

Schofield's timely knock

LONDON, May 7: Chris Schofield gave a timely nudge to the England selectors as Lancashire beat Leicestershire by an innings and 25 runs on the final day of their Division One county championship match at Old Trafford on Saturday, reports Reuters.

The 21-year-old leg-spinner took four for 82 to prompt the visitors' collapse from their overnight 155 for six to 198 all out.

Schofield, who made 66 in Lancashire's first innings total of 488 on Friday, is the only uncapped player to be awarded an England contract this season and is in line to make his Test debut against Zimbabwe at Lord's later this month.

In Division Two, a superb opening stand of 152 between Adrian Rollins (96) and Matthew Hayden (93) steered Northamptonshire to a draw with Middlesex at Lords.

The visitors had been set an unlikely victory target of 391 after 23-year-old opener Andrew Strauss (111) not out completed his maiden first-class century in Middlesex's 243-3 declared.

Half centuries from captain Matthew Maynard (52) and Adrian Shaw (56 not out) helped Glamorgan stage off defeat against Warwickshire after being forced to follow-on at Edgbaston.

The Welsh county lost their last three first innings wickets in four over the start of the day to trail by 151. But they survived the remaining 94 overs in reaching 194-6.

The other game between Essex and Nottinghamshire at Chelmsford also ended in a draw.

In the one National League Game played on Saturday, the Surrey Lions beat the Durham Dynamos by 66 runs at Chester-le-Street to gain swift revenge for their 231 runs defeat in the championship on Thursday.

Adam Hollis took 42 in Surrey's 230-7 before taking 5-29 as Durham were dismissed for 164.

Rajshahi cricket

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, May 7: Rajpara Cricket Club and Upashar Cricket Club won their respective matches of the second Siraj Memorial Kishor cricket tournament at the Rajshahi Medical College Campus playground today.

Rajpara defeated Rani Bazar Sporting Club by 3 wickets in the first match.

Sent in to bat Rani Bazar were bowled out for 112 in 19.3 overs. Sumon with 44 was the top-scorer.

In reply, the winners reached the target of 113 runs losing seven wickets in 17.3 overs.

In other match of the day, Upashar Cricket Club recorded a 100 run win over Altab Smriti Sangha.

A sparkling half-century by Tushar (65) paved Upashar's way to earn the victory. The winners made 174 for eight in the stipulated 175 overs.

In reply, Altab Smriti Sangha were all out for 74 in 16.3 overs.

3 Windies icons on selectors' panel

ST. JOHN'S, May 7: Cricket icons Sir Vivian Richards, Gordon Greenidge and Desmond Haynes have been nominated to sit on junior and senior West Indies selection panels for the next two years, reports AFP.

The two-year terms of the present panels end at the West Indies Cricket Board's annual general meeting to be held in Georgetown, May 11 and 12.

All the incumbents - chairman Mike Findlay, Joel Garner and Joey Carey for the seniors; chairman Garner, Jeff Dujon and Clyde Butts for the juniors - have been nominated.

Several other new names, including those of Sir Vivian, Greenidge and Haynes, have been recommended to the cricket committee of the WICB.

Keegan wants a decade in charge

LONDON, May 7: England coach Kevin Keegan has revealed he would like to keep the job for another 10 years, reports AFP.

"I'm committed until after the 2002 World Cup but I want to be in charge a lot longer," Keegan told the News of the World.

"I want to be England's manager as long as I can. I'd like the job for the next 10 years. But the only way will be if I'm successful."

"We are judged on results. I will be criticised unless we win every game, and in some style. It is the nature of the job and I've had my critics."

Keegan is confident about England's Euro 2000 prospects claiming he has more good players to call on than any of his rivals.

He said: "I have watched all the Euro 2000 teams, live or on video, and no coach has as many good players to pick from as I have."

England face Portugal, Germany and Romania in Group A next month and Keegan is confident about ending the jinx against the Germans.

