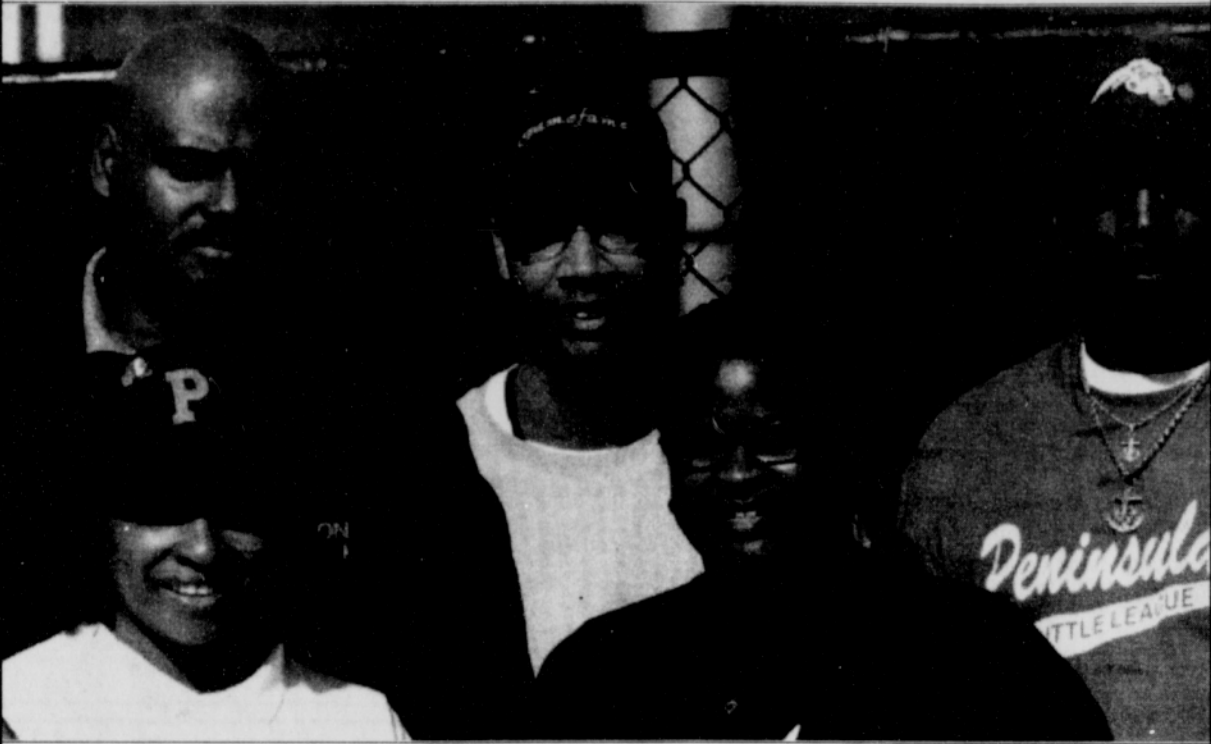




Metro/Sports

Officers open year 2000 Peninsula Little league



Top, from left T.B. Winston, Bryan Butcher, Michael Mangum. In front, from left, Sharon Maxwell-Hendricks and Sharetta Butcher are officers that opened up the 2000 Peninsula Little League season.

Kwan wins women's skating title

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Michelle Kwan abandoned all inhibitions in the best free program of her career and won her third World Figure Skating title Saturday. She vanquished critics and two Russian rivals who were in better position to win the gold by pushing through all seven triple jumps. Both Kwan's short and long programs were the most technically difficult she's ever skated, and she dedicated the six weeks since the U.S. Championships to adding more challenging triple jumps to both. During the free program, Kwan was the only skater to hit a triple-triple combination.

The triple toe-triple toe was critical in lifting Kwan above Irina Slutskaya, who won silver, and last year's champion, Maria Butyrskaya in third. Coming off the ice, a breathless Kwan was ecstatic. "That felt sooo good!" Kwan exclaimed. "I never felt like that. Every time I went to jump, I was, 'Oh jeez! Oh, jeez! A jump Then motioning to coach Frank Carroll, she said: "His last words of encouragement were, 'Let go She did. She nailed five triple jumps within the first 1 minute, 30 seconds,

of the four-minute free program - including the new combination. Still, she saved a difficult triple lutz for last. "This is the first time I ever pushed and pushed and pushed through the four minutes," Kwan said. "I never felt as fast. There are times when you get a little tired in your program ... I didn't want to come off the ice and say I still had some energy left. This time I wanted to use up all my energy." Kwan's victory was especially dear since her chances of winning the title

depended not only on a strong program, but lapses by Butyrskaya and Slutskaya, who were 1-2 after the short. Kwan, the 1996 and '98 champion, skated first, and the judges left ample room in the scores for both Russians to place higher, giving Kwan two 5.6s, three 5.7s and four 5.8s in the technical marks. Her artistic marks were 5.8s and 5.9s, rewarding Kwan's hallmark grace, which provided an interesting contrast with the dark soundtrack to "The Red Violin."

