

Ljubicic lifts Lyon title

AFP, Lyon
Croatian Ivan Ljubicic won the 800,000-dollar Lyon ATP event here Sunday, defeating Yves El Aynaoui of Morocco 6-3, 6-2 in a one-sided affair.

Ljubicic, ranked 48 in the world, set the pace from the start with an aggressive game to flatten an opponent suffering from an arm injury. The 22-year-old Croat brought his first two service games through to love and 40th-ranked El Aynaoui never recovered. The Moroccan sent a smash long to drop serve in the fourth game and after half an hour he was staring defeat in the face as he conceded the opening set.

Swapan

FROM PAGE 13
ninth placed Idris Ali in the seventh and final round. Shamsul beat Kamal, Asgar beat Majid, fifth placed Palash beat Shorup and Maleq beat Azad in the other matches. Later, a prize distribution ceremony was held at the conference room of the National Sports Council. Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam distributed prizes among the winners as the chief guest. Shujaudin Ahmed, BCF general secretary, was present as special guest. The country's only International Woman Master Rani Hamid was the guest of honour. The ceremony was presided over by Hakan Ohlsson, country representative of InterLife-Bangladesh which is a Swedish non-government organisation. The meet attracted the participation of seventy players from not only Dhaka but also 15 other districts across the country. Besides, for the first time four women also took part.

Noori talks

FROM PAGE 13
fanatically followed national sport of neighbouring Pakistan, and was introduced to the country by Afghan refugees based in Pakistan during the 1979-89 occupation of Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union. Some players still live in Pakistan and travelled to Afghanistan to take part in trials for the tour, which lasts until the end of October. Noori said the Taliban, known for wide-ranging restrictive policies on many aspects of life from banning music to even cutting the hair of players from a visiting Pakistan soccer team as punishment for wearing shorts, had not stopped the game from being played. "No, there is no problem. People outside say there is, but there is no problem," said Noori. However, it was still difficult to get support in Afghanistan, which is near the bottom of most international lists of development after more than two decades of war and ethnic conflict. "The government does not have any money, so we have to contribute ourselves," he said, although the team has received equipment donated by the International Cricket Council (ICC), the sport's world governing body. Noori's team was invited in July by the Pakistan Cricket Board to take part in the tournament as part of an effort to boost Afghanistan's status with the ICC. Afghanistan is an affiliate member of the ICC and is aiming for associate membership, allowing the team to play in international tournaments. "Every time we play cricket our main priority is to become an associate member," Noori said. With the returnees from Pakistan, the sport is expanding in Afghanistan, although there are few facilities. Some matches have been played in a Kabul stadium often used by the Taliban for public amputations, floggings and executions of those deemed to have contravened their strict interpretation of Islamic sharia law.

USA back among elite

Tennis

AFP, Winston-Salem

Andy Roddick defeated Leander Paes in the decisive match and the United States downed India 4-1 here Sunday to qualify for the 2002 Davis Cup.

Roddick, the 19-year-old prodigy who reached the US Open quarter-finals last month, rallied to beat Paes 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 7-5 to clinch a US triumph. James Blake beat Harsh Mankad 6-3, 6-0 in a dead rubber to complete the victory.

US players will learn Thursday which rival will be their first opponent in next year's 16-nation World Group playoff. India was relegated to zonal play in the global men's team tennis competition.

"I think we have a chance to win it next year," said US captain Pat McEnroe, whose switch to a youth movement without veterans Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras seemed to start well. "It feels nice."

Roddick, 15th in the world, smashed 13 aces past 177th-rated Paes. But the crafty Indian veteran took the first set by changing speeds and pressing Roddick.

