Subject: **[Lg22] Majoli shocks Hingis to capture French Open women's title / Jun 7**
Date: Sat, 7 Jun 1997 8:30:41 PDT
From: C-ST@clari.net (Sports Ticker)
Organization:
Newsgroups: clari.sports.tennis, clari.sports.top, clari.sports.photos

SPORTSTICKER FRENCH OPEN TENNIS NOTE

Top seed Martina Hingis of Switzerland suffered her first loss of the year in stunning fashion today as ninth seed Iva Majoli of Croatia defeated the world's number one player, 6-4, 6-2 to capture the women's singles title at the $8.23 million French Open in Paris.

The 19-year-old Majoli (mah-yoh-lee) broke Hingis' serve three times and never faced a break point during the 79-minute match as she became the first Croatian player to win a Grand Slam title.

The 16-year-old Hingis saw her 1997 unbeaten streak stop at 40 matches, the second best start on the WTA Tour since Steffi Graf went 45-0 to begin 1997. Hingis became the youngest Grand Slam singles champion in the Open Era by winning the Australian Open in January.

Hingis struggled on her serve throughout the opening set, saving nine break points, including six in the fifth game. Majoli finally broke Hingis in the seventh game and held to love for a 5-3 advantage. After Hingis held to pull within 4-5, Majoli served out the set in 39 minutes. This was only the fifth time in 41 matches this season that Hingis had dropped the first set.

Hingis continued to have problems on her serve in the first game of the second set as she faced three break points, but Majoli was unable to capitalize. However, Majoli broke Hingis for the second time in the match to go up 3-2 and Hingis departed from the court for a bathroom break.

A frazzled Hingis was warned by the chair umpire for racquet abuse after falling behind 2-4. Hingis was broken again in the seventh game and asked for an injury timeout. Majoli then served out the match as she handed Hingis her first loss since the final of last year's five-set season-ending Chase Championships to Steffi Graf.

Majoli, currently ranked ninth in the world, captured her seventh career singles title and third this season as she improved her 1997 record to 33-11. She also prevailed at the Faber Grand Prix in Hannover in February and the Rexona Cup in Hamburg last month.

Majoli's victory marks the first time since 1986 that someone other than Graf, Monica Seles or Sanchez Vicario has won the French Open women's title.

Majoli had to battle a cold during the two-week event. But she rallied to defeat fifth seed Lindsay Davenport in the fourth round and number 11 Amanda Coetzer in the semifinals. Coetzer was coming off her third victory of the year over Graf, the two-time defending champion.

Majoli evened her lifetime record with Hingis at 2-2 and avenged her straight-set loss to Hingis earlier this year in the semifinals of the Open Gaz de France.

Hingis was seeking her seventh singles title this year. She also prevailed at the Sydney International, Pan Pacific Open, Open Gaz de France, the Lipton Championships, and the Family Circle Cup.

On Sunday, two-time champion and 16th seed Sergi Bruguera of Spain meets unseeded Gusavo Kuerten of Brazil in the men's final.

The 26-year-old Bruguera will be seeking his 15th career title and first since the 1994 Prague Open. He has reached two finals this year, losing at the Italian Indoor Championships and the Lipton Championships.

Kuerten will try to become the first player to win his first career singles title in a Grand Slam event since Mats Wilander captured the 1982 French Open.

Also today, top-seeded Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde of Australia takes on defending champions Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia and Daniel Vacek of Czech Republic, the fourth seeds, in the men's doubles final.

In the mixed doubles final, top seeds Lisa Raymond and Patrick Galbraith of the United States battles the 16th-seeded tandem of Japan's Rika Hiraki and Mahesh Bhupathi of India for the mixed doubles crown.

The "Woodies" have won 43 titles as a team, including eight

Grand Slam titles but have never won the French Open, where they are in the final for the first time.

The pair from Australia are seeking their fourth straight Grand Slam title, having won 23 consecutive Grand Slam doubles matches.

Kafelnikov, who failed in his bid to repeat as men's singles champion when he lost in the quarterfinals, and Vacek have won four titles as a team, all in 1996. They are seeking to become the third team to defend their French Open title since the tournament became international in 1925, joining Vic Seixas/Tony Trabert in 1954/55 and Ken McGregor/Frank Sedgman in 1951/52.

This is the first meeting between the two teams.
-=-=-

PARIS, FRANCE, 7-JUN-97: Martina Hingis of Switzerland stretches to return the ball to her opponent Iva Majoli of Croatia in the final of the French tennis open at Roland Garros Stadium, June 7. [Photo by Philippe Wojazer, Reuters]