

Sport

Clijsters the beneficiary

MIAMI, Florida, Oct 10 (AP): Belgium's Kim Clijsters was the big winner Monday, when the new WTA tennis rankings were released, jumping 19 places up to 26th position, thanks to her final appearance at the Filderstadt Open last week, reports AFP.

Swiss superstar Martina Hingis who felled Clijsters at the final hurdle in Germany retained her number one ranking as the top ten positions were unchanged.

Lindsay Davenport remained second with Venus Williams, Mary Pierce and Monica Seles completing the top five.

Serena Williams who won the Princess Cup in Japan on Sunday stayed at number eight, but closed the gap on France's Nathalie Tauziat who is one place ahead of her, to 256 points.

Following are the top 20 women's tennis players:

Player	points
Hingis	5652
Davenport	5031
V Williams	4336
Pierce	2891
Seles	2889
Martinez	2716
Tauziat	2562
S Williams	2306
Sanchez-Vicario	2130
Huber	1785
Testud	1756
Coetzer	1740
Kournikova	1707
Rubin	1529
Mauresmo	1507
Capriati	1505
Van Roost	1501
Halardecugis	1412
Dementieva	1391
Frazier	1132

ATP rankings

PARIS, Oct 10 (AP): Latest ATP men's world tennis rankings issued on Tuesday:

Player	points
Kuerten	645
Safin	639
Sampras	637
Norman	586
Kafelnikov	460
Hewitt	435
Corretja	424
Agassi	418
Enqvist	402
Hennan	328
Carlos Ferrero	322
Squillari	296
Pioline	282
Philipoussis	279
Rafter	265
Kiefer	253
Puerta	244
Ferreira	239
Clement	210
El Aynaoui	210

Athens-IPC dispute

SYDNEY, Oct 10: Athens has not signed a host city contract for the 2004 Paralympic Games because of unacceptable financial demands by the event's world governing body, a Greek Paralympic Committee official said Tuesday, reports AP.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) said this week it had serious concerns about Athens hosting the Paralympics in 2004 because Greek organizers had shown minimal interest in the Games.

But Takis Papacostantopoulos, a board member of the Hellenic Paralympic Committee (HPC), said delays in Athens' preparation were due to "unacceptable" economic demands made in the host city contract by the IPC.

"In this contract there are some articles that were not acceptable for Athens," he said. "One of these is the lump sum Athens must pay to the IPC - double or more of the amount that Sydney had to pay."

He said Sydney Paralympics organizers paid just over 1.2 million dollars as a lump sum to the IPC, while "they've asked in the vicinity of three million dollars from Athens."

McCarthy wary

DUBLIN, Oct 10: Following impressive draws away to Holland and Portugal, Republic of Ireland manager Mick McCarthy is warning against complacency in Wednesday when his team host minnows Estonia in their Group Two 2002 World Cup qualifier, reports AFP.

"I'm delighted with those results and those performances, of course I am," said McCarthy after watching substitute Matt Holland hit a spectacular equaliser in Saturday's 1-1 draw against Portugal.

"But it is no good shouting from the rooftops at this stage. We've got our first home game of the group now and we'll see what happens."

And if we don't beat Estonia then those results in Amsterdam and Lisbon, much as we've all enjoyed them, won't really mean a thing."

McCarthy has steered the Republic unscathed through their opening tests away to the best two teams in the group.

But the two draws have certainly felt like wins against two of the Euro 2000 semi-finalists - even to the Aeg Liggins stewardess who announced on the team's flight home from Portugal: "Congratulations on your 1-1 victory."

On Saturday, though, it was largely a case of old-fashioned trench warfare which underpinned the Republic's latest achievement and repelled the likes of Portugal superstars Luis Figo and Rui Costa.

"I think you'll find we won't often be able to play as well away from home as we did in Holland," admitted McCarthy.

"But I enjoyed taking the point in Lisbon just as much. We knew we were up against another great team and it worked out that we had to defend better."



Russian sensation Marat Safin hits a backhand during his match against France's Nicolas Escude in the CA Trophy event in Vienna on October 9.

—AFP photo

Hingis Dokic's next hurdle



ZURICH, Oct 10: Australia's Jelena Dokic overcame jet-lag to defeat Switzerland's Emmanuelle Gaillard 6-3, 6-0 at the Swisscom Challenge on Monday, and lined herself up for a second round clash with top seed Martina Hingis, reports AFP.

