

Warne prime for a lot more

LONDON, Aug 24: From the moment he bowled Mike Gatting with his first delivery of the series, Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne sentenced England to a trail by guile that was the abiding memory of the Ashes Tests, reports Reuter.

A high-class wrist spinner is rare in modern Test cricket but Warne, even at the age of 23, has shown the qualities to make a lasting impression on the international game and rewrite its record books.

Warne and paceman Merv Hughes were Australia's match-winners in the six-Test series which ended at the Oval on Monday with England's only victory but left Allan Border's team savouring a 4-1 triumph after retaining the Ashes.

The influential role of the Victorian pair is underlined by their haul of wickets in the series — 34 for Warne and 31 for Hughes — and while the leg-spinner added a refreshing dimension to the attack, Hughes epitomised the spirit and determination of the team.

Warne's developing skills have enabled him to play a winning role in Test matches in four different countries — Sri Lanka, Australia, New Zealand and England — and he now has 65 wickets from 17 Tests, with the prospect of adding significantly to that haul in the forthcoming series against South Africa, home and away, and New Zealand.

A prodigious spinner of the ball who made relatively limited use of the googly and the flipper, Warne posed problems for most of England's batsmen, baffling Robin Smith to such an extent that this established player was ultimately dropped for the last Test.

It was Warne's first delivery in an Ashes Test, on the second

day of the series at Old Trafford, that sowed the seeds of doubt in English players' minds and set the pattern of his domination.

The ball pitched outside leg stump, fizzed past Gatting's probing forward push and hit off stump. There can rarely have been a more stunning debut delivery in an England-Australia Test.



SHANE WARNE

Warne's magic, the bristling hostility of Hughes and the effective support by off-spinner Tim May, whose series haul was 21 wickets, carried the attack in the absence of premier strike bowler Craig McDermott.

McDermott pulled out of the tour after undergoing surgery for a twisted colon during the second Test. In that context alone, the emphatic margin of Australia's series victory was

remarkable. Border's team were short of runs only in the Oval Test, otherwise the contrasting talents of their six front line batsmen produced a succession of massive totals.

Opener Michael Slater emerged at Test level as a player of immense promise whose timing and instinctive stroke-play illuminated his innings, notably at Lord's when he scored his maiden Test century.

Mark Waugh's fluent batting was always a delight while twin brother Steve contributed several resolute innings at crucial stages.

David Boon lived up to his reputation as Australia's most dependable batsman of the last three years by hitting centuries in the second, third and fourth Tests, though he endured a comparatively lean time at the end of the series.

Border's farewell tour of England enabled him to complete a hat-trick of Ashes triumphs — he led Australia to victory in the 1989 and 1990-91 series — and emphasised what a durable and accomplished cricketer he is.

Border is the longest-serving current Test captain, having been appointed during 1984-85, and has scored the most runs in Test history. His appetite for batting remains undiminished, as he demonstrated by making exactly 200 not out in the fourth Test at Headingley.

When Australia started to run away with the series, Border said there was one aspect in which England would not match his side, and that was heart and commitment.

Such characteristics, exemplified by Hughes and wicket-keeper Ian Healy, one of the unsung heroes, ensured Australia sustained their drive, ambition and winning form during a tour that ranks high on their list of Ashes achievements.

Case against Sarfraz dropped

LONDON, Aug 24: Charges alleging that former Pakistani international cricketer Sarfraz Nawaz assaulted a dancer and stole money from her were dropped on Monday after the prosecution offered no evidence, reports Reuter.

Nawaz, 44, who played in 55 Test matches for Pakistan, had denied all the allegations of theft, assaulting and unlawfully imprisoning classical dancer Azra Rauf after a party last September.

Prosecutor Colin Pitt told London's Old Bailey criminal court that Rauf was no longer willing to give evidence, saying that "Pressures have been brought directly and indirectly on the lady" from within Britain's Pakistani community.

Nawaz was formally found not guilty on all charges.

He angrily told reporters outside the court that the case had prevented him from standing as a candidate for the Pakistan People's Party in elections due in October.

"He said he had been due to hand in his nomination papers on Monday but had been obliged to return to Britain for the court hearing instead. 'So I cannot be a candidate,' he said.