Germany knocked England out of the 1990 World Cup semi-finals and the Euro 96 semi-finals - each time triumphing in a penalty shoot-out.



The Mothertek Abdul Aziz High School team who become volleyball champions. — Star photo

Kapil's tearful denial

NEW DELHI, May 7: Indian cricket icon Kapil Dev broke down during a television interview on match-fixing allegations levelled against him and said he would rather commit suicide than take bribes, news reports said Sunday, reports AFP.

Indian newspapers on Sunday splashed colour photographs of a weeping Kapil, who told the BBC in an interview to be aired on Wednesday, that the charges had ruined his life.

"I will die. I will commit suicide before I take a bribe. I have not taken money. I have not offered any money to anybody," he said.

"I put my heart, soul and tears, my everything into the game and this is what I get. I don't know what to do. My wife can't sleep at night. I hold my daughter all night."

"I am ashamed I played cricket. Who wants money? Take all my money. I come from a family where pride is more important than anything else."

Kapil on Friday served a legal notice on Inderjit Singh Bindra, former president of the Board of Control for Cricket in

India (BCCI), for naming him in a match-fixing slur dragging since 1994.

Bindra in comments broadcast on CNN had said that Indian seamer Manoj Prabhakar had named Kapil as the person who had offered him a bribe to play badly in a one-day international in Sri Lanka in 1994.

According to Bindra, Prabhakar said Kapil had offered him 25,000 dollars to underperform.

"The person who offered ... to Prabhakar to play below poten-

tial is an icon in the cricketing world. He is the Michael Jordan of India. His name is Kapil Dev," Bindra told CNN.

Kapil, a former Indian captain, in his statement said Bindra's comments were "an earth shattering experience" for him.

He told the BBC that he was fed up with insinuations when asked whether two sets of allegations of wrongdoing from two different people bothered him.

"Third party! Third party! What third party? I'm sick of third party. Please for God's sake become the first party and say what happened."

Kapil said he would provide access to all his financial documents.

"I have never done any wrong. Never taken any money from any bookie. Please go to my accountant and see my accounts."

He said the accusations had changed his life forever.

"These allegations have burnt down my house. What is left after that? I will give up everything and take up 'sanyas' (a state where one renounces material things and becomes like a saint)."

"In one stroke, 25 years of mine that I have played for the country, are gone."

Giddins' blessing in disguise

LONDON, May 7 (Internet report): Dean Headley, one of only three fast bowlers in England's first centrally-contracted squad, is to undergo spinal surgery which threatens to rule him out of his country's busiest-ever domestic season, paving the way for a surprise recall of Ed Giddins for the first Test against Zimbabwe.

Headley must rest for three to four months after the operation is performed a week tomorrow. Even an absence of three months would make it extremely difficult for Headley to be available for the summer's final Test against West Indies starting on August 31.

His absence, coupled with injuries to Alan Mullally and Chris Silverwood, leaves England with a tricky selection problem ahead of next week's opening Test against Zimbabwe at Lord's. The selectors had originally planned to conduct their deliberations this week by phone, but now they will meet to discuss Headley's replacement and that of Michael Vaughan, who broke a finger playing for Yorkshire last week.

Silverwood would be the obvious fast-bowling partner to Andrew Caddick and Darren Gough, but he has been missing with a heel injury for three weeks and had his first tentative bowl in the nets yesterday.

Only a convincing comeback for Yorkshire against Hampshire this week would bring him back into the equation for the Test which begins on May 18.

That leaves Giddins competing with Durham's outstanding prospect Steve Harmison and, possibly, Dominic Cork for a

place against Zimbabwe, with the colourful Warwickshire bowler the favourite. Giddins took four wickets on his Test debut against New Zealand at the Oval last summer but missed out on a winter tour because of concerns about his fitness and lack of genuine pace.