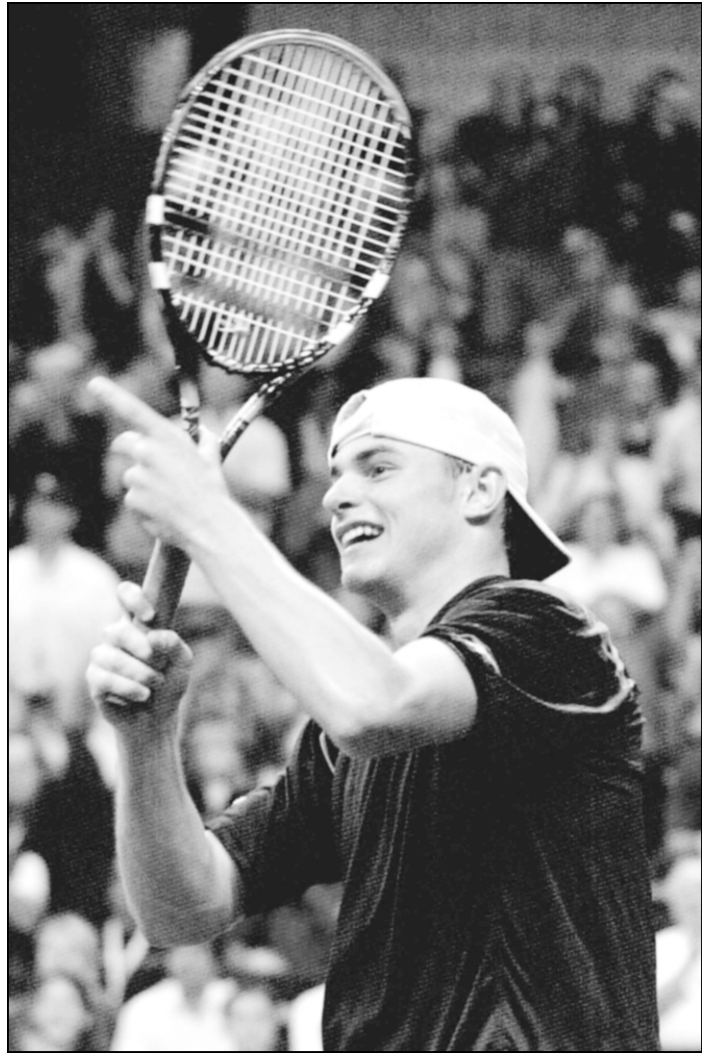
"I made him come up with the goods and he did every time," Paes said. "Every time I put the pressure on he came up with either a huge serve or a great pass. He was a bit too good for me."

The tie was postponed three weeks in the wake of terrorist attacks upon New York and Washington.

Roddick defeated Mankad 6-3, 6-4, 6-1 and Blake downed Paes 7-5, 6-3, 6-3 on Friday but Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi won Saturday's doubles match to sustain India's hopes.

The US team, seeking a 32nd

Davis Cup title after a six-year drought, rose to 7-0 over India in Davis Cup play. Americans were forced into the qualifying tie after losing to Switzerland in a first-round tie earlier this year.



American Andy Roddick is ecstatic after beating India's Leander Paes at the Davis Cup qualifying match on October 14.

Greedy Gustavo

Tennis

AFP, Stuttgart

Gustavo Kuerten has the chance to double-up for the year in the German car-making capital of Stuttgart when he begins play at this week's 2.95-million-dollar Masters Series.

The Brazilian of German extraction - his grandmother Olga was born in the country and speaks the language fluently - won a title and a car this summer on clay in the south west Germany city.

Now the treble French Open champion confronts the pleasant possibility of lifting a third Masters trophy of the season - Monte Carlo and Cincinnati were his other two - and increasing his winning margin atop the Champions points race.

But the 24-year-old from Florianopolis lost in the third round on the purple carpet of the Hans-Martin Schleyer Halle a year ago as South African veteran Wayne Ferreira beat Aussie fireball Lleyton Hewitt in a five-set finale.

Kuerten has played in low gear since the U.S. Open, when he went out to Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the quarterfinals, then did poorly during an understandably distracting week in Brazil during last month's terror attacks on the U.S.

