

### Chelsea pleading with Wise

LONDON, Jan 7: English Premiership club Chelsea are trying to persuade captain Dennis Wise to stay at the club after he told them he was considering leaving Stamford Bridge, reports AFP.

England international Wise, 34, who has been at the club for the past 10 years, is understood to be still mulling over his future despite a report that he will hand in a transfer request next week.

However, Chelsea confirmed that lengthy talks with Wise had been taking place this week in a bid to persuade him to stay put.

### Rajshahi cricket

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAH, Jan 9: Bright Star Club defeated Town Club by two wickets in the Rajshahi Premier Division cricket league today at MIM Gannuzzaman Dhaka Stadium.

Winning the toss, Town Club decided to bat first and went all out collecting 152 runs in 49.3 overs.

### A Windies win

From page 13 break and forged a 71-run partnership before Hinds (29) was caught by Greg Blewett at cover off the bowling of MacGill.

After going so long without a victory, the West Indies got the wobbles and lost three wickets in three overs.

Fleming struck again when he had Sylvester Jacobs (13) caught behind by Wade.

The Queensland keeper was in the action again, stumping a charging Samuels from the bowling of MacGill.

Ricardo Powell was then bowled by Fleming for a duck, giving the Victorian swing bowler figures of 3-18 from 10 overs in only his second match since missing more than a month with a bulging disc at the base of his neck.

Australia could not recover with the bat after losing five wickets for just 95 runs in the first 25 overs.

Shane Lee looked set to offer some resistance to the tourists attack, belting a Mahendra Nagamootoo delivery for a massive six over midwicket and out of the ground.

But when Lee lunged forward in an attempt to give Nagamootoo's next ball similar treatment, he was trapped outside his crease and stumped by Jacobs for 30.

Andy Bichel and Wilson put on 25 for the last wicket before Bichel was caught by Powell off Samuels for 30.

Nagamootoo claimed 3-28 from 10 overs while Samuels took 2-27 from 9.3 overs and Laurie Williams also took two wickets.

### SCORECARD

Scoreboard of the one-day match between Australia A and the West Indies on Tuesday.

Table with 5 columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Rows include Hayden c Campbell b Cuffy 7, Blewett c Campbell b Black 15, etc.

Table with 5 columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Rows include Campbell c Slater b Wilson 8, Hinds c Blewett b MacGill 29, etc.

Table with 5 columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Rows include Fleming 10, Wilson 8, Bichel 7, MacGill 10, Lee 6.5.

### Manoj ready

From page 13 and asked these players to represent their case to a ministry official.

Prabhakar sent a written reply instead of appearing before the official on Monday. Jadeja and Azharuddin on Wednesday, but ministry officials said they had not heard from them.

Meanwhile, the BCCI's anti-corruption commissioner K Madhavan met former Indian coach Ajit Wadekar here as part of his continuing probe into the scandal.

Wadekar was India's coach in 1994, the time Prabhakar said he had been offered a bribe by cricket great Kapil Dev to underperform in a one-day match against Pakistan.

"His (Wadekar's) interrogation is over," Madhavan told reporters.

"Whatever I wanted to know I have asked him. Wadekar was cooperative and answered all questions."

Kapil, who was absolved of any wrongdoing by the CBI, is also due to appear before Madhavan on Wednesday.

### FA Cup

# Boro advance on Ricard

BRADFORD, England, Jan 9: Middlesbrough won the battle of the Premiership strugglers here Monday heading Bradford 1-0 at Valley Parade in the third round of the English FA Cup, reports AFP.

Colombian Hamilton Ricard's 67th minute edge of the box curler into the top left corner of Gary Walsh's goal was good enough for second from bottom Middlesbrough to make it six matches unbeaten under former England boss Terry Venables.

Bradford, bottom of the table, consequently became the first Premiership side to go out of this season's FA Cup.

They came closest in the final minute of normal time as midfielder Dean Windass steered the ball narrowly wide of Mark Schwarzer's near post.

Middlesbrough's Christian Karembu could have wrapped up the game in the second minute of extra time but his precise shot was well pushed away by Walsh.