He countered the first in impressive fashion, paving 7,000 pounds to undertake a 12-week fitness course at Lilleshall and answers the second by arguing that he thought last season's Oval pitch was more conducive to swing than extreme speed, hence a deliberate reduction in his pace. Now Giddins, who overcame a year's suspension for drug-taking and doubts about his action to reach Test level, says his stamina is enhanced and he is more able to come back effectively for second and third spells. Duncan Fletcher, the England coach, was at Edgbaston to watch him on Friday, admittedly in a match where bat has dominated ball.

Harmison is the better long-term prospect, and is seen as the man England need in the Indian sub-continent this winter on flat pitches, but conditions at Lord's are likely to favour

bowlers who can hit the right spot regularly and let the ball do the work. There are still few better at that discipline than Angus Fraser, but it is unlikely England will turn to the old warhorse on his home ground, however impressive his early-season form.

Vaughan's injury, which came when he was unbeaten on 155 against Derbyshire, is a blow for a player who established himself in England's final Test of the winter series in South Africa. Graham Thorpe, who ruled himself out of that tour, is competing to replace him along with Nick Knight, who scored a double century against Glamorgan at a flat Edgbaston last week.

The latest setback for Headley is the culmination of a difficult time for the Kent seamer, who earned an England contract ahead of Mullally mainly because of his impressive strike rate - and heart - in Test cricket.

A back injury forced the 30-year-old Headley home from the winter tour after he had managed to bowl only 10 balls in the opening fixture in early November.

Headley said: "The problem is that the injury is in the same area as the last injury, so it's obviously a worry because it could be connected. I felt fine bowling in the nets for a month pre-season and this happens. It's all very frustrating."

In addition to seven tests - two against Zimbabwe and five against West Indies - there will be 10 one-day internationals in a triangular tournament against those two countries.

Headley's last appearances for England was in the second and third Tests of the losing home series against New Zealand in 1999.

Deburghraeve retires

BRUSSELS, May 7: Belgium's 100 metre breaststroke world record holder Frederik Deburghraeve decided to call it quits on his career Saturday after failing to qualify for the Sydney Olympics, Belgian TV station VRT reported, says AFP.

The 1996 Olympic champion came up just over a second short in his attempt at the Flanders meeting to defend the gold medal he won in Atlanta.

With the 20-year-old Massu and the 19-year-old Gonzalez squaring off in Sunday's final, this will be the youngest final on the ATP Tour this season. It also will be the first all-Chilean final on the tour since November 28, 1982, when Jaime Fillol defeated Ricardo Acuna in Salvador.

Massu finished 1999 as the second-ranked player in Chile behind Marcelo Rios after winning three Challenger events, all on clay. He entered this season with a career 6-6 record on the ATP Tour, but has posted a 10-7 record in 2000, including 8-4 on clay. A former number one junior doubles player, Massu has dropped only one set en route to the final.

Gonzalez was the last player to enter the 32-man field for qualifying, then had to save four match points in his second-round qualifying match before becoming the last player to enter the main draw.

A former French Open junior champion, Gonzalez has not faced a seeded player this week and has lost only one set.



A scene from yesterday's Premier Division Kabaddi League match between Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Rifles at the court next to Bangabandhu Stadium. — Star photo

Silly!

SYDNEY, May 7: Sydney Olympics organisers lost almost a million Australian dollars Sunday when they mistakenly put athletics tickets for sale at half price, reports AFP.

An evening athletics session was publicised at cheaper day-session prices in newspapers and as a result, 12,704 sports fans will get lucky.

Tickets which should have cost between 165 Australian dollars (100 US) and 105 Australian dollars were advertised for half the price.

The error will cost the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympics (SOCOG) 926,580 Australian dollars.

SOCOG deputy chief executive Michael Evers admitted there had been an error in the printed mail order form.

"That, unfortunately, is an error. We are, of course, bound by that, so the people who order for that session will get the tickets for the price advertised in the paper," Evers told reporters.

"It's clear, by our legal obligations, that we have to sell those tickets at the advertised price that comes in with the order form."

