

Kiefer upends Rafter

MONTREAL, Aug 7: Ninth-seeded Nicolas Kiefer of Germany upset defending champion Patrick Rafter of Australia on Friday in the rain-delayed quarterfinals of the ATP du Maurier Open, reports AP.

Kiefer ousted the top seed 6-3, 6-7, 7-6 in two hours, 43 minutes on Centre Court for his third victory over Rafter in as many meetings.

Second-seeded Andre Agassi also advanced to the semifinals with a 6-0, 6-3 win over Fabrice Santoro of France. Third-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia beat No 6 Todd Martin 7-6, 6-7, 6-4, and No 11 Thomas Johansson of Sweden defeated unseeded Jim Courier 6-4, 6-4.

Kiefer, 22, withstood Rafter's serve-and-volley game with solid returns and strong baseline play in the first set.

He broke Rafter early in the second set but was broken himself later in the set. In the tiebreaker, Kiefer had a 5-1 lead before Rafter called in the next six points with some tenacious net play.

Another tiebreaker followed in the third set after several exhausting baseline rallies, and Kiefer finally closed out the match with an ace.

Johansson defeated a disgruntled Courier before rain delayed the rest of the day's quarterfinal matches.

After the rain subsided, Agassi wasted little time dispatching Santoro, needing just 52 minutes and winning 55 points to Santoro's 30.

Johansson beat the rain but didn't escape Courier's outburst, as Courier received a code violation for unsportsmanlike conduct in the final game of the match.

Serving for the match at 5-4 and 30-15, Johansson hit a serve that Courier felt was long. No call was made and Johansson eventually won the point to give him two match points.

Courier walked over to the line judge and engaged the official in a heated one-way discussion, prompting the judge to inform umpire Norm Chryst, who issued the violation.

"The guy is serving for the match and he double faults and they miss the call," Courier said. "So I go over and tell the guy who is making the line call he should take his sunglasses off because it's pitch black out there."

"So he jumps out like a tattletale like he's in elementary school and runs and tells the umpire."

While Courier was upset about the call, the turning point in the set came when the four-time Grand Slam winner was broken three games earlier.

Courier was also broken late in the first set.

"Jat thing that happened in the end of the match today didn't bother me so much," Johansson said.

Johansson played a solid baseline game, hitting 20 winners, compared to Courier's 14. Johansson also made four fewer errors.

"I wasn't serving well but I felt I played well from the baseline," he said.

Despite the loss, Courier should improve on his current world ranking of 46th after upsetting seeded players Tim Henman and Wayne Ferreira.

Atlanta's dark secret

ATLANTA, Aug 7: Olympic documents point toward possible scholarship and travel abuses during Atlanta's bid for the 1996 Summer Games. The Associated Press learned Friday.

Sources familiar with a congressional committee's investigation of the city's bid said the documents contained "several references to scholarship" for relatives of International Olympic Committee members and non-Olympic travel for some members.

According to the sources, the documents mention gifts worth well over 1,000 dollars that weren't previously acknowledged by the local organizers.

The sources said many gifts involved corporations, and therefore did not turn up on the ledgers of the Georgia Amateur Athletic Foundation or the Atlanta Organizing Committee.

For months, Atlanta organizers said they may have bent some IOC regulations, but never took part in outright vote-buying on the scale that occurred in Salt Lake City. Organizers there gave cash, college scholarships and other gifts to IOC members and their families to win the 2002 Winter Games.

The sources, who would not give specific details of the Atlanta evidence, spoke on condition of anonymity.

The documents are filled with possible violations not previously disclosed, one of the sources said. The sources said references to scholarships went well beyond previously disclosed memos from Atlanta Olympics chief Billy Payne, who said the memos contained ideas that never acted upon.



Action from the French First Division match between Saint Etienne and Nantes on August 6. Nantes won 2-0. — AFP photo

Nantes take the lead

PARIS, Aug 7: Olivier Monterrubio and Antoine Sibierski scored the goals as Nantes won 2-0

away to promoted St Etienne on Friday night and moved to the top of the French league standings, reports AFP.

Monterrubio fired home a well-directed shot in the 35th minute on a rain-soaked night and Sibierski stabbed home a last-minute insurance goal from close range to give Nantes two wins out of two.

In other matches played Friday night, former champions Lens edged Monaco 1-0, promoted Sedan downed Nancy 3-1 and Bastia trounced Strasbourg 3-0.

Daniel Moreira rounded off a superb flowing move by firing home a crashing right-foot shot past French national team goalkeeper Fabien Barthez five minutes before halftime to give Lens their win over Monaco, who have gleaned just one point from their opening two matches.

