

Sport

Plaatjes pockets marathon gold

STUTTGART, Aug 15: South African-born Mark Plaatjes won the men's world marathon title for the United States on Saturday with an astonishing late burst, reports Reuter.

Curiously, Shorter was also born outside the US, starting his life in Munich, the city where he was later to achieve glory.

Men's 5,000 metres title favourite Khalid Skah of Morocco came only fourth in his heat won by Briton Robert Denmark, but still qualified for Monday's final.

Maria Mutola, predictably won her race, moving past American Meredith Rainey in the final straight to finish in 1:59.81.

The first day at Stuttgart

STUTTGART, Aug 15 (AP): A brief look at what happened Saturday, the first day of competition at the World Championships.

PERFORMANCE OF THE DAY: Andre Cason of the United States, 9.96 seconds in a second-round heat of the 100-metre dash, the fastest of his career and the fastest in the world since April 1992.

WEATHER: Hot, with temperatures at 27 Celsius (82 F) and 57 percent humidity. Brief late shower.

QUOTE OF THE DAY: "I couldn't have done a thing in my life if it wasn't for running... we were asking me to give that up and that was too much."

GOLD MEDALISTS: Mark Plaatjes, United States, men's marathon; Sari Essayah, Finland, women's 10-kilometre walk.

Coggi firms his hold on WBA CROWN

BUENOS AIRES, Aug 15: Argentina's Juan Martin Coggi made his third successful defence of the World Boxing Association junior welterweight crown by defeating Jose Barboza of Venezuela on points in a 12-round bout on Friday, reports Reuter.

The 31-year-old Argentine, who sent the 28-year-old challenger to the mat with a left cross in the first round to the glee of the 6,000 fans packed in a small suburban stadium, never found the knockout punch he sought all night.

Daring the heavier-muscled Barboza like a bullfighter, the left-handed champion relied on counter punches to stun his opponent, whose performance improved as the match wore on.

A veteran of 66 professional fights who retained the junior welterweight title in December, Coggi saved energy by falling back on the ropes and letting the Venezuelan try to pierce his solid guard.

Asari, the first Asian to bag marathon gold

STUTTGART, Germany, Aug 15: Junko Asari of Japan staged a comeback late in the marathon Sunday to win the World Championship title ahead of Portuguese Manuela Machado, reports AP.

Another Japanese, Tomoe Abe, took the bronze.

Asari finished the 42.195 kilometre (26 miles 285-yard) race in 2 hours, 30.03 minutes, holding a lead of some 350 metres (yards) over Machado. Abe finished some 50 metres (yards) further back.

On Saturday, Mark Plaatjes of the United States won the men's marathon.

Asari, 24, bid her time while American Kim Jones and Machado set the pace for most of the race.

The economy of her stride matched the intelligence of her strategy as she slowly caught up with leader Machado by kilometre 36, and quickly overtook her. She was never threatened again.