A SOCOG ticketing spokesman said the printing error was simply a lucky break for a few thousands of consumers.

"A little over 12,000 people will receive evening-session tickets at a day-session price ... it's a lucky break," he said.

"In the scheme of things, it's a small number of tickets when you're dealing with an operation of this scale ... it involved a lucky few."

This week SOCOG is selling 3.2 million Olympic tickets that have been handed back by overseas Olympic committees or sponsors.

The athletics tickets were the first offered on Sunday.

Safin sails into final

PALMA, Spain, May 7: Russian fourth seed Marat Safin reached the final of the 500,000 dollar Mallorca Open here on Saturday with a rampaging 6-2, 6-2 success over Spaniard Galo Blanco to set up a meeting with Sweden's Mikael Tillstrom, who beat Argentine Mariano Puerta 3-6, 7-5, 6-1, reports AFP.

World number 27 Safin, who has spent most of his career based in Spain, is bidding for his second title success inside a week - after winning at Barcelona last Sunday and he was never in trouble against Blanco, ranked 109 in the ATP Champions Race.

The Russian waltzed through the encounter with two service breaks in each set to win in just 1hr 15min and held his own service throughout as his opponent failed to keep pace with him.

Safin, who lives in Valencia and who ousted former world number one Carlos Moya in the quarter-finals, is now on target for his third career ATP title after Barcelona and Boston last year.

Blanco had overcome Argentine hope Juan Ignacio Chela, who eliminated mercenary Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov on Thursday, to reach the last four, but from the first game it was apparent he would not be going any further.

Tillstrom had a much tougher job against Puerta, who bamboozled him with a rich mix of returns in the opening set.

But in the second the Swede managed to break Puerta's rhythm as he dominated the net and produced several stop volleys.

Tillstrom quickly advanced to 5-2 only for the Argentine to pull him back to 5-5 before losing the final two games of the set as tiredness began to set in.

As a result the third set was a rout as Tillstrom booked his passage.

Chileans clash on clay

ORLANDO, Florida, May 7: The final at the US Clay Court Championship will be an all-Chilean showdown as Nicolas Massu and Fernando Gonzalez Saturday advanced to their first career ATP Tour finals, reports AFP.

In the first of back-to-back South American semi-finals, sixth seeded Massu posted a 6-4, 6-4 victory over qualifier Ramon Delgado of Paraguay.