A Laurent Casanova header put Bastia on their way against Strasbourg and the Corsicans

then got further strikes from Dane Dan Petersen and Fredric Nee.

Sedan bounced back impressively from their opening loss to Marseille with goals from Pierre Debloek, Cedric Mionnet and Olivier Quint before Irish international Tony Casciaro grabbed a consolation goal for outgunned Nancy.

In matches played on Thursday night, Lyon won 2-1 at newly-promoted Troyes while perennial strugglers Le Havre held last year's runners-up Marseille to a 0-0 draw.

Troyes, who are based in Champagne country but have failed to sparkle in their opening two matches since promotion, look destined for a season of struggle because of their lack of punch in attack.

Two goals from French international striker Tony Vairelles saw them fall behind to Lyon before defender Richard Jezierski grabbed a late consolation goal with a fine header.

Marseille hit the post through Robert Pires, but were outplayed for long periods by Le Havre's worry for coach Roland Courbis.

The final brawl of an ill-

tempered match saw Cyrille Pouget of Le Havre and Eduardo Berizzo of Marseille shown red cards after Pouget had lashed out at his opponent with a wild kick.

The remainder of the second round of games will be played on Saturday with ambitious Montpellier hosting champions Bordeaux, Metz facing Auxerre and Rennes at home to Paris St Germain.

STANDINGS

French league standings after matches played Friday (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

Nantes	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Marseille	2	1	0	3	0	4	4
Bastia	2	1	0	1	5	3	3
Bordeaux	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Montpellier	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Auxerre	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Paris SG	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Lyon	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Lens	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Sedan	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Strasbourg	2	1	0	1	1	3	3
Metz	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Rennes	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Monaco	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Le Havre	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
St Etienne	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Troyes	2	0	0	2	1	3	0
Nancy	2	0	0	2	2	5	0

Attractive SEA prizes

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Aug 7: More than medals are at stake in the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games beginning today, with governments promising cash and other incentives to winners even as the region recovers from an economic slowdown, reports AFP.

Host Brunei, which has not won a gold medal in the games' 40-year history, is offering a new Mitsubishi car as well as 40,000 Brunei dollars (23,670 US) for the first athlete to earn the yellow metal.

Sultan Hassanalkiah's oil-rich kingdom will pay athletes 40,000 dollars for a gold medal at the games, 20,000 dollars for a silver medal and 5,000 for a bronze.

Brunei is banking on the

combat sport silat, the Malay art of self-defence, to break their duck.

Singapore will give 10,000 Singapore dollars (5,900 US) to a gold medal winner in an individual event, while a team gold is good for 20,000 dollars.

Malaysia, traditionally strong in athletics and evening 35 gold medals, will reward each individual gold medalist with 5,000 ringgit (1,315 US) and 1,000 ringgit for each gold medalist in a team event.

No Southeast Asian nation was spared from the financial crisis which erupted in mid-1997 and plunged the region into a recession. The region is recovering from crisis amid severe government belt-tightening.

But sports seems to have survived the government axe.

Vietnam will give 2,000 US dollars and Thailand has allocated 50,000 baht (1,351 US) for every gold winner.

Thailand together with Indonesia, which have also reserved an unknown amount of cash for their medal winners, are expected to take the lions' share of the Brunei Games gold medals.

The Philippine Sports Commission, the state body financing athletic development, is offering 75,000 pesos (2,000 dollars) for a gold winner, 50,000 pesos to a silver medalist and 30,000 pesos to a bronze winner, said Gus Villanueva spokesman for the delegation.

Curtain raised in Brunei

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Brunei, Aug 7: The world's richest monarch opened the 20th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games today in a colourful early evening ceremony that also served as a coming-out party for the tiny oil-rich nation of Brunei, reports AFP.

With fireworks roaring into the skies, Sultan Hassanalkiah launched the region's biggest sports carnival in the 36,000 capacity national stadium. Balloons rose over the cavernous canopy from where hundreds of doves fluttered aloft to signal the last SEA Games of this century.

More than 2,000 athletes from the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam — will compete for sporting supremacy in 21 events.

They range from football to traditional boat racing and from track and field events to combat sports karate and silat, the Malay art of self defence.

This is the biggest mass event hosted by relatively-low profile Brunei, which will come under world scrutiny when it hosts the leaders of 21 economies at an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting next year.

The SEA Games opening ceremony saw participating teams donning their national costumes and marching past the royal box.

The Brunei contingent received a thunderous applause as Crown Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah, competing in the 9-ball individual billiards championships, led the home team in the march past.

