

Euro 2000

Thai police plan action against betting

BANGKOK, May 21: Thai police will crack down on illegal betting during next month's Euro 2000 soccer tournament, a Thai newspaper reported Sunday.

European soccer teams have large and loyal followings in Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries, and betting on their games is widespread.

Betting activity usually crests during the World Cup but is also common for British and other European league play.

Police said they are especially concerned at the involvement of students in gambling, because they sometimes turn to crime to pay off their gambling debts, reported the Bangkok Post.

Bookmakers are active in many of Thailand's largest cities and use mobile phones and transfers of money through bank accounts to make their activities hard to detect, the Post quoted police as saying.

Police said they had asked the Education Ministry to order schools to take measures against student gambling and would stake out suspected downtown betting centers.

The Euro 2000 tournament will be held June 10 to July 2.

'No football town!'

CAMPOROSO, Italy, May 21: If a youngster feels tempted to kick a ball around the streets of the northern Italian town of Camporosso, they could end up having to pay a 50,000 lire (\$23 dollar) fine or have their ball confiscated, reports Reuters.

In an extraordinary move in soccer-mad Italy, Camporosso town council issued a by-law banning any type of game that includes the "throwing of objects" in its streets or squares, Italian news agency ANSA reported on Saturday.

The law was passed after residents complained about groups of youths who played soccer into the evening, making noise and marking the town's walls.

De Brujin sets new swim mark

MONACO, May 21: Dutch veteran Inge de Brujin set a women's 50 metre butterfly world record on Saturday and followed it with a European best in the two-leg butterfly race, reports Reuters.

De Brujin clocked 25.83 seconds in the 50 metres butterfly, beating the previous best of 26.29 set by Sweden's Anna-Karin Kammerling in the European championships in Istanbul in July 1999.

De Brujin set the world during speed trials and broke her own European 100 metres butterfly record in the final of that event to win a 20,000 francs (\$3,000) prize.

There is no prize for records in the speed trials but a swimmer breaking a world mark in the finals will be awarded 100,000 francs (\$16,500). If no other world record is broken on Sunday, however, De Brujin may be awarded the prize.

De Brujin, 1999 European champion in 100 metres butterfly and 50 metres freestyle, set the record in her second attempt of the day wearing a skin-tight black bodysuit which she said enabled her to rise higher in the water.

The 27-year-old US based for the last three seasons, overcame a false start in the 100 metres butterfly final to clock 57.96 seconds — 26.90 at the turn — to break her 11-month-old European record.

She set her previous record of 58.49 when winning the European title in Istanbul on July 30 last year.

New records set at Vienna Marathon

VIENNA, May 21: Running in almost perfect conditions, Kenyan runner Willy Cheruiyot and Maura Vicente of Italy smashed the respective course records for men and women in the Vienna City Marathon on Sunday, reports AP.

Cheruiyot crossed the finish line in 2 hours 8 minutes and 48 seconds, breaking the previous record, set by Ethiopian runner Taya Minges in 1984, by 33 seconds.

Vicente put in an outstanding race to come in 2 hours 23 minutes 47 seconds, 7.2 minutes ahead of the record set in 1997 by Tatiana Dzhabbarlova of Ukraine. It was the Italian runner's personal best time — more than four minutes faster than her previous record.

Cheruiyot, who started the race as a pacemaker for the favorite Simon Bor, also of Kenya, ran together with his countrymen from start to finish. Bor was in front going into the final stretch, then Cheruiyot broke away in the last few meters to cross the line first.

"I did not expect such a race," Cheruiyot said at the finish. "It was a wonderful race."

Miroslav Goleblevski of Poland was third with 2:09:04.

Runners enjoyed near perfect conditions, with mild summer temperatures under clear blue skies on the flat course that takes them past some of the city's most famous landmarks.

Organizers said the 10,000 entrants for this year's race was an all-time record in the now 15-year-old event.

Monica against Amelie



ROME, May 21: Monica Seles lined up an Italian Open final against France's Amelie Mauresmo here on Saturday -- 10 years after the American won this tournament as a 16-year-old prodigy, reports AFP.

Both women were in a hurry on the Centre Court -- Seles brushing aside compatriot Corina Morariu 6-3, 6-1, shortly after Mauresmo hammered Colombian qualifier Fabiola Zuluaga 6-1, 6-2.

Sunday's final of the 1.08 million dollar tournament will see the first ever meeting between the two players, both of whom are clearly on top of their court game.

