

Ma's army sets the tempo

MANILA, Dec 1 — China surged to the top as their world-class women distance runners got into gear, but Kazakhstan emerged as major challengers as the former Soviet Asian republics showed their wares at the second day of the Asian Athletic Championships here today, reports AFP.

The defending champions snared the gold in the men's 20-kilometre walk and in the men's javelin, and then coach Ma Junren's wards hit the medals to finish 1-2 in the 800 metres, led by Liu Li, who ran a deliberate slow race to protect a thigh injury.

The legendary coach, whose radical high-altitude training regimen has produced a string of world records this year, said he asked Liu "not to run too fast."

Kazakhstan replied by comfortably winning the first two places in the pole vault, underlining the former Soviet's new challenge to 10-year Chinese domination of the biennial meet.

"It's easy to win here," said world number two Gregory Yegorov, 26, who set a new meet record with a 5.70-metre vault.

"It's difficult to jump in December after a long season. I just wanted to rest."

His Alma Ata townmate, Natalya Torchina, 25, humiliated world number five Han Qing of China, who finished fourth in the 400 women's hurdles. Torchina, the world's number eight, said she had difficulty with the 32 degrees Celsius temperature in Manila.

India's Ajit Bhadrayida also upset Chinese favourite Ma Wei in the men's discus throw. The Chinese top seed was crowded out for the silver by S Kot of Uzbekistan and had to settle for the bronze.

A surprising Saudi Arabia copped their second straight middle-distance gold, with Alyan Al-Kahtani easily ruling the 10,000 metres for men ahead of Malaysia's M Ramachandran.

Syria and South Korea joined the winning column, with Zaid Abou Hamed topping the men's 400-metre hurdles, bettering by 21 seconds a 20-year-old meet record.

South Korea's male distance runners also shone, with schoolmates Lee Jin Il and Kim Yong Hwan seizing the gold and silver in the 800 metres. Kim was under orders to pace Lee, revealed their famous coach Kim Bok Ju, the gold medalist in the event at the Seoul Asian Games in 1986.

Chen Shaoguo set the Chinese train on a roll early Wednesday by surpassing the eight-year-old meet record in the men's 20-kilometre walk, and then said he could have done better if not for the heat and soft tracks.

His compatriot Zhang

Lianbao Then, as expected, won the men's javelin gold.

Chen finished the course in one hour, 26 minutes and 29.69 seconds, besting the Asian Track and Field Championships record of 1:26:52 set by fellow countryman Liu Janli in Jakarta, Indonesia in 1985.

Japan's Hirotomi Sakai finished second in 1:28:31.26, Sergei Korepanov of Kazakhstan won the bronze in 1:29:06.36.

China is expected to dominate the five-day championship, which brings together about 500 athletes from 39 countries.

The Chinese team features Wang Junxia, record holder at 3,000 and 10,000 metres, and Qu Yunxia, record holder at 1,500 metres.

China's Han Qing, the Asian Continental record holder in the women's 400 metres, is also favoured in that event. Her best time is only 1.22 seconds off the world record of 52.74, set by Germany's Sally Gunnell last August during the World Championships at Stuttgart, Germany.

China has emerged as the rising star of international sport after the demise of the Soviet Union and East Germany.

But many former Soviet athletes are competing from newly independent Central Asian states. They include pole vault star Gregorily Yegorov,

who was trying for the gold Wednesday under the flag of Kazakhstan.

The former Soviet republics of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan also have fielded teams in the championships.

President Fidel Ramos opened the competition Tuesday in a colourful ceremony at Manila's Rizal Sports Stadium.

"A sporting event such as this brings together the youth of Asia in an arena where you can compete in an atmosphere of sportsmanship and fair play," Ramos said.

MEDALS TABLE

The medal tally at the end of the second day of competitions at the Asian Track and Field Championships here today: Countries (gold, silver, bronze, total).

