

Navratilova rallies to beat Graf

YOKOHAMA, Japan, Feb 6: Veteran Martina Navratilova clinched a dramatic victory today over top seed Steffi Graf in the first semi-final of the 750,000 Toray Pan-Pacific Open tennis tournament, reports Reuter.

Navratilova overcame a first-set deficit to down the German 4-6, 6-3, 6-3. Both players served consistently

well but it was Navratilova's hammering returns, coupled with her prowess at the net, that ultimately overwhelmed the world's number two player.

"She returned much better and stronger," said a dejected Graf after the game. "I didn't get many winners in court as difficult to set up the points."

"I made a lot of mistakes. Martina keeps running to the net all the time, forcing you to hurry your shots and then make mistakes."

A beaming Navratilova told reporters: "I kept going for my shots, played with conviction and not ever backing down."



Czech-born naturalised American Martina Navratilova rejoices after her stunning victory over world number two Steffi Graf of Germany in the semifinal of the Toray Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament yesterday. Navratilova won 4-6, 6-3 and 6-3. — AFP photo

But Navratilova broke Graf's serve in the fourth game of the second set and the fifth game of the final set with some blistering backhand cross-court returns, coupled with superb volleying at the net.

"I returned very well," the American said. "I think the difference today was not that I could break her serve, but that I could hold on to my own."

Graf's concentration was adversely affected in the second set when she earned a few unfavourable line calls.

"I was getting upset by all the overrules. There were too many in a row, so it was very strange," the German said.

The Czech-born Navratilova is now a step away from winning her 162nd career singles title—a feat unmatched in either men's or women's tennis.

Looking ahead to Sunday's final, Navratilova said: "It's hard to go out again after having beaten Steffi (Graf), because you feel as though you've already won the whole tournament."

Chang upstages Courier

OMAHA, USA, Feb 6: Michael Chang only had three days to prepare for an exhibition tennis match against top-ranked Jim Courier on Friday night, and he made the most of the opportunity, reports AP.

Chang upstaged Courier 3-6, 7-6 (7-3), 6-4 in the Healthy Choice Challenge after being named on Tuesday to replace the injured Pete Sampras.

Courier looked like he still had momentum from winning the Australian Open last week-end as he cruised through the first set. But Chang started to get the crowd behind him and finished strongly.

Chang was nearly perfect in the final set. He needed just four points to break Courier's serve and then used two aces to hold his serve and lead 2-0.

Both players held serve the rest of the way. Chang's overhead smash and two aces served brought him to match point in the final game. He finished off Courier by racking to the net and slicing a backhand down the line, ending a long volley and a match that lasted more than two hours.

"I know I have to work on coming in a little bit more, hitting good serves, hitting good volleys and mixing it up," Chang said.

"I'm playing a little defensive tennis, but a lot of offensive tennis. Basically playing an unpredictable style."

Manchester may bid for World Chess Championship

LONDON, Feb 6: Manchester is likely to make a bid to host the World Chess Championship, boosting Britain Nigel Short's hopes of contesting the title in his home town, sources close to the negotiations said on Friday, reports Reuter.

Short, 27, who defeated Jan Timman of the Netherlands in a 200,000 dollar final eliminator on January 30, will challenge reigning champion Garry Kasparov.

"Officials of Manchester City Council and would-be sponsors are still in negotiations. The fact that they are still talking suggests they are deadly serious about it," one source said.

The International Chess Federation is scheduled to open the sealed bids on Monday in Lucerne, Switzerland. The highest bidder will host the match at the beginning of September if neither of the players objects.

Apart from the interest by Manchester, bids in the range of 4 million dollar are also expected from Jakarta, Berlin, Zagreb and Santiago (Spain).

Barcelona, host of the 1992 Olympic Games, had been expected to bid but pulled out on Thursday, saying staging the event would be too expensive.

Britain last sponsored the Championship in 1986, when Kasparov beat arch-rival Anatoly Karpov.

Short, who quit school at 17 to concentrate on chess, is the first Briton to contest a world title in more than 100 years.