The north-east club will now be at home to either Wimbledon or Notts County in the fourth round.

Bradford's Benito Carbone and Dan Petrescu were forced to settle for a seat on the bench for with manager Jim Jeffries set to confirm later that both players are to be placed on the transfer list.

The duo are now up for grabs along with Stan Collymore, who has already been told he has played his last game for the club, and goalkeeper Matt Clarke.

Jeffries vowed to swing the axe when he first arrived seven weeks ago and the Scot has been true to his word as he feels Carbone, Petrescu and Collymore in particular do not have the stomach for the forthcoming relegation fight that faces the bottom of the table club.

Jeffries has quickly learnt that heart, not talent, is the

characteristic which will keep Bradford in the Premiership, while the big-name trio are also the most highly-paid at Valley Parade.

If meant City's starting lineup was based on hard-working foundations, the kind which stabilised their survival bid last season.

Bradford should have taken an early lead as Windass rattled the outside of Schwarzer's left-hand post in the sixth minute with a riveting 30-yard right-foot drive.

Stuart McCall was then given acres of space just inside the Middlesbrough area in the 13th minute as he collected a pass from Windass but his sidefooted shot-cum-cross was

fired firmly over the bar.

Middlesbrough's first chance came moments later when Curtis Fleming delivered a teasing cross from the right wing for Colombian Ricard to fire in a header which forced Walsh into an arching save.

Bradford swiftly countered and from a corner by Eoin Jess, making his home debut following his recent move from Aberdeen, centre-back Robert Molenaar then powered a header against the right-hand post.

Dean Saunders, starting his first home game since the final match of last season, pounced on the rebound only for Schwarzer to thwart the Wales international with a stop right on the line.



Robert Molenaar (L) of Bradford City and Middlesbrough's Hamilton Ricard are in pursuit of the ball during their FA Cup clash at Valley Parade on January 8. —AFP photo

### Streak sounds optimistic

BRISBANE, Jan 9: Zimbabwe's cricket team arrived here on Tuesday in an upbeat mood ahead of this month's triangular one-day series against Australia and the West Indies, reports AFP.

While not predicting an upset over World Cup champions Australia, there was quiet confidence that they could prove highly competitive.

Captain Heath Streak said his country was facing their biggest challenge in the tournament starting on Thursday after registering their first Test victory over India and winning a one-day series away from home for the first time in New Zealand.

"Our confidence is up after our recent success but we know this is a big challenge," said Streak, whose unbeaten 79 played a key role in Zimbabwe's shock win in the deciding third match against the Kiwis in Auckland at the weekend.

"For a lot of us (players) this is a dream come true."

For the young guys in the team it will be special to play at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and it would be even grander to have some success, but we have a lot of work to do."

Zimbabwe's coach, former Australian Test pacer Carl Rackemann, said the team had improved much in a few years.

"They've come a long way but we have to keep playing the right kind of cricket to have more success," Rackemann said.

Zimbabwe play a warm-up day-night game against Australia A at the Gabba here on Friday before opening their triangular series against the West Indies the following day here.

### Beckers close to settlement

MIAMI, Jan 9: The judge presiding over the divorce of former tennis star Boris Becker on Monday postponed his judgment until January 18 at the request of lawyers who say the couple has made progress towards an out-of-court settlement, reports AFP.

In court, Barbara Becker's attorney Sam Burstin asked Judge Maynard Gross for a postponement, because "they are doing substantial progress and the process is ongoing."

Neither Becker nor his estranged wife were in court Monday.

One of the lawyers for the former tennis number one indicated that "support maintenance will continue without order."

Becker's lawyer Robert Kohlman told reporters outside the courtroom here that "we are very confident they will reach an agreement very soon."

An aide to one of Becker's lawyers said they anticipated an agreement would be reached either Tuesday or Wednesday.

Boris and Barbara Becker met Saturday in their Florida home on Fisher Island. German press reported.

Boris, 33, went to the house and had a meeting of several hours with Barbara, 34, after she had spoken to everyone in his entourage in order to persuade him to talk to her, the reports said Sunday.

"They are doing it for the children," the Berliner Morgenpost reported, citing an "insider" who had spoken with Boris Becker.