Seles made a bright start -- breaking for 2-1, serving out for 3-1 but being broken for 3-3 when she put a two-fisted backhand wide.

However, the former world number one broke back immediately for 4-3 after Morariu double-faulted and served out for 5-3.

Sensing her chance, Seles powered into a 40-15 lead on Morariu's serve. The first set point evaporated when she was caught out by a deftly-executed drop shot. But when Morariu followed up by ploughing a forehand into the net, the first set was over.

And the second didn't last long either. Morariu netted a backhand, flung her racquet to the floor in disgust and slumped to a fatal 3-1 deficit.

She didn't win a single point for the rest of the match.

Seles was delighted with her return to the final 10 years on.

"It feels fantastic. She said "I have such great memories from 1990, and to come back and play so well in 2000 is really a fantastic feeling."

Describing the intervening years, which included the 1993 stabbing in Hamburg which cost her a two-year absence from the WTA Tour, she said: "A lot of highs, a lot of lows and a lot of things in the middle."

"But in terms of my career, I never lost the love that I have for the game of tennis and that's what really means the most to me."

"So that's why I look back really fondly, even through the difficult times of my life... the toughest thing for me when I got stabbed was really not playing for those years. That was the only period that I didn't really want to go back to the tennis court."

As for Sunday's final, she added: "I really like Amelie's style of play. I've seen her play in Australia... I'm really looking forward to tomorrow's match."

Mauresmo, who won the Sydney tournament this year and reached the 1999 Australian Open final, was simply in a different league to her 69th ranked opponent and needed only 64 minutes to seal her victory.

And for the Colombian

hopeful, there was no let-up in the second set.

Mauresmo broke to love twice -- for 1-0 and 4-1 -- and reached 5-1 after avoiding a break point when Zuluaga went for a backhand winner down the line but the ball landed fractionally the wrong side of the net.

It was Zuluaga's last chance of staging a comeback, and even another attack of match-point wobbles for Mauresmo failed to change the outcome.

The first match point at 40-30 went begging when the Colombian finished a fine rally by manoeuvring Mauresmo out of position and smacking a potent drive into the corner.

The Frenchwoman matched that with a crunching forehand down the line to bring up her second match point -- but followed up by ballooning a backhand.

However, she was third time

lucky when Zuluaga responded by slamming down a service winner.

Zuluaga, who was feeling the effects of both the qualifiers and her run to the semis, paid tribute to Mauresmo: "She played really good... and I was a little bit tired."

"I've been playing here since Saturday and I've been having a lot of tough matches."

For Sunday's final, she added: "I really like Amelie's style of play. I've seen her play in Australia... I'm really looking forward to tomorrow's match."

Mauresmo, who won the Sydney tournament this year and reached the 1999 Australian Open final, was simply in a different league to her 69th ranked opponent and needed only 64 minutes to seal her victory.

And for the Colombian

hopeful, there was no let-up in the second set.

Mauresmo broke to love twice -- for 1-0 and 4-1 -- and reached 5-1 after avoiding a break point when Zuluaga went for a backhand winner down the line but the ball landed fractionally the wrong side of the net.

It was Zuluaga's last chance of staging a comeback, and even another attack of match-point wobbles for Mauresmo failed to change the outcome.

The first match point at 40-30 went begging when the Colombian finished a fine rally by manoeuvring Mauresmo out of position and smacking a potent drive into the corner.

The Frenchwoman matched that with a crunching forehand down the line to bring up her second match point -- but followed up by ballooning a backhand.

However, she was third time

lucky when Zuluaga responded by slamming down a service winner.

Zuluaga, who was feeling the effects of both the qualifiers and her run to the semis, paid tribute to Mauresmo: "She played really good... and I was a little bit tired."

"I've been playing here since Saturday and I've been having a lot of tough matches."

As for Sunday's final, she added: "I really like Amelie's style of play. I've seen her play in Australia... I'm really looking forward to tomorrow's match."

Mauresmo, who won the Sydney tournament this year and reached the 1999 Australian Open final, was simply in a different league to her 69th ranked opponent and needed only 64 minutes to seal her victory.

And for the Colombian

hopeful, there was no let-up in the second set.

Mauresmo broke to love twice -- for 1-0 and 4-1 -- and reached 5-1 after avoiding a break point when Zuluaga went for a backhand winner down the line but the ball landed fractionally the wrong side of the net.

It was Zuluaga's last chance of staging a comeback, and even another attack of match-point wobbles for Mauresmo failed to change the outcome.

The first match point at 40-30 went begging when the Colombian finished a fine rally by manoeuvring Mauresmo out of position and smacking a potent drive into the corner.