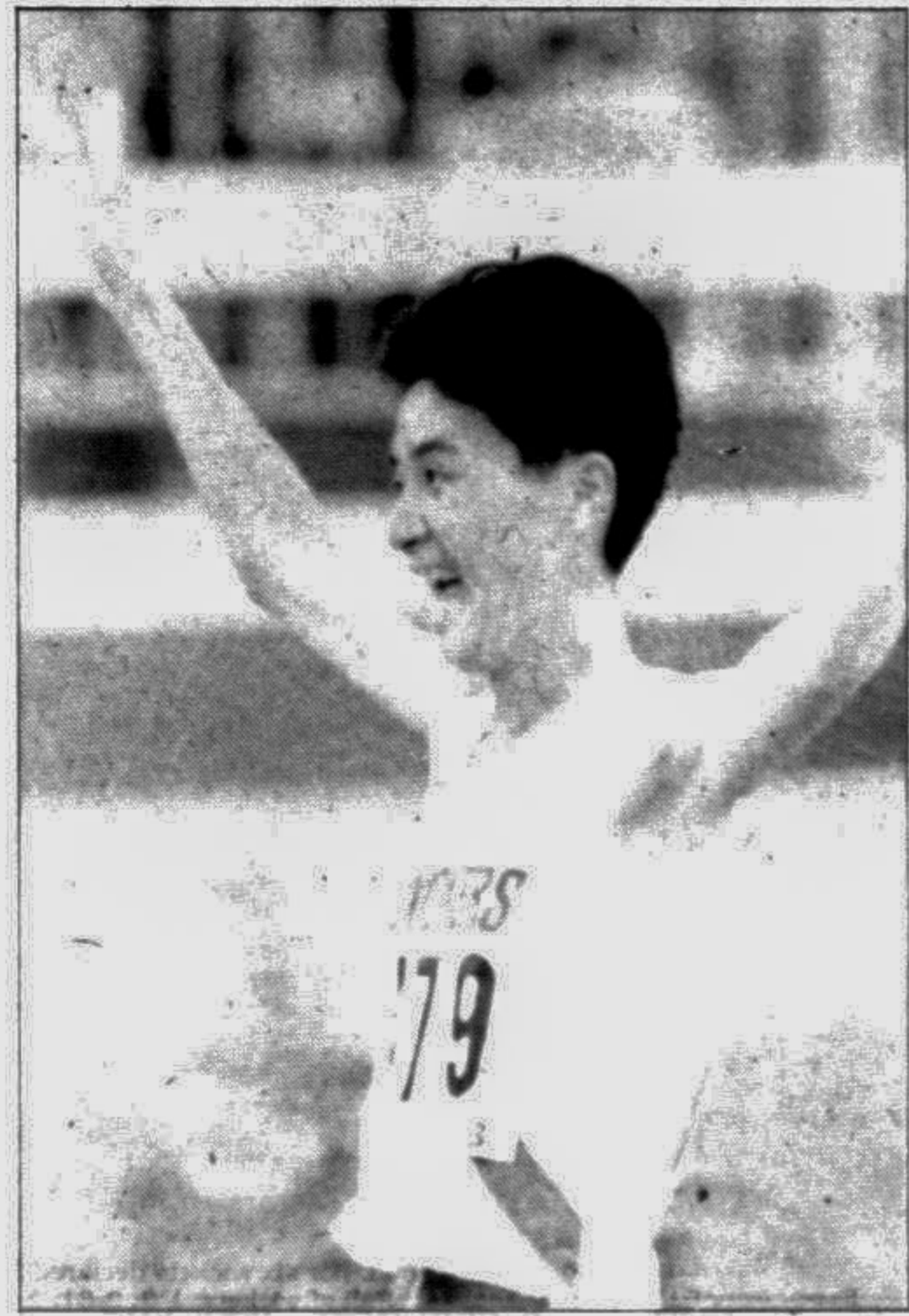
It was the second marathon gold medal for Japan in a world championship. In Tokyo two years ago, Hiromi Taniguchi won the men's event.

It also was the second marathon win for Asari this year after she already equaled the Asian record in Osaka.

Jones set the pace for the first 30 kilometres, thinning the pack of 33 to just eight, including all three Japanese runners and home favourite Katrin Dorre.

But on one of the many hills dotting the undulating circuit, Jones' effort collapsed in the heat. Dorre suffered the same fate a few hills later.

Sunday morning's conditions were almost as muggy as for the men late Saturday. At the start, humidity reached 68 per cent and the temperature stood at 22 C (72 F). Running in windless conditions, it only got worse.



Japanese Junko Asari rejoices after winning the women's marathon in the Stuttgart World Athletics Championships yesterday. Asari, who clocked two hours 30 minutes and three seconds, is the first Asian to win a World Championships marathon gold.

Britain and Olympic gold medalist Yelena Romanova of Russia.

Qu Yunxia took the second in 8:49.20. The third Chinese entrant also reached Monday's final, Zhang Lirong finishing third in the final heat won by Ireland's Sonta O'Sullivan in 8:50.62.

