

Atherton takes over reins

LONDON, July 28: Michael Atherton was chosen as the man to rescue England's cricket fortunes Wednesday, as the selectors named him to succeed Graham Gooch as captain of the national team, reports AP.

The announcement, made at a news conference Wednesday, followed a meeting Tuesday night of the five men who make up the Captains Selection Committee.

Atherton was named to lead the team for the remaining two Tests this summer against Australia, and will be the likely choice for the winter tour of the West Indies.

"The committee expects to confirm this appointment for the West Indies tour, but not immediately," committee chairman Ted Dexter said. "We decided not to break with tradition, and the tour captain will be named along with the team in early September."

Atherton will be asked to lead a squad that hasn't won a Test match in over a year. Their recent loss to Australia was England's eighth in nine Tests, prompting Gooch's early resignation after the match ended Monday.

"The players we pick must take responsibility for their performances and stop the rot here and now," Atherton said.

"People have talked about the young players in the side and building for the future. For me, the future starts now."

Atherton, 25, was chosen over Alec Stewart, Gooch's vice-captain on the last two winter tours, and Mike Gatting, who captained England in 23 Tests from 1986-88. Dexter said that Derbyshire's Kim Barnett, Hugh Morris of Glamorgan, and Martyn Moxon of Yorkshire were also considered.

The committee's agreed criteria included the need for mental toughness, especially with the West Indies in mind, Dexter said.

"All those candidates measured up in that context. It was in the areas of tactical awareness and fresh approach that Michael eventually emerged as the choice."

Atherton's laid-back style will contrast sharply with the rough-edged, hard-work ethic practised by Gooch.

"People have talked about new ideas, a fresh approach, and I hope to be able to get the players to put in their best performances for England because that's what has been lacking for

two years," Atherton said. "I'm going to be my own man. I have my own ideas. We won't shy away from working hard."

Atherton has played in 27 matches for England since making his Test debut in 1989. He was captain of the university squad at Cambridge for two years, but has limited experience leading a team at the first-class level. He is currently vice-captain at Lancashire, where he has played since 1987.

Atherton's first assignment comes this weekend when he

But despite several solid performances in recent years as an opening partner for Gooch, Atherton was left off the team for the first two Tests in the tour of India last winter.

As a result, Atherton missed many of the bad reviews from the disastrous tour, in which England lost all three Tests to India and one to Sri Lanka. Much of the bad press went to Gooch and Stewart, which was seen as boosting Atherton's chances for the captaincy.

England's last Test victory



An AFP library picture dated April 1992 of Mike Atherton, who was named England cricket captain at a news conference at Regents Park Hotel, London yesterday. Atherton takes over from Graham Gooch, who stepped down after England's humiliating innings defeat at the hands of traditional rivals Australia in the fourth Test at Headingley on Monday.

will meet with the selectors to pick a team for the next Test against Australia, starting Aug 5 at Edgbaston.

With 1,735 runs scored in Test cricket, Atherton has averaged 34.70 runs per innings.

came one year ago this month against Pakistan. Pakistan later avenged the defeat, and, after going 0-4 on the winter tour, England have lost three out of four this summer to Australia, with one draw.

Everyone who matters will be at US Open

WHITE PLAINS, New York, July 28: The world's top 40 men tennis players have all entered the 25th edition of the US Open championship, which starts in Flushing Meadows, New York, on August 30, reports AFP.

The men's field is led by Wimbledon champion and world number one Pete Sampras and two-time defending champion Stefan Edberg of Sweden.

In all, 49 of the world's top 50 men are slated to compete. The 1993 tournament, the last Grand Slam in the 1993 calendar, boasts record prize money of 9.022 million dollars.

The men's singles champion will win 535,000 dollars. The men's field also includes former champions Boris Becker of Germany and Ivan Lendl, who won three straight titles in 1985-87.

Australian Open champion Jim Courier of the United States, French Open champion Sergi Bruguera of Spain and former Wimbledon champion Andre Agassi are also entered.

Agassi begins confidently

MONTREAL, July 28: Seeded only 11th because of his unimpressive world ranking of 31, Andre Agassi played confident tennis to capture a 6-2, 6-4 first-round decision over Germany's Patrik Kuhnen on Tuesday at the 1.65 million dollar player's international men's tennis tournament, reports Reuter.

