

Deportivo lift Spanish Supercup

LA CORUNA, Spain, Aug 29 (Reuters/Internet): Spanish champions Deportivo Coruna won the first trophy of the new season on Sunday with a comfortable 2-0 victory over Espanyol in the second leg of the Supercup.

After a goalless first leg in Barcelona and a dour opening 45 minutes in the return, Deportivo took control on 58 minutes as Brazilian midfielder Djalminha stroked in a free kick that struck the bar and bounced down well over the line.

Lovier Inureta's side wrapped up victory against a disappointing Espanyol three minutes later as Diego Tristan pounced on some loose defending 30 metres out and calmly slotted home.

Depor had had to weather some early pressure from Espanyol, who created three half-chances in the opening 10 minutes.

The best of them fell to Raul Tamudo but the young striker's shot from the edge of the area was comfortably saved by Jose Molina.

Irish booters in trouble

DUBLIN, Aug 29 (Reuters/Internet): Ireland manager Mick McCarthy dropped Phil Babb and Mark Kennedy from his squad on Tuesday for the World Cup qualifier against the Netherlands after the pair appeared in court in Dublin charged with criminal damage.

"Neither player will be travelling to Holland. They will be leaving the squad immediately," McCarthy told a news conference.

"It's my decision and it's supported by the Football Association of Ireland."

Earlier Babb and Kennedy, who also appeared at the conference, were charged at Dublin district court with causing criminal damage to a police woman's car, with being intoxicated in a public place and with causing a breach of the peace.

The two men, arrested in central Dublin in the early hours of Tuesday, were released on bail of 950 Irish pounds (dollars 1,087) each and ordered to appear again on November 13.

Javed in no

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Mianand and team manager Brigadier Mohammad Nasir had held detailed discussions with PCB chairman General Tauqir Zia, and Director of Operations, Yawar Saad.

Both Zia and Saad had said earlier that action would be taken following the coach's report on the team's return from Singapore.

"We did not talk about the incident in Singapore because it could have been disturbing for the team," Mianand said.

Sources close to PCB said if the men were found guilty they would be fined and reprimanded, but not publicly so as to save their careers.

"The matter is delicate and the Board does not want to spoil the careers of the three young players," Zia observed last week.

Pakistani players have a history of off-field discipline problems.

An under-19 player, Zeeshan Prevez, was charged in Guyana. West Indies of rapping a woman in 1997. He was released after the court ruled there was a lack of evidence.

Senior players Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis, Aaqib Javed and Mushatq Ahmed were arrested for smoking cannabis in Grenada. West Indies during the 1993 tour.

Two other senior players, Saqlain Mushtaq and Mohammad Akram were reportedly beaten in a night-club brawl in 1998.

Readers' zone

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regularise all the irregularities of the last three years?

There is still time for the NSC, the controlling body of all sports in the country, to act and direct the PCB to shift the venue to Dhaka. Such a NSC decision might anger a few but do good to cricket. Let us see who prevails... State Minister (Obaidul Quader) or the Deputy Minister (Saber Hossain Chowdhury, the BCB president).

-Asif Haque, Dhaka

So far so good for Scifo



BRUSSELS, Aug 29 (Reuters/Internet): Just three weeks into the Belgian football season, Enzo Scifo, the country's most famous player of the past decade, has already woven a magic spell over Charleroi, the struggling club he took over in March.

Three brief months on from escaping ignominious relegation from Division One, Charleroi are riding high at the top of the league, with three wins from three matches.

Unexpected early success has brought new enthusiasm in a city better known for its high unemployment and crowd trouble at June's Euro 2000.

A consortium led by Scifo took over the club in March as it languished in deep trouble, starting relegation in the face.

Charleroi added seven points from their last three games, including a point in the last game against champions Anderlecht.

A nervous Scifo watched that game from the stands, desperate for his new club to take at least a point, but still officially an Anderlecht player until the final whistle blew.