Kuerten was sent packing this week in as top seed in Lyon, but said a lack of recent match toughness was at fault.

The Brazilian heads the field in front of Andre Agassi with both having qualified for the season-ending Masters Cup in Sydney from Nov. 12. Hewitt is six points adrift of Agassi, whose last outing prior to Stuttgart was an opening round-loss

European.

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The amiable Aussie has been dropping hints for weeks that flying up to Europe was not his idea of fun and the injury problem was enough to keep him ensconced Down Under.

Rafter is due in Sweden next week for the Stockholm Open, which is followed by the closing Masters of the season at Paris Bercy.

German Rainer Schuttler, 44th in the world standings, has been given a wild card after a superlative run in Asia in recent weeks, where he won Shanghai and lost the final to Marcelo Rios in Hong Kong.

American Pete Sampras faces his first competition since being hammered by Hewitt in straight sets for the U.S. Open title. The 30-year-old is scaling back his commitments as his career inevitably slows. He has pulled out with injury here



GUSTAVO KUERTEN in Shanghai at the Heineken Open Georgian Irakli Labadze.

Aussies back on track

Hockey

AFP, Hobart

Australia showed character Monday with a 2-1 defeat of India in field hockey's Junior World Cup, regaining composure after a hammering from Holland.

Playing open, attractive and

attacking hockey, the Aussies showed the passion and skill that was lacking in their 4-2 loss to the Netherlands on Sunday.

It was India though that showed the early promise, turning over possession in midfield and creating scoring chances for Gagan Ajit Singh, Deepak Thakur and Prabhjot Singh on the counterattack.

Australia missed twice from penalty corners early on.

prior to the past two editions and will be making his record 10th appearance but without ever taking a title.

Sampras played the 1996 final and got the semi-final stage on five occasions. Both Sampras and Agassi have asked for personal bodyguards as the venture into Europe.

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Jennifer atop WTA tree

AFP, Paris

Jennifer Capriati has ended Martina Hingis' long reign atop the WTA world rankings following the tournament in Filderstadt, Germany.

Capriati lost in the quarter-finals, but Hingis needed to win the tournament to maintain top spot and instead she lost in the semi-finals to Lindsay Davenport of the United States, pulling out with an ankle injury.

Hingis had spent a total of 134 weeks in top spot taking over for the first time in 1997 and holding it continuously since May of last year.

But the 21-year-old Swiss miss has had a poor year and her last Grand Slam title came at the 2000 Australian Open. She was a first round casualty at Wimbledon.

There will be no quick return to the top for Hingis as she will be out of action for at least eight weeks after undergoing surgery here on the injury to her right ankle.

For 25-year-old Capriati, becoming world number one, caps a fairytale comeback from her teenage years in the mid-1990s when she succumbed to drugs and petty crime as the pressure of top level tennis proved too much for her.

The American's slow fight back was rewarded this year when she won back-to-back Grand Slam titles at the Australian and French Opens, although she subsequently lost to Justine Henin of Belgium in the Wimbledon semi-finals and to Venus Williams in the US Open last four.

"It feels great. I haven't really digested it yet - I think I'll have to see it on paper first," said Capriati. "Of course, it's every kid's dream to be No. 1. For me I think you can appreciate it more when you are older."

STANDINGS table with 20 entries including Jennifer Capriati (4867), Martina Hingis (4842), Lindsay Davenport (4496), Venus Williams (4333), Kim Clijsters (3280), Amelie Mauresmo (2917), Justine Henin (2899), Monica Seles (2672), Serena Williams (2501), Jelena Dokic (2343), Nathalie Tauziat (2050), Shaughnessy (1905), Elena Dementieva (1866), Sandrine Testud (729), Silvia Farina Elia (1685), Magdalena Maleeva (1575), Amanda Coetzer (1459), Arantxa Sanchez (1430), Anke Huber (1386), Barbara Schett (1310)

Safin closes in on Sydney Masters

AFP, Paris

Russia's Marat Safin has moved within striking distance of a place in the season-closing Masters tournament to be held in Sydney November 12-18.