The couple has two children — Noah Gabriel, six, and Elias Balthasar, one.

Becker has promised his wife between five and 10 million euros (dollars) in exchange for shared custody of the children, the German newspaper Bild said in its internet edition Monday. Details remain to be worked out, Bild Online said.

The couple, married in 1993, broke up in December last year, with the tennis star announcing his plans to file for divorce and a battle ensuing over custody of the children.

Barbara Becker had demanded sole custody and the couple's Florida house on Fisher Island as well alimony payments.

### Sahara Millennium Cup

# Now Cameroon in doubt

NEW DELHI, Jan 9: India's biggest football jamboree, the Sahara Millennium Cup, kicks off on Wednesday amidst chaos and uncertainty over last-minute withdrawals, reports AFP.

Anxiety hit by the absence of top stars, the two-week event was reduced to 15 teams after Iraq withdrew on Monday citing the non-availability of some players.

It now appears that Olympic champions Cameroon are also unlikely to take part because of visa problems caused by the absence of an Indian embassy in the African nation.

"We are trying to get them visas, but time is running out," an official of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said.

If Cameroon, who are scheduled to play their first match on Friday, cannot make it, the tournament will be reduced to just 14 teams.

The teams have been divided into four groups with the top two from each qualifying for the quarter-finals.

Iraq's withdrawal has reduced group one to three teams: Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Bangladesh.

If Cameroon pull out, group three will also have only three contenders, Romania, Jordan and Hong Kong.

South American giants Chile head group four, which features Uzbekistan, Japan and Bahrain as the other teams.

Group two comprises Uruguay, Iceland, Indonesia and hosts India.

Chile and Bahrain clash in Wednesday's opening match at the 120,000-seater Salt Lake stadium in Calcutta, which will also host two quarter-finals, both semi-finals and the final on January 25.

Uzbekistan take on Japan in the day's other match, also at Calcutta.

League matches in group one and two will be played in the southern city of Cochin, group three games in Goa and group four in Calcutta.

The FIFA-sanctioned event, which awards 150,000 dollars to the winners, has been hit by the absence of any established stars.

Bangladesh is the only nation sending a full-strength squad.

Even hosts India will be without star striker Baichung Bhutia, who has not been released by his English Second Division club, Hury FC.

The tournament's top sides, Yugoslavia, Chile and Uruguay, have not even consented to field their second-string squads.

Chilean World Cup stars Ivan Zamorano and Marcelo Salas, who were touted as the major attractions by the (AIFF), stayed away because of club commitments.

Jo Bonfrere and his preference for foreign-based professionals.

Like Ditto, many fans see the foreign-based players as money grabbers past their prime and want Bonfrere to use more players from the local league.

One exception is Nwankwo Kanu of English Premiership side Arsenal, but though popular with the fans and Bonfrere, he has been forced out of the side by the sports minister after being obliged by Arsenal to miss the Olympics.

Paris Saint-Germain of France midfielder Austin "Jay

Jay" Okocha has, however, been quick to dismiss doubts surrounding him and his teammates.

"Nigerians have to be patient with this team. I don't agree that we are too old to make it to the next World Cup. We know what it takes to play at the World Cup and I bet you we will prove our critics wrong," Okocha said this week.

To do so, Nigeria will however need to out-play Ghana who currently have the same number of points but a better goal difference in the qualifiers.

# Eagles can't fly anymore!

LAGOS, Jan 9: Nigerians fear that after two successive World Cup outings, the country's ageing Super Eagles are past their prime, overshadowed by Cameroon and Ghana, and will not get to Japan and Korea next year.

Last year, west African neighbours Cameroon beat Nigeria to gold in the final of the African Nations Cup and then went on to win the top Olympic football medal, a feat achieved by Nigeria in 1996.

Ghana, always a rival of Nigeria, are in the same World Cup group as the Super Eagles and favoured to go through after a series of unimpressive performances from the Nigerian team.

The Eagles play again this month against Sudan in the World Cup after an African Nations Cup match against Zambia this weekend.

Most of Nigeria's big name stars play outside the country, mostly in Europe, but few are currently performing as well as they were a few years ago, sports analyst Siheui Ditto told AFP this week.

