

Sport

Stevenson ousted

NEW YORK, Sept 1: Alexandra Stevenson made banner headlines this year at Wimbledon as much for the confirmation she is the daughter of former basketball great Julius Erving as for becoming the first female qualifier to reach the semifinals of that Grand Slam event, reports Reuters.

But the Wimbledon wonder-girl's return to the US Open was short-lived after a 6-2, 6-2 first-round loss to 11th-seeded Nathalie Tauziat of France, who gave the bubbly California teen a 59-minute tennis lesson.

"Grass is definitely a different game," said the 43rd-ranked Stevenson Tuesday in explaining her success at Wimbledon. "And my game's great on grass, and it will be great on hard-court. I just need to work harder and learn a lot more and play many more matches."

It appears that no matter what kind of controversy surrounds the 18-year-old, Stevenson has learned to keep up a bubbly demeanor, insisting nothing disrupts her life.

"There's an aftermath in the media, not in my life," Stevenson said of the revelation about Dr J. "I'm the same person and I'm living the same life. Nothing's changed except cab drivers know me now."

And so do young tennis fans who clamored for her autograph following the match as if she were a bona-fide star.

Nevertheless, Stevenson does say she would have preferred not to become a curiosity over her celebrity parentage.

"I would have liked to have kept my private life private, but some people thought that should have been discovered," Stevenson said. "I mean, you have your good journalists and your bad journalists and the people like that like to divulge information."

"When you're in the public eye, a lot of people are going to want to know about your private life. You can't get upset about it because it happened, and it's going to happen."

US OPEN AT A GLANCE

NEW YORK, Sept 1 (AP): Highlights of Tuesday's play in the 14.5 million dollars US Open tennis championships:

Weather: Mostly clear and comfortable with a high of 75.

Attendance: Day session: 28,095, surpassing the record of 27,809 set on Monday. Night session: 19,971. Total: 48,066.

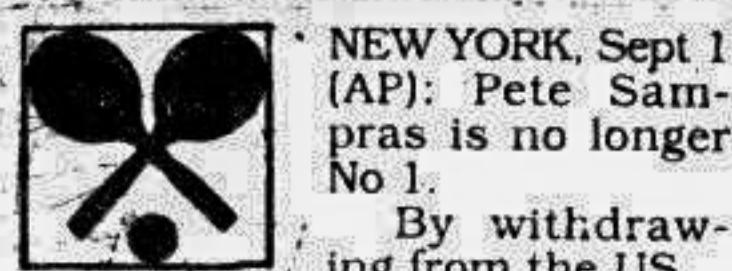
Results: In men's singles, No. 1 Pete Sampras withdrew with a lower back injury. Two-time defending champions Patrick Rafter retired from his match with Cedric Pioline, with a shoulder injury.

No. 5 Gustavo Kuerten, No. 7 Todd Martin, No. 15 Nicolas Kiefer and No. 16 Nicolas Lapentti advanced. No. 6 Tim Henman and No. 13 Alex Corretja were eliminated. Women's singles: No. 2 Lindsay Davenport, No. 4 Monica Seles, No. 5 Mary Pierce, No. 7 Serena Williams, No. 9 Julie Hlavacek, No. 11 Nathalie Tauziat, No. 14 Sandrine Testud and No. 16 Conchita Martinez advanced. No seeded women lost.

Stat of the Day: Pete Sampras is the first No. 1 seed to withdraw from the Open since Budde-Patty in 1950.

Quote of the Day: "I'm No. 5 in the world at the moment. That's the highest ranking I've ever been and I couldn't be more dissatisfied with my game." — Tim Henman.

OPEN NOTEBOOK



NEW YORK, Sept 1 (AP): Pete Sampras is no longer No. 1.

By withdrawing from the US Open because of a back injury, Sampras will drop out of the No. 1 spot when the ATP Tour rankings are compiled at the end of the year's final Grand Slam tournament.

