

Non-white to step into Bacher's shoes

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa, Jan 24: South African cricket will get a black managing director in the wake of the shake-up that resulted in United Cricket Board (UCB) president Raymond White resigning Saturday, reports AFP.

Alli Bacher, the current managing director, said in Bloemfontein Sunday he will step aside by October 1. But he will remain in charge of the sport's administration as executive director, a position which will be created for him.

In that capacity, Bacher aims to help the new managing director settle in over a two-year period. Bacher will also be in charge of planning for the 2003 World Cup in South Africa.

Bacher said his successor as MD would definitely be black.

"We have to be realistic on that issue, but the key factor will be the ability of the person, whether he is headhunted or appointed from inside cricket," he said.

"He does not necessarily have to have a cricket background, but it is important that it must not be a political appointment."

South African cricket appeared to be in turmoil following the resignation of White, who was accused by UCB council member Gerald Majola of retarding transformation.

Majola, a national selector, also called for the appointment of a black chief executive.

"It is vitally important that during the World Cup and the period leading to it that blacks start playing a vital role in the running of the game," Majola said in a letter that led to White's resignation at a UCB council meeting in Johannesburg Saturday.

Explaining the latest developments, Bacher, a former Test captain, said he was not being pushed out of administrative control of the sport.

Bacher spoke to journalists during a one-day international between South Africa and England in Bloemfontein Sunday. He said he would only switch full-time to planning the World Cup in April 2002.

Bacher announced, however, that he would resign as chairman of the International Cricket Council's development committee.

The weekend's developments have rocked a sport long hailed as one of the success stories of the new South Africa since democratic elections in 1994. Majola's letter to White followed several incidents in which white cricket officials were accused of dragging their heels on the transformation issue.

White's resignation will be effective February 11, after he has attended a meeting of the International Cricket Council in Singapore February 9 to discuss commercial arrangements for the World Cup.

He will be succeeded by vice-president Percy Sonn, who will be acting president until the annual meeting in July.

Sonn, like Majola, is a former member of the "non-racial" SA Cricket Board which merged with the formerly all-white SA Cricket Union in 1991.

Although the majority of top level players in South African cricket are white, there has been increasing pressure to bring more black South Africans into positions of influence in the sport.

Rushty Magiet became the first black convener of selectors at the start of the season.

Concern that uncertainty over the administration of the sport might spill over into the performances of the national team led by Hansie Cronje was fuelled Sunday when England thrashed South Africa by nine wickets with 10.3 overs to spare, one of their heaviest defeats for several years.

Unique chance for Iraqi women

BAGHDAD, Jan 24: Iraq's women footballers are gearing up for their first ever international matches when they take on seven other Arab teams in five-a-side matches at the end of this month, reports AFP.

Dressed in black trousers and wearing white headscarves, the Iraqi women have been chosen to represent the sanctions-hit state in the Amman tournament which runs from January 29-February 4.

The tournament will be the team's first international matches since the Iraqi women's football federation was created in 1990. Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and the Palestinians will also take part.

"The team has had no warm-up matches. It will pit itself against experienced teams. It will not be easy," coach Mohammed Abd es-Sabah said.

