

Real Madrid and Deportivo aim to make amends in Europe tonight

J. B., Madrid
Real Madrid and Deportivo La Coruña play Champions League games this evening, both clubs needing a win to get them back on track in their qualifying groups. At present, neither team is in the top two positions in their respective groups, which would mean elimination before reaching the knockout stage.

Real Madrid, third in Group B, plays Dynamo Kiev tonight at home in the Santiago Bernabéu stadium (8:45pm on Canal+). Real hopes to improve its fortunes of late, languishing at the bottom half of the Spanish first division. Something like the second-half performance in its last Champions League match against Roma — Real came back to win 4-3 — would be a lifesaver for the club and new coach, Mariano García Remón. Kiev, however, is in first place of the group with a perfect six points from the two games played so far.

Deportivo La Coruña, meanwhile, travels to Liverpool this evening (8:45pm on TVE1). The Galician club is seeking its first win in this year's Champions League. Not only that, but Depor has so far failed to score a goal in its two matches. At the bottom of Group A, Deportivo has just one point — from the 0-0 tie with Olympiakos.

Tonight's match will be something of a reunion for Liverpool's Spanish coach and players with some faces from their former careers in the Spanish league. Rafael Benítez took over the English club in the summer, and has attracted Spanish players to the club. Defender Josemi, formerly at Málaga, and midfielders Xavi Alonso and Luis García, who signed from San Sebastián and Barcelona respectively, have all become regulars in the Liverpool lineup in the first two months of the English league season.

Sunday's late league results were: Valencia-Sevilla 1-2; Atlético Madrid-Racing Santander 1-0; Osasuna-Albacete 3-2.

RAFA NADAL / Tennis player

“I still need to be stronger”

DANIEL B. / J. MARCOS, Madrid
Spanish teenage tennis star Rafa Nadal starts out in the Madrid Masters individual event today with the memory of his triumph in last month's Davis Cup semifinal against France fresh in the memory. Nadal was called upon to play a crucial singles match due to an injury to the more experienced Carlos Moyà. He had already won his doubles match with partner Tommy Robredo, with whom he is also competing in doubles this week in Madrid.

The Madrid event is part of the series which culminates in the prestigious Masters Cup in Houston, beginning on November 15. Britain's Tim Henman is top seed for the Madrid Masters (the final is on Sunday), while Andre Agassi is second-seeded. Besides Nadal, Spain is well represented by Juan Carlos Ferrero, Robredo, Alex Corretja and Feliciano López — a winner in Vienna last week.

Question. Have you made the jump from promising young player to media star yet?

Answer. Tennis has a great following, and ever since I won the decisive point in the Davis Cup match against the Czech Republic, I have experienced a certain amount of fame.