Andre Agassi moved ahead of Sampras, advancing one spot from the No. 2 ranking, but might not be No. 1 in two weeks. That's because Yevgeny Kafelnikov also can pass Sampras in the rankings by reaching the round of 16, and the Russian could conceivably overtake Agassi, according to how far each goes in the Open.

SISTERS

Venus and Serena Williams are both ranked at career-high positions this week. Venus at No. 3 after her victory in New Haven, Connecticut, last week, and younger sister Serena at No. 6 after winning two weeks ago in Manhattan Beach, California.

The Williams sisters thus become the highest ranked sibling act in WTA Tour history.

The highest of the three Maheeva sisters were ranked at the same time was from June 14-July 4, 1993, when Magdalena was No. 11, Manuela No. 12 and Katerina No. 13. The best two any one time was when Katerina was No. 7 and Manuela No. 8 from June to August, 1990.

MISSING IN ACTION

Tim Henman's problems in Grand Slam tournaments continued Tuesday when he lost 7-6 (7-1), 6-4, 6-3 in the first round to Guillermo Canas.

The sixth-seeded Henman lost in the first round of the Grand Slam tournament for the first time since the French Open last year, where back problems forced him to retire while trailing 5-2 in the opening set.

In 19 career Grand Slam tournaments, the top British player has lost in the first round six times.

A LITTLE LAUGHTER

When Pete Sampras met the media to talk about his withdrawal from the US Open with a back injury, there were a couple moments of levity.

After Sampras said second-seeded Andre Agassi had called him Tuesday morning, saying it was a "very classy thing to do on his part," a reporter asked Sampras if Agassi already knew of the injury when he called.

"Do you think he was calling me to tell me he won last night?" Sampras chided the questioner.

When Dr Brian Hainline, the tournament's medical director, was asked to "repeat the medical phrase you used in reference to Pete's injury and spell it," the doctor said:

"Well, there's a small disc, d-i-s-c, herniation at L-5, S-1. Usually we write that as a L-5, S-1."

STEADY SLIDE

Alexandra Stevenson's slide since reaching the Wimbledon semifinals continued at the US Open on Tuesday when she lost to 11th-seeded Nathalie Tauziat 6-2, 6-2.

At Wimbledon, Stevenson became the first woman qualifier to gain a semifinal berth. She has not won a match since then.

Tauziat also has struggled. Going into the US Open, the Frenchwoman had won just one match in her last three tournaments.

SWINGING STADIUM

"It's OK for Louis Armstrong to be part of tennis," Lucille Armstrong, widow of the great trumpeter, said in 1977. "Both are swinging."

The Louis Armstrong Stadium at the National Tennis Centre, not far from where the Armstrongs lived from 1943 until his death in 1971, and she lived until her death in 1983.

