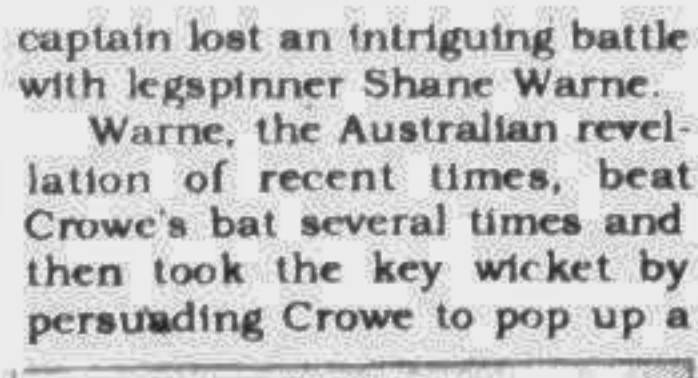


Victory beckons New Zealand

AUCKLAND, Mar 15: New Zealand were within 33 runs of their first home test victory in three years at close of play on the fourth day of the third and final Test match against Australia today...



MERV HUGHES



MARK GREATBATCH

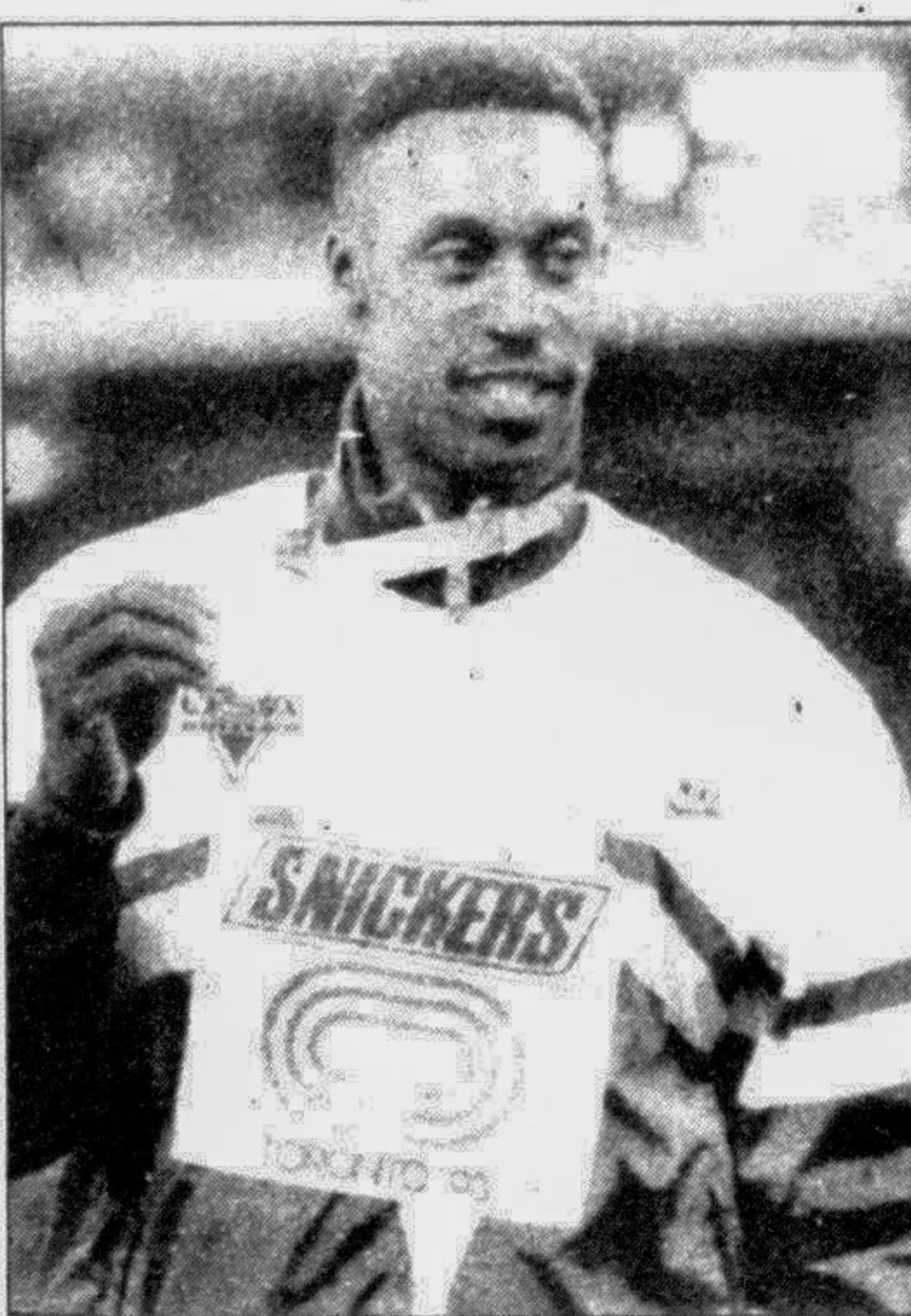


JOHN WRIGHT



SHANE WARNE

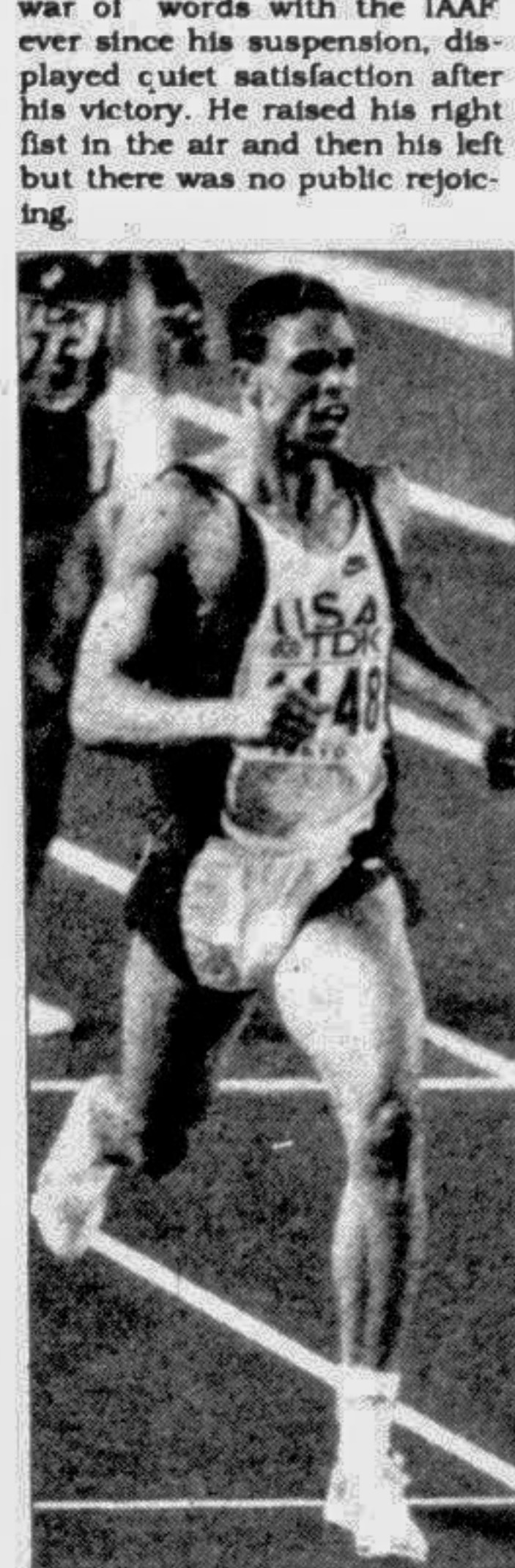
ingly close to squaring the three-match series after a humiliating innings and 60-run defeat in Christchurch. A bit of fun! AUCKLAND, Mar 15: Australian fast bowler Merv Hughes' spitting, spitting, crude finger gestures and shunting of New Zealand opening batsman Mark Greatbatch during a cricket Test here Monday were termed by Test referee Javed Burki as "a bit of fun", reports AFP.



American Butch Reynolds arrogantly asserted his supremacy in the men's 400m when he won the event at the World Indoors Championships in Toronto on March 14. It was his first major meet after a two-and-a-half year IAAF-imposed suspension on drug charges. —AFP photo

Brilliant return for Butch Reynolds

TORONTO, Mar 15: Butch Reynolds made a golden return to the international stage on Sunday by winning the 400 metres title at the World Indoor Athletics Championships, reports Reuter. Reynolds, in his first major meeting since serving a disputed two-and-a-half year doping suspension, sprinted into the lead on the final straight to triumph with a time of 45.26 seconds — the fifth fastest indoor time ever.



DAN O'BRIEN

war of words with the IAAF ever since his suspension, displayed quiet satisfaction after his victory. He raised his right fist in the air and then his left but there was no public rejoicing. The women's 200 metres, running the second fastest time ever to win in 22.15. Cuban world high jump record holder Javier Sotomayor, bronze medalist in the 1991 championships claimed the gold with a year's best jump of 2.41 metres to beat Sweden's Patrik Sjöberg, who cleared 2.39.