Q. It is thought you will become much better. Santana says you will be world number one in five years.

A. Anyone can get stuck — it doesn't matter how old you are.

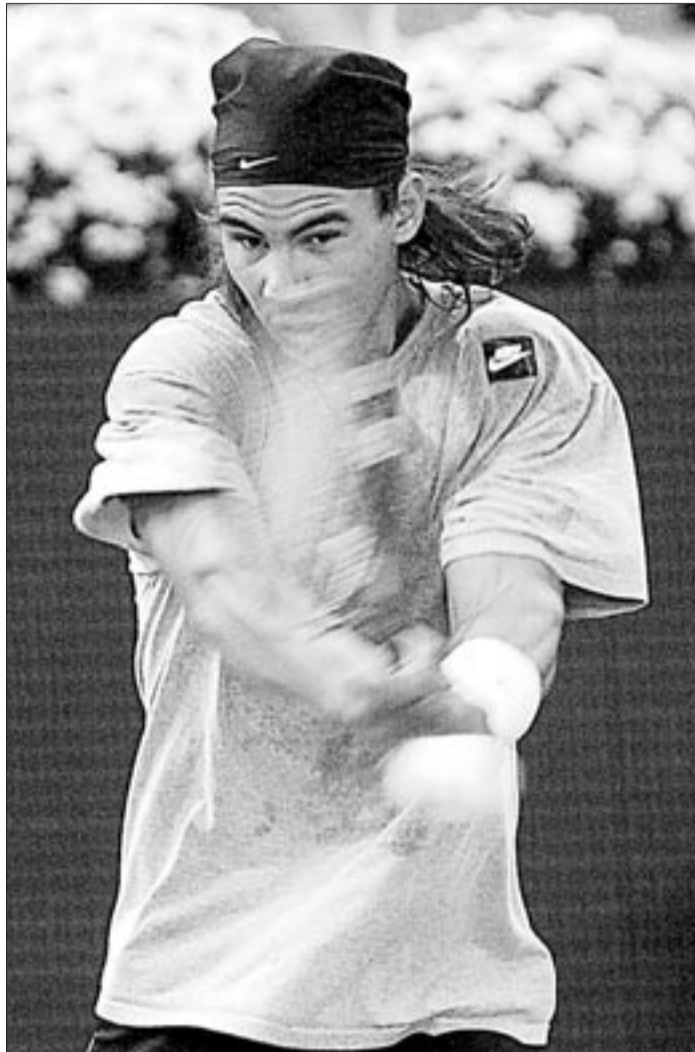
Q. But you aren't even fully developed physically...

A. I need to be stronger and that will help me get better.

Q. How did you start playing tennis?

A. My uncle [Toni Nadal] is a club professional, and I used to go there a couple of times a week. Later on, I began to see that I could actually do this professionally.

Q. So you realized your dream.



Rafa Nadal. / EFE

A. Well actually, my dream was to become a pro soccer player — like my uncle [Miguel Ángel Nadal, former Barcelona player, currently at Mallorca].

Q. What do you most admire about Carlos Moyà, who also helped you get started?

A. His straightforwardness. I feel it's vital to keep your feet firmly on the ground.

Q. They say you are impulsive on court, and your doubles partner Robredo is calmer.

A. Although I am very

intense during the match, we are both calm and, at the same time, great fighters. Maybe that's why we have such a good understanding.

Q. You're not bad on your own, either. You beat Roger Federer, the world's number one...

A. That was an incredible feeling, and in an important tournament like Miami.

Q. Your strong point?

A. The best thing I've got is my head.

Grand masters thirsty for success in Majorca chess Olympics

LEONTXO GARCÍA, Calvià
Chess is not like other sports, and the sensitivities of chess players are far greater than those of most athletes. The World Chess Olympics, which opened on Friday in Calvià, Majorca, ran into their first quarrel over the weekend. The chief referee of the tournament suspected foul play in some of the arrangements the Spanish hosts were providing for the other teams.