"How many Nigerians are featuring regularly for their European clubs? I can only name a few," he asked.

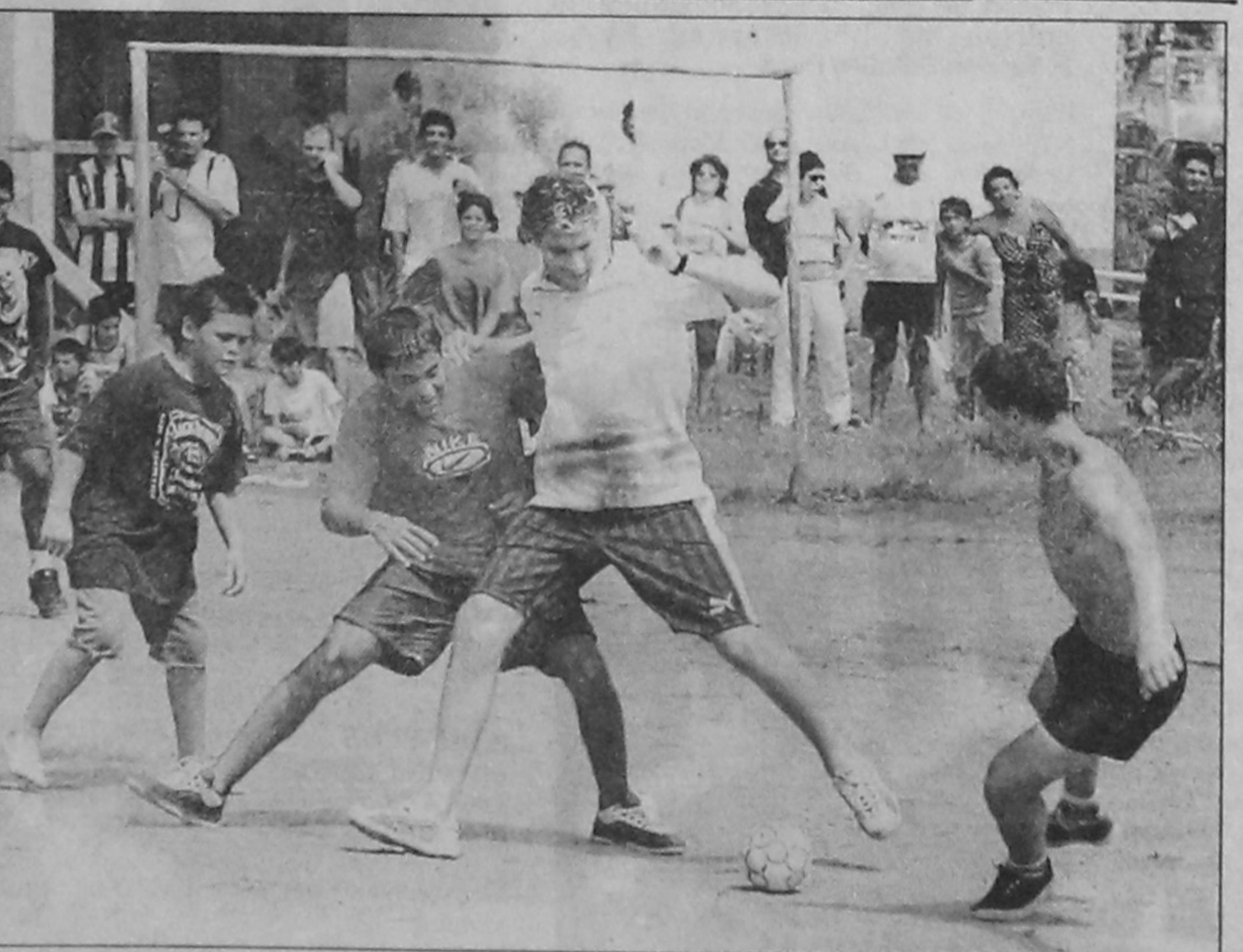
"The others have been struggling all through this season. They have grown old and tired and lack the motivation," he said.

The Eagles are no longer hungry for success and this will count against us," he added.