Scifo's revolution -- includ-



ENZO SCIFO

ing the appointment of former Anderlecht youth coach Manu Ferrara as coach and the sale in July of an 80 percent stake to soft drinks firm Chaudfontaine -- has brought "the zebras" immediate results.

Scifo himself has already got on the scoresheet while veteran striker Dante Brogno -- brother of last year's Belgian top-scorer Toni -- is top of the Belgian rankings with five goals.

But the real test of how far Charleroi have progressed will come next week, when they travel to Brussels to take on Anderlecht.

"Can we win? No, we've got to be realistic. We'll be very happy to come back with a point and perform well," Scifo told La Derniere Heure.

Now that we have nine points, things will probably be a bit easier for us. We'll play without the slightest pressure on us. For the moment, we're keeping our feet firmly on the ground."

As for Scifo, he may be robbed of the chance to take on his old team mates. An injury picked up in Sunday's defeat of Antwerp makes him a doubtful starter for next Tuesday's clash.

Popescu bids int'l farewell



BUCHAREST, Aug 29 (Reuters/Internet): Romanian international defender Gheorghe Popescu said on Monday he was retiring from the national team because at the age of 32 he could no longer continue playing for both Romania and his Turkish side Galatasaray.

Popescu told a news conference that his decision was final and that after 104 caps it was time to call it a day.

He is one of three Romanians to win a century of caps -- the others are Ladislau Boloni and his brother-in-law Gheorghe Hagi, who confirmed his retirement from the international team after Euro 2000.

Earlier this month, Popescu turned down a call from Romania's newly-appointed coach Ladislau Boloni to play in the upcoming World Cup qualifiers for the 2002 finals.

He denied reports in the Romanian press that he was quitting because the authorities had refused to grant him purchasing rights of a hotel in a mountain resort.

He rejected those allegations at the news conference adding: "I consider that at my age I can-

not continue playing for both Galatasaray and Romania."

Popescu played 104 matches for Romania, scoring 15 goals. He made his debut in a friendly against Albania in 1988 and made his last appearance during Euro 2000.

Although he was outstanding at the back he could also be dangerous going forwards and once scored four goals for Romania in a World Cup qualifier against Liechtenstein in 1997.



GHEORGHE POPESCU

He was named Romania's Footballer of the Year six times between 1989 and 1996 and even now is enjoying some of the best moments of his career.

He scored the decisive penalty in Galatasaray's 4-1 shoot-out win over Arsenal in the UEFA Cup final in May and was also outstanding when Galatasaray beat Real Madrid 2-1 to win the European Supercup in Monaco on Friday.

He began his career at Universitatea Craiova in 1984 and later moved to PSV Eindhoven in 1990.

He spent a year with Tottenham Hotspur in 1994-95 and is still regarded with great affection by Spurs fans -- not only for scoring the winning goal against Arsenal in the home league match during his season at the club -- but also for scoring the penalty that condemned them to defeat in the UEFA Cup final in Copenhagen in May.

After leaving Spurs he went to Barcelona and went on to win the European Cup Winners Cup with them in 1997.

His last club move was to Galatasaray where he has won three national titles and enhanced his reputation as one of the greatest all-time Romanian players.

Always under pressure



NEW YORK, Aug 29 (AFP): Martina Hingis is the world's top-ranked tennis player, but the Swiss 19-year-old is feeling the pressure from Wimbledon winner Venus Williams and her younger sister, reigning US Open champion Serena.

Top seed Hingis advanced to the second round of the 15 million-dollar Grand Slam tennis event by beating 101st-ranked Alina Jidkova of Russia 6-3, 6-1 in 56 minutes.

But Hingis has not won a Grand Slam crown since last year's Australian Open, losing here to Serena Williams in the 1999 final even as Venus Williams has won 19 matches and four titles in a row starting with her first Slam at Wimbledon.

