

Germany regain Champions Trophy

BERLIN, Sept 23: Australia's men's hockey side failed to get a medal for the first time since the Champions Trophy was started in 1978, but coach Frank Murray came away with some priceless intelligence, reports AFP.

Australia went into their final game against Germany on Sunday needing to win by five goals to keep the Trophy they won in 1989 and 1990. But they lost 2-0 and the hosts deservedly won their fourth title.

Murray was deeply disappointed but said: "We will go away with a lot of valuable information that was needed in our preparation for the Olympics next year."

"Of all the tours on which I have coached this side that has been the most valuable. It has given us a lot of answers and a lot of direction towards Barcelona."

Andreas Becker scored both German goals in the last game and it was also a double celebration for Carsten Fischer, the veteran pillar of the German defence, who was in his 200th international.

Becker took eight minutes to put his side ahead, connecting with a centre from the right by Sven Meinhardt.

The Germans dictating play for most of the game with good positional sense and passing.

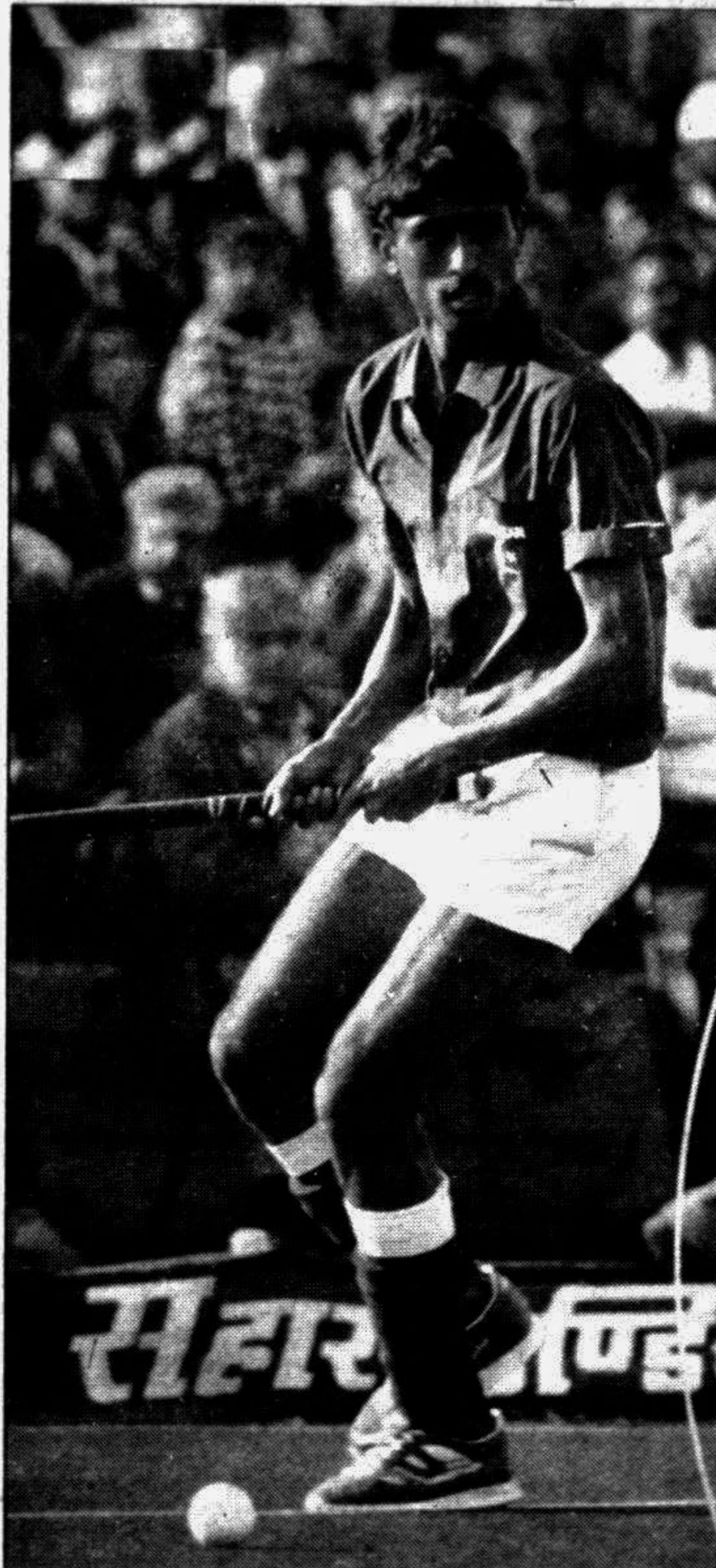
The Australians had to wait till the second half to get their chances and then let them go begging.

