

Waugh vows to fight back

MELBOURNE, Oct 11 (Internet report): The knives are out for Australian star Mark Waugh, but the elegant batsman is determined to retain his place in the Test side for the upcoming home series against the West Indies.

Waugh, 35, has managed just 98 runs in his past nine ODI innings, including seven against India in Australia's loss in the ICC Knockout Trophy quarter-final in Nairobi on October 7.

Waugh averaged 30 in his past 17 Test appearances. In 103 Tests he averaged 42, including 17 centuries.

A back injury has ruled him out of Sunday's domestic limited overs game between New South Wales and Victoria at North Sydney, but he says a few days rest should take care of it.

However despite his poor form, Waugh is determined to regain his form in domestic matches over the next few weeks.

Australia, the reigning World Cup champions in the limited overs version of the game, have won their past 10 Test matches and have the chance next month to equal the West Indies' record of 11 consecutive Test victories.

The first Test of the five-match series between Australia and the West Indies starts in Brisbane on November 23.

Chase C'ships from Nov 13

NEW YORK, Oct 11: Serena Williams, fresh off Sunday's French Open title in Tokyo, French Open champion Mary Pierce and Anastasia Sanchez-Vicario have clinched berths in the Chase Championships, completing half of the 16-player field for the WTA Tour season finale, reports Reuters.

Tournament officials announced the three latest qualifiers for the November 13-19 event at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday.

Williams, the 1999 US Open winner, will be making her delayed debut in the year-ending championships after pulling out last year with a back injury.

Cronje

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recommendations to government by early December, according to sports minister Ngondwe Balfour.

According to the UCBSA resolution, Cronje has seven days from Tuesday to make representations to the general council regarding the resolution.

The scandal has rocked the whole of the nation and has provoked former president Nelson Mandela, who met Cronje last week, to urge the cricketer to become a role model to young South Africans despite his disgraced actions that cost him the captaincy of the national side.

"I am saying to him, without excusing in any way what he has done if the allegations are proven to be right, that he can be a role model and turn this tragedy into triumph," Mandela said after the meeting.

FACTFILE

JOHANNESBURG, Oct 11 (Reuters): Factfile on former South African cricket captain Hansie Cronje:

1969: Born Sept 25, Bloemfontein.

1987: Makes first-class debut for Orange Free State against Transvaal in Johannesburg.

1992: Plays his first one-day international, against Australia in Sydney during World Cup.

1992: Makes Test debut, against West Indies in Bridgetown.

1994: Appointed South Africa captain, taking over from Krieger Wessels for home series against New Zealand.

1994: Loses his first Test as captain, against New Zealand, but then leads his country to five successive Test victories, a South African record.

1995: Plays for Leicestershire, scoring 1,301 runs at 52.04 in 15 county championship matches.

1996: Leads South Africa to 1-0 home victory against England in their first five-Test rubber since returning to world cricket after apartheid.

1999: His dream of winning World Cup for South Africa is shattered when they are knocked out of the tournament in England after a semifinal tie with Australia.

2000: Charged on April 7 with match-fixing by Indian police after one-day series in March.

2000: Sacked on April 11 from one-day series against Australia after admitting he had not been "entirely honest" in his denials of match-fixing.

2000: In June, he admits to a government enquiry headed by retired Judge Edwin King to approaching two team mates about fixing a one-day international against India. He also admitted accepting nearly \$100,000 from bookmakers over a four-year period but denies ever having thrown a match.

2000: In September, prosecutor Shamila Batooli returns from India with transcripts of telephone conversations allegedly detailing a conspiracy to fix matches.

2000: October 11, the United Cricket Board of South Africa announces its intention to ban Cronje for life.

Warne has nothing to prove



MELBOURNE, Oct 11: Champion leg-spinner Shane Warne says he has nothing extra to prove this summer despite being stripped of the Australian vice-captaincy for off-field indiscretions, reports AFP.

Warne trained lightly with Victorian teammates here Wednesday testing out the knee on which he had minor surgery two weeks ago, and declared himself excited about the coming summer season.

Warne had to defend himself after admitting to engaging in dirty phone talk with a British nurse during his off-season stint with English county Hampshire.

The controversy was the last straw for the Australian Cricket Board after a series of incidents tarnished his reputation and he was demoted from the vice-captaincy. Adam Gilchrist is the new deputy to captain Steve Waugh.