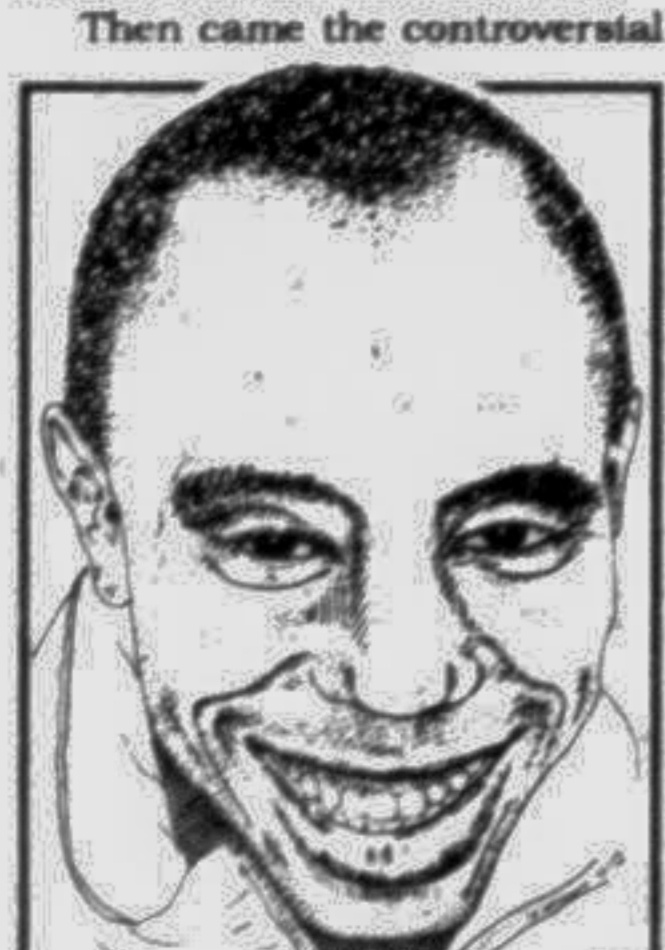
'Nearly Man' races for top of podium

With the world track and field championships fast approaching, Kenya's Richard Chelimo has his sights set firmly on gold medals and new records.

The 20-year-old middle and long-distance runner was a world-record holder for five days, before having that time beaten by another Kenyan. In a contentious incident at the Barcelona Olympics, Chelimo also knew, although again only briefly, what a gold medal felt like.

Gemini News Service profiles this up and coming track star's successes and goals and those who will try to stand in his way.

lieve that the rivalry between Chelimo and Ondieki may not last long. "Chelimo will soon upstage Ondieki," they say. At 32, Ondieki is nearing the end of his career while Chelimo has many years ahead of him.



MOSES KIPTANUI

silver at the Barcelona Games. His performance at the Stockholm meet has convinced the world he belongs in the exclusive club of record-breakers.

He is not yet a match for such other Kenyans as the legendary Henry Rono, who broke compatriot Samson Kimmbwa's and two other records in the 3,000m steeplechase and in the 5,000m in 1978, and Moses Kiptanui, the current steeplechase world record holder. But at 20 Chelimo is the

youngest Kenyan to join the club, and the youngest ever 10,000m record holder.

Like most of Kenya's top athletes, Chelimo was born and raised in the rugged highlands of the Great Rift Valley. He is of the track-famed Kalerjin tribe. Like most of his track-mates, he did not go past high school, opting instead to join the army in 1990. The army is famed for identifying and nurturing track talent.

The five-foot-five Chelimo is not the only start in the family. His younger brother Ishmael Kirui is an up-and-coming 5,000m athlete, and sister Catherine Kirui, a high school student, is another middle-distance runner.

The Stockholm success notwithstanding, Chelimo is not resting on his laurels. He said after the great race: "I have not got the pace I have always wanted in the first part of the race. But I also hope to run under the 27-minute mark. I think it's possible."

Now that Ondieki has beaten him to it, will the young Kenyan aim for the sub-26 minute mark? Affable, down-to-earth Chelimo has been improving his skills ever since he ventured into the competitive middle and long-distance Kenyan athletics.

Having graduated from the guidance of Samson Obwocha in the army in 1990, he moved over to the stable of John Blicourt, a renowned athletics agent in London, to train alongside Kenyans John Ngugi, then world cross-country champion, and Susan Birma, the 5,000m champion in Tokyo in 1991.

Byessa at the International Amateur Athletics Federation cross-country challenge during the 1990-91 season, nobody took him seriously until the Kenya Armed Forces pre-Tokyo championships in 1991.

