

Victoria cling to life-line

Sports Reporter

Victoria Sporting Club registered an upset but important win when they beat former champions Brothers Union at the Pallabi cricket ground, Mirpur yesterday.

Struggling to stave off the axe of relegation along with Dhanmondi, and Kalabagan, Victoria could score 149 for six wickets as Brothers batting first managed 148 for nine wickets to set them an easy victory target.

They were in a bit of soup as first four of their batsmen left cheaply but experienced Gautam Some, a regular member of Bengal team in Ranji trophy, India's most celebrated domestic championship, teamed up with local Lalau to steady the rocking boat.

Lalau made 34 before being stumped off slow left arm. G. Some played 42 balls and sent the ball across the rope on four occasions.

Some was more aggressive hitting six fours in his 56-ball 38, the top score of Victoria's innings. His dismissal brought in Arup Bhattacharya, another Indian at the wicket and the burly left-hander stayed long enough with lbal to shape a four wicket win for Victoria in 31.1 overs.

Brothers' part-time bowler Shueb was most successful among the depleted and rather

casual. Brothers attack which looked toothless in the absence of Shri Lankan Fernando.

It was a chronicle of defeat foretold for Brothers who fielded a second string side and although Tamal and Rahul (of all people, hitherto unknown as a batsman) gave them a solid looking start in the morning, the writing was on the wall.

Tamal, in fact, emerged the highest scorer of the match with 45, followed by Rahul who made 36.

From an opening stand of 73 in 20.4 overs, Brothers mustered 148 for nine from the stipulated quota of 45 overs.

Arup Bhattacharya who parted with Brothers only this year proved to be their thorn in the flesh bagging four wickets for 21 runs with his flattish spin.

Adil took three for 25 while Shihab captured one for 36.

Victoria have so far recorded four wins from their quota of eleven encounters in this year's league. Yesterday's win in fact gave them new lease of life in the Navana league.

DIFFERENT ENDS

A steady Sharma, the former India international guided Surja Tarun to an exciting victory in their last match but heralded an ominous end for Dhanmondi Club in another Navana Premier tie at the eastern portion of the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Sanjeev Sharma scored an invaluable 46 as Tarun, chasing 93 for a win reached their cherished target in 38.3 overs for the loss of nine wickets. Just one other batsman — opener Moni got into the double figures making 17 to be precise.

Dhanmondi's Vinay and Mithu were Tarun's dangermen sharing six scalps between themselves.

Mithu bagged three wickets for 21 runs while Vinay took three for 18.

Earlier, Kamrul's defiant 42 formed the core Dhanmondi's total of 92 in 38.2 overs. None else made it to the double figures.

Tarun's Sikh skipper was the pick of the bowlers bagging three for 18 with his off-spin.