He is also the first player from outside the former Soviet Union to contest the finals since American Bobby Fischer beat Boris Spassky in Iceland in 1972.

Atletico plunge deep into crisis

MADRID, Feb 6: Atletico Madrid's humiliating 0-5 Spanish Cup rout by Barcelona, their worst home defeat since 1956, has plunged the club deeper into crisis, reports Reuter.

"What a disaster" screamed a headline in Friday's sports daily as after the holders' third round, first leg thrashing on Thursday night.

"I have never felt so useless in my life... The players just crumpled, doing everything I didn't want them to," Atletico coach Luis Aragones told reporters after the match, adding: "Of course a team can lose, but not like that."

Atletico have not won since November and are suffering their worst spell in the league for 13 years. They are eighth in the First Division, nine points adrift of leaders Deportivo Coruna.

Star Portuguese striker Paulo Futre walked out last month after a very public row with Aragones and press reports say the beleaguered Atletico coach has offered his resignation to flamboyant club president Jesus Gil.

Agassi, Connors in Volvo semis

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb 6: Jimmy Connors let his tennis do the talking, and it carried him right past Chuck Adams and into the semifinals of the Volvo Tennis San Francisco tournament, reports AP.

"That boy's a good player, and that's the way tennis should be played," said Connors, who pulled out a 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 victory in his improbable quest toward the finals.

One night after trash-talking his way — during and after the match — to a split-set win over Bryan Shelton, Connors kept his mind on the game against fellow American Adams.

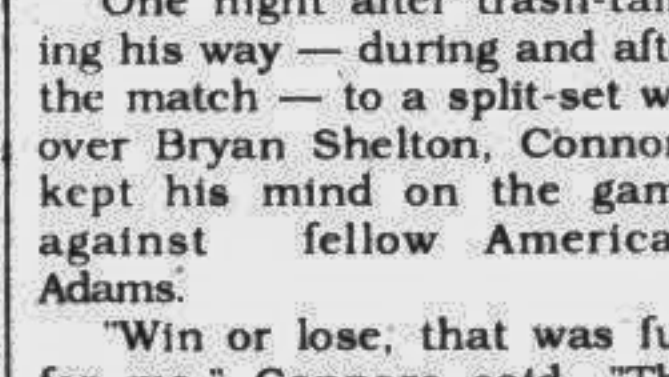
"Win or lose, that was fun for me," Connors said. "The crowd was into it. They see more than just boom, bang, over. The guy's using the whole court, and that's tennis to me."

Connors, unseeded in the tournament, faces Brad Gilbert Saturday night in the semifinals. Top-seeded Andre Agassi was to meet Jeff Tarango in an afternoon semifinals.

Leading 4-3 and serving in the third set, Connors survived a 25-minute game and eight duces to pull ahead 5-3. After losing the next game at love, Connors closed out the match when Adams missed wide on a return near the baseline at 40-15.

"I'm still standing," the 40-year-old crowd favourite said. "They haven't knocked me down yet. I've got to wake up tomorrow and figure it out."

Connors is one match win away from a possible showdown with Agassi, who advanced to the semifinals with a 6-0, 6-4 victory over Marcos Ondruska of South Africa.



JIMMY CONNORS

his private jet, will stay in town the rest of the week.

"I'm here for the weekend; it's time to play tennis," the American said.

The match was over in less than 80 minutes, in sharp contrast to the 3-hour, 11-minute quarterfinal duel between Gilbert and Richey Reneberg.

Gilbert worked out the cramps, first in his body and then in his game, rallying to win 5-7, 7-6 (9-7), 6-2.

"That was a battle," said Gilbert, who prepared himself for the match by eating bananas, hoping for a potassium rush to help block out the cramps. "I think (the bananas) helped me more psychologically than physically."

