

### Luxemburgo at full strength

SAO PAULO, Apr 24: Brazil coach Wanderley Luxemburgo on Sunday enjoyed a full house of players for their 2002 World Cup qualifier against Ecuador in Sao Paulo although many clubs had protested at releasing players, reports AFP.

Flamengo, for example, who play Vasco Da Gama Basou on Sunday in a match which could decide the Rio de Janeiro championship, had threatened not to release defender Athirson, creating friction between the club and Brazilian football federation (CBF).

Athirson arrived however at the team hotel and said how delighted he was to be in the Brazilian squad for Wednesday's match. "I really wanted to play for Flamengo this Sunday but I was lucky because the club understood my situation and authorized my release."

The only tense moment came when Ronaldinho Gauchao of the Union club arrived an hour after the 1100 (1400 GMT) deadline for the players to meet at the team hotel.

An agitated Ronaldinho said his plane had made an unscheduled stop and was therefore delayed. "Right now I am looking forward to playing for the Brazilian team but I will be thinking of my club on Sunday," Ronaldinho said.

Luxemburgo arrived shortly before the 1100 (1400GMT) deadline and made no comments to the press before going to his hotel room. On Sunday afternoon, Luxemburgo has a training session scheduled at Pacaembu.

Meanwhile, Ecuador coach Hernan Dario Gomez said he had had a dream of beating Brazil 1-0. Quito newspaper Hoy said.

Colombian Gomez, who was due to travel to Sao Paulo on Sunday, added his squad was in good spirits.

"We all know Brazil is a wonderful side but we are going there with great belief in ourselves. The other day I dreamed that we won 1-0 through a goal by Ulises (de la Cruz)," Gomez said.

### Rangers riding high

GLASGOW, Apr 24: Rangers celebrated winning the title in style on Sunday by beating St Johnstone 2-0 at McDiarmid Park, reports AFP.

Scotland striker Billy Dodds, in action against Holland for his country this Wednesday, led the way with goals after 43 and 60 minutes to seal the victory.

Rangers have been unbeaten on their travels in the league this season, their only defeat at home to Dundee, and as soon as the deadlock was broken as Saints' challenge faded.

Celtic's 1-1 draw with Hibernian at Parkhead on Saturday confirmed Rangers as Champions without kicking a ball -- leading to an inevitable sense of anti-climax.

Yet there was no disguising the joy at the end as Rangers skipper Lorenzo Amoroso led the players onto the field for a champagne-fuelled lap of honour for the 7,000-plus visiting supporters.

It is a second successive title success for Rangers manager Dick Advocaat, who has transformed the Ibrox club since his arrival from PSV Eindhoven lifting them an emphatic 20 points clear of Celtic.

Advocaat could not single out any particular player for credit, hailing the team effort throughout the season.

The Dutchman said: "Everybody is a very good player. I do not like to talk about stars."

He added: "It's always great when you get the championship. We worked very hard to get it but it was well deserved as well."

"It was a long season. We had a very good period but if you only lose one game in a season you have to say you did an excellent job."

"St Johnstone looked very sharp but in the second half we played some excellent football and it was just a case of how many goals we would score."

"If you do not have the right commitment then you can get some problems. St Johnstone were quite physical -- but I did not think we gave them a chance."

### Garbin grabs Budapest Open

BUDAPEST, April 24: Unseeded Tatjana Garbin of Italy defeated Kristie Boogert of the Netherlands to secure her first career title in the 100,000 dollars Budapest Ladies Open clay court tournament Sunday, reports AP.

Garbin downed the 7th-seeded Boogert 6-2, 7-6 (7-4) in just 79 minutes.

The 77th WTA-ranked Italian started confidently and with strong baseline shots broke service as early as the second game.

