

Cool Courier too good for Costa

ROME, May 18: Jim Courier underlined his status as world number one by hammering rising Spanish star Carlos Costa 7-6(7/3), 6-0, 6-4 to win the 1.4 million dollar Italian Open here on Sunday, reports AFP.

After two-and-a-half hours on court, Courier, the man they call the Dade City Dude, looked as cool and relaxed as he had at the start — and will be a tough character to beat as he defends his French Open title in a week's time.

It was the first time the two men had met, and Costa was clearly overawed by the occasion in the blistering heat of the Foro Italico, and only put up anything of a fight in the opening set.

He looked a shadow of the men who did his reputation a power of good with back-to-back wins in Barcelona and Estoril earlier this season, and Courier commented: "I was in better shape than he was, and I guess that was important. He looked real tired in the second set but I was feeling real good."

"I'm really pleased because I've played some good matches this week, but the big test for Costa will be living up to his results. He's a lot faster than the other Spanish players, he's very fast and very aggressive."

Costa admitted: "I lost my rhythm physically and psychologically after the first set. I was very tired indeed, while he just concentrated on the points and didn't let up. I hope

it's only because I've played so many matches in the last two months and not because we were playing best-of-five sets."

Another AP message adds: He may not have Stefan Edberg's graceful volley or Boris Becker's blistering serve.

But Jim Courier is No. 1 in the world and he proved it again Sunday by winning the Italian Open.

He now goes to Paris as the clear favourite to defend his French Open title in the Grand Slam event that starts May 25.

The real test is to defend what you did the year before. No one knows that better than I, the American said after turning back, Spain's Carlos Costa, this year's clay court

sensation, at Rome's Foro Italico.

More impressive than the straight-set drubbing was the way the American won every key point.

"Jim doesn't have ups and downs and you have to be constant playing him," said Costa. "He is stronger physically and more regular than the other players."

Virtually unknown a year ago, Costa had established strong clay court credentials coming into Rome. He won two tournaments and reached the finals and semifinals in two others and will move into the top 10 when the new ATP rankings are released Monday.

Courier, on the other hand,

was making his first appearance on clay this year.

His game is built on hammer-like ground strokes and a powerful serve even if he is not counted among the biggest servers in the game.

He is also persistent, never giving up on a point and keeping the pressure on.

"The bottom line is I'm feeling physically fit," Courier said after the Costa match. "I'm going to be right there on every point."

Looking ahead to Paris, Courier listed Edberg and Becker, as well as Costa, as the players most likely to give him trouble.

"You usually see the same guys when you get to the business end of the tournament," he said.

Two other Americans who reached the Rome quarterfinals could also figure in Paris.

Pete Sampras, the 1990 US Open champion, looked certain to reach the Italian semifinals but folded in a match against Petr Korda. Michael Chang, the 1989 French Open winner, faltered against Carl Uwe Steeb.

In what was the strongest Italian Open in recent memory, organizers announced record attendance of 2,34,840 for the two-week men's and women's tournament, with gate receipts of 3.4 billion lire, nearly \$1.3 million.

Tickets swindle

Meanwhile, the Italian Tennis Federation said on Sunday it had begun legal action to recover money owed for tickets to the Italian Open, adds Reuter.

The top-selling daily La Repubblica reported earlier that a director of a Rome-based ticket agency had disappeared along with 1.5 billion lire (\$1.3 million) from advance ticket sales.

It said the director had set up a bank account in his own name to store the takings before he went missing.

The two-week tennis tournament ended on Sunday.

Courier top seed in Paris

PARIS, May 18: Jim Courier, the newly crowned Italian Open champion, heads to the French Open as the top seed on the strength of ATP Tour rankings released Monday, reports AP.

The \$1.74 million Grand Slam tournament begins next Monday. The French Federation, in contrast to Wimbledon, uses the ATP rankings for its men's seedings without any revisions.

Courier, who won here last year on route to the No. 1 ranking, will be the top seed the Stefan Edberg of Sweden the second seed. Edberg made the finals in 1989 but lost to Michael Chang.

Former US Open champion Pete Sampras is No. 3, followed by Boris Becker, the three-time Wimbledon champion who had to withdraw from the Italian Open last week with an injury.

