

Schett sails

KLAGENFURT, July 15: Top seed Barbara Schett on Friday easily moved into the semifinals of the dlr 170,000 Uniqa Grand Prix, routing South African Joannette Kruger 6-3, 6-1 in only 55 minutes, reports AP.

The 24-year-old Austrian is looking for her third WTA Tour title following victories at Palermo, Italy, in 1996, and another at Maria Lankowitz, Austria, a year later.

Schett looked a lot more consistent than in her second-round match against German Jana Kandarr, establishing an early 5-0 lead in the first set. But Kruger recovered somewhat, narrowing Schett's advantage to 5-3.

"That was when I thought of Paris, when I was clearly ahead of Sanchez and still lost the match," she said, referring to Spain's Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario. "Whenever I'm clearly ahead I fall into a mental hole."

Schett did serve out the set for 6-3, then took only 19 minutes to win the second.

I believe this could have been a change for a better second half of the season," she said. "There's still a lot I have on my mind."

In order to move into the final, she must first beat Spain's Angeles Montolio in the semifinals on Saturday. Montolio beat Magdalena Maleeva, of Bulgaria 6-3, 6-3 in her quarter-final.

In other matches, unlike Schett, second-seeded Patty Schnyder of Switzerland laboured for more than two hours before beating Gala Leon-Garcia of Spain 2-6, 7-5, 6-4.

Schnyder faces Adriana Gersi of the Czech Republic in the other semifinal. Gersi led Natasha Zvereva 6-2 before the Belarusian retired.

Naogaon zonal champs

NAOGAON, July 15: Naogaon district 12-16 age group teams won zonal championship in kabaddi and football tournament of Rajshahi division recently, reports BSS.

The tournaments were held at the Rajshahi Physical Education College playgrounds. It was organized by the Divisional Sport Department.

Army aquatics

The annual swimming and water polo championship of Bangladesh Army begins today at the Army Swimming Pool in Banani, reports UNB.

300 swimmers from eleven different areas of Bangladesh Army are expected to take part in the five-day meet.

Joyner-Kersey keeps Olympic hopes alive

SACRAMENTO, California, July 15: Jackie Joyner-Kersey may yet rewrite the ending to her remarkable athletics career, reports AFP.

The three-time Olympic gold medalist survived some shaky moments Friday to advance to the long jump final at the US Olympic Athletics Trials staying on course to make a fifth Olympic team two years after officially retiring.

When she hung up her spikes, Joyner-Kersey was already the most-honored woman in US Olympic athletics history, with a total of five medals.

She won the Olympic long jump in 1988 and earned bronze in 1996, and she said she was looking forward to a chance to focus only on the event after dominating the demanding seven-discipline heptathlon for years.

"It could be fun," she said of a trip to Sydney. "I get to enjoy it. I've never enjoyed an Olympics. I come in, do the heptathlon, stay off my feet, next do the long jump, then I'm on a plane home."

Of course, she still has to finish in the top three in Sunday's final, and it was clear that two years without a long jump competition had left her a little rusty.

"Rusty?" the 38-year-old athlete said. "I was saying '20 feet? Girl, you can do better than that!'"

Joyner-Kersey managed just over that — 6.29m — on her first jump. Her second was a dismal 4.68m.

She qualified eighth with her third and final jump of 6.42m.

"Relieved," she said of her dominant emotion. "Because I was surprised. I asked my brother, 'Do you think that'll make it?'"

Dawn Burrell was the top qualifier with a leap of 6.60 on her first attempt. Measha Hubbard and Shana Williams both jumped 6.59. Jenny Adams posted a 6.58, and Marion Jones — whose own drive-for-five is for five gold medals in one Games — cleared 6.57.

Although she hasn't competed in two years — her farewell event was a long jump on July 28, 1998, Joyner-Kersey still holds the US long jump record of 7.49m.

Now she's aiming for another kind of distance — stretching her Olympic career through five Games.

The only other US woman to make five teams was Willye White from 1958-72.

"It's special to have the opportunity to make five Olympic teams," she said. "It's a test of my discipline and desire to put myself in a position like that."

