

## Fresh injury setback for Atherton

LONDON, June 29 (Internet report): Mike Atherton's career-threatening back complaint has provided fresh consternation for the ex-England captain and ruled him out of Lancashire's County Championship match against Essex at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

Atherton needed more treatment for the recurrent condition that forced him out of England's World Cup squad and has allowed him to play in just two matches - including a 2nd XI fixture - this summer.

Lancashire, meanwhile, desperately need to beat Essex to pull themselves up the championship table and out of the reckoning to play Second Division cricket next season.

Chairman Jack Simmons was most concerned about Atherton, though, and said: "We feel for him because we know how determined he is to continue playing."

"He has had a setback, but we are leaving it to him to tell us when he is fit - only he will know."

## SA downgrade Scots tour

LONDON, June 29 (Internet report): South Africa's proposed A team tour of Scotland next month has been downgraded.

Instead a South African Cricket Academy will fulfil two three-day and four one-day fixtures against the Scots, who felt a full A tour would have been too one-sided.

Scotland are looking to increase the number of international fixtures they are exposed to and are hoping to persuade the touring West Indies and Zimbabwe squads to come north next year.

## Astle, Cairns carry New Zealand

LONDON, June 29: New Zealand gained a confidence-boosting six-wicket win before their first Test against England when Nathan Astle and Chris Cairns linked up for a match-winning partnership against Somerset at Taunton on Monday, reports AFP.

The New Zealand pair came together with their side 134 for four against injury-hit Somerset and still far from certain of achieving their 281 victory target.

But some flourishing strokeplay enabled Astle who finished unbeaten on 88, and Cairns, not far behind on 74 not out to put on 148 in 23 overs and send the Kiwis into the Test series in confident mood.

It was a remarkable victory considering Somerset had posted 554 in their first innings. But the county were lacking six first-choice players, and their stretched bowling resources were finally exploited.

Medium-pacer Keith Parsons had kept fortunes in the balance by removing Roger Twose, Stephen Fleming, Matt Horne and Craig McMillan, taking three for 10 in the space of 4.2 overs at one stage.

Twose was dropped twice in making 26, having scored only four in the first innings. But in general the New Zealand batsmen came out of the game with valuable preparation for Edgbaston.

Astle faced 102 deliveries and the destructive Cairns only 75, both players hitting 11 fours and a six while scoring runs all round the wicket and never looking in the slightest trouble. In truth it was a friendly-looking Somerset bowling attack without Andy Caddick, Matt Bulbeck and Graham Rose.

But Ian Jones and Jason Kerr produced lively early spells, and Parsons swung the ball in overcast conditions for his four for 61.

It was in the spin department that Somerset really struggled. Adrian Pierson was well below his best in conceding 47 from eight overs, while debutant leg-spinner Saqib Mahmood was handed only the final over after giving away 34 runs in his two in the first innings.

There was some consolation for Gregor Kennis, who picked up the 500 man-of-the-match award for his 175 in Somerset's mammoth first-innings total.

## SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the final day of the four-day tour match between Somerset and New Zealand on Monday:

**SOMERSET:** First innings 554 (G Kennis 175, P Jones 105, A Pierson 66, R Turner 59; N Astle 3-22)

**NEW ZEALAND:** Second innings 420 (C McMillan 121, M Horne 91, A Parore 80; J Kerr 3-65)

**SOMERSET:** Second innings 146 (G Allott 3-22, D Nash 3-32)

**NEW ZEALAND:** Second innings (overnight 22-0)

R Horne b Parsons 26

N Astle not out 88

C McMillan c Turner b Parsons 28

C Cairns not out 74

Extras: (b-1, lb-11, nb-10) 22

Total: (for four wickets) 282

Fall of wickets: 1-65; 2-67; 3-92; 4-134

**Bowler** O M R W  
Kerr 13 3 51 0  
I Jones 11 3 40 0  
P Jones 11 2 34 0  
Parsons 12 2 61 4  
Pierson 8 0 47 0  
Burns 3 0 28 0  
Mahmood 1 0 9 0

**Result:** New Zealand won by six wickets.

## Leading veterans' charge



LONDON, June 29 (AP): Unlike the fresh faces who have piled into the last 16 of the women's singles at Wimbledon, seven-time champion Steffi Graf is the one who has seen it all before - ever since she was their tender age.

Graf and defending champion Jana Novotna - as well as American former world number one Lindsay Davenport - have been quietly going about their business happy to leave all the screaming headlines about the teenage revolution which is supposedly about to break over their heads.