Becker is not playing in Dusseldorf at the World Team Cup this week. He reportedly first had thigh muscle problems in his loss to Michael Stich in the semifinal of the German Open 10 days ago. He hopes to be in shape to play in

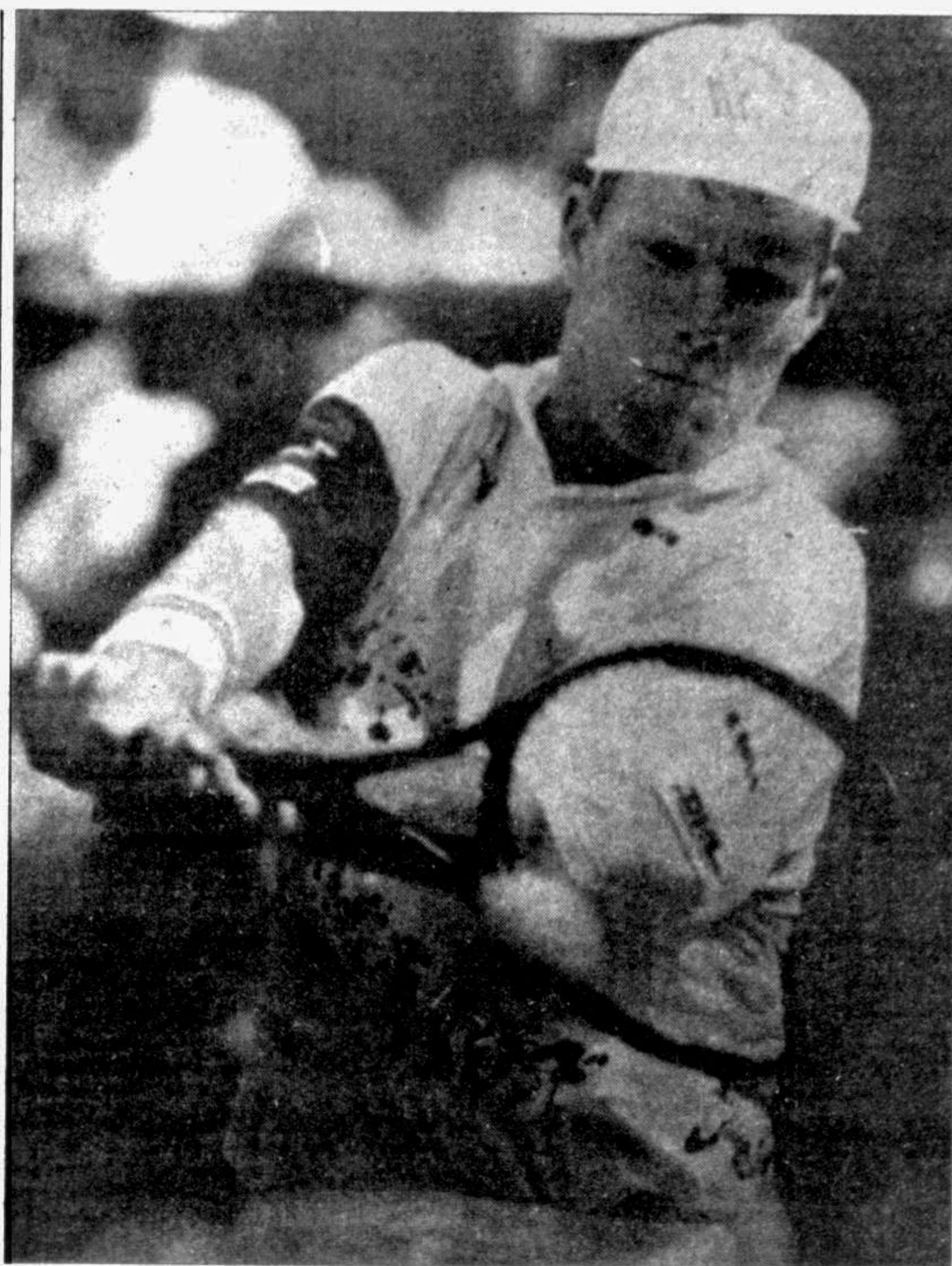
Paris. Stich, who beat Becker for the Wimbledon title last year, is No. 5. Chang, Frenchman Guy Forget and Czechoslovakian Petr Korda complete the top eight.