In danger of losing the match when he trailed 6-5 in the second set, Gilbert regrouped to force a tiebreaker. After falling behind 7-6, he rallied to win the last three



ANDRE AGASSI

Novacek makes it to Dubai Open semis

DUBAI, UAE, Feb 6: Third-seeded Karel Novacek of the Czech Republic struggled into the semifinals of the Dubai Open tennis tournament Friday, beating Russian Andrei Cherkasov in three sets after a delay of several hours because of rain, reports Reuter.

Novacek was on the verge of being eliminated by the tough Russian before squeezing through with a 6-1, 5-7, 7-5 victory in a match interrupted several times by rain.

Second seed Thomas Muster of Austria did not let the delays affect his concentration in the day's only other men's singles match, defeating Ctislav Dosedel of the Czech Republic 6-0, 6-3. The game ended after midnight (2,000 GMT).

The other quarterfinals were to be played Saturday mornings, with the semifinals to follow in the afternoon, weather permitting.

Top seed Alexander Volkov's match against Frenchman Fabrice Santoro was postponed to Saturday morning with Santoro leading 1-0 in the first set.

The tournament ends Sunday.

Pak-Lanka Davis Cup tie level

LAHORE, Pakistan, Feb 6: Pakistan and Sri Lanka were level at 1-1 after the opening singles of their Davis Cup Asia Oceania zone Group Two tennis tie on Friday, reports Reuter.

Results (Pakistani names first):

- Mohammad Khalid lost to Rohan de Silva 6-4, 4-6, 3-6, 5-7.
- Mohammad Khaliq beat Jayendra Wueyese Kera 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

At Mexico City on Friday, Luis Enrique Herrera beat Canadian Sebastian Larreau 6-4, 6-4, 6-2 and Lennardo Lavalle defeated Andrew Sznajder 6-2, 7-6, 4-6, 4-6, 6-4. Mexico will win the round with a victory today in doubles or a win Sunday in one of two singles matches.

At Guayaquil, Ecuador, neither Andres Gomez nor Pablo Campana lost a set in beating Jimmy Szymanski and Maurice Ruah of Venezuela. Gomez's match ended 6-1, 6-4, 6-3 while Campana won 6-4, 6-2, 6-2. Ecuador can advance to the semifinals by winning one of the remaining three scheduled matches.

At Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Xia Jiaping of China defeated Malaysia's R. Rama Chandran 6-1, 6-0, 7-6 (7-1), but countryman Pan Bing withdrew from the second match leading to 2-0 due to an elbow injury, leaving the match tied 1-1.

At Lima, Peru, Colombia's Mauricio Haded beat Alejandro Aramburo 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 before Peru's No. 1 player, Jaime Yzagre, beat Colombia's Miguel Tobon 6-4, 7-5, 6-1.

Mexico, Ecuador take lead

UNDATED, Feb 6: Mexico and Ecuador took 2-0 leads in best-of-five Davis Cup qualifying matches, while China, Malaysia, Colombia, Peru, the Bahamas and Chile won one game each and were tied, reports AP.

For men only!

DUBLIN, Feb 6: A top Irish tennis club has voted to stay men only, upsetting a government minister, reports Reuter.

Labour Minister Mary O'Rourke said on Friday the decision by Dublin's Fitzwilliam Club was symbolic of the entrenched attitudes of men towards women in Ireland.

A move to admit women failed when the club's membership secured a simple majority but failed to reach the required two thirds majority.

One member of the 123-year-old club said: "It has left us looking like a stone-age anachronism."

Rosset runs out of Frenchman

MARSEILLE, France, Feb 6: Olympic champion Marc Rosset completed an odd hat-trick on Friday when his booming serve blew away a third successive French left-hander at the 500,000 dollar Marseille Open, reports Reuter.

Rosset followed earlier wins over Stephane Simian and Henri Leconte by beating Rodolphe Gilbert 6-4, 6-4 to move into the last four.

Unfortunately for the lanky Rosset, the inaugural Marseille tournament has run out of Frenchmen for him to face and neither of his prospective opponents, fellow Swiss Jakob Halsek and second seed Sergi Bruguera of Spain, is left-handed.

Rosset served impeccably and broke once in each set.