Aussie girls run all over Spain in Champions Trophy

AMSTERDAM, Aug 24: Olympic champions Spain were beaten 8-1 by Australia on the second day of the week-long women's Champions Trophy hockey tournament on Monday, reports Reuter.

It was Spain's second reverse in two days following a 3-0 defeat by the Netherlands and leaves them rooted at the bottom of the six-nation competition.

Seven Australian players got on the score sheet with the Spaniards' lone goal coming from Ivett Imbers four minutes from time.

Earlier, South Korea turned in a sparkling display of attacking hockey to win 3-1 and send Britain crashing to their second defeat in two games.

Britain has goalkeeper Hilary Rose to thank for keeping the scoreline respectable as she pulled off a succession of excellent saves.

It was some revenge for the Koreans for their extra-time defeat by Britain in the bronze medal match in Barcelona last year.

In the last match of the day, the Netherlands joined Australia at the head of the standings after beating Germany 1-0 thanks to a 48th minute strike by Cecile Vinke.

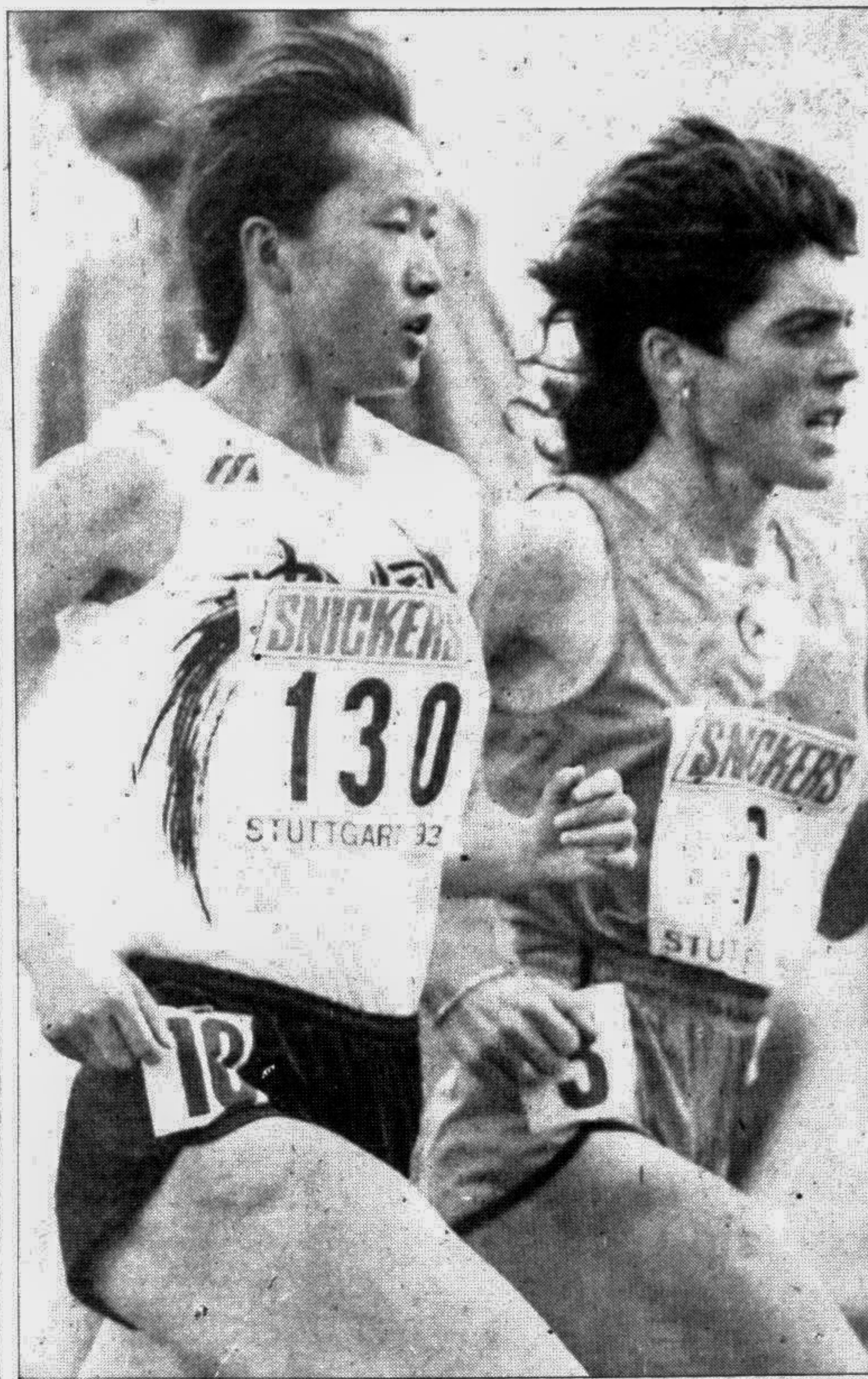
Australia, top on goal difference, were celebrating Jackie Pereira's 100th appearance for her country in the rout of Spain.

