

Glenn, Brett do Aussie double

LONDON, July 4: Fast bowlers Glenn McGrath and Brett Lee completed an Australian double at the International Cricketer-of-the-Year awards at the Grosvenor House Hotel, reports AFP.

McGrath headed a list that included New Zealander Chris Cairns, Ricky Ponting of Australia, South African duo Lance Klusener and Shaun Pollock as well as India's Sachin Tendulkar.

Newcomer Lee, who took seven wickets on his Test debut against India in December, was voted the International Young Cricketer-of-the-Year.

Federation of International Cricketers' Association president Barry Richards said: "Glenn McGrath is a wonderful cricketer at the peak of his powers and Brett Lee is a young man representing a new generation of exciting fast bowlers."

The awards are a testament to their stature in the world of cricket and they are both worthy winners.

Other awards went to record wicket-taker Courtney Walsh, who won the Wisden International Moment in History 2000 award, and Malcolm Marshall who was posthumously awarded the Regus International Special Merit Award.

Five cricketers were also inducted into the Hall of Fame on Monday night.

They were: England legend Graham Gooch, former Yorkshire and England all-rounder Wilfred Rhodes, explosive West Indian bowler Andy Roberts, ex-Australian skipper Ian Chappell and former Kent batsman Frank Woolley.

Lord's win sparks rush for ticket

LONDON, July 4 (Internet report): England's dramatic two-wicket victory over the West Indies at Lord's has sparked a surge of interest among supporters who are snapping up tickets for the next two Tests.

Staff at Old Trafford and Headingley were kept busy on Monday as telephone callers rang to buy seats.

More than 3,000 were sold by Lancashire for the third Test, which starts on 3 August, with more than 50 received in the first 25 minutes at the start of the day.

Zimbabwe, NZ A draw

BRISTOL, England, July 4: The day/night match between Zimbabwe and New Zealand A yesterday was abandoned as a draw because of rain, reports Reuters.

SCORES: New Zealand A 173-3 in 41 overs — innings closed, Zimbabwe 128-2 in 22 overs.

'Stop Indian gamblers'

COLOMBO, July 4: Pakistan's cricket team manager said Monday authorities around the world should guard against Indian bookies as they are the root cause of match-fixing, reports AP.

You should do something about these Indian gamblers and their agents who are responsible for bringing disrespect to the noble game," retired Brig Mohammad Nasir told reporters ahead of the triangular one-day series that involves South Africa, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

England boost one-day squad

LONDON, July 4 (Internet report): England have reinforced their squad for the first part of the triangular one-day series against the West Indies and Zimbabwe by calling up Somerset all-rounder Marcus Trescothick and Glamorgan skipper Matthew Maynard.

The pair has been added to the original 14-man squad by the selectors because Nasser Hussain and Nick Knight are injured.

"Both players have been called up to the party as short-term cover and will be available for selection for England's first two matches in the tournament this weekend. We will determine whether they stay with the squad once we have assessed everyone's fitness before our match against Zimbabwe at Old Trafford next Thursday," said chairman of selectors David Graveney.