David Wansbrough found himself with only the goal-keeper to beat after picking up a pass from the right by Stacy. Advancing toward goal, he stumbled and lost possession.

Six minutes later a rare mistake by Fischer let through Wansbrough, but again he lost control and Fischer retrieved the ball.

Becker scored again with a well taken goal from a long corner in the 50th minute after he had missed an open chance.

For Germany, who won the title between 1986 and 1988, it was the second success to celebrate in three months, they beat the strong Dutch side in the final of the European Championship in Paris.



SHAHBAZ AHMED — The best player of the meet.

Pakistan, whose fate depended on the last match, were hoping for at least a draw if not an Australian win. That would have brought their first title since 1980.

Team manager Islahuddin, though disappointed, said, "We played very well and came so close, but we shall have our chance of recovering the Trophy next February in Karachi."

Pakistan had the fastest and most skilful forward line but too many chances were squandered.

The Dutch won the bronze medal by beating the Soviet Union 5-1 earlier Sunday.

Jan Floris Bovelandier scored from three short corners to take his tally to seven and finish joint top scorer of the men's tournament with Khalid Bashir of Pakistan.

The Soviets finished last and now drop out of the next Champions Trophy in Karachi in February. They will be replaced by France, who are ranked seventh in the world.

Shabaz Ahmed of Pakistan was named men's player of the tournament while the women's award went to Sharon Buchanan of Australia.

BOVELANDER'S HATTRICK

An earlier report said, a second hattrick by Floris Jan Bovelandier sparked the Netherlands to their biggest win in the Champions Trophy — 5-1 success over the Soviet Union on Sunday.

The Dutch victory ensured that the Soviets and not themselves were excluded from the 1992 tournament.

The Soviet team, with a single point to their name, needed to win by three clear goals to avoid last place. They took the lead through centre forward Sergei Pleshakov in the 21st minute but were outplayed in the second half.

Bovelandier scored his hattrick of corner goals in 22 minutes to finish the tournament with seven goals, the same total as Pakistani Khalid Bashir.

Earlier in the event he scored all his team's goals in a 3-1 defeat of Britain.

STANDINGS

Final men's standings in the Champions' Trophy held in Berlin (tabulate under played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

Men:						
Germany	5	3	2	0	12	6
Pakistan	5	3	1	1	14	7
Netherlands	5	2	1	2	12	10
Australia	5	2	1	2	8	5
Britain	5	1	2	2	4	6
Soviet Union	5	0	1	4	7	19

BHF calls 26 to nat'l youth camp

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) has called up 26 players to attend the final training camp for selection of the national youth side which is scheduled to take part in the Asian youth hockey championships due to be held in Hong Kong in late December.

A press release of the BHF yesterday advised the selected players to report at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkhya Protisthan (BKSP), Savar by five in the afternoon on September 30 along with their full kits.

The selected players are as follows: Asir, Tushar, Jahangir, Karim, Mamoon, Irteza Kayes, Mahfooz, Rabuiddin, Sanjeet, Ejaz, Khurshid, Mitul, Jewel, Haroon, Tapan, Haider Alam, Sadeq, Raju, Alamgir, Khwaja Waz, Shahid, Shaful, Rashid, Zahid Biswas, Ansar and Zecshan Kader.

ROK girls bring up the rear

BERLIN, Sept 23: China edged out South Korea for the wooden spoon here on Sunday in the women's Champions' Trophy hockey tournament after picking up a point in a 2-2 draw with Spain, reports AFP.

After their last match the Chinese finished in fifth place, ahead of bottom placed South Korea on goal difference.

But they could have beaten Spain with some straighter shooting.