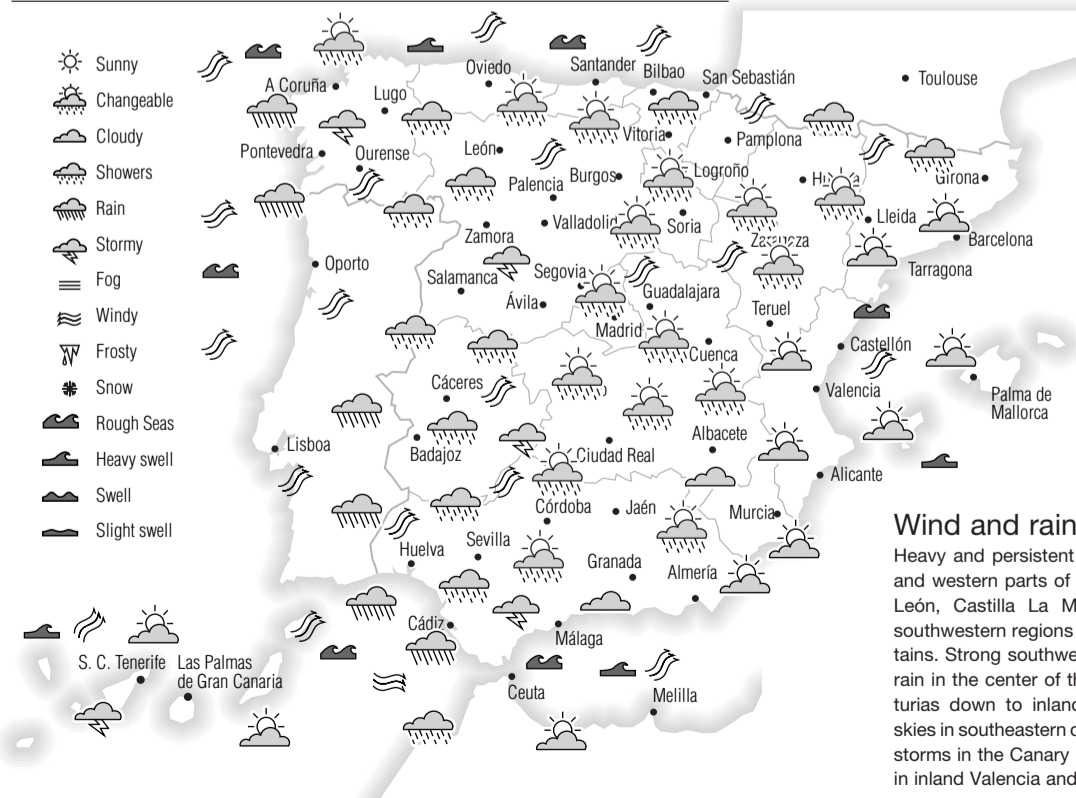
Ignatius Leong from Singapore pounced upon the fact that visiting players were not being served free tap water with meals, and also that the Spanish competitors were scheduled to play every game on the raised stage section of the venue. With masterly strategy, Leong combined the two complaints, threatening that Spain would lose the privilege of always being center stage unless free water was provided forthwith.

Some of the players applauded Leong's stand, perhaps because it is traditional to put jugs of water on the table during meals at the Chess Olympics. Some locals pointed out that these players probably hadn't tasted the water of Calvià. "It has a horrible taste; I never touch it," various inhabitants of Calvià told this newspaper. In any case, a letter from the organizing committee to the International Federation (FIDE) on April 1 stated that all players would be provided with "full board, excluding drinks." A FIDE representative said on Sunday that "the hotels should offer water to anyone who wishes to drink it, even though it has a bad taste."

Referee Leong had already shown himself to be a stickler, when on Saturday, he ripped the pass from a Peruvian player who had failed to leave the hall immediately after his match, as is required by the rules. The player was banned from further involvement, although the organizers were able to persuade the referee to revoke the decision some hours later.

WEATHER SPAIN TODAY

J. L. RON



Wind and rain in west

Heavy and persistent rain in Extremadura and western parts of Andalusia, Castilla y León, Castilla La Mancha, Galicia and southwestern regions of the central mountains. Strong southwesterly winds. Lighter rain in the center of the country, from Asturias down to inland Andalusia. Cloudy skies in southeastern coastal regions. Rainstorms in the Canary Islands and showers in inland Valencia and Catalonia.

Useful information

- Ambulance061
- Fire Brigade080
- Municipal police.....092
- National police091
- Civil Guard062
- Traffic900 123 505
- Directory inq.11818
- International directory inq11825

TRAINS

RENFE902 240 202

EMBASSIES

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- Ireland91 436 40 93
- New Zealand ..91 523 02 26
- UK91 700 82 00
- US91 587 22 00

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- Gran Canaria 928 30 46 64

AIRPORTS

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- Madrid902 35 35 70
- Valencia96 159 85 00
- Málaga95 204 88 04
- Palma97 178 90 99

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