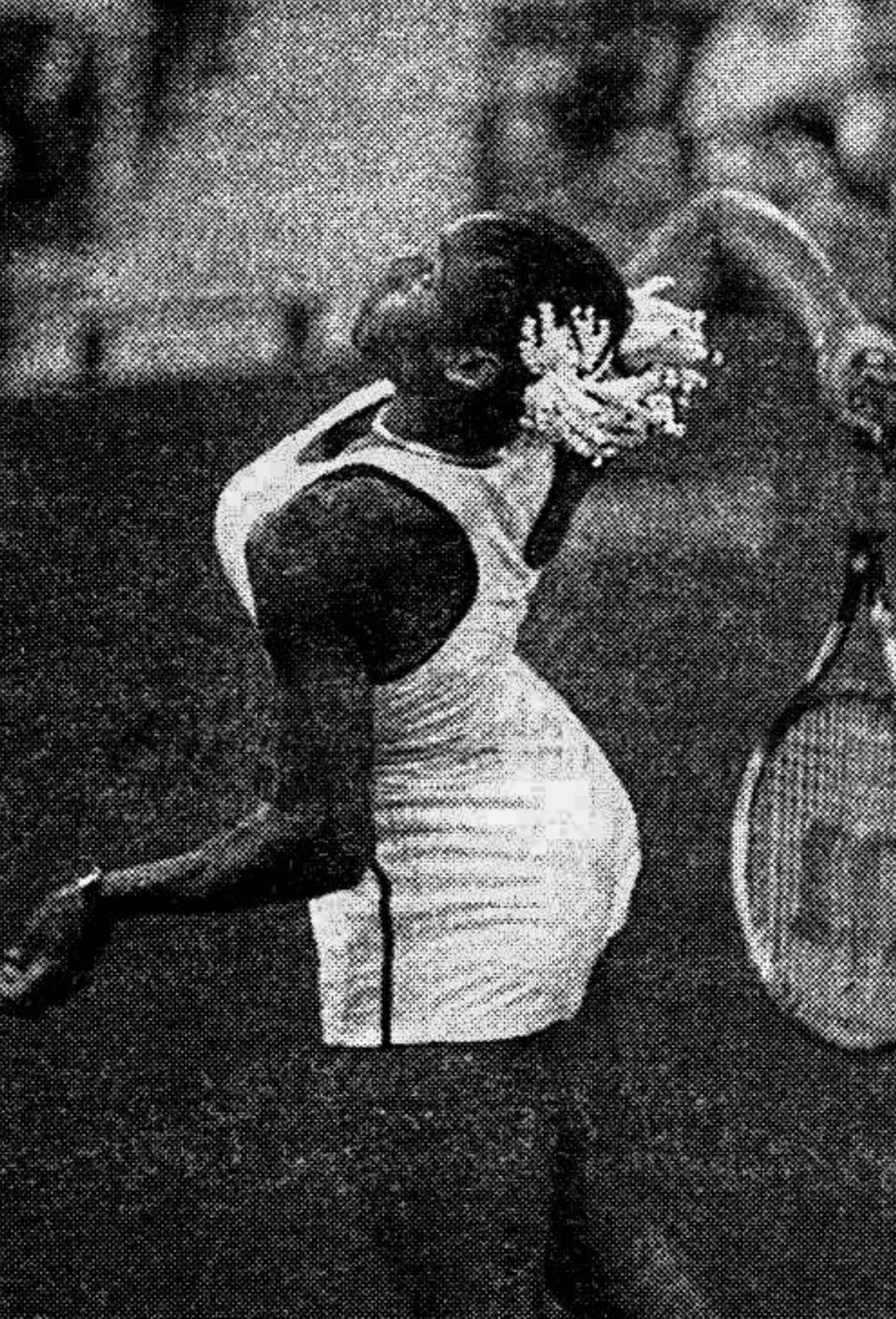
was rededicated on Monday, the first day of the US Open. It has been rebuilt as a state-of-the-art facility for tennis.

It opened in 1964 as the Singer Bowl, by the Singer Sewing Machine Company, in connection with the World's Fair. It was later taken over by the city and dedicated July 4, 1973, as the Louis Armstrong Bowl for concerts.



Todd Martin of the United States in action against Frenchman Stephane Huet on Tuesday. — AFP photo

American Serena Williams serves during her match against compatriot Kimberly Po. — AFP photo



American Serena Williams serves during her match against Kimberly Po. — AFP photo

Agassi doesn't like being tagged

NEW YORK, Sept 1: Second-seeded Andre Agassi wants nothing to do with being favoured for the US Open title now that world number one Pete Sampras has withdrawn with a herniated back disc, reports AFP.

"I won't consider myself the favourite until I'm up two sets and two breaks in the third set of the final," Agassi said. "Maybe I am the favourite. But it's one match at a time. Anything can happen out here."

"To win the event is to beat Pete would be special just because of what he has accomplished. But it's not certain he would even be in the final."

Wimbledon runner-up Agassi, who next faces 124th-ranked German qualifier Axel Pretzsch, claimed the number two seedling here by beating Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov on August 15 in the ATP Washington final.

Agassi, who tumbled to 141st in the world 21 months ago, climbed back to number one after his French Open triumph, which made him only the fifth man to complete the career Grand Slam sweep.