"I've got nothing to prove at all. I've played for ten years and have done pretty well on the park and I don't have to prove anything to anybody," Warne said Wednesday.

"My approach to this sum-

mer will be the same as any other summer.

"It's always exciting no matter what you've done the previous months and I'm looking forward to it, excited by it and can't wait for it to come really."

Warne was named in a 14-man squad for Sunday's one-day game against New South Wales in Sydney, but will wait to see if there is any stiffness or swelling in the knee Thursday before committing to playing.

He bowled about 20 deliveries in the nets Wednesday, did some batting and throwing and said his knee felt fine.

"That will do it tonight then a bit more tomorrow and then gradually build up to the game on Sunday," Warne said.

"I wouldn't be letting anybody down so if it's not right I won't play but if it is right then hopefully I'll be all right."

Warne had his knee scraped after suffering discomfort in the joint for the past 12 months.

He was uncertain about the chances of returning to English county cricket, with concern the off-season work could be too much after shoulder, finger and now knee problems.

"County cricket is something I always wanted to try out and I have this year and whether I'm going to do it in the coming season I'm not sure."

"It's very demanding, there is not much time off, you're playing cricket just about every day and when you're not you're travelling."

"It's quite tough but it's very enjoyable and given the opportunity depending on schedules down the track it's something I might do in the future."



SHANE WARNE

WA set to rule the Shield



SYDNEY, Oct 11: Zimbabwean Test batsman Murray Goodwin and the new generation of the Marsh dynasty have

boosted Western Australia ahead of their Sheffield Shield launch against champions Queensland here on Friday, reports AFP.

Goodwin and Shaun Marsh, son of former Australian opener and coach Geoff, have strengthened WA's chances of wresting control of Australia's traditional first-class competition from the Queenslanders.

The Shield offers an excellent grounding for Australia's cricketers to prepare under tough four-day match conditions for graduation into the champion Test team.

Australian captain Steve Waugh has vowed his players will work hard at home following a disappointing early exit from the ICC Knockout Trophy tournament in Kenya, losing to India in the quarterfinals.

And, with the first Test between Australia and the West Indies six weeks away, players will be keen to push their claims before the national selectors with strong performances in the domestic competition.

Chairman of selectors Trevor Holnis said this week his panel would take advantage of the unusually large number of interstate games ahead of the Test series, which begins at Brisbane's Gabba ground on November 23, to monitor form.

WA, or the Warriors as they've been marketed, welcome Adam Gilchrist and Damien Martyn back from international duties to a side considered the likely challenger to Queensland.

WA also boast Test batsman Justin Langer and will again be captained by Tom Moody, who has been played first-class cricket for his state since March last year because of a back injury.

Goodwin spent the past three years with Zimbabwe's national team while Marsh, a stylish batsman, will embark on a career already pre-destined for greatness. His uncle is former Test WA wicketkeeper Rod Marsh.

Meanwhile, one-day international all-rounder Andrew Symonds returns to a Queensland side missing paceman Scott Muller and spinner Geoff Foley.

Queensland opening batsman Matthew Hayden will be looking to continue the form that allowed him to break back

into the Test team while Victorian Matthew Elliott, South Australian Greg Blewett and WA's Mike Hussey could mount challenges for his national spot.

New South Wales, who finished bottom last season but are now coached by Steve Rixon, will rely on international players Steve Waugh, Michael Bevan, Shane and Brett Lee and Glenn McGrath.

Former Test wicketkeeper Rixon guided NSW to three Sheffield Shield and three one-day titles from 1989-90 and 1994-95.

The Blues take on Victoria in a one-day match on Sunday and then a four-day fixture starting at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on October 25.

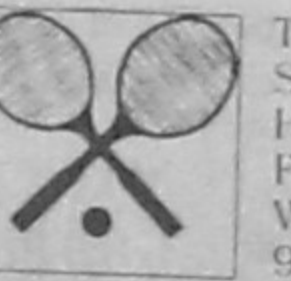
Mark Waugh has been left out of the NSW side for Sunday's match after being troubled by a back injury in Kenya.

Tasmania will be missing Colin Miller, who has gone to Victoria, and Mark Ridgway (retired) when they meet Queensland in the Shield from October 26.

