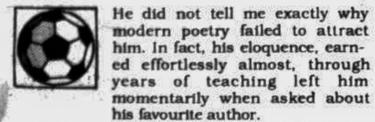


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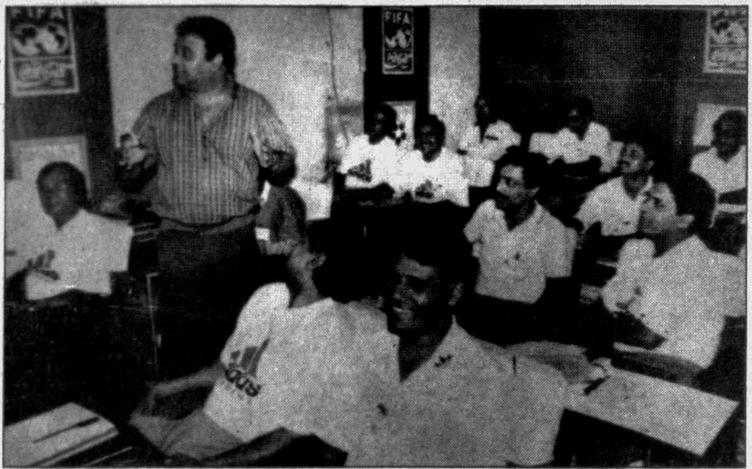
'You have an ideal base to turn pro'

Star Special by Ashish Das

Paul Momy Samuel, the English teacher-turned-Secretary of the Persewaan Bola sepak Malaysia (Malaysian Football Association), was in the city in connection with the Futuro FIFA-Coca Cola World Football Development Programme which concluded July 11.



He did not tell me exactly why modern poetry failed to attract him. In fact, his eloquence, earned effortlessly almost, through years of teaching left him momentarily when asked about his favourite author.



Paul Momy Samuel taking a class with local organisers during the recent FIFA-Coca Cola soccer clinic at the Bangladesh Football Federation office.

imaginative sketches of character, Michael Henchard, 'Mayor of Casterbridge' at that too, at the Bangladesh Football Federation of all places! Well the teacher of English Language and Literature in Penang, Malaysia was through and done with his redemption.

Unlike his favourite author Paul Momy Samuel, the well-built, energetic and engaging executive is quite loathe to accept the pessimistic, fatalistic philosophy of life. For a more literary verisimilitude one can possibly cite Shelley rather than Schopenhauer as Paul's ideal in real life.

The transition is not easy, you see; lot of people and money are involved. So we have to go slowly towards full professionalism, revealed Paul. Semi-pro, or partial professionalism, first began in Malaysia in 1989.

The National League draws huge crowds simply because the matches are competitive. Paul reassured when reminded about the unhealthy cult of two clubs in our country.

Some of them retained the championship title for years; this happened only because of an imbalance in strengths. Two or three teams were so powerful that the rest could never offer any semblance of a challenge and the championship used to be decided midway through the league.

Every state arranges its own 'club based league' to sift and expose the best players of the state in the national league. The states are taking care of this club-based league. Most of

them are employer clubs. So the best players get exposure in pan-Malaysian competition comprising the National League, Malaysia Cup and FA Cup, with the last named competition being held in the middle of the National League. Brunei and Singapore, who take part in the National League and Malaysia Cup competitions, are kept out of this tourney. The home and away arrangement makes up for the feared lack of 'enough matches'!

In a relevant reference, Paul informed this correspondent that there are only six professional clubs in South Korea, the Asian representatives in the last two World Cups, generally regarded as the biggest power in Asian football.

Our performance has not been satisfactory at the international level but we are hopeful; things are bound to improve.

It is imperative to have a good organisation, because if you have a good organisation results are bound to come, today or tomorrow. Look at Brazil, they have hardly any organisation. Brazilian players are self-made and gifted. On the contrary, Germany has arguably the best organisation in the world. It is so carefully planned and well laid out that the standard of soccer there is unlikely to go away. The records speak for themselves. They are the most consistent footballing nation.

Sheer talent can win you a battle or two but it is system that makes all the difference in a war.

Malaysia had some very talented players in the Sixties. Some of them are always there. You must have seen Ali Baker, Issa Baker. Then there was Zainal Abedin. These are exceptions. A majority of good durable players come through an integrated system and we are after that.

Unwilling to dwell upon the scope of professionalism, Paul was straight-forward enough to say that Bangladesh has the ideal base for the introduction of a semi-pro system.

We, too, faced various problems but once the ball was set rolling things started falling into place.