"My service feels good at the moment. I'm able to concentrate on it and this makes me feel relaxed about the rest of my game, even if I'm not playing that well from the back of the court," he said.

Gilbert said he felt powerless against his opponent's serve.

"I served two bad games and that was it," he said. "When he's confident he serves and serves. It's embarrassing, I felt as if I was watching planes fly past."

Another Frenchman bowed out when fifth seed Arnaud Boetsch surrendered a one-set lead to lose 3-6, 6-4, 6-0 to third seed Henrik Holm of Sweden.

Eighth seed Dutchman Jan Siemerink, another big server, had a 6-3, 6-3 win over Italian Gianluca Pozzi, the man who beat top seed Ivan Lendl in the second round.

Seventh seed Halsek later set up a meeting with Rosset, his teammate in last year's Davis Cup final defeat of the United States, when he beat Bruguera in three sets.

Halsek struggled for two sets before beating the Spaniard 7-6, 6-7, 6-1. But he always seemed the more confident of the two as he showed amply in the final set.

Reynolds's remarkable return

NEW YORK, Feb 6: World record holder Butch Reynolds made a successful return to the track by winning the 400 metres on Friday night at the Millrose Games indoor athletics meeting, reports Reuter.

In other events, Noureddine Morel of Algeria won the mile 40-year-old Irishman Eamonn Coghlan set his second masters mile world record in a week and Greg Foster opened his final season with a victory in the 60 metre hurdles.

Reynolds clocked a slow 47.16 seconds but was clearly best in the field.

Olympic 400-metre hurdles champion Kevin Young was almost a second behind in 48.13 and world 400-metre champion Antonio Pettigrew was third in 48.16. World indoor champion Antonio McKay was timed in 48.54.

Reynolds, whose suspension for failing a drug test in August 1990 ended on December 31 but whose battle with the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) grinds on, made a bold move at the start to take the lead and never was threatened by his fellow Americans.

"The IAAF and no man can confuse me or take away my focus," said Reynolds, who will compete for a spot on the US world indoor team February 20-21 in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"I did 2 1/2 years for no reason. I was a prisoner. What I want now, I want a world record and a gold medal."

Privalova, Surin shine in Berlin

BERLIN, Feb 6: Sprinters Bruna Surin of Canada and Irina Privalova of Russia continued their superb starts to the indoor season with commanding victories over top-class fields at the Berlin International athletics meeting on Friday, reports Reuter.

Powell's second win in a week

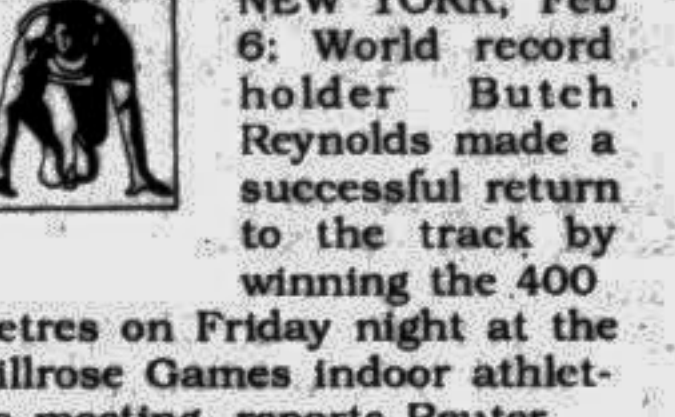
BUDAPEST, Feb 6: World long jump champion Mike Powell collected his second European win in a week, outclassing all opposition with his final leap in an indoor meeting on Friday, reports Reuter.

The American, who set a British all-comers record of 8.36 metres in Glasgow last Saturday, jumped 8.44, capping a series of lachluster jumps with a final effort which eclipsed his competitors.

Powell broke the world outdoor record with an astonishing jump of 8.95 metres at the 1991 Tokyo World Championships but US rival Carl Lewis has held the best indoor mark of 8.79 for the past nine years.

Powell reckons he can improve his own indoor performance and that would point the way to new distances outdoors.