The Philippine contingent sprang a surprise when the chef-de-mission's place at the head of the parade was taken up by President Joseph Estrada's

son, Jinggoy Estrada. Spectators burst into laughter when the chef-de-mission's name, Jamalul Kiram, was flashed on the electronic scoreboard when the Philippine team passed the grand stand and the portly Jinggoy gamely waved at the crowd. It was not immediately known why the change took place.

Dances and other cultural displays by schoolchildren followed the parade.

It climaxed with the raising

of the SEA Games flag and the traditional lighting of the games cauldron by Brunei's woman silat exponent Umi Kalthum, who made a one-lap run in the packed stadium before taking the steps to light the flames.

"I regard it as a great honor to be picked the final torch bearer," said the 26-year-old student of a Scottish university who was the last Brunei athlete to win a gold medal in the games in 1993.



Scene from the opening ceremony of the Southeast Asian Games yesterday. — AFP photo

World chess roundup

LAS VEGAS, Aug 7: Michael Krasenkow of Poland was the only top seed to run into deep trouble Friday in the first game of the third round of the World Chess Championship, reports AP.

Vadim Zvjaginsev of Russia upset the eighth-seeded Krasenkow with the black pieces. Since white always moves first in chess, that colour has a significant advantage at this level. Now the Polish Grand Master must win with black in the second game of the round Saturday or go home.

Thirty-two of the original 100 players remain in the running for the 660,000 dollars first prize and the title of world champion in this seven-round knockout tournament. It will run through the month.

The event is sponsored by FIDE, the international chess federation. The International Olympic Committee recently recognized FIDE as the official governing body for chess.

Favourites who won with black were England's Nigel Short over Alexander Beliavsky of Slovenia and Alexei Fedorov of Belarus over Jan Timman of the Netherlands.

Short qualified to play a 1993 match for the title against the then-FIDE World Champion Garry Kasparov. Unhappy with the financial conditions of the FIDE match, Kasparov split from FIDE and started his own organization. Short lost to Kasparov in that group's tie match.

Kasparov, generally considered to be the strongest player in the world, still claims to be World Champion and refused to play here.

Fedorov took over the third seed in this event when FIDE's current champion, Anatoly Karpov of Russia, decided not to play. Karpov believes he has the right to play the tournament's winner for the title.

Three of the top seeds won with white Friday.

Alexei Shirov of Spain, the second seed, defeated No 50, Gilbert Milos of Brazil in a very tough fight. Midway through the game the outcome was very much in doubt.

Sixth-seed Vassily Ivanchuk of the Ukraine won over the tough Sergei Shipov of Russia, the 22nd seed.

Veselin Topolov of Bulgaria scored a quick win off Lev Psakhis of Israel.

Kiril Georgiev, the veteran Bulgarian star, pulled a mild upset, using the white pieces to best the seventh seed, Peter Svidler of Russia.

Top-seeded Boris Gelfand of Israel was held to a draw the 68 year-old Viktor Korchnoi of Switzerland. Korchnoi played matches for the world title against Karpov in 1978 and 1981. Karpov won both matches.

Judit Polgar, the strongest women player in the world, drew easily with black against Jordi Magem Badals of Spain.

TT DIARY

EINDHOVEN, Netherlands, Aug 7 (AFP): Vladimir Samsonov of Belarus had his passport, a portable radio and a portable CD player stolen from his hotel bedroom.

Samsonov, knocked out in the last 16 by China's Ma Lin, at least was reunited with his passport, which was discarded by the thief and returned to the world championships venue by a passer-by who found it near some bushes.

The theft completed a disappointing week for top-seeded Samsonov, who had won the European title here at the same venue last year.

SHE'S GOT THE BOTTLE

A doping test on new mixed doubles champion Zhang Yining hit a hitch following her victory with partner Ma Lin in the first final of the week on Friday.

Sixteen-year-old Zhang took three hours to produce a urine sample as required by organisers.

That meant that her doping escort also had to work overtime. Event rules state that the escort must not leave a competitor from the moment he or she finishes her match until the sample is produced.

The intention of the rule is to prevent a masking pill being taken.

