Sampras rides Open win to No. 6 rank

Edberg No. 1, Mac now No. 11

NEW YORK (AP) — The wind swirled and the tennis world spun madly as the U.S. Open ended a turbulent Grand Slam season and began the 1990s with fresh faces, new champions and the hint of a revival by an aging master.

Parity has come to tennis after two decades of dominance by a handful of superstars.

Pete Sampras and Gabriela Sabatini made the leap to the upper echelon of the sport by capturing their first major titles, each playing gung-ho, net-charging games that feature power and quickness.

Sampras, 19, the youngest U.S. men's champion in history, jumped from 12th to sixth in the ATP rankings Monday after beating Andre Agassi in the final on a chilly, breezy Sunday evening to win the $350,000 top prize.

Sabatini, 20, beat two-time defending champion Steffi Graf in the women's final with a surprisingly good new net game and boosted her standing in Monday's Virginia Slims ranking. Sabatini, who also pocketed $350,000, is still No. 4, but the points she picked up by winning the Open narrowed the gap between her and No. 3 Monica Seles.

For the first time since 1966, eight different players claimed the top honors in tennis this year: Ivan Lendl and Steffi Graf won the Australian Open; Andres Gomez and Monica Seles won the French; Stefan Edberg and Martina Navratilova won Wimbledon; and Sampras and Sabatini took the U.S. titles.

"There are no easy matches anymore because there are too many good young players," Lendl said after losing to Sampras last week in the quarterfinals.

Navratilova, who lost in the fourth round to Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere, shared the same opinion about the women's game.

"It's good that there are surprises. It's not as predictable as it once was," she said.

It was more than exciting, it was chaotic, a random assault on the biggest names in the game from start to finish: Edberg, the top seed, blown out in the first round by Alexander Volkov; Becker, No. 2, blasted in the semis by Agassi; No. 3 Lendl gone in the quarters; No. 8 Brad Gilbert knocked out in the third round by Amos Mansdorf; No. 11 Michael Chang beaten in the third round by Andrei Cherkasov.

On the women's side, the most notable early casualty was Monica Seles, taken out in the third round by Italy's Linda Ferrando, who was in turn beaten by Soviet Leila Meskhi.

John McEnroe, 31, played some of the most masterful tennis of t tournament until he lost to stronger, quicker and more accura Sampras in the semifinals.

McEnroe moved up from 20th 11th in Monday's rankings and s he plans to continue his comeba His next Grand Slam event will Australia, where he started the ye by getting tossed out after a curs and racket-throwing tantrum.

Edberg remains No. 1 for the m ment, with Becker second, Le third, Agassi fourth and Gom fifth. But Sampras is coming strong and McEnroe is threatenin

Jennifer Capriati, ranked 12th the women's tour, also may be rea to make her move in 1991 as she a proaches age 15.

"Nobody is dominating and eve body is challenging," said onetim kingpin Jimmy Connors. "It's gre for the sport — for the players a the fans."

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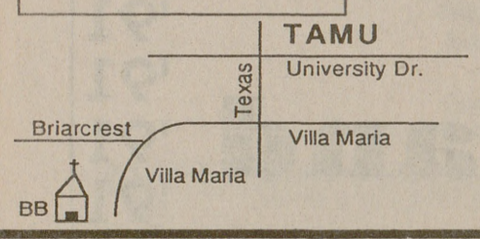

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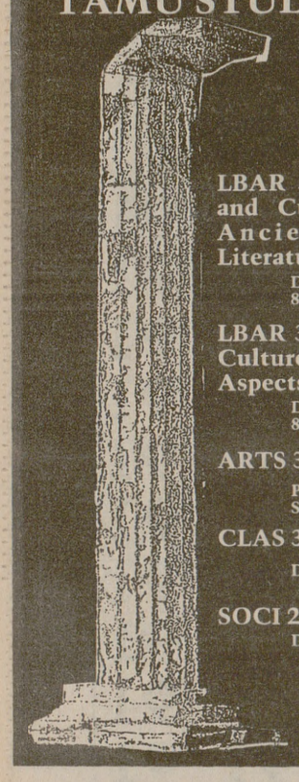

