

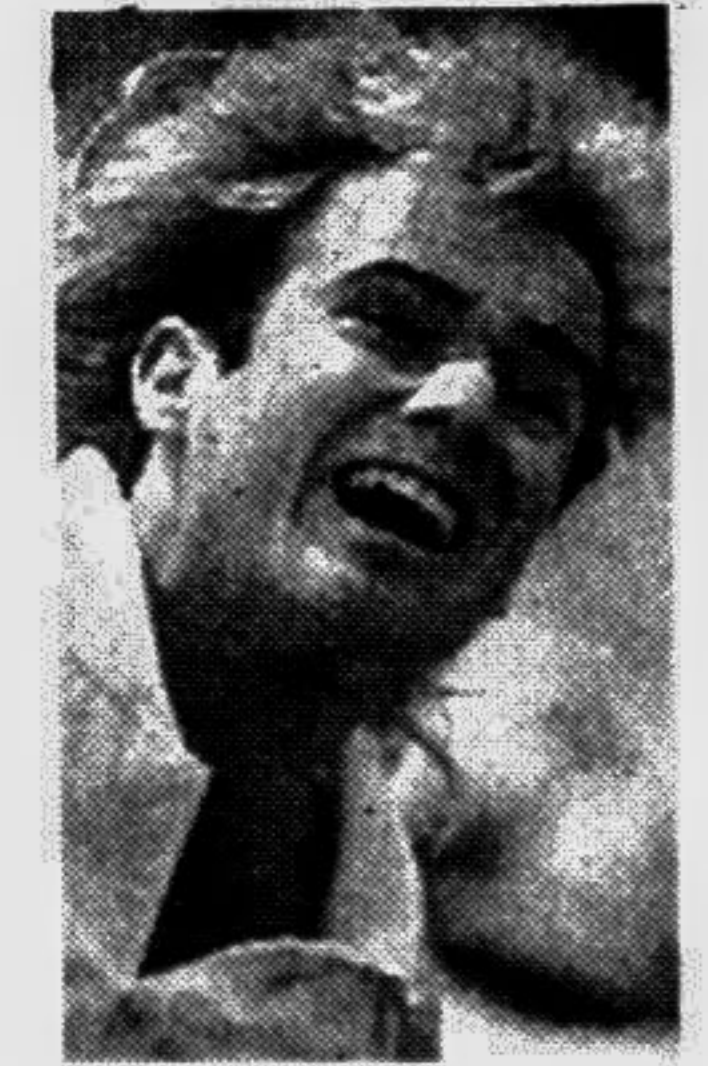
THREE BATSMEN AT THE CREESE? Dermot Reeve (R) seen in consultation with his England batting partner Neil Fairbrother (L) during yesterday's one-day international against India at Jamshedpur, which England won by six wickets. In the middle is Robin Smith who came on as a substitute runner for the injured Fairbrother. —Star TV photo

Experience bails Agassi out

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona, Mar 1: Wimbledon champion Andre Agassi survived a strong upset bid by unheralded Marcos Ondruska of South Africa to win the final of the \$300,000 dollar Scottsdale tennis championships 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 on Sunday, reports Reuter.

"Anytime someone is breaking you like that, they can start serving better and then it's anybody's ball game. Fortunately I got him early in the third."

nice to get through those as well as go out there and beat guys easy. Both players agreed the turning point of the two-hour 22-minute contest, played in cold, windy, drizzly conditions, came in the fourth game of the decisive set as Agassi survive five match points to go ahead 3-1.



ANDRE AGASSI

"I felt in the third set, I pulled it together. I think that (the fourth game) was the turning point," said Agassi.

"That state of the match was where a wind was blowing either way and I was against it on my serve. I knew getting by that game was going to be a big step in winning the match."

"It was a very physical match and he put me under pressure," said Ondruska who after starting the week at number 67 will move into the top 50.

Fernandez clinches Evert Cup

INDIAN WELLS, California, Mar 1: Top-seeded Mary Joe Fernandez nearly led a badly needed confidence builder get away from her on Sunday but saved two match points to beat fourth seed Amanda Coetzer of South Africa in the final of the \$375,000 dollar Evert Cup, reports Reuter.

Fernandez beat Coetzer 3-6, 6-1, 7-6 (8-6) in two hours 42 minutes to win only her third career title despite having been ranked in the top 10 for the past three years.

points, the seventh-ranked American said. Coetzer, who earned \$30,000 dollar, was also encouraged, pointing to the closeness of the match.

Huber, Ticci win it for Italy

LILLEHAMMER, Norway, Mar 1: Gunther Huber and Stefano Ticci of Italy captured the World Cup two-man bobsled finale by just four-hundredths of a second Sunday, reports AP.



MARY JO FERNANDEZ

Huber and Ticci had a combined time of 1 minute, 47.16 seconds down the Hunderfossen Olympic track, edging Canadians Pierre Lueders and Jack Pyc.

Fernandez finally closed out the tiebreak 6-6 on her third match point when Coetzer netted a forehand.