The Tigers have recruited former Victorian paceman David Saker and wicketkeeper batsman Sean Clinecliff.

South Australia will have paceman Jason Gillespie and spinner Brad Young back from overseas when they meet WA at Adelaide Oval from October 26.

Chang falters again



TOKYO, Oct 11: Second seed Julie Halard-Decugis of France got a scare Wednesday at the 970,000 dollars

Japan Open tennis tournament, rallying past unseeded local favourite Shimoda Asagoe 6-2, 3-6, 7-5 in an entertaining second-round match, reports AP.

The 30-year-old Frenchwoman, ranked 19 in the world, was luckier than men's fifth seed Michael Chang, who fell to unheralded fellow American Cecil Mamiit to become the day's biggest-name casualty.

Coming off a loss to Serena Williams in last week's final at the Toyota Princess Cup in Tokyo, Halard-Decugis seemed to be on her way to an easy win against the 24-year-old Asagoe after drawing a bye Tuesday.

The world No 69 committed several unforced errors in the first set and seemed rattled. But encouraged by the sparse yet vocal crowd at Centre Court, she upped the tempo of her game and wrong-footed Halard-Decugis with a number of accurate crosscourt strokes from the baseline.

An upset seemed to be in the making with the third set tied at 5-5 and Asagoe serving, but Halard-Decugis pulled out the final two games with some of her most creative shots - including a perfect lob that left her opponent stranded at the net.

"I'm extremely disappointed," said Asagoe, who was the highest-ranked of four Japanese women competing in the singles tournament. "If I had won I could have gotten close to the top 50, which is my goal."

Halard-Decugis was visibly relieved.

"I didn't focus long enough during the match and let Shinobu come back into the match," Halard-Decugis said. "It was a good fight until the end."

In the surprise of the day, Chang lost 5-7, 4-6 to the unseeded Mamiit, whose repeated charges to the net forced the world No 34 into making an uncharacteristic number of mistakes.

"I wasn't able to put away as many balls as I'd like today," Chang commented afterward.

He built an early lead with a patient baseline game, pushing the ball deep into the corners and breaking Mamiit in the sixth game to go up 4-2.

But the 24-year-old Los Angeles native came back to break Chang twice in the first set as the one-time world No 2 seemed

to lose his composure.

Chang was blanked in the decisive 12th game, losing the set with a wild return from a hard Mamiit serve.

Mamiit, currently ranked 130 in the world, was only 4-10 this year going into his match with Chang, who was making his 10th appearance in the Japan Open.

In other men's action Wednesday, top seed Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil wore down Chile's Nicolas Massu 7-6, 6-0 in a match of big serves and booming strokes.

Back from a trip to the quarterfinals at the Sydney Olympics, the 24-year-old world No. 3 was comfortably simply trading shots from the baseline with Massu.

The 21-year-old Chilean gave as good as he got for most of the first set but appeared to tire in the second, when he was broken three times and struggled with his returns.

Third seed Mark Philippou-

sis of Australia showed off his own power game in an easy 6-2, 7-5 victory over compatriot Wayne Arthurs.

Other second-round winners in the men's singles included sixth seed Byron Black of Zimbabwe, who defeated Daniel Elsner of Germany 6-2, 6-1.

Black's younger brother Wayne beat American Taylor Dent 6-4, 6-2. Dent was playing as a substitute for German second seed Nicolas Kiefer, who withdrew from the tournament with an injury to his right wrist.

In other women's singles action, second seed American Amy Frazier needed to prevail in two tiebreakers to down fellow countrywoman Corina Morariu 7-6, 7-6.

But three other seeded women were knocked out of the tournament, including No 3 Kristina Brandi, who retired late in her match with Tara Snyder after complaining of dehydration.



American Michael Chang is visibly disappointed after losing his second round game of the Japan Open to compatriot Cecil Mamiit yesterday.

Marsh won't talk about Sarwan

SYDNEY, Oct 11: Australian Cricket Academy coach Rod Marsh said Wednesday it was too early to predict the future for West Indian batsman Ramnaresh Sarwan, reports AFP.

Sarwan and four of his West Indian teammates are on six-week scholarships at the ACA and have taken part in three one-day matches against Tasmania in Adelaide this week.

