



BEST OF THE BEAST

At 196cm tall, Belarusian **Max Mirnyi** is affectionately called “The Beast” by many of his friends and tour mates – but there is nothing ugly about his game.

Mirnyi demonstrates a dying art with his superb **backhand volley**, a stroke that has contributed to his stunning success in both singles and doubles.

His 10-year career has so far reaped 32 titles (in both singles and doubles) and more than \$US 7 million in prize money. With consistency a key feature to his success, there is little doubt that more big prizes await the hard-working Mirnyi.

By Pat Cash



1 Using a continental grip, Mirnyi prepares as early as possible for a waist-high backhand volley.



2 He cocks his wrist up and back, which helps provide extra strength on contact.



3 Mirnyi’s balance is upright and his feet are in a nice semi-open position. His contact is not too far in front of his body.



4 Mirnyi’s movement doesn’t slow down. He is well inside the service line and cuts down on the ball for slice.



5 His racquet keeps cutting across, providing the side spin that is perfect for grass.



6 Because Max is moving smoothly, he comfortably criss-crosses his legs, then slows down.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN ANTHONY



Pat Cash, who won Wimbledon in 1987, contributing to a total of seven singles titles during his career, reached a career-high world No.4 ranking. The Melbourne-born champion will also be remembered as one of Australia’s finest Davis Cup players. The classic hard-fighting serve and volleyer also reached the final of the Australian Open in 1987 and 1988, the first year at Melbourne Park.

He currently runs the Pat Cash International Tennis Academy at Hope Island Resort on the Gold Coast. For more information, log on to www.patcash.net

Next month:

Patriotic pride - We focus on some of the biggest team events in the game, with coverage of Australia’s tough Davis Cup semi-final in Argentina, as well as the Fed Cup final in Belgium.