

Sport

WSC action resumes today

BRISBANE, Jan 8: The World Series Cup one-day cricket series resumes today after a three-week break, with World Cup champion Pakistan in danger of missing the finals series, reports AP.

Australia held first place in the three-team series on seven points from three wins and a tie in five games, while the West Indies have six points from three wins in six games.

Pakistan, who won last year's World Cup in Australia, have only a win and a tie in five games for three points. Pakistan play the West Indies at the Gabba on Saturday, while the West Indies and Australia play Sunday.

Pakistan then have two matches against Australia on Tuesday in Melbourne and Thursday in Sydney to close out the regular schedule.

The best-of-three finals series begins Jan 16 in Sydney and moves to Melbourne on Jan 18 for the second match. A third match, if necessary, will be played in Melbourne on Jan 20.

West Indies skipper Richie Richardson believes that Pakistan is not as formidable a side since the retirement of former captain Imran Khan.

"I think they all looked up to and respected Imran tremendously," Richardson said Friday. "He was the great motivator to the team so they are probably not as strong, but still you cannot underestimate

them." Australian captain Allan Border said Friday it's likely that only one spin bowler will be taken into the finals series — either Greg Matthews or Tim May.

Matthews and May, both finger spinners but boasting different traits and characteristics, could both end up playing against the West Indies on Sunday, but no decision will be made until the day of the match.

The West Indies on Friday picked a full-strength side for

jury hampered him over Christmas and New Year. He is also considered a superior batsman in the one-day format.

Third Test double century-maker Brian Lara is likely to open the innings with Phil Simmons slipping down the order.

Pakistan were expected to wait until Saturday morning to name their team.

THE TEAMS

WEST INDIES (Saturday): Desmond Haynes, Phil Simmons, Richie Richardson

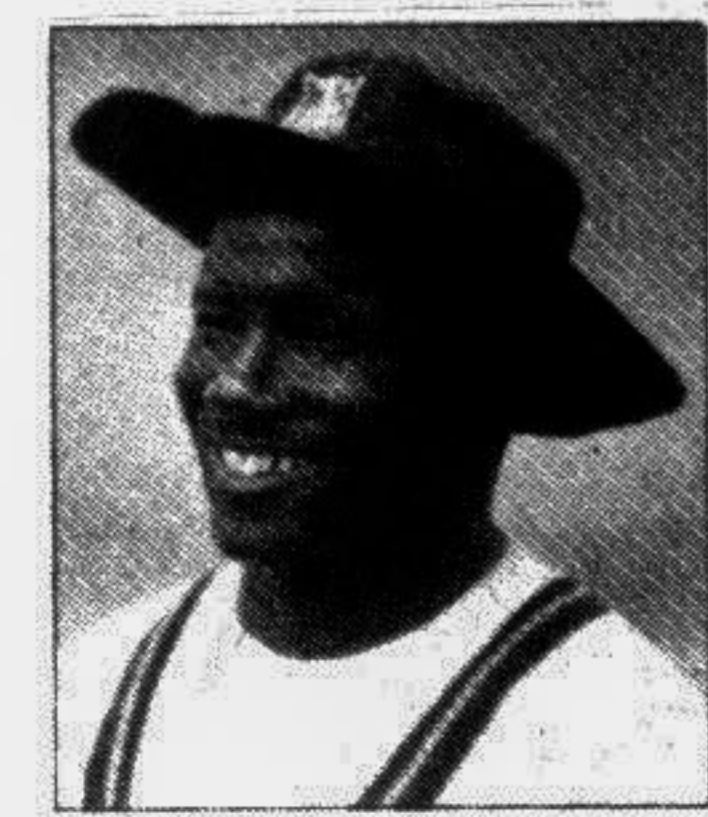


JAVED MIANDAD

their match against Pakistan.

They have brought in Kenneth Benjamin ahead of Anderson Cummins. Benjamin was impressive in his two games of the series so far with 46-2 and 28-2, both against Pakistan.

Benjamin is considered the quicker of the two and may also be being groomed for Test honours after a slight foot in-



RICHE RICHARDSON

(captain), Brian Lara, Carl Hooper, Jimmy Adams, Keith Arthurton, Junior Murray, Curtly Ambrose, Ian Bishop, Kenneth Benjamin.