The West Indian Cricket Board sent the five players to Australia rather than consider them for the ICC Knockout Trophy tournament in Kenya, giving the next generation of Caribbean cricketers a chance to sample Australian wickets.

With the West Indies to tour Australia later this year, the likes of Sarwan, Ricardo Powell, Daren Ganga and Chris Gayle are expected to be at the heart of any revival in the nation's cricketing fortunes.

Sarwan, who has been compared to a young Rohan Kanhai, smashed 112 off 100 balls against Tasmania on Monday, including 10 fours and two sixes.

Marsh was impressed by Sarwan's temperament and technique but said it was premature to be comparing him with Kanhai, who played 79 Tests and averaged more than 45.

"Rohan was one of the best players I ever saw," said the former Australian wicketkeeper.

"I wouldn't quite put Ramnaresh in that category yet. It's too early to tell. There's a bit of a difference playing at Adelaide Oval No.2 on a flat track against Tasmania and playing in a Test match against McGrath and Lee and Gillespie and Warne."

"Time will tell whether he should be compared with Rohan. At this point in time, I wouldn't like to be making a comparison."

Earlier this year, Sarwan became only the 10th West Indian cricketer to make his debut as a teenager, joining the likes of Sir Garfield Sobers and current teammate Shivnarine Chanderpaul.

He topped the West Indies averages on the recent tour of England and boasts a Test average of 45 after five matches.

"I think it's a good move of the West Indies to send them out here and give them experience under our conditions," Marsh said.

"He looks very organised. He hits the ball well. But I'd like to see him against the best we have to offer."

Seeds tumble at CA Trophy

VIENNA, Oct 11: An uninspired Olympic champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov was sent crashing out of the CA Trophy on Tuesday by Britain's defending champion Greg Rusedski 6-4, 6-7, 6-3, reports Reuters.

A wary second seed Magnus Norman made a similarly early exit, losing his first round tie 4-6, 7-6, 6-4 to Switzerland's Roger Federer.

Fifth seeded Spaniard Alex Corretja was also bundled out 6-1, 6-0 match to Germany's Olympic silver medalist Tommy Haas, leaving the hardcourt tournament with only three remaining seeds.

On Monday, top seeded Russian and US open champion Marat Safin lost to unfancied Frenchman Nicolas Escude and seventh-seeded Spaniard Juan Carlos Ferrero bowed to Richard Krajicek.

"So many of the top guys are losing their first round matches this week. This goes to show that the rankings mean nothing at all at the moment," said Kafelnikov.

The Russian went on to slam Vienna organisers after his defeat which he blamed on a slow surface he said resembled the clay courts of the French Open.

"It was a pretty ridiculous surface. We are playing indoors and the surface should be reasonably fast. It was unfortunate as I was hoping to do well this week and I'm very disappointed," he said.

Norman, the second seed after withdrawals from Pete Sampras and Australia's Lleyton Hewitt, said his exit was due to mental fatigue.

"I have been struggling a lot lately with my confidence. I'm mentally tired as I have been playing too much tennis," said the Swede whose hopes of completing the season as world number one were also dented.

"Becoming the number one has been a goal of mine since the French Open. It will be tough," said Norman, who led the race for seven weeks earlier in the season and is currently fourth.

Rusedski, who beat Germany's Nicolas Kiefer for the title here last year, delivered one of his best displays of the year after having been sidelined with a series of injuries.

The Briton needed a single break for 6-4 before his form wavered slightly in the second set which he lost 3-7 in a tie-break. In the decider he broke twice, for 3-2 and then for 6-3, profiting from Kafelnikov's double faults on both occasions.

"I always play well here. Vienna treats me well," Rusedski said. "My injuries are not at the back of my head when I enter the court. I have to try and get on a roll and that will give my confidence a boost."

Norman had a slow start but came back from 4-1 down to break twice in the seventh and ninth games and claim the first set.

Hingis eases past Dokic



ZURICH, Oct 11: World number one Martina Hingis cruised past Jelena Dokic in straight sets in the second round of the Swisscom Challenge Tuesday, avenging a Wimbledon loss to the Australian in their previous meeting, reports AP.

Hingis took 51 minutes to dispatch the Australian 6-3, 6-2, erasing unpleasant memories of her 1999 first-round Wimbledon defeat to Dokic, then ranked 129 in the world, in what was considered the biggest upset in Open era history.

