



# Ivanisevic is having fun - and it shows

By Suresh Menon

**Dubai**  
The new, improved Goran Ivanisevic is virtually unrecognisable from the man who walked out of the Dubai Open last year. He threw his match against his doubles partner Gaudenzi, much to the disgust of his coach then Bob Brett.

inwards, and with his talent, that can mean only one thing -- the Sampras and Agassis have a new threat.

The only time he showed a flash of his old self was during the semi-finals when he gently, almost playfully lobbed a ball into the stands to remind a technician that it is not polite to let a television set crackle when a tennis player is about to serve.

In the old days, Ivanisevic would have probably sent one of his 190-km-an-hour special services in the offender's direction. "My head was completely

out," he said of his bad old days - the days before he won the Grand Slam Cup in Munich last year. Ivanisevic sees that as the turning point.

He gives the credit to his friend and coach Martic Vedran, his most ardent supporter at the final yesterday.

"There are many things new with me," said the Croatian after his victory. "A new approach, new coach."

"I have shown I am capable of steady tennis. I don't get angry for nothing."

"Before the Grand Slam Cup, I

would practice six or eight hours a day, but couldn't beat anybody. I took a week off doing nothing, and won the Cup.

"I began to have fun. This can be my best year," said Ivanisevic, who has now won two tournaments back-to-back.

The confidence of one of the most talented tennis players in the world is tempered by self-doubt, however.

"When I am winning, I am not afraid of anything. Then I lose confidence and don't know what to do," he says with child-like honesty.

"I hope I can continue to play at this level."

His goal is not the number one spot, but the Wimbledon title. Ivanisevic has lost two finals to Pete Sampras.

"I don't think of the number one spot. My aim is to keep playing steadily and win Wimbledon," he said.

Ivanisevic's rebirth has much to do with the discovery of the fun in the game. He communicates that enjoyment, as the spectators at the Dubai Open will confirm. The fans have forgiven him for his petulance last year.

# Dubai Open reaches 70 countries: Casey

Director of Communications, International Group of ATP praises the role of television and print media

By K.R. Nayar

**Dubai**  
"The Dubai Open semifinal and final was watched by over 70 million people in 70 countries. The global television coverage agreement with ESPN and Eurosport this year will take every ATP tournament to all corners of the world. The sustained efforts of television and print media have started to pay dividends," remarked Steve Casey, Director of Communications, International Group of ATP in an exclusive interview to *Gulf News*.

ATP has also ensured that tournaments are not relayed after a long gap. "We have set a rule for broadcasts and as per the understanding, tournaments have to be played within 48 hours. Hence, you will no longer see a recorded version of a tournament of Agassi with a long hair and another with a short cut," says Casey.

Television is also being used by the ATP in promoting the game among youngsters. "We guide certain TV stations on how to explain the basics of the game. In fact we have a television arm of the ATP called CSI

(Championship Strategies Limited) which is based in London and they coordinate between tournaments and television stations.

The boost given by the television has not tempted ATP to ignore the print media. "The role of the print media has always been great. ATP itself has a magazine called International Tennis and it comes out every two months. We have also a weekly newsletter comprising of press releases to the journalists. It updates them on the latest development in the sport," says Casey.

ATP, through the media, is now concentrating on various sectors for the promotion of the game. "Australia, Europe and in America the game is well established. China is a market which we are now focussing. In countries like Australia and Europe the coverage of tennis is very sophisticated with a lot of colour stories along with the report. In certain countries the coverage is just basic and that is what we hope to change," says Casey.

Talking about the sanction of the first ATP Tour to India,

Casey remarked: "India is a tennis loving nation. The tournament at Delhi will be a great success, but it should be allowed to grow and gain in reputation. It has been in our agenda to allot a tournament to India and we were looking forward for someone to take it up there and do a professional job. We are happy that International Management Group (IMG) has decided to take the lead."

The Communication wing of the ATP is not missing any opportunity to spread the game. Even a song "Bring it on" by the singer, Seal, is being used as a campaign. His latest album has already sold six million. The song "Bring It On" will serve as ATP's worldwide theme through 1997.

The success of the tournament in India is likely to shift the focus on the subcontinent. "The game is picking up fast in Middle East. Already two good stadiums have come up in Dubai and Doha. Pakistan and Lanka should also be on the look out for tournaments which are for sale and organisations should come forward and buy it like IMG have done it in India."



Steve Casey

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