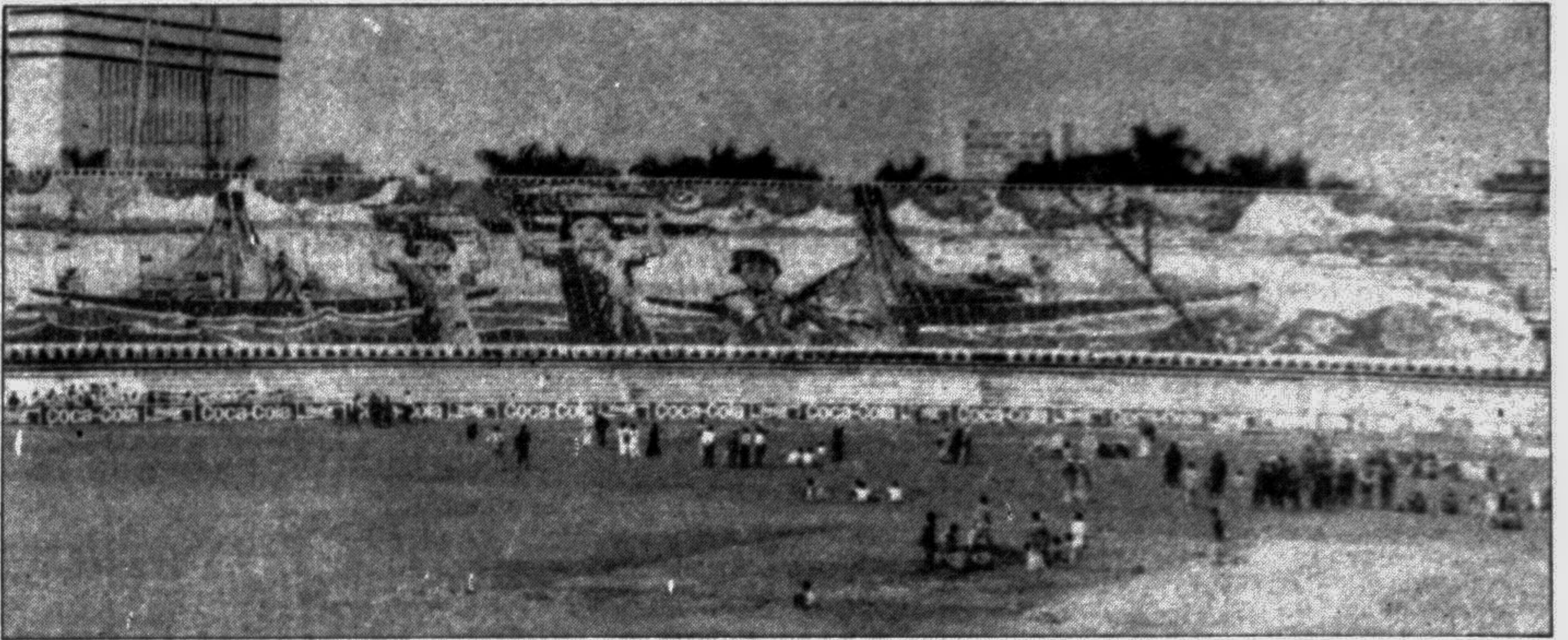
Young seamer Munna captured three for 11 from his eight overs, three of which were maidens.

The defeat deepens Dhanmondi's crisis who played their last match yesterday. With three wins in their kitty they have to wait for the result of today's match between Kalabagan and Greater Mymensingh Cricket Club (GMCC).

A win for Kalabagan will ensure Dhanmondi's exit from Navana league along with Udit who have already confirmed their descent to Milners First Division league next year.

TODAY'S MATCH

Kalabagan vs GMCC (Mirpur)



A panoramic view of the aligned display boards at the Dhaka Stadium, as a part of the preparation for the opening and closing ceremonies of the sixth SAF Games to be held in Dhaka from December 20 to 27. Regular drilling under foreign experts are going on in full swing to ensure a delightful show. — Star photo

Sajid's maiden entry

Sports Reporter

Gulshan Youth's young opener Sajid Hassan made it to the national team for the time as the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) announced a 13-man squad for Bangladesh national cricket team that will tour Hong Kong from December 15 to 21 as a part of their preparation for the ICC Trophy to be held in Kenya early next year. Abahani's Faruque Ahmed will lead the side.

Athar Ali Khan of Mohammedans will be Faruque's deputy on the week long tour that will feature four exhibition matches.

The full squad Faruque Ahmed (captain), Athar Ali Khan (Vice captain), Minhazul Abedin Nannu, Akram Khan, Aminul Islam Bulbul, Enamul Huq Moni, Golam Nowsher Prince, Jahangir Alam, Saiful Islam, Selim Shahed, Al Sharif Rokon, Anisur Rahman and Sajid Hassan.

Akram returns for today's 2nd Test

RAWALPINDI, Dec 8: Zimbabwe, destroyed by Waqar Younis in the first Test, will also have his new ball partner, Wasim Akram to contend with in the second Test against Pakistan beginning on Thursday, reports Reuter.

The Pakistani captain missed the opening match of the three Test series after fracturing his wrist in Sharjah last month. But he was barely missed as acting skipper Younis claimed match figures of 13 for 135.

Akram's return to partner Younis on a grassy strip will test fledgling Test side Zimbabwe to the full.

Their skipper Andy Flower admitted his side faced a "daunting task."

Zimbabwe will be looking to the experience of Flower, David Houghton and Alistair Campbell to blunt the pace of Akram and Younis.

Houghton made 46 while Campbell and the left handed Flower contributed half centuries in Zimbabwe's first innings total of 289 in the first Test.

The Zimbabweans are likely to stick by their side from the first Test, with Eddo Brandes, John Rennie and Heath Streak their main seamers.