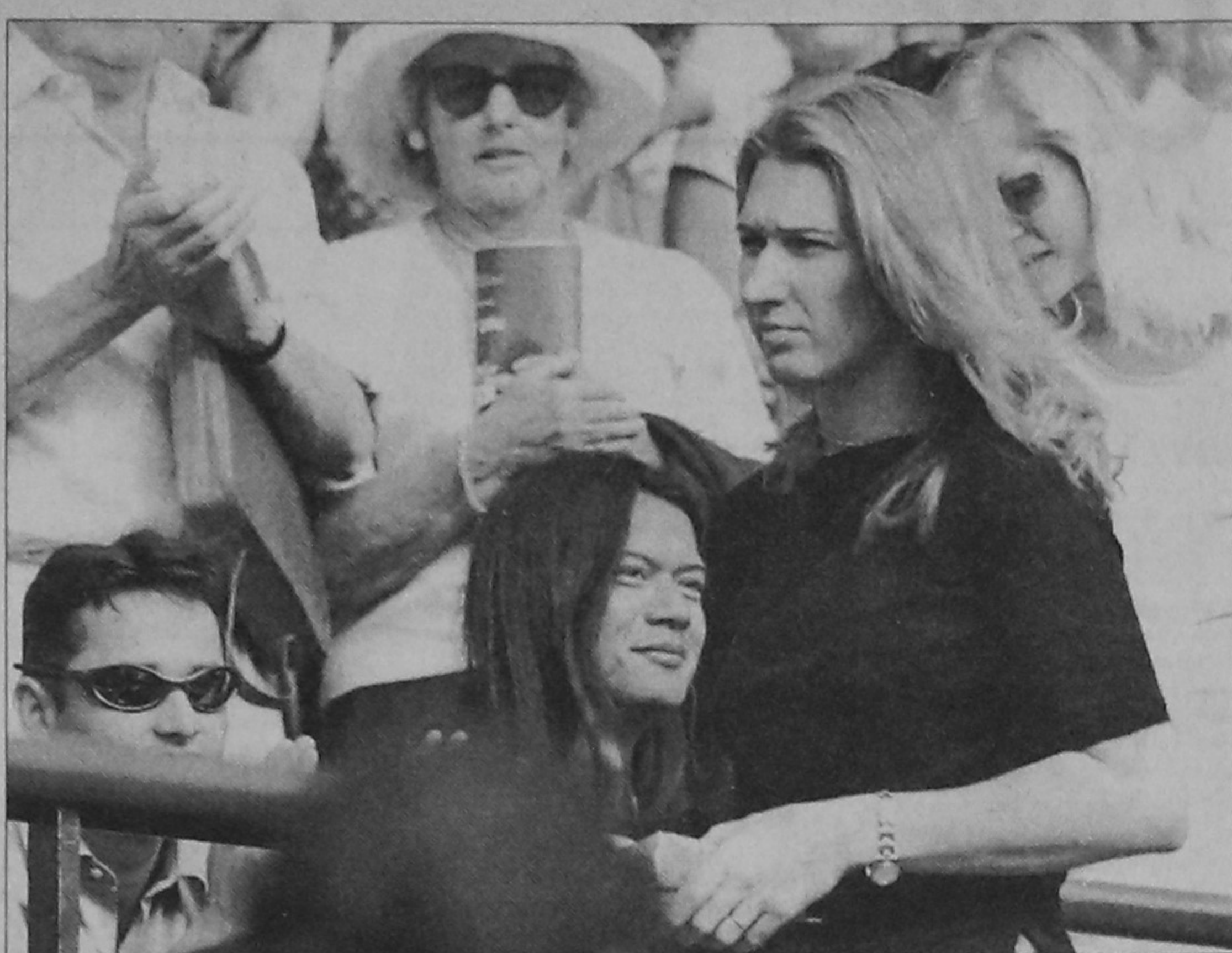
Dokic turns to dear dad

LONDON, July 4 (AFP): The coach who helped lead Australia to the Davis Cup last season was apparently not good enough for Sydney teenager Jelena Dokic, reports AFP.

The Serbian-born 17-year-old is now in the hands of her controversial "Mad Dad" Damir Dokic after sacking Aussie great Tony Roche from her team.

So far, the headstrong Dokic has done well enough in her new, rudderless role, advancing to the quarterfinals at Wimbledon for the second straight year.

She beat American Kristina Brandi 6-1, 6-3 on Monday, but it remains to be seen how much further Dokic can go without a "real" coach.



Former German tennis queen Steffi Graf leaves her seat after enjoying the match between her boyfriend Andre Agassi and David Prinosil at the Wimbledon on July 3. — AFP photo

Popp making lots of noise

LONDON, July 4 (AFP): Alexander Popp fended off questions about his nationality with a little less difficulty than the challenge of Swiss giant Marc Rosset on Monday, but still reached the quarterfinals of the men's singles at Wimbledon.

