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Sampras survives marathon match

NEWYORK (AP)—Exhausted to the point of sickness, barely able to move, and forced to lean on his racket like a crutch between rallies, Pete Sampras survived an epic ordeal Thursday against indefatigable Alex Corretja.

Sampras vomited on court in the middle of the fifth-set tiebreaker and looked as if he would pass out. Yet somehow he summoned the strength to keep going, set up a second match-point with his 25th ace. Then he watched in utter relief as the Spaniard double-faulted to end one of the most dramatic matches in U.S. Open history, 7-6 (7-5), 5-7, 5-7, 6-4, 7-6 (9-7).

Corretja fell to his knees and Sampras slumped onto the net before they embraced each other tenderly amid a long standing ovation for both players after the 4-hour, 8-minute struggle.

Sampras, the defending champion, went for an intravenous drip to treat dehydration. He'll have to find a way to recover by Saturday when he plays in the semifinals against the winner of the Stefan Edberg-Goran Ivanisevic match.

Moments after the match, Sampras hugged his girlfriend, Delaina Mulcahy.

"This one was for Tim. There with me," he whispered, referring to his late friend Tim Gullikson, who died in a plane crash last year.

Everyone who watched the match had to be cringing. Sampras limped around the court, trying to stay on his feet and playing on and on. He ended at the back of the court at the final tiebreaker, receiving a time delay warning, but right back to win the next point.

"A lot of people saw things that most won't see in a lifetime," Paul Annacone, Sampras' coach, said. "Alex Corretja is a great player, but what Pete did, there are no words to describe it. It was exhilarating to watch."

"The guy is pretty special. Even Corretja, who broke down and sobbed after the match, said life slipped away, was amazed at Sampras."

"I saw him at a couple of parties, but he was more generous then," the No. 31-ranked Corretja said. "At 3-3 in the tiebreaker, he served at 124 mph. He's tired, he can't serve like that."

SOCCER

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acked their bags to battle it out with the Crimson Tide this Sunday at 1 p.m. But first, they must face 17th-ranked Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., tonight.

"Vanderbilt is a game we cannot take lightly, but we are also focusing on how we will face Alabama," junior forward Bryn Blalack said. "We struggled with them last year, but we should have the experience and drive to bring back a win."

As of yet, the Lady Crimson Tide is unranked, but the Lady Aggies agree there is no reason to take them lightly.

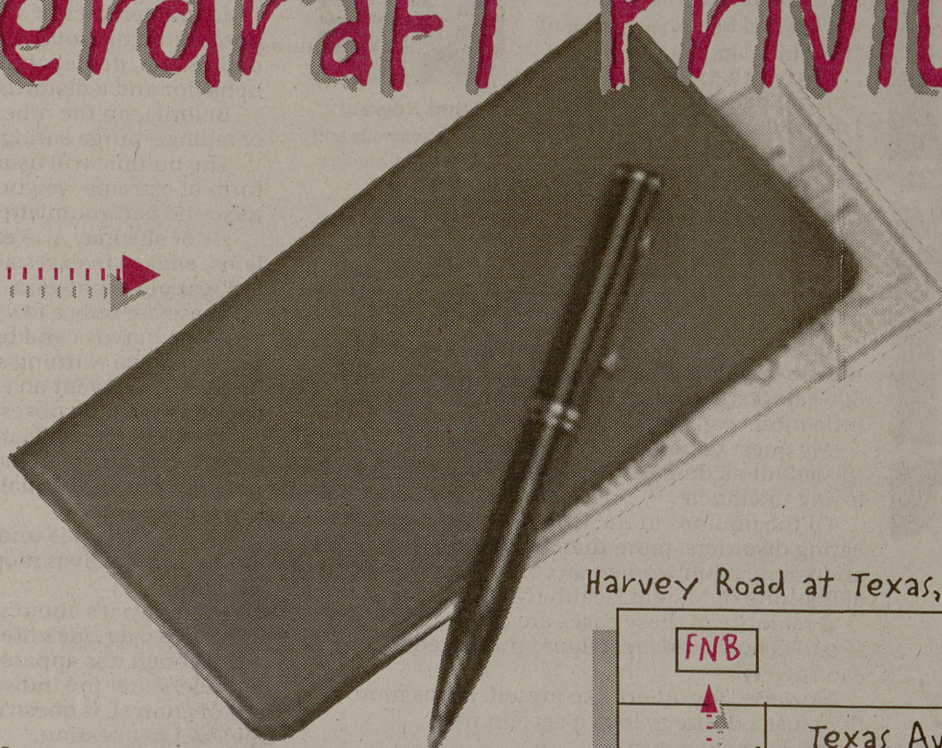
"They are a very strong team

that makes us work very hard," Conner said. "They have a strong coach who knows how to play the other team's weaknesses. We have to be focused without letting our eighth-ranked position get to our heads."

Many agree that this will definitely be a game to watch. Only do the Aggies want to avenge their sole loss at home, but the Crimson Tide want to add a win to their 1-0 record, as well as knock the Lady Aggies out of the top 10 rankings.

"Of course they want to know that their win last year was not an accident," senior forward Kristen Koop said. "However, if we work together and remain focused, we should prove them wrong."

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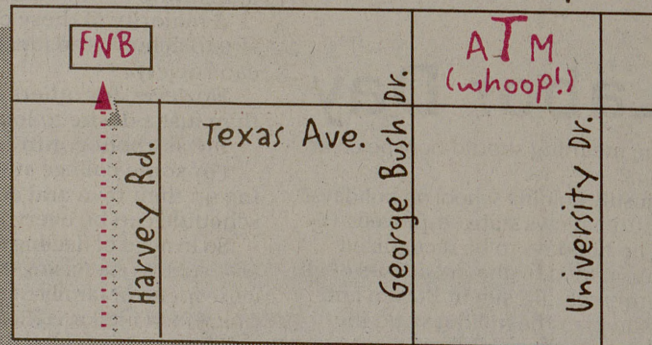
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