AUSTRALIA (Sunday): Allan Border (captain), Mark Taylor, David Boon, Ian Healy, Dean Jones, Craig McDermott, Tim May, Greg Matthews, Paul Reiffel, Mark Waugh, Steve Waugh, Mike Whitney.

Indian Board XI 178 for 3 against England

LUCKNOW, India, Jan 8: India's Cricket Board President's XI were 178 for three when bad light forced an early close on the first day of the three-day match against England on Friday, reports Reuter.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the opening day of the three-day match between India's Cricket Board President's XI and England on Friday:

BOARD PRESIDENT'S XI: First innings
S Bhavne c Stewart b Lewis 1
N Sidhu c Gatting b Emburey 36
V Kambl retired hurt 61
A Sharma not out 0
R Dravid st Stewart b Gooch 27
N Mongia not out 45
Extras (b-2, lb-3, w-1, nb-2) 8
Total (three wickets) 178
Fall of wickets: 1-1; 2-105; 3-177

To bat: S. Ankola, P. Vaidya, M. Singh, R. Chowhan, N. Hirwani

Bowling (to date): O M R W
DeFreitas 13 3 37 0
Lewis 11 2 35 1
Emburey 13 3 44 1
Taylor 6 0 27 0
Tufnell 11 1 29 0
Gooch 2 1 1 1
ENGLAND: G. Gooch, M. Gatting, A. Stewart, R. Smith, N. Fairbrother, G. Hick, C. Lewis, P. DeFreitas, J. Emburey, P. Taylor, P. Tufnell.

Stich, Graf win Hopman Cup



PERTH, Jan 8: Michael Stich and Steffi Graf scored a pair of impressive singles victories Friday night, lifting Germany to their first win in the Hopman Cup team tennis tournament, reports AP.

Graf beat Arantxa Sanchez Vicario 6-4, 6-3 in the women's singles and Stich downed Emilio Sanchez 7-5, 6-4 in the men's singles to clinch victory over Spain in the final at the Burswood Superdome.

The third-seeded Spaniards were aiming to become the first team to repeat as champions, but found Graf and Stich in awesome form.

Stich and Graf shared dirrs 105,000 for their triumph in front of a sellout 8,500 crowd while the Sanchez siblings picked up dirrs 63,000.

Stich and Graf hugged and kissed to celebrate their win, for which they also received replica tennis balls made of gold, silver and diamonds worth dirrs 22,000 each.

Graf had failed in two previous attempts to win the Hopman Cup, one of the few titles to elude her in a glittering career, and overcame an ankle injury on her way to the title.

She twisted her right ankle against France in the semifinal, but was received treatment before the match and did not appear hampered.

Graf was completely dominant against Sanchez Vicario, who did not have enough weapons to threaten the Wimbledon champion's groundstroke power and consistency.

The German raced to a 4-1 lead in the first set and was never in trouble.

Sanchez Vicario's hopes flickered briefly when she took a 2-0 lead in the second set, but Graf responded by reeling off five straight games to re-establish control. Her victory took her only 67 minutes.

Graf improved her career record against Sanchez Vicario to 16-3. She hit 10 outright winners during the contest, while Sanchez Vicario could manage only four and just one from the baseline—where she normally excels.



Michael Stich of Germany fires a return in the men's singles of the Hopman Cup semifinal match against Guy Forget of France in Perth on January 7. Stich won 6-2, 6-7 (1-7), 7-6 (7-2).



STEFFI GRAF

Teen twinkle

BRISBANE, Jan 8: Inexperienced teenager Shi-Ting Wang upset 11th-seeded Florencia Labat Friday to advance to the semifinals of the dirrs 150,000 Australian women's hardcourt championships at the Milton Tennis Centre, reports AP.

Wang, a 19-year-old from Taipei who only turned professional 18 months ago, outplayed her more experienced Argentine opponent in searing hot conditions.

Wang, seeded 13th, earned a meeting with second-seeded Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria, who beat seventh-seeded Australian Rachel McQuillan 6-3, 6-2 in a match interrupted by late afternoon rain in the second set.

"I think maybe she was a little bit tired after the first set," said Wang, who made only the second semifinal of her career.

Top-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain also advanced to the semis with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Angelica Gavaldon of Mexico.

Martinez now will play unseeded Australian Michelle Jaggard-Lai, who made the first semifinal of her career with a 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (9-7) win over Nelle van Lottum of France.