Jones, 24, said she never doubted her childhood hero would reach the final, despite her long layoff and her alarming second jump.

"Although I might have struggled the first two jumps, I knew she'd do whatever was necessary," Jones said. "That's her heart."

Mixed British fortunes

LONDON, July 15: Greg Rusedski's run of bad form continued Friday when he lost Great Britain's opening Davis Cup singles match to Ecuador's Nicolas Lapentti 6-3, 6-7 (3/7), 7-5, 4-6, 7-5 in three hours and 12 minutes, reports AFP.

Fortunately for home hopes British number one Tim Henman subsequently completed a routine straight sets 6-2, 6-1, 6-4 win over Luis Morejon to level the match at 1-1.

Earlier Rusedski threw away a 4-2 lead in the final set to go down to world number 11 Lapentti on Wimbledon's number one court.

It completed a dreadful run of form for the British number two who suffered a stunning first round defeat in the mens singles at Wimbledon a fortnight ago.

The 26-year-old then split from long-time coach Sten Cronqvist at this week just days before this vital tie which Britain must win to remain in the elite 16-nation world group.

But for a tantalising half hour it appeared as if Rusedski had exorcised his demons on the same court on which he had lost to Spadea almost three weeks ago.

Two double faults in the sixth game of the opening set gifted Lapentti the one break he needed to take the set 6-3 in 29

minutes, but Rusedski enjoyed the better of the second set before taking it in a tie-break. At that stage his fragile serve seemed to be coming together — one ace timed at 138mph — but he needed to save four break points in the third before Lapentti produced a forehand winner to take it 7-5.

After a second brief rain delay at 1-1 in the fourth set, Rusedski again had to save a break point on his serve to keep level at 2-2.

He looked unlikely to break Lapentti's serve, however, until what looked to be the turning point of the match in the ninth game.

For almost the first time in the tie the Briton managed to read his opponent's serve and produce something more effective than a blocked return, three outright winners helping him to achieve the vital break and serve out for the set 6-4.

The momentum appeared to have swung firmly in Rusedski's favour and he immediately broke in the first game of the decider as Lapentti's resolve began to waiver.

But after saving two break points to stay in front at 4-2 he was broken back to make it 4-4 and from then on there was only going to be one winner, a double fault giving Lapentti two match points which he gratefully accepted to give Ecuador a precious 1-0 lead.

The pressure was now all on Henman to get his team back on

level terms and the British number one made the perfect start against Morejon. Henman broke in the second game of the set on his way to a 3-0 lead against a player ranked a lowly 310 in the world. And he had little trouble in wrapping up the set 6-2 in just 26 minutes to take it 7-5.

Henman was playing like a man possessed and showed no mercy to Morejon who looked like a man out of his depth against the world number 16.

The second set followed the pattern of the first as Henman cruised into a 3-0 lead and made absolutely certain with a second break as he took the set 6-2 in just 24 minutes.

Morejon showed greater resistance in the third set but Henman was still in control winning 6-4.

Saturday's doubles now assumes greater importance with captain Roger Taylor facing a tough decision over whether to drop Rusedski and partner Henman with either Arvind Parmar or Barry Cowan.

A delighted Lapentti agreed, adding: "The doubles is now the key match. Mentally it was very important to win the first match."

"I definitely thought I had a chance to win, although he is a better player on grass. I am higher ranked at the moment. I thought I played a great match, served well and put some pressure on him with the returns."

Greg out of Davis Cup

LONDON, July 15: Greg Rusedski's depressing season slumped to a new low here on Saturday as injury forced him out of the Great Britain team facing Ecuador in the Davis Cup at Wimbledon, reports AFP.

The British number two, who lost Friday's opening singles rubber in five sets to Nicolas Lapentti, had originally been selected to partner Tim Henman in this afternoon's doubles rubber.

But he has since had an MRI scan which revealed tendinitis in his foot and has been advised to have a week's rest to try and clear the problem.