Popp, 23, has caused a huge stir here not only for ousting Brazilian fourth seed and French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten but because he holds German and British passports, prompting raised eyebrows from British fans keen to adopt him here — and possibly for the Davis Cup in future.

"My heart almost stopped beating. I could never have believed I'd get so far — it's my first grass tournament," said Popp, who looked to have thrown his chance away after squandering a two-set lead before emerging with a 6-1, 6-4, 3-6, 4-6, 6-1 win.

"My head was just empty in the fifth set," added Popp, born in the southern city of Heidelberg to a German father but whose mother hails from the central English town of Wolverhampton.

He revealed he had expected to be defending his title in a challenger event at Oberstaufen next week.

"I won there last year and I

wanted to retain the title," he told reporters.

Asked if he would be going back he laughed: "I don't know — it depends how far I go here."

Popp said he was finding it somewhat irritating to run the gauntlet of press questions about whether he might play for his nationality.

"Everything's gone so quickly — it doesn't bother me too much — but nobody was interested in me a week ago."

"At least my parents are not that bothered about tennis — so the Davis Cup has never been a subject," Popp said when asked if his parents had split loyalties over any potential Davis Cup allegiance.

Popp, who is ranked just 114th in the world, will face Australian 12th seed Pat Rafter in the quarters, is, at 2.01m, one of the tallest men on the circuit and is about the only one who can look Rosset in the eye as the Swiss is the same height.

Looking forward to the tussle with Rafter, Popp was refreshingly laid back about the most important match of his life.

"If I lose it won't be the end of the world. If it works out, great. If not, I'll just go home."

Popp took up a racket as a youngster inspired by Boris Becker's triumph here as a 17-year-old in 1985 and he could now give Germany their first champion since Michael Stich beat Becker in the 1991 final.



Scene from yesterday's third round engagements in the schools' chess tournament. —Star photo

Vlad has every reason to smile

LONDON, July 4 (AFP): Vladimir Voltchkov of Belarus caused the first upset of the second week at Wimbledon nipping experienced grass-court exponent Wayne Ferreira of South Africa 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/0) advancing to the last 16 here on Monday.

In the process he provided a lesson to all those who think the way to sporting success is simply to spend lots of money on lavish facilities — Voltchkov learned to play tennis in that well-known sporting arena that is the Minsk automobile plant.

"My father was just working at the factory. We had a tennis club there. One of my brothers used to play, so it was father's idea to take me to tennis," Voltchkov explained.

"I started when I was seven and a half."

If he wins his next match the 22-year-old Voltchkov will equal the record for the most progress made by a qualifier at Wimbledon set by John McEnroe, who reached the semifinals here in 1977.

And the man who started him off on his tennis career, his father Nicolai, is here to watch his son.

Unlike most Wimbledon qualifiers, Voltchkov has previously enjoyed success on the lawns of the All England Club — in 1996 he won the Wimbledon boys' championship, but he has so far failed to make the progress expected of him.

"Well I guess there are a lot of reasons," said Voltchkov, who suffered with a shoulder problem last year.

Injuries started to come. I had to pull out from a couple of tournaments. Then I started to play, then the injury came back again.

"I had to take some time off — three and a half months."

Rather than the glamour of

the Grand Slams, Voltchkov has been spending most of his time grafting on the Challenger circuit — pro tennis' second-string tour.

That brings its own pressure, every bit as real as the rarefied atmosphere of Wimbledon.

"For one point it is more difficult: from one point it is easier. When you play on the challenger level, there is a lot of pressure."

"Everybody wants to win, to make the step, to progress to a higher level where you start making big points, big money."

"It's like a surviving zone." Plenty of people have told Voltchkov that he has a similar technique to Yevgeny Kafelnikov, although the Russian has a poor Wimbledon record.

"I never saw him (Kafelnikov) before I was 16. When you see guys from the former Soviet Union do really well, of course it motivates you."