"I'm zonked!" said Dokic, who had flown in from an event in Tokyo. "I didn't think I was going to have to play today (Monday)."

"I was a little upset, but they scheduled me and I just had to get used to it. It took me a bit of time to adjust because I just got in last night. I feel all right actually, not too bad. Once I got going I was all right, and it wasn't such a long match."

The 17-year-old is in Zurich without her father and coach, Damir. He is banned from the WTA Tour until the end of March after running foul of the authorities at Wimbledon and the US Open.

"He's staying at home with my brother and my mum is with me at the moment," said Dokic. "He's going to be coming

to some tournaments and we'll train off-site. I've think I've gotten used to it. I've played a few tournaments since the was banned and I've coped just fine. The biggest step was to get through the US Open, which I did."

In other matches, qualifier Anastasia Myskina of Russia disappointed local fans when she upset Patty Schnyder 6-4, 2-6, 6-1, and there was also success for two other qualifiers.

Another Russian, Tatiana Panova, overwhelmed Gala Leon Garcia of Spain 6-1, 6-3, and Germany's Jana Kandar dismissed Anne Kremer of Luxembourg 6-4, 6-1.

In the remaining match of the day, Anne-Gaelle Sidot of France outlasted qualifier Andrea Glass, beating the German 6-1, 6-7, 6-4.

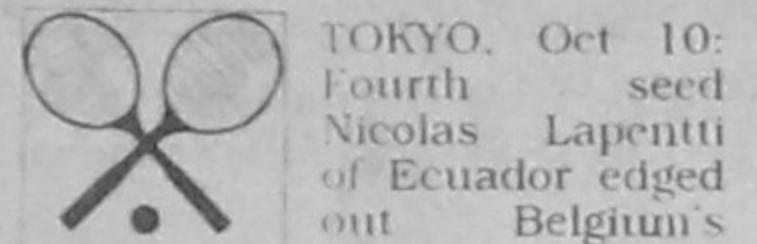
Sidot won despite putting only 35 per cent of her first serves into play, but when she was successful she won an impressive 84 per cent of the points and never faced a break point.

It will be their first meeting since the young Australian's stunning victory over Hingis at Wimbledon last year, and it's a match she's looking forward to.

"I've got nothing to lose," said Dokic. "I'm happy with the way I played today (Monday) and whatever happens happens. You can't worry about it too much and I'm actually looking forward to it."

I think her serve is the thing to attack. I've just got to play my game, not make errors and keep the ball in play. She's not going to overpower me, but she's been playing well. As I said, I've just got to play my game and take advantage when I can."

Rochus lone seed to fall



TOKYO, Oct 10: Fourth seed Nicolas Lapentti of Ecuador edged out Belgium's Olivier Rochus 7-6, 7-6 Tuesday, advancing to the second round of the 970,000 dollar Japan Open tennis tournament, reports AP.

Lapentti, ranked No. 16 in the world, topped five seeds in action on the second day of the tournament. All but 16th-seeded Christopher Rochus, Olivier's elder brother, were winners.

Leading 6-5 in the first set, Lapentti had three break points slip away.

In the tiebreaker, Lapentti built a 7-6 lead with an ace and then set with a sharp return that Rochus hit long and wide.

It was their first meeting on tour.

"I was sick last night with an upset stomach. I didn't take any food all day, and I felt somewhat weak and tired in the second set when I had to go to bathroom (during the interval)," he said.

I wanted and tried to win the second set's tiebreaker because I knew I would have less chances in a third set."

Among those reaching the second round included 11th-seed Mariano Zabaleta of Argentina, No. 14 seed David Prinosil of Germany and 15th-seeded Harel Levy of Israel.

Andrea Gaudenzi of Italy, ranked No. 103, ousted the elder Rochus 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Of 16 seeds, eight had first-round byes. They include top-seeded Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil, defending champion Nicolas

breaker, Lapentti volleyed a winner and then served an ace to win the set and the hard-fought match.

Rochus has been playing some good tennis in the last few weeks," said Lapentti. "I had to play a great tennis to beat him, and we had two close games with two tiebreaks. I was lucky to win."