Concentrating on the economic bottle-neck and snags, Paul said that last year's gate collections amounted to twelve million Malaysian dollars; a far cry from the four million in the first year of semi-pro. With Sharp and other big names flowing in, money is not the biggest problem.

Once the commercial concept catches the imagination you, too, will not find it very difficult, I am sure.

Moreover the standard set-up and the milieu of football in Malaysia and Bangladesh is more or less the same. You only need to give it a serious and exhaustive thinking, Paul assured.

Doping scandal rocks ROK Olympic hope

SEOUL, July 13: A doping scandal involving a handful of South Korean athletes cast a shadow over Seoul's ambitious bid to spearhead Asia's assault on the Barcelona Olympics, reports Reuter.

At least four athletes qualified to compete in the Games have tested positive for banned drugs in an initial analysis of urine samples, a source at the Tacnung Sports Centre said on Sunday.

The secluded camp in northern Seoul is the home to hundreds of the nation's top sportsmen and women who have endured an exhausting dawn-to-dusk programme in the past months.

The source refused to identify either athletes or the sports until a second test had been completed.

The final results of anti-doping tests will not be known until Monday. We are worried about the possibility that the number of suspected drug-users may increase," he said.

The four included competitors in men's handball, wrestling and weightlifting, Yonhap news agency said.

Rice rings the memory of home

NARBOEE, France, July 13: Japan's Olympic Swimming team are homesick, already — because they can't get the right sort of rice, reports AFP.

Head coach Yoku Suzuki said: "We brought a lot of Japanese food with us, but unfortunately not enough for every day. The main problem is the rice. It's just not the same here, it's not as glutinous, and some of the team are missing the food at home."

Fifteen of the 20 strong team for Barcelona have been in Europe for two weeks, having spent time training in Lisbon. The five long-distance swimmers are to join the squad when they get to Majorca for the last stretch before the Games begin.

In the meantime, they have a couple of days' practice in the Olympic pool in Barcelona but have been staying on the French side of the border.

Suzuki says that his team have three realistic medal hopes. "We're getting closer to the standard of the rest of the world — and we can medal in three events, the men's and women's 200 freestyle and the women's 200m butterfly."

Kiichi Kawana is Suzuki's tip for a medal in the men's 200 butterfly. The 19-year-old Japanese record holder has swum the third fastest time in the world this year and Suzuki is confident he can make his mark — particularly as there are three million yen at stake for a gold medal.

A silver will be worth two million and a bronze a million.

His other medal tips are 14-year-old Mika Haruna in the women's 200 butterfly, after her third fastest time in the world this year of 2:11.63, and 200 m and 400 m freestyler Suzu Chiba, who will turn 16 on August 11.

Chiba holds Japanese records at 100, 200 and 400 m freestyle, and although she won the bronze in the 400 at the World Championships in Perth last year, it is probably in the 200 that her best hope of success lie in Barcelona, according to Suzuki.

Johnson runs a slow second

RHEDE, Germany, July 13: Ben Johnson, who will be back in the Olympics later this month after his disgrace in Seoul, finished second in a slow 100 metres race at an international athletics meeting on Sunday, reports Reuter.

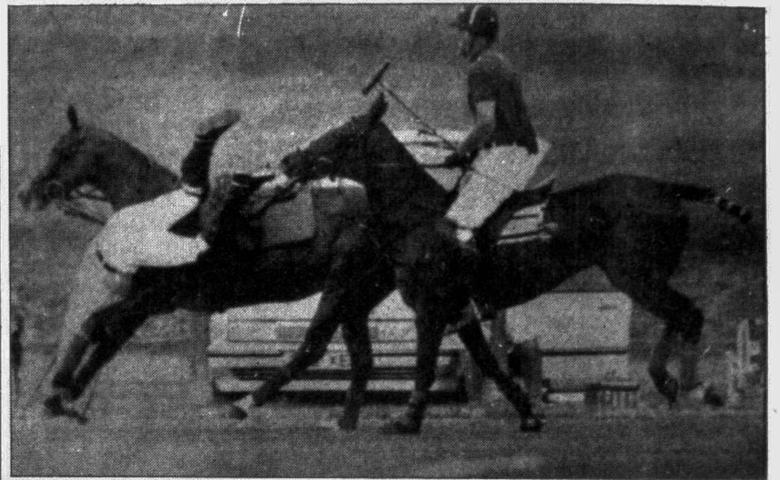
Johnson, who ran 10.16 seconds at the Canadian Olympic trials last month, could manage only 10.47 seconds on Sunday, behind winner Emanuel Tufour of Ghana, who clocked 10.46.

Johnson was stripped of the Olympic gold medal four years ago after testing positive for steroids.