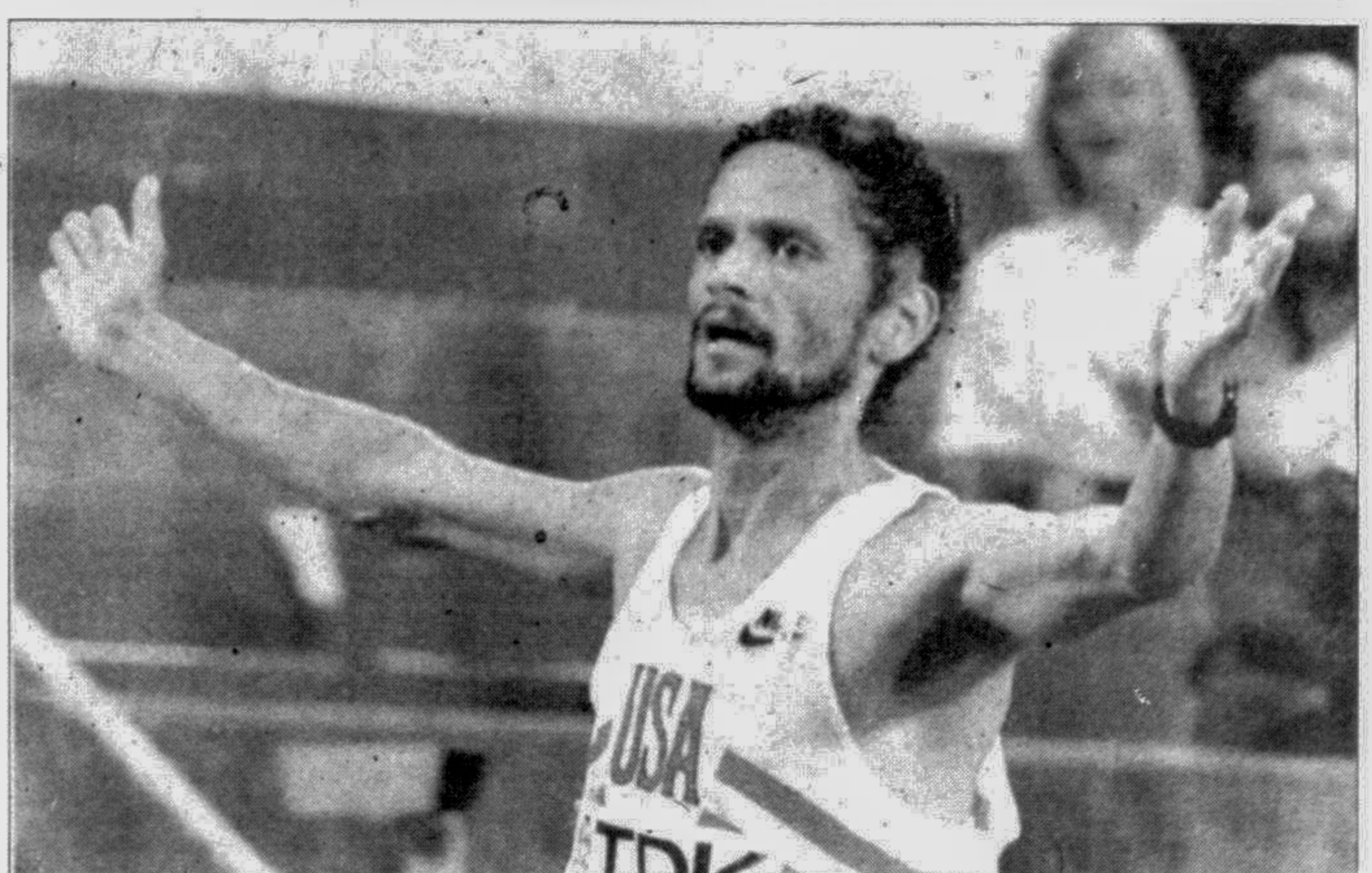
There he beat such big names as Ngugi and Tanui in the 5,000m and 10,000m respectively. Having tested his might against the "big brothers," Chelimo returned to Europe. The world began to notice his potential. At the Hengelo Grand Prix in June 1991 he clocked a time in the 10,000m only three seconds off barrios' world mark and the second fastest ever.

Then he recorded three faster times in quick succession in the 5,000m in July 1991. In the process he relegated Adebbe of Ethiopia, the then world junior record holder, to fourth place in the junior all-time best. To date, only Tanzania's Andy Sambu and Byessa have come any closer to Chelimo's mark.

Chelimo's track successes have given him economic security. His earnings from the Grand Prix and other overseas meets, appearance fees and prize money will hit a five-digit mark. But despite his wealth Chelimo remains a modest man.

Off track and back home near Eldoret, about 400 km west of Nairobi, he runs a real estate business and, instead of the BMWs, Volvos and Porches that his fellow Kenyan stars drive, he prefers to go in a not very presentable Peugeot pickup truck. — GEMINI NEWS

About the Author: ROBERT OTANI is on the staff of Kenya's Daily Mail in Mombasa.



South African-born American Mark Plaatjes jubilates while crossing the finish line to win the marathon gold in the World Championships in Stuttgart on Saturday.