Pereira, Australia's top scorer of all time, obliged with a 33rd minute goal, her 86th in internationals.

Pernfors pushed to limit

SCHENECTADY, New York, Aug 24: Seventh-seed Mikael Pernfors of Sweden survived a scare to beat Stephane Simian of France 3-6, 7-6 (7-4), 7-5 in the first round of the 350,000 dollar OTB International Open tennis tournament on Monday, reports Reuter.

Pernfors lost the first set 3-6 and went down an early break in the second, but rallied to tie that set in a tiebreak 7-4. Serving at 6.5 in the third set, Pernfors held at love to secure the match, his first win since capturing the Canadian Open four weeks ago.



Chinese runner Liu Dong (L) races past Algeria's Olympic gold medalist Hassiba Boulmerka during the women's 1,500m event at the Stuttgart World Championships on August 22. Liu won the gold but Boulmerka, who finished a disappointing third, later hinted that drugs might have played a major role in the Chinese victory. — AFP photo

Chinese success tainted?

STUTTGART, Aug 24: China, one of the last Communist holdouts in the world, has taken to sports the way its former counterparts in Europe did. Again, suspicion is treading on the heels of success, reports AP.

At the World Championships, China's total of four gold medals was second only to the 13 won by the United States, and it was achieved by dominating the women's distance events in unprecedented fashion.

Its progress came largely out of the blue, with a succession of new, young athletes stunning everyone — but themselves.

"I have never had any doubts about my victory," said Liu.

But as one red-and-white-clad runner after another crossed the finish line unchallenged at the Gottlieb-Daimler Stadium, admiration gave way to sneering.

When Dong Liu pulled away from the field on the final lap of the 1,500 Sunday, many among the crowd of 52,274 started jeering and whistling.

Liu's victory added to China's sweep of all three medals in the 3,000 and a 1-2 finish in the 10,000.

The 1992 Olympic 5,000 metre champion Dieter Baumann of Germany publicly suggested the Chinese might be getting help from illegal substances, and the rumours kept swirling all week.

German 10,000 metre runner Uta Piggig, who lost to Junxia Wang, offered two options.

"Either you speculate about doping, or you accept the results as long as nothing is proven," she said.

Over the past two years, four Chinese women have been suspended for up to four years for use of anabolic steroids.

On Sunday, Liu beat the rest

of the field by nearly 25 metres as she clocked 4:00:50, nearly four records faster than her previous personal best.

Several other young runners, including 10,000 metre champion Junxia Wang, have made amazing progress with stunning personal bests. Wang set a new Asian record in the 10,000 Saturday in 30 minutes 49.30 seconds, a progression of 1.40 minutes over the last year.

Controversy extended to their age as well. Wang was listed as 18 on the team sheet but she admitted at a news conference that she was born in 1973.

After her win in the 10,000 she was awarded the world junior record, but if she was indeed born in 1973 she would be ineligible for it.

Whatever her age, one of the keys to her success, she said, was training up to 40 kilometres (24 miles) a day through the winter, averaging about 250 kilometres (150 miles) a week, which is an amazing amount compared to what most other runners average.

"Christie was one of three British athletes to win gold medals at the championships in Stuttgart. The other two, 110 metres hurdles titlist Colin Jackson and 400m hurdles winner Sally Gunnell, both broke world records while Christie was one-hundredth of a second off Carl Lewis' world 100m mark of 9.86.

"Of course, there will be rumours," Dick said. "But you have to look at our athletes who have won gold medals in these championships and judge for yourself how they have done it."

"Christie, Jackson and Gunnell are not young kids who have suddenly sprung to prominence after a couple of years.