Croatian Goran Ivanisevic, Spaniard Carlos Costa, Ivan Lendl and Andre Agassi follow in positions 9-12. Dutchman Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands, American Aaron Krickstein, Russian Aleksandr Volkov and American Brad Gilbert are the final four seeds.

Lendl is a three-time champion making his first appearance at Roland Garros since 1989, he had an injured hand last year and chose to bypass the event in 1990 to concentrate on Wimbledon.

Agassi is a two-time finalist on the red-clay courts of Roland Garros but had to scramble to become seeded after dropping to 17th in the rankings a few weeks ago.

Americans John McEnroe and Jimmy Connors, who have created excitement at the French Open over the years, are ranked 36th and 38th respectively and run the risk of meeting top seeds in the early rounds.



US tennis player Jim Courier returns the ball to Carlos Costa of Spain during the Italian Open final in Rome on May 17. Courier won 7-6, 6-0, 6-4. — AFP photo

Graf closer to her peak form

BERLIN, May 18: Steffi Graf showed she is back to some extent like her best on red clay when she recovered from dropping the first set against Spain's Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario to win the German Open final 4-6, 7-5, 6-2, reports AP.

It took Graf a minute short of two hours to lift her sixth German Open title and she did so in style, slugging it out and never giving any quarter once she had got into her stride.

But there was a moment's uncertainty in the second set when Sanchez-Vicario stood 5-4 up and serving for the match, only for Graf to reel off the next three games and the set with some confident groundstrokes.

In the end, her strength and superior fitness told over the three sets as her opponent finished the match struggling to keep pace and looking physically drained.

It was a useful workout for Graf on the strength-sapping clay court, with the French Open in Paris only a week away for she is determined to wrest back the crown from her arch-rival Monica Seles of Yugoslavia.

English clubs benefit from TV deal

LONDON, May 18: Television networks have guaranteed to pay each of the top 22 English soccer clubs a minimum of \$1.5 million (£1.5 million pounds) a season, reports AP.

The 22 Premier league clubs accepted Monday a joint broadcasting rights offer from the government-owned British Broadcasting Corporation and American Rupert Murdoch's British Sky Broadcasting satellite channel. Murdoch owns the US Fox network.

The five-year deal \$47 million (\$34 million pounds) deal includes live appearance and performance bonuses to clubs in addition to the guaranteed \$1.5 million (£1.5 million pounds) per year.

The deal gives the BBC and BSkyB exclusive rights to live soccer broadcasts in England. The Premier league replaces the football league's former First Division.

Army soccer

COMILLA, May 18: Savar, Chittagong, Comilla area teams and Dhaka Signals team qualified for semifinals of the Army football championship at the Comilla Cantonment today, an ISPR press release said.

Group-1 Champions Chittagong Area team will now meet Group-2 runners-up, Savar Area team while Group-2 champions Dhaka Signals team will face Group-1 runners-up, the hosts Comilla are team in the semifinal matches tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the Chittagong Area team beat the Dhaka Engineers team by 3-0 goals, while the Comilla Area team defeated the Dhaka Infantry team by 4-2 goals at the last leg of their robin league matches today.

Earlier, in two other matches held yesterday, the Bogra Area team beat the Savar Area team by a solitary goal while the Rangpur Area team beat the Dhaka Engineers team by the same margin.

Powell feels he can improve

MODESTO, California, May 18: Long jump world record-holder Mike Powell says he still has room for improvement, reports AP.

"I am faster, stronger more confident this year. I don't know how far I can jump," Powell said shortly after leaping 8.90 meters, the third longest jump in history, at the Modesto Invitational track meet Saturday.

Powell's wind-aided jump was the third-longest in history, and matched Bob Beamon's jump in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City.

which stood as a record for 23 years before Powell and Carl Lewis both beat it at the World Championships in Tokyo last August. Powell with his record

jump of 8.95.

Powell said the fall of Beamon's record marked a new era in the long jump.

"Breaking the record, I thin, broke down those barriers that men can't jump beyond 30 feet (9m)," Powell said. "We're at a new level in the long jump. I'm looking forward to going 30 feet and beyond."

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Marathon results

CLEVELAND, Ohio, May 18: William Koech led a Kenyan one-two in the 15th annual Cleveland 10 kilometer road race here Sunday, while Dries Daech of Morocco won the Cleveland marathon, reports AP.