"It was good it didn't happen again today," said Hingis, fresh off her singles and doubles triumph in Filderstadt on Sunday.

"I was maybe a bit more nervous playing her than against some of the other players."

It marked the first time the two players have met outside a Grand Slam. Hingis having defeated Dokic in straight sets at the Australian Open prior to her Wimbledon defeat.

The two traded breaks early in the second set, but Hingis broke again to take a 3-1 lead and once more to go 5-2.

Dokic, who lost the Olympic bronze medal match in Sydney to American Monica Seles and reached the quarterfinals in

Tokyo last week before being beaten by Serena Williams, was no match for Hingis, whose scorching serve resulted in six aces.

"I don't think I attacked enough, that was the difference this time," said Dokic. "I let her stay in the points and you can't do that with her."

A fresh Hingis, who chose not to play at the Olympics, is still looking for a first career tournament title on home soil. Her 32 titles all coming outside Switzerland. The Swiss player will meet either Russian qualifier Anastasia Myskina or eighth-seeded Elena Dementieva in the quarterfinals.

In first round action earlier in the day, a sullen Jennifer Capriati scraped past wildcard Linka Krasnoroutskaya 5-7, 6-3, 7-6, in a volatile match that had the American refusing to shake hands with her 16-year-old Russian opponent, accusing her of unsporting tactics.

"I've been playing 10 years and never thought I would ever do anything like that," said Capriati, who won her ninth career tournament title in Luxembourg two weeks ago. "Until now, someone has never driven me to that point. Her behaviour on the court was unprofessional. It was a lot of things."

"I have shoulder problems and she would keep saying 'come on, go, even after the points...' it was disrespectful on her part. Then she was stalling on my serve and the umpire thought I was right and gave her warnings."

The American started strongly, breaking Krasnoroutskaya twice to jump to a 4-1 lead. But the Russian stormed back, winning the next seven of eight games to take the first set and lead the second 1-0.

Capriati fought back, breaking to go 3-2 and then once more to close out the set.

The Russian looked to have the match in the pocket, breaking Capriati twice to jump to a 4-1 lead. But Capriati rallied back.

In the end it was Capriati who prevailed, with Krasnoroutskaya squandering four match points.

In other matches, Bulgaria's Magdalena Maleeva defeated Dominica Manastir of Belgium 6-7, 6-2, 7-6, while Austrian Barbara Schett ousted Russia's Elena Likhovtseva 6-0, 6-1.

Swiss superstar Martina Hingis is jubilant after defeating Jelena Dokic of Australia in the second round of the Swisscom Challenge in Zurich on October 10.

— AFP photo

Warning for Athens



SYDNEY, Oct 11 (Reuters): The International Paralympic Committee has placed in doubt the handing over of the Paralympic flag to the next host city, Athens, when the Sydney Games close.

IPC president Robert Steadward told a news conference in Sydney the contract for the Athens 2004 Paralympics had not been signed.

"This has to be clarified within the next seven days. If it is not, we will have to make alternative arrangements for the closing ceremony," Steadward said.

"We could not morally, ethically or legally pass it on to Athens if the contract is not signed or we have assurance it will be signed," he said.

The Sydney Paralympics open on October 18 and close on October 29.

Assistant chief de mission for the Greek Paralympic team at the Sydney Games, Panagiotis Papakonstantopoulos, told reporters immediately after the IPC news conference there were two sides to any contract nego-

tion.

Papakonstantopoulos said the IPC had changed details of the contract which may have contributed to the signing delay.

Steadward said he had asked for the Athens 2004 Paralympic Committee to send him a letter by Tuesday, October 10, outlining their willingness to sign the contract for the Games.