Heavy rain delayed any matches from getting underway until close to 6:00 pm.

"I haven't spent this long at the office since junior tennis," Agassi said about his long wait to play.

At 8:29 pm, 15th-seeded David Wheaton became the first player of the day to finish a match with an easy 6-2, 6-0 first-round victory over fellow-American Kelly Jones.

American Aaron Krickstein, ranked 62nd, posted the upset of the day when he defeated 14th-seeded Amos Mansdorf 6-3, 6-3 in another first-round match. The 24th-ranked Mansdorf was last week's champion at Washington.

Agassi and the 107th-ranked Kuhnen were about even on outright winners in the match — the American had 20 while Kuhnen posted 22. The big difference came in the unforced error count — Agassi committed only 12 while Kuhnen, who beat Agassi in their two previous meetings, had 33.

"You never want to lose to someone three times," Agassi said.

"It was nice to go out there and hit the ball well even when you're not playing under perfect conditions."

Agassi also commented on longtime coach Nick Bollettieri's decision following Wimbledon to sever their relationship, calling it a "total surprise" any saying he felt a strong sense of "abandonment."

Nevertheless, Agassi said he accepted Bollettieri's desire to spend more time with his family and the younger players at his tennis academy.

Agassi recently hooked up with former tennis great Pancho Segura, who guided Jimmy Connors in his early days.

"Pancho told me I'll put my neck out for you," Agassi said.

"Pancho played the game so he has a different perspective than Nick did. Pancho doesn't like to get beat and he feels like he's getting beat if the person he's coaching is beat."

Pierce gets tough with her dad

CARLSBAD, California, July 28: Mary Pierce, who fired her father as her tennis coach last week, will seek a court order enforcing the ban against him at her matches, reports AFP.

France's world number 14 is scheduled to file papers in San Diego superior court on Wednesday to make sure her father, Jim Pierce, stays away from her at the Mazda Classic tournament that starts next Monday.

"The papers are ready. It should be a simple operation," said tournament promoter Raquel Giffra.

Jim Pierce, long known for unruly behaviour while watching his daughter play, was banned from the women's tour for two years after a disturbance during the third round of the French Open on May 28.

He was thrown out of Roland Garros Stadium by 10 security guards.

The Women's Tennis Council banned him under the newly expanded "dishonourable conduct or unprofessional conduct" rule for players and their coaches and managers.

Last week, at an exhibition event in Mahwah, New Jersey, the 18-year-old Pierce said her father would no longer be her coach.

"We'll still keep our relationship, we'll be together," she said. "As far as tennis is concerned, we were just fighting a lot."

Memory catapults Sotomayor

SALAMANCA, Spain, July 28: Javier Sotomayor went back to the venue of his first world high jump record on Tuesday to set a new best of 2.45m, reports agencies.

Cuba's 25-year-old Olympic champion added a centimetre to the old record with his second attempt at El Hemantico Stadium in Salamanca. Long jumper Mike Powell and Colombian sprinter Ximena Restrepo set best performances of the year in their events.

Sotomayor cleared 2.23m, 2.32m and 2.38m first time. On his second try at 2.45m, Sotomayor rattled the bar with his legs but it stuck.

It was at El Hemantico in September 1988 that Sotomayor took the record from Sweden's Patrick Sjoeborg with a jump of 2.43m.

On July 29, 1989 he became the first athlete to clear eight feet when he lifted his record to 2.44m at San Juan, Puerto Rico, that had stood till Tuesday.

Sotomayor has made himself clear favourite to win a first world title at Stuttgart next month. In 1991, he had to be content with second place, behind American Charles Austin, after pulling out injured in mid-contest.

"I have been dreaming of 2.45 metres," he said. "If I win at the World Championships, it will have been a great year."

"It has already been a good year for me. I have good memories of Salamanca and I know the record could fall here."

He was stopped from going to the Seoul Olympics in 1988, a few days after setting his first world record, because of a Cuban boycott.

But Sotomayor has always defended the communist government of Fidel Castro, even though he is allowed to keep hardly any of the riches he earns.