"They had a very good summer. They played very good on hardcourt," Hingis said. "Serena didn't play that much since Wimbledon. But Venus -- you know, if I would be a fan, maybe I would pick her too."

Hingis is the most likely spoiler to a US Open final matchup between the Williams sisters. Asked if she felt like a favorite or underdog here, Hingis replied, "Maybe both."

"I feel like I have a pretty good chance. I'm playing well. Venus, she has won four straight tournaments. Maybe she is the one who is more favored. People used to pick me. So you never know."

Hingis has won three Australian Open titles plus

Wimbledon and US Open titles in 1997, when she came within a French Open final loss of completing the Grand Slam. But the Williams' more recent success clearly haunts Hingis.

"I think so far I have been better than them," Hingis said. "I haven't been as injured as them. It's just the consistency. That's what counts to be number one, not who wins the most tournaments or who hits the fastest serve."

"Everybody expects me to do as in '97, which is unfair. I have five Grand Slams. Venus and Serena each have one. The Williams sisters, they are my age."

Hingis emphasizes speed but lacks the serving power shown by the Williams sisters, second-ranked Lindsay Davenport or French fourth seed Mary Pierce. The lack of Slam titles since the rise of the Williams girls has also dimmed her light.

"Sometimes people don't understand my game, why I'm up there -- fans when they watch me, because I don't hit the ball as hard as Venus. But I have got a pretty good all-around game," Hingis said.

Poor sportsmanship by Hingis led to jeers by French fans when she lost to Steffi Graf at the 1999 French Open final, again missing a chance to complete a career Slam.

"OK, I had a few problems. But who doesn't when he is a teenager?" Hingis said. "You learn by playing tournaments. You have to deal with different things than just playing tennis. When you go into the real world, it's always different than what you expect."

"I've survived quite a bit. Now I can try to improve my game again. Now I've gotten to the stage where nobody is talking down what I am doing and I can go forward again."

Hingis lost a Wimbledon quarter-final to Venus Williams and now regrets taking a conservative style in the match, saying, "I should have taken my chances earlier, not wait for her to miss or do something stupid."

One thing Hingis will not do to combat the Williams sisters is try to become a big-serving player by working on weights and taking steroids to enhance her muscles. Speed, not strength, will continue to be Hingis' main weapon.

Army Chief Lt Gen M Mustafizur Rahman inaugurating the Prime Bank Women's Open Table Tennis Competition at the Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex at Dhanmondi in the city on August 28.



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Tennis no longer his fixation

NEW YORK, Aug 29 (Reuters): Pete Sampras admits that at 29 years old with 63 career titles, including a record 13 Grand Slam trophies, he no longer has as strong a desire to keep his reign at the top.

Among the recent changes in Sampras' life that have altered his once single-minded focus on tennis are his move back home to Los Angeles and his upcoming marriage to actress Bridgette Wilson.

"Maybe (I'm) not as consumed, not like I was three, four years ago," Sampras said after a hard-earned first-round victory over Martin Damm of the Czech Republic on Monday.

"It's time to kind of cut back on my tournaments, not play quite as much, but try to find ways for me to keep it exciting and fun."

"Looking at myself and Andre (Agassi), who is 30 now, I just turned 29, we're not going to play for the next five, 10 years. But I think for the next two, three years, we'll be at the top of the game, contending for majors, two of the best players in the world."

Sampras held the number one ranking for a record six consecutive years from 1993 to 1998.

"Being number one or dominating the game is much more than playing great tennis. It's a lifestyle that you're willing to lead, that I was willing to do," Sampras said. "To be number one for years and years at a time you have to be consumed with the game, you have to eat, live, and breathe tennis."

"Being number one is almost a passion."

Sampras says he is grateful to be playing his first US Open match since losing in the 1998 semifinals to Patrick Rafter after sustaining a leg injury in that match.

