# AT&T Calls Up 1st-Class Field

## Defending Champ Lendl, Agassi Entered Despite Slashed Purse

By Karen Rosen Staff Writer

AT&T has lowered its rates for its 1989 Challenge, but that hasn't appeared to cause any static among the players.

Eight of the top 24 in the world, including top-ranked Ivan Lendl and No. 4 Andre Agassi, accepted invitations to dig into the clay courts at Horseshoe Bend Country Club Tuesday through · Sunday, even with the lowered stakes.

The exhibition tournament once offered \$500,000 in prize money, which included \$150,000 for the winner, \$100,000 for the runner-up, \$50,000 for semifinal losers and \$25,000 guaranteed just to show up.

Now, the entire tournament is worth \$280,000: \$100,000 to the winner, \$50,000 to the runner-up, \$35,000 to the semifinal losers and \$15,000 to the other four who fail to advance past the three-match, round-robin portion.

There are also appearance fees of undisclosed amounts to sweeten the pot for the top players.

"It was just a restructuring of the entire event," said Terri Florio, tournament manager from ProServ, the Washington D.C.-based management firm. "AT&T has analyzed its overall sponsorship involvement with events. We thought we could put together an event that is just as exciting, competitive and prestigious a tournament at a somewhat lower level of sponsorship dollars for AT&T. We felt we've been successful doing that."

The AT&T Challenge again will be held in conjunction with the first event on the Prudential-Bache Grand Champions circuit for players 35 and over. Players such as Tim Gullikson, Roscoe Tanner and Bob Lutz will vie for a \$40,000 purse in singles and doubles.

Lendl will defend his AT&T title and lead

### The AT&T Challenge

■ When: Tuesday through Sunday.

■ Where: Horseshoe Bend Country Club. Tickets: Available at SEATS locations for all ses-

sions, but only single tickets are left for Tuesday night and Friday night. Call 577-9600 for ticket information. ■ Schedule: Tuesday — 7 p.m. Chang vs. Krickstein,

followed by Mayotte vs. Agassi. Wednesday - 1 p.m. Gilbert vs. Gomez, Grand Champions singles, Mayotte vs. Krickstein; 6:45 p.m. GC singles, Lendl vs. Noah, GC doubles. Thursday — 1 p.m. Lendl vs. Gomez, two GC singles matches; 6:45 p.m. Agassi vs. Chang, GC doubles, Noah vs. Gilbert. Friday - 1 p.m. Agassi vs. Krickstein, Noah vs. Gomez, Grand Champions semifinals; 6:45 p.m. Lendl vs. Gilbert, GC semifinals, Chang vs. Mayotte. Saturday - noon AT&T semifinal, GC consolation; 6:30 p.m. GC singles final; AT&T semifinal. Sunday — noon AT&T final; GC doubles final.

the Blue Group, which also includes No. 13 Yannick Noah, No. 19 Brad Gilbert and No. 21 Andres Gomez.

Agassi leads the youth brigade that makes up the Red Group. No. 12 Tim Mayotte, 28, is the lone old folk. It may seem like No. 18 Aaron Krickstein has been around forever (seven years), but he's only 21. He is still the youngest player ever to win a singles title on the men's Grand Prix circuit — 16 years, two months, 13 days. Agassi will turn 19 on Saturday, the day of the semifinals, and No..24 Michael Chang is 17.

This week marks tennis's yearly transition from hard courts to clay, culminating in the French Open May 29-June 11. And as Mayotte says of the AT&T field, "It sounds like seven clay-courters and me."

Mayotte, more adept on faster courts, plans to use the tournament as a gauge of his claycourt progress. Although the event doesn't count in the rankings, Mayotte believes any chance to play Lendl is a chance to beat Lendl.

Mayotte was supposed to play here last year, but withdrew because of injury and was replaced by Amos Mansdorf.

Gilbert also withdrew last year, and Slobodan Zivojinovic filled in. This field is the most American assembled in Atlanta, with five homegrown players and one would-be American (Lendl).

