

Sampras faces Agassi in final

ATLANTA, Georgia, May 3: Top seed Pete Sampras and second-seeded Andre Agassi both posted straight set wins on Saturday to set up a Sunday showdown in the final of the dollar 260,000 AT and T challenge tennis tournament, reports Reuter.

Sampras cruised into the final with a 6-4, 6-2 in over fellow-American Todd Witsken, while Agassi advanced earlier in the day by beating unseeded Pablo Arraya of Peru 6-4, 6-3.

Sampras and Agassi, tutored at the same Florida Tennis Academy years ago, have played five times with Sampras holding a 3-2 edge. But Agassi won their only match on clay, the first time they played three years ago in Rome.

Sampras, ranked three in the world, needed just one hour and 19 minutes to win his semifinal.

Relying on a solid first serve, Sampras held easily and broke Witsken, ranked 94th, for a 2-0 lead. But the top seed suddenly became careless and had to fight off three break points in the next game before holding for 3-0.

Witsken attacked the Sampras serve again in the seventh game, this time breaking with a backhand top-spin return, ten held to even the set at 4-4.

But Witsken wasted all his hard work two games later by double-faulting to give Sampras the set 6-4.

Sampras eliminated many of the unforced errors in the second set and outlasted Witsken to take a 4-1 lead. Sampras pounded in so many

wins that he resorted to an underarm serve in the fifth game.

"I was hitting the ball really well but then I lost some concentration," said Sampras of his first-set lapse. "In the second set it was a matter of me being more patient. But that concentration lapse is something I can't really do against Agassi in the final."

Witsken, thwarted in his effort to reach his first singles final, moaned about the power servers that dominate the game. "With a lot of guys at the top, if you took away their serve, many wouldn't be considered great tennis players," he said.

Arraya won over the crowd but could not outperform Agassi on the court in the earlier semifinal.

The Peruvian made effective use of the dropshot in the first set but Agassi broke first to lead 5-3 and then broke again to win it 6-4.

Somewhat winded, Arraya laid on the comic banter in the second set as his game began to fall apart.

When Agassi missed a classic Arraya drop shot, the Peruvian flung his arm around his opponent's shoulders in a mock pose for the television cameras. Arraya then promptly broke a distracted Agassi for a 1-0 lead.

Two more service breaks followed, then Arraya held to go ahead 3-1. When Agassi disputed a call in the next game, Arraya climbed into the stands with the spectators and called out: "Come on Agassi, play."

Agassi obliged, holding serve, then breaking a tiring Arraya for 3-3 after which the Peruvian faded. Agassi broke again for 5-3 and won the match on a kick serve that he followed up with a forehand winner.

"It was a test of concentration," Agassi said. "It was enjoyable, but when it got to 3-3 in the second set I needed to bear down and concentrate. It was very mental today and a question of staying focused."

Hong Kong beat Thailand

HONG KONG, May 3: Thailand gained small consolation by winning both the 'dead' reverse singles in the Group Two Asia-Oceania zone Davis Cup final against Hong Kong here Sunday, reports AFP.

Woraphon Thongkhamchou, coming in for the injured Narathorn Srichaphan, carved out a 6-3, 6-7, 2-7, 8-6 victory over the British territory's number one player Michael Walker.

Then Thongkhamchou took the other reverse singles, reduced to a best of three sets format, beating Colin Great 6-2, 6-4.

Both reverse singles were of academic interest as Hong Kong had already clinched the tie by winning both the opening singles and the doubles.

Hong Kong's victory earned them qualification into the zonal Group One next year.

Thailand were left to ponder what might have been if their number one player,

Narathorn, had not succumbed to cramps on the opening day of the tie.

The 19-year-old Narathorn seemed well on course towards victory in the first match against Grant when he pulled a muscle and suffered a bad cramp midway in the game. He finally retired, with the score reading 3-6, 2-6, 6-2, 6-1.

Results: Opening singles: Colin Grant (Hong Kong) bt Narathorn Srichaphan (Thailand) 3-6, 2-6, 6-2, 6-1, ret'd.

Michael Walker (Hong Kong) bt Thanakorn Srichaphan (Thailand) 6-4, 0-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Doubles: Michael Walker/Mark Bailey bt Wittaya Samrej/Woraphon Thongkhamchou (3-6), 4-6, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4.

Reverse singles: Woraphon Thongkhamchou bt Michael Walker 6-3, 6-7(2-7), 8-6.