The athlete lives 17 miles from his training track and has to get a bus there each day because he has no car. He only has his own house in his village because the other inhabitants built it for him.

"I wanted (to set the record) here, because it's a small city in which I feel like I'm in Cuba. The people recognize me in the street and ask how I'm doing, the children surround me and I find myself in a good mental state," Sotomayor said.

American Mike Powell, the world record holder in the long jump, took first in the event with an impressive leap of 8.70 metres, the longest in the world this year.

"I want to jump nine metres this year and I thought I could do it in Salamanca, but records aren't easy," Powell said.

"I'm very happy with (my performance) at this meet," he added.

Colombia's Ximena Restrepo ran the fastest women's 400 metres (50.37 sec) of the year.

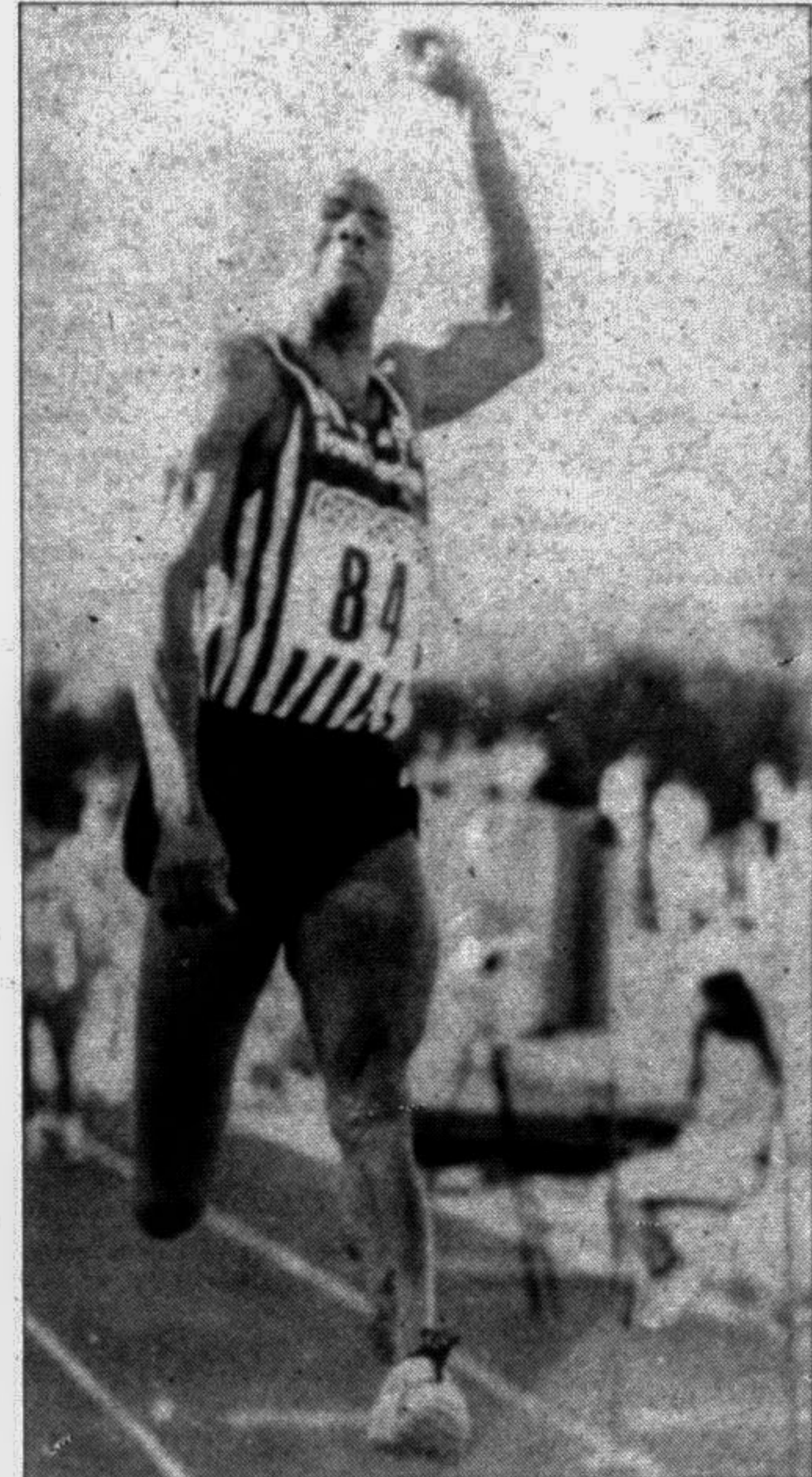
Cuban Ivan Pedrosa took second with a leap of 8.27 metres (27 feet-1-3/4 inches).