Two of the traditional crowd favorites won't be on hand to bait spectators or each other. John McEnroe had played in all four previous AT&T Challenges in Atlanta, winning in 1987. Jimmy Connors withdrew at the last minute from one but played in the rest.

Connors, ranked No. 10, is playing this week in Monte Carlo, along with No. 2 Mats Wilander and No. 3 Boris Becker, who have each played in the Atlanta event.

McEnroe, No. 9, wasn't invited because of a "combination of economics, ranking and scheduling," Florio said. His ranking hovered near No. 20 when the players were under consideration.

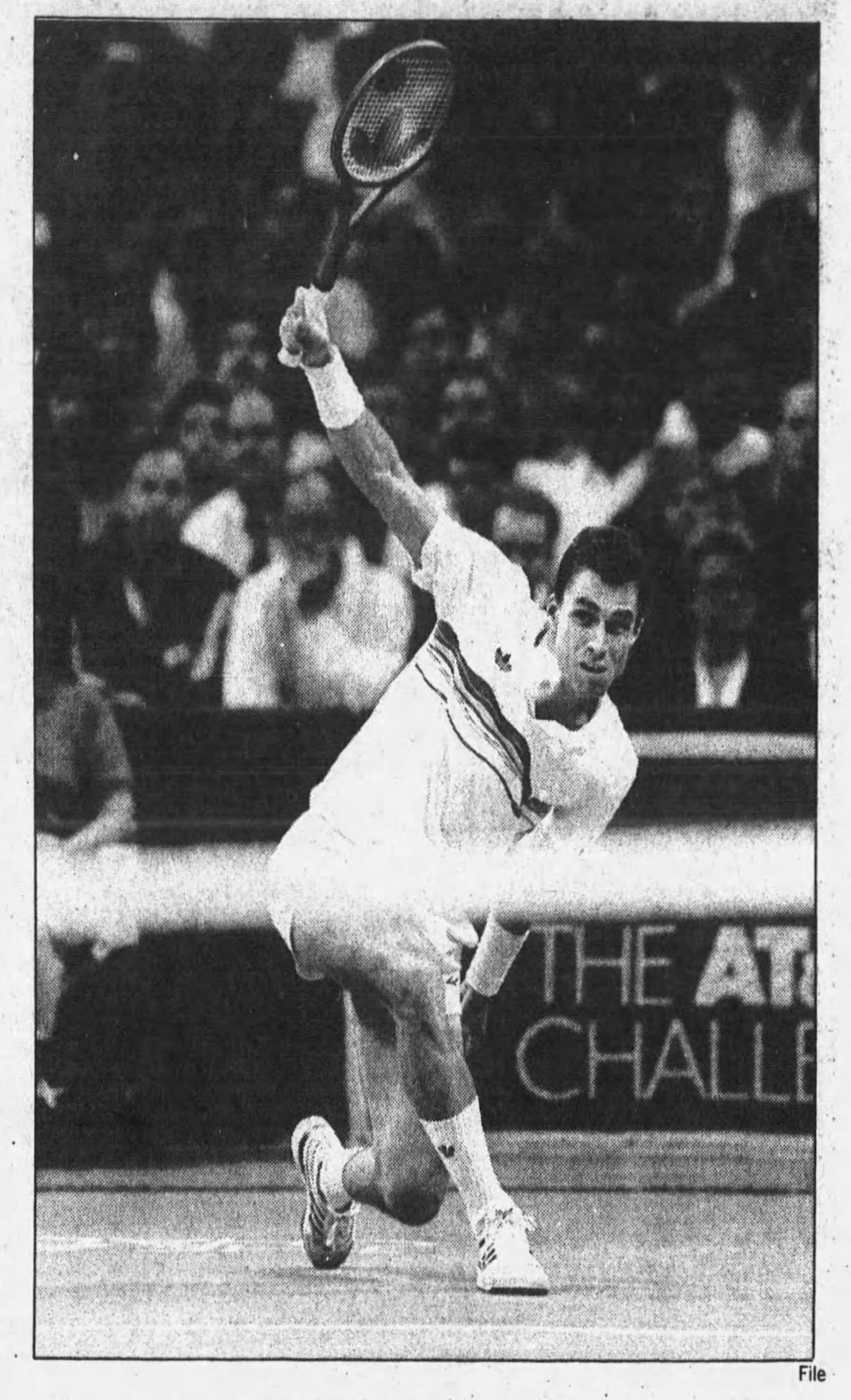
Also, McEnroe has vowed not to play more than three weeks in a row. He played Davis Cup in San Diego two weeks ago, followed by exhibitions with Bjorn Borg all over Asia, and is now in