Volleyball results

Sher-e-Bangla Physical Training Centre and Chand Textiles Mills won their matches of the qualifying meet for the Metropolis Second Division volleyball league which began at the Outer Stadium volleyball court yesterday.

The field at the 56-player, hardcourt tournament was diluted the weekend before the tournament began when Germany's Steffi Graf and American Jennifer Capriati, who would have been seeded one-two, withdrew, both due to pulled stomach muscles.

Four teams are taking part in the Bangladesh Volleyball Federation organised meet with the champions qualifying for the Second Division league next season.

Bruno to face 'The Truth'

LONDON, Mar 1: British heavyweight Frank Bruno, hoping to position himself for a third shot at the world title, will fight American Carl "The Truth" Williams at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre on April 24, reports AP.

The fight, announced Monday, could move Bruno in line to challenge fellow Briton Lennox Lewis for the WBC title or Riddick Bowe for the WBA and IBF crowns.

"If Frank has a convincing win over Williams, then he is in as strong a position as anyone else," said promoter Mickey Duff.

The 31-year-old Bruno, who lost world title challenges to Tim Witherspoon in 1986 and Mike Tyson in 1989, is 35-3 for his career. Williams, 33, has won 26 of his 32 fights and is expected to be the toughest opponent Bruno has faced since beginning a comeback two years ago.

Duff said he had approached Witherspoon and Jesse Ferguson but both turned down fights with Bruno. Bruno, meanwhile, declined an offer to fight Alex Garcia for the vacant WBO heavyweight title.

"He doesn't want to win a chess championship," Duff said. "He wants to win a championship that's recognised."

Bruno's last fight was an eighth-round victory over Pierre Coetzer on Oct 17. Williams was stopped in the eighth round by Tommy Morrison in his last bout on Jan 16.

"This time, nobody can knock the opponent," said Duff, noting that Williams was ahead on two of the judges' scorecards when he was stopped by Morrison.

"He's fresh, he's tall, has a good jab and he's a good mover," Bruno said. "I'm taking him very seriously." If Bruno beats Williams, matchmakers are likely to seek a fight in September against Lewis—provided Lewis successfully defends his WBC title against Tony Tucker on May 8.

Duff said a Lewis-Bruno bout could draw 80,000 at Wembley Stadium, "potentially the biggest fight ever held in this country."

"If Lewis says no, we'll see if Riddick Bowe says yes," Duff said.

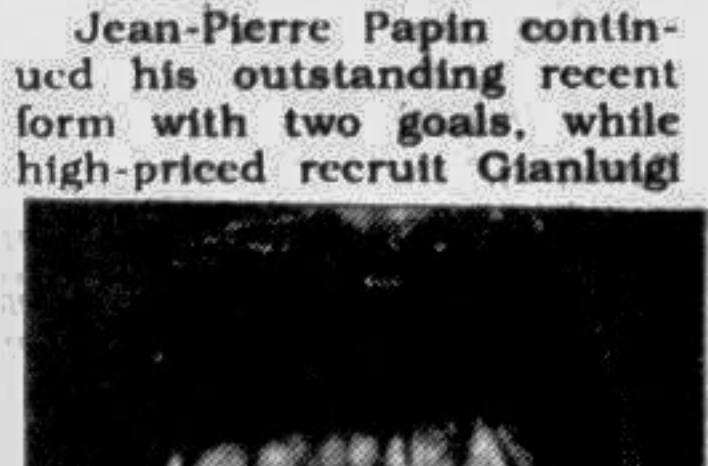
Bruno would now seem to be a better prospect for Bowe than Herbie Hide, who won the vacant British heavyweight crown Saturday by stopping Michael Murray in the fifth round.

Bowe came to London to watch Hide and discuss a possible fight later this year. But Hide failed to impress and is no longer considered a legitimate world challenger.

"It would be a total mismatch," Bowe said. "I would knock him out in the first round. To be honest, I know of some amateurs who could beat Herbie."

Gazza gets marching order

MILAN, Mar 1: Paul Gascoigne's troubled debut season with Lazio plunged to its nadir on Sunday when he was sent off in a heated Italian league match against Genoa which was also interrupted by a minor pitch invasion, reports Reuter.



GAZZA... sent off

The former Tottenham player, whose fitness and form have been a constant worry for the Rome club, was given his marching orders 25 minutes into the second half for lashing out at Genoa's Mario Bortolazzi.

Lazio coach Dino Zoff said later on Italian Radio he didn't think there was anything malicious in the incident.

He didn't kick the player, there was just a bit of elbowing and Gascoigne pulled him over, Zoff said. It was just one of those things.

The news for Gascoigne's teammates was much better. They overcame a two-goal deficit to beat Genoa 3-2 and move into third place behind Milan and Internazionale.

German Karl Heinz Riedle scored twice and the league's leading scorer Giuseppe Signori hit Lazio's third from the penalty spot.

But the game had to be held up for three minutes after the final Lazio goal when up to a dozen Genoa fans invaded the pitch.