Chinese bit to tempt Taiwan

TAIPEI, Aug 24: China may allow some Olympic events to take place in rival Taiwan if Beijing wins its bid to host the Olympic in the year 2000, the head of the Chinese Olympic Committee was quoted as saying on Monday, reports Reuter.

This arrangement would require the approval of the International Olympic Committee. He Zhenliang told Taiwan's semi-official central news agency on arriving in Taipei. He did not elaborate.

Local media have speculated that China may co-host the Olympics with Taiwan as a gesture of reconciliation. The two sides have been at loggerheads since the end of the Civil War in 1949, but both governments say they want reunification one day.

He and Wei Jizhong, secretary general of the Chinese Olympic committee, are the most senior Chinese sports officials to visit Taiwan since 1949.

They will attend a two-day meeting of the Olympic Council of Asia, beginning in Taipei on Tuesday, on preparations for the Asian Games in 1994 and 1998.

He said he hoped sports exchanges between Taiwan and China would increase and called on both sides to remove remaining restrictions.

Taiwan, which claims sovereignty over China, has restricted visits by Chinese holding posts in the communist party, government and military since 1949.

Both He and Wei hold posts in China's State Physical, Culture and Sports Commission but were allowed to visit under a programme to help Taiwan host international sports events.

British coach hits back at Christie critics

LONDON, Aug 24: Britain's national track coach, Frank Dick, has hit back at smears that Olympic and world 100 metre champion Linford Christie has been taking drugs, reports AP.

When it was revealed at the World Championships, which ended in Stuttgart on Sunday, that an Olympic champion had tested positive, rumours circulated it was the 33-year-old British sprinter. It turned out to be Lithuanian discus thrower Romas Ubaras.

"Linford is 33 and people say he must be on drugs," Dick said. "It's stupid rumours like those that we have to put up with now."

"Because he is a very high profile athlete, I would think Linford must be randomly tested at least three or four times a year on top of all the meetings where he wins so regularly."

Christie was one of three British athletes to win gold medals at the championships in Stuttgart. The other two, 110 metres hurdles titlist Colin Jackson and 400m hurdles winner Sally Gunnell, both broke world records while Christie was one-hundredth of a second off Carl Lewis' world 100m mark of 9.86.

"Of course, there will be rumours," Dick said. "But you have to look at our athletes who have won gold medals in these championships and judge for yourself how they have done it."

"Christie, Jackson and Gunnell are not young kids who have suddenly sprung to prominence after a couple of years.

Bruguera races past O'Brien

COMMACK, New York, Aug 24: French Open Tennis Champion Sergi Bruguera, the third seeded player, beat unseeded American Alex O'Brien 6-2, 6-3 in the 300,000 US dollar Waldbaum Hamlet Cup tournament on Monday, reports Reuter.

Bruguera, ranked fifth, said he felt one tournament on hard courts was enough for him to prepare for next week's US

Open championships. "I was winning and felt more comfortable on clay," he said. "I think I can beat top players by playing 10 feet behind the baseline."

Bruguera won Monte Carlo, Gstaad and Prague on clay, in addition to the French Open, and has won 41 of his last 50 clay court matches in the past seven months.

"My serve is not strong enough to play serve-and-volley but I didn't lose it against O'Brien," he said.

O'Brien, last year's national collegiate champion from Stanford University, faded after

Davis Cup doc

BRISBANE, Australia, Aug 24: Tennis Australia is expected to announce Wednesday that a doctor will be accompanying the Australian team to India for next month's Davis Cup semifinal, according to informed sources here today, reports ARP.

It is believed to be the first time a doctor has accompanied an Australian squad on overseas Davis Cup duty.

Long-time team captain Neale Fraser would not confirm the appointment when contacted today, but an announcement is expected at a Wednesday news conference.

Tennis Australia is understood to be concerned about the health of its players while in India, who last played in the Davis Cup final in 1987 by beating Australia in Australia before losing to Sweden, is expected to be led by Leander Paes and Ramesh Krishnan.

holding a break point to reach 4-4 in the second set, Bruguera won the last 10 points of the match.

Eighth-seeded Alexander Volkov led a trio of Russian players into the second round.

Volkov stopped American Robbie Weiss, 6-4, 6-4. He broke Weiss in the ninth game of the second set after five of the 10 first set games resulted in service breaks.