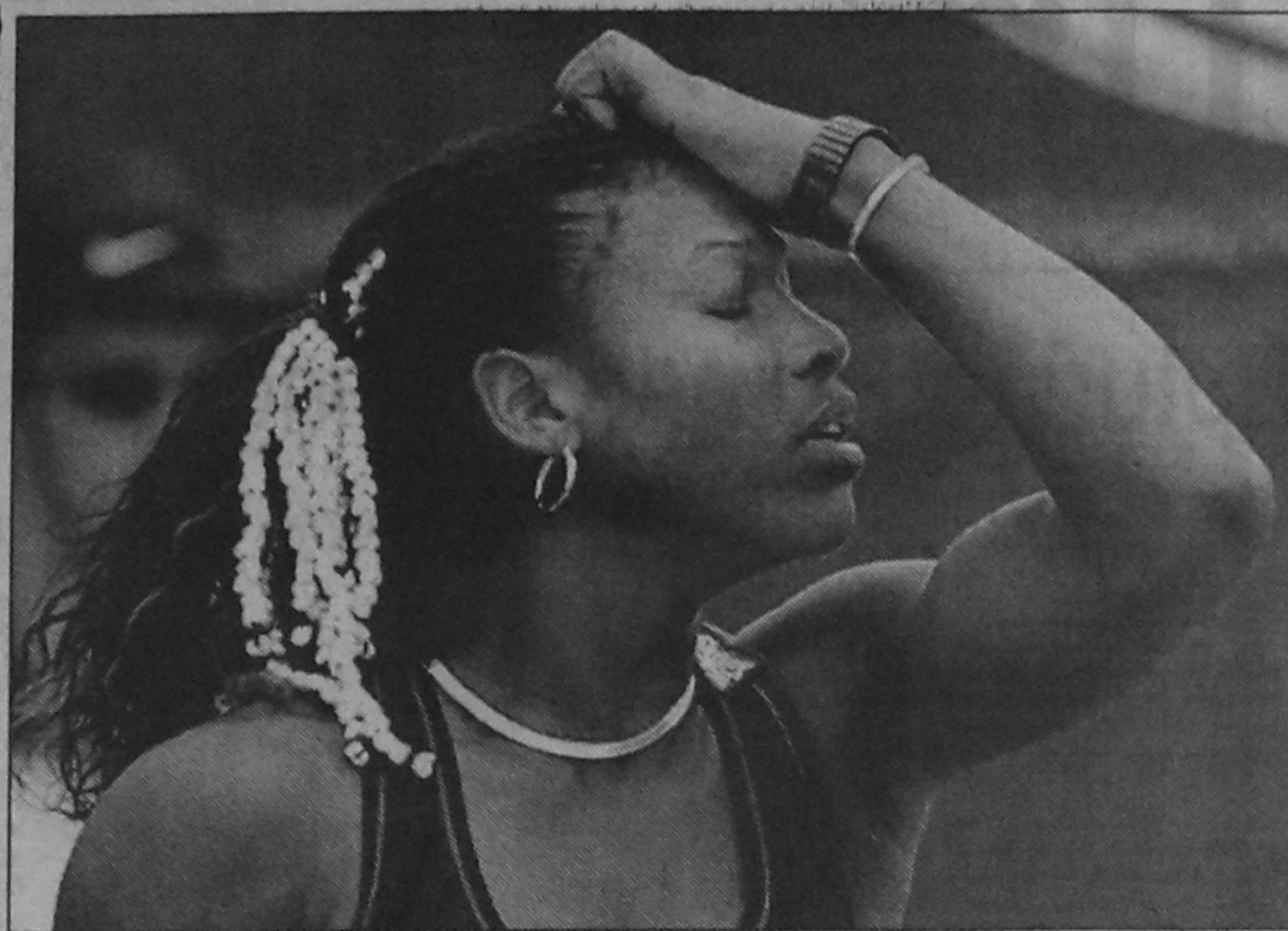
"As an Iraqi woman, I must tell the world that Iraqi women will not be prisoners of the embargo. The embargo has created a sort of defiance inside me," said team captain Khulud Abdel Karim, who is a student.

Iraq has been under UN sanctions since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"Since the team was formed, women's football has begun to win support among the population," said Fatima al-Hashemi, head of the Iraqi women's union.

Most Iraqi provinces have women's football clubs, but there is as yet no national championship. Iraq also fields women's teams in disciplines such as volleyball, basketball, handball, athletics, fencing and some martial arts.

Women in the neighbouring conservative Gulf region have only recently begun to play football competitively, but tournaments are generally held behind closed doors and men are banned from the crowd.



American Serena Williams is visibly disappointed after losing a crucial game on way to make a fourth round exit from the Australian Open against Russian Elena Likhovtseva yesterday.

Serena sent packing

MELBOURNE, Jan 24: US Open champion Serena Williams denied she was unprepared but could not explain why she played so badly to crash out of the Australian Open on Monday, reports AFP.