1. China	4	3	1	8
2. Kazakhstan	2	1	1	4
3. Saudi Arabia	2	0	0	2
4. South Korea	1	1	2	4
5. India	1	0	0	1
6. Syria	1	0	0	1
7. Uzbekistan	0	2	0	2
8. Japan	0	1	2	3
9. Thailand	0	1	1	2
10. United Arab Emirates	0	1	0	1
11. Malaysia	0	1	0	1
12. Iran	0	0	2	2
13. Qatar	0	0	1	1
14. Sri Lanka	0	0	1	1

PFA condemns elbow challenge

MANCHESTER, England, Dec 1 — England's Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) have called on soccer authorities to outlaw the elbow challenge which has caused serious injury to former England stars Peter Beardsley and Gary Mabbutt this season, reports Reuter.

"We want the use of the elbow to be condemned and outlawed," said PFA chief executive Gordon Taylor at the annual meeting of the Players' Union on Monday.

The PFA urged referees to clamp down on players committing fouls with their elbows and called for heavier punishments for offenders.

"If we're not careful someone will get a very serious injury," Taylor said. "Peter Beardsley was badly injured and Gary Mabbutt nearly lost an eye."

Mabbutt, the Tottenham captain, fractured his skull in an aerial collision with Wimbledon striker John Fashanu during an English Premier League match last Wednesday.

Video replays showed Fashanu's elbow had made contact with Mabbutt's face.

Surgeons had to rebuild Mabbutt's right eye socket and said he was lucky not to lose the sight in the eye.

Newcastle's new signing Beardsley missed the start of the season after suffering a triple fracture of the cheekbone in a clash with Liverpool defender Neil Ruddock in a testimonial match in August.

Deadly, drunk and disorderly

ISTANBUL, Dec 1 — Six Manchester United supporters were freed from jail here on Tuesday — after being held for almost a month on charges of being drunk and disorderly, reports AFP.

Their release followed a campaign for justice by the club which was backed by British politicians.

The charges against the six — John Cunningham, Andrew Philipps, Graham Cross, Kevin Doherty, Michael Shelton and Danny Humphries — were dropped because of lack of evidence.

They were jailed on November 3, following violence on the eve of Manchester United's European Champions Cup clash with Turkish side Galatasaray. United were knocked out of the Cup after drawing the match 0-0.

They faced jail terms of between one and three years "if found guilty after it was claimed English fans had attacked Turkish rivals with bottles and stones and damaged a hotel."

But witnesses failed to identify the culprits.

English fans admitted they had been drinking alcohol but claimed it was they who were attacked.

The six fans were questioned along with 141 other Manchester fans, who were detained until after the Cup match.

A campaign for their release was launched after the Turkish authorities delayed in bringing the matter to court.

Bonecrusher takes on Tubbs

BAY ST LOUIS, Miss, Dec 1 — James "Bonecrusher" Smith and Tony Tubbs, former WBA champions, will compete Friday night in a 16-man, 15-bout heavyweight tournament, reports AP.

The winner of the final reportedly will get \$1 million. Tyrell Biggs and Henry Tillman, gold medal winners at the 1984 Olympics, also will compete in the pay-per-view television event at Casino Magic.

Each fighter is supposed to get \$20,000 for each of the three-round matches he appears in and anyone scoring a first-round knockout is supposed to get an additional \$20,000. The tournament runner-up will receive \$100,000.

Tubbs will fight Magna Havana of Norway. Biggs will meet Yevgeni Sudakov, a Ukrainian, fighting out of New York, and Tillman will oppose Leoncio Bueno of the Dominican Republic.

Derek Williams of Britain will box Rocky Ray Phillips in the first-round match in the first bracket.

Other second-bracket bouts will be Jason Williams vs. Marshall Tillman, Derrick Roddy vs. Daniel Dancuta of Romania and Bert Cooper vs. Craig Peterson of Australia.

The fighters have been told that only a portion of the prize money will be paid immediately, with the remainder coming from various revenues, according to a spokesman for promoters Don Arnot, Trevor Wallden and Event Entertainment (pay-per-view).

