

**METRO/SPORTS**

**SPORTS**  
**briefs**

**Jordan Hints at Return**

CHICAGO — Michael Jordan has dropped more hints that his return to the NBA is imminent. In a conversation, which included reporters from the *Chicago Sun-Times* and *cnn.com*, Jordan confirmed that a news conference has been planned for Washington, D.C., in the next 10 days to announce his decision.

**Verplank Scores First Victory of Year in Canada**

MONTREAL — Scott Verplank sank two clutch birdie putts in the final round and held on to win the Canadian Open. Verplank closed with a 3-under 67 and won for the first time this year, beating Bob Estes and Joey Sindelar by three strokes. John Daly was tied for the lead after nine holes and finished fourth, four strokes back.

**Hewitt Heads Off Sampras for U.S. Open Crown**

NEW YORK — Lleyton Hewitt of Australia swept past Pete Sampras, clinching his first Grand Slam championship with a 7-6 (7-4), 6-1, 6-1 victory in the U.S. Open final. Hewitt, a 20-year-old Australian, coolly ripped one winner after another as Sampras made just five winners and 38 unforced errors. It marked the first year since 1992 that Sampras has failed to win a major title.

**U.S. Basketball Team Wins Goodwill Gold**

BRISBANE, Australia — The United States bounced back from a near-upset against Brazil in the semifinals to win the basketball gold medal at the Goodwill Games, defeating Argentina 91-63. Jermaine O'Neal led the Americans with 14 points while Shawn Marion finished with 13.

**Islanders' Yashin to Sign Landmark Contract**

The New York Islanders have made center Alexei Yashin the richest player in NHL history. The former Ottawa Senator will earn \$87.5 million over the next 10 years. Yashin was acquired from the Ottawa Senators in June for the second overall pick in the NHL draft (Jason Spezza) along with winger Bill Muckalt and defenseman Zdeno Chara.

**Report: Elliott Retiring for TV**

TUCSON, Ariz. — Sean Elliott, the first person to play in the NBA after undergoing a kidney transplant, signed a two-year contract to be the San Antonio Spurs' TV Analyst, apparently ending his 12-year NBA career, the "Arizona Daily Star" reported on its Web site. Elliott, 33, was not available for comment. His business manager, Armando Rios, told the paper that Elliott "hasn't completely closed the door on returning to action, but at this time is committed to starting a broadcasting career."

**Venus Stops Serena for U.S. Open Title**

BY JANE MCMANUS, THE (WESTCHESTER, N.Y.) JOURNAL NEWS

NEW YORK — After a poised Venus Williams schooled her younger sibling on Arthur Ashe Stadium in the U.S. Open women's final, the elder jogged to the net even as Serena Williams was retrieving her impatiently tossed racket. Reunited, the sisters hugged and as the crowd roared above them, Venus said softly in Serena's ear, "I love you, all right?" It was all right. With her careful play and flawless serve, fourth-seeded Venus Williams, 21, defeated 19-year-old Serena Williams 6-2, 6-4.

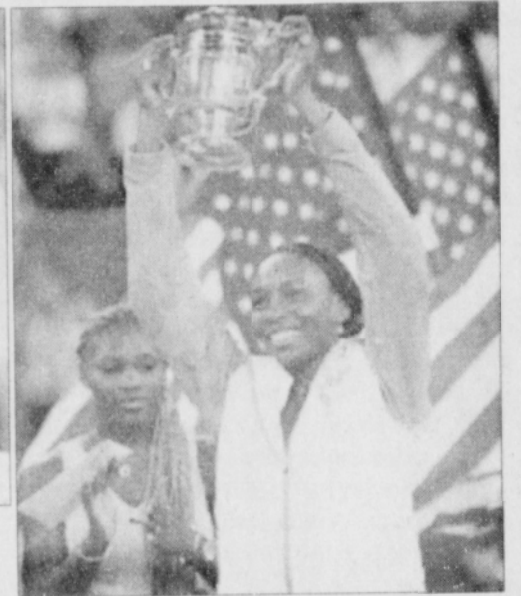
For one hour and nine minutes, they were competitors. Once it was over, they could go back to being sisters.

Venus Williams successfully defended her 2000 Wimbledon and U.S. Open championships and netted \$850,000 in prize money.

She earned it with an 103 mph average first serve, five mph faster than Serena Williams.



The Williams sisters after a grueling face-off. Venus Williams (right) proudly holds up her U.S. Open Cup while Serena looks on.



Serena Williams' winning percentage on first serves is generally around 70%, but against a competitor intimately familiar with her strength and strategy, it fell to 53%. She was successful at the net, but was pinned to the baseline too often to approach at will.