Plaatjes — a running man

STUTTGART, Germany, Aug 15: Mark Plaatjes owes the best things in life to running. He had to run out of his country to hold onto them, reports AP.

The new US citizen gave his team a dream start to the World Championships Saturday with a spectacular come-from-behind win in the marathon.

It was sports imitating life for Plaatjes, who was born in South Africa.

In 1988, death was staring him in the face.

"My family received threats all the time, that they were going to find me dead in the road or whatever," he said, the gold medal proudly resting on his chest.

At the time, South Africa was under a state of emergency, apartheid laws were in force, Nelson Mandela was in prison on Robben Island and "people were being killed left, right and

centre," Plaatjes said. And Plaatjes, of mixed race, was running for the white, official track body.

"Black people did not like that," he said explaining he was seen as a traitor by some.

He said a close friend, also an excellent runner, was killed while training. A truck veered off the road and ran him over.

Another friend was shot in the leg, also while running.

"Those were two things that crystallized things," he said.

Plaatjes was left with a choice — stop running or run away.

"I wouldn't have done a thing in my life if it was not running," he said. "And there was nothing else for me to compete in. The only reason why I had a very good life and got a good education was because I could run. They were asking me to give that up and it was too much."

Plaatjes fled in 1988 and was granted asylum in the United States, where he attended the University of Georgia from 1981 to 1983.

Two charged with Jordan's murder

FAYETTEVILLE, NC, Aug 15: Authorities have arrested two teenagers and charged them with the first-degree murder of basketball star Michael Jordan's father, James Jordan, reports AP.

The senior Jordan apparently was killed by robbers when he pulled off the road to rest, said Capt. Art Binder, chief of detectives for the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department.

Larry Martir Demery, 18, of Roland and Daniel Andre Green, 18, of Lumberton each were charged with one count of first-degree murder, one count of armed robbery and one count of conspiracy to commit armed robbery. They were being held without bond on Sunday.

Binder said the murder occurred on Interstate 95 near Lumberton, in southeast North Carolina. The suspects had planned to rob someone that night and were waiting at the exit when Jordan pulled off the road there to rest, Binder said.

After shooting Jordan, the suspects drove the body to McColl, SC, then dumped the car near Fayetteville, Binder said.

Binder said they took the body to South Carolina and tried to cover their tracks because they knew the victim was Michael Jordan's father.

Cumberland County Sheriff Morris Bedsole said he does not expect any more arrests. He said four youngsters arrested earlier for stripping Jordan's car were not connected with the murder.

Jordan was last seen alive on July 22, after attending the funeral of a friend.

Miguel retains WBC title

GUADALAJARA, Mexico, Aug 15: Mexico's Miguel Angel Gonzalez retained his World Boxing Council lightweight title on Friday with an unanimous points victory over challenger David Sample of the United States, reports Reuter.

De la Hoya deadly, resolute

BAY ST LOUIS, Miss., Aug 15: Like any young artist, Oscar de la Hoya tries to learn from a master, reports AP.

Jones, cheered on by a lot of fans from his hometown of Pensacola, Fla, spent a great deal of time showboating in the first five rounds of his over-the-weight match against Sugar Boy Malinga of South Africa.

Then suddenly in the sixth round Jones flashed home a right hand and left hook to the head that knocked Malinga flat on his back where he was counted out for the first time in his 44-bout career. The time was 1:57.