Graf, at the 30th third oldest woman left in the event, is still moving around the court like a foal - and has the energy in abundance to play for fun alongside John McEnroe in the mixed doubles to keep her on her toes.

Only 31-year-old Novotna and last year's finalist Nathalie Tauziat of France, beat Graf for age.

But their age and the glamour of the teenage brigade mean they have not raised much interest so far - and that's the way the trio like it.

Despite Graf's early problems in the second round when she lost a set to South Africa's Marlaan De Swardt, neither they nor anybody else look like beating the German second seed.

Graf, who faces the youngest of them all - Belgian Kim Clijsters - in the fourth round, is enjoying a new lease of life after two injury-ravaged years, and her French Open triumph and Martina Hingis' expense made a nonsense of the Swiss teen's earlier assertion that the veteran was finished.

Graf joked after beating De Swardt that she'd really rather prefer to "win easy," although that match gave her the wake-up call she needed if she is to claim a 23rd Grand Slam singles title.

"I'm not having an easy road. Every match is tough - Kim won't be any different. But I feel good about the way I'm playing," says Graf, who spent a record 377 weeks ranked number one but is now number three in the world.

Graf cannot avoid hogging the headlines given the constant speculation over whether this will be her last Wimbledon.

The teenage army is represented in abundance and just keeps on growing.

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German tennis legend Steffi Graf executes a forehand during her rain interrupted match against Kim Clijsters of Belgium on June 28.

proposition from anyone else Kournikova has faced so far.

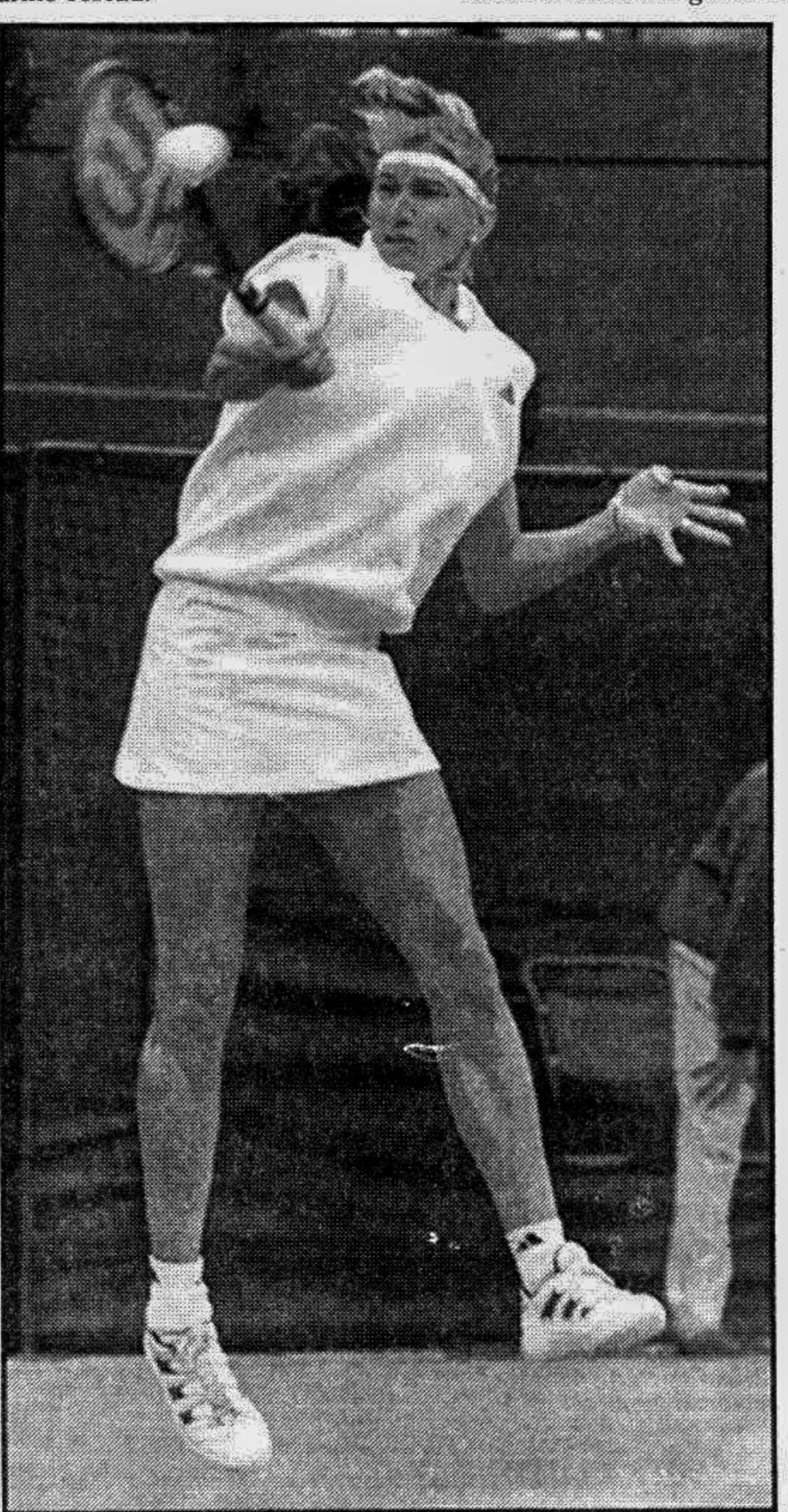
Another teen who can hit the ball as hard as Williams is Croatian 17-year-old Mirjana Lucic, who having knocked out former finalist Monica Seles now faces Tamarine Tanasugarn of Thailand, a comparative veteran at 22 and who ended the hopes of French 13th seed Sandrine Testud.