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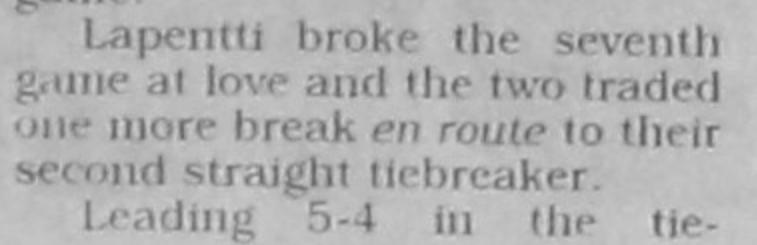
Harel-Decugis finished second to Serena Williams in the Toyota Princess but won its doubles title with her Japanese partner.

Frazier was a quarterfinalist in the Toyota Princess.

Lapentti broke the seventh game at love and the two traded one more break en route to their second straight tiebreaker.

Leading 5-4 in the tie-

Her efforts paying off



TOKYO, Oct 10: Serena Williams, joined by Pete Sampras, tries to copy his forehand and she has already followed in the great American's footsteps towards world number one by winning her debut event in Japan, reports AFP.

Leading 5-4 in the tie-

well as former number one Monica Seles, to reach her career high at fourth in the world.

It fired up Venus. She has continued an excellent 32 singles match winning streak, including victories at Wimbledon, Flushing Meadow, and the Sydney Olympics, also targeting the world's summit.

Venus ascribes her current form to a change in attitude towards the game that she dates to the end of 1999, a year that saw her painfully eclipsed by Serena's US Open triumph.

Serena slipped down to eighth after a meniscus tear in her left knee left her out of the game for two and a half months before returning to court at Wimbledon where she was beaten by Venus in the semifinals.

"I did not play a very solid beginning of the year. I did not do anything until Wimbledon. If I had better results in some of the tournaments in the beginning of the year, I would have had a better ranking now," said Serena.

Gosper, an IOC member since 1977, was a founding member of the IOC's ethics commission but resigned from the panel this year after he came under investigation in the bribery scandal surrounding the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City. He was cleared of any wrongdoing by the panel.

He also apologized to Australians for allowing his daughter to become the first Aussie torchbearer of the Olympic flame.

"Anytime you win a tournament, it is good. I have only won three this year. Last year I had a few more. I am glad that I was able to win this tourna-

ment," said Williams.

Williams' most challenging rival for the top spot is probably her elder sister Venus, ranked third in the world, and with whom Serena captured the Sydney Olympic doubles gold medal.

At the 1999 US Open, Serena clinched her first Grand Slam title faster than Venus, beating Hingis, Davenport as

Lindsay Davenport.

"When you're young, you usually get a player that you want to copy, because you are going to do as well as them, so I tried to copy his forehand and his running forehand, because he has a great shot and he does that very well," the 19-year-old from Saginaw, Michigan, said of Sampras.

Williams fired 10 aces and powered past doubles world number one Julie Halardecugis of France 7-5, 6-1 on Sunday to win the WTA Princess Cup, giving herself a 100-per cent winning record in Japan.

Sampras holds the same immaculate record in the country.

Sampras, who won record 13th Grand Slam singles crown at Wimbledon in July, won the 1993 Japan Open to become the world number one for the first time and reclaimed the title in 1994 and 1996 here.

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Safin shocked

VIENNA, Oct 10: US Open champion Marat Safin suffered further disappointment after a first round exit at the Olympics last month, by losing to unranked Frenchman Nicolas Escude at the CA Trophy on Monday, reports Reuters.

In his first appearance since the defeat at the Sydney Games to another Frenchman, Fabrice Santoro, the top seeded Russian bowed out in Vienna's Stadthalle 5-7, 6-3, 7-6.

Safin's early exit is yet another blow for tournament organisers who had last-minute cancellations from Pete Sampras and Australia's Lleyton Hewitt.

Although Safin is second in the Champion's Race and has already assured himself a place in the inaugural Tennis Masters Cup in Lisbon, he was upset at having missed earning points in Vienna.

"I wanted to earn points here to fight for the number one spot," he said. "My next goal is to be number one. I would like to tell my kids I was the best player in the world, even if just for one week."

"It's important to always have another goal. The US Open title was not the end of my career, it marked the beginning of it. I have enough motivation in me for the rest of my life."

After the Sydney debacle, which came directly after his maiden Grand Slam triumph and a fifth season title at Taschikent, Saf