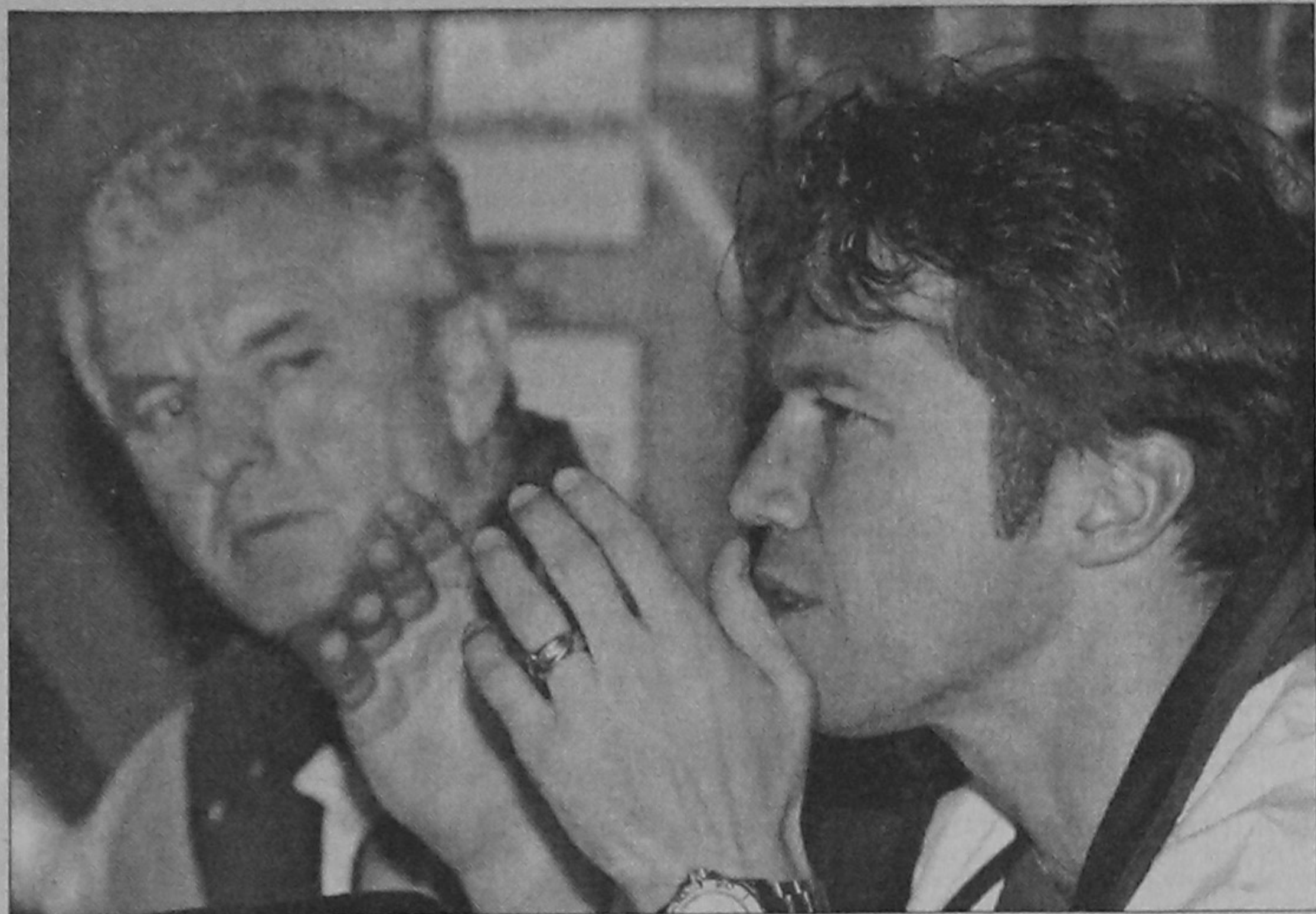
Boogert, 66th in the world, recovered briefly, then lost service again allowing Garbin to take the set in just 29 minutes.

The second set was more evenly contested. Both players faltered, exchanged service breaks, then recovered to force the tiebreak.

The 22-year-old Garbin then went on to win the tiebreak for her first ever WTA tournament title.

"There are no words to express how happy I am," she said after the match.

Garbin received \$15,000 and 90 WTA points for the championship.



German soccer legend Lothar Matthaeus (R) talking to the newsmen during a conference in Saarland, Germany yesterday while national coach Erich Ribbeck looks on. Germany play Switzerland in a friendly match in Kaiserslautern today. —AFP photo

## Pierce blows Arantxa away



HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina, April 24: Top seed Mary Pierce blitzed fourth-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario 6-1, 6-0 to win the 166,000 dollars first prize in the women's tennis tournament at Hilton Head Island yesterday, reports Reuters.

Pierce matched one of the tournament's older records, the one game Chris Evert gave up to Billie Jean King in the 1977 final. The Frenchwoman lost just 12 games in five matches here, shattering Evert's record of 15 games in 1985.

Pierce needed 56 minutes in the final, 12 minutes more than she required to defeat Monica Seles in the semifinals.

Seles said she had never seen Pierce serve better than she served in the semifinals. Sanchez-Vicario said she had never seen Pierce play so well for an entire week.

The 25-year-old Pierce put on a groundstroke and serving clinic at Sea Pines Racquet Club. She nailed 27 winners to just five for Sanchez-Vicario. Pierce had 15 unforced errors, enough to give the Spaniard a couple of openings that Pierce quickly closed.

Sanchez-Vicario had one real chance to make a match of it, in the fourth game. The gritty Spaniard had closed to 2-1 on an amazing show of energy when she ran down what looked like a sure winner off a Pierce forehand.

But she did not black sheep -- they are truly injured and should not be confused with the players I was talking about," he said.