It was a good day overall for Cuban athletes at the meet. Naritza Marten placed first in

inches). Other Cubans to take firsts were Altuska Lopez, who won the women's 100-metre hurdles in 12.92 seconds, and Emilio Valle, who won the men's 110-metre hurdles in 13.41 seconds.

American Jason Hendrix won the men's 200-metres in 20.47 seconds.

Meredith Rainey, also of the United States, took top honours in the women's 800-metres, crossing first in 2 minutes, 1.96 seconds. Maitte Zuniga of Spain was second in 2:03.52, and



World record holder and a silver medalist in the Barcelona Games American Mike Powell takes off during the men's long jump at the Salamanca athletics meet in Spain on Tuesday.

the women's discus with a toss of 65.96 metres (216 feet-5 inches) while Roberto Moya won the men's discus with a toss of 64.08 metres (210 feet-8 inches).

Shola Lynch in third at 2:04.92, and American Maicel Malone took third in the women's 400-metres with a time of 51.37 seconds.

McEnroe to play in 6th Marlboro

HONG KONG, July 28: Former world No. 1 tennis player John McEnroe, whose tournament appearances are becoming rarer will play in the 6th Marlboro Championships in Hong Kong in October, the organiser said Wednesday, reports AP.

Also in the field will be world No. 3 Stefan Edberg of Sweden; defending champion Ivan Lendl of the United States, now ranked 7th; Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands and Wayne Ferreira of South Africa said the Hong Kong Tennis Patrons Association.

The singles winner in the Oct. 19-24 tournament receives 1.71 million Hong Kong dollars (U. S. dls 219,000) from a total purse of 5.44 million Hong Kong dollars (U. S. dls 698,000).

Fernandez laid low by bad shoulder

STRATTON MOUNTAIN, Vermont, July 28: Second seed Mary Joe Fernandez withdrew from the dollar 375,000 women's hardcourt tennis tournament at Stratton Mountain with a sore shoulder on Tuesday and Austrian Beate Reinstadler upset seventh seed Lisa Raymond of the United States, reports Reuter.

Fernandez, a french Open finalist this year, hurt her shoulder last week at an exhibition tournament. After a brief practice session on Tuesday, the American decided against risking further injury.

"The trainer said to rest it and hopefully it won't be more than two weeks," Fernandez said.

Reinstadler, ranked 162nd in the world, surprised the 50th-ranked Raymond 4-6, 6-7 (7-4), 6-4 in a two hour second-round battle disrupted by rain for an hour 45 minutes.

Raymond had trouble with her serve. Her 10th double fault of the match came on match point.

"I didn't have a lot of confidence coming into this tournament," said Raymond, who reached the fourth round at Wimbledon earlier this month.

Fourth-seeded Manuela Malcuva-Fraginieri of Switzerland scored a straight-sets second-round victory over Anne Mall of the United States.

Top seed Conchita Martinez of Spain, fresh from helping her country win the Federation Cup in Germany last weekend, is scheduled for her opening match against American Camille Benjamin on Wednesday after getting a first-round bye.

Defeats don't daunt Dexter

LONDON, July 28: England selectors chairman Ted Dexter will not be joining captain Graham Gooch by standing down after the Ashes series debacle, reports AFP.

Dexter said Tuesday: "I am carrying on until I am told otherwise. I make sure I don't hear the criticism. When the chairman of the Test and County Cricket Board picks up the phone and starts bawling me out then I shall listen. That hasn't happened so far."

Dexter's term of office ends in March. He has already needed one vote of confidence after the disastrous tour of India and Sri Lanka at the start of the year.