Newspaper vendor Azeez Ibrahim said a defeat earlier this year by lowly Liberia was a signal that something was wrong.

"I don't see us going especially after we lost in Liberia. If we know what is good for us, we should forget this World Cup and start planning for the next one."

The Eagles' weakness has led to growing criticism of the country's Dutch national coach



PUNISHED FOR BEING LOCO. Martin Palermo playing with a few youngsters at a community centre in Maldonado, Uruguay on January 8. The Argentine star was ordered by an Uruguayan court to impart tips to the boys after he attacked a photographer of Argentine magazine Gente and robbed his camera on January 6. —AFP photo



Williams sisters Venus (L) and Serena wave to the crowd as they arrive to play their doubles match against Martina Hingis and Monica Seles in Sydney. —AFP photo

# Mauresmo's solid start

SYDNEY, Jan 9: Amelie Mauresmo learned a few hard lessons after her euphoric victories over Grand Slam champions Mary Pierce, Martina Hingis and Lindsay Davenport on the way to winning last year's Sydney International here, reports AFP.

Australia became her happy hunting ground as she downed Davenport in the Sydney final after reaching the 1999 Australian Open final unseeded, where she lost to Martina Hingis.

Yet days after her rousing lead-up 2000 tournament win in Sydney she fell to Patty Schnyder in the second round of the Australian Open — she was out and on her way home in the first week.

"It was disappointing," she said here Tuesday. "But it was the first time I had to handle a win in a tournament and then go into a grand slam. So it was an experience. When it happens to me again — and hopefully it will — I will know better how to handle the situation."

Mauresmo, unseeded here, kicked off her title defence Tuesday by thrashing Luxembourg's Anne Kremer 6-1, 6-4 in less than an hour.

The big-hitting Frenchwoman, with the sublime backhand, is next up against South African terrier and seventh seed Amanda Coetzer on Wednesday in the second round.

Mauresmo was troubled by a back complaint throughout last year, but has worked

throughout the northern winter to strengthen herself for the coming season.

"I hope I'm going to be healthy for all the year. I've tried to prevent injuries this winter in practice and we did well, so hopefully it's going to last 12 months now," said the 21-year-old, who finished last year ranked 16.

Eighth-seed Anna Kournikova beat Russian qualifier Elena Bovina 6-4, 6-4 in the first round and later was coy over the reasons for her split with doubles partner Martina Hingis.

The 19-year-old Russian glamour girl denied the bust-up ended in tears and said it was over something else.

When pressed on what was the cause, Kournikova was non-committal.

The split follows reports of a row between Hingis and Kournikova at a singles exhibition match in Chile a month ago.

Kournikova, who with Hingis won this year's Chase Championships and four other doubles titles along with the 1999 Australian Open, disagreed that it was a breakup and denied there were any ill-feelings with Hingis.

"It's not like a breakup," said Kournikova. "It's just that we both have different partners."

"It's not like we've never going to see each other, never going to talk to each other. No way."

"It's tennis. As you know, a lot of players, they change partners all the time, so it's ab-

solutely normal."

Australia's number one Leyton Hewitt says he is doing everything he can to avoid surgery and chase his Australian Open tennis dream.

Hewitt has been struck by an illness which has failed to be fully diagnosed. But he is playing on, fearing surgery would put him on the sidelines for up to five weeks.

Medical opinion is that 19-year-old Hewitt may have a sinus problem or an allergy-related asthma condition. Surgery may correct it, but specialists cannot give him a guarantee that he will be 100 per cent.

So Hewitt is blocking it out of his mind and playing on hoping he can become the first Australian since Mark Edmondson in 1976 to win his home grand slam.

Hewitt took the first step toward successfully defending his Sydney International title when he overcame one of his Davis Cup teammates Wayne Arthurs, 6-7, 7-6, 6-2 in the first round Tuesday.

Elsewhere, Monica Seles and Conchita Martinez progressed to the third round after beating Australians — fourth-seeded Martinez ousted Alicia Molik 6-4, 6-7, 6-3 and third seeded Seles doused Nicole Pratt 6-4, 6-2.