His rise has coincided with the breakup of his marriage to actress Brooke Shields, but likely has more to do with his lean figure, built on a regimen of diet and exercise to boost his speed and serving power.

"I'm moving well and I'm getting to the ball well. That gives me lots of options out there," Agassi said. "Although I see the ball well, you still have to have the ability to take it early."

Agassi had not gone beyond the fourth round of a Grand Slam event since reaching the 1996 semifinals here.

Inzaghi relishing the prospect

MILAN, Sept 1: Juventus striker Filippo Inzaghi reckons that teaming up with his best friend Christian Vieri will see Italy into the finals of Euro 2000 next week, reports AFP.

The two men will start in Wednesday's Group 1 qualifier against Denmark as Inzaghi's club teammate Alessandro Del Piero has yet to recover full match fitness after a nine-month lay-off due to surgery.

A victory over the Danes in Naples -- where Italy secured their place at the 1998 World Cup finals by beating Russia -- will book their ticket to the finals in Holland and Belgium.

Inzaghi said: "The matches we played together in the national team at the end of last season went very well. I hope we can play together again, because we're both on form at the moment and we both want to do well."

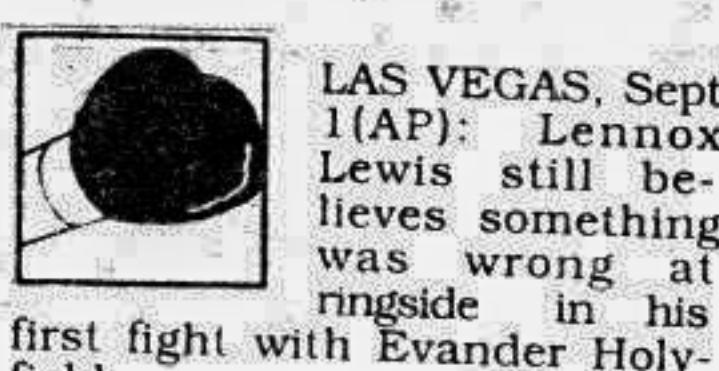
"We're good friends and as footballers we've grown up together; the Serie B, the Under-21 squad, the Serie A via Atlanta and Juventus, and then the national team; always first one and then the other."

"We're very compatible. What counts on the pitch is the willingness to help each other out and to make sacrifices. And that's where friendship is important."

That friendship also counts off the pitch, Inzaghi said, especially given the pressure-cooker atmosphere in which Italian footballers now live.

"It's also a form of self-defense, we use it to protect each other from the outside world, from the curiosity of the public and from the pressure of the media," he said.

Holyfield-Lewis II Nov 13



LAS VEGAS, Sept 1 (AP): Lennox Lewis still believes something was wrong at ringside in his first fight with Evander Holyfield.

So does Holyfield, although in his case it had nothing to do with funny judging.

Though Holyfield still maintains he did not lose, he admitted Tuesday that he fought poorly. And he accepted party

tions for the rematch, ended with both fighters signing contracts over the weekend that will pay them some 15 million dollars each to meet again at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas campus arena.

Organizations who give out the titles will not be picking the judges as they did in New York. That will be done by the Nevada State Athletic Commission, which made it clear Tuesday that it will be in charge of the officiating.

"All we want in the state of Nevada is the man who wins the fight in the ring to get the decision," said Marc Ratner, the commission's executive director.

Lewis and Holyfield appeared together as a curtain was raised amid music and spotlights in a night club Tuesday at the Las Vegas Hilton.

Lewis refused later to pose for pictures with promoter Don King, who he believes might have influenced the judges into giving Holyfield a draw.

"You're biased against me," Lewis told King. Lewis said later that he didn't "want to stand there so he can put his arm around me and pretend he's with me."

Holyfield, who will be 37 the week after the fight, said after the press conference that he has watched tapes of the first fight over and over to figure out what went wrong.

His stomach was upset and he had cramps in the ring, then, Holyfield said. Lewis fought less aggressively than he expected and he couldn't catch him in the ring.

