

# United States wins inaugural Presidents Cup

## Late rally by international team provides golf event credibility, exciting finish

GAINESVILLE, Va. (AP) — With one magnificent swing of the club, Fred Couples locked up the Presidents Cup for the United States and provided the new event with some much-coveted credibility.

Couples' late heroics and the play of the international team gave the sponsoring PGA Tour exactly what it wanted for its inaugural Presidents Cup: riveting golf drama.

The Tour, which hastily brought this event into being earlier this year, wanted "to have the best first significant event in history," Commissioner Tim Finchem said.

It was solved — and saved from any suggestion of scripting — by the shot from Couples that gave the Americans an unbeatable 17-9 lead in the 32-match series.

From a fairway bunker on the

left, Couples hit a 147-yard 9-iron shot to the middle of the green, caught the slope he knew was there and watched the ball curl within tap-in distance.

The shot provided the U.S. with the clinching 17th point.

At one time, the Americans — who had a 12-8 lead going to the last day's play — led in 9 of the 12 matches.

But after playing captain Hale Irwin, Jay Haas and Jim Gal-

agher won the first three matches, and Jeff Maggert added another point, the apparently easy victory quickly turned difficult.

Holding a 16-9 lead and needing only one more point to clinch the cup, the Americans came up empty for almost an hour as the international team began a rally.

Four of those matches went to sudden death playoff, all of which were in progress when Couples' great shot finally won it.

## Gerulaitis

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Gerulaitis, who left the main tour in 1985, worked a week ago for CBS at the U.S. Open as a studio analyst. He also played in the men's 35 and over doubles event during the tournament.

"That's a very big loss for tennis because of Vitas' personality and his play," tennis star Michael Chang said. "He was very easy going. All the players were able to joke around with him. He was very easy to talk to."

Chang spoke Sunday night after losing an exhibition match to John McEnroe in Berkeley, Calif. McEnroe, who knew of the death before taking the court, left immediately after playing and issued a statement through the ATP Tour.

"I won this match for my buddy Vitas and I'm too distraught to talk about it," he said.

A New Yorker with shaggy blond hair, Gerulaitis enjoyed

some of his best moments U.S. Open, a tournament far from his birthplace in Lyn or his home on Long

He lost the finals of the U.S. Open and the 1980 U.S. Open. In one of his matches, Gerulaitis beat Roscoe Tanner in the semifinals of the 1973 U.S. Open after trailing by two and down a service break.

He won the Italian Open in 1977 and 1979. In 1977 he lost in the Wimbledon semifinals, falling to Bjorn Borg in a five-set tiebreaker. He won the 1975 Wimbledon title with Sandy Mayer.

In 1979, he won four national and five of six U.S. Cup matches to help the United States retain the title played on the U.S. team in 1977-80.

Gerulaitis, No. 4 in the world in 1984, won 27 titles and nine doubles championships and had career earnings of more than \$27 million.

Gerulaitis is survived by his sister, Rita, and his mother, Alodonna.

## Day

Continued from page 5

win every tough game it plays year after year. However, the team would look more attractive to pollsters if it came back the week after a loss to beat another ranked opponent. Demoralizing an inferior team to the tune of 73-0 after a loss

doesn't turn many heads. Games against ranked opponents would also serve to better prepare A&M for a tough bowl opponent.

The losses A&M has suffered in the past three Cotton Bowls might not have stung so badly if there had not been so much pressure to win the "big game." Add more marquee match-ups to the schedule, and there isn't nearly as much em-

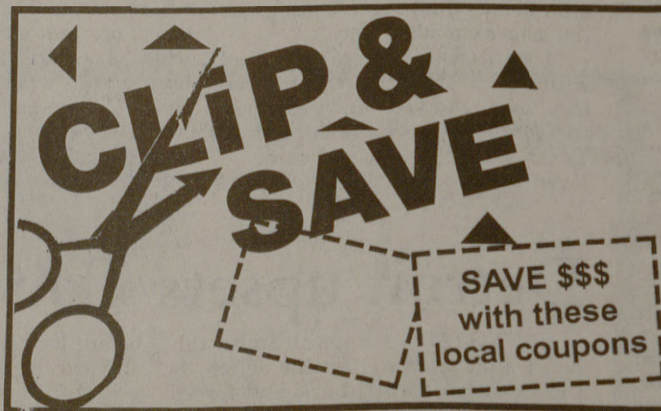
phasis placed on one individual game. A&M can concentrate more on beating its bowl opponent rather than trying to impress some Yankee journalists.

In two years, A&M heads to the prestigious Big 12, and upon arrival comes a more realistic shot at the national championship. The Aggies will have more television exposure playing stronger conference foes. Consequently, this will

impress voters and potential blue-chip recruits as well.

But A&M's hopes still hinge on a halfway decent non-conference schedule. So its up to the braintrust in the athletic department to help the program out and fine some genuine competition.

Once the Aggies show they can beat the best, they can stop pretending and start contending.



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