I was glad to read that I'm not the only one who does this — that I'm not abnormal," topped Martina Hingis said of rival Monica Seles' practice of avoiding the lines.

But the superstitions don't stop at walking, sitting and showering. They extend to a player's most important piece of equipment: the racket.

Some players have sent their coaches out in the middle of a match to have a racket restrung, said Gunnar Schmid, who strings rackets for a living.

Schmid expects to string about 300 rackets by the end of the nine days of Family Circle matches.

"They're very picky when it comes to tension in the rackets, how many knots in the string — everyone likes something different and each is very particular," Schmid said.

Last year's champion, Amanda Coetzer, doesn't have any rituals or tennis superstitions, but she understands why players do.

"We have to maintain a very uncertain lifestyle," Coetzer said. "Maybe the superstitions help players have something that makes them feel in control."

Coetzer does have one superstition, but it's not related to tennis.

She could have used a pocketful of pennies Thursday when she became the Family Circle Cup's second defending champion to lose before the quarterfinals.

**Luxemburgo plays down Korean loss**

RIO DE JANEIRO, Apr 3: Brazil coach Wanderley Luxemburgo praised South Korea after arriving back in Rio late Friday at the end of the South Americans, Asian tour, during which his side lost 1-0 in Seoul, reports AFP.

Luxemburgo shrugged off the Brazilians first ever loss to the South Koreans by saying every team had to expect an occasional defeat even the four times world champions.

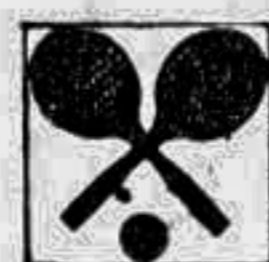
"There are no unbeatable teams. Brazil cannot expect not to lose the odd game."

"South Korea have been to five World Cups. They are the best team in Asia with the best developed football and their physical preparation is good," said Luxemburgo, who added the Asian trip was an important warm-up for this summer's Copa America.

The dry pitch, strong wind and the cool night having to adapt to the time change, undermined the team's showing in Seoul," Luxemburgo added.

Brazil took half a dozen new faces on their tour and were without star striker Ronaldo. They recovered from the Korea defeat by beating Japan 2-0.

**Hingis keeps winning**



HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina, Apr 3: World number one Martina Hingis was cruising against

11th seed Natasha Zvereva of Belarus, then found herself in a real battle before pulling out a victory in the quarterfinals of the Family Circle Cup on Friday, reports Reuters.

The Swiss star needed only 24 minutes to win the first seven games but was extended twice that long the rest of the way before finishing off Zvereva 6-0, 7-6.

Hingis will face Wimbledon champion Jana Novotna, the third seed, in today's semifinal. Usually lightly regarded at Sea Pines Racquet Club as a hard-court player, Novotna played perfect clay-court tennis to dominate 16th seed Henrieta Nagova of Slovakia 6-2, 6-4.

Seventh seed Anna Kournikova of Russia will clash with sixth seed Patty Schnyder of Switzerland in the other semifinal. Kournikova led unseeded Andrea Glass of Germany 6-2, 2-1 when Glass retired with a left hip injury.

Schnyder held off 14th seed Elena Likhovtseva of Russia 6-3, 4-6, 7-6. Likhovtseva had scored a straight-set upset of second seed Monica Seles in a match that ended late Thursday night.

Hingis, winner of this tournament in 1997, had little trouble against Zvereva through 3-1 in the second set. Zvereva seldom extended rallies in the first 10 games as she hit balls into the bottom of the net or far off the court.

Just that quickly, however, Zvereva found the game that has made her the world's number one doubles player, a finalist here twice and a semifinalist

three times. Zvereva started hitting lines and throwing in big serves. Caught off guard, Hingis nearly lost the second set.

"It was like two points away from victory (in the 10th game), and all of a sudden I was almost down," Hingis said. "Now, I felt like I was going to lose the second set. I was like, no way this can happen."

Down 15-40 on her serve at 5-5, Hingis chased down what looked like an easy put away at the net by Zvereva to stay in the game. Hingis eventually won the game for 6-5, but Zvereva held service at love to force the tiebreaker.