Thanakorn Srichaphan bt Colin Grant 6-2, 6-4.

Krabbe may yet run in Stockholm

STOCKHOLM, May 3: German world champion sprinter Katrin Krabbe could still run at the Stockholm Grand Prix athletics meeting on July 2 despite an earlier statement by organisers that she would not be welcome, reports Reuter.

Rajne Soderberg, director of the Stockholm meeting, said on Saturday Krabbe could be invited if the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) supported the German Federation's decision to lift a four-year ban for allegedly rigging a dope test.

The IAAF will consider the case of Krabbe and two of her

former East German teammates at a council meeting in



KATRIN KRABBE

Toronto this month.

"As things stand today, she's not invited," Soderberg said during this weekend's annual spring meeting of European Grand Prix organisers. "But we'll wait and see what the IAAF decides. We're going to follow their decision."

Soderberg said the organisers had considered the Krabbe case and agreed to wait for the IAAF decision before deciding whether to take any joint action.

On Monday Soderberg's assistant director Pers-Anders Persson said the Stockholm organisers had decided not to invite Krabbe because of other athletes "who apparently don't want her around, who feel they are not competing on equal terms."

Krabbe admitted on Saturday that her training was suffering because of the affair.

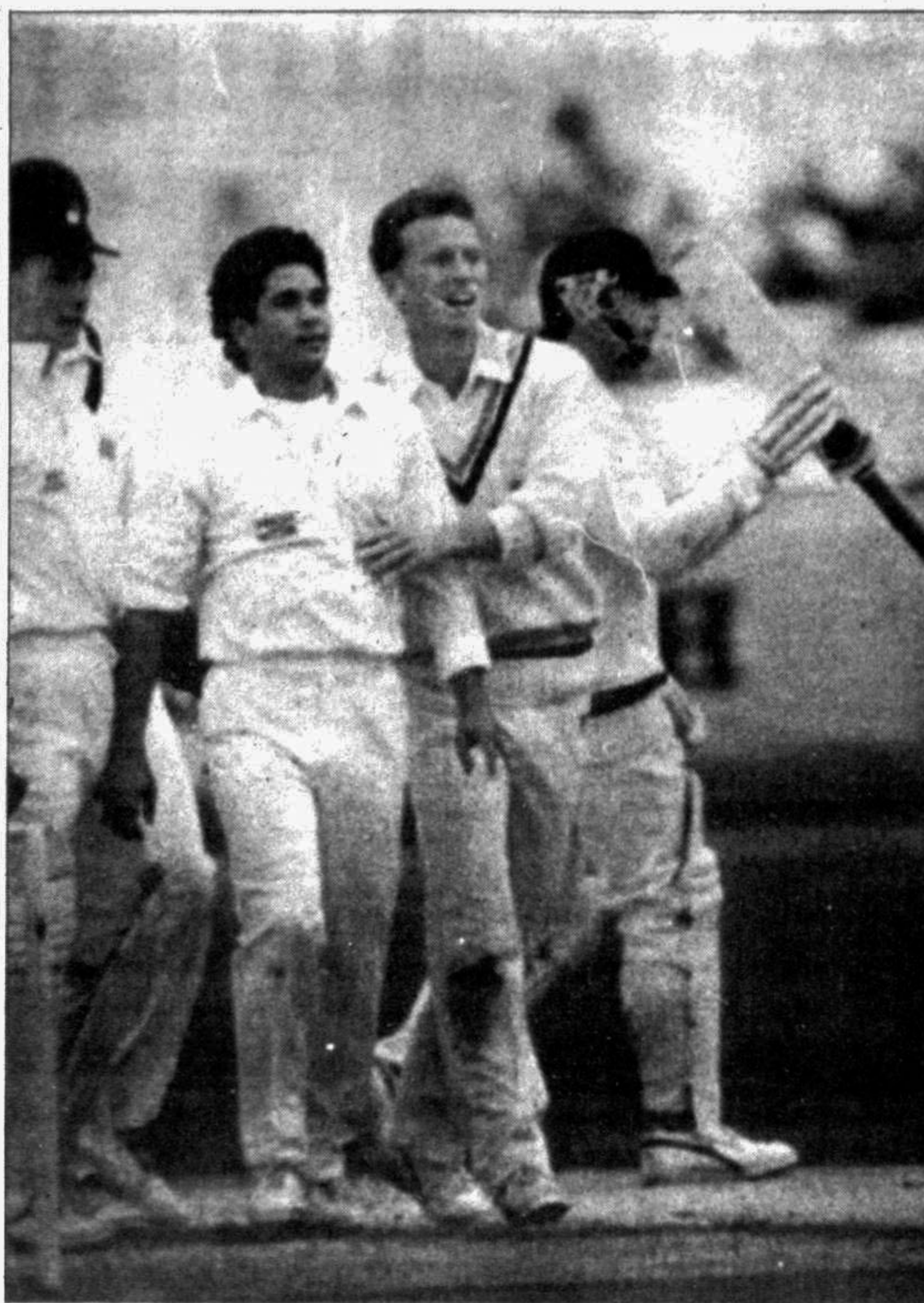
"I still have problems concentrating fully on my training because my head is not completely clear yet," Krabbe said in an interview with the German newspaper Neues Deutschland.