With England having lost three of the first four Tests against Australia, Dexter has come under new fire. One of England's poor play, Dexter was criticised for not being at Headingley at the time of their latest defeat — the eighth in nine internationals.

"I stayed in London on Monday to carry out my administrative functions while watching the Test on television," said Dexter.

"I would not have been able to fulfil all these functions if I had been wandering around a cricket ground," he said.

"Graham's decision saddened me," added Dexter. "But I understand his feelings and I know that his reason for doing this because he feels it's best for England."

"He is still a hell of a player and I'm very glad he wants to carry on as a member of the team."



TED DEXTER
The England committee — Dexter, manager Keith Fletcher, TCCB chief executive Alan Smith, Micky Stewart and cricket chairman Ossie Wheatley will meet on Wednesday. An announcement of a replacement is not expected till Thursday.

Mike Atherton remains favourite to become captain. Alec Stewart is a close second.

The odds against Mike Gatting returning have lengthened since he said Atherton or Stewart should be the leader. Gatting threw his weight behind Atherton.

"My preference would be for Atherton because we have seen what Stewart can do and now would be a good chance to have a look at Atherton," he said.

As well as agreeing on a name, the committee must also decide what period of office to offer. It could be for only the two remaining Tests of this summer, though Gooch believes his successor should be given the winter tour of West Indies as well.

England's hopes took a new blow when it was announced that Kent's Australian origin fast bowler Martin McCague is unlikely to play again this season because of a back injury.

McCague, attacked as a traitor in Australia for choosing to play for England, was brought into the Test side this season to boost the home side's chances.

He was born in Northern Ireland but was mainly brought up in Australia and attended the Australian Cricket Academy. His uncle Brander him "a traitor."

After all he's an Aussie

LONDON, July 28: Warwickshire opener Jason Ratcliffe followed the Australian example of bashing the home side at Headingley on Tuesday, reports AFP.

A day after the Aussies completed an innings Test win over England in Leeds, Ratcliffe hit 105 to take his side to the verge of victory over Yorkshire in the Natwest Trophy quarter-finals.

Chasing Warwickshire's 245 in 59.4 overs, Martyn Moxon's side were reduced to 69 for five off 29 overs by the close of a rain-hit day.

Warwickshire's innings was founded on a fourth-wicket stand of 136 between Dermot Reeve (50) and Ratcliffe.

Ratcliffe played superbly after his side, who won the toss, had been reduced to 31 for three. His maiden century innings came off 142 balls with two sixes and eight fours.

West Indian skipper Richie Richardson made only eight before cutting a ball from Reeve to Trevor Penney at backward point, reducing Yorkshire to 31 for three in the 15th over.

Ashley Metcalfe was lbw to Paul Smith for 12 and Yorkshire sacrificed another wicket off the last ball of the day when David Ryan, having made 20, was run out by Smith.

Allan Lamb went on to hit 71 from 88 balls for Northamptonshire against Sussex at Northampton, after being missed on his third ball of the day with no runs to his name.

David Smith split a chance at first slip off Franklin Stephenson which would have reduced Northants to a vulnerable 26 for three.

Sussex made 230 for nine in their innings thanks to 47 from Smith and 42 from Bill Athey. Lamb's side were on 146 for three at the close of play, with 20 overs left. Sussex will go through on a faster scoring rate if rain stops the players coming back on Wednesday.

England captain candidate

Alec Stewart was booed by Somerset fans at Taunton when he tried to prevent a clash on the field.

Umpire Jack Bond confirmed that Stewart was blameless when acting to calm things down following a verbal clash between Somerset's Graham Rose who was upset by a comment from Surrey felder James Bolling.

Bond and John Hampshire called Stewart over to explain what had gone on, and the crowd thought Stewart was being ticked off.

Bond said Stewart "acted the peacemaker" but his eventful day ended poorly. Stewart was dismissed for 15 edging Andy Caddick just before bad light stopped play. Surrey will resume on 26 for one from 9.5 overs in reply to a Somerset total boosted to 230 for nine by some magnificent tailend hitting from Mushtaq Ahmed — 35 from 31 balls — and Adrianus van Troost (17 from five balls).

Matthew Maynard hit 84, including nine fours, to steer Glamorgan towards a semifinal berth at Swansea.