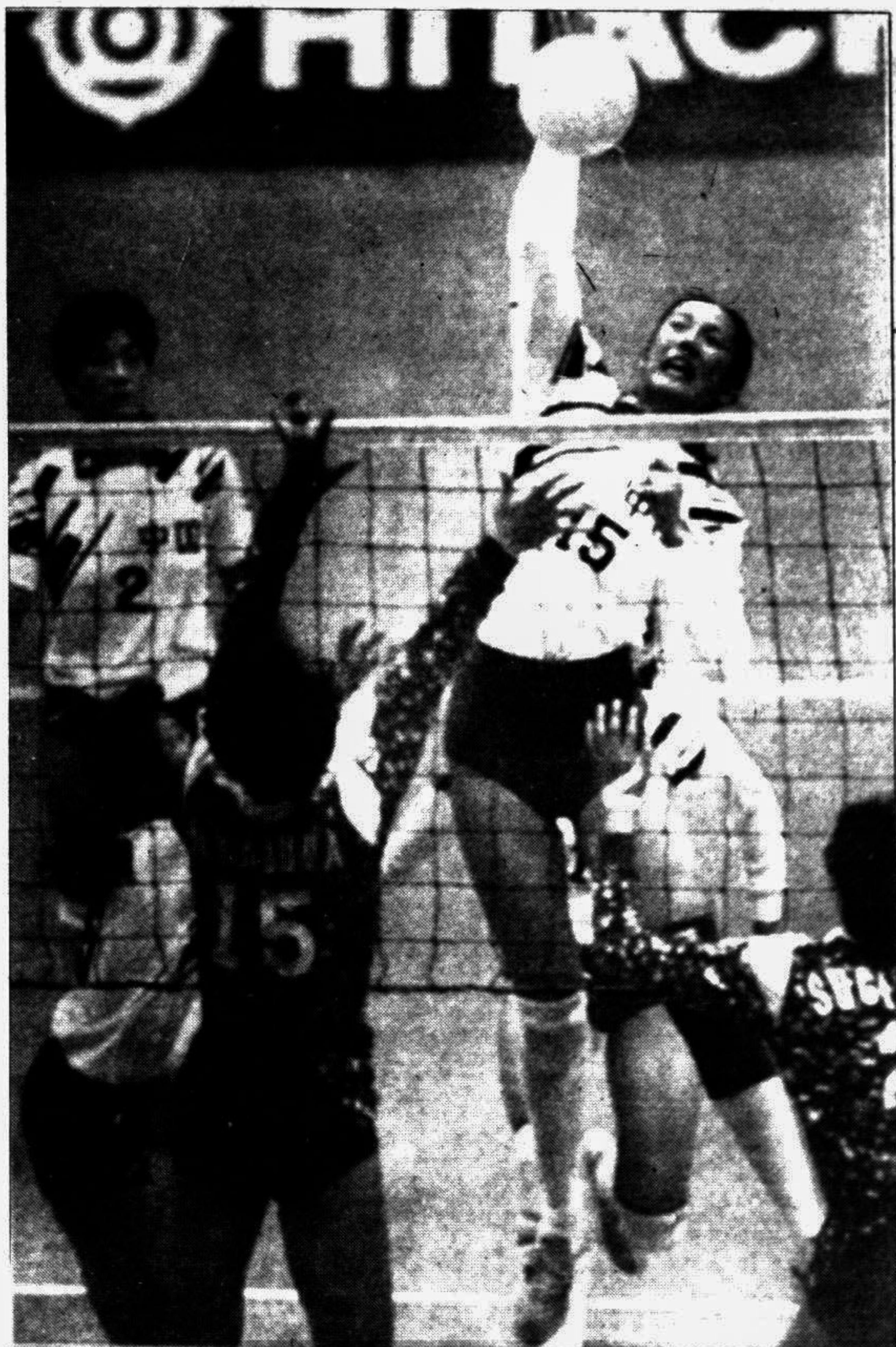
Jianbin Chen incredibly missed the target from only five yards out in the opening minutes.

An early offensive failed to break the deadlock and it was the Spaniards who took the lead in the 29th minute through Natalia Dorado from a centre by Muria Oliva.

Five minutes into the second half China drew level with a well-taken effort from Hongbing Yang, who found the net following up a short corner.

Spain regained their lead in the 43rd minute when Teresa Motos cut in sharply from the right to unleash a fierce shot.

China did not give up and were rewarded when Yanshen Wu scored with a direct hit from a short corner on the hour, the ball taking a deflection off a defender's stick.



China's Li Yueming (No 15 facing camera) makes a shot while Japan's Kazumi Nakamura (No 15, facing back to camera) prepares to block during the final of the 6th Asian women's volleyball championship in Bangkok on Sept 21. China won the final 3-0. —AFP photo

Becker returns next week

SYDNEY, Sept 23: World number two Boris Becker confirmed on Monday he will make his comeback from injury at next week's Australian indoor tennis championship in Sydney, reports Reuters.

Becker's New York-based manager told tournament organisers the three-time Wimbledon champion would be back to defend the title he won last year.

"Boris has had back problems which forced him to pull out of Germany's Davis Cup semifinal but he's back to training two hours a day now," tournament organiser Graham Lovett said.

The only player still in doubt among the strongest ever field for the one million US dollar event is Yugoslav Goran Ivanisevic.

Ivanisevic has also had back trouble and withdrew from this week's Queensland Open



BORIS BECKER

where he was top seed.

"Goran has promised us a decision within 24 to 48 hours," Lovett said. "He's having a doctor's examination and trying to hit some balls to see how it feels."