"The acquittal by the legal commission is an acquittal in every way and not a second-class acquittal as some people are now saying."

Krabbe confirmed she would be running her first race since the DLV decision in the eastern German city of Jena on May 28, the day before the start of the IAAF meeting in Toronto.

ROK beat NZ

SEOUL, May 3: South Korea took an unbeatable 3-1 lead over New Zealand today by winning the third singles match of the Davis Cup tennis Asia Oceania zone Group One semifinals, reports Reuter.



Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar (2nd L) makes a dream start in his career in the Yorkshire team by taking the wicket of Chris Cowdrey lbw in his debut match against Kent in the Benson and Hedges Cup at Headingley, England on April 30. —AFP photo

Graf unbeatable in Hamburg

HAMBURG, May 3: Steffi Graf got out to a quick 4-0 lead and then hung on for a 7-6 (7-5), 6-2 victory over Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain on Sunday to win the dlr 3500 Citizen Cup — her 63rd career title, reports AP.

With a backhand slice, power serve and new varied, full-court strategy, the top-seeded Graf appeared headed for an easy victory. But Sanchez, who rallied after a first-set loss to beat Gabriela Sabatini in the semifinals on Saturday, again halted her opponent's momentum with passing shots to win three of the next four games and force

the tiebreaker.

After Graf prevailed in the



STEFFI GRAF

62-minute first set, she needed only 33 minutes more to complete the victory — her sixth straight title in Hamburg.

"When I look back I'm very satisfied with myself. I won the tournament for the sixth time and did the right thing at every phase of the game, especially in the final," said the victorious Graf.

The win was Graf's 12th in 14 matches against Sanchez. It was her second title this year, along with Boca Raton.

Graf breezed by Anke Huber of Germany, Leila Meshki of Georgia, Magdalena Maleeva of

Bulgaria and Debbie Graham of the United States before the showdown with Sanchez.

She leaves the tournament with dlr 60,600 in prize-money and renewed confidence after two losses to Sabatini in the United States this year at the Key Biscayne and Amelia Island tournaments.

"I want to thank everyone in the audience. They were terrific. I'll definitely come back next year. It was great," she shouted to the crowd.

An earlier report said: Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario enjoyed a typically spirited victory over Gabriela Sabatini in the Hamburg women's clay-court event on Saturday to set up a final with old rival Steffi Graf.

The Spanish third seed battled back to beat the Argentine 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 and reach today's final against the German world number two.

Graf had an easier passage to her sixth Hamburg final with a 6-3, 6-0 victory over compatriot Anke Huber.

She had looked in trouble when Huber led 3-1 in the first set before the fifth game was interrupted twice because of rain.

Pakistanis off to flying start

Sports Reporter



World Cup cricket champions Pakistan got off to a flying start in their tour of England when they beat the Duchess of Norfolk Eleven by 32 runs in the traditional tour opener at Arundel yesterday, according to BBC monitored in Dhaka late last night.

Pakistan, led by Javed Miandad, rattled up 252 for the loss of two wickets in their 50 overs thanks to a fine 104 by opener Aamir Sohail. In reply, the Duchess of Norfolk XI finished on 220 for two wickets when their overs ran out.

The left-handed Aamir Sohail, who retired after making 104, put on 86 runs for the first wicket with Rameez Raja before Raja was out for 23. Then newly-appointed vice captain Salim Malik, who had such a nightmarish World Cup, appeared to have regained his batting form and picked up from where he had left off last season when he had such a brilliant stint with Essex, scoring nearly 2000 runs in the English county season. Malik hit a stylish 84. Skipper Miandad also made a good beginning, scoring a rapid unbeaten 31.