Japan wants Santana

TOKYO, Dec 8: Japan is likely to approach former Brazil coach Tele Santana to see if he is interested in training their national soccer side, a spokesman for the Japan Soccer Federation said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Rutherford to experiment

ADELAIDE, Dec 8: New Zealand cricket captain Ken Rutherford Wednesday vowed to use unorthodox tactics during his team's matches against South Africa and Australia in the triangular World Series tournament, reports AP.

Rutherford, whose team begins its World Series campaign against South Africa at Adelaide Oval on Saturday, said opposition teams should "expect the unexpected."

Rutherford has taken over as captain from the injured Martin Crowe, who used highly unusual tactics to lift New Zealand into the semifinals of the 1992 World Cup.

Crowe used off-spinner Dipak Patel as an opening bowler and aggressive middle-order batsmen Rod Latham and Mark Greatbatch as openers during the Cup campaign.

"We have tried to be innovative over the past four years in the way we have played our one-day cricket, and if the resources are there to allow us

to continue to play that way then I'm sure we will," Rutherford said.

Coach Geoff Howarth and myself will sit down for a chat



KEN RUTHERFORD

about things and try to make the best of the resources we have — and if that includes the odd unorthodox tactic then so

Aussies keep Warne a secret

MELBOURNE, Dec 8: Australia remained coy on Wednesday about their one day plans for meame-ric spinner Shane Warne in Thursday's day night limited overs cricket match against South Africa at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), reports AFP.

Australian cricket coach Bob Simpson said the match winning wrist spinner was in the 13 man squad and had not been ruled out.

Australian captain Allan Border has been quoted as saying he wants to keep the baffling legspinner under wraps for the three match Test series against South Africa rather than allow the tourists to get an early familiarisation of his repertoire of deliveries.

Warne, named man-of-the-series in the recent Trans-Tasman Trophy win over New Zealand with his 18 wickets, was not giving anything away on Wednesday.

"I don't know what's going

Hide can fight for Britain

LONDON, Dec 8: Nigerian-born Herbie Hide is to be allowed to fight as Britain's heavyweight champion, a boxing board of control meeting here ruled on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Rival Henry Akinwande recently issued a court writ challenging Hide's eligibility at the time he won the vacant title against Michael Murray last February.

But the board of control, hearing into the question of his nationality and right to hold the title was deferred on Tuesday until January 11.

That is the date of the 22-year-old's defence of the WBC international title against Mimmy Thunder in London.

Board secretary John Morris said: "We are dealing in technicalities now and the board have decided they want the home office to give us certain answers to certain questions."

But as Hide has written home office evidence that he was granted British citizenship as a minor, his title now looks safe.

C'ganj soccer

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Dec 8: Rohonpur Eleven reached the final of the first Deputy Commissioner Gold Cup football tournament defeating Narayan-ganj DSA by 5-4 goals in a tiebreaker in the second semifinal at the local stadium today, reports UNB.

The match ended in a goal-less draw during the scheduled time.

Rohonpur will face National Sporting Club in the final at the same ground on Friday.

BANEX Open

Six matches were decided on the seventh day of the BANEX Open yesterday at Dhaka Club, reports UNB.

Muhtit Lal defeated Rashed Chowdhury in 9-3, 9-4, 1-9, 9-5. Anisul Haque came from behind to overcome Jagadish 6-9, 9-2, 9-5, 9-6 while Barun beat MT Madar in straight sets 9-2, 10-8, 9-4.

In the veterans section, Squash Federation VP Lt Col A Latif Khan (rtd) was triumphant over Hubert, with a 9-6, 3-9, 9-6 scoreline.

MT Madar kept his semifinal hopes alive with an easy 9-1, 9-1 victory over Shamsul Huda while Shahidul Huq earned a creditable win over Lt Gen M Showket Ali (rtd) with a 9-4, 9-4, 9-4 scoreline.

Simpson. He said the pace bowlers had to hold the ball across the seam to stop it from doing any damage to the batsmen.

"We will be lodging a complaint about the nets to the MCC (Melbourne Cricket Club)," said Simpson.

Simpson said they may have to use mats in the bowling run-up to the match wicket as was the case in the Victorian-South African game earlier this week.

"There's some concern just how well it will hold up," said Simpson.