Lovett said Australian tournament newcomer Andre Agassi, the hero of the US Davis Cup win, had confirmed his flight details to Sydney as had Ivan Lendl, Pete Sampras and Michael Chang, who will all be travelling from Singapore.

Becker will need to recapture form very quickly to reach another potential final showdown with the Swede Stefan Edberg, the man who has taken his World No 1 ranking twice this year.

The four wild cards are expected to be announced on Thursday and Lovett said it was likely a couple of Australian juniors would be given their chance in the big money tournament.

Agassi guides US to Davis Cup final

KANSAS CITY, Missouri, Sept 23: Andre Agassi gave the United States the opportunity to defend their Davis Cup tennis title by routing Carl-Uwe Steeb 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 on Sunday to lift the Americans to a 3-2 semifinal win over Germany, reports Reuters.

Earlier, German Wimbledon champion Michael Stich had levelled the tie 2-2 by defeating French Open champion Jim Courier in the first reverse singles 6-4, 7-5, 6-4.

Agassi mirrored Friday's impressive straight sets win over Stich by playing near flawless tennis against Steeb on the specially-constructed indoor red clay court at the Kemper Arena.

The flashy American, playing perhaps the best tennis of his career, blasted winners into the corners and served rockets to frustrate and thoroughly dominate Steeb.

The United States will meet France in the Davis Cup final at the end of November. France destroyed a crippled Yugoslav team 5-0 to reach their first final since 1982.

Yugoslavia was without its two best players — Goran Ivanisevic and Goran Prpic — who withdrew in a demonstration of Croatian solidarity.

After failing to deliver under Davis Cup pressure in the past, Agassi was coolly efficient in dismantling Steeb.

Agassi won the first four games of the match, breaking Steeb's serve at love in the first and third games.

He never allowed Steeb to put any pressure on him and the German only appeared to be holding his own early in the third set, which proceeded on

serve for the first six games.

"From the very first point it was obvious Andre was on. There was never any doubt," said US captain Tom Gorman after the 29-time champion United States reached their 56th Davis Cup final.

Agassi, loser of all three of his Grand Slam final appearances, admitted he had shied away from pressure in the past, but said he was ready on Sunday.



Michael Stich of Germany returns the ball during his Davis Cup semifinal match with American Jim Courier on September 22 in Kansas City. US took an unbeatable 3-1 lead and will face France in final. —AFP photo

"I wanted to get out there in a crucial situation," he said.

"Now I view competition as a challenge and you have to push yourself to the limit if you want to get better. I just wanted it," added Agassi, who easily ran off the last four games from 3-3 in the third set.

German captain Nikki Pilić said: "I was hoping until Charlie (Steeb) lost the break in the third set. When he lost the break, I lost hope."

Stich had given Pilić reason to hope when he dominated Courier on the American's favourite surface to keep Germany alive.

Stich had his big serve working and was extremely effective on the slow red clay from the opening point.

"I was serving all the time well, especially when I was in trouble," said Stich, who had 10 aces including a second serve ace to save a break point.

Stich calmly fought off six break points and lost his serve just once in the third set.

"I got into position to break him, but I couldn't quite get over the hump," said Courier, who had scored his first Davis Cup victory against Steeb on Friday.

Stich opened the match with a first game service break that set the tone for his two hour 41 minute triumph.

"From there on I felt so relaxed and comfortable out there and just played my game," said Stich, who had teamed with Eric Jelen in Saturday's doubles victory over Scott Davis and David Pate to stave off early elimination.

But Agassi came through when his team counted on him most.

"I wish there was a non-egotistical way of saying it, but I felt everything was in control," he said after completing a remarkable turnaround since suffering a humiliating first round defeat at the US Open last month.

"I have a hard time remembering it," Agassi said of his opening day Open loss to Aaron Krickstein.

"It does feel like a long time ago. I've taken some big steps for me since."

Brazil reaches World Group

SAO PAULO, Sept 23: Luiz Mattar defeated Ramesh Krishnan in four sets here on Sunday, as Brazil clinched their Davis Cup tie against India and gained a place in the World Group, reports AFP.

Mattar, his country's top-ranked player, won 5-7, 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 to give Brazil an invincible 3-1 lead in the best-of-five-match tie.

Taiwan earn promotion

TAIPEI, Sept 23: Taiwan, for the first time in 20 years, won the Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group Two final, defeating Hong Kong 3-2 on Sunday, reports AFP.

The hard-fought battle earned it a place in next year's Asia Oceania Zone Group One.