Koech completed the 10k in 28 minutes 13 seconds, with compatriot Paul Kipoech second in 29:06. German Jens Kurras was third in 29:11.

Scotland's Liz McColgan won the women's 10k in 31:58.

Ben takes another beating

SAO PAULO, May 18: Ben Johnson's bid to become a serious international title contender again took a further knock on Sunday when he missed the Olympic 100 meters qualifying time at the Sao Paulo athletics Grand Prix, reports Reuter.

The Canadian sprinter, banned from all competition for two years when he tested positive for a banned anabolic steroid after winning the 1988 Seoul Olympic 100 meters final, finished fifth in 10.44 seconds. The qualifying time is 10.30.

Former world record holder Johnson was clearly nervous at the start and false started.

At the second attempt, he got away quickly but fell away in the second half of the race, finishing fifth behind Brazilian

Fernand Botasso.

The race was won by world bronze medalist Dennis Mitchell of the United States in 10.15 seconds. Mitchell was virtually ignored while Johnson was surrounded by an army of reporters, photographers and cameramen.

Despite his poor performance, Johnson said he was

team for last year's World Championships and ran in the 4 X100 relay team only.

AOUTA WINS 1500

Moroccan Olympic gold medalist Brahim Boutayeb and Said Aouta both won their races.

Boutayeb spent most of the 5,000 meters in second place before overtaking Kenya's Jonas Koech with just under a lap to go to record a comfortable win. "I used my head, not my physical strength," he said.

Aouta passed Brazilian Edgar de Oliveira on the final straight of the 1,500 meters.

"It was a difficult race for him and he had to make a big effort," Oliveira said. "I expect he thought he would come to Brazil and win easily."

World champion Samuel Mateo of Zambia cut it fine in the 400 metres hurdles, winning by just 0.05 seconds from American McClinton Neal. Olympic champion Andree Phillips of the US could finish only sixth.

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Nat'l handball from May 25

Sports Reporter

The eighth national Eastern Insurance handball championship will begin from May 25 at the Outer Stadium handball court.

So far seven teams have confirmed their participation in the competition. They are defending champions Bangladesh Rifles, Bangladesh Police, Bangladesh Ansars, Bangladesh Air Force and Faridpur, Natore and Pabna DSAs.

However, the Bangladesh Handball Federation, the organisers of the meet, expect Barisal DSA and some other teams in the championship.

Div II cricket qualifiers from tomorrow

Sports Reporter

The qualifying competition for the Second Division cricket league will begin in the city tomorrow, Wednesday.

Foreign Minister A S M Mustafizur Rahman will inaugurate the meet at the Dhaka Stadium as chief guest.

Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) will arrange a grand rally of the participating teams on the occasion.

There will be just a solitary match on the inaugural day in which Kalabagan Krira Chakrabarti will face Rangdhona Sporting Club at 9:30 am.

Seventy-four teams — split into eight groups — will take part in an elimination league followed by another knock-out round involving the eight group champions.

Only the champions and runners-up will qualify for the Second Division cricket league next season.

Three city venues — Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Mirpur Pallabi ground and the Mohakhali T&T ground — and the Narayanganj Stadium will be used for the smooth running of the first round which is scheduled to finish by June 6.

Last year forty teams took part in the qualifying meet with Evergreen and Western Club earning promotion to the Second Division.

Khwaja chess

Sports Reporter

The traditional Khwaja active chess competition will begin from May 22 at Narayanganj, says a press release.

Organised by the Narayanganj District Chess Players' Association, 15 players will take part in the tournament.

They are Abdullah Al-Morasin, Zakia Sultana, Subrata Chandra Shaha, Hassan Kabir Molla Babu, Syed Monirul Huq, Md Raisuddin, Md Abdul Khaleq, Alauzzaman Malik, Khondaker Mushtaq Ahmed, Azharul Islam, Md Peer Hossain, Munir Chowdhury, Farhad Hassan Jewel, Munir Hossain and Mamunur Rashid.

It takes all kinds to make the Bay-to-Breakers a race

SAN FRANCISCO, May 18: Runners both fleet and footish joined in the fun of the Bay to Breakers,

the zany footrace featuring everything from two-time Kenyan winner Thomas Osano to a sprinting wedding party heading for nuptials after the race, reports AP.

Amid the raucous runners, bride Rebecca Lack made her way along the course in a gown so long that it took two running flower girls to carry the train.