Voltchkov is assured of the biggest pay day of his career — a point he acknowledged with a broad grin — when he faces Zimbabwe's Byron Black in the quarterfinals.

But the man who knocked out former finalist Cedric Pioline in five sets in the second round is taking nothing for granted.

"It's obviously a big opportunity. But he (Black) is here. It means he's also playing really good tennis right now."

"At this stage it's more about who plays better on a given day — and Voltchkov's best day here may still be ahead of him."

The man from Minsk ousted experienced South African Wayne Ferreira in round four and now faces Zimbabwe's Byron Black, who edged Italian veteran Gianluca Pozzi.

Black won only nine matches in his first eight visits to Wimbledon — but he now has an excellent chance of making his first Slam semi.

The other big surprise, alongside Voltchkov, is the appearance of rising German star Alexander Popp, who beat fellow giant Marc Rosset in five sets to get to this stage.

Popp next takes on the man who should on paper give Sampras and Agassi the biggest run for their money — Aussie 12th seed Pat Rafter.

Rafter, who ended the challenge of Thomas Johansson, has had an injury-blighted year following arthroscopic shoulder surgery last autumn.

But the two-time US Open champion knows what it's like to get to the serious stages having been a semi-finalist here 12 months ago.

"At this stage I'm very happy with the way things are going. I'm gaining confidence," said the Queenslander who feels entirely at home on grass.

Black against Voltchkov and Rafter against Popp are first time meetings.

Andre doesn't need Steffi's advice

LONDON, July 4: Andre Agassi said Monday he didn't need the advice of seven-time women's Wimbledon champion Steffi Graf as he goes in search of a second crown for his own collection, reports AFP.

Asked if his fiancée had offered any advice to the 1992 champion the shaven-headed Las Vegas smiled and said: "Not too much."

"It's always easier playing than watching," added Agassi, who nevertheless praised Graf for regularly supporting him from the sidelines.

Serena simply loving it

LONDON, July 4 (AFP): She might be Venus Williams' little sister but Serena Williams is talking just as big, if not bigger, on the lush Wimbledon turf this year.

The US teenager certainly has a healthy appetite to go all the way here — citing cheeseburgers from a well-known US fast food outlet as her recipe for success.

Serena, who turns 16 in September and who is 15 months younger than Venus is also seven centimetres smaller at 1m87, 78 inches — but she packs at least an equal punch and has already put her sibling in her place by lifting last year's US Open crown.

Venus has still to taste a Grand Slam singles success.

Both made it through to the women's singles quarterfinals on Monday and could face off in the semifinals if Serena first gets past compatriot Lisa Raymond and Venus can end top seed Martina Hingis' interest in the tournament.

Serena, seeded eight and playing only her second campaign at Wimbledon after missing last year's event through injury, says she doesn't care a rap who she faces — she's in the mood to take on all-comers.

"I'm ready to play Venus. Hingis or whoever," said Serena after thumping Tamarine Tanasugarn of Thailand 6-1, 6-1 in her fourth round match.

And now

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want to step it up," said Sampras, who showed little signs of dragging his feet — injured or otherwise — against his outclassed fourth-round opponent Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden, whom he thrashed 6-3, 6-2, 7-5 in a 1hr 35min Centre Court exhibition showing.

With the departure of Sweden's Thomas Enqvist, beaten by Gambill, Sampras is the only seed left in the top half of the draw.

Second seed Agassi, champion here in 1992, had to save two match points against Todd Martin in a second round tightrope walk.

But he survived, drew strength from the fightback and will next tackle Australian marathon man Mark Philippoussis, who after playing a record 5hr 1min to knock out Sjeng Schalken on Saturday ended British interest by beating eighth seed Tim Henman in another five-setter in the fourth round.

"I'm ready to be in the quarters," Agassi insists.

"My experience tells me that taking every match intensely and seriously is the way to have great things happen."