bastion - but at least they're still on speaking terms.

Not so Lucic with her father, whom she admits she hasn't seen for a year.

Asked where her father was following the greatest victory in her young career, Lucic shrugged and said: "Nowhere. I haven't had any contact with him in about a year."

"These kinds of things make



## Howard hails Jelena

SYDNEY, June 29: Prime Minister John Howard, still savouring Australia's World Cup cricket success, today joined the growing chorus of praise for teenager Jelena Dokic's remarkable run at Wimbledon, reports Reuters.

Dokic, 16, grabbed headlines when she stunned world number one Martina Hingis in straight sets in the first round and Howard said she had now proved her win over top seed Hingis was no fluke.

"She proved that first round win was no flash in the pan," he told a Canberra radio station.

Dokic's successful run at Wimbledon has created a stir in Australia, particularly in Fairfield, the unfashionable suburb in Sydney's west where she has lived since she and her family emigrated from Yugoslavia in 1994.

The Australian media has embraced Dokic, with her progress capturing front page headlines.

"Wonder Girl," said Sydney's tabloid Daily Telegraph in a frontpage banner headline on Tuesday.

Howard, an avowed cricket fan, on Monday hosted a Parliament House reception for Australia's one-day squad, who have been feted with ticker tape parades in Melbourne and Sydney since returning from their World Cup final triumph over Pakistan.

## Stevenson will get prize money

WIMBLEDON, June 29: Alexandra Stevenson will get her Wimbledon prize money after all, reports AP.

The WTA Tour had ruled the 18-year-old American entered as an amateur and was ineligible for prize money. But Wimbledon officials stepped in Monday and overruled, saying Stevenson had professional status and was entitled to her winnings.

The player's mother, Samantha Stevenson, had threatened to take legal action to obtain the prize money.

WTA Tour rules and Grand Slam rules state that a player who beings the first match as an amateur may not receive prize money during that tournament.

However, Wimbledon officials said their guidelines assume all players are professionals unless they are notified otherwise.

Stevenson is guaranteed of 26,280 pounds (42,340 dollars) for reaching a fourth-round match with fellow American Lisa Raymond. That match was rained out Monday.

## Schools h'ball

Agrani Girls' High School and Adarsha Girls' School won their respective matches in the 10th Bata schools handball tournament at the Sultanah Kamal Women's Sports Complex yesterday, reports UNB.

French eighth seed Taziat takes on 15th seed Dominique Van Roost of Belgium.

Taziat shows no signs of fatigue despite playing virtually non-stop for the last three weeks. "My objective is to win as many games as possible in two sets," she said.

Dokic's father has been dubbed the 'Dad from Hell' after being thrown out of the pre-Wimbledon tournament at Edgbaston.

Even if their leader Martina Hingis went home early, there are plenty more where she came from, with Clijsters having been assigned the hardest job of all in the fourth round.

The miserable times are well behind Lucic, who was tipped for stardom by Graf two years ago after reaching the final of the Strasbourg Open before she even had a ranking.

Like Dokic, Lucic has bounced into the limelight burdened by controversy surrounding her difficult relationship with her father Marinko.

He was also her coach but Lucic claims he mentally and physically abused her for almost a decade.

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