

Scary collapse on Grandstand Court

BY JOHN JEANSONNE

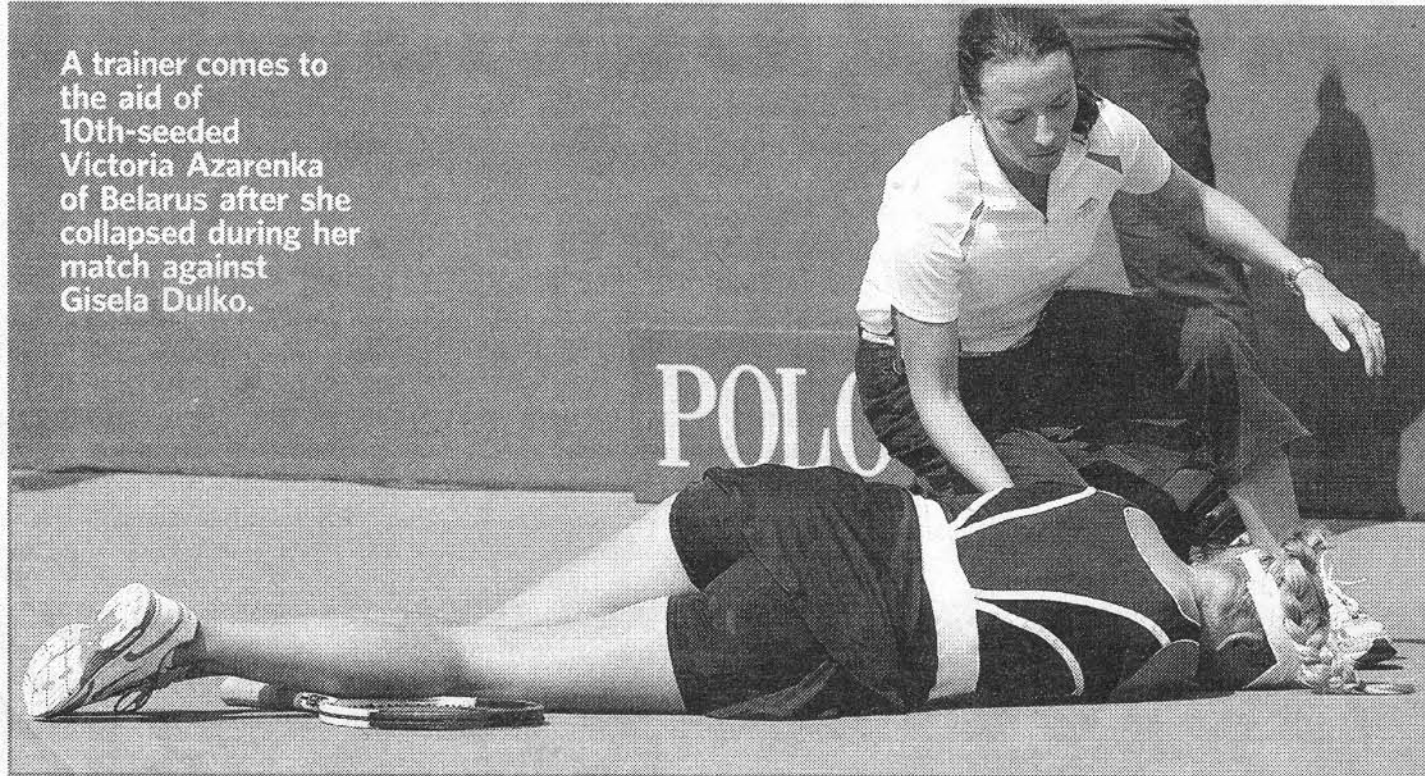
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Extreme heat again was a U.S. Open sideshow yesterday but apparently was not the primary cause of 10th-seeded Victoria Azarenka's collapse only 34 minutes into her second-round match.

A late-day statement from Azarenka revealed she had suffered a mild concussion, probably suffered shortly before her match when she fell warming up and struck her head and arm. During her play against 25-year-old Gisela Dulko, the world's 42nd-ranked player from Argentina, Azarenka clearly was not moving well and was trailing, 5-1, in the first set when she crumpled to the ground.

On-court temperature readings at the time, just before noon on the sunny Grandstand Court, were 109 degrees. (An on-court high of 111 was recorded shortly after 3 p.m.) Medical personnel immediately provid-

A trainer comes to the aid of 10th-seeded Victoria Azarenka of Belarus after she collapsed during her match against Gisela Dulko.



ed aid and water to Azarenka, the 21-year-old from Belarus expected by many tennis experts to be capable of a deep run into the Grand Slam tournament.

Instead, she was forced to de-

fault and was taken off the court in a wheelchair.

Hot weather prevailed for a second consecutive day on the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center grounds, with an air tem-

perature high of 89 after Tuesday's peak of 96. But Azarenka is accustomed to competing in hot weather and lives in Scottsdale, Ariz. No other players were forced to retire during the day.

Shortly after the incident, Dulko told The Tennis Channel, "At 3-1, [Azarenka] was taking more time to serve. When it happened, she fell on the floor. It wasn't nice. You feel bad for a player you know. I crossed the net and took her some ice. They took her to the hospital, I guess."

Late in the day, after being released in "good" condition from the hospital following tests and back at her hotel, Azarenka released her statement:

"I was warming up in the gym before my match against Gisela Dulko when I fell while running a sprint. I fell forward and hit my arm and head. I was checked by the medical team before I went on court and they were courtside for monitoring. I felt worse as the match went on, having a headache and feeling dizzy. I also started having trouble seeing and felt weak before I fell. I was taken to the hospital for some medical tests and have been diagnosed with a mild concussion."

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