And then there was the man in an ostrich costume, and a group of runners dressed as a tropical bar, complete with cocktails and palm trees.

Osano, 22, won Sunday's race for the second straight year, but failed to beat the course record he set last year at 33:54.5.

All three top men's finishers were from Kenya.

Osano, 22, pulled ahead of Yobes Ondieki in the final 100 yards (metres) of the 7.5-mile (12 km) course to win in 33:56.1. Ondieki, 31, was second in 33:58.

William Mutwal was third in 34:16.

Lisa Ondieki, who is married to Yobes Ondieki, won the women's division in 38:52. It was the second Bay to

Breakers victory for the 32-year-old Australian, who was the top women's finisher in 1988.

Deleah Asiago of Kenya was second in 39:10. Uta Pippig of Germany was third in 39:44.

Osano, who trailed Yobes Ondieki by as much as 50 meters for much of the race, said his only trouble spot was the down slope of the Hayes Street Hill.

Lisa Ondieki's finish marked the first time a woman has beaten the men's centipede — several male runners linked together like the creepy-crawly insect.

The first-place Reebok Aggies centipede's time was 39:12. The Boho centipede was second in the insect division with a time of 40:23.

"I won this in 1988 but I was beaten by a centipede," Lisa Ondieki said. "It's nice to win a BMW, but when you are beaten by a centipede, it kind of takes the joy out of it."

First-place winners of the 81st annual Bay to Breakers take home new BMW automobiles.

The world-class athletes led a colorful monster pack of runners and walkers that stretched miles. As usual, many pranced along in outlandish — and sometimes complicated — costumes.

One man wore a portable

toilet costume, advising others to "get in line." Several contestants disguised themselves as a regulation-sized US Postal truck. A chiropractic organization ran as a human vertebrae.

"I saw one guy running as a cow, and he was actually milking himself while he was running," said Melissa Blair, a spectator.

The race, sponsored by the San Francisco Examiner newspaper, began in the city's financial district near the bay, proceeded up Hayes Street Hill and through Golden Gate Park to the finish line at Ocean Beach.

In the women's centipede division, the Reebok Aggies were first in 51:55. The Tamalpais Crystal Geysers were second in 57:56.

About 63,000 people registered to run in this year's race, a big drop from the 78,769 who registered for the largest Bay to Breakers, in 1986.

However, thousands of unregistered runners and walkers joined the mob, bringing the estimated number of participants to nearly 100,000. Thousands more cheered them on.