Jaggard-Lai needed six match points before clinching her win in another rain-interrupted match.

The 23-year-old qualifier clawed her way back from a 0-3 deficit in the final set.

Martinez, meanwhile, said she was becoming happier with her form.

"My forehand is still a little off sometimes, but it's coming," she said.

"I'll just try to play relaxed in the semifinal and just see what happens."

The tournament is being played on synthetic Rebound Ace courts and is one of a series of warm-up events before the Australian Open, which starts in Melbourne on Jan 18.

Steven in BP semis

WELLINGTON, Jan 8: Top-seeded Brett Steven of New Zealand dropped his first set of the tournament Friday but recovered to advance to the semifinals of the dirrs 50,000 BP Challenger tennis event, reports AP.

Steven decided to become more aggressive after the opening-set loss to American Kenny Thorne, then rebounded for a 3-6, 6-2, 6-2 quarterfinal win.

Third-seeded Bryon Black of Zimbabwe moved into a semifinal meeting Saturday with Steven with a 6-3, 6-7 (5-7), 6-2 win over Germany's Peter Morang.

Fourth seed Tommy Ho of the United States will meet countryman Jimmy Arias in the other semifinal after his 6-2, 5-7, 6-3 win over Australian qualifier Patrick Rafter.

Arias continued his impressive run at the tournament with a 6-3, 6-1 win over second-seeded Robbie Weiss of the United States.

Steven recaptured the best of his recent form Friday after his first-set defeat.

"It was a case of having to try to get angry with myself to get myself going," Steven said. "It's difficult to say but it seemed all the breaks were going his way."

Steven and Thorne have been practice partners through the week in Wellington and are close friends off the court.

Indians in SA: High profile, low standard

CAPE TOWN, Jan 8: India's 10-week tour of South Africa strengthened the bonds cricket has forged across the republic's racial divide, reports Reuter.

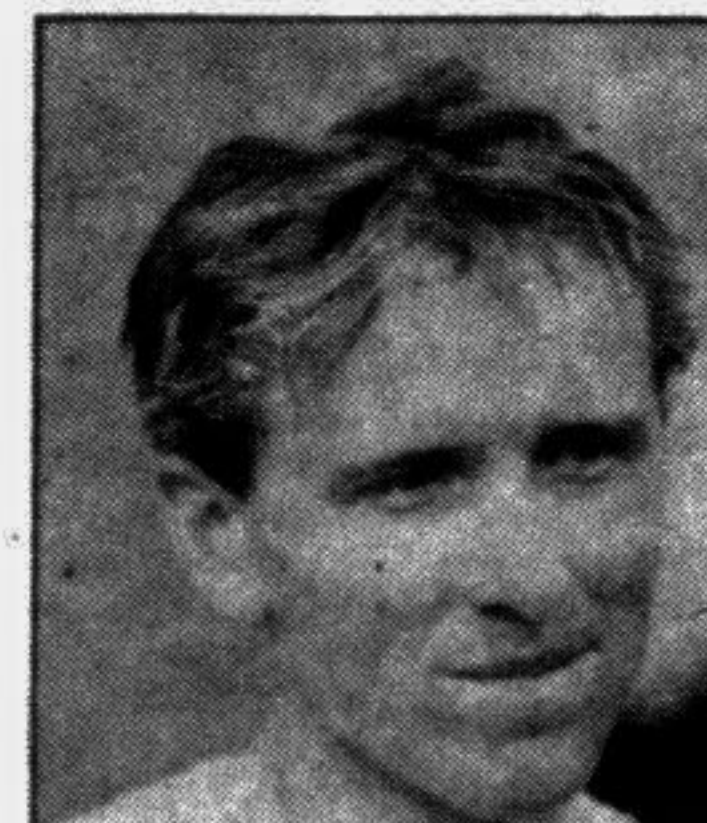
Even if much of the cricket was second class, the first officially sanctioned tour to South Africa in 22 years and the first ever by a non-white team, raised the game's profile here. India were ideal opponents. On the pitch they brought a reputation high enough to be credible while playing badly enough for South Africa to emerge victors.

South Africa won the one-day international series 5-2 and the Test series, which ended on Wednesday, 1-0.

Off the pitch the Indians were marvellous ambassadors for multi-racial sport.