Reynolds's remarkable return



BUTCH REYNOLDS

Reynolds won US court rulings to be allowed to run in the US Championships in 1991 and the US Olympic trials last June, his last competition before the Millrose Games, but he was blocked from competing in Barcelona last summer.

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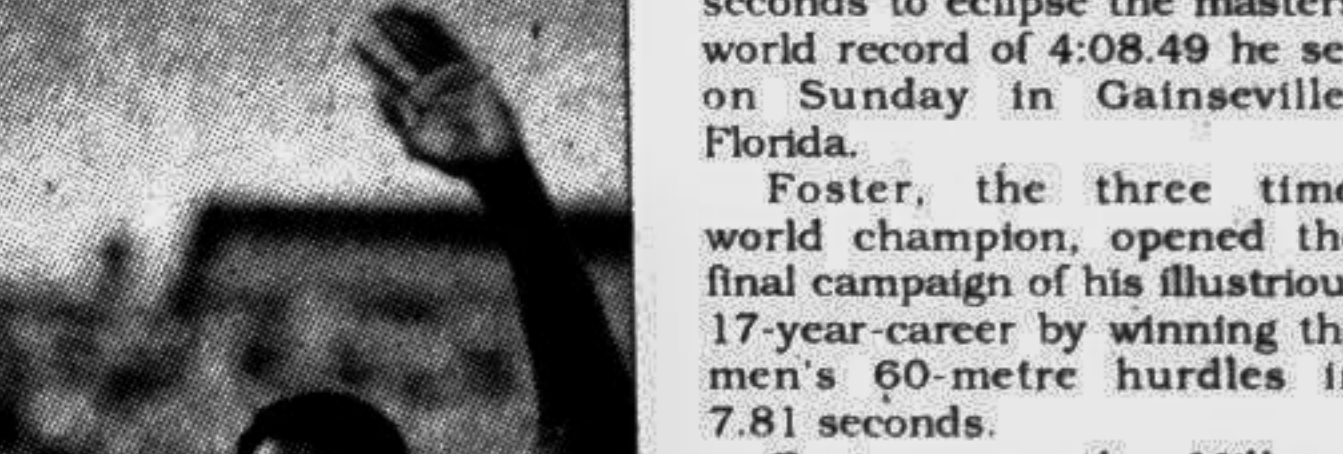
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BUTCH REYNOLDS

The IAAF last month gave Reynolds until February 23 to withdraw allegations of misconduct against them over the drug test or face possible further punishment.

In the meet's other feature event, Morell held off Marcus O'Sullivan of Ireland in the mile.

Morell, who finished a disappointing seventh last year in the Olympic 1,500, clocked three minutes 55.06 seconds. O'Sullivan went ahead for a quarter lap, but Morell regained the lead with two remaining and fought off the Irishman, who clocked 3:55.36. Olympic champion Fermin Cacho of Spain finished fifth in 4:01.75.

Coghlan, the world indoor record-holder in the mile, clocked four minutes 5.95 seconds to eclipse the masters world record of 4:08.49 he set on Sunday in Gainseville, Florida.

Foster, the three time world champion, opened the final campaign of his illustrious 17-year career by winning the men's 60-metre hurdles in 7.81 seconds.

Foster won the Millrose hurdles for the ninth time, equalling the meet record set by Harrison Dillard from 1947-55. Olympic silver medalist Tony Dees was second in 7.86.

"I'd like to stay until '96, but I know I won't be around until '96," said Foster 34, a two-time Olympic silver medalist.

"This is the best time to go. Unfortunately, I don't have an Olympic gold medal. But this is a World Championship year, so this is the right year to go."

Olympic 100 metre champion Gail Devers crushed the field in the women's 60 winning in 7.31.

Jackie Joyner Kersee finished a distant third in the women's hurdles in 8.33, behind Lavonna Martin Floral (8.15) and Michelle Freeman (8.19).

American Lance Deal set a world indoor record with a throw of 24.82 metres. He broke his own record of 24.54 metres, set on February 28, 1992.