In contrast, defending champion Martina Hingis, whom she was due to meet in the semifinals, danced on for a quarterfinal clash with 13th seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario.

Williams' flashy red shoes looked like lead as she dragged herself across court to miss passing shots or net her returns in succumbing to unfashionable Russian sixteenth seed Elena Likhovtseva 6-3, 6-3 in the fourth round.

Likhovtseva had never made it past the fourth round in her 24 previous Grand Slam appearances.

"I couldn't stop hitting errors. I don't know why I made so many errors. I just didn't do anything right," said Williams but denied being short of match practice.

She had opted against a warm-up tournament and only decided to come to Melbourne at the last minute without her father and coach Richard and elder sister Venus, who pulled out citing tendinitis in her left wrist.

"I wasn't unprepared. I was here long enough and I've answered this question a million times before. I just couldn't make the shots," she said.

Hingis, chasing a fourth successive title, swept aside Sandrine Testud 6-1, 7-6, recovering from 0-3 down in the second set when the French 12th seed started to match her ground strokes.

"I probably had some lucky

shots and everything went in and I was so aggressive, so excited to be out there, you know, almost too pumped up, over-hyped," said the Swiss world No. 1, who tipped Lindsay Davenport as her likely final opponent.

But Sanchez-Vicario and fellow Spaniard veteran Conchita Martinez also battled into the last eight and are out to upset her prediction.

Sanchez-Vicario, a triple French Open champion, reached her 34th Grand Slam quarterfinal by beating sixth seed Barbara Schett of Austria 1-6, 6-0, 7-5.

Tenth seed and former Wimbledon champion Martinez dispatched American Kristina Brandt 6-1, 6-1 to set up a match with Likhovtseva.

Quarterfinals on Tuesday
Jennifer Capriati v Ai Sugiyama
Julie Halard-Decugis v Lindsay Davenport

AUSTRALIAN OPEN NOTEBOOK

MELBOURNE, Jan 24 (AFP): Darren Cahill, coach of Lleyton Hewitt, can finally have a shave and his fiancée is thrilled to bits.

Cahill promised his young charge that he wouldn't remove his whiskers while Hewitt was still in men's singles contention.

But that was creating personal problems with his wife-to-be who was becoming anxious about their upcoming wedding and the accompanying photographs.

"It got to the stage where even my future wife was cheering against Lleyton," Cahill quipped of the Aussie youngster, who bowed out Monday in straight sets to Swede Magnus Norman, ending a 13-match unbeaten run.

HOT CAKES
Nike has brought out a Lleyton Hewitt cap and they're selling like hot cakes.

More than 600 have been snapped up so far this tournament.

"That's good, I think," said the 18-year-old Aussie, recognisable for wearing his white cap back-to-front.

"I spoke about it late last year, making these hats. I was disappointed I couldn't get a Tommy Haas one and I spoke to one of the guys from Nike and they thought it was a pretty good idea for the summer circuit."

They have been pretty lucky up until today.

CASH HAS A PLAN
Former Wimbledon champion Pat Cash is putting his money where his mouth is.

The Australian tennis coach has never been short of an opinion and this time he says he's got the game plan to produce future champions.

After reversing Mark Philippoussis' slide down the world rankings, Cash will share the secret of success at the Cash Hopper International Tennis Training Academy on the Queensland Gold Coast.

He and Gavin Hopper, who trains Philippoussis, plan an academy similar to that of Nick Bollettieri in Florida, which has produced a steady stream of champion players, including world No 1 Andre Agassi and former women's No 1 Monica Seles.

NO PAIN, NO GAIN
Serena Williams had a bad

day at the office Monday, losing in the fourth round to Russian Elena Likhovtseva.

Asked what she would do to cheer herself up, the budding fashion designer said punishment was what was needed.

"I'm going to punish myself by finishing this work that I have to do, some homework I have to do—38 drawings," she said.

AYNAOUI APOLOGIZES

Lanky Moroccan Younes El Aynaoui said sorry Monday to "nice" Portuguese chair umpire Jorge Dias, who gave him two warnings, on his way to a 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 10-8 victory over Frenchman Arnaud Clement.

