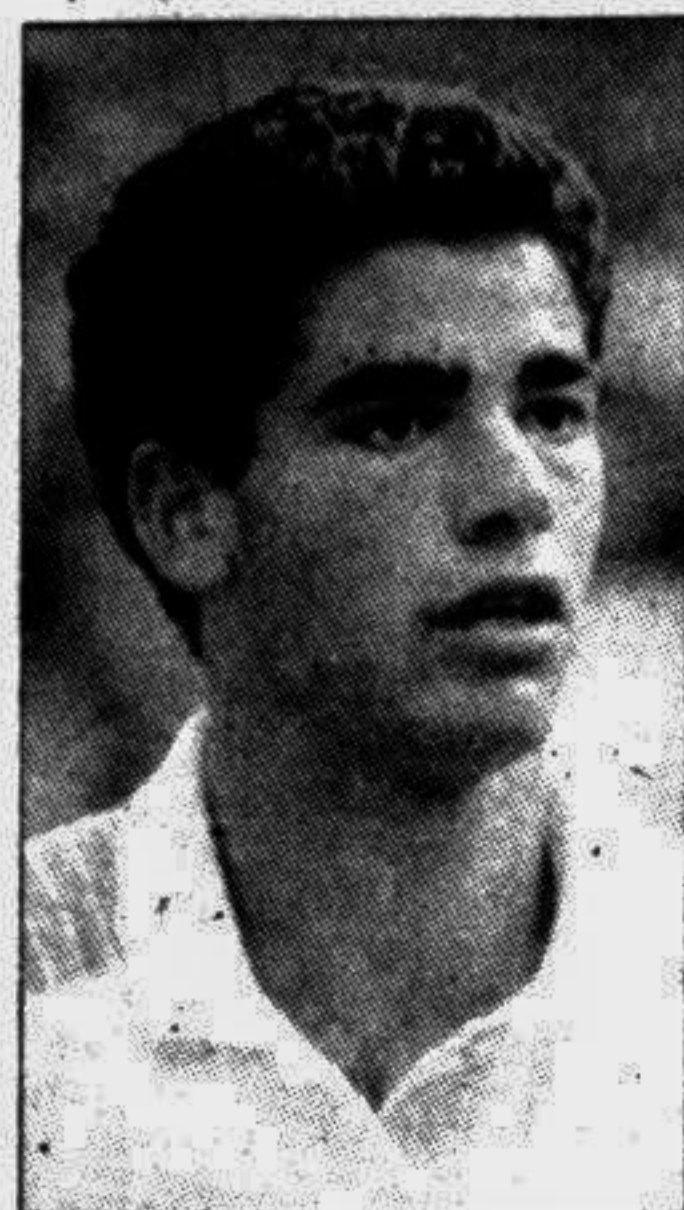


Sampras, Martin harbour similar thoughts



MELBOURNE. Jan 29: Fighting Todd Martin seeks to extend the best winning streak of his Grand Slam career here Sunday with an upset victory of seismic proportions over world number one Pete Sampras, reports AFP.



PETE SAMPRAS

This clash on the Centre Court here in the year's first Grand Slam tournament is the first all-American final in the Australian Open since 1969.

And in the match Sampras will be bidding for an elusive hat-trick — to become the first player in the Open era to win the previous year's Wimbledon and US Open titles and then

ICTVTR athletics

Sports Reporter

The sixth annual athletics competition of the Islamic Centre for Technical and Vocational Training and Research (ICTVTR) a subsidiary organ of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was held yesterday at the playground of the centre at Board Bazar, Gazipur.

Some new records were created during the competition participated by students of the centre.

Md Yeasub Ali Khan from Bangladesh and Cameroon's Nangou Issah became overall champion and runner up respectively.

State Minister for Science and Technology, Prof MA Mannan gave away prizes at a simple ceremony attended by guests from Muslim embassies and high commissions based in the capital.

Earlier Dr A M Patwari, Director General of the (ICTVTR) inaugurated the meet.

Aussie Open schedule

MELBOURNE, Jan 29: Featured matches Sunday at the Australian Open (seedings in parentheses): Centre Court (Play begins 0100GMT).

Gigi Fernandez, United States, and Natalia Zvereva (1), Belarus, vs Patty Fendick and Meredith McGrath (7), United States.

Pete Sampras (1), United States, vs Todd Martin (9), United States.

IOC, UNICEF join forces

LAUSANNE, Jan 29: The International Olympic Committee and United Nations Children Fund on Friday signed a collaboration agreement to step up work on programmes that highlighting and easing problems facing the world's young people, reports AFP.

The accord was signed by IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch and UNICEF executive director James Grant.

Doubles title for Dutch duo

MELBOURNE, Jan 29: Dutch pair Jacco Eltingh and Paul Haarhuis won the Australian Open men's doubles title here today when they downed second seeds Byron Black and Jonathan Stark, reports AFP.