"It was a rough night," Holyfield said. "But it wasn't that I was old in that fight. I was a little under the weather. People ask if Evander can still perform. Nobody will have to guess after November 13. They'll get the opportunity to see the ring."

Lewis said there was little else. Holyfield could bring into the second fight except maybe some renewed determination.

All Evander Holyfield is going to be a little older for this fight, Lewis said.

The rematch, expected to sell out the 18,000-seat Thomas and Mack arena, is being sponsored by Caesar's Palace and the Mandalay Bay hotel-casinos, which put up 10 million dollars for the rights.

EVANDER HOLYFIELD

"I was cramping going into the ring and that was my biggest problem," Holyfield said. "I just didn't feel well, and I thought several times of just quitting."

Holyfield didn't quit, of course, and ended up being rewarded with a controversial 12-round draw that both prevented the heavyweight title from being unified and sparked investigations into how the ringside judges scored the fight.

On Tuesday, both fighters got together once again to vow that on November 13 they will finally get it right.

The judging definitely was suspect, I believe there was some influence there," Lewis said, raising his fists. "But I'm bringing my own two judges to this fight."

Months of fragile negotia-

LENNOX LEWIS

in the purses this time, after making 20 million dollars to 10 million dollars for Lewis when they first fought March 13 at New York's Madison Square Garden.

"It's like getting demoted because you didn't do as well as you should," Holyfield said. "If it means taking less, I'll take less. If I fought a great fight (the first time), I wouldn't be demoted."

Holyfield's IBF and WBA titles will be on the line once more, as will the WBC title owned by Lewis when the two fight once again to unify the heavyweight championship for the first time since Riddick Bowe threw the WBC belt into a garbage can after beating Holyfield on November 13, 1992.

This time, though, the or-

Zoff leaves Del Piero out



in the 2-0 defeat of Switzerland. Zoff appears to have decided he is not yet fit enough to return to the international frame.

Vanoli's place in the squad is just reward for his contribution to Parma's successful 1998-99 season.

The left-sided midfielder scored the decisive goal in Parma's Italian Cup final victory over Fiorentina in May and followed it up a week later with one of Parma's three goals in their UEFA Cup final victory.

The other new face in Zoff's squad is Bologna's Jonathan Binotto who can play in either defence or midfield.

Binotto started his career at Juventus but never won a place in the side and spent most of his career in Serie B before joining Bologna in 1998. He was a regular in the side which reached the semifinals of the UEFA Cup last season.

Left back Paolo Maldini is ruled out with a fractured toe and his captain's armband passes to AC Milan teammate and central midfielder Demetrio Albertini.

Lazio's Giuseppe Favalli is named as a replacement for Maldini on the left side of defence while Inter Milan's Christian Panucci keeps his place at right back.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Gianluigi Buffon (Parma), Francesco Toldo (Fiorentina).

Defenders: Fabio Cannavaro (Parma), Paolo Negro, Alessandro Nesta and Giuseppe Parco (all Lazio), Christian Panucci (Inter Milan), Jonathan Binotto (Bologna).

Middlefielders: Demetrio Albertini and Massimo Ambrosini (both AC Milan), Dino Baggio, Diego Fuser and Paolo Vanoli (all Parma), Antonio Conte (Juventus), Eusebio Di Francesco (AS Roma), Giuliano Giannichedda (Udinese).

Forwards: Enrico Chiesa (Fiorentina), Filippo Inzaghi (Juventus), Francesco Totti (AS Roma), Christian Vieri (Inter Milan).

CARTOON NETWORK

5:30 World Famous Toons

6:30 The Real Adventure of Jhony: 7:00 Tom & Jerry Kids: 7:30 The Popeye Show: 8:00 Scooby & Scrappy D: 8:30 Perils of Penelope: 9:00 Josie & Clu: 9:30 Silly Sillies

10:00 Baap Si Bada Rupai: 11:30 Silen Reech

12:00 Series Crime Busters

8:30 Cine Sangeet: 6:45 Chalo Cinema: 7:1