The 15 bouts will be held from 9 pm EST Friday (0200 GMT Saturday) until 1 am Saturday (0600 GMT).

Smith drew into the second bracket Tuesday, while Tubbs, Biggs and Tillman each drew into the first bracket.

Smith's first-round opponent will be Jose Ribalta, a Cuban fighting out of Miami.



Manchester United striker Eric Cantona (L) pounces on to a ball with Everton's Dave Watson in hot pursuit during an English Premier League match at Everton's Goodson Park on Nov 30. — AFP photo

Villa gun Gunners down

LONDON, Dec 1 — Aston Villa striker Dalian Atkinson ended Arsenal's astonishing 25-match unbeaten cup run here on Tuesday with the only goal in a fourth round English League Cup tie, reports AFP.

The fleet-footed striker prised the Gunners grip from the trophy with a fourth-minute shot following a smart exchange with Dean Saunders.

It was Villa's second win in a month at Highbury and their eighth in their last 10 meetings with the Gunners, whose defeat was their first in a home cup match for three years.

Villa were fortunate to win the premiership match, but were full value for their success this time, catching Arsenal on one of their poorer nights when even their famed set pieces were miserably unproductive.

Manchester United and First Division Tranmere also marched into the quarter-finals, United with a comfortable 2-0 victory at Everton and Tranmere with a 3-0 home drubbing of Oldham.

Welsh internationals Mark

Hughes and Ryan Giggs guided United through to the last eight with goals after 13 and 46 minutes to repeat last month's premiership victory over Howard Kendall's team.

Hughes hammered a dipping drive into the net — his 10th goal of the season — while Giggs fired home after Neville Southall could only palm Ian Andrei Kanchelskis shot into his path.

However, United's Danish goalkeeper, Peter Schmeichel, helped their cause considerably with a 52nd minute penalty save from Tony Cottas after Stuart Barlow had been fouled by Gary Pallister.

The premiership leaders were full value for their win, though, as they also had three goals disallowed within four minutes in the second half.

Meanwhile, Tranmere reached the last eight for the first time with their win over Oldham, who had to battle with 10 men from the 36th minute after defender Richard Jobson was sent off for a professional foul on John Aldridge.

Tranmere capitalised with two goals from midfielder Ged Brannan, who struck with a 52nd minute drive and 60th

minute lob, and one from Aldridge a minute from time.

In the all First Division tie Portsmouth forced a home replay by drawing 0-0 at basement club Peterborough.

In the Scottish Premier Division Motherwell regained first place from Aberdeen with a 1-0 home win over Partick Thistle.

The vital goal came after 71 minutes, when Doug Arnott prised open the title defence and, as Grant Tierney failed to clear, Phil O'Donnell nipped into drive the ball into the roof of the net.

Celtic were denied a share of top spot when they went down 1-0 at Dundee United to surrender their nine-game unbeaten run.

Paddy Connolly grabbed the winner, pouncing on a blunder by Peter Grant in the 72nd minute to score his first league goal of the season and give United only their second win in 13 games.

The night's two other Premier games ended in goalless stalemates, Hibernian suffering their third successive blank at home to St Johnstone and Kilmarnock being held by heart of Midlothian.

Torino drub Atalanta

ROME, Dec 1 — Two goals by Uruguayan midfielder Enzo Francescoli and another by compatriot Carlos Aguilera gave holders Torino a 3-0 win over Atalanta in an Italian Cup third round first leg tie on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Francescoli struck twice in the first 13 minutes while striker Aguilera added a third 10 minutes before half-time to condemn struggling Atalanta to a humiliating home defeat.

Neither man has been a first team regular at Torino in recent weeks.

The result leaves the Turin club virtual certainties to reach the last eight of a competition they won last June.

They are already in the quarter-finals of the European Cup Winners' Cup in which they face English club Arsenal over two legs next March.

Caught in the act

GOTHENBERG, Sweden, Dec 1 — Two Russians, due to take part in the World Powerlifting Championships were detained at Gothenberg Airport carrying a huge cache of banned performance enhancing drugs, police said Monday, reports AFP.