Rusedski's place in the doubles will be taken by Arvind Parmar, who is also scheduled to tackle Luis Morejon in Sunday's reverse singles as Britain fight to retain their place in the elite 16-nation World Group.

The hosts go into Saturday's rubber against Lapentti and his brother Giovanni level at 1-1 after Henman beat Morejon in three sets to cancel out Rusedski's defeat.

Double Dutch victory

TASHKENT, July 15: The Dutch team advanced to the Davis Cup World Group here Saturday after taking an unbeatable 3-0 lead by winning their doubles tie against hosts Uzbekistan, reports AFP.

Doubles duo Sjeng Schalken and Paul Haarhuis defeated Uzbeki pair Oleg Ogorodov and Dmitri Tomashevich 6-3, 6-1, 7-6 in 97 minutes to wrap up the tie 3-0.

The reverse singles rubbers will be played Sunday. The Uzbekistan pair took a 2-0 lead in the opening set after making an early break only to allow the guests to win five consecutive games to wrap up the first set in 30 minutes.

The Dutch dominated the second, allowing their hosts to take just one game, before racing into the third set after a further 25 minutes.

The hosts put up a fight in the final set forcing a tie-break. But the Netherlands were more focused winning the tie-break 7-0.

Ogorodov said afterwards that he was not surprised by the result and blamed their lack of top class experience for their poor performance.

"We did our best to win the match but it was not enough," Ogorodov said. "The Dutch were playing better than we do. We are just not ready to perform at such a level," he added.

The result meant that Uzbekistan have failed to make the World Group for the third consecutive time.

Two years ago they lost to Australia, who have not lost a tie since, while last year they went down to the Czech Republic, despite their home advantage.

Spadea a lucky man

GSTAAD, Switzerland, July 15: American Vince Spadea Saturday found a silver lining in the clouds which have wrecked the programme this week at the 600,000-dollar Swiss Open after confirming his availability for the American Davis Cup team, reports AFP.

"I'm thrilled to be on the team," Spadea said Saturday after concluding the final game remaining in his held-over second round match against top seed Alex Corretja to lose 6-2, 6-2.

"This is a lifetime achievement and one I want to take advantage of," he said. "I'm honoured that he (coach John McEnroe) called me. I didn't hesitate to come back with a positive answer."

The 25-year-old Floridian will join an ad-hoc squad comprising Todd Martin, Jan-Michael Gambill, Chris Woodruff and McEnroe, who had nominated himself for doubles just in case. Spadea will likely fulfil those duties now.

McEnroe, playing a senior event in California, indicated he might have been hesitant about choosing Spadea, who only at Wimbledon snapped a 21-match loss streak.

"I wanted to speak to him to see where his head was at. He's been on a terrible run, but he's the type of player that can pull an upset," said McEnroe.

With Andre Agassi and Pate Sampras both out with injury, McEnroe faces a fight to get his team past the Spaniards on clay at Santander, Spain from July 21-23. The winner plays Australia in the Davis Cup finale the first week of December.

The only good news is that Spain has historically under-achieved and choked," said Mac. "We'll see if they do it again."

Spadea said that U.S. tennis "still has a chance against Spain."

Farina moves into semis

PALERMO, Sicily, July 15: Italy's Silvia Farina advanced to the semifinals of the Palermo WTA Tour event Friday, beating Argentina's Marina Diaz-Oliva 2-6, 7-5, 6-3, reports AP.

Farina, seeded fifth, will play Slovakia's Henrieta Nagyova, a 7-5, 6-4 winner over Belgium's Justine Henin.

In the other quarterfinals, sixth-seeded Anna Smashnova of Israel beat Italy's Gloria Pizzichini 6-4, 4-6, 6-1, and Bulgaria's Pavlina Nola defeated Slovakia's Jarmeta Husarova 5-7, 6-2, 6-4.



American Maurice Greene leads the pack during the men's 100m dash heat of the US Olympic team's trials at the California State University on July 14. —AFP photo

Greene, Johnson jive

Marion gets serious

SACRAMENTO, California, July 15: Marion Jones got down to business in her bid for five Olympic gold medals Friday, alongside her childhood idol Jackie Joyner-Kersey, reports AFP.