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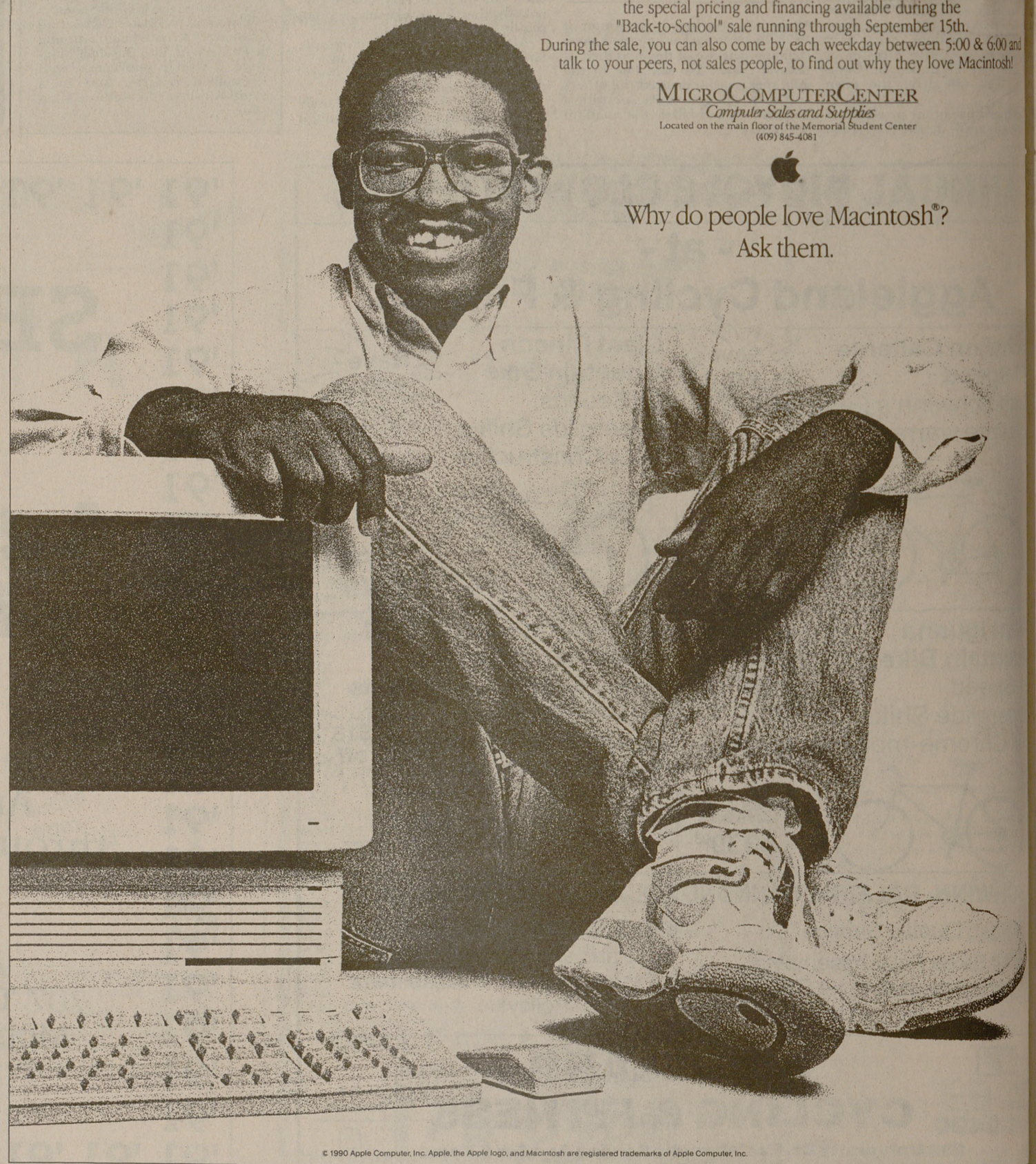

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