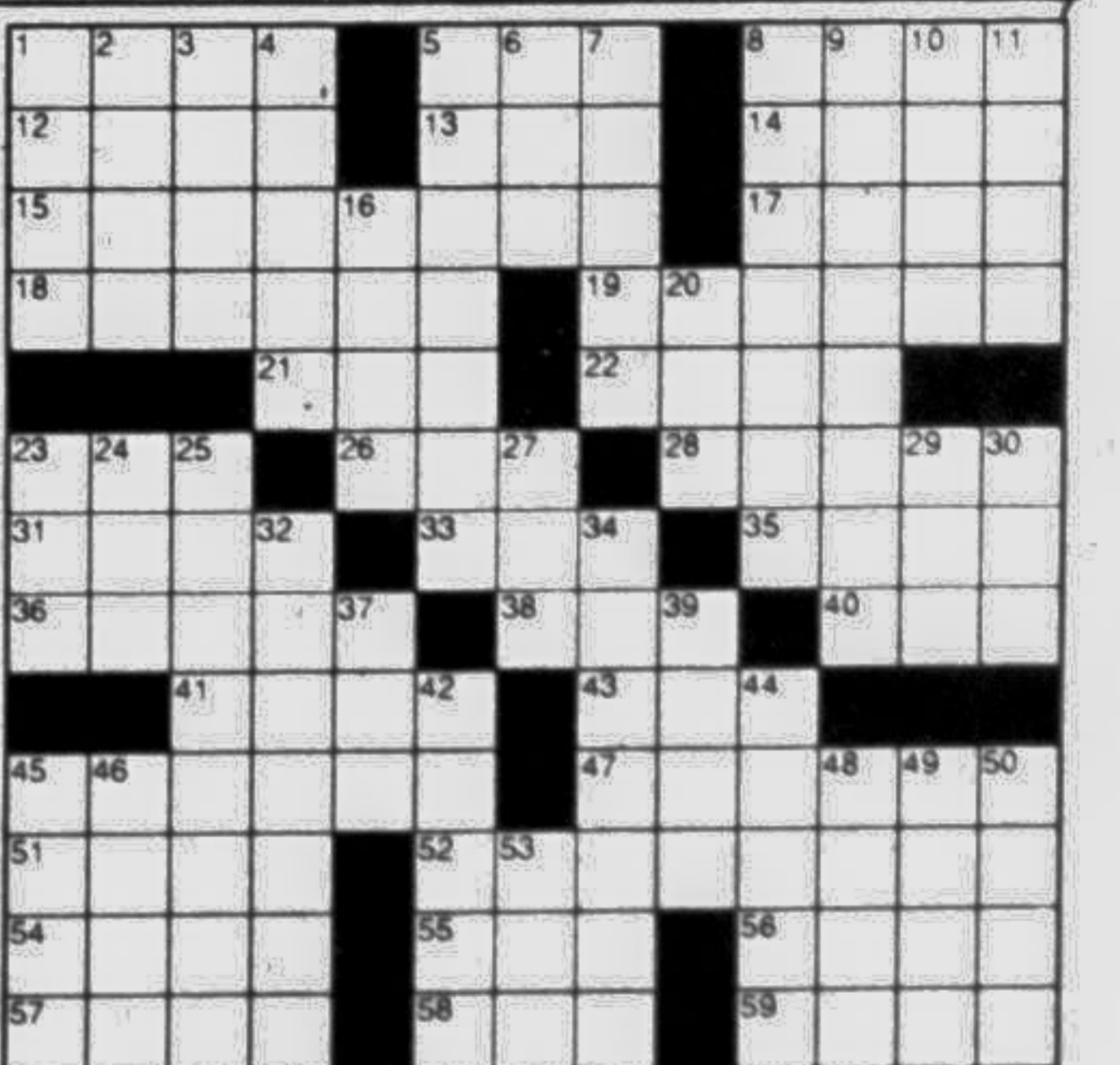
De La Hoya landed 191 of 360 punches while Carter landed 62 of 293 punches as his record fell to 27-5-1.

"I never rally thought I could knock him out," the 24-year-old Jones said after scoring his 21st KO in boosting his record to 23-0. "He's never been knocked out."

Malinga was very much knocked out Saturday night. From the instant he hit the floor, it was obvious the fight was over.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Fishhook 41 Reply of feature 5 Bashful 8 "Bei Mir — du Schon" 12 "— ben Adhem" 13 Luau gunk 14 Sufficient, old-style 15 Water-color art? 17 Commune near Caen 18 "Beale — Blues" 19 Wood-shop machines 21 Solidify 22 FDR's on it 23 Extinct bird 26 Kinsey subject 28 Sousa tempo 31 See 44 Down 33 Cereal grain 35 Infamous lyric 36 "Stormy Weather" composer 38 Shoot with a ray gun 40 Şalon application 59 Parisian pop 1 Low 2 Help a hood 3 Thunderous noise 4 Urban fleet 5 Botch the paint job 6 School dance 7 Highway sign 8 Groom's pal 9 Going broke 10 Un-matched 11 "— company..."



CRYPTOQUIP

"W GVO V HVO PQVB" R VPR D Q B X Q D E W I Q X V S Q N O Q V N Q B "H M E W S A I Q B E G Q G M S D." Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THOSE PUT IN PRISON ON BIG ASSAULT AND BATTERY CHARGES END UP IN DRY CELLS.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: P equals Y 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.