Philippoussis, through to the last eight for the third year in a row, insists he will not be weakened by his back-to-back five setters against Agassi, against whom he has an uninspiring 1-4 career record — including a loss at the Australian Open last January.

"I'm the best returner in the world. He's got the best hand to eye co-ordination and the best passing shots."

"I'll definitely have to be on my game. I'll go out there and give it my best shot," promised the man they call Scud for his booming serves.

The other two matches, while not exactly featuring also-rans, nevertheless comprise at best dark horse candidates.

Vladimir Voltchkov of Belarus certainly didn't expect to get this far — but if he gets to the semis he will equal John McEnroe's 1977 record achievement of making the last four as a qualifier.

The man from Minsk ousted experienced South African Wayne Ferreira in round four and now faces Zimbabwe's Byron Black, who edged Italian veteran Gianluca Pozzi.

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Black against Voltchkov and Rafter against Popp are first time meetings.

Scud scuttles Henman

LONDON, July 4: After an opening week which had more than its fair share of upsets Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi, Lindsay Davenport and Martina Hingis all boosted the established order Monday by booking quarterfinal slots at Wimbledon, reports AFP.

Defending champion Sampras, going for a record 13th Grand Slam title, trounced Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden 6-3, 6-2, 7-5 in a 1hr 35min Centre Court exhibition, which included 17 aces for good measure.

Sampras will next face compatriot Jan Michael Gambill, who shocked Swedish ninth seed Thomas Enqvist to leave Sampras as the only seed in the top half of the draw as he closes in on a seventh title here which would equal William Renshaw's record set in 1889.

Sampras, unhindered by the last vestiges of his shin injury, leads their head-to-head series 2-1 but Gambill won their last meeting at Scottsdale last year on hard court.

Bjorkman had no answer as the six-time champion stunned him with his all-round power game to take their series to 9-1 in his favour.

"Today I was a lot more confident. I was hitting the ball pretty well," said Sampras. "It's the second week, you want to step it up."

Second seed Agassi knocked out David Prinosil of Germany 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 and will next tackle Australian 10th seed Mark Philippoussis, who after playing a record 5hr 1min to knock out Sjeng Schalken on Saturday ended British interest when he beat eighth seed Tim Henman 6-1, 5-7, 6-7 (9/11), 6-3, 6-4.

A disgusted Henman threw his racket away in disgust.

"I think it's safe to say he wore me down with his serve. As frustrated as I am you have to give him credit," said Henman afterwards, adding he would not stick around to watch the remainder of the event after failing to become the first British man to win here since Fred Perry in 1936.

Agassi meanwhile said he was approaching his best form after an indifferent clutch of recent performances.