A Justice Department communique said the two, whose names were not given, were in possession of 3,500 anabolic steroid pills and 270 doses that could be injected into the body.

The two were detained after a routine customs check at the airport on Sunday. They were heading for the world powerlifting championships in Joensuu this week.

A court is to decide today whether charges should be made.



American Tom "Boom Boom" Johnson is triumphant after his victory over Frenchman Stephane Hacoun in their IBF feather world championship bout in Marseilles, France on Nov 30. — AFP photo

Money makes world go round

WASHINGTON, Dec 1 — Boxing has never seen anything quite like it.

Two former heavyweight champions, two 1984 Olympic champions, an unbeaten ex-prisoner and eight international contenders fight for a million-dollar top prize in a tournament-style showdown Friday, reports AFP.

Sixteen boxers will gather in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, for a series of three-round bouts. Winners advance until someone takes away one million dollars for four victories.

"I like the format, said Tyrell Biggs, super-heavyweight champion of the Los Angeles Olympics.

"In amateur fights, my record was 108-6. Three rounds are more suited to my type of fighting."

The international field includes former Australian champion Craig Petersen, England's Derek Williams, Romanian champion Dan Dancuta, Cuban-born Jose Ribalta, former Soviet Union champion Yevgeni Sudakov from Ukraine, Norway's Magnie Havana and Leon Bueno from the Dominican Republic.

US veterans in the tournament include Biggs, 1984 Olympic heavyweight winner Henry Tillman, Jimmy Ellis, Bert Cooper and two former World Boxing Association champions, 40-year-old James Smith and 34-year-old Tony Tubbs.

"I don't think we're envisioned as the best of the crop, but it's a good field," Biggs said. "But the bouts will be competitive. Anything can happen in this format. I want to be ready for anything."

Jason Williams makes his pro-debut in the event after seven straight victories, all by first-round knockout.