Germany's European long jump champion Heike Drechsler won her event with 7.20 metres.

Former world champion Drechsler surpassed seven metres five times, twice in rain.

Her compatriot Helga Radtke was way behind in second place with 6.65 m.



Britain's Prince Charles tumbles from his horse during a polo match at Cowdray Park in England Sunday. The Prince, who was unhurt, only achieved a single figure rating in a recent newspaper popularity poll that showed Princess Diana more popular than ever.

Pakistanis set out on gold chase

KARACHI, July 13: Pakistan's 16-man Olympic hockey squad left here Friday for Amsterdam and a series of warm-up matches to acclimatise themselves to European playing conditions ahead of the Barcelona Games, reports AFP.

Nothing short of the gold is expected by the nation, and we shall not be found lacking in our efforts", team captain Shahbaz Ahmed, 24, said before leaving.

The side, he said, were encouraged by their victory in the recent five-nation BMW tournament, but it would still "face every side with seriousness, and for us every match will be a final."

Team manager and former Olympian, Islahuddin, said the side had overcome its problems with penalty conversions and finishing and been work-

ing at strengthening its defence.

Pakistan will play two matches against the Netherlands junior team on July 12 and 13, and some other matches yet to be finalised before leaving for Barcelona on July 17, Islahuddin said.

Former captain and centre forward Hassan Sardar said, "The team is definitely better than before. But a lot will depend on how the goalkeeper and fullbacks neutralise attacks."

Both Islahuddin and Sardar rated Germany, playing in the opposite pool, as one of the major contenders for Olympic gold.

Particularly happy to be travelling to Amsterdam was 24-year-old centre forward Musaddiq Hussain who in February this year returned a positive dope test during the six-nation 14th Champions trophy held here.

when this false report implicating me in a positive dope test was published," Hussain said.

Hussain was among the eight picked at random for dope tests after a match against the Netherlands.

But he was cleared after Abdul Hamid, secretary, Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) and doctor Nishat Malik went to Cologne in Germany and convinced the authorities there that the samples could not implicate Hussain in the use of any kind of banned drug.

"I was shocked because I had not taken any (drugs) except for cough syrup and — tablets for headaches," Hussain said.

"I was emotionally and psychologically very much disturbed because from the reports I came to know that if the verdict against me was upheld, not only I could be barred from playing but the entire team could have lost the

bronze it won in the Champions Trophy", he added.

"We have been provided a card by our specialist doctor indicating dose and don'ts with regard to medicine," he said.

Pakistan begin their Olympic pool matches against Malaysia on July 26, followed by other matches against New Zealand, Russia, the Netherlands and Spain.

Three-time winners of Olympics Gold, Pakistan finished a poor fifth in 1988 at Seoul after failing to qualify for the finals.

SQUAD: Shahid Ali Khan, Mansoor Ahmed, Mohammad Akhlaq Ahmed, Farhat Khan, Khawaja Junaid, Rana Mujahid, Khalid Bashir, Anjum Saeed, Mohammad Khalid, Tahir Zaman, Qamar Ibrahim Waseem Feroz (vice-captain), Mohammad Shahbaz, Shahbaz Ahmed (captain), Musaddiq Hussain, Asif Bajwa.

Cutman saves Holyfield's title

ATLANTA, July 13: Heavy-weight champion Evander Holyfield learned a valuable lesson three weeks ago during his fight against Larry Holmes — a solid corner man is as good as gold, reports AP.

After that June 19 fight, the gold totalled about \$18 million. That's what Holyfield can expect next time out after surviving the Holmes bout to defend his title.

Veteran corner man Ace Marotta saved the bank for Holyfield, closing the first cut of the champion's career.

"Ace is the best cut man in the business," said Holyfield, who caught a Holmes' elbow above his right eye in the sixth round. "Most of all he's a praying man. He prays for me before each fight."

The night of the Holmes fight, Marotta did more than pray. He slapped his secret concoction over the gash that later required 15 stitches. "I use anything that's legal," said Marotta, who has been a corner man for 53 years. "A lot of us use Adrenaline (mixed with vaseline); it constricts the cut."

"It was very serious cut," said Ron Stephens, a surgeon at Crewford Long Hospital and Holyfield's personal physician. "Even though the blow that caused the cut was illegal, the



EVANDER HOLYFIELD

referee didn't see it. "If the referee had stopped the fight, Holyfield would no longer be the heavyweight champion. Ace Marotta single-handedly saved Holyfield's championships."

Marotta has some help. Co-trainers Lou Duva and George Benton, along with assistant trainer Ronnie Shields, successfully guided Holyfield

through the third defence of his title.