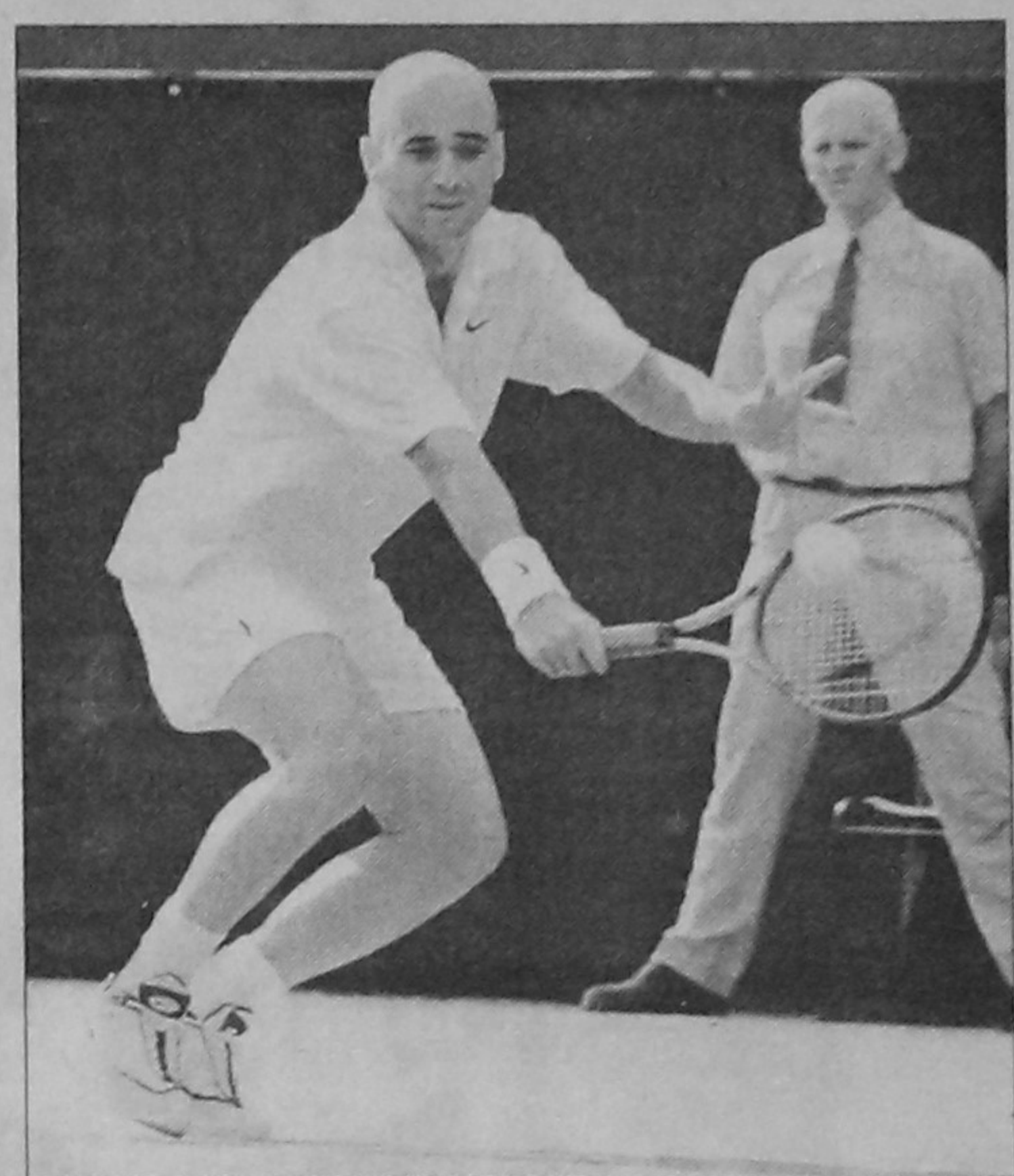
"You're only as confident as your last few results. I needed to get through the first week. My experience tells me that taking every match intensely and seriously is the way to have great things happen," said the Las Vegas.

Women's title-holder Davenport earlier swamped fellow American Jennifer Capriati 6-3, 6-3 in just 62min.

Davenport next faces sixth-seeded fellow American Monica Seles, who beat old rival and Spanish ninth seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario 6-3, 6-4.

Women's top seed Hingis had earlier turned in one of her best performances of the year in crushing German 11th seed Anke Huber 6-1, 6-2.

Davenport, who like Sampras has had to overcome an injury scare after back trouble hastened her departure in the first round of the French Open,



US superstar Andre Agassi makes a backhand return against David Prinosil of Germany in the fourth round of Wimbledon on July 3. — AFP photo



TIM HENMAN

echoed her compatriot's sentiments after overwhelming Capriati.

"I hit the ball a lot better from the beginning. I think that was the best match I've played in months," said Davenport.

Swiss Miss Hingis took just 53min for her win over Huber.

She now meets US fifth seed Venus Williams, who made hard work of reaching the last eight for the third straight year, ousting Belgium's Sabine Appelmans 6-4, 6-4.

Hingis, champion here in 1997, was unperturbed at the thought that she faces a tough

run-in as she could face eighth seed and US Open champion Serena Williams if she ousts Venus.

"You have to play against whoever is on the other side. We'll see how it goes tomorrow," said the 19-year-old Hingis.