Jackson eclipses his own mark

SESTRIERE, Italy, July 28: Briton Colin Jackson demolished his own European 110 metres hurdles record when he posted a time of 12.97 seconds in an international athletics meeting at this high-altitude ski resort today, reports Reuter.

The 26-year-old Welshman destroyed a high-class field including Canadian Olympic champion Mark McKoy to better the previous record of 13.04 seconds he set in Cologne last August.

"I'm obviously very pleased with the performance and more than satisfied with the time," said Jackson.

His time, just 0.05 seconds out side the four-year-old world record of American Roger Kingdom, came despite running into a wind of 1.6 metres per second in hot, sunny conditions.

The performance will boost the European champion's confidence ahead of the World Championships in Stuttgart next month. The Briton finished a disappointing seventh in the Olympic final last year.

American 400 metres Olympic champion Quincy Watts enjoyed his outing 2,000 metres above sea level in this small, uncovered stadium.

Watts clocked 44.13 seconds, the third best time of the year. His two chief rivals, fellow

Americans Michael Johnson and Butch Reynolds, are the only men to have gone faster in 1993.

Kevin Young, 400 metres hurdles Olympic champion, duly returned to form after seeing his 26 race unbeaten streak ended in London last week.

Young faced little opposition but had to settle for the unexceptional time of 48.20 seconds.

Nambian Frankie Fredericks, silver medalist in the two Olympic sprint events last year, notched up a double success to underline his World Championship credentials. Fredericks defied a strong head wind to post a time of 10.16 in the 100 metres, beating former world

record holder Leroy Burrell into second place.

The American-based African then doubled up with victory in 20.08 in the 200, the fourth best time this season.

German Susen Tiedtke handed her compatriot Heike Drechsler a rare long jump defeat.

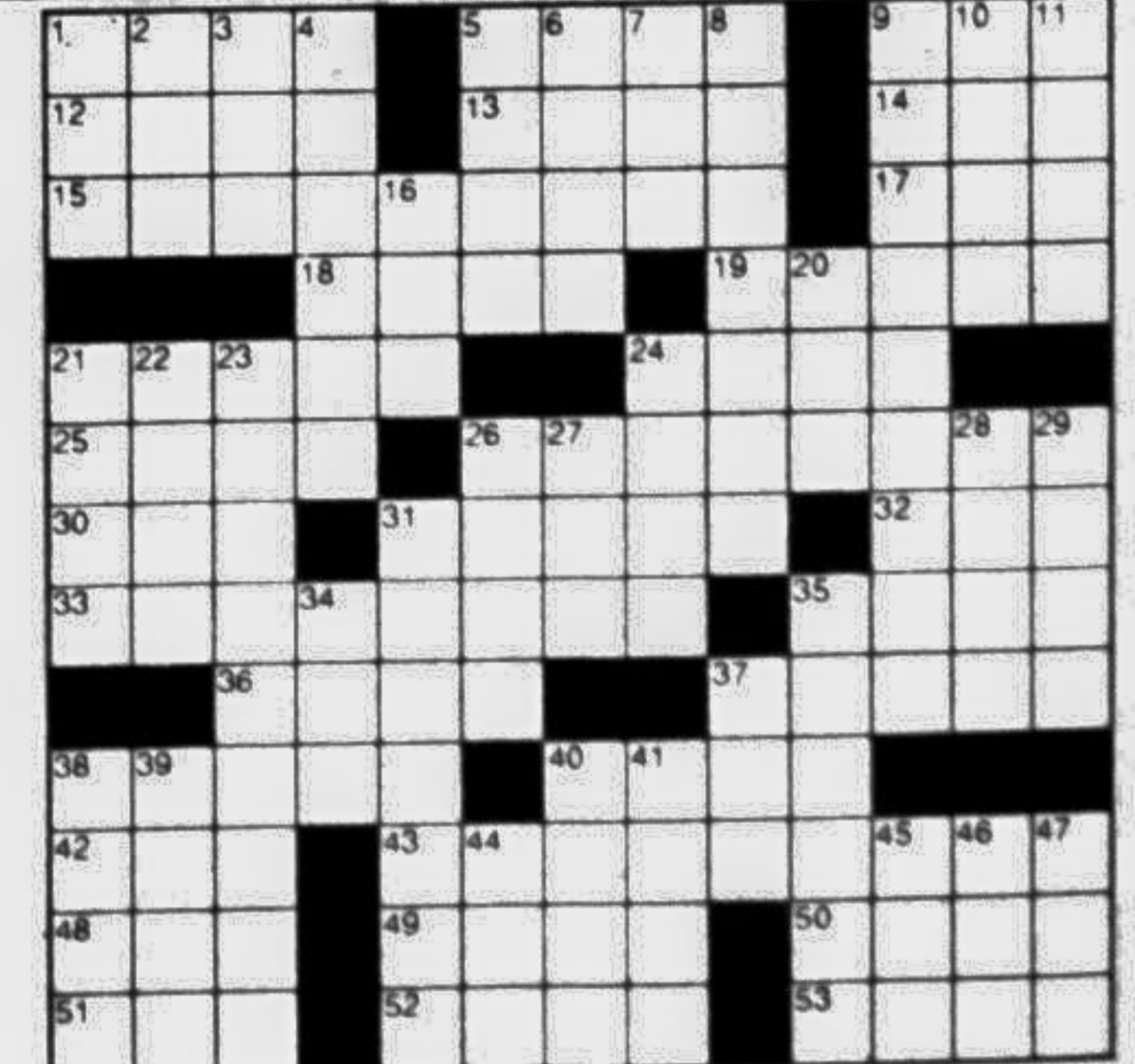
The blond-haired German took advantage of the strong breeze at her back to leap a personal best of 7.19 metres on her last jump.