"I think that was kind of an important game," Hingis said. "She was up 40-15 and had this easy forehand."

Once in the tiebreaker, however, Zvereva looked like she was playing the first set again. She could not keep the ball in

between points. She holds her head to her full 5-foot-8 (1.73 metres) height with her back as straight as an arrow, her long, braided, pony-tailed hair swinging from side to side across her lower back.

Between points, she walks briskly, at times making comments in Russian. She is all business, and when another point starts, she shows the tennis skills that have had her ranked as high as 10th in the world. She is currently 20th.

Kournikova attacks her opponent with rifle-like ground strokes, angled sharply to the corners. Her two-handed backhand is a weapon but it is her forehand that is most dangerous. She does not just stroke the ball, she sledgehammers it.

Catlike on the court, she also possesses fine dropshots and a medium-speed spin serve which she can at times kick in at

play. "It might look very easy in the beginning, but somehow the kind of always mixes up, slices, powers you and then you just tally get out of rhythm sometimes," Hingis said. "That's how she beats players."

Novotna looked capable of beating anyone, even Hingis and even on clay. But the talented Czech would just as soon be playing someone else. "I just wish I could be on the other side of the draw," Novotna joked.

A semifinalist here in 1996, Novotna admitted that she does have the physical game to fare well on clay, she just needs to make the mental adjustment.

"Sometimes it is all in my head, because I grew up on clay and I do have good variety, which is great for clay court," Novotna said.

"Sometimes I'm not patient enough and sometimes I just get frustrated with bad bounces and just being on the court for a very long time."

Novotna showed greater patience and greater finesse than Nagova, who defeated Seles last month on hard court and upset defending champion Amanda Coetzer here Thursday.

Nagova did not have a weapon to finish a point off. She could win a point only when Novotna committed an error. That did not happen often as Novotna won six games in succession after a 2-2 start.

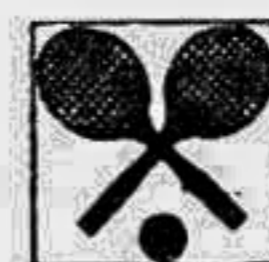
"I started to play well right from the beginning, and didn't basically give her a chance to come back into the match," said Novotna, the world's fourth-ranked player.

"That's the way you have to play against Nagova, because she's obviously a very tough opponent. She had a good win against Coetzer, and I took her very seriously."



MARTINA HINGIS

**Not driven by stardom**



HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina, Apr 3 (Reuters): Anna Kournikova, poster girl of the women's Tour, enjoys the attention she is getting.

"I think it's good. It brings attention to the game which I'm playing tennis," the 17-year-old blonde beauty said.

Near capacity crowds cheer when Kournikova takes the court here in her first appearance at the Family Circle Cup, where the Russian-born player has earned a semifinal appearance against Switzerland's Patty Schnyder.

Billed as the sex symbol of women's tennis, she does not disappoint — in her play and in her appearance.

Wearing tight short-shorts and a body-fitting top that at times exposes her mid-section, she struts about the court be-

between points. She holds her head to her full 5-foot-8 (1.73 metres) height with her back as straight as an arrow, her long, braided, pony-tailed hair swinging from side to side across her lower back.

Between points, she walks briskly, at times making comments in Russian. She is all business, and when another point starts, she shows the tennis skills that have had her ranked as high as 10th in the world. She is currently 20th.

Kournikova attacks her opponent with rifle-like ground strokes, angled sharply to the corners. Her two-handed backhand is a weapon but it is her forehand that is most dangerous. She does not just stroke the ball, she sledgehammers it.

Catlike on the court, she also possesses fine dropshots and a medium-speed spin serve which she can at times kick in at

high velocities. She recorded the ninth-fastest serve on the Tour last year, 111 mph (179 kph).

In the interview room, Kournikova sounds no different from any highly intelligent American teenager. She speaks perfect English.

Asked to comment on publicity in recent weeks about being labelled as a sex symbol, Kournikova said: "I don't think it's been in the last few weeks." Indeed, her looks have drawn attention much longer than the past few weeks.

Nevertheless, she took the question in stride. "I guess it comes with the job and I'm just concentrating on tennis. If it wouldn't be for tennis, I wouldn't be here."