Participation for top 50 players is mandatory in Masters Series events -- but Raftier, who is not black sheep -- they are truly injured and should not be confused with the players I was talking about," he said.

Leading players including Americans Sampras, Andre Agassi and Todd Martin, Australians Raftier and Lleyton Hewitt and German star Nicolas Pietrangeli all bypassed the third of nine Masters Series events to be played this year.

The Dutchman said: "Everybody is a very good player. I do not like to talk about stars."

He added: "It's always great when you get the championship. We worked very hard to get it but it was well deserved as well."

"It was a long season. We had a very good period but if you only lose one game in a season you have to say you did an excellent job."

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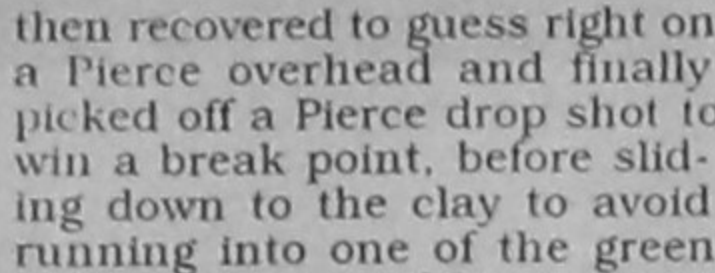
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then recovered to guess right on a Pierce overhead and finally picked off a Pierce drop shot to win a break point, before sliding down to the clay to avoid running into one of the green sofas on the side of the court.

Pierce clapped to compliment her opponent for the display of hustle, then went about her job.

Sanchez-Vicario kept the heat on her serve in the fourth game, but then lost the ad on an error. Another deuce later, Pierce drilled back-to-back forehand winners to take a 3-1 lead, and never looked back.

"That was a very, very big game at 2-1 for me to go up 3-1,"

Pierce said. "It was very good that I won that game because it's 2-2, things change. It's a big difference between 3-1 and 2-2 in the first set."

Pierce breezed in the second set, winning 12 straight points in one stretch to move to 30-love in the sixth game.

"I've just become more and more relaxed on the court and just really at peace with everything," said Pierce, who is engaged to be married to Cleveland Indians baseball star Roberto Alomar.

Sanchez-Vicario tried to move her opponent from side to side, but eventually would angle a backhand too sharply for an error or would wind up watching a Pierce forehand smack a line for a winner.

"I tried to move her around, but she played very, very well," Sanchez-Vicario said. "She's a very powerful player. She hits the ball really hard and she especially served really well today. Normally her second serve you can attack a little bit more, but today she was just making aces and making the point really well."

Other than her big forehands and well-placed backhands, Pierce used her powerful serve as a key weapon all week. No one found an answer.

"The first set was probably much closer than it shows," Sanchez-Vicario said. "But I think that once Mary was ahead, she just went on a roll and she didn't miss much. She was playing really very deep and very consistent."

"I think by the year 2002 or 2003 we will have a more balanced calendar -- and that will be in interests of the players, but also the spectators and the media," Dominguez said.

He added that he understood it would be difficult to axe some of the smaller events from the schedule, but said it needs to be done.

"It is difficult to change, but I think if we were starting today on blank paper to build a calendar we would not do the same," he said.

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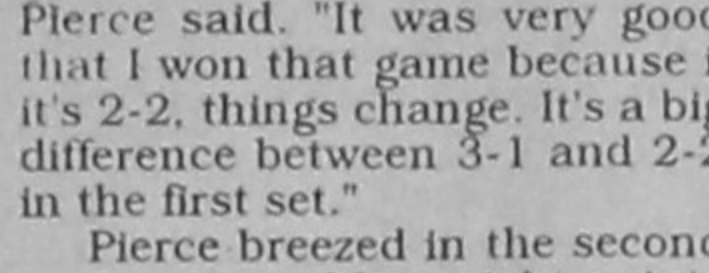
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### Schools h'ball Narinda High top Group B

Narinda Government High finished top in Group B of the 11th Bata schools boys handball tournament beating Kamalapur Sher-e-Bangla Railway High 10-3 at the Outer Stadium Handball ground yesterday, reports UNB.

They will meet BAF Shaheen School & College in a group deciding play-off match today at 4 pm at the same venue as both the teams have secured same points on completion of the group encounters.

Narinda dominated the first half by 3-2 goals. Sajib scored four, Ariful three and Saiful two for the winners while Rimom netted two and Majid one for the losers.

In the day's other match, Bhasantak High outplayed Saint Jude's International 10-0 at the same venue. Shafrin contributed five goals and Russel two for the winners.

Earlier on Sunday, BAF Shaheen School & College and Shahid Nabi High won their respective matches.

Shaheen School beat Rahmatullah Model High 26-4 after dominating the first half by 10-4 in the day's first match.