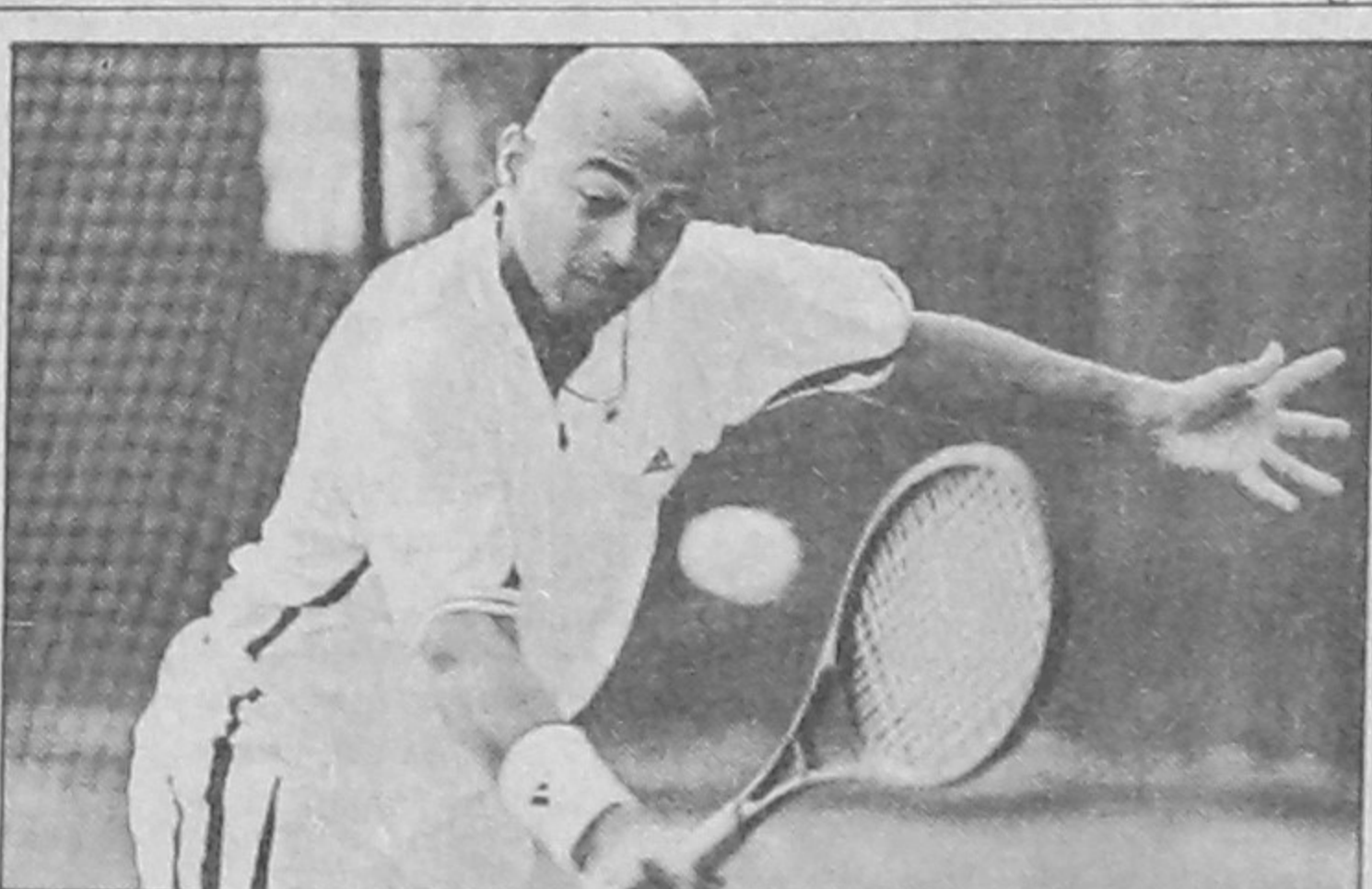
"Our expectations were not met. The letter (received on Wednesday morning) was very general in nature," he said.

"I am trying to remain incredibly optimistic," Steadward said, adding it was possible the flag handover could be done at a later date rather than at the Sydney Games closing ceremony.

Steadward said he did not want Athens to charge a participation fee like the 397 pounds Sydney has charged for each athlete. "That's one basic fee that should not exist and it won't in the future," he said.

Papakonstantopoulos indicated the participation fees would be an enormous cost for the Athens committee to cover if they could not pass the fee on to the athletes.

Steadward, who is also an International Olympic Committee member, said it was unlikely the Games would be moved from Athens, but did not rule out asking the IOC to intervene.



Indian star Leander Paes plays backhand against Italian Andrea Gaudenzi during their second round match at the Japan Open in Tokyo yesterday.

— AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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