Top seed Magnus Norman of Sweden saw off Romanian Andrei Pavel, 6-3, 7-5 and French fifth seed Arnaud Clement went through after Czech Republic's Bohdan Ulihrach retired from his match while trailing 6-1, 3-0.

# Amanda aiming higher

JOHANNESBURG, Jan 9 (Inter-Press report): She may be turning 30 in October but Amanda Coetzer has great expectations for 2001.

On Monday the world number 12 ranked tennis player defeated Denisa Chladkova of the Czech Republic 3-6, 6-2, 6-2 to move into the second round of the Sydney International tournament to play Amelie Mauresmo of France in the second round.

Her immediate focus, however, is on next week's Australian Open — the first Grand Slam of the year.

"I ended the last year off very well and in fact, at the tournament in Philadelphia, I felt I was playing some of my best tennis. I had a good win over Lindsay (Davenport) and then lost a close match to Monica Seles.

"I've got a heavy schedule mapped out for myself this year but right now I'm going to take it step by step and just prepare myself for the first Grand Slam," said Coetzer.

"Over the course of last year I had good consistency but I had four bad slams. I've been working pretty hard lately and I feel I'm on track and still improving."

However, she added that while her top level game had improved, what she referred to as her "bottom level" had not been that good.

"Sometimes you're playing like a top tennis and at other times like you're not even in the top 30."

"I still feel though that once I can play myself into a certain position, I can be a major threat to even the top players."

Last week Coetzer played at the Hopman Cup with Wayne Ferreira where she scored two good wins in their opening matches but then got thrashed 6-1, 6-0 by world number one Martina Hingis.

"Hingis may not have won grand slam last year but she's always a threat in the big ones."

Coetzer added that she felt Hingis would always be able to beat Davenport but would struggle against Venus and

Serena Williams.

"You've always got a chance that Davenport's mental block can come back or that the Williams sisters might play inconsistently. But when Venus and Serena are in form, they're very hard to beat."

However, the South African number one has her doubts about young Russian Elena Dementieva, who was a surprise semi-finalist at last year's US Open.

"I've practised with her and I think she might be someone who could do damage against the top people because she takes the ball on the rise and she enjoys their big power game."

However, I think she might battle against the lesser ranked players who won't give her the sort of pace she likes. She could struggle in the early rounds of tournaments."

But the player Coetzer feels could do steal the limelight this year is Seles. "I was impressed by the way she ended the year. She's working really hard and she's striking the ball very well."

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Clues include: 34 Winner's take product, 55 Milwaukee product, 20 Journey segment, 1 Call day, 35 Sand quickly, 23 Requisite, 4 Carson's predecessor, 36 Causes ennui, 1 Corn Belt state, 24 Fashion magazine, 8 Heal, 37 Wild One, 2 Rain-delay prop, 26 Sport cumber, 25 Dismember, 26 Sport, 27 Paris airport, 3 Seed, 39 Cashew coating, 40 Sera, 4 Whom Simple, 14 Hawaiian seaport, 41 Code of silence met pugilism, 15 Depreciation, 45 Carte, 5 Pueblo material, 17 Wheelbase, 50 Mel, 6 TV alien, 33 Tend, 18 Self-session, 51 DeLoe's material, 19 Wapiti, 9 Kibosh, 21 Daisy, 52 Occupation, 10 Bugged? 35 Winter woe, 22 A Few Good Men, 53 Computer maker pivot, 38 Peer, 54 River of England, 16 Heavy reading, 39 Songs, 42 Singer, 43 Do surveillance on, 44 Wood-shaping tool, 45 Inane, 46 Previous to, 47 Goose egg, 49 Addressed

Cryptoquip puzzle grid and solution. The puzzle is a 10x10 grid with numbers 1-44. The solution is: E O M P T T U D C Y W, V R Y Z C M U E O Y E J M Z W N Y, R K C J M B A Y V F Z D A K D E, J Y B F J B M Y F Z W N P T B F, Yesterday's Cryptquip: SCIENTISTS CONCLUSION: ATOMS COMPRISING ANELOSPE CONTAIN GNUTRONS. Today's Cryptquip Clue: J equals B. The Cryptoquip 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.