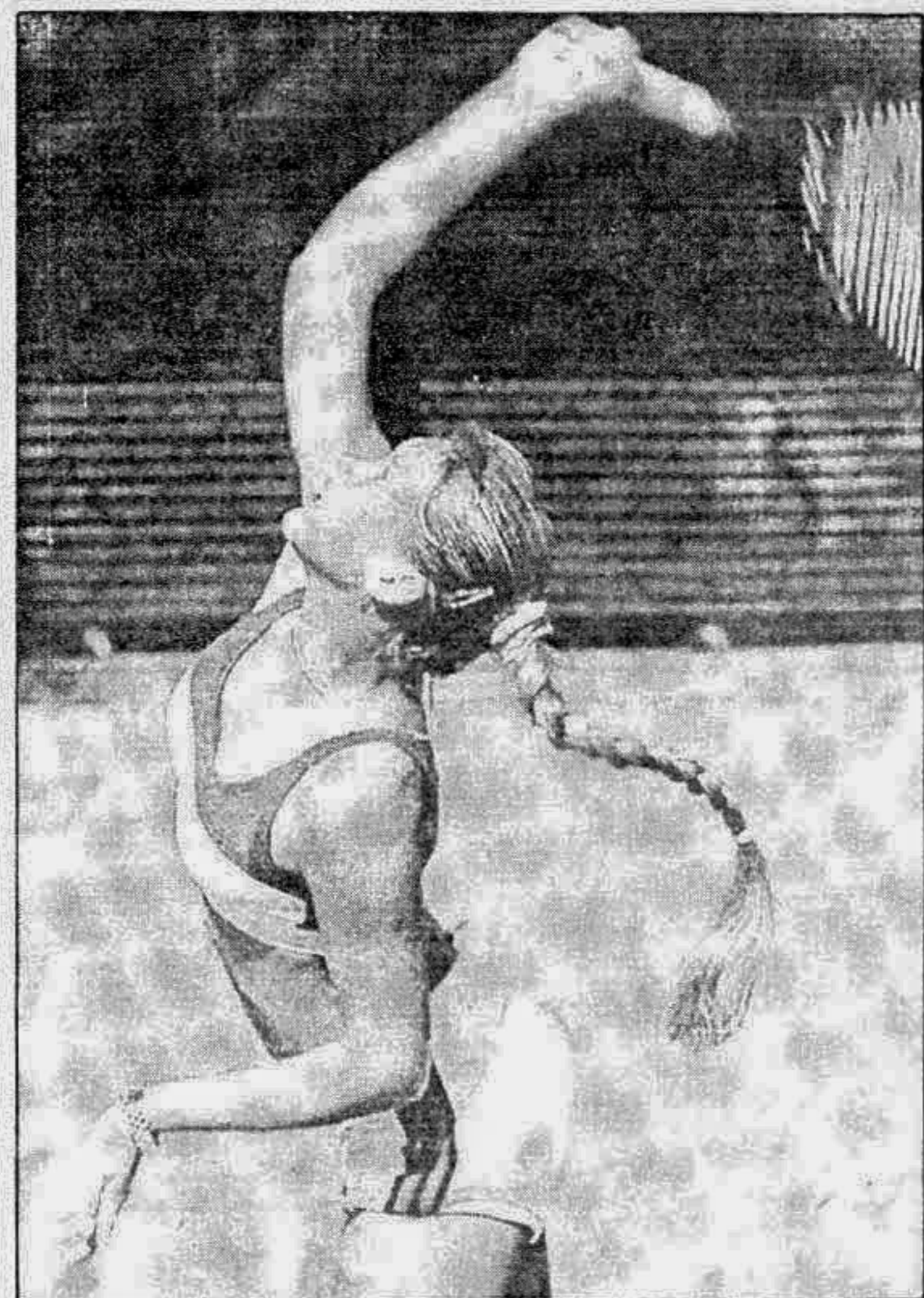
Tennis has been her life since she was 10 years old, when her mother moved with her from Russia to Bradenton, Florida, where she enrolled in Nick Boettner's tennis academy. Having started tennis at age 5, she was already serious about the game.

She turned pro at 14, from the start of 1997 through October 18 of last year, she lost only to players ranked among the world's top 15.