Privalova, Surin shine in Berlin

BERLIN, Feb 6: Sprinters Bruna Surin of Canada and Irina Privalova of Russia continued their superb starts to the indoor season with commanding victories over top-class fields at the Berlin International athletics meeting on Friday, reports Reuter.

Surin dominated a superb men's 60 metres line-up, which included Olympic 100 metres bronze medalist Dennis Mitchell of the US and Canada's former world record holder Ben Johnson, to win in 6.52 seconds.

Privalova, who broke the long-standing women's world record with a 7.31, won the 100 metres final at last year's Barcelona Olympics, left his blocks fast and looked confident throughout.

Johnson, stripped of his Olympic 100 metres gold at the 1988 Seoul Games After a positive dope test, still managed a good second place in 6.80.

Calvin Smith, former outdoor 100 metres world record holder, was third in 6.61, while Mitchell managed only fourth in 6.65.

Privalova, who clocked a rapid 7.02 in her heat despite easing down at the finish, never looked in danger as she held off American Charlette Guidry (7.14) with Nigeria's Olympic 100 metres finalist Mary Onial third in 7.28.

Jamaica's Olympic silver medalist Juliet Cuthbert was pushed back into fourth place in 7.30.

"I'm in great shape at the moment," Privalova said. "I want to go for a world record at a meeting in Grenoble (France) on Sunday and I will be going to the World Championships."

German Dietmar Koszewski caused an upset in the men's 60 metres hurdles when he took the scalps of double Olympic champion Roger Kingdom and Jack Pierce, the

Hosts edge past Singapore

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 6: Malaysia defeated rival Singapore 2-1 in a sensational opening match of the 34th Merdeka soccer tournament held here late Friday, while Bulgaria's CSKA Sofia edged Thailand 1-0, reports AFP.

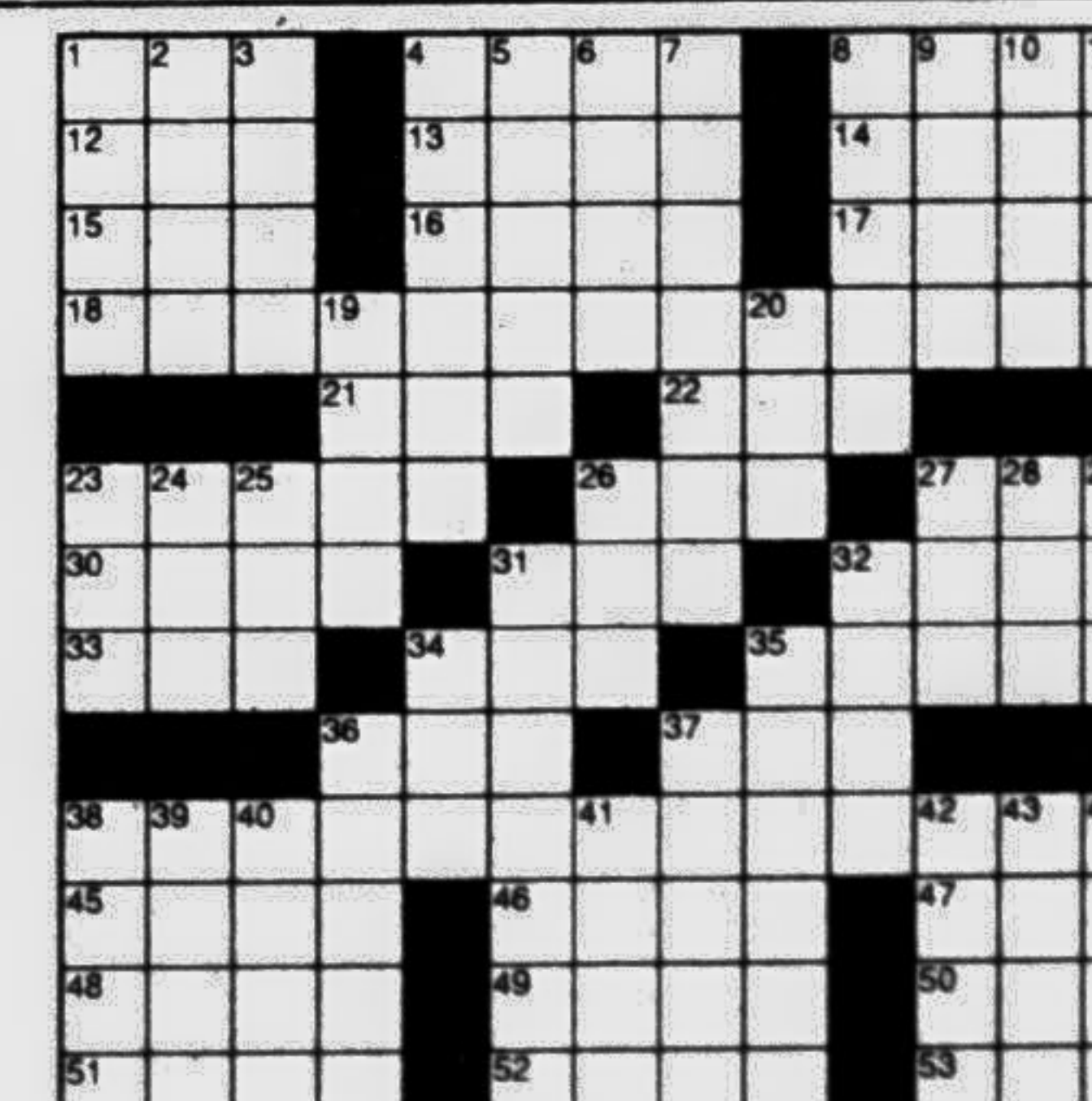
Singapore led 1-0 at half-time after forward Sundram Moorthy chipped in the opening goal in the 41st minute.