"I feel like, if anything, I appreciate it more playing this year, because last year it was tough being home, watching the US Open unfold the way it did," Sampras said.

Sampras journeyed to Flushing Meadows in 1999, but after suffering a herniated disc in his back during practice was forced to pull out of the tournament. During a press conference to announce he would not be playing, the normally stoic Sampras was visibly upset, his voice quivering.

For the past few years, the most dramatic question on the tennis circuit had been whether or when Sampras would break his Grand Slam titles tie of 12 with Australian great Roy Emerson.

After beating Patrick Rafter in the Wimbledon final this July for his record 13 Grand Slam titles, an emotional Sampras wiped away tears and hugged his parents, who were making a rare tournament appearance.

"Breaking the record was definitely a big weight off my shoulders," said Sampras, who has been injury-plagued for the past year. "I didn't look at breaking the record as pressure, I looked at it as an opportunity. Now that I've done it, sure, it feels great."

Despite being seeded only fourth at the US Open, Sampras is not discouraged about his chances to take a fifth US Open title. "Since I'm four doesn't mean I'm less of a favourite," Sampras said. "I still feel like if I get my game going, I can win here easily."

"I've won here plenty of times. I'd certainly like to add on to that and try to make it five."

Sampras, Hingis sail



NEW YORK, Aug 29: Grand Slam record-setter Pete Sampras and world number one Martina Hingis advanced with ease to the second round of the US Open here Monday with straight-set triumphs at the 15 million-dollar tennis event, reports AFP.

Sampras, who won his record 13th Slam title last month at Wimbledon, subdued stubborn Martin Damm 7-6 (7/3), 7-5, 6-4. The 69th-rated Czech extended Sampras for two hours and 22 minutes despite not having a break point until set three.

"In the first couple sets we were both playing at a very high level," said Sampras. "He was serving huge and it was tough to break him. I felt pretty good out there. The first match is never easy to get through."

"I felt pretty comfortable from the first point on. It was a tough win, one I hope I can build on to get through."

The victory was the first by fourth-seeded Sampras here since 1998 after he missed last year with a back injury. Next up for the four-time US Open winner will be 27th-ranked fellow American Jan-Michael Gambill.

Swiss 19-year-old Hingis, a 1997 winner here and US Open runner-up the past two years, ousted 101st-ranked Russian Alina Jidkova 6-3, 6-1 in 56 minutes. She next faces 32nd-ranked American Kristina Brandl.

Third-seeded Venus Williams increased her winning

streak to 20 matches by beating Anne-Gaëlle Sidot of France 6-3, 6-4.

Top seed and defending men's champion Andre Agassi had no trouble dispatching wild-card entry Alex Kim 6-4, 6-2, 6-0.

Agassi, 30, showed no signs of back pain from an auto accident last month that limited his preparation for the Open. The American served eight aces to book a second round date with Frenchman Arnaud Clement.

But Australian Open runner-up Yevgeny Kafelnikov struggled through after dropping the first two sets and women's seeds Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain and Nathalie Tauziat of France rallied after rain to win first round matches.

And Australian ninth seed Lleyton Hewitt had to fight back from losing the first four games before eliminating Sweden's 43rd-ranked Andreas Vinciguerra in a battle of 19-year-old rising stars that lasted two hours and 58 minutes.

Hewitt fired 17 aces to defeat Vinciguerra 2-6, 7-5, 6-3, 6-3 and book a second-round date against France's Julien Boutter.

Fifth seed Kafelnikov of Russia staggered back to defeat Bulgaria's Orlin Stanoynchev 6-7 (5/7), 1-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-3.

Kafelnikov, a semifinalist here last year, barely kept alive his mark of having never lost a first-round match here in his sixth try against a foe ranked 116th.

Britain's Tim Henman was the first men's seed to reach the second round. The 11th seed ousted Spain's 36th-ranked

Fernando Vicente 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 in one hour and 45 minutes.