Eltingh and Haarhuis, seeded three here, beat the Zimbabwean-American combination, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.

"It's a great feeling to win this Grand Slam event," said Haarhuis. "We didn't do so well last year and the gold for us was to do well in the Grand Slam events."

To start off the new year with a Grand Slam win is fantastic. It was Eltingh and Haarhuis's ninth career title.

The top seeds, the North American combination of Grant Connell and Patrick Galbraith, were knocked out in the first round.

go on to the win the Australian Open at the dawn of the new year.

"Winning major titles is the most important thing in my mind in tennis," stressed Sampras.

But he nearly missed the final here when 19-year-old Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov got to two points from victory in their second round five setter.

The 22-year-old Sampras may have hit top form just at the right moment to win the 322,000 US dollar first prize and the crown.

He demolished his friend and fellow-American Jim Courier 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 in the semifinal Friday and said it was one of "the better matches" of his career.

"Everything clicked," he said. "The rhythm of my serve was great. I was hitting my groundies as well as I've hit for a while... I really could not play any better."

Sampras has reached speeds of 200 kph (124 MPH) with his service here and it was flawless Friday.

"When my serves work, my whole game follows through behind it," he added.

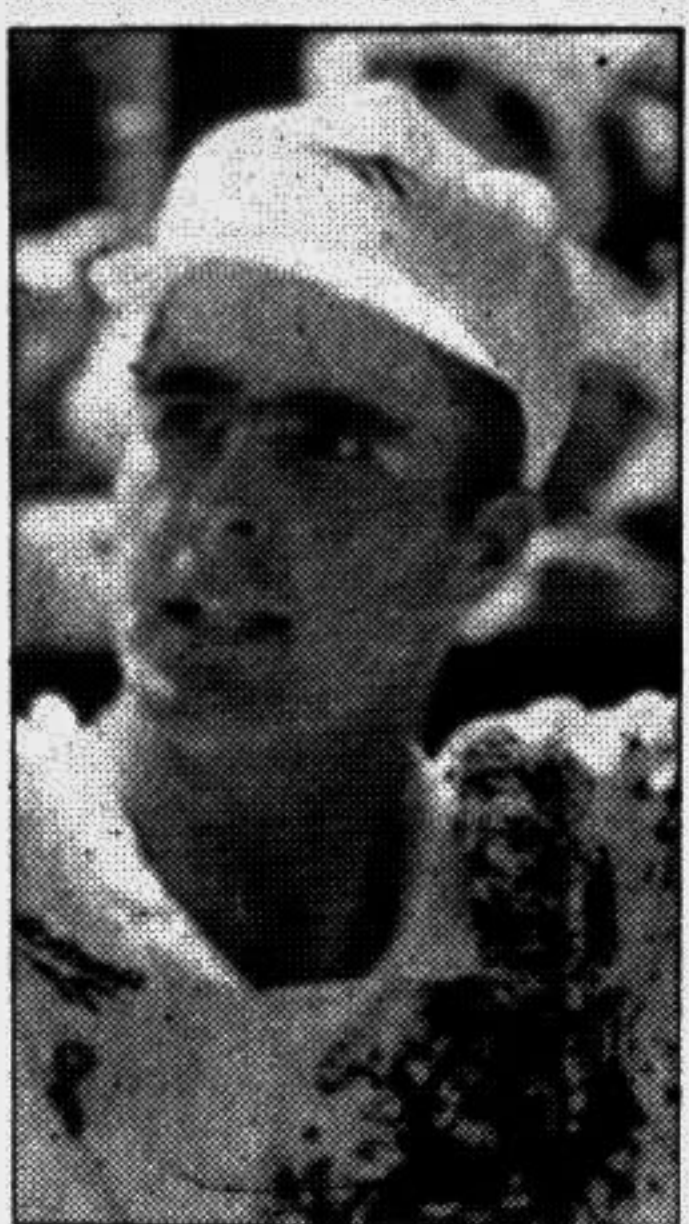
Martin, who has won six games in a row for a career-best Grand Slam streak, may take some cheer from the record books — they show that the top seed has won the Australian title only seven times since 1969.

The 23-year-old Martin, at 1.98 m (6ft 6ins) and 86 kilograms (190 pounds) one of the biggest men on the tour, uses his height to strike a mean serve.

But he used his flat, whiplash forhand return to topple Swedish star Stefan Edberg in a major semi-final upset Friday. The same weapon could trouble Sampras.

"Todd has some of the best returns in the world, he serves well and is obviously playing some of the best tennis of his career," Sampras said.

Martin, who was world number 12 at the tournament's start, has been one of the most underestimated players here.



TODD MARTIN

He is improving rapidly and developing into an all-court player with a calm temperament who relishes tight corners and long odds.