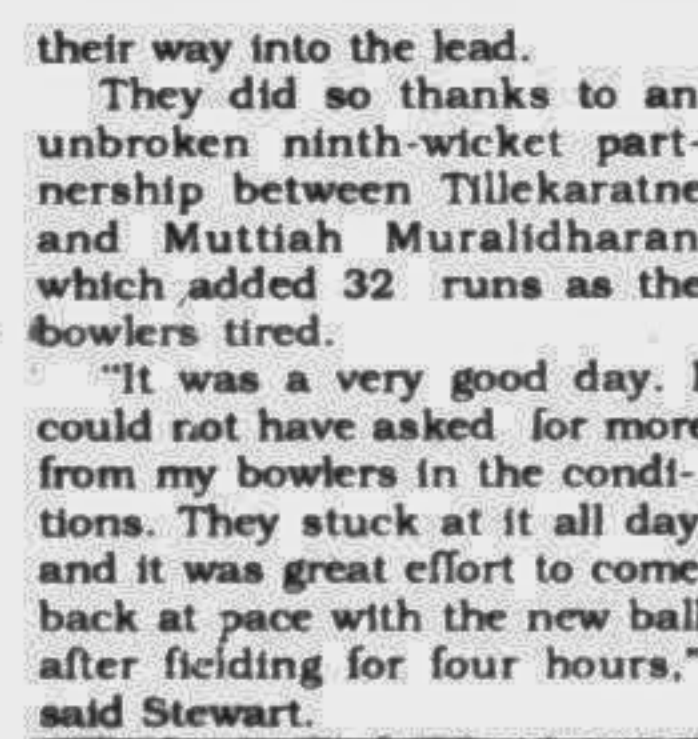
The wrangle continues

TORONTO, Mar 15: Butch Reynolds scored gold on the track yesterday in a triumphant return to international athletics, but the legal wrangling in his 27.3 million dollars judgment by a US court against the International Amateur Athletic Federation continues to fester, reports Reuter.

A long day for the Englishmen

COLOMBO, Mar 15: England's pace bowlers loiled in demanding conditions to keep the tourists in the match in the one-off Test with Sri Lanka on Monday, reports Reuter. Sri Lanka's batsmen had threatened to put the game out of England's reach when, with all top five scoring well, they moved within 50 runs of England's first innings 380 with seven wickets left.

Mike Gatting at forward short leg off John Embury for 9, Champaka Ramanyake was taken by Jarvis with a reflex catch by Lewis at gully for one. Before lunch, overnight not out batsmen Chandika Hathurusinghe (59) and Gurusinha added 54 runs for the second wicket. Their partnership was broken by Lewis who got Hathurusinghe to flash outside the off stump and give a low catch to Stewart.



ARAVINDA DE SILVA

England's spinners were largely innocuous, however, and coach Keith Fletcher admitted: "There seem to be two different pitches, a turner when they bowl and a flat one when we do. I have no idea why."

With two days remaining after Tuesday's rest day, the onus is on the English batsmen to copy the improvement against spin shown by Robin Smith, Graeme Hick and Stewart.

In the first innings they collapsed against Muralidharan and Jayasuriya. Warnawera after those three key batsmen were out and any repeat could push them towards another embarrassing defeat.

McKoy may have false started

TORONTO, Mar 15: World indoor hurdles medalist Mark McKoy was the first to admit he may have jumped the gun, reports Reuter. "I paid off the starter", joked McKoy, who had been charged with one false start and risked disqualification for a second.

McKoy may have false started

Jackson said. "Mark got out to a very quick start but it's not his job to call it back." Dees said McKoy conceded he had probably false started in the process of winning the race, but "if the officials didn't catch it, that means it's official."

Mixed fortunes for European giants

PARIS, Mar 15: The big guns of European football had mixed fortunes this weekend, but Barcelona, AC Milan, and Bayern Munich still top the tables this weekend, reports AFP. Barcelona beat Spanish title rivals Deportivo La Coruna 3-0.

AC Milan look destined to take the Italian title, but Lazio's Paul Gascoigne lived up to his 5.5 million pound price tag and was a continual thorn in the side of Milan. Second placed Inter Milan were held 1-1 at home by AS Roma, who beat AC Milan in the Italian Cup in midweek.

Norwegian girls lift Cyprus Cup

AYIA NAPA, Cyprus, Mar 15: Ann Christen Aarones scored in the 70th minute to lift Norway to a 2-1 victory over Sweden on Sunday and win the six-nation Cyprus Cup women's soccer tournament, reports AP.

Jones, Dodemaide to join Aussies

MELBOURNE, Mar 15: Batsman Dean Jones and all-rounder Tony Dodemaide will return to the Australian cricket team for a series of limited-overs internationals in New Zealand, the selectors announced Monday, reports AP.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a Cryptoquip section at the bottom with a grid and a clue: 'Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I DISLIKED GOING TO THE PIGS' PARTY BECAUSE I ALWAYS GOT STUCK WITH A BOAR.'