"Not too much fun today, just business," Jones said of the first day of the US Olympic Athletics Trials, where she easily led the first round of the 100m and qualified fifth in the long jump.

Men's sprint rivals Maurice Greene and Michael Johnson — who won't meet on the track until next week's 200m, also got off to successful starts, Greene with an in-your-face 100m and Johnson with a "smooth and easy" 400m first round.

Greene, the 100m world record-holder, admitted he had more than advancing to the semifinals in mind when he clocked a 9.93 — second fastest in the world this year after his own 9.91 in May.

"Get Michael Johnson," Greene said of goals for the 10-day competition, in which only the top three finishers in each event book their tickets to Sydney.

But Johnson, out to repeat his 1996 Olympic double in the 200m and 400m, refused to be rocked.

He looked like he was on auto-pilot as he posted the quickest 400m time of 45.16, and that's the way he wanted it.

"I ran according to plan," Johnson said. "Taking it as easy as possible. I'll do the same thing in the second round, try to get through as easy as possible and save as much for the final as I can, the objective is to be smooth and easy... I just wanted to get this one under my belt. At this point I don't think there's anything in my racing I need to work on. It's not like at a world championships where I'm trying to break a world record."

That said, Johnson didn't rule out the possibility that he could break his own 400m world mark of 45.16 by the time the final is over on Sunday.

"It's possible," he said. Johnson may have been smooth as silk, but he appeared to have ruffled Greene's feathers with some dismissive remarks in Friday's USA Today.

"He doesn't think anyone can beat him, but if you look at our last race, who won it," said Greene, who won their last meeting in 1998.

Greene said he was delighted, but not surprised, by his performance, despite three surprising defeats in Europe in recent weeks.

"A lot of people thought I came in here not ready to run, I showed I am," Greene said.

"It feels a lot better than '96."

added Greene, whose failure at the trials that year meant he missed the Atlanta Games. "I ran a 10.08 in the first round. Oh yeah, I remember it."

Jones is also seeking to add her first Olympic gold to her impressive array of achievements. In fact, she's seeking to grab and unprecedented five athletics golds in one Games — in the 100 and 200m, long jump and two relays.

The long jump is likely to be her biggest stumbling block. After two jumps of 6.57m, she fouled on her third and final attempt.

"I went for it on my last jump and I fouled by a bit," said Jones, who said she purposely attacked the board on the final try.

With the first day out of the way, Jones said, her way was clear.

"Tomorrow I have a fun-filled day in the 100. The following day I only have the long

jump to worry about," said Jones, who then has five days off before the 200m begins.