"The umpire was nice to me," El Aynaoui said, "I deserved a second warning."

"For the first warning I wasn't sure I really deserved it because it was a return of serve and I smacked the ball on the side and it went into the crowd and I got a warning for this."

"Then I spin my racket and it almost went into the crowd. As soon as I did it I apologised to the umpire. I didn't want to hit anybody in the crowd and I regretted doing that."

Mark in Davis Cup team

MELBOURNE, Jan 24: Australia's Davis Cup preparations were boosted Monday with Mark Philippoussis making himself available, reports AFP.

But the Swiss camp remained in turmoil as captain Jakob Hasek defended his decision to drop veteran Marc Rosset.

The Scud was named by team captain John Newcombe in his four-man squad alongside Lleyton Hewitt, Sandrine Stolle and Wayne Arthurs, ending speculation that he didn't want to play.

"Mark has always said that he's very keen to play Davis Cup this year. There was speculation in the media whether he would play in the first match or not—he's playing," Newcombe confirmed.

Two-time US Open champion Pat Rafter remains injured while Todd Woodbridge has tennis commitments in Hawaii at the same time. Mark Woodforde has retired.

Hasek, meanwhile, was busy explaining why he threw Rosset off the team ahead of their match with defending champions Australia on indoor carpet at Zurich from February 4-8.

"The behaviour of Marc Rosset towards the federation, and to me, has been completely unacceptable," he told The Australian newspaper.

"He is a very difficult person to get along with. Either you are on his side or you're not. I've decided not to take him because of the harmony I need to have in the team, and also his ranking has dropped."

"He isn't the player he was and he isn't the No. 1 ranked player in Switzerland anymore, but this is mostly a decision taken for human reasons. He would not be good for the team."

Rosset, ranked 28 in the world, has been controversial throughout his 10-year Davis

Cup career and led a revolt against the appointment of Hasek for a five-year term.

"It's been tough but I'm going to be here for a long time," said Hasek, who played Davis Cup for 13 years, most of them with Rosset.

"We always had conflict as team-mates," he said.

"It had to be his way. He has opened his mouth all the time but I know he also had some good results in the Davis Cup, so I expect I will be criticised in Switzerland for this decision."

But Hasek said he refused to put up with distraction as Switzerland prepare for one of their biggest Davis Cup challenges.

"I cannot let the fact that he played well in the past become a distraction," he said. "Now I have to forget him and set my mind on what's best for the four

players of the team. Some of the other guys were with him for a while but they have come to their senses."

Here was a person who was attacking me and then two days before the Australian Open he says he might want to play again. We discussed it, but nothing had really changed."

Instead, Switzerland will go into the tie with world number 139 Michel Kratochvil joining Roger Federer, Georges Basti and Lorenzo Mantia.

Rosset said he would never play for Switzerland under Hasek.

"You will not see me in the Davis Cup as long as Hasek is captain," he said.

Hasek has also been appointed head of the women's Fed Cup team, which features Martina Hingis and Patty Schnyder.



Grindlays Bank's senior marketing manager N Shaktat Choudhury (2nd from L) handing over the cheque for sponsoring the Bogra First Division Cricket League to Deputy Commissioner of Bogra and district sports association president Shamsul Hoq (R) during a press conference at Bogra recently. The league is scheduled to begin in the first week of February.

AUSSIE OPEN AT A GLANCE

MELBOURNE, Jan 24: Highlights of the day session Monday on the eighth day of the US \$1.8 million (12.4 million Australian dollars) Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park.

Weather: Mild and sunny with a temperature of 70 f (21 Celsius).

Attendance: 24,635
Results: Men's singles, No 4 Nicolas Kiefer, No 12 Magnus Norman both advanced.

Results: Women's singles, No 10 Conchita Martinez, No 13, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario and No 16 Elena Likhovtseva, all advanced. No 3, Serena Williams lost.

Slat of the Day: No 3 seed Serena Williams hit 17 backhand errors in her 6-3, 6-3 loss to No 16 seed Elena Likhovtseva of Russia.