The million-strong Indian population of South Africa was

naturally exultant but the touring team also won friends



ALLAN DONALD

from the strike-torn black townships of Soweto to the plush white northern suburbs of Johannesburg and the Afrikaner heartland of Bloemfontein.

Financially, the tour brought

in considerable sums with an estimated three million rand-plus (1m dollar) going directly towards developing cricket another sports in the country's many underprivileged areas.

The Tests were well attended in Johannesburg and Cape Town while the day-night series sold out almost everywhere. After an outcry at truncated coverage of the first Test both series were given live ball-by-ball television coverage.

The series, however, rarely rose above the mediocre, had few moments of drama and even fewer heroic performances.

The best, on a tour dominated by bowlers, came from South African's Allan Donald in the third Test in Port Elizabeth.

His 12-wicket haul, on a flat, unhelpful wicket, decided the Test and the series in South Africa's favour and Donald deserved — and got —

the man-of-the-series award for that alone.

Both sides bowled tightly. If South Africa lacked a true spinner, they boasted good fast-medium bowlers spearheaded by the formidable Donald.

India's bowling attack, as in Australia the previous year, was the team's strength. But unlike South Africa, whose fielding was superb, it was poorly supported and rarely penetrative.

"There have been some positive things," coach Ajit Wadekar said. "(Javagal) Srinath, (Anil) Kumble and (Venkat) Raju bowled well. Praven Amre came out in the shadows of the other batsmen and wicketkeeper Vijay Yadav looks a find for one-day cricket."

South Africa now entertain Pakistan and West Indies for a limited-overs tournament and must stand a good chance of winning.

World Series Cup: Full of dreams

At the end of the first eight matches in the Benson & Hedges World Series Cup cricket the home team Australia, are at the top with 7 points from 5 matches, followed by the West Indies with 6 points from 6 matches and the world champions, Pakistan, practically under the hammer, with only 3 points from 5 matches.

The Australians under the leadership of stand-in skipper Mark Taylor proved to be a highly determined side and it was a highly creditable performance on their part to finish at the top at the end of the first leg.

So far the tournament has produced highly competitive cricket with ups and downs marking the thrill of one-day cricket at its highest and the uncertainties of this glorious game at its enjoyable best.

The world champions started well at Perth with a 5-wicket victory against the West Indies and the latter, in their next game, thrashed the home team on the same ground for a 9-wicket victory. Under Taylor's inspiring leadership the home team turned the table against the West Indies at the SCG in a low-scoring 30-over match. Put in by Richie Richardson the Aussies laboured to 101 for 9 wickets on a difficult pitch. But they bowled and fielded well and held superb catches to restrict the West Indies to 97 with 3 balls to spare. Mark Taylor led from the front by bringing off 4 consecutive catches. This 4-run victory brought the Australians back to stride and they kept on riding high.

At Bellerive Oval, Hobart, high drama was enacted by Pakistan's Asif Mujtaba, who hit a six off the last ball to equal the Aussie score of 228 and thereby his side succeeded in virtually snatching a point, which at one stage (123 for 5 after 36 overs) looked almost an impossibility, from the Australians. Steve Waugh, who bowled the last over, would surely like to forget the proceedings of those momentous minutes in which he was hit for 16 runs.

With this tie, it appeared Pakistan would make a come back. But they could not. In the next match at Adelaide it was

W Indies' turn to turn the tide. With only one win in 3 matches, they were in a do or die situation. Pakistan, after their morale booster tie in the previous match, did well to restrict the West Indies to 177 for 7 in the curtailed 42-over match, and they seemed to be cruising on 148 for 3 in the 36th over. Thirty runs in 36 balls with 7 wickets in hand was a task nowhere near impossibility for the world champions. But the unexpected did happen. Pakistan lost their last 7 wickets for only 25 runs in the space of 6 overs — four of those were run outs. Carl

Hooper, who took three for 31, designed three run outs with direct hits. The hurry of the Pakistani batsmen was beyond comprehension.

This defeat from almost a certain winning position must have unsettled the Pakistanis and in their next match on the same venue they could compile only 195 which Australia wiped off easily losing only two wickets. Mark Taylor led the onslaught with a solid innings of 78.