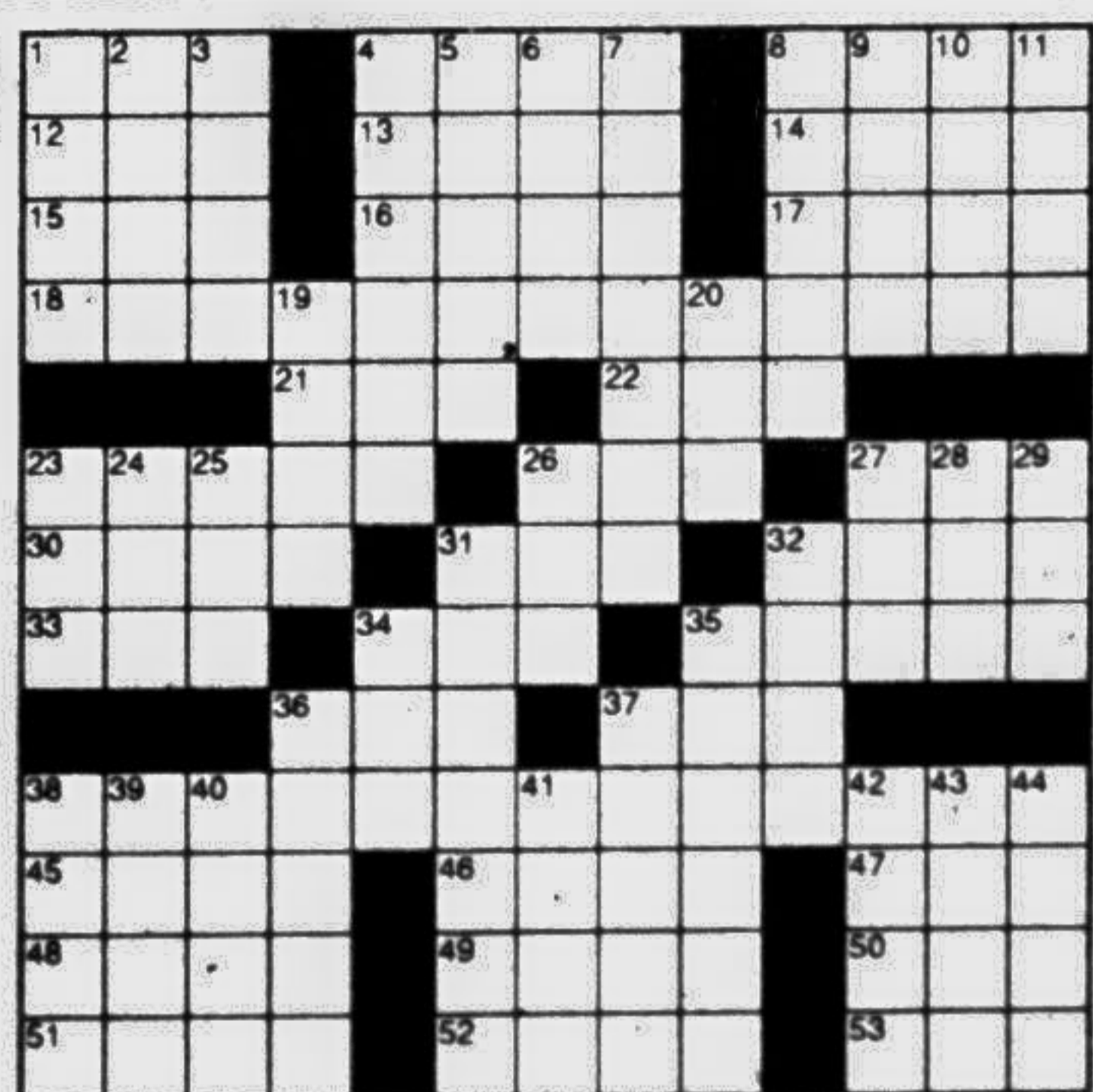
CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
 1 Pledge
 4 Duck
 8 Hunter's device
 12 Prop in "The Shining"
 13 Medley
 14 Two thumbs up, e.g.
 15 "When Will I — You Again"
 16 Dress-maker's dummy
 17 Micro-wave
 18 Y, literally
 21 Bottom line
 22 Charity concert suffix
 23 Electricity
 26 Get ready to fight
 27 Bruce Wayne's inspiration
 30 Mrs. Shake-speare
 31 Young'un
 32 "J'accuse" author
 33 Took top honors:
 34 Diamond, for one
 35 Prancer's yokemate
 36 "And — the opposite shore..."
 37 Proscription
 38 A, literally
 45 Exam type
 46 Dirt
 47 Cote
 48 Coleridge opus, in a word
 49 Gardening sci.
 50 Old card game
 51 Recipe qtz.
 52 Builds on

DOWN
 20 Edge morsel
 23 Mandible
 24 Important numero
 25 B&B
 26 Intention
 27 Duke it out
 28 Stout cousin
 29 Beach-goer's goal
 31 Wisconsin city
 32 Heart-string sound
 34 Understood
 35 Leaps
 36 Some are British
 37 Attorney General nominee
 38 Ticonderoga, e.g.
 39 Eye part
 40 Freeway access
 41 Sustenance
 42 Bruins' sch.
 43 In due time
 44 Gridlock sound

Solution time: 23 mins.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER
 HAP MAY LINES
 ELI ECO OCALA
 LOX STUDYHALL
 POI SORES
 SPEC REA PHIL
 HIS RARELY
 RAVEN DOYLE
 ALASKA VEX
 GETS LAE YOKE
 ROUND AYN
 CAFETERIA SOD
 ALIKE ICY ITO
 MIXES CES SOW



CRYPTOQUIP

DBVKX EPOBSE EDJAVF
 XSSQ KDOVJ EPXA

APJESFQ
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I STARTED WORKING AT THE LOCAL CAR WASH, AND I TOOK A SHINE TO IT.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: E equals W

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.