Khalid scored 12 for the winners while Rafique netted all the four goals for the losers.

In the day's other match, Shahid Nabi High beat Bangladesh Ansar & VDP High 11-6 after leading the first session by 6-1.

Simon contributed five goals for the winners while Razzak netted two for the losers.

### BKSP will have sports science department

Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Pratisthan (BKSP) will open a full-fledged Sport Science Department within two years, a press release said here yesterday, reports BSS.

A three-member Indian sports science expert team, who arrived here on April 17 to train the local experts as well as to prepare the curricula of the department in BKSP, informed about this when they called on State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader at the latter's Secretariat office.

The team, comprising of Dr Laila Das, Dr S K Dey and Dr Sajib Sahnee, will also develop the infrastructure plan for the department.

Quader assured them of all-out cooperation from the government to open a modern and well-equipped sports science department in BKSP.

### Memorial match for Marshall July 27

An exclusive cricket match will be played in memory of Malcolm Marshall, the legendary West Indian fast bowler who died on November 4 last year from colon cancer, involving past and present world-class players at the HAC Ground at City Road in London on July 27, says a press release of Professional Cricketers' Association.

Players who have confirmed their participation are Graham Gooch, Mike Gatting, Robin Smith, Shane Warne, Mark Nicholas, Graeme Hick, Graham Thorpe, Mark Butcher, Wayne Lamm, Desmond Haynes and Viv Richards.

The day to remember will consist of a coaching clinic for young and enthusiastic cricketers in the morning. After lunch there will be a 40-overs-a-side match which will be divided into four quarters. At the close of play there will be a concert by the Mark Butcher Band for the VIP guests and sponsors.

All funds raised from the match will go towards the Mall Marshall Trust.

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### C'paul needs more tests

PORT-OF-SPAIN, Trinidad. Apr 24: West Indies batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul, who has been suffering from fatigue, is to see specialists to decide if he is fit for the forthcoming Test series against Pakistan, reports Reuters.

Michael Findlay, chairman of West Indies selectors, told the Caribbean News Agency (CANA): "After his three-week rest from the syndrome of fatigue, he is due to visit the medical team in Jamaica again (this week)."

"But at the moment we cannot say whether he will be fit to play in the upcoming Test series. We will have to wait and see, depending on the results of the tests that are done in Jamaica," he added.

West Indies' squad for the first of three Tests against Pakistan, to be played in Georgetown from May 5-9, is being chosen next Saturday.

### Rajshahi soccer

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, Apr 24: Diganta Proshary Sangha defeated Kadriganj Sporting Club 2-0 in the Rajshahi First Division football super league played at the Rajshahi District Stadium today.

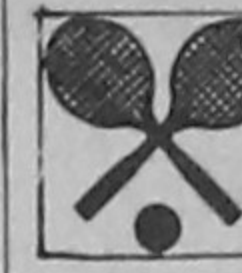
Raj netted the first goal for the winners at the 31st minute in the first half. The second goal was also scored by Raj at the 59th minute in the second half.

Mohammedan Sporting Club will take on Alide Club tomorrow at the same venue.



Frenchman Cedric Pioline (R), winner of the Monte Carlo Open, and beaten finalist Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia pose with their trophies after the prize-giving ceremony in Monaco on April 23. —AFP photo

## Pioline overcomes Hrbaty



MONTE CARLO, Apr 24: It was third time lucky for Cedric Pioline as he downed Dominik Hrbaty in straight sets on Sunday to win the 2.95-million-dollar Monte Carlo Open Masters Series clay-court tournament, reports AFP.

Eighth-seeded Pioline beat unseeded Hrbaty 6-4, 7-6, 7-6 in a final played mainly in light drizzle -- his first win in three appearances in the final of the event.

Pioline lost in the 1993 final to Sergi Bruguera and in 1998 to Carlos Moya, but he made no mistake against Hrbaty as he became the first French winner at the Monte Carlo Country Club since Pierre Darmon in 1963.

The stylish Pioline, 30, hammered down 12 aces as he recorded only the fifth tournament victory of his career -- but his second this year after his victory in Rotterdam in February.

The win lifted Pioline to joint fifth in the ATP Champions Race and he earned 400,000 dollars and a Waterford Crystal trophy. Hrbaty earned 211,000 dollars and moved to 15th in the Champions' Race by virtue of making the final.

Pioline, a former Wimbledon and US Open finalist, won his first-ever Masters Series event and was the first French winner in a Masters Series event since Guy Forget won the 1991 Paris Indoor.

Pioline went into the match with a dismal 4-12 record in finals but kept calm after Hrbaty threatened a comeback after falling two sets to love behind.

"I'm very happy because it was really tough -- Dominik played unbelievably," Pioline said. "It's a great feeling."

Pioline said he was still enjoying his tennis as much as ever.