Pakistan's utility player Asif Mujtaba, who returned to the team after languishing in the wilderness for quite sometime, picked up both the Norfolk wickets with his gentle left-arm spin.

The Pakistanis play their second game of the tour, another limited over match,



AAMIR SOHAIL...104

against Kent at Canterbury today, May 4.

Jaisimha defends Azharuddin

CALCUTTA, May 3: Former Test cricketer, M L Jaisimha feels that the Indian skipper Mohammed Azharuddin as simply made a "scapegoat" for India's disastrous performance in the World Cup, reports PTI.

"He (Azhar) was definitely a little passive in his dealings, but it is wrong to put all the blame on him for India's poor showing," he told newsmen when asked to comment on Azhar's captaincy.

He said India's inconsistent batting was the main reason for the poor showing as many of their key batsmen like Srikkanth, Manjrekar and Azharuddin himself could not click at the right time during the long tour Down Under.

Jaisimha, who was here to arrange some sponsorship deal for his employers, VST Industries, said "Before the tour our bowling was suspect, but surprisingly it was the bowlers who did very well while the strong batting line up let us down."

DU cricket

Sports Reporter

Department of Political Science recorded an easy seven wicket victory against the Department of English in the Dhaka University inter-department cricket competition at the Jagannath Hall ground yesterday.

Put into bat, English department batsmen struggled right through their innings against the accurate bowling of their opponents on an uneven wicket in a match that was reduced to 25 overs a side because of over night rain.

English could muster a paltry 96 for five wickets with Mujibur top scoring with an unbeaten 36. Mamun chipped in with a useful 28. Opener Mujibur carried his bat through the innings but failed to accelerate the run rate which proved costly in the end as his fellow bowlers were left with too few runs to bowl at.

Arif Ahmed Chowdhury of Pol Science did the real damage by claiming three wickets for 20 at a crucial stage of the match. Naimul took two for 11. Political Science made 97 for three wickets in 20.5 overs with Naimul remaining at the kill with 36. Arif, who bowled well, did one better scoring a quick 22 before being stumped off leg-spinner Ahsanuzzaman Saklain.

Saklain, brought on late by his skipper, returned the best analysis with figures of one for 17. Masur claimed one wicket while the other batsman was run out.

Gooch, Waugh Essex heroes

LONDON, May 3: Graham Gooch and Mark Waugh hit centuries on Saturday to pave the way for a comfortable Essex victory over Northamptonshire in Benson and Hedges Cup 55-overs group matches.

England captain Gooch (119) shared a 206-run partnership with Australian all-rounder Waugh (100) as the county champions defeated Northamptonshire by 66 runs. Essex scored 264 all out, with West Indies' strike bowler Curtly Ambrose taking four for 31, before the home side struggled to 198 in 51.1 overs with Allan Lamb hitting 53.

Ian Botham was again among the runs for newcomers Durham as they defeated Combined Universities by 51 runs at Cambridge.

Botham, who hit Durham's maiden first class century this week, scored 72 with former England opener Wayne Larkins stroking 74.

At Leicester, Mark Ramprakash, fighting to regain his England place, hit an unbeaten 108 as Middlesex beat Leicestershire by 99 runs.

West Indies' opener Desmond Haynes scored 67 and John Carr 70 in Middlesex's 325 for five. Leicestershire 226 for eight.

Johnson a poor sixth

KINGSTON, Jamaica, May 3: Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson finished a disappointing sixth out of a

field of eight in a 100 metres homecoming on Saturday at the 1992 Mutual Games athletics meeting, reports Reuter.

The Jamaican-born former world record holder, who was appearing for the first time in his career on a local track, finished at 10.39 seconds, well behind Jamaica's Raymond Stewart, who won with a time of 10.10.

John Drummond of Texas Christian University, who clocked 10.12, took second place in the race, while Jamaican John Mair finished third at 10.24 as the runners benefited from a tail wind of 1.83 metres per second.

Speaking with reporters after the race, Johnson said he felt good despite the poor

showing. "It was my first run since my injuries," said Johnson, who has been hobbled by a pulled leg muscle. "Look for more good things from me."

Jamaican former Olympic medalist Herb McKiney, who watched Johnson run, said Johnson needs to work on stamina.

"He needs to run some 250 metres instead of just 100s, and build himself up," McKiney said.

Johnson has been struggling to regain his form following a two-year suspension imposed by the International Amateur Athletic Federation for using banned steroids.