kmhd for the love of jazz

89.1

Sampras edges Brazilian in Ericsson Open thriller

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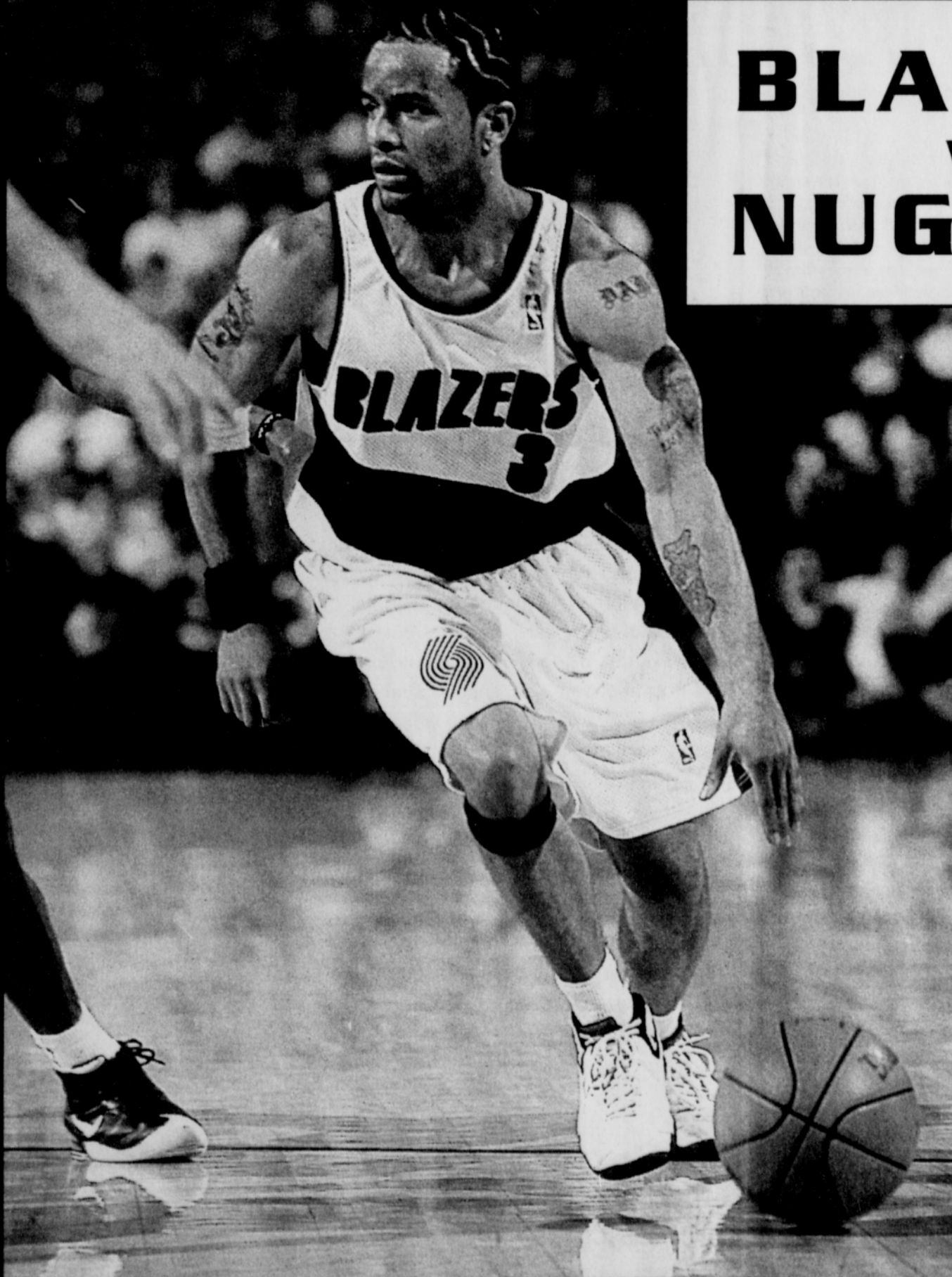
Pete Sampras earned his first tournament title of the year Sunday, thrilling a boisterous crowd by beating Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten in a dramatic four-set marathon to win the Ericsson Open. Sampras squandered six match points before winning 6-1, 6-7(6-2), 7-6(7-5), 7-6(8-6) in 3 hours, 18 minutes. Looking weary, Sampras took a 6-2

lead in the final tiebreaker but then made four consecutive errors to make the score 6-6. He held another match point at 7-6 but double-faulted, and hit a backhand return long at 8-7. Sampras went ahead again, 9-8, then came to the net behind his serve. Kuerten's forehand passing shot clipped the net cord and sailed long. Sampras raised both arms in jubilation as Kuerten angrily swiped at the ground with his racket, mangling it.

The sellout crowd of 14,145 was evenly divided in its loyalty, with many fans waving Brazilian flags and singing Kuerten's nickname, Guga. But chants of "Let's go Pete" dominated during the final tiebreaker. "I was choking there at the end, feeling my nerves," Sampras said. "But I got through it. ... It was a hard-fought match. My conditioning wasn't there, but the crowd was tremendous. They really got behind me."

Sampras, seeded second behind Andre Agassi, earned his third title at Key Biscayne but his first since 1994. He received \$410,000 and Kuerten earned \$215,000. The sixth-seeded Kuerten, 23, beat Agassi in the semifinals and was bidding for the first hardcourt title of his career. Sampras, who had 20 aces, dominated with his serve for much of the match, and Kuerten converted just one of six break-point opportunities.

DAMON STOUAMIRE



BLAZERS VS. NUGGETS

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