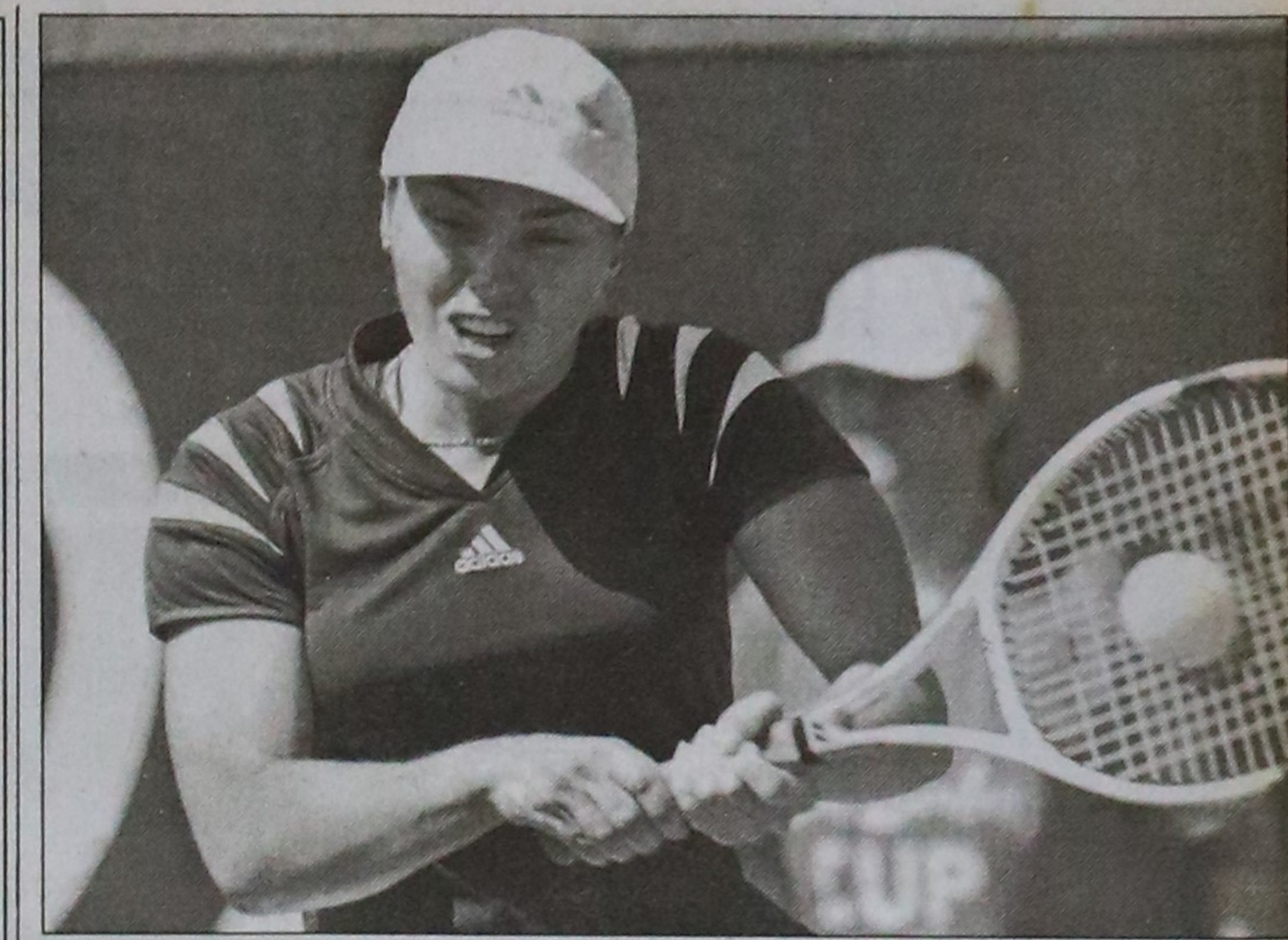
Gonzalez, the last qualifier to enter the main draw, continued to make the most of his opportunity as he outdueled Martin Rodriguez of Argentina, 6-0, 3-6, 7-5.

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Martina Hingis of Switzerland plays a backhand return against Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario in the Betty Barclay Cup final match yesterday. — AFP photo

Hingis' perfect day

HAMBURG, May 7: Martina Hingis defeated Germany's Anke Huber 6-3, 6-2 on Saturday to reach the final of the Betty Barclay Cup on Saturday and regain the number one ranking from Lindsay Davenport, reports AFP.

In the final the Swiss will face fourth seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, who took two hours 45 minutes to beat eighth seeded South African Amanda Coetzee 6-3, 4-6, 7-6.

Huber began strongly and tested the top seed with her strong forehand. But Hingis matched her in the baseline rallies, and several times caught her seventh seeded opponent with some daring dropshots.

Hingis saved a break point in the third game and then broke to lead 3-1, only to concede the next game to love. But she broke again to go ahead 5-3 and served out for the set.

The second set saw Hingis break for 1-0, again drop the next game to love, but she then

took a 2-1 lead. Another break for 5-2 sealed Huber's fate.

"It wasn't easy to play her with the home crowd behind her. I had to raise my level (from yesterday) and I did," said Hingis. "I knew if I won the match I would go back to number one, but winning the tournament would be more important to me than number one."

Hingis snapped Huber's 11-match winning streak. She recently won Estoril and was then involved in a busy Fed Cup schedule immediately before playing in Hamburg.