Despite the notoriety he gained after his disqualification at the Seoul Olympics, Johnson remains a popular figure in Jamaica and he was greeted with loud cheers when his name was announced prior to the race at the National Stadium.

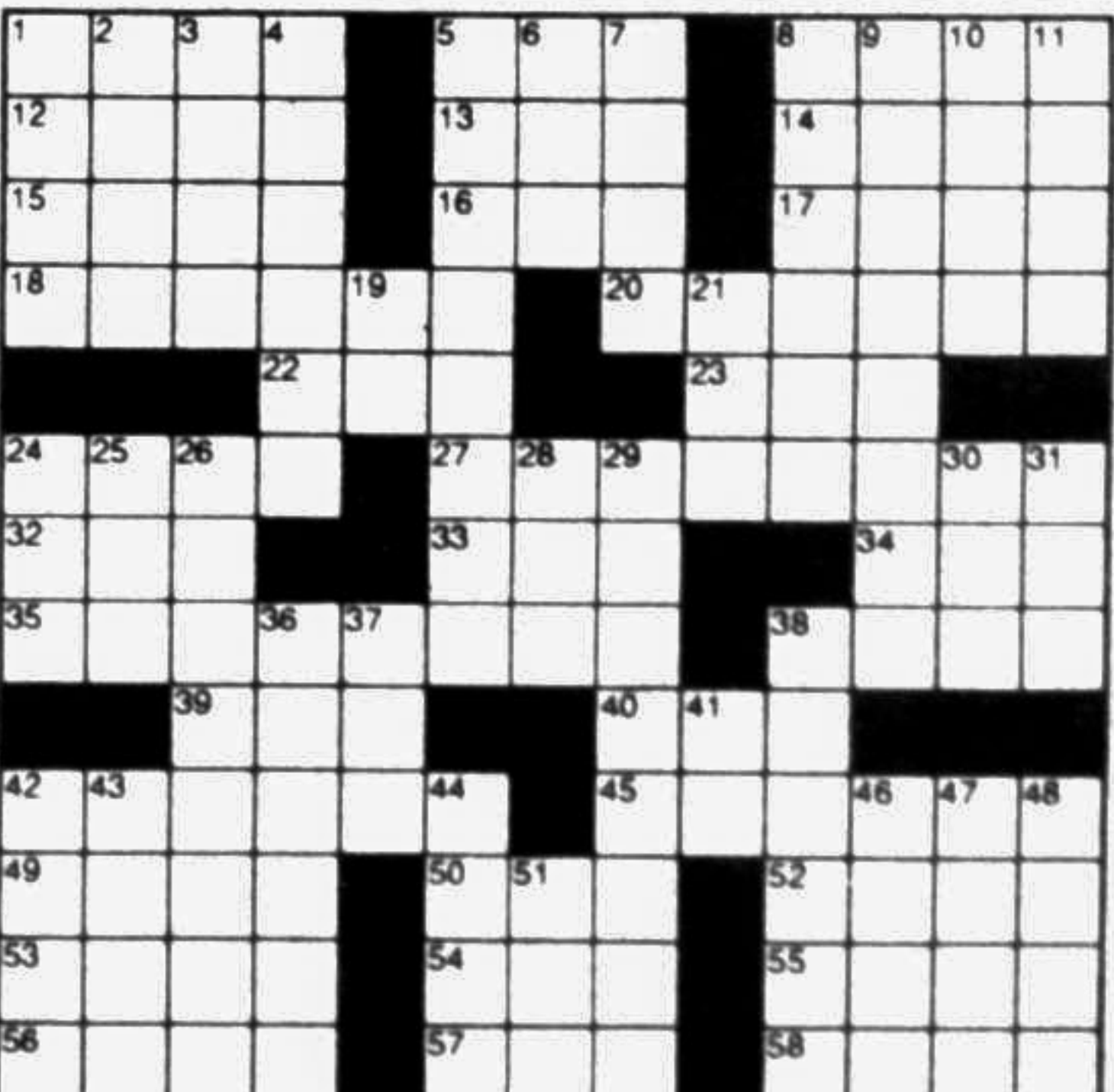


Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah being introduced to the players at the start of the 15th men's and ninth women's national volleyball championships at the Outer Stadium volleyball court yesterday. —Star photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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CRYPTOQUIP

IAOL VDLTUVRVUPDL IDYHOY
IET EVVRTTOZ DG THPB-
BPLX IDYH, AO IELUOZ
VDLVYOUO BYDDG.

Today's Cryptquip clue: V equals C

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.