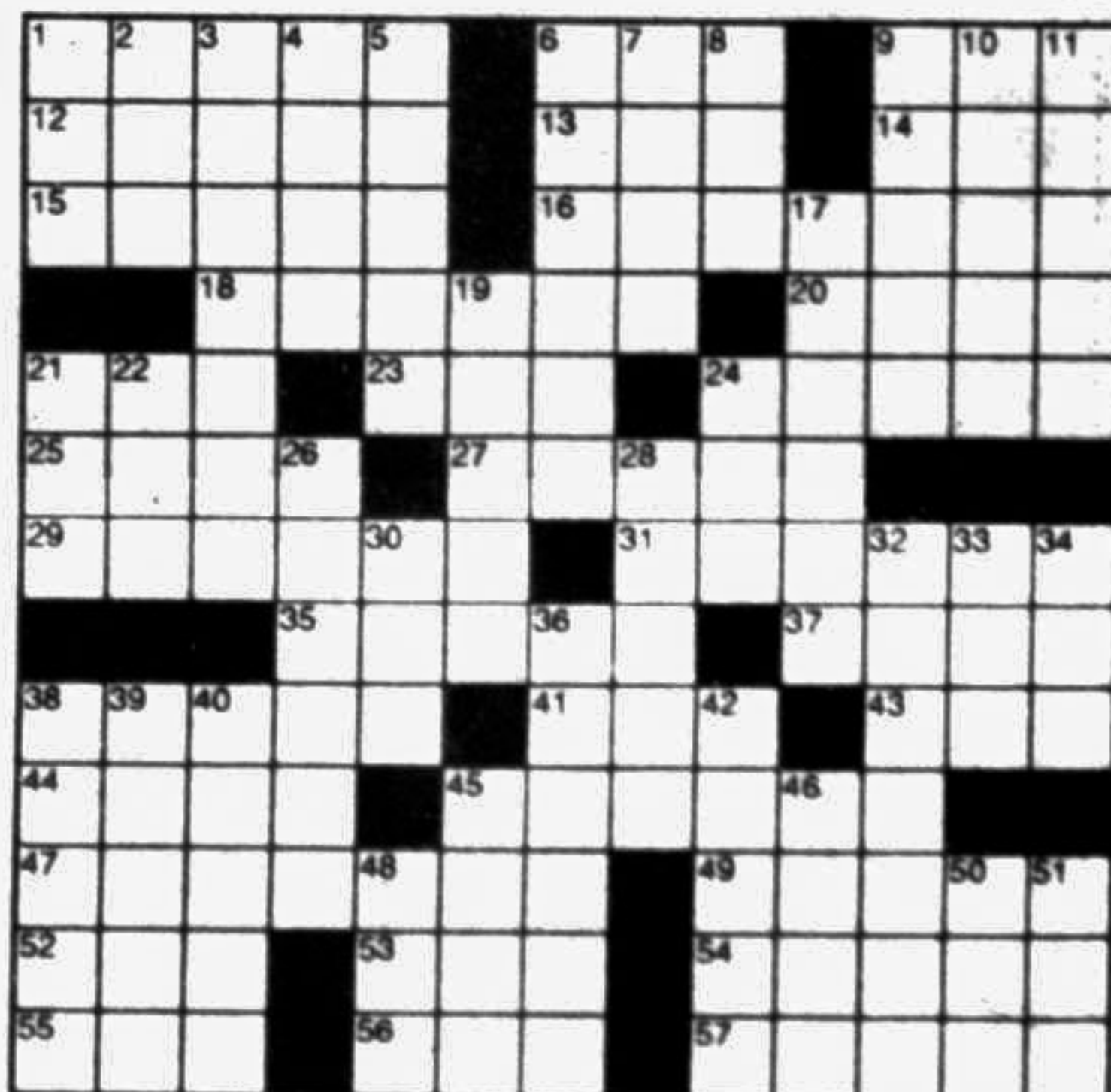
Soul legend Ray Charles headlined the Bay to Breakers Footstock Festival that capped off the race at Golden Gate Park's Polo Fields.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	Johnson	nopoly	19 L
1 Lawn-care need	43 Bagel topper	money-maker	21 — Amin
6 Burst	44 Exam variety		22 Colorless
9 Box-office sign	45 "Jeopardy!"	DOWN	24 Mineo of Hollywood
12 Spanish province	46 emcee	1 Seeing red	26 Team
13 Keatsian creation	47 Surfer's woe	2 Breakfast for Brutus?	28 Not merely plump
14 Heavy weight	49 Future oak	3 Sans	30 "— Impos-
15 Passe	52 Author Umberto	4 Gen. Robt. —	sible"
16 Jane Fonda's recommendation	53 In favor	5 DeeJay's milieu	32 Strike
18 A little lower?	54 "On the Beach" author	6 Persian Gulf War VIP	33 Rock musician Brian
20 Gymnast Korbut	55 "Night Court" prosecutor	7 Skunk's defense	34 Reviewer Reed
21 — Jima	56 Raggedy doll	8 Pieced	36 Kramden's pal
23 Ewing wares	57 "Mo-	9 Filched	38 Spread seeds
24 Win the Series in four		10 Roulette bet	39 Author Jong
25 Smear		11 Available	40 Poultry purchase
27 Parade exhibit		17 Fawn	42 Disconcert
29 Sense			45 Emulate
31 Fan			46 Canyon occurrence
35 Broadway composer			48 — Locka, Fla.
37 Lesson			50 Hwy.
38 Denominations			51 — Blu Dipinto di Blu"
41 Explorer			

Solution time: 26 mins.

HOSS HOC TWAS
ABOW ONO OHIO
RODE WEB MOLD
MEADOW BRACES
ERA ATA
MAWS SAWHORSE
ASH ICH EAR
OPERETTA ISLE
HUE TAM
FEELBLE SUPINE
ARAB VAN ODOOR
DIME ICE REAL
SKID LEW TAME



CRYPTOQUIP

ECHWOAWAO ACP HCNF
 LCUFH, NTCKWYNA NQFX
 TNMCKH LQYMUCE EXPA.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: A equals N

The Cryptoquip 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.