Safin's run to the semifinal in the Lyon tournament at the weekend has left him in 10th place in the ATP Champions Race, just 32 points behind the eighth and final qualifying spot.

ATP'S TOP TWENTY table with 20 entries including Gustavo Kuerten (755), Andre Agassi (683), Lleyton Hewitt (677), Patrick Rafter (557), Juan Carlos Ferrero (552), Yevgeny Kafelnikov (438), Sébastien Grosjean (363), Pete Sampras (363), Tim Henman (352), Marat Safin (331), Roger Federer (324), Tommy Haas (312), Alex Corretja (303), Goran Ivanisevic (296), Arnaud Clément (293), Guillermo Canas (281), Andy Roddick (276), Thomas Johansson (249), Jan-Michael Gambil (1242), Carlos Moya (241)

Haas makes no mistake

Tennis

AFP, Vienna

Tommy Haas, the German number one with the locally born father, atoned for his disappointment in losing in last year's final by winning the CA Trophy in front of his Austrian relatives here Sunday.

Haas' 6-2, 7-6, 6-4 triumph over the unseeded Guillermo Canas earned him the fourth ATP title of his career and his third of the year, and carried him to within 50 points of the cut for next month's eight-man year-end finals in Sydney.

For Canas, the first Argentine in an indoor final since Guillermo Vilas 18 years ago, it was a great disappointment, but he was often out-hit by his sixth seeded opponent who had heavier weapons, a better all-court game and considerable crowd support.

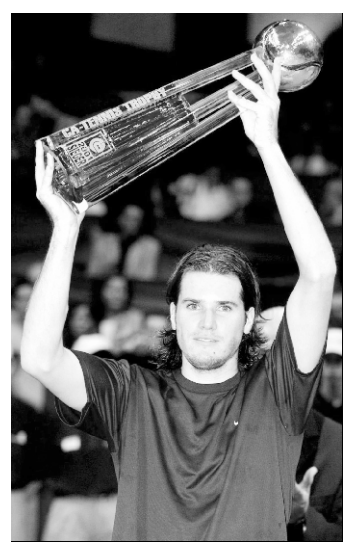
"It's really nice to win here - I played great all week," said Haas, who had to save two match points against Thomas Enqvist, against whom he was within a couple of centimetres of defeat in Saturday's semi-finals.

"As well as my coach I would like to thank all my family and the crowd here. The great support they have given me has helped me a lot," said Haas.

Haas nevertheless had to survive his first crisis, two break points on his serve in the fifth game, but once Canas had missed the second of them with a backhand drive which was projected too wide the unseeded player's error ratio

started to rise. The Argentine drove a forehand long on game point in the next game, dropping serve, and when he served to save the set at 2-5 he made two more uncharacteristic ground stroking errors, the second a backhand which slewed wide on set point.

For a while after that it seemed Haas might trample all over Canas. He disconcerted the unseeded



TOMMY HAAS player with some fierce flat ground strokes which pressured Canas into over-hitting and dropping serve, and advanced to 4-1.

But just when a two-set lead beckoned, Haas, perhaps tensing up, started to make hard work for himself.

Davenport downs Henin

Tennis

AFP, Filderstadt

American Lindsay Davenport powered past Belgian teenager Justine Henin to take her fifth title this season at the 565,000-dollar Filderstadt WTA event Sunday.

It was a 35th singles title for the 25-year-old Californian but her first

in Germany and she drives away in a brand new 84,000-dollar Porsche with 90,000 dollars prizemoney in her pocket.

Davenport, seeded third, was fresh after her semifinal walkover match against Switzerland's Martina Hingis, who was forced to retire with an right ankle injury Saturday.