Henman avenged a third-round French Open loss to Vicente this year and exorcised the demons of a first-round ouster on the same Louis Armstrong court last year at the hands of Argentina's Guillermo Canas.

"My game is at a different level now," Henman said. "There's more consistency with my serving, a little bit better understanding of the way I can maintain levels at a high standard."

Henman will next face Chilean qualifier Fernando Gonzalez, who beat US wild card Cecil Mamiit 6-3, 6-4, 6-1.

Sixth seed Monica Seles, a two-time US Open winner, beat fellow American Tracy Almeda Singsen 6-0, 6-2 in 50 minutes.

Rain interrupted the first matches of the day for one hour and 45 minutes, helping save Sanchez and Tauziat.

Ninth seed Sanchez escaped South Africa's 63rd-ranked Joanne Kruger 5-7, 6-4, 7-6 (7/2) while eighth seed Tauziat, at 32 the oldest woman in the draw, ousted 160th-ranked Slovakian qualifier Ludmila Cervanova 3-6, 6-2, 6-4.

Sanchez, the 1994 winner here, advanced to a second-round date with Canada's Sonya Jeyaseelan, who beat France's Amelie Cochetux 6-2, 7-5.

"I got to the tie-breaker and started playing my best," Sanchez said. "Matches like this help you play your best. I always think it's not how you start, it's how you finish."

Tauziat will next face 103rd-ranked Venezuelan Maria Vento, who upset Belgium's 28th-ranked Sabine Applemans 6-4, 6-2.

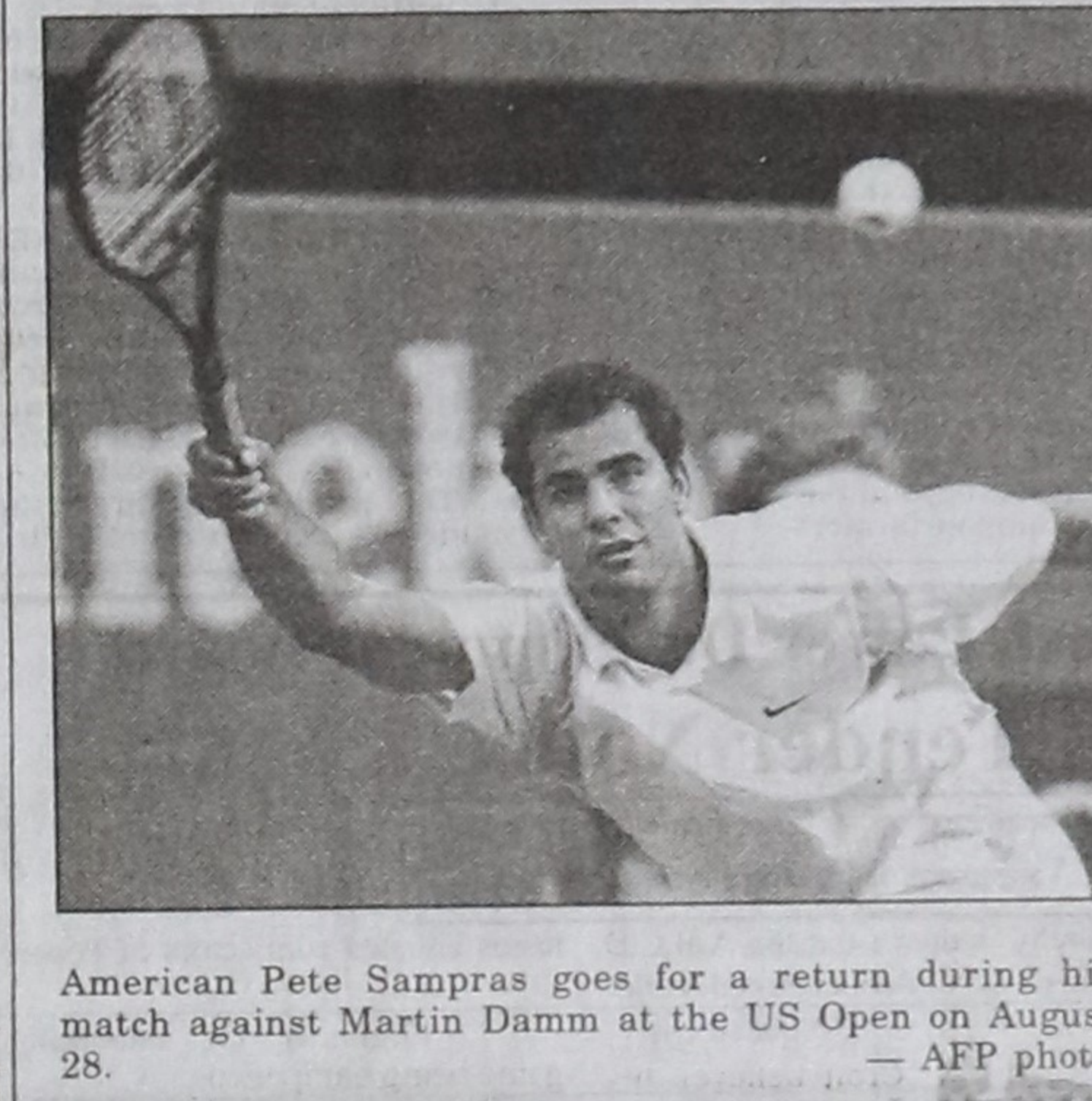
The rain was a big advantage, I was able to think about my tactics," said Tauziat. "When I came back, I played better from the forehead side."