Border said the bowlers would have the shifting surface in the back of their minds as they run in.

"Hopefully we will come through unscathed tomorrow," he said.

"It's a showpiece game and you'd like conditions to be perfect but it isn't as bad as I thought."

The Australian squad is: Allan Border (captain), David Boon, Matthew Hayden, Ian Healy, Tim May, Craig McDermott, Glenn McGrath, Paul Reffel, Michael Slater, Mark Taylor, Shane Warne, Mark Waugh and Steve Waugh.

Becker wants to forget it



MUNICH, Germany, Dec 8: Boris Becker, who failed to clear the first hurdle at the Grand Slam Cup on Tuesday, admitted that he was eager to turn his back on his worst ever season, reports AFP.

"I can never be satisfied with that," he grimaced after being beaten 5-7, 4-6 by talented South Africa Wayne Ferreira.

"I felt fine going into the match but I couldn't do on court what I could do in practice," said the German who prepared for the event at Nick Bolletieri's academy in Florida.

"This has been my worst ever season but my mind has been on other things. You cannot play top-five in the world tennis when you aren't focussed."

Ferreira, who had lost all four of his previous matches against the former German number-one — two of them this year, said: "He didn't serve too well today but a lot of his problem is to do with confidence. He's not doing the things he used to do."

Becker, who has slumped from number five to number eleven in the rankings, confirmed that he has parted company with his coach Eric Jelen after only six months.

"It wasn't easy because we are close friends. But there are no hard feelings on my part," he said.

Becker, who has now had six coaches in ten years, also recently split with Romanian manager Ion Triac and his affairs are now handled by compatriot Axel Meyer-Wolden — organiser and promoter of the Grand Slam Cup.

Becker will not play again until he travels to France for the Marseille Open in the first week of February.

He has decided to miss the Australian Open in order to be with girlfriend Barbara Feltsu who is due to give birth to their first child early in the New Year but he said a final decision on whether or not he will continue with Bolletieri would probably be taken next weekend.

"We shall have more talks and then come to a decision," he said.

Bolletieri is best known as the man who launched the careers of top stars Andre Agassi, Jim Courier, and Monica Seles.

Becker, who had been seeded to play compatriot and world number-two Michael Stich in the semifinals here, paid a warm tribute to his arch-rival who on Sunday led Germany to their third Davis Cup triumph.

And he did not rule out

making himself available for selection for the 1994 competition.

"I cannot say anything right now. First I shall have to have talks with the captain Niki Pilic and with Michael Stich," he said.

Becker, who decided not to play for his country in 1993, said of Stich: "He has played very, very good tennis — not just over the last week — but over the last twelve months."

In the six-million dollar event Ferreira now meets Sweden's Stefan Edberg, who saw off American Todd Martin. Edberg, also trying to salvage a bitterly disappointing season won 6-3, 6-2.

Czech Petra Korda also had a straight-sets win over Russia's Alexandre Volkov, winning 6-2, 6-3.

And Spain's French Open winner Sergel Bruguera, ranked fourth in the world, adapted his clay-court style well to the fast surface and brushed aside Magnus Larsson of Sweden 6-3, 6-4.

Stich, who beat Michael Chang in last year's final, opens his campaign against American Malivai Washington on Wednesday.

Only Jim Courier, who has dropped from first to third since winning the Australian Open in January, is missing from the world's top 16.

Day One of WI-SL Test washed out

COLOMBO, Dec 8: Play was abandoned on the first day of the inaugural Test between Sri Lanka and the West Indies on Wednesday without a ball being bowled after rain soaked the ground, reports Reuter.

Captains Arjuna Ranatunga of Sri Lanka and Richie Richardson of the West Indies agreed to make up for the lost time by playing on the rest day on Friday.

Evening showers in the past few days drenched the outfield at the Moratuwa Stadium just south of Colombo.

The West Indies short tour has been dogged by rain. Both matches played so far — a one-day international and a three-day game — were disrupted and ended in draws.

The visitors are due to play two more one-day games in addition to the Test.

Birds force a change in venue

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Dec 8: Two protected species of birds of prey are forcing organisers of the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano to switch the biathlon events to a new venue, reports Reuter.

Director general of the Japanese Organising Committee Makoto Kobayashi told the International Olympic Committee on Wednesday that nests and fledglings of goshawks and buzzards had been found on the planned site at Hakuba, 37 km west of Nagano.