"I was tired," said Huber. "I had a tough week at the Fed Cup, and this week was also not so easy for me. I didn't move as well as I wanted to, and it's hard if you're not 100 per cent fit to play against Hingis."

There was little to separate Sanchez-Vicario and Coetzee throughout their gritty baseline battle, in which some of the rallies went to more than 60 exchanges.

After Coetzee levelled the

match at one set all the Spaniard faced a crisis when she found herself down 0-40 on her serve as the deciding set got underway. But she pulled herself out of trouble, and then rallied to break Coetzee twice to establish a dominant 4-0 lead.

But, like her opponent, the South African is known for her tenacity, and she twice prevented Sanchez-Vicario serving out for the match, at 5-1 and 5-3. Sanchez-Vicario held five match points before eventually closing the match out in the tiebreaker.

As a result of Mary Pierce and Venus Williams dropping points from last year, 32-year-old Nathalie Tauziat will rise to a career high of three on Monday.

"The older she gets, the better she is," said Hingis. "She's very clever and can get the best out of her game. She's probably not the fastest on the tour or the youngest, but she can play a very smart game. She deserves it because she's a very fair player and she's a competitor."

Squillari halts Haas

MUNICH, Germany, May 7: Franco Squillari earned his second straight title at the \$25,000-dollar BMW Open on Sunday, dashing the hopes of German Tommy Haas 6-4, 6-4 as he picked up only the second trophy of his career, reports AFP.

The Argentine's rapid-fire defeat of Haas in an hour left a full-house crowd disappointed.

But the 22-year-old German hope, aiming to be the first home player since Michael Stich to win the event, was no match for the solid baselining of his South American opponent.

Squillari raced to a convincing early lead, taking a 5-1 margin almost before the German had time to react.

Haas, a crowd of 3,000 fans willing him on, climbed back slightly into contention for 2-5 before finally losing the opening set after just over half an hour.

Squillari was having no part in any late resistance, breaking early in the second set and keeping Haas at bay on the way to victory.

Squillari now stands a perfect 10-0 in Munich and will move to around 23rd in the season-long Champions points race on Monday.

The Argentine, who beat Romanian Andre Pavel for his title here a year ago, couldn't suppress a smile when asked about the venue.

"I like the conditions here in Munich," he said. "The balls are pretty fast and the court a bit slower. It suits me really well."

The quick victory was a double pleasure for Squillari - he

beat Haas in the second round in Munich a year ago, also in straight sets.

Haas, whose only career title came last year in Memphis, had been keen to win his first title in Germany. But he admitted as he lost his seventh of eight finals: "I've been in three finals in Germany and I haven't won yet."

"Squillari was the obvious favourite, but I had nothing to lose. He just outplayed me today."