But Malaysia's 35,000 supporters came back to life when midfielder Mubin Mokhtar tied the match by blasting a left shot past Singapore's goalkeeper Abdul Malek Mohd in the 61st minute.

Malaysian forward Dollah Salleh's winning goal in the 64th minute earned his nation sweet revenge against Singapore, who had humiliated the Malaysian side with a 3-0 defeat in the Marlon Cup in Singapore in December.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	blotter abbr.	cop	mackerell"
1 Coonskin caps, e.g.	37 Many, many years	2 Verdi opus	25 "A Chorus Line" song
4 April repertoire	38 Eggs Benedict ingredient	3 Jerry's ex-partner	26 Hem's partner
8 Beatles movie	45 Play first hood	4 Movie actor	27 A
12 Falsehood	46 "Family"	Charles Protection	personal question?
13 Factual	47 Diamonds	6 Festive	28 Undoubtedly
14 Met show-stopper?	48 Lab rat's challenge	7 Reedy	29 Flock female
15 Rhoda's mom	49 Caustic solutions	8 Villainous	31 Very, to a Brit
16 Look lecherously	50 "Leave It to Beaver" cast member	9 Author	32 "Eyes only" abbr.
17 La Boheme	51 Luminary ingredient	10 Wheels of fortune?	34 Schuss
18 Eggs Benedict	52 Bygone days	11 Athlete's woe	35 Foamy hair gunk
21 Terry-cloth term	53 Switch positions	19 "Hi, sailor!"	36 Birchlike tree
22 Adams or Johnson	DOWN	20 Go against Holyfield	37 Princely title
23 Faint	1 French	23 Hot tub	38 "Desire Under the —"
26 Whammy	Ex	24 "Holy"	
30 Follower	31 Cake of soap		
32 Masticate	33 Reverential fear		
34 Tend a tear	35 Squirrel's pal		
36 Police-			



CRYPTOQUIP

E L W R T R L Q H N M Q Z F

X Y T A Z K T X L E S R Y Q H Y A

S M R F Z R Q J T Y M R Q W

X L H H M R T A J

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: A NEARSIGHTED AND BALMY BOWLER I KNOW HAD TWO STRIKES AGAINST HIM.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: Q 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.