Sampras leads 2-0 in their head-to-head record but had to come back from two sets to one down to beat Martin in the second round of the 1992 US Open.

"I have to play my game and be aggressive and make (Sampras) beat me," Martin said.

His first Grand Slam final has him very excited.

"I just can't wait till the sun rises," he said.

Becker backs down

NEW YORK, Jan 29: Boris Becker, who recently criticised the drug testing policy in men's tennis, now says he is satisfied with the system, reports AP.

In December, a German newspaper ran a story in which Becker reportedly called the ATP's drug testing "a joke" and claimed that some players were using illegal drugs.

Becker, a three-time Wimbledon champion, says his comments were "misinterpreted." But he admitted he didn't know about the details of the ATP's current drug policy until January, when he spoke to ATP chief executive officer Mark Miles. The rules were revised in March 1993.

"I was not fully aware of the extent of those changes, and after a lengthy conversation with Mark Miles, I am now satisfied that it is administered with integrity by competent medical officials," Becker said.

However, Becker added that his earlier remarks were taken out of context.

"I did not say that doping was widespread on the ATP Tour or that the Tour was concealing positive tests, as several in the media have reported, and I did not accuse any tennis player of drug wrongdoing," he said in a statement issued from Monte Carlo.

"I view that everybody is innocent unless proven guilty."

Miles criticized Becker for questioning the ATP's drug rules without knowing what they were.

"I believe Boris was wrong in making his public comments with having first armed himself with the facts," Miles said Friday.

How many make a Grand Slam?

MELBOURNE, Jan 29: The International Tennis Federation says it's a Grand Slam. The Women's Tennis Association agrees. Steffi Graf begs to differ, reports AP.

Graf crushed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario 6-0, 6-2 in just 57 minutes to win Saturday's Australian Open women's singles final — her fourth consecutive victory in a Grand Slam event.

The 24-year-old German has won the French Open, Wimbledon, the US Open and the Australian Open in succession — but she doesn't regard it as a Grand Slam because the four victories didn't come in a calendar year.

Graf had a calendar-year Grand Slam in 1988 and is adamant that's the only one that counts.

"It's very special at any time to win four Grand Slams in a row, it's incredible, but in one year — it's harder. The 1988 one counts," she said.

Graf is consistent in her belief. She also does not believe Martina Navratilova's six Grand Slam tournament wins in a row between 1983-84 should be counted as a Grand Slam because Navratilova did not win all four in one year.

Graf's fourth Australian Open title leaves her fifth in total Grand Slam singles victories. She now has 15 and trails Margaret Court (24), Helen Wills Moody (19) and Chris Evert and Navratilova (18 each).

One thing Graf has no doubt about that she is a more complete player now than when she completed the calendar-year Grand Slam.

"I think the way I'm playing now is a step forward from the time in 1988," she said. "Competition has gotten stronger, so I have gotten stronger. I think today I proved it."

"There are more things than going for my shots that I can do. I think in 1988 I was more limited."

Aussie Open at a glance

MELBOURNE, Jan 29: Highlights and key information Saturday from the Australian Open tennis championships, reports AP.

WEATHER: Cloudy, breezy and cool, with an afternoon high of 71 degrees.

ATTENDANCE: 11,750, as compared to 14,144 on the first Saturday in 1993. The 13-day total is 283,928, compared to 317,102 through 13 days last year.

RESULTS: Steffi Graf defeated Arantxa Sanchez Vicario 6-0, 6-2 to win the women's title, her fourth Australian Open championship in seven years.

INJURIES: None.

STAT OF THE DAY: Graf lost just 12 points in the first set.

QUOTE: "Especially in the first set, I didn't seem to make any mistakes and whatever I did was close to the lines, it was the right shot and perfect timing. I don't think there have been many moments that I can say I have played like that," — Graf.

SUNDAY'S HIGHLIGHT: Pete Sampras faces Todd Martin in an all-American men's final.



World number one Steffi Graf from Germany holds on to her Akubra hat while receiving the winners trophy after a convincing 6-0, 6-2 straight sets victory against Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in the women's final of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday.

Golden Graf galumphs

MELBOURNE. Jan 29: Steffi Graf attacked relentlessly from the first point and overwhelmed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario 6-0, 6-2 in the women's singles final of the Australian Open Saturday, reports AP.

The 24-year-old German won the fourth Australian Open title of her career, but her first since 1990.

Monica Seles, who is absent recovering after being stabbed in the shoulder, won in 1991-92-93.

Graf took only 57 minutes to complete a victory that earned her \$322,000. It was the fastest Australian Open final for more than 30 years.

"I don't think there have been many moments I have played like that," said Graf after playing the match of a lifetime.

Graf kept the ball deep throughout, and her power and persistence with her new Wilson racket kept her in complete control.