Australia with 5 points from 4 matches faced the West Indies at the MCG with confidence revived. But for the defeat in this match the West Indies have only themselves to blame. Chasing Australia's 195, they had the match in their pockets when they had reached 156 for 2. A dramatic collapse, tantamount to hara-kiri, saw them folding up 4 runs behind. The hero of the Australian victory was Mark Waugh, who claimed five wickets for 24 in 6 overs. The

huge crowd at the MCG could not have hope for a more exciting enactment of their home side. The West Indies did what Pakistan did a day before at Adelaide. Nerves gave in under pressure.

But the climax of the drama was enacted at the SCG in the last match of the first leg of the tournament. Set to chase a West Indies total of 215 for Pakistan, the world champions, were in for a shock of their life. An incredible bowling performance from Phil Simmons tore apart the top order batting to send Pakistan reeling at 5 for 14. Simmons

completed his 10 overs in one go and his figures read 10-8-3-4, the most economical spell in one day cricket. Pakistan never recovered from this shock; they were all out for 81 and could just save themselves from the gloomy of their lowest one-day total of 74 against England at Adelaide in the 1992 World Cup. One would long remember Phil Simmons' spell of highly incisive medium fast bowling in which all his victims were forced to cave in.

A fair deduction from the first eight matches will be: (a) Australia have gained in confidence as the competition progressed. Having tasted defeat in the opening match they never really looked back and did not lose any of the next four; (b) the West Indies, starting with a defeat, had their ups and downs and showed signs of recovery from shock and (c) the world champions, on the contrary,

started with a victory and showed great determination in the tie match, but somehow seemed to fade away lacking the kill instinct. Without Imran they seem to be a different machine and the unpredictable nature of their performance was apparent.

However, one cannot really write off the world champions, even at this stage. Obviously they will be in a do or die situation in the next three matches, all of which they shall have to win to be in the finals. Did not they show in the last World Cup that they are capable of coming back with a bang? Javed Miandad shall have to bring the best out of his talented teammates. But whether the New Zealand sojourn during the interregnum, where the conditions are altogether different, are going to help their cause is a big question. They will again be facing the problems of adjustment.

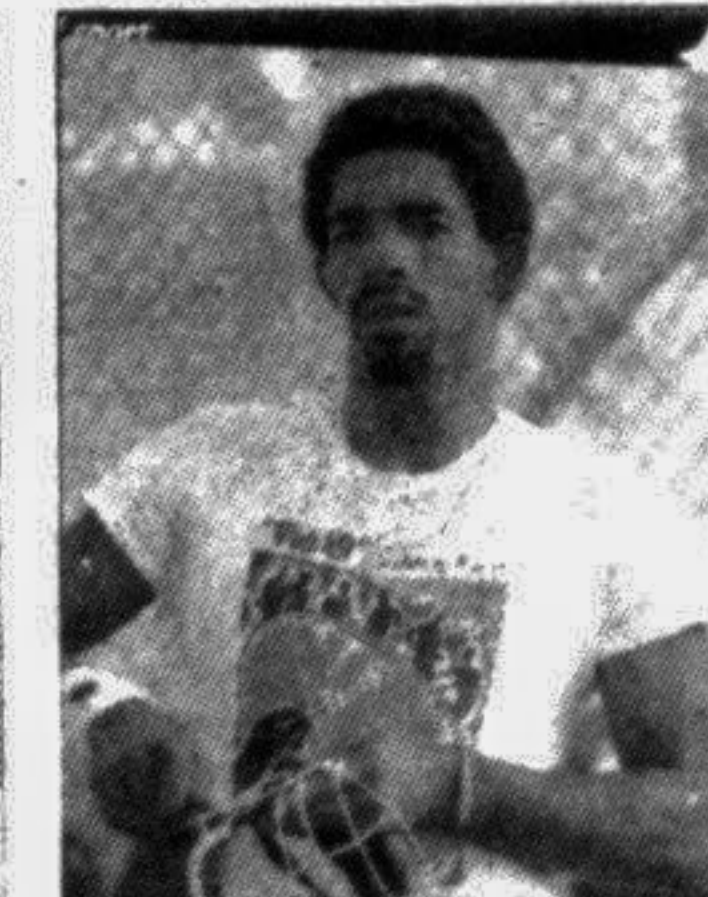
The West Indies under Richie Richardson seem to have regrouped well with the assistance of Rohan Kanhai, as the manager. Richardson's innovative move of giving the new ball to Phil Simmons, usually an occasional medium-pacer, has really paid off. In two matches, that he opened the bowling, Simmons returned figures of 3 for 11 and 4 for 3.