Sixth-seeded Henin showed the effects of her tougher semifinal tie

against France's Sandrine Testud.

Nevertheless Davenport was pushed hard in the opening set by the 19-year-old Henin, who was bidding for a fifth career win here, with both players exchanging breaks of serve.

Davenport broke Wimbledon finalist Henin's opening service game in the second set to take a 5-3 lead with the tiny Belgian unable to deal with the power of the tall American's shots.

Henin nevertheless fought back saving three match points before ceding her service and losing the tie 7-5, 6-4.

"Justine is an excellent player - her backhand is just unbelievable. She has a lot of great years ahead of her," said former Australian Open, US Open and Wimbledon champion Davenport.

It was the first success at Filderstadt for Davenport, who lost the final here three years ago to Frenchwoman Sandrine Testud.

"It feels fantastic to finally win here in Filderstadt, especially after the week in '98 when I got to No. 1 and then lost in the final to Testud. "This is my first pro title ever in Germany, so it's nice to get that jinx out of the way," added Davenport.

A disappointed Henin said that she didn't have enough left in the tank after a tough week.

"I was a little tired after a couple of long matches this week. Lindsay played too fast for me today. You need to be 100 percent to have a chance against her," said Henin.

But Davenport's win was overshadowed by the drama of Hingis losing her world number one ranking to American Jennifer Capriati.

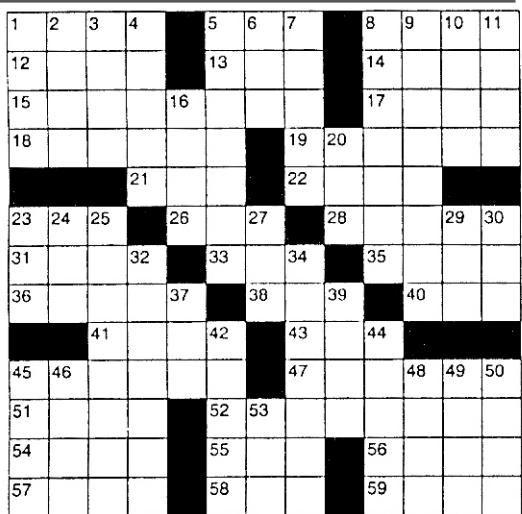
The 21-year-old Hingis will be out of action for at least eight weeks after undergoing surgery for torn ligaments in Zurich, and could miss the Australian Open in January.



American Lindsay Davenport plays a backhand return against Belgian Justine Henin at the Porsche Grand Prix final on Sunday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 36 Villain of 1865 38 Horrible need 40 Up to 5 Satchel 8 Persian bigwig 12 Medicinal plant 13 Under the weather 14 Wear a rut in the rug 15 1957 movie, "County" 17 Pound of poetry 18 Broke the rules 19 Dormant 21 Sweet potato 22 Teens' hangout 23 Astronaut 26 West of Hollywood 28 Thick 31 Actress Magnani 33 "Friends" network 35 John Wayne's nickname 58 D.C. VIP 59 Actress Russo 20 Despondent 23 Talk and talk 24 Popular card game 25 Grow exponentially 27 Recede 29 Schuss 30 Grownup elver 32 Jock 34 "The Piano" director 37 Weeding tool 39 Pickle flavor 42 Bonfire aftermath 44 Politico Alexander Bivouac 46 Moises of baseball 48 Collapse 49 Mineral nutrient 50 Unit of force 53 Census datum



CRYPTOQUIP
S T J I M B - Q Y Y I L F D L Z Q Q W
L Z M F ' S W T N X O R L F D Z R
T ' B J L O O S U M N
U Q X X T F D N L B
Yesterday's Cryptquip: GOOFY NEW GAME SHOW ABOUT FURTIVE BEES IN THEIR HONEYCOMBS: "HIVE GOT A SECRET"
Today's Cryptquip Clue: L equals A
The Cryptquip 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.