Venus had a second-set lapse against Appelmans before winning on her fourth match point — and she later chided herself for her inconsistency and failure to close out matches.

"I missed quite a few easy shots today. I don't usually do that."

Younger sister Serena beat Tamarine Tanasugarn of Thailand 6-1, 6-1 — but promptly said there was plenty of room for improvement.

"I wasn't really happy with too many of my returns," said Serena.

She now plays compatriot Lisa Raymond, who hammered Olga Barabanschikova of Belarus 6-4, 6-2.

On the prospect of a potential clash with Venus, Serena said she was not fazed by the prospect of facing anyone.

"I'm ready to play Venus. Hingis or whoever," said the muscular teen.

Elsewhere, Spain's Magui Serna beat Lilia Osterloh of the United States 7-6 (7/1), 6-3 in a tussle between two non-seeds.

Serna will next tackle Aussie teen Jelena Dokic, who beat Kristina Brandi of the United States 6-1, 6-3. Dokic has now made the quarterfinals in both of her Wimbledon visits.

"It's great that I did it again. I think I can go at least another round," said the Belgrade-born 17-year-old.

WIMBLEDON NOTEBOOK

LONDON, July 4 (AFP): The big match was supposed to involve a re-run of the 1980 men's singles final epic between John McEnroe, who beat old rival Bjorn Borg in a charity match at Buckingham Palace on Sunday.

But the real interest all centred on the battle for supremacy in the stands between Russian babe Anna Kournikova and English actress Liz Hurley — and British tabloid newspapers duly gave acres of coverage to their brief encounter.

Kournikova, 19, turned up in a silky creation which left little to the imagination whereas Hurley, former squeeze of Brit heart-throb Hugh Grant, opted for a far more demure pale lemon suit, which the papers dubbed "conservative".

The London Evening Standard headlined that Kournikova had found Hurley "ugly" according to a report which emerged in the Russian edition of Vogue magazine.

Another paper wrote: "Sorry Liz but it's game, set and match to Anna."

IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

Pete Sampras just can't convince people that injury is all part and parcel of the game.

Amid the innuendo that last week's foot injury was not as bad as it was made out to be, six-time champ Sampras was asked after beating Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden to make the quarterfinals if he didn't have "a pocketful of vomit somewhere" for when he needed a quick time out.

"Usually when it's a tough moment I kind of carry it in my pocket, the vomit. I explode it. It comes out," joked Sampras, before adding in more serious vein: "Athletes are injured and you play through injuries."

AIN'T OVER TILL IT'S OVER

Wimbledon is over according to some local tennis fans, distraught at the exit of their favourite Tim Henman.

Those arriving at the venue Tuesday were greeted by a Hen-

man fan shouting at them through a megaphone: "Wimbledon has been cancelled. Tim Henman has been knocked out. Go back to your homes."

The message clearly hadn't got through as fans streamed towards the gates to watch the women's singles move into its final phases.

KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY

"My father was just working at the factory. We had a tennis club there. One of my brothers used to play, so it was father's idea to take me to tennis."

World number 327 Vladimir Voltchkov of Belarus, talking of his humble beginnings in that well-known sporting arena that is the Minsk automobile plant, after causing the first upset of the second week by beating South African Wayne Ferreira to advance to the last 16 on Monday.

Dad was at courtside to see his son book a last-eight showdown with Zimbabwe's Byron Black.

CROSSWORD — By Eugene Sheffer

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24 "Bravo"
25 Blood-type groups
26 Rocket
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34 Vitality
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39 "Humbly"
41 Carle
42 It's up your sleeve

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10 Indian attire
11 Blind piece
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17 Plaines, IL
20 Launch site
21 Greet as a group
22 Wind instrument
23 Potential syrup
27 Symbol of intrigue
29 Play-ground game
30 Between jobs
31 Go like the eagles
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40 Medal earners
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Solution time: 27 mins.

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LOO UNTO ADAY
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