Chen Chih-Jung of Chinese Taipei smashed the guest team's dream of elevating to Group One after trouncing opponent Colin Grant 7-6, 6-4, 6-4 in the deciding reverse singles match.

The crowd, blowing whistles and applauding vigorously, gave a standing ovation to Chen as he beat Grant for the second time in a month, having beaten him in Hong Kong last month.

Earlier in the day, the Hong Kong team was full hope when its top player Michael Walker prevailed over Chinese Taipei's Lien Yu-Hui 7-6, 6-4, 6-4 in a match that lasted three hours, leveling the score to 2-2.

The two teams had traded singles victories Friday, then Chinese Taipei won Saturday's doubles.

Walker played extremely well Sunday, breaking serve repeatedly against the taller Physical Education College student, Lien.

Taipei and Hong Kong met before in 1984 and 1990, with Hong Kong winning both times.

Matsuoka moves up

BRISBANE, Australia, Sept 23: Shuzo Matsuoka used an accurate first serve to defeat Peter Lundgren 6-4, 6-4 Monday and advance to the second round of the Dollars 250,000 Queensland Open tennis championships.

The sixth-seeded Matsuoka of Japan was more aggressive and consistent than his Swedish opponent, and rallied from 4-4, 15-40 in the first set to reel off 12 straight points.

Lundgren made a succession of volleying errors and mistakes with his forehand groundstrokes.

The Swede led 30-0 in the final game, but double faulted to let Matsuoka back into contention.

Britain outplay Austria

LONDON, Sept 23: Britain won their way back into the Davis Cup elite with surprising ease on Saturday.

Taking an unbeatable 3-0 lead over Austria in their World Group qualifier, reports Reuters.

The Britons, who were last in the World Group in 1987, joined former champions Sweden, who beat the Philippines in Manila as expected, and Switzerland, who took a winning lead over New Zealand in Baden.

Sweden, four times winners, found themselves in the position of having to qualify for the 1992 World Group after a shock first round defeat by Yugoslavia — beaten in this weekend's semifinals by

France.

Even without their top men, the Swedes made short work of the Philippine team. Christian Bergstrom and Rikard Bergh beat Felix Barrrientos and Sofronio Palahang, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2 in Saturday's doubles to put them 3-0 up in the best-of-five tie.

Britain's opponents were also without their best players, Horst Skoff and Alex Antonitsch, who had declined to play.

Jeremy Bates and Nick Brown, with a 2-0 overnight lead behind them, clinched the tie with victory in the doubles on Saturday, beating Thomas Muster and Gerald Mandl 6-7, 6-3, 6-0, 7-5 in a grass court match.

British captain Tony Pickard, who also coaches world number one Stefan Edberg, said: "The door was open for US when a couple of Austrians did not bother to come, and our lads put both feet inside and closed it behind them."

Switzerland, absent from the top 16 for a year, found their way back thanks to Jakob Hlasek and Marc Rosset.

They both won their singles in straight sets on Friday and then beat the same two New Zealand opponents Brett Steven and Kelly Everdeen, 4-6, 7-6, 6-3, 6-4 in just under three hours in the doubles on Saturday.

Among the other World Group hopefuls, Italy were leading Denmark 2-1 after the second day of their tie in Bari and Belgium led Israel 2-1 after losing the doubles on Saturday.

Chinese girl threatens Soviet monopoly

MANILA, Sept 23: A university student from China will try to break the 64-year stranglehold of Soviet women over the World Chess title when she challenges Soviet holder Maya Chiburdanidze in the Philippines this week, reports Reuters.

Xie Jun, a 21-year-old student of Beijing's sport college, emerged from relative obscurity to become the first challenger for the world chess title from Asia.

Her 16-game series with Chiburdanidze, the 31-year-old champion from the separatist Soviet Republic of Georgia who has held the title since 1978, will open on Wednesday in

Manila.

"It's a little cool now," Xie told reporters, as she held up in her room at the seaside Manila Hotel studying for the championship battle against Chiburdanidze, who spent the weekend shopping with her family.

"I have had good training for this interesting match," Chiburdanidze said after she

arrived on Friday evening.

She is the latest women's chess champion from the Soviet Republic of Georgia to hold the world title, winning it 13 years ago in a bitterly fought contest with fellow Georgian Nona Gaprindashvili.

Chiburdanidze has defended the title four times since the last in 1988 against fellow Georgian Nana Ioseliani.

Xie became a Grandmaster when she finished second to Gaprindashvili in the 1990 Candidates Tournament in Borjomi, Georgia.

She then won the right to challenge for the world when she defeated Sisa Marie of Yugoslavia in an eight-game contest, 4.5-2.5.

The first player to score 8.5 points takes the title