The home side, under leadership of stand-in captain Mark Taylor, displayed spirited determination. If they keep it up under Allan Border and win one of the remaining three games they can be sure of a place in the finals. The task ahead of the West Indies is also equally easy, they shall have to win one of the remaining two. But unquestionably the task ahead of the world champions is the toughest — they have to win all the three.

Thrills and drama have been in plenty in the first leg and one cannot but expect still more to come. Would Pakistan be able to bring about a repeat performance of their Down Under success in the World Cup? We shall have to wait till January 9, when Pakistan meet the Caribbeans at Brisbane. Shall the thrill hold on upto the last match of the preliminary rounds to be held on January 14, when Pakistan meet Australia at the SCG?

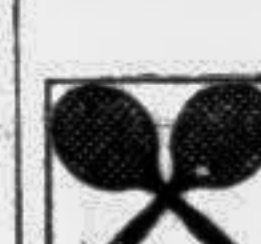


MARK TAYLOR



PHIL SIMMONS

Edberg, Becker in Doha qtrs



DOHA, Qatar, Jan 8: Top seed Stefan Edberg of Sweden overcame a nagging flu to defeat Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia 6-3, 6-4 in second-round play Thursday at the inaugural dirrs 450,000 Qatar Open Tennis Tournament, reports AP.

Third seed Boris Becker of

Stefane Simian.

Gianluca Rozzi of Italy, meanwhile, continued his surprise progress in the tournament with a hard-fought win over seventh seed Jan Siemerink of Holland. Rozzi won 7-5, 6-7, 7-5 in the tightest match here so far, and his reward is a quarterfinal clash with Edberg.

Becker's opponent in Friday's quarterfinal will be the dangerous Spanish sixth seed Javier Sanchez. He overcame a first set loss on Thursday to end Russian Andrej Merinov's streak, 4-6, 7-5, 6-0.

Becker and his opponent both found the humid Gulf weather difficult to handle, with the blond German's service action badly affected by a slippery court.

"I served something like eight double faults in the first set," said Becker. "In my mind I was worried about falling, so I wasn't moving my body well enough. Thankfully, I sorted it out in the second set."

Second seed Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia meets Germany's Patrik Kuhnen in the third quarterfinal, while

Marcos Gorriz of Spain faces Andrej Cherkasov of Russia.

Although ill, Edberg nepped just 83 minutes to dispose of his opponent Thursday.

"I've definitely felt a lot better than this in my life," said the Swede. "I felt like death yesterday (Wednesday)."

He added "If there's one thing I could improve upon



STEFAN EDBERG

Germany joined him in the last eight with a 7-6, (7-3), 6-2 victory over lanky Frenchman