As both species were protected by an international treaty, the venue would probably have to be switched to Nozawa Onsen, 50 km north of the city, he said.

Kobayashi also said two women's alpine ski races would have to be moved after objections from the International Ski Federation (FIS).

A FIS report after four visits to the proposed venues recommended switching the women's downhill and super-G races from Shinga Kogen, he said.

The Nagano organisers were now planning to hold the two women's races at the same track as the men's events in Hakuba, Kobayashi added.

He said the IOC would be asked for formal approval to the changes at the next meeting of their executive board in Lillehammer next February.

USSF approves pro league

CHICAGO, Illinois, Dec 8: The US Soccer Federation (USSF) gave the green light to a new top-flight professional football league here on Monday, reports AFP.

The USSF approved the bid by major league pro soccer, a subsidiary of the 1994 World Cup organising group headed by Alan Rothenberg, who is also USSF president.

It plans to set up a 12-team league by summer 1995. Rothenberg's group will present the plan to world governing body FIFA on December 17 during meetings in Las Vegas for the 1994 World Cup pairings draw.

"Now we have the green-light, we can start making some deals," Rothenberg said. "We can speak to sponsors, stadium people and broadcasters and develop financial assurances."

Instead of privately owned teams, Rothenberg's proposal has coaches, players and team administrators employed by the league. He plans to have joint ventures with smaller stadiums that could be expanded to as many as 20,000 seats.

Rothenberg beat two other bidders, the American professional soccer league, an existing circuit with four US and three Canadian clubs, and league 1 America, which planned to build new stadiums for teams as part of entertainment complexes.

M United maul Sheffield



LONDON, Dec 8: Manchester United turned on the style to hammer struggling Sheffield United 3-0 away at Bramall Lane, and march 15-points clear at the top of the Premiership on Tuesday night, reports AFP.

The United goals came from Mark Hughes, Lee Sharpe and Eric Cantona.

Defeat dropped Sheffield into the bottom four—and they also lost key defender Paul Beesley who was stretched off midway through the second-half.

The league leaders were clearly riled by Dave Bassett's description of them as a "rough house team," and answered with fine, flowing football.

They took the lead after 13 minutes when Hughes scored his tenth goal of the season by flashing home a shot past diving Alan Kelly, and the Sheffield goalkeeper was soon working overtime.

In the 27th minute Kelly was again picking the ball out of the net.

Gary Pallister, Paul Ince and Hughes combined neatly, with the Welshman delivering a perfectly timed pass to release Lee Sharpe beyond the home defence and the young England star found his target with a low shot.

Brian McClair should have made it three soon afterwards when Paul Parke's cross picked him out unmarked eight yards in front of goal but he headed wide.

In the second-half Sheffield pushed United Back at times and won a number of corners.

This encouraged Bassett to pitch fit-again striker Justin Flo into the fray, in place of Andy Scott, in the hope that his extra height and power could pay dividends.

But on the hour, and just four minutes after Flo's introduction, Giggs released Cantona and the French international sped 40-yards into the home area to steer a shot past Kelly which went in off the inside of the near post.

Dennis Irwin and Carl Bradshaw were booked after a squabble out on the touchline, before Ferguson sent on Republic of Ireland international Roy Keane in place of McClair.

Within a minute ward fired in a rasping freekick to test Peter Schmeichel for the first time and the Danish international duly made a difficult save look easy.

Ince was booked in the 78th minute as the game became scrappy, but the champions finished with a flourish to almost snatch a fourth goal right on time but Sharpe's shot was saved by Kelly.

Meanwhile, Steve Redmond's first goal for Oldham settled a bruising battle against bottom club Swindon at Boundary Park.