On a day which saw 29 goals in nine matches, Milan beat Sampdoria with ridiculous ease, 4-0 at San Siro, to take their unbeaten run to 56 matches.

Jean-Pierre Papin continued his outstanding recent form with two goals, while high-priced recruit Gianluigi Lentini emerged from a form slump to score the other two.

A last-minute Fiorentina goal earned them a 2-2 draw against Internazionale and left Inter 10 points behind their Milan rivals in second place.

Genoa shook Lazio with two goals in a minute midway through the first half from Michele Padvano and Tomas Skuhravy.

Riedle pulled one back within two minutes in the 26th and Signori drew them level with a penalty in the 69th after Gascoigne was fouled.

Gascoigne was dismissed a minute later, but Lazio did not miss him as they went on to beat Genoa with an 85th minute winner from Riedle.

That goal prompted a minor pitch invasion from up to a dozen aggrieved Genoa fans, who got as far as the advertising hoardings behind the goal before being beaten back by police.

Zoff later said the on-going public debate about Gascoigne's worth to Lazio had placed great pressure on the 25-year-old.

Sometimes he is very tense when he goes out to play, Zoff said.

England manager Graham Taylor said recently he was concerned about Gascoigne after his poor performance in their 6-0 World Cup win over San Marino 11 days ago.

There is something there with the player that isn't right and it's affecting his fitness, said Taylor. It's a matter of concern.

Gascoigne's dismissal meant he has completed just four of Lazio's 21 matches this season.

Lazio's neighbours Roma also came from behind to win 2-1 against fifth-placed Juventus, who had opened the scoring through a brilliantly-taken Roberto Baggio free-kick.

Norwich miss a golden chance

LONDON, Mar 1: Injury-hit Norwich missed the opportunity to make up significant ground on leaders Aston Villa when they were held at home to a goalless draw by Blackburn in the English soccer Premier League on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Villa and second placed Manchester United, who notched home wins on Saturday over Wimbledon and Middlesbrough, ended the weekend respectively seven and five points clear of third placed Norwich.

Club captain Ian Butterworth and midfielder Gary Megson became the latest players to join Norwich's lengthening casualty list and in the end, Norwich were happy to earn a point against impressive Blackburn.

Manager Mike Walker brought in David Smith for his first appearance of the season as a replacement for Megson and moved Chris Sutton to centre-half for Butterworth but his side were rarely able to present a threat.

Norwich who still have two games in hand on Villa and one on United have another chance to close the gap when they entertain Arsenal on Wednesday.

But, with five first choice players currently sidelined by injury, their hopes of having a significant say in the champions run-in are dwindling.

Gijon buried in Barcelona avalanche

MADRID, Mar 1: Barcelona buried Sporting Gijon under an avalanche of seven goals on Sunday in an action-packed game which saw four penalties and a Barcelona player sent off, reports Reuter.

Roberto Rodri in the 70th and 83rd minutes and Stoichkov scoring with a 79th-minute header and a penalty in the dying seconds.

Stoichkov began the season with a blaze of goals but had not scored for a month before Sunday's match.

Sporting's two goals included a penalty after Barcelona's midfielder Miguel Nadal had been sent off for handling in an open goal mouth. Sporting missed an earlier penalty in what was a thoroughly grim evening for them.

Sevilla's two Argentine stars Diego Maradona and Diego Simeone received a rousing reception from the Seville crowd when they went out to face Athletic Bilbao, having returned from their midweek international against Denmark in Argentina.

The pair got a cooler reception from club officials for returning 24 hours later than stipulated from Argentina's previous match against Brazil and for travelling again to Argentina straight after last Sunday's game at Logones, again without club permission, to play against Denmark.

Sevilla are due to announce today what disciplinary action they plan to take.

But if club officials were worried the Argentine internationals would not be fit to play, they were soon proved wrong. Simeone scored once and Maradona created two of the goals as Sevilla beat Bilbao 3-1.

Ignacio Conte scored twice for Sevilla, who are now sixth in the table.

However, Maradona's famous hand got him in trouble again.

Maradona, whose hand helped the ball into the net in the first of two goals he scored against England in the 1986 World Cup quarter-finals in Mexico, was booked for deliberate handball.

A 53rd-minute goal from Andoni Imaiz gave Real Sociedad a 1-0 win over Valencia. It was the 23rd year Valencia had failed to win in San Sebastian, but despite the defeat they remain fourth in the league, six points behind the leaders.

On a bitterly cold Sunday the games between Real Oviedo and Cadiz, and Real Burgos and Atletico Madrid had to be postponed, because of heavy snow.



Sevilla's Argentinian superstar Diego Maradona challenges Athletic de Bilbao's Del Campo (on ground) during the Spanish league tie Feb 28 at Seville. Maradona's team won. —AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

CRYPTOQUIP puzzle grid with a 11x11 grid of letters.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: T equals C. 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.

C K Md Abdullah, Chairman, Petro Bangla giving away the men's individual championship trophy to Milton at the conclusion of the organisation's annual sports meet held in the city last week.