In her ninth WTA Tour event

of the year, Serena Williams hasn't played enough to get her ranking higher than No. 10. She reached the quarterfinals each time she played, but her relaxed approach to her schedule this year raised questions. She answered with each subsequent win.

Serena had by far the toughest

path through the women's draw. She turned back sixth-seeded Justine Henin in the fourth round, No. 3 Lindsay Davenport next and top-seeded Martina Hingis.

Venus Williams didn't drop a set to any player — including No. 2 Jennifer Capriati whom Williams defeated in the semifinal.

**Trail Blazers Televising Their Season Games**

The Portland Trail Blazers recently announced their 2001-02 television broadcast schedule.

Blazers fans throughout the state of Oregon and Southwest Washington will be treated to over 50 Blazers Cable Network (ASCN). There will be 53 preseason and regular season game telecasts, including 25 games broadcast live from the Rose Garden.

The Blazers announced that new regional cable sports channel, Action Sports Cable Network, will carry the biggest schedule of cable games the Blazers have ever offered, starting with an opening night match-up with the two-time

defending World Champions Los Angeles Lakers, live from the Staple Center.

In addition to opening night, ASCN will carry heavily anticipated match-ups with Western Conference rivals San Antonio (Nov. 3), Sacramento (Jan. 22 & Mar. 4), Dallas (Feb. 13 & Mar. 14) and Utah (Nov. 6 & Dec. 27). Several Eastern Conference powers will also be seen on ASCN, including Milwaukee (Nov. 30), Toronto (Jan. 2), Miami (Jan. 17) and New York (April 4). Blazers preseason contents with the Utah Jazz and Houston Rockets will also appear on the new cable network. For the

sixth year, KGW-TV will carry Blazers home and away games, beginning with a preseason contest against Pacific Division rival Sacramento Kings on October 12.

As a part of KGW-TV's 26 Blazers games, fans will see the Blazers home-opener with the Golden State Warriors (Oct. 31), new Blazer Derek Anderson's first trip back to San Antonio (Dec. 19) and head coach Maurice Cheeks return to Philadelphia (Feb. 25). KGE-TV will also broadcast great match-ups with Minnesota (Feb. 6 & Mar. 23), the Lakers (Mar. 29) and the Toronto Raptors (Mar. 1).

All preseason and regular season

Blazers games will be broadcast on the Blazers Radio Network, which can be heard on KXL-750 am throughout Portland and Southwest Washington.

**Bonds Hits Nos. 61, 62, 63**

DENVER (AP) — San Francisco's Barry Bonds hit his 61st, 62nd and 63rd home runs, breaking Roger Maris' record for most homers in a season by a left-handed hitter.

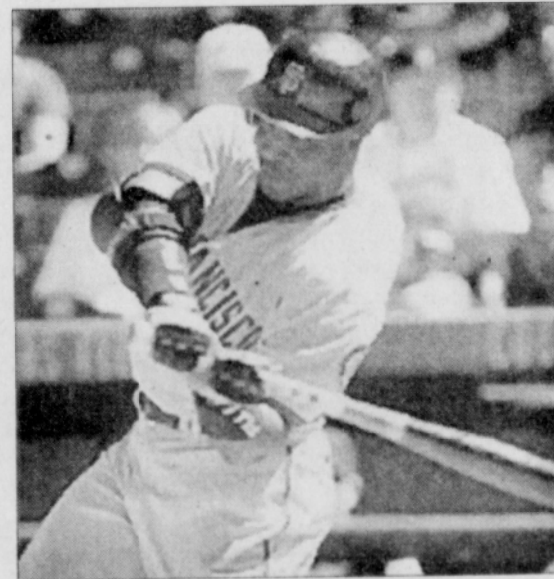
With homer No. 61 in the first inning, Bonds matched Maris' then major league-record 61 homers for the New York Yankees in 1961. Bonds broke the mark with No. 62 in the fifth.

Bonds also became the fastest to reach 62 homers, doing it in his 144th game. Mark McGwire needed 145 games to reach 62 when he broke Maris' record by hitting 70 homers in 1998.

In the first, on a 1-1 count, Bonds launched a 488-foot solo shot off Colorado's Scott Elarton. Bonds' soaring drive struck a beer sign beyond the center-field wall.

It was the third-longest homer in Coors Field history,

Barry Bonds sets a new record, matching Roger Maris' own, with a series of home-run hits.



exceeded only by a 496-foot shot by Mike Piazza and a 493-footer by Larry Walker.

In the fifth, Bonds lined a 2-2 pitch from Elarton that just cleared the right-field wall.

Maris, whose record stood for 37 years, had been surpassed only by McGwire and Sammy Sosa — both right-handed hitters.

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