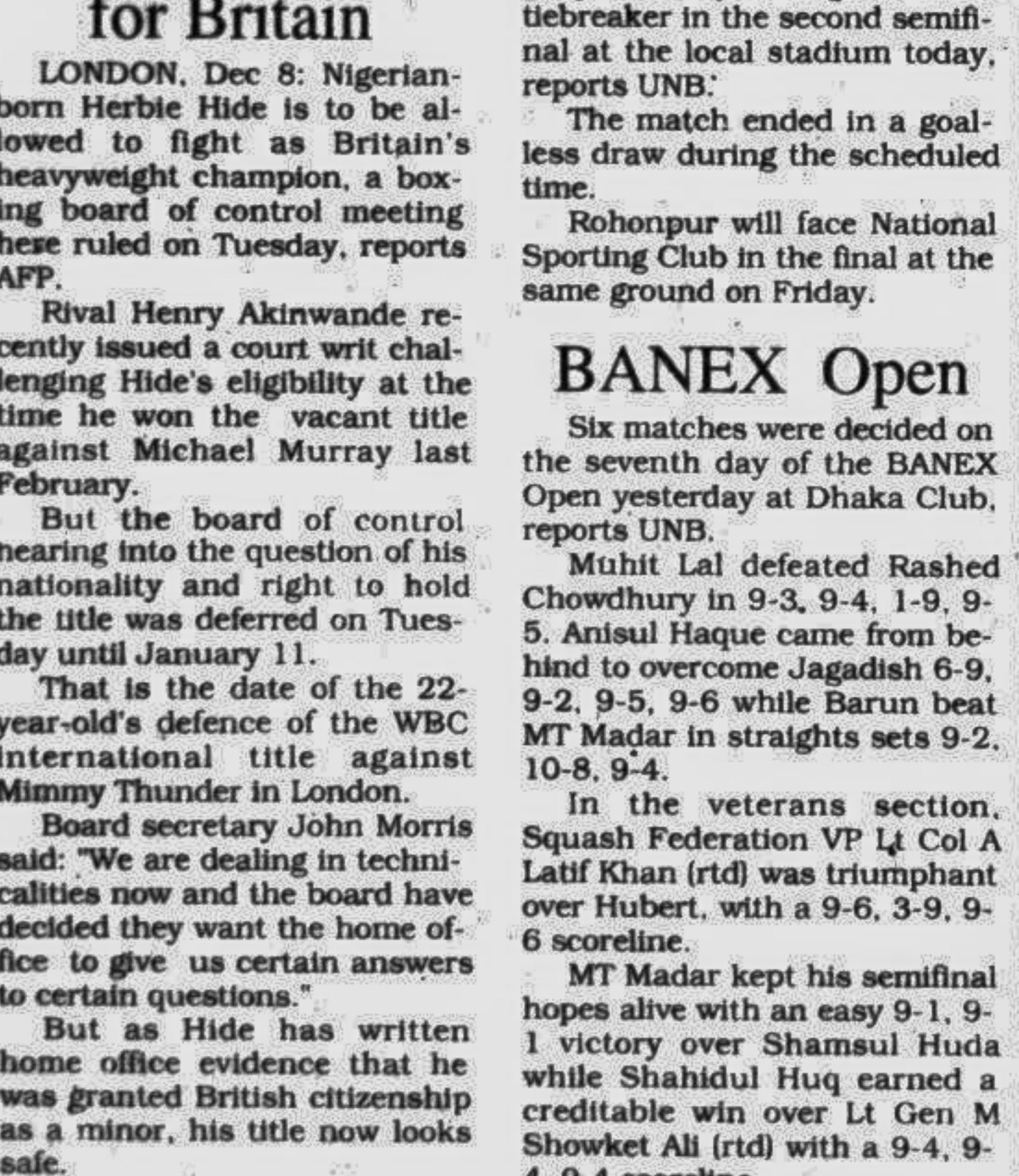
The gutsy centre-back, making his 56th appearance, struck six minutes from the end with a superb 20-yard drive to give Oldham seven points from the last nine and complete their first double of the season.

Oldham had gone into a half time lead when winger Rick Holden paid back a chunk of his recent 350,000 pounds fee with a super goal.

Holden who returned to his former club from Manchester City two months ago, curled a 30-year touchline freekick past hapless Swindon keeper Fraser Digby in the 11th minute.

In an untidy and often scrappy first half Swindon had three players booked and Oldham lost two key men with injuries.

Kevin Horlock, Andy Mutch and John Moncur went into the book of Lancaster referee David Allison for reckless tackles.



Brian Ahmed the pugilist from Wales who has come all the way from Great Britain to bolster the boxing prospect of Bangladesh in the SAF Games is seen trying to pierce the defence of the South Korean coach during a practice session. — Star photo by Anisur Rahman