Quote of the day: "I talked to Andre yesterday. Agassi, and he told me. Maybe we will see you next Sunday. And I said, 'Yeah, I wish too.' Nicolas Kiefer talking up his chances of reaching the final after demolishing Wayne Ferreira 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 in the fourth round."

Poland friendly Spain call up goal-glutton Salva

MADRID, Jan 24: Racing Santander's new goal scoring sensation Salvador Ballesta, with 21 goals in 21 matches this season, was called up by national team coach Jose Antonio Camacho for a friendly match with Poland on January 26 in the south-eastern town of Cartagena, reports AFP.

The player known as "Salva" is one of five new caps alongside Rayo Vallecano's forward Luis Cembranos. Real Zaragoza goalkeeper Juan Miguel Garcia (known as "JuanMi"), Deportivo La Coruna midfielder Enrique Fernandez Romero and Celta Vigo defender Juan Velasco.

It is a continuation of Camacho's avowed policy of picking the best players even if they play for relatively unfashionable clubs.

Real Madrid pair Raul and Fernando Hierro were also called up even though the Meringues face a match the same day with Real Betis. That is likely to cause tension between club and country.

The friendly with Poland forms part of Spain's build-up to Euro 2000.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Jose Francisco Molina (Atletico Madrid), Juan Miguel Garcia (Real Zaragoza)

Defenders: Abelardo Fernandez (Barcelona), Fernando Hierro (Real Madrid), Juan Velasco (Celta Vigo), Vicente Engonga (Real Mallorca), Agustin Aranzabal (Real Sociedad), Francisco Jemez Martin "Paco" (Real Zaragoza)

Midfielders: Josep Guardiola and Luis Enrique (both Barcelona), Enrique Fernandez Romero (Deportivo La Coruna), Juan Carlos Valero (Atletico Madrid), Gaizka Mendietia (Valencia)

Strikers: Joseba Etxeberria and Ismael Urzaiz (both Athletic Bilbao), Raul Gonzalez (Real Madrid), Pedro Munitis and Salvador Ballesta "Salva" (both Racing Santander), Luis Cembranos (Rayo Vallecano)

Lobanovsky gives conditions

KIEV, Jan 24: Dynamo Kyiv chief coach Valery Lobanovsky said Sunday that he would not accept an offer to take on the job of Ukrainian football coach unless he received assurances from the country's top football organisation about future reforms in the national game, reports AFP.

Ukrainian football boss Valery Pustovoienko has offered the Dynamo Kyiv coach the post which was left vacant following last month's resignation of under-fire Josef Szabo.

Pustovoienko, head of the Ukraine's Football Federation FFU, said: "I think that Ukraine's top coach should lead the national team. This is a logical choice and a vital necessity."

However, Lobanovsky said he would not give a final decision until his programme to develop Ukrainian football had been discussed and accepted by the country's football ruling body.

Hingis' missed chance!



MELBOURNE, Jan 24: World number one Martina Hingis said today that she was disappointed her rival Serena Williams failed to make it past the fourth round of the Australian Open because she wanted to knock her out herself, reports Reuters.

Speaking after she bundled French hope Sandrine Testud

out of the Australian Open 6-1, 7-6, the confident Swiss teenager said she had been looking forward to renewing her rivalry with Williams, who beat her in last year's US Open final.

They were due to meet in the semifinals at Melbourne Park but their reunion was put on hold after Williams crashed out to Russia's Elena Likhovtseva.

"I thought I would have a

good chance to beat her right here right now, especially because it has been my tournament for the last three years," Hingis said.

"She's one of the top players out there, you always want to compete against."

Hingis was in determined mood against the French 12th seed Testud on Monday, winning her match in 72 minutes to keep alive her hopes of winning the women's singles and doubles titles at Melbourne for the fourth time.

She broke Testud's serve twice in the opening set and calmly fought back from a 3-0 deficit in the second to force a tiebreak, which she won 7-3.

"It's been long days for me at the office," she said. "But you have to be ready every single time you go out there."

Her quarterfinal opponent will be Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain, who beat Austrian Barbara Schett earlier on Monday.