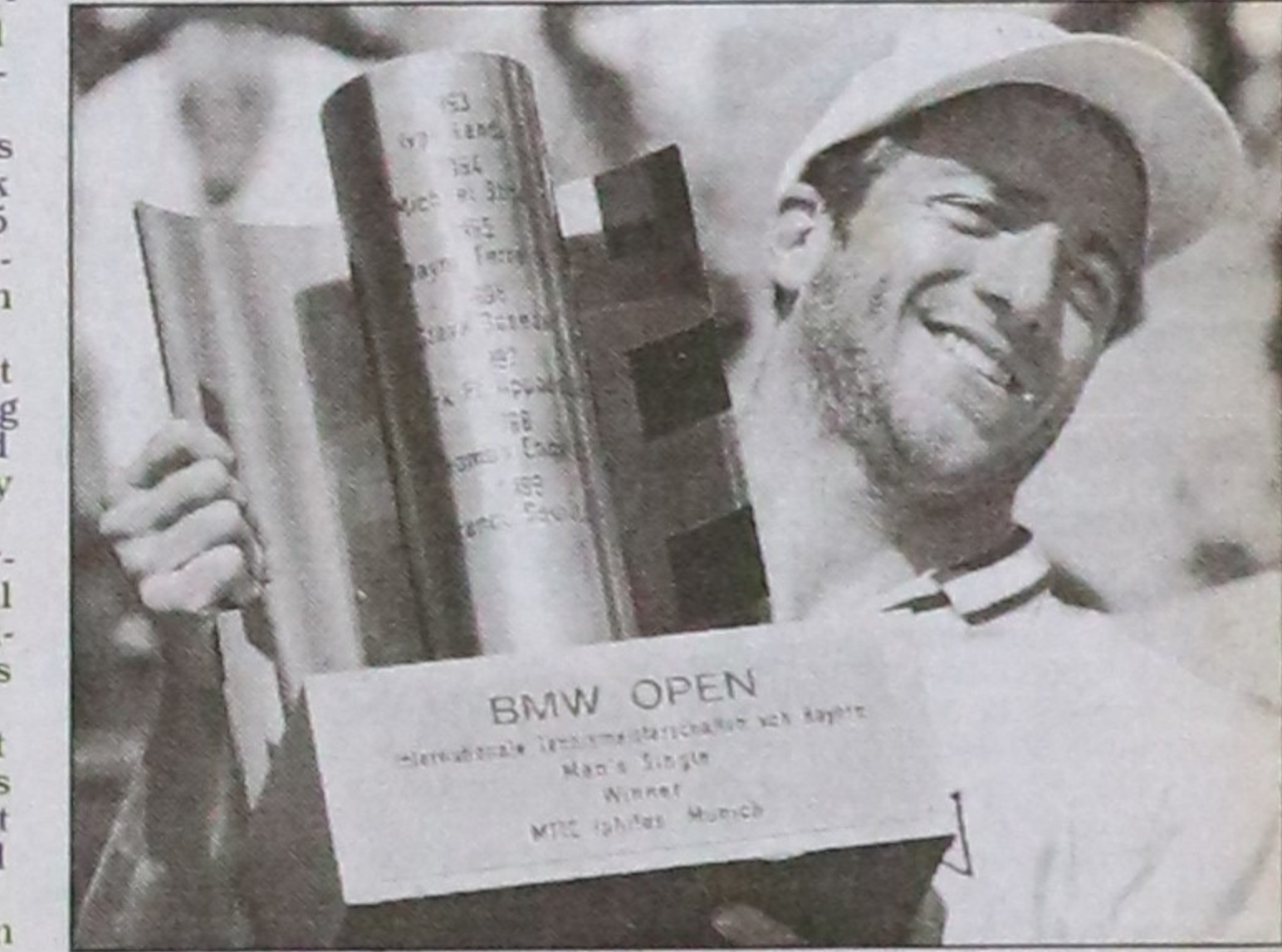
Squillari, earned 54,000 dollars for his victory while Haas took away 31,500. His best previous showing this season came in Mexico City, where he reached the semi-finals against

Mariano Puerta.

In Saturday's semifinals, Squillari triumphed 6-2, 6-4 over Max Mirnyi of Belarus and Haas had to overcome 1998 winner Thomas Enqvist of Sweden 7-6 (7/5), 1-6, 6-4 in front of a loud, partisan home crowd.

Enqvist had won the title here beating Andre Agassi, just as the current world number one was launching himself on the miracle comeback which is still going strong.

Enqvist was feeling the effects of three matches played on Friday as the schedule was bought up to date after rainy weather.



Argentinian Franco Squillari shows off the trophy after beating German Tommy Haas in the BMW Open final in Munich yesterday. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 25 mins and a 'Yesterday's answer' section.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with a key: Q W A D T L F F G X, P T Y F P M V X M Q B M V P F F, W F F M Y D L J J D M D.

CRYPTOQUIP
Q W A D T L F F G X
P T Y F P M V X M Q B M V P F F
W F F M Y D L J J D M D
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AFTER LORNE LEFT HIS GIRL-FRIEND LAST WEEK, I HEARD SHE WAS LOOKING FOR LORNE.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals N
The Cryptoquip 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.