"It took me a little while to get started," said Volkov who is playing his sixth straight week on hard courts. "I won't do this again. You should rest now and then. It's good for me to play a lot of matches but it's bad mentally. You start to hate tennis."

Andrei Cherkasov and Yevgeny Kafelnikov, a 19-year-old qualifier, were the other Russian winners.

Cherkasov beat Italy's Gianluca Pozzi, 6-2, 6-1. Kafelnikov, ranked No. 148 and one of the young additions to the Russian Davis Cup squad, eliminated Tomas Carbonell, Spain 7-6 (7-2), 6-4. He won the last five points in the tiebreaker.

In another first round match between two German players, Carl Uwe Steeb beat David Prinosil 6-4, 7-5 after rallying from 3-5 love 40 in the second set.

Steeb, a German Davis Cupper, said this was the first day he has played without pain in his right knee.

"I was out with the knee injury four weeks, started back on clay two weeks ago and played hard court at new Heaven last week where I lost first round.

"But I feel good. Now I'll be ready for the US Open and hope to play Davis Cup.

WTA's top 20

ST PETERSBURG, Florida, Aug 24: Top 20 women's tennis players, according to rankings issued by the Women's Tennis Association on Monday, reports Reuter.

1. Steffi Graf (Germany)
2. Monica Seles (Yugoslavia)
3. Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario (Spain)
4. Martina Navratilova (US)
5. Conchita Martinez (Spain)
6. Gabriela Sabatini (Argentina)
7. Mary Joe Fernandez (US)
8. Jennifer Capriati (US)
9. Jana Novotna (Czech Republic)
10. Anke Huber (Germany)
11. Magdalena Maleeva (Bulgaria)
12. Manuella Maleeva-Fragniere (Switzerland)
13. Helena Sukova (Czech Republic)
14. Mary Pierce (France)
15. Nathalie Tauziat (France)
16. Amanda Coetzer (South Africa)
17. Zina Garrison-Jackson (US)
18. Sabine Hack (Germany)
19. Kimiko Date (Japan)
20. Katerina Maleeva (Bulgaria)



Sharon Ellis, a 21-year-old from Liverpool, England who is set to become Britain's first female boxing coach, relaxes after working out at the gym on August 23. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- Envelope part
- Uno + uno
- Zinger
- Den
- A personal question?
- Met melody
- partridge...
- One of Louisa's girls
- Any minute now
- More acute
- Lip
- Breakfast treat
- Folkways
- Remiss
- Up to, briefly
- State
- Heyerdahl's — "Tiki"
- Tarp-covered haystack
- Crimson
- Football filler
- Hose

DOWN

- Strong criticism: colloq.
- Kent's coworker
- Right-hand person
- Vixen's yokemate
- Sleepy, for one
- Resistance unit
- Whence comes tofu
- Fundamental
- Fragrant
- 1992 eco-summit city
- Proscrip-
- tion
- Dawn goddess
- Harrison or Reed
- Plant life
- Rock-ettes' move
- Part of B.P.O.E.
- Playwright Connelly
- "The Party's —"
- Fragrant
- Rude dismissal: colloq.
- "The Barber of Seville" composer
- Simpleton
- Pigs' digs
- Tittles
- Overly inquisitive
- Trampled
- Jannings or Ludwig
- Barely cooked
- Ga.
- neighbor
- Chignon
- Yon maiden fair

Solution time: 23 mins.

TOM ARK
LAVA SMEAR
EALED PINTER
GLORIA ESTEFAN
GOT SHAMS OCA
HOOK PREY
CRONY SLAMS
SHUT ACID
AIM VENOM ADA
GLORIA STEINEM
DRUDGE ASKME
STEEL DALI
HOR EYE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15				16				17		
18			19			20	21			
			22		23			24	25	
26	27	28		29				30		
31				32				33		
34				35				36		
37				38				39		
				40				41		
				42				43	44	
45	46			47	48			49		
50				51				52		
53				54				55		

CRYPTOQUIP

F R I O F L N R F F Z T O B F
 S Y I D V R . I D R N N I L Y V
 S R A A W E ; F U R V W T A Z D ' L
 B Y D U Y O Z W E D .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IN THIS RECESSION, MOST PEOPLE'S FINGERS ARE SORE FROM PINCHING PENNIES.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: O equals M

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.