The Frenchwoman matched that with a crunching forehand down the line to bring up her second match point -- but followed up by ballooning a backhand.

However, she was third time

lucky when Zuluaga responded by slamming down a service winner.

Zuluaga, who was feeling the effects of both the qualifiers and her run to the semis, paid tribute to Mauresmo: "She played really good... and I was a little bit tired."

"I've been playing here since Saturday and I've been having a lot of tough matches."

As for Sunday's final, she added: "I really like Amelie's style of play. I've seen her play in Australia... I'm really looking forward to tomorrow's match."

Mauresmo, who won the Sydney tournament this year and reached the 1999 Australian Open final, was simply in a different league to her 69th ranked opponent and needed only 64 minutes to seal her victory.

And for the Colombian

hopeful, there was no let-up in the second set.

Mauresmo broke to love twice -- for 1-0 and 4-1 -- and reached 5-1 after avoiding a break point when Zuluaga went for a backhand winner down the line but the ball landed fractionally the wrong side of the net.

It was Zuluaga's last chance of staging a comeback, and even another attack of match-point wobbles for Mauresmo failed to change the outcome.

The first match point at 40-30 went begging when the Colombian finished a fine rally by manoeuvring Mauresmo out of position and smacking a potent drive into the corner.

The Frenchwoman matched that with a crunching forehand down the line to bring up her second match point -- but followed up by ballooning a backhand.

However, she was third time

lucky when Zuluaga responded by slamming down a service winner.

Zuluaga, who was feeling the effects of both the qualifiers and her run to the semis, paid tribute to Mauresmo: "She played really good... and I was a little bit tired."

"I've been playing here since Saturday and I've been having a lot of tough matches."

As for Sunday's final, she added: "I really like Amelie's style of play. I've seen her play in Australia... I'm really looking forward to tomorrow's match."

Mauresmo, who won the Sydney tournament this year and reached the 1999 Australian Open final, was simply in a different league to her 69th ranked opponent and needed only 64 minutes to seal her victory.

And for the Colombian

hopeful, there was no let-up in the second set.

Mauresmo broke to love twice -- for 1-0 and 4-1 -- and reached 5-1 after avoiding a break point when Zuluaga went for a backhand winner down the line but the ball landed fractionally the wrong side of the net.

It was Zuluaga's last chance of staging a comeback, and even another attack of match-point wobbles for Mauresmo failed to change the outcome.

The first match point at 40-30 went begging when the Colombian finished a fine rally by manoeuvring Mauresmo out of position and smacking a potent drive into the corner.

The Frenchwoman matched that with a crunching forehand down the line to bring up her second match point -- but followed up by ballooning a backhand.

However, she was third time

lucky when Zuluaga responded by slamming down a service winner.

Zuluaga, who was feeling the effects of both the qualifiers and her run to the semis, paid tribute to Mauresmo: "She played really good... and I was a little bit tired."

"I've been playing here since Saturday and I've been having a lot of tough matches."

As for Sunday's final, she added: "I really like Amelie's style of play. I've seen her play in Australia... I'm really looking forward to tomorrow's match."

Mauresmo, who won the Sydney tournament this year and reached the 1999 Australian Open final, was simply in a different league to her 69th ranked opponent and needed only 64 minutes to seal her victory.

And for the Colombian

hopeful, there was no let-up in the second set.

Mauresmo broke to love twice -- for 1-0 and 4-1 -- and reached 5-1 after avoiding a break point when Zuluaga went for a backhand winner down the line but the ball landed fractionally the wrong side of the net.

It was Zuluaga's last chance of staging a comeback, and even another attack of match-point wobbles for Mauresmo failed to change the outcome.

The first match point at 40-30 went begging when the Colombian finished a fine rally by manoeuvring Mauresmo out of position and smacking a potent drive into the corner.

The Frenchwoman matched that with a crunching forehand down the line to bring up her second match point -- but followed up by ballooning a backhand.

However, she was third time

lucky when Zuluaga responded by slamming down a service winner.

Zuluaga, who was feeling the effects of both the qualifiers and her run to the semis, paid tribute to Mauresmo: "She played really good... and I was a little bit tired."

"I've been playing here since Saturday and I've been having a lot of tough matches."

As for Sunday's final, she added: "I really like Amelie's style of play. I've seen her play in Australia... I'm really looking forward to tomorrow's match."

Mauresmo, who won the Sydney tournament this year and reached the 1999 Australian Open final, was simply in a different