Chang's ranking was lower than McEnroe's, but Florio said, "We took a gamble on him. We thought he was someone the people would want to see. He's young and fresh, and we thought he would do well here."

Lendl has had an outstanding year. He won the Australian Open for the first time in his career, taking care of one of the glaring omissions on his resume. (The other is Wimbledon). Lendl has won \$363,468 this year.

By contrast, Agassi has struggled. His victories over Noah and Henri Leconte in the Davis Cup recently were boosts to his celebrated ego. The low point was at the Lipton International Players Championships, when Agassi lost to Carl-Uwe Steeb 4-6, 5-7, 0-6 in the first round.

Mayotte also lost in the first round at the Lipton and, unlike Agassi, didn't have the Davis Cup to sharpen his form.



Ivan Lendl, the top-ranked player in the world, leads the field for the \$280,000 AT&T Challenge.

### The Nation's Top-Ranked Sports Sections

DAILY TOP 10 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution The Boston Globe

The Dallas Morning News The Detroit Free Press The Detroit News

The Los Angeles Times The Minneapolis Star Tribune

Newsday The Philadelphia Inquirer

USA Today Honorable mention

The Baltimore Morning Sun, The Chicago Tribune, The Dallas Times Herald, The Hartford Courant, The Miami Herald, The Orange County Register, The Philadelphia Daily News, The San Jose Mercury News, The Toronto Sun, The Washington Post

SUNDAY TOP 10 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The Boston Globe The Dallas Morning News The Detroit Free Press

The Hartford Courant The Los Angeles Times

The Minneapolis Star Tribune Newsday

The Orange County Register

The San Jose Mercury News Honorable mention

The Baltimore Morning Sun, The Chicago Tribune, The Detroit News, The St. Petersburg Times, The New York Times, The Orlando Sentinel, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Pittsburgh Press, The Sacramento Bee, The Washington

# Journal-Constitution Sports Wins 9 National Honors

From Wire Reports

NEW YORK — The Atlanta Journal-Constitution has been named one of the nation's top 10 sports sections in both daily and Sunday categories in the annual Associated Press Sports Editors (APSE) contest.

The Journal-Constitution also had seven entries place in the top 10 in writing categories, more than any other newspaper.

The APSE contest is the only national competition for sports sections and annually is entered by more than 300 newspapers. The winners are selected by a panel of editors and managing editors from across the country.

The Journal-Constitution was one of seven newspapers to win top-10 honors this year in both the daily and Sunday categories in competition for newspapers with more than 175,000 circulation.

Joining the Journal-Constitution as double winners in the section competition were the Boston Globe, Los Angeles Times, Newsday, Detroit Free Press, Dallas Morning News and Minneapolis Star Tribune.

This is the second straight year, and the eighth time in the past nine years, that the Journal-Constitution has been named among the top daily and Sunday sports sections in the country.

In the writing competition, judges first chose the top 10 in each category, then awarded Nos. through 5 plus five honorable mentions.

Staff writers Chris Mortensen and Tony Barnhart both finished in the top five in the news-story category, Mortensen winning third place for his report on the indictment of sports agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom and

Barnhart getting fourth place for his report on college basketball coaches exchanging Final Four tickets for vacations and cash.

Sports columnist Dave Kindred placed in the top 10 in three categories: event coverage, columns and enterprise reporting. Kindred's report on the 1988 women's final at Wimbledon won fifth in event coverage, while he received honorable mention in columns and in enterprise (for a three-part series on Muhammad Ali).

Also, staff writers Gary Pomerantz and Mortensen received honorable mention in the event and investigative reporting categories, respectively. Pomerantz made the top 10 for his report on the women's finals at the 1988 U.S. Open tennis tournament and Mortensen for his year-long series of reports on sports agents' dealings with college athletes.