Germany's Tommy Haas eliminated British qualifier Jamie Delgado 6-3, 6-1, 6-1 while France's Jerome Golmard ousted Zimbabwe's Wayne Black 6-2, 6-2, 6-2.

South Africa's Amanda Coetzer, seeded 13th, defeated American Sandra Cacic 6-2, 6-2 while 15th seed Jennifer Capriati, a former US teen star, beat Swiss No. 80 Emmanuelle Gagliardi 6-4, 6-0 in 66 minutes.

Japan's 27th-ranked Ai Sugiyama ousted 97th-rated Yugoslavian Sandra Nacuc 6-1, 6-7 (6/8), 6-3.

"I was light in the second set," Sugiyama said. "I had to come back and focus on my game. I'm very pleased with the way I played the third set. It was a good win for me."



American Pete Sampras goes for a return during his match against Martin Damm at the US Open on August 28.

— AFP photo

US OPEN NOTEBOOK

NEW YORK, Aug 29 (AP/AF): Andre Agassi is attempting to become the third straight man to win back-to-back titles at the US Open.

Pete Sampras won US Open titles in 1995 and '96 before Patrick Rafter won back-to-back titles in 1997 and '98.

Since the Open Era began in 1968, only six men have won consecutive US Open championships: John McEnroe in 1979-81, Jimmy Connors 1982-83, Ivan Lendl 1985-87, Stefan Edberg 1991-92, Sampras and Rafter.

Last year, in attempting to win his third consecutive title, Rafter became the first US Open defending men's singles champion to lose in the first round when he retired against Cedric Pioline at 4-6, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5, 1-0 because of a torn right rotator cuff.

DEBUTANTS Twelve players are making their US Open debuts in the women's singles. And for Kristin Schlukebir of Kalamazoo, Michigan, it is the first Grand Slam tournament main draw of her career.

Others playing in the US Open for the first time are Greta Arn of Germany; Daja Bedanova of the Czech Republic; Alison Bradshaw, San Diego; Dawn Buth, Wichita, Kansas; Ansley Cargill, Fulton, Georgia; Marta Marrero, Spain; Lina Krasnoroutskaya, Russia; Kyra Navy, Hungary; Francesca Schiavone, Italy; Selima Sfar, Tunisia; and Alena Vaskova, Czech Republic.