If she wins, she will play either Likhovtseva or Spaniard Conchita Martinez.

With Williams out of the way, Hingis unsurprisingly nominated second seed Lindsay Davenport as the hardest to beat and said she hoped to play her in the final.

Although they have been ranked number one and two for most of the past three years, Hingis and Davenport have only played each other once in a Grand Slam final. That was at the 1998 US open where Davenport won 6-3, 7-5.

The only other time Davenport has made a Grand Slam final was last year when she beat Steffi Graf at Wimbledon after Hingis was bundled out in the first round.

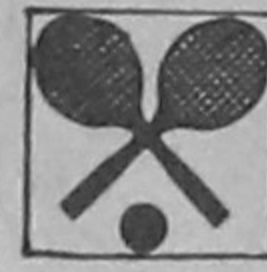
"Nobody really gives her credit for what she has done," Hingis said.

"I've lost to her three times already so I would love to play her in the final."



Top seeded Martina Hingis is elated after beating Sandrine Testud in the fourth round of the Aussie Open in Melbourne yesterday.

Moroccan march goes on



MELBOURNE, Jan 24: Younes El Aynaoui was savouring the high point of his tennis career Monday when he fought

his way into the quarterfinals of the Australian Open, reports AFP.

El Aynaoui followed compatriot Hicham Arazi into the last eight capping a Moroccan assault at the Open when he doused Frenchman Arnaud Clement in a three and a half hour five-set war of attrition.

The lanky Moroccan beat

Clement 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 10-8 to set up a quarterfinal with defending champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov on Wednesday.

Arazi plays top seed Andre Agassi in the quarterfinals Tuesday.

Lleyton Hewitt, whose headline-grabbing unbeaten 13-match run was snuffed out by Magnus Norman, is on a learning curve. Australian Davis Cup captain John Newcombe said Monday.

Norman, the Swedish 12th seed, played at the top of his game to put out the red-hot Australian 18-year-old, 6-3, 6-

1, 7-6 and will now play German fourth seed Nicolas Kiefer in Wednesday's quarterfinals.

Hewitt was the last Australian to reach a Grand Slam final, but he has raised a nation's hopes after winning back-to-back lead-up tournaments in Adelaide and Sydney and getting through three rounds here.

The bottom half of the men's draw finally lined up an opponent of note for Kafelnikov in Norman or Germany's Nicolas Kiefer, who meet in the quarterfinals.

The seeded four, looked untroubled in beating South African hope Wayne Ferreira 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 and is in a Grand Slam last eight for the third time.

Kafelnikov cruised past Belgium qualifier Christophe Rochus 6-1, 6-3, 7-5.

The Russian No. 2 seed said he was lacking confidence coming into the tournament but was pleased with his progress.

And if Kafelnikov makes it to the final again, he'll need all the energy he can get with a likely encounter against US and French Open champion Andre Agassi or Wimbledon champion Pete Sampras, who are scheduled to meet in the semifinals.

Quarterfinals on Tuesday

Andre Agassi v Hicham Arazi
Pete Sampras v Chris Woodruff

Atletico protest before league game

MADRID, Jan 24: Several hundred supporters protested outside Atletico Madrid's Vicente-Calderon stadium on Sunday evening, unhappy at the club's recent plight, reports AFP.

Atletico, due to play Real Sociedad in Sunday's Spanish league late match, were placed under administration by the authorities on December 22, and the whole board were sacked.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Sci-fi film monster	1 Witch's potion
5 Fiddler's need	2 Succulent
8 Lairs	3 Never again?
12 Mysterious character	4 Smith's Brothers' growths
13 Wish undone	5 Monokin's lack
14 Skip	6 No move
15 Heighten	7 Garden intruder
17 Al	8 Flip side of Ritchie Valens'
Hirschfeld's daughter	9 Make opera
18 Tourist's query	10 Baseball team
19 Jeopardy	11 Celebrity
21 Hyphen's big brother	
24 Discard	
25 Tarzan's cronies	
28 Hawk-eye's home	
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34 Taft's inauguration year	
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