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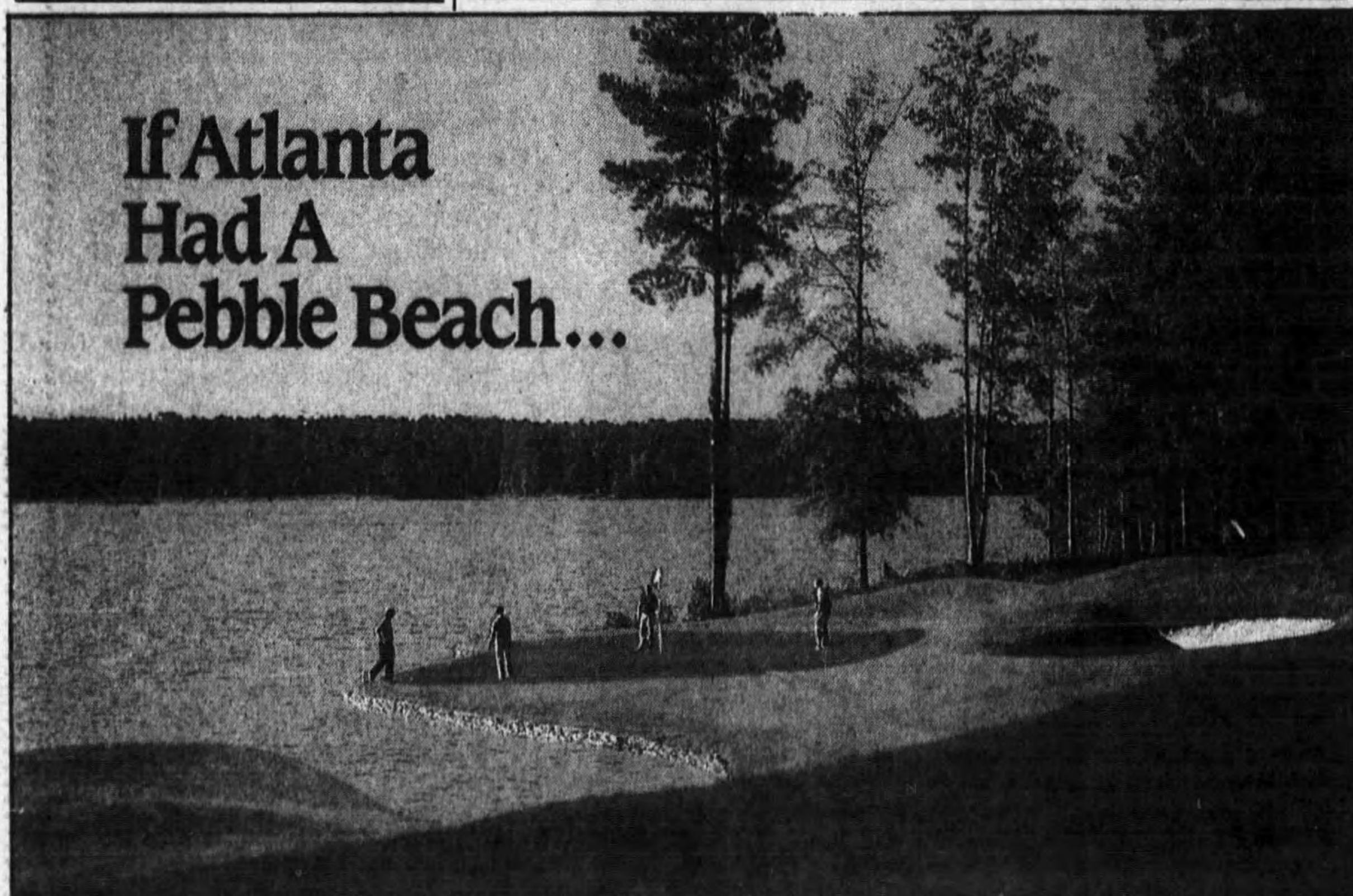
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