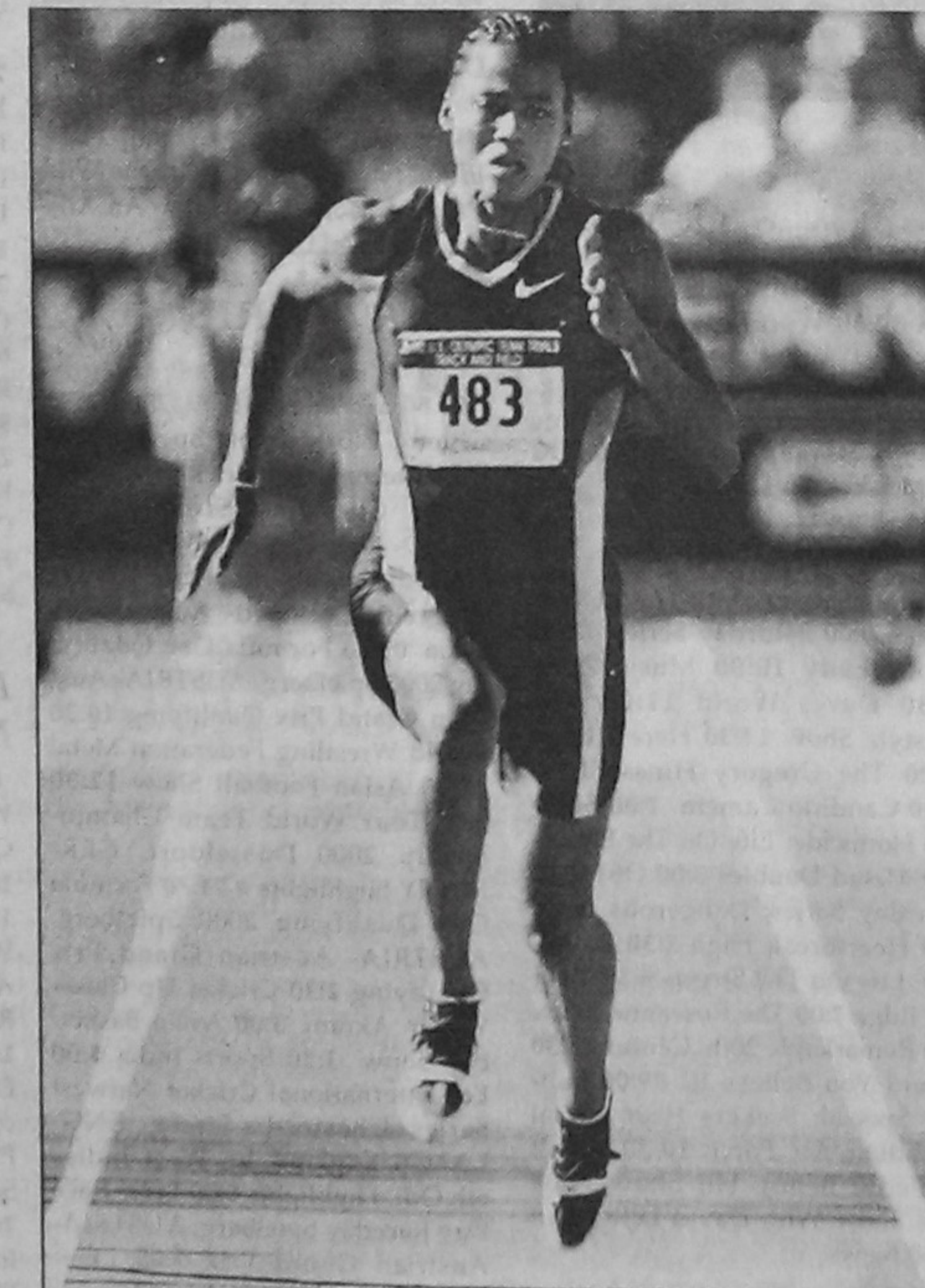
In Sunday's long jump final she'll again get a chance to compete against her onetime hero, Joyner-Kersey, who came out of retirement at the age of 38 in a bid to qualify for a fifth Olympic team.

Joyner-Kersey struggled in her first two jumps — her second was only 4.68m, but qualified with a leap of 6.42m on her third try.

It was clear that Joyner-Kersey, the heptathlon world record holder, was happy not to be worrying about anything but the long jump.

"Now I have a day's rest," she said. "At 38, you need that day."

Jeff Hartwig, the top pole vaulter in the world this year with a height of 6.03m in June, saw his hopes of Olympic glory evaporate when he failed at three attempts at 5.55.



American Marion Jones running during the 100m dash heat of the US Olympic team's trials at the California State University on July 14. She qualified for the finals after finishing first with a time of 10.92 seconds. —AFP photo



Australia's Sandon Stolle is the toast of his Davis Cup teammates including playing partner Mark Woodforde (centre foreground) after they defeated Brazil in the doubles of the semifinals in Brisbane yesterday. The win gave the Aussies an unbeatable 3-0 lead over their Latin American opponents. —AFP photo

Hosts brush Brazil aside

BRISBANE, July 15: Mark Woodforde and Sandon Stolle locked up a 45th Davis Cup final appearance for Australia with a gripping five-set doubles win over Brazilians Gustavo Kuerten and Jaime Oncins here Saturday, reports AFP.

Stolle ended his Davis Cup heartbreak by serving it out for his first doubles victory at the fourth attempt to clinch a 6-7 (3/7), 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 triumph in three hours 25 minutes to wrap up the tie 3-0 with the two reverse singles to play Sunday.