'I'VE STARTED, SO I'LL FINISH'

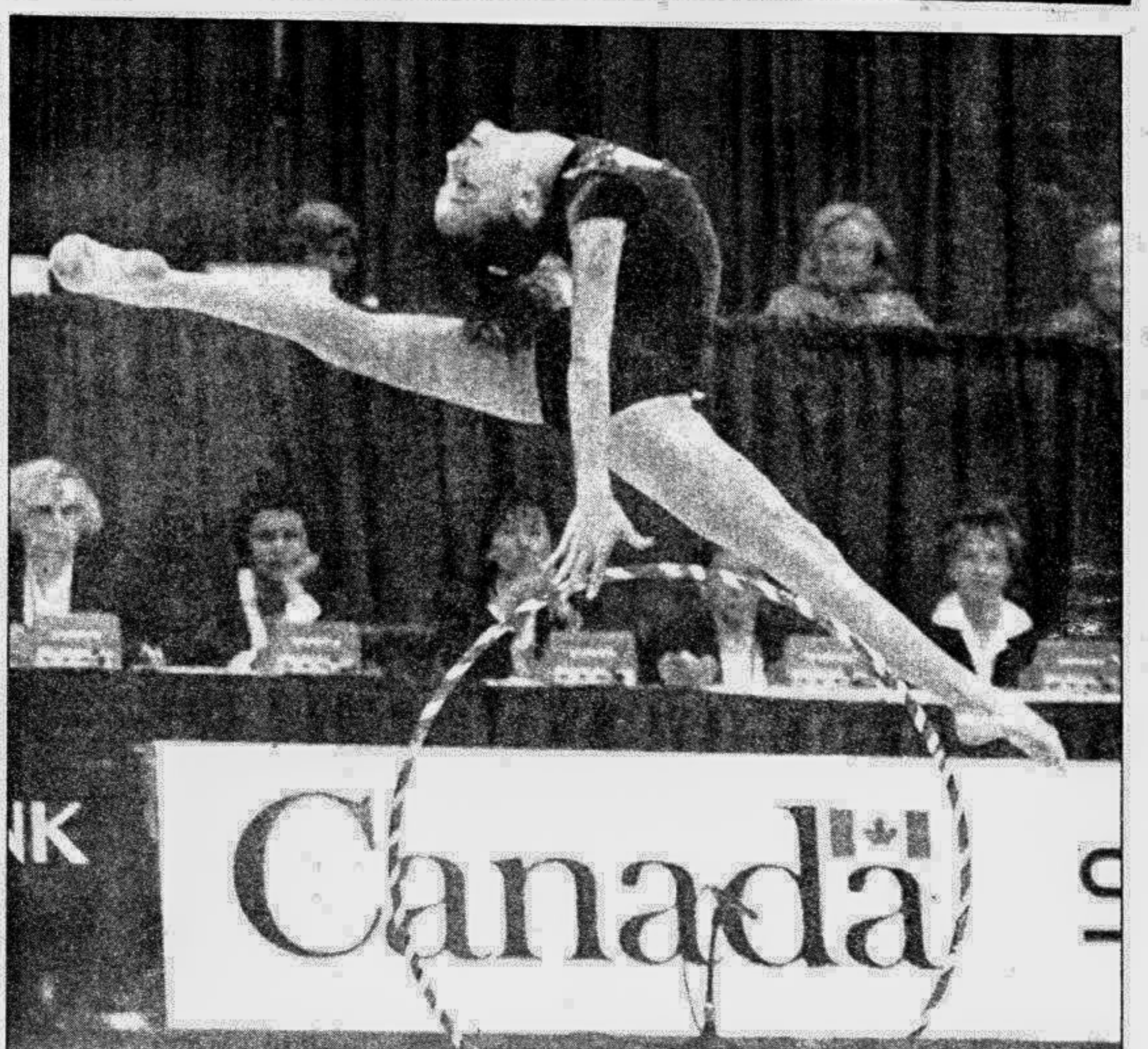
A Swede and a Russian proved victorious in the rankings tournaments, which were concluded Friday.

These events can significantly boost the world ranking of players eliminated in the early stages of the main tournament.

Magnus Molin of Sweden was the victor in the men's event while the women's event went to Russia's Svetlana Gama.

Leeds legend cremated

LEEDS, England, Aug 7: The ashes of former Leeds United and Scotland legend Billy Bremner were scattered at the top end of his beloved Elland Road before Leeds' opening match of the Premiership season against Derby on Saturday, reports AFP.



Acicela Rosado of Mexico performs in the rhythmic gymnastics all-round competition at the Pan American Games. — AFP photo

Schlager's toughest test

EINDHOVEN, Netherlands, Aug 7 (AFP): Austria's Werner Schlager is the joker in the pack in the men's Tennis Championships.

Two of the other semifinalists — Jan Ove Waldner and Liu Guoliang — need no introduction ahead of Sunday's men's semis and final.

Sweden's reigning champion Waldner has twice been a victor at this level and was also the singles gold medalist at the Barcelona Olympics.

Liu, meanwhile, relieved Waldner of his Olympic gold at Atlanta and since the elimination of Belarussian top seed Vladimir Samsonov, is the highest-ranked player remaining in the tournament.