INJURED Colombia's top player, Fabiola Zuluaga, withdrew Monday from the US Open be-

cause of acute tendinitis in her right shoulder.

Ranked 34th in the world, Zuluaga was replaced in the singles draw by "lucky loser" Alicia Molik of Australia.

Zuluaga, who will return home to Bogota for rehabilitation, is scheduled to represent Colombia next month at the Sydney Olympics.

"I'm looking forward to fighting for a medal at the Olympics, but if I am not 100 per cent, I won't go," she said.

BELL RINGER Although defending US Open women's champion Serena Williams wasn't scheduled to play on the opening day of the year's final Grand Slam tournament, she was still busy.

She began Monday by talking to Matt Lauer on the Today Show on a temporary tennis court built outside the studio. Then she raced down to Wall Street where she rang the bell to open trading on the New York Stock Exchange.

CELEBRITY VIEWING New York Mets pitchers Mike Hampton and Pat Mahomes and third baseman Robin Ventura were on hand for the opening day of the US Open at the National Tennis Centre, located across the subway tracks from Shea Stadium, home of the Mets.

Also taking in the tennis were former New York Mayor David Dinkins, photographer/cinematographer Gordon Parks, comedian Alan King, football commentator John Madden, music star Dave Matthews, singer Tony Bennett, former Mets third baseman Ed Charles, and former tennis

stars Chris Evert, Steffi Graf, Billie Jean King, Ilie Nastase, Fred Stolle and Stan Smith.

SAMPRAS NO "IRON MAN" Record 13-time Grand Slam champion Pete Sampras has achieved his stunning tennis success despite suffering from thalassemia, a blood condition stemming from an iron deficiency.

"In the heat of battle, there is a tendency to get tired when the iron is low and it can affect you," Sampras said.

Sampras regularly takes iron supplements but has been known to suffer from dehydration, nausea and dizziness in extreme heat such as the Open can produce.

IN HONOUR OF ASHE A 14-foot tall bronze statue of a nude figure serving a tennis ball created to honour the late three-time Grand Slam champion Arthur Ashe was unveiled here Monday at the US Open.

The work by artist Eric Fischl is the centerpiece of the Arthur Ashe Commemorative Garden and stands near the giant globe Unisphere adjacent to the US Tennis Centre, the main stadium of which is named for Ashe.

The black tennis great won the 1968 US Open, 1970 Australian Open and 1975 Wimbledon titles.

A stone terrace along the bottom of the sculpture and garden bears a quote from Ashe as an inscription: "From what we get, we can make a living; what we give, however, makes a life."

TV Guide

Wednesday 30th August

(All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme)

BTB

3:00 Opening Announcement, Recitation From The Holy Quran And Programme Outline 3:15 Patriotic Song 3:20 Open University Program 4:00 Bangla News 4:05 Sashtho Thatttho (Health Developing For Mother & Children) 4:20 Cartoon: Captain Planet 4:40 Shamol Chhaya 5:20 Aapon Bhumi (Programme On Land Management) 5:45 Fusti Tattho 6:05 Niramoy (Home Medical) 6:30 Transmission From Chittagong Center 7:00 Sambad (Bangla News) 7:05 Geetibhat (Rabindra Song) 7:25 Bidibidhan (Programme On Law) 8:00 Bangla News At 8:20 Serial: Basant Balyo

#4 (*Azizul Hakim, Tony Dayes, Eshita, Munira Bagom Mamy, Tapas Sarkar) 8:50 Series: The New Adventure of Robinhood (Bangla Dub) 10:00 News At Ten (English) 10:20 Bishaw Natok 10:50 Dristi-O-Sristi (Programme On Letarture) 11:30 Bangla News 11:35 English News 11:40 A) Programme Outline For Thursday B) National Song 11:45 Closing