And they were given a ringing endorsement by captain John Newcombe who said the semifinal team of Woodforde,

Stolle, Patrick Rafter and Lleyton Hewitt would be the same for the December 8-10 final against either Spain or the United States.

If that is the case stayaway Mark Philippoussis will be overlooked for the final after his controversial withdrawal from the semifinal citing an inflamed knee from his Wimbledon campaign.

Newcombe only learned of Philippoussis' unavailability when he rang the Scud in his Melbourne home from London last Saturday forcing a late change of plans for the Brazil tie on grass at ANZ Stadium here.

But it appears his patience with the occasional Davis Cup team member Philippoussis

has run out as Newcombe winds down his seven-year tenure as Australian captain with a consecutive final appearance.

"The way we are looking at it right now the team that did the job in the semi will be the one that does the job in the final," said Newcombe.

The Australians are expecting Spain to put John McEnroe's weakened US team to the sword in Santander, Spain, next week to set up a final indoors on clay in Barcelona.

Should the Americans pull off an against-the-odds semifinal victory this year's final will be in Melbourne on hardcourt.

Stolle was chaired off court by his jubilant teammates thrilled for him breaking through for his first Davis Cup doubles win. He had also lost nine consecutive men's doubles finals, including the French Open and Wimbledon, this year.

"There have been a lot of disappointments in Davis Cup and to finally get through today and to earn a point for the team is a great career highlight," said Stolle.

It was Australia's eighth consecutive winning tie since losing their last home tie 3-2 against Zimbabwe in Mildura in April 1995.

Brazil, who will have to wait for another year to chase their elusive first Cup final, fought back Saturday after their dismal opening day when Kuerten and Franco Squillari dropped their singles matches in straight sets to Rafter and Hewitt.

With Kuerten, talked into playing by his team overnight after complaining of a groin injury, leading the way, the Brazilian pair, winners of eight of their last nine Cup matches, looked set to take the semifinal tie into the third and final day.

"We always play well together and we had a two sets to one lead, some late opportunities, but at least it was closer, we played better today," said French Open champion Kuerten.

"Personally, I feel much better today. I enjoyed myself more than yesterday. We tried hard."

Just when the Brazilians were high-fiving each other and looking the likely winners, Woodforde and Stolle rallied breaking Oncins in the fourth set to level the rubber.

Oncins' serve cracked open and he was broken twice again in the fifth set as Australia took control.

Kuerten had a match point against him on serve in the ninth game before Stolle served it out with two more match points to clinch the semifinal.

"There were a lot of emotions to go through in that long last game. I made all my first serves that game and the ball kept coming back, they hit a few let-outs and it was a tremendous high to win it," said Stolle.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 43 Onetime Harvard prexy Derek Video-game parlor 47 Cheers up 51 Cafe au — 52 Campus organization subject 54 Stud fee? 55 Egypt's boy king 56 This weights — 57 The — the lim! 58 Eyesore 59 Zilch
DOWN 3 Cinderella's horses, really Unit-pricing unit Tight shoe result 6 Brace insert 7 Elsa Klensch's subject 8 Attribute 9 Inner peace 10 Wig-maker's mannequin 11 Therefore coins 37 Pop evidence 39 Prince Charles' pastime 42 Criteria 44 Donna of fashion 45 "Sad to say ..."
46 File crossover 48 One of LaToya's brothers 49 College founded by Henry VI 50 "Auld Lang ..." 53 Chic no more
Solution time: 21 mins.

Grid for Cryptokuip puzzle with numbers 1-30 indicating starting positions.

CRYPTOKUIP
VTDBD'N ODHCA? E
TCHDO'Z JPY ZTD HDJCN
EADC EO ZTD VTPXD VPBXA
Yesterday's Cryptokuip: WHEN THE BIG-MOUTH BRAGGED THAT HE COULD CLIMB CLIFFS, HE SURE WAS BLUFFING.
Today's Cryptokuip Clue: V equals W
The Cryptokuip 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.