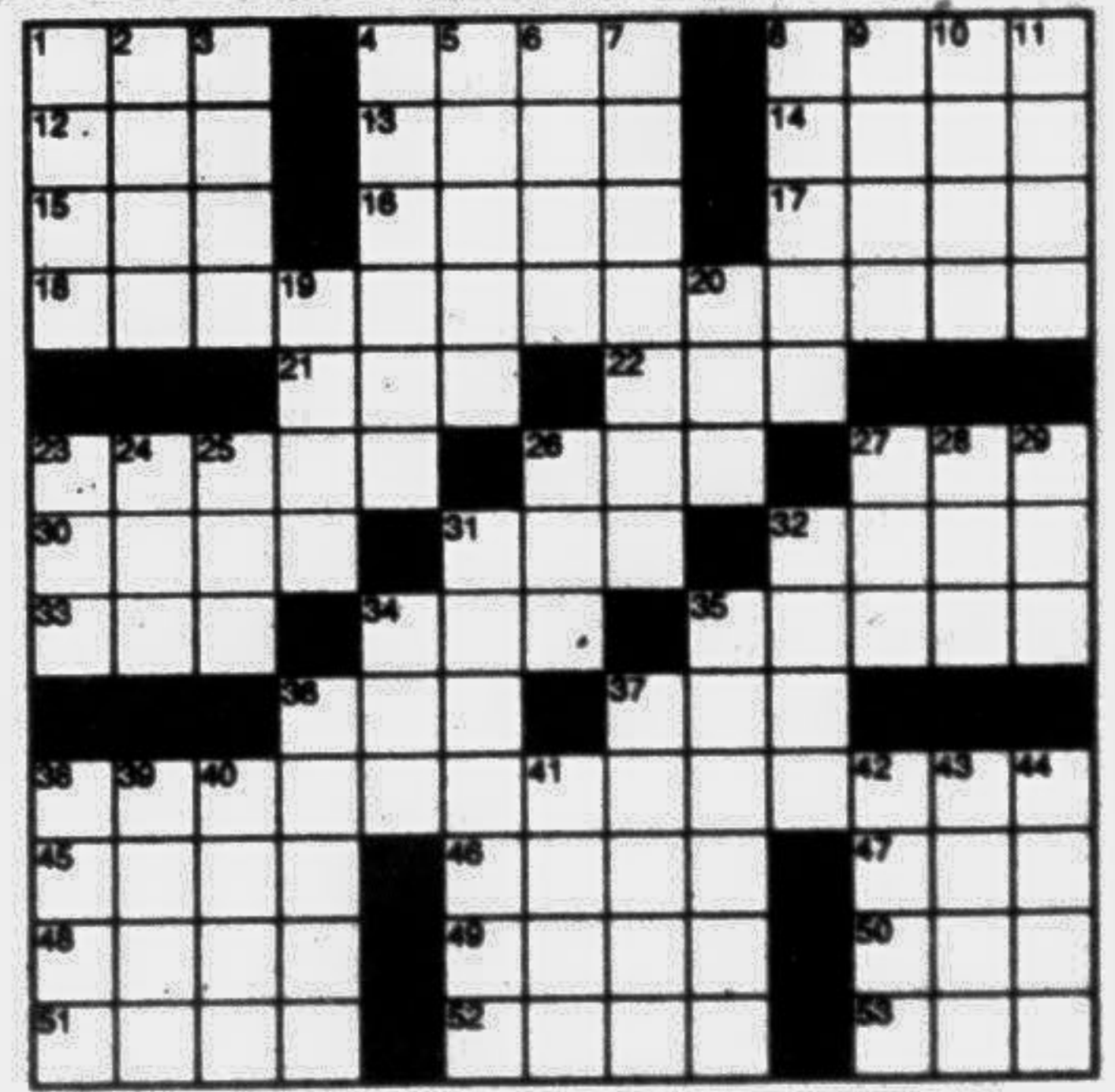


BORIS BECKER

This year, it would be my serve. I know what's wrong and I'm trying hard to put it right."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 TV alien
 - 4 Prone to mildew
 - 8 Went too fast
 - 12 White House nickname
 - 13 Actor-playwright
 - 14 Medal earner
 - 15 White House nickname
 - 16 Angry
 - 17 "Exodus" author
 - 18 Thomas Mann novella
 - 21 Embarrassed
 - 22 Follower
 - 23 Unconscious states
 - 26 Absolutely
 - 27 Not fashionable
 - 30 Vacationing
 - 31 Uncooked
 - 32 Word before warp or zone
 - 33 Reed or
- DOWN**
- 53 Away from SSW
 - 1 Alkali neutralizer
 - 2 "Swan —"
 - 3 Dog bane?
 - 4 After-dinner chore
 - 5 Duck
 - 6 Early hours
 - 7 Advance showing
 - 8 Turn aside
 - 9 Around: prefix
 - 10 Actor Bogosian
 - 11 Two tablets, usually
 - 19 Cafeteria item
 - 20 Mountain road
 - 23 Train component
 - 24 Be in the red
 - 25 Agent 86
 - 26 Thanksgiving veggie
 - 27 Ewing wares
 - 28 Actress Thurman
 - 29 One of the Kennedys
 - 31 Favoring drastic reforms
 - 32 Verbotten
 - 34 Maxilla
 - 35 Merchant
 - 36 Some house-plants
 - 37 Intact
 - 38 Lounge
 - 39 Notion
 - 40 Comes-tibles
 - 41 One of Hamlet's choices
 - 42 Ayatollah's land
 - 43 Commencement raiment
 - 44 Eric of Monty Python



CRYPTOQUIP

B M P A R V T P S E T F D T K S F S T
F Q T P S Z F V D M S K
Q M R P Q A M E Z T E

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE MILD-MANNERED MEN'S STORE TAILOR FINALLY HAD A FIT.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: Q equals G

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.