The third of the four contenders Ma Lin is, admittedly, a less illustrious name than Waldner or Liu.

But his seeding of nine was believed to be a false one before the tournament as Chinese players have not attended many ranking events with Ma suffering as a result.

He is, however, a rising star of the Chinese game and, at the age of 19, clinched the first title of the event on Friday with mixed doubles partner Zhang Yinying.

Schlager, in contrast, has genuinely confounded the pundits with his run to the semis.

Cynics believe the Austrian's run will end on Sunday morning but the 26-year-old, who has never been ranked higher than

14th, has steadily improved during the tournament and his quarterfinal victory over Croatian fourth seed Zoran Primorac had the hallmark of class.

Schlager and Liu, semifinal opponents, also met in the outstanding clash of the men's doubles category so far on Friday.

In a thrilling encounter Schlager -- and compatriot Karl Jindrak -- squandered five match points, losing eventually to Liu and his partner Kong Linghui, the 1995 world singles champion.

Liu also has the pressure of being China's main hope to end Europe's preeminence in the blue ribbon event of the tournament.

Europe has taken four of the last five titles at world level and the Chinese delegation have admitted they will consider their campaign to have failed if they let slip the men's singles again -- even if they sweep the board in the other events.

Ma's clash with Waldner is an intriguing one.

Fifth-seeded Waldner looked a spent force in the earlier rounds but turned in a vintage performance to send Kong packing in a response.

Until that match, the drum-beating, flag-waving Chinese had provided the main support in the tournament but the near-capacity crowd were thrilled by Waldner's 22-20, 13-21, 18-19, 21-15 triumph.

Describing the crowd as "perfect" the Swedish legend knows he will be the sentimental favourite again against Ma.

Meanwhile, Wang Nan ensured that a Chinese player will win the women's singles title at the Championships -- but will have to wait until Saturday afternoon to see if it is her name that will follow that of retired legend Deng Yaping into the history books.

Wang, the top seed, had to fight hard in her semifinal to see off the last non-Chinese competitor, Ryu Ji Hye of Korea, seeded thirteen, but eventually prevailed.

She now meets the winner of the other last four clash -- an all-Chinese affair between 12th seed Zhang Yining and surprise package Li Nan, who has come from nowhere to emerge as the find of the tournament.

Left-hander Wang, aged 20, had to fight to keep her head above water with the Korean taking an early lead in the deciding rubber.

Backed by a noisy Chinese contingent in the crowd, Wang emerged the victor by a 22-24, 21-9, 21-15, 16-21, 21-16 scoreline.



Austrian Werner Schlager exults after defeating Croatia's Zoran Primorac in the quarterfinals of the World Table Tennis Championships on August 6. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Disen-cumber
4 "You've got"
8 Incision
12 Expert
13 Arm bone
14 Big name in scat
15 Wrestling hold
17 Apprehend
18 Mussolini's title
19 Something to write home about
20 Norton's pal
22 Strike team
24 Reed instrument
25 Three-part disharmony?
29 Elmer in scat to Bugs
30 Perch
31 Uncivilized
32 Stir-fry dish
34 Karaoke need
35 Put together
36 Bodies of laws

DOWN
1 "Go, a Rose"
2 Lermieux
5 Loton additive
6 Letter-head abbr.
7 "Mighty"
8 Fame
9 Astronaut Shepard
10 Netman Nastase
11 "What's My Line?"
16 Make a fool of
19 Castle protection
20 Reel's mates
21 "Ben Adhem"
22 Penniless
Solution time: 26 mins.

37 Crocodile
38 Tiki
39 Crooked
40 Wall
41 Enthusiastic
42 Skilled sleuth
43 Verifiable
44 What we share
48 Runner Sebastian
49 Collections
50 Hawaiian goose
51 "Tiki"

23 Actress Vrina
25 "Wind in the Willows" character
26 Major traffic jam
27 Michigan, for one
28 Rams' ma'am's
30 Tatum's dad
33 Representations
34 Gangster's girlfriend
36 Talk a blue streak?
37 Bartholomew Cubbins' 500
38 Fairy tale
39 Toe woe
40 Swiss capital
42 Bart to Homer
43 Color
44 Bill's partner
45 Barbie's beau

CRYPTOQUIP

EUU YUVDLVOOESN DKSDMV
LIEL LIYOV QVMOL KO
DIKODY ON LIY DMVVEL
Yesterday's Cryptquip: AREN'T SOME PEOPLE LIKELY TO SAY THAT AROMATHERAPY STINKS?
Today's Cryptquip clue: D equals C

The Cryptquip 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.