To this youngster who was named one of People magazine's "50 most beautiful people" in 1998, it is still all about tennis.

"I don't really focus on anything except tennis and just my game and preparing and everything. Tennis is my life," she said.

"That's what I've been working for. What I was working for 13 years. So for me to think about anything else — of course, I do think about something else — but my main goal is tennis. Otherwise I would be wasting 13 years of life."



ANNA KOURNIKOVA

**Cycling and athletics hit by fresh drugs scandals**

LONDON, Apr 2 (Reuters/Internet): The leading Olympic sports of cycling and athletics were rocked

by fresh drugs scandals on Thursday only 18 months away from the Sydney Games.

In Belgium, riders in the Mapei team were dragged from the De Panne three-day race and questioned over the discovery of banned amphetamines. They were later cleared but an Italian masseur is still being held in custody.

Across the border in Lille, France, French cycling federation (FFC) chief Daniel Baal was charged in connection with last year's series of drugs raids in the Tour de France.

And the world governing athletics body confirmed in Monaco that US 400 metres hurdles champion Bryan Bronson had tested positive for a steroid last year and was suspended pending an investigation by his national authority.

Riders in the Mapei team, including race leader and Belgian champion Tom Steels, were forced to follow police who halted the race two kms into the first leg of the split final stage.

The second leg, a 14 kms time trial, was staged without the Mapei riders who included world number one Michele Bartoli and former world champion Johan Museeuw.

The team's hotel rooms were searched by police and urine samples taken.

Belgian public prosecutor Louis Denecker told a news conference in Brussels later that the riders and management of the Mapei team had been cleared of doping allegations.

But he said the masseur from the Italian-Belgian team was still being held in custody in

connection with the discovery of five flasks of amphetamines. "I can already state that management of the Mapei group is not involved in this case," Denecker said. "The inquiry has made this clear."

As far as the riders are concerned, they understand the situation very well because it is also important for them that they came out of this without

any reproach." In Lille, Baal became the 13th person to be placed under investigation over the doping furore which threatens the future of France's leading sports event.

Judicial sources said he had been charged with "complicity in helping others to obtain and use illegal performance-enhancing substances".



A file photo of Belgian cyclist Andrei Tchmil.

**CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer**

ACROSS 1 Too confident 5 Listening device 8 "Pygmalion" writer 12 Gilbert & Sullivan work 14 Body of laws 15 Country-wide 16 Santa's runway 17 Teachers' org. 18 In the thick of 20 Ship of the desert 23 Attempt 24 Mil. sch. 25 Popular takeout cuisine 28 Oz bigwig, -for short 29 Out-fighter's need 30 Ms. Lindstrom 32 Strip (of) 34 Avon calling 35 Key — pie 36 Pondered 37 Party outfit? 40 110 in the shade 41 Greatly 42 Meeting on the sly 47 Inlet 48 Great happiness 49 Golf gadgets 50 Witness 51 Sistas DOWN 1 Misdeed 2 Extinct New 3 Last: abbr. 4 Profited 5 Sicilian spouter 6 "Caught yal" 7 Comparative 8 Writer 9 Boyz' home? 10 Commotions 11 Warp crossing 13 Year-end refrain 19 Horse's neck hair 20 Cornfield comment 21 What A.G. Bell spilled 22 Lab rat's challenge 23 Push hard 25 Prevailing conditions 26 Resorts 27 Hibernia 29 Sinister 31 Put together 33 China-ware 34 Campaign souvenir 36 Slamdance 37 Treaty 38 Burn aid 39 Jupiter's alias 40 Overblown publicity 43 Wish undone 44 Nest-egg act. 45 Chill in the air 46 Petrol

CRYPTOQUIP puzzle grid with numbers 1-48 indicating starting positions for words.

V K M V P Y U T U L Y D M D W N V K H E R F N Y Q W T M L E M D Y Q V I K H R T F E H V K T K T E I N I W Y U T P H M Saturday's Cryptiquip: THE GROUCH WHO OWNED THE LEMON GROVE WAS VERY SIMPLY CONSIDERED A SOURPUSS. Today's Cryptiquip clue: I equals C The Cryptiquip 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.