Olympic champion Drechsler could manage only 7.12 metres in reply.

Tiedtke's leap was the best of the year but the wind speed of 3.70 metres per second was well above the permitted limit.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS
- 1 Imperfection
 - 5 Carpet installer's concern
 - 9 B-F link
 - 12 Jai —
 - 13 Mary Quant creation
 - 14 "Please explain"
 - 15 Back-to-school time
 - 17 "— Got a Secret"
 - 18 Landlocked Asian nation
 - 19 Hermit
 - 21 Indiana athlete
 - 24 Ms. Lollobrigida
 - 25 What we share
 - 26 Party paper
 - 30 Actor Erwin
 - 31 Act the Pied Piper
 - 32 Personal
 - 33 Annie's song
 - 35 Booty
 - 36 Neighbor's kid?
 - 37 Thick
 - 38 Charles' princedom
 - 40 Cheeseboard choice
 - 42 Lead-in to center or cure
 - 43 Hope chest contents
 - 48 Coq au —
 - 49 Actress Skye
 - 50 Parisian pals
 - 51 Future phalarope
 - 52 Dorm occupant
 - 53 "— off to see..."
 - DOWN
 - 1 "How Green — My Valley"
 - 2 Mil.
 - 3 Urban music style
 - 4 Library listings
 - 5 Shot
 - 6 Cage components
 - 7 Compass pt.
 - 8 Transport method
 - 9 Section of San Francisco
 - 10 Hawk's counterpart
 - 11 Basin accessory
 - 16 Corn serving
 - 20 Indivisible
 - 21 Place to
 - 22 Indy entry
 - 23 Fate of old walls
 - 24 What rodents do
 - 26 Birth doc.
 - 27 Plata's partner
 - 28 "— brillig, —"
 - 29 "Bus Stop" playwright
 - 31 Extremely severe
 - 34 Raw rock
 - 35 Play-ground fixture
 - 37 Prefix for taste or temper
 - 38 "— Only Just Begun"
 - 39 As fat as
 - 40 Ossuary item
 - 41 Wished otherwise
 - 44 Kanga's kid
 - 45 Scottish uncle
 - 46 Basketball contents
 - 47 Put to work



CRYPTOQUIP

F K D N S J F F L J F L X K D J L
N Y M N " X S Y I K D J
D K E E M J Z X D ' N J H E M
F Z F F M E J I K

Yesterday's Cryptogram: BALLOONIST'S GIRLFRIEND IS SO BEAUTIFUL SHE'S OUT OF SIGHT.

Today's Cryptogram clue: F equals P
The Cryptogram 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.