Holyfield scored a unanimous decision, but his credibility took a blow because of the fight's lack of heavy banging. Duva and Benton insist the champion did what he had to do by surviving six rounds with a gash over his eye.

"I knew I had to fight a cautious fight," Holyfield said.

The beleaguered, 42-year-old Holmes couldn't take advantage of the cut because his speed and accuracy aren't what they used to be. Holmes' chance at reclaiming the title he first held 14 years ago rested with a possible decision by referee Mills Lane to stop the bout.

Instead Marotta, who started in the fight business in 1939, took control of the fight. Marotta, Duva and Benton have been together for 15 years. They've been on Holyfield's team since 1984.

"I've been with Evander every pro fight," Marotta said.

Marotta's role with Holyfield is limited to cut work, but his experience is much more vast. He's helped train 15 champions, including Mark Breland. "I do. I've been very lucky," Marotta said.

Swiss refs to sport logos

ZURICH, July 13: Swiss referees plan to carry advertisements on their jerseys in defiance of a ban by FIFA, soccer's governing body, when their new season kicks off on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The ban, confirmed by FIFA two weeks ago, was underlined by spokesman Guido Tognoni who said today, "The executive committee rejected a proposal to allow referees to carry advertising on their jerseys. As such, it would be better if the Swiss reappraise their decision."

But Referees' Commission chief Willi Jaus appeared unbending when he said in a weekend newspaper interview: "We are urged from all sides to improve the quality of refereeing. At last we have a sponsor willing to support us financially."

Jaus said the money, from a paint manufacturer, would be used for courses for referees and linesmen.

"We cannot turn down this offer of 300,000 Swiss francs (200,000 dollar)," he said.

In recent seasons a similar plan by English referees was dropped after opposition from the soccer authorities.

Metamorphosis ahead for 'manana' Catalans?



BARCELONA, July 13: Three-hour lunches and mid-night dinners. High fashion and outlandish prices. Quirky architecture and funky churches and a restaurant topped by a 15-metre (50-foot) lobster.

Throw in the Summer Games, and you've got the ingredients for one heck of a two-week party in this Mediterranean port, reports AP.

Spaniards may not be the world's best athletes — they have won only four gold medals since the modern Summer Olympics began in 1896 — but they sure know how to have a good time.

"The Olympics are just a

chance to get to drink beers and champagne and sometimes to watch a pretty woman run very fast," said Javier Mariscal, creator of this Summer's Olympic mascot — the cubist cartoon dog Cobi.

"This is not a city where people are crazy about sports. People here have more free time, so they go to the bars," said Mariscal, one of the young artists who have made Barcelona a design center. "We make culture. We make food for the brain."

To many Spaniards, the Olympics are a coming-out party marking the re-emergence of their nation as a significant member of western Europe after decades of isolation under the authoritarian regime of Gen Francisco

Franco. The Summer Games, as well as Expo '92 in Seville, are a chance for Spaniards to show off the healthy democracy and thriving market economy they have developed since Franco's death in 1975.

But the Summer Games are much more than just a big party to the people of Barcelona and the surrounding region of Catalunya.

They have been an excuse to invest \$8 billion in improvements ranging from new roads to reclaimed beaches. The city has thousands of new hotel rooms and a rebuilt airport.

The Olympics also give the Catalan people of northeastern Spain and opportunity to show themselves, and their tradi-

tions, off to the world. Their culture has spawned the eccentric art of Joan Miro and Salvador Dali and nourished musicians such as cellist Pablo Casals.

A vocal minority of Catalans support outright independence from Spain, and will try to ensure their hand printed "Freedom for Catalunya" signs will be captured by television cameras throughout the Olympics.

But even those Catalans who do not desire secession are anxious to show they are different than other Spaniards — in temperament, tradition and lifestyle.

Though almost everyone in Barcelona speaks Spanish, the language of preference is Catalan — a Romance language that resembles Spanish, French and Italian. Street signs in Barcelona are in Catalan, not Spanish.

Catalans are businesslike and more formal than other Spaniards, who often are ridiculed for a "manana" attitude that things can always be put off until tomorrow.

Many Spanish tourist icons are frowned upon in Barcelona. There is little interest in bullfighting, and visitors must search to find typical Spanish foods such as gazpacho (cold tomato soup) or paella (shellfish and rice casserole).

Visitors to Barcelona this summer will be struck immediately by the high humidity and the high cost of living.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 27 min.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and a clue: Today's Cryptoquip clue: C equals F



Lt Col (ret) M A Hamid, President of the Bangladesh Handball Federation, addressing a press conference at the National Sports Council yesterday.