"If this is the way I'm playing, I don't care about the score or the length, if it's a final or if it's a first round," Graf said. "I think it's just a great feeling to be able to play that well."

"Especially in the first set, I didn't seem to make any mistakes."

Chunky Sanchez Vicario re-

trieved doggedly and tried to keep the ball on Graf's backhand — but she was frequently left flat-footed by Graf's lethal groundstrokes and occasional drop shots.

"She played unbelievable," Sanchez Vicario said. "She was playing the best I've ever seen her play."

Graf romped through the first set in 24 minutes, dropping only 12 points, and it was not until the second game of the second set that Sanchez Vicario was able to win a game.

There was prolonged applause from the centre-court crowd at the National Tennis Center as they sensed a possible comeback. But it never came.

It was Graf's fourth successive Grand Slam title and her 15th overall. She was cheered on by hundreds of flag-waving, horn-blowing German fans and clinched the victory with a backhand passing shot.

"My legs were not on the court," said Sanchez Vicario. "I was late getting to the ball, so I wasn't in position. It was the first time I've ever felt this way."

World No.1 Graf now holds a 22-5 career advantage over No. 2 Sanchez Vicario, whose only Grand Slam tournament championship came at the 1989 French Open, when she beat Graf in the final.

It has been three years since anyone other than Graf

or Seles has won a women's Grand Slam title. At least one of those two players has been in 27 of the last 28 Grand Slam finals, including Saturday's match.

The last time Graf lost in a Grand Slam tournament to anyone other than Seles was to Sanchez Vicario in the quarterfinals of the 1992 US Open.

Graf had experience and momentum on her side entering the final. She now has a record of 196-23 in Grand Slam matches and went through the tournament without dropping a set.

The previous fastest Australian Open saw Margaret Smith defeated Jan Lehane 6-0, 6-2 in 35 minutes in Sydney in 1962.

But it was not Graf's most one-sided victory. She beat Natalia Zvereva 6-0, 6-0 in the French Open final in 1988.

Sunday's men's singles final will be contested by the top player in the sport — Pete Sampras — and No.9 seed, Todd Martin.

Sampras was awesome in ending the two-year reign of his friend and rival Jim Courier, winning 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 in the semifinals on Friday without dropping serve.

The tournament is sponsored by Ford and played on synthetic Rebound Ace hard courts.

Trudel crashes out

HYDERABAD, Jan 29: Canada's Francis Trudel became the first seed to fall by the wayside as the individual events of the 11th Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships began here Saturday, reports AFP.

Francis, the 14th seed in the men's singles, lost a tough five-game match to Malaysia's Chem Yong Hong after sitting pretty with a 2-0 lead in the opening round.

The Malaysian won 18-21, 13-21, 21-19, 21-5, 21-19 after a titanic struggle that lasted more than an hour.

England's Lisa Lomas, the fifth seed in the women's singles, who got a bye in the first round, withdrew from the competition and flew home after taking ill on Friday night.

Lomas' late withdrawal enabled unfancied Indian Chaitali Hate to advance to the third round.

All the other top stars, however, breezed through their opening matches.

Men's top seed Johnny Huang of Canada, given a bye in the first round, needed four games to oust England's Andrew Eden in the second round.

Huang conceded the first game at 16-21, but then came back strongly to win the next three at 21-17, 21-15, 21-11.

Huang's closest challenger, Alan Cooke of England, seeded second easily overcoming India's G. Ganesh in straight games.

Hong Kong star player Chai Po was justified her top billing in the women's singles by brushing aside Tong May Hui of Canada 21-8, 21-8, 21-15 in the second round.

Second-seed Jing Jun Hong of Singapore, overpowered local girl Kanchan Dhawan in straight games.

Waters thinks he's earned it

LAS VEGAS, Jan 29: Troy Waters thinks he earned a title shot against Simon Brown when he lost a title bid against Terry Norris, reports AP.

"I opened the door to show people Terry Norris was not invincible," said Waters, who was stopped on cuts in the third round by Norris, the former WBC super welterweight champion, last June 19.

Brown watched tape of the fight, and what he saw was Waters throwing straight punches between Norris' spread gloves that knocked him down in the second round and left him dazed.

On Dec. 18, Brown walked through the door, Norris, who loudly proclaimed himself the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world, went down from a jarring left jab in the first round. He never recovered and Brown became champion on a fourth round knockout.

On Saturday night, Brown, a 30-year-old former welterweight champion, will defend his share of the 154-pound title against the 28-year-old Waters, of Australia.

In two other title bouts on the first boxing show at the new MGM Grand, Julio Cesar Chavez, the WBC super lightweight champion from Mexico, will fight Frankie Randall, and Felix Trinidad, the IBF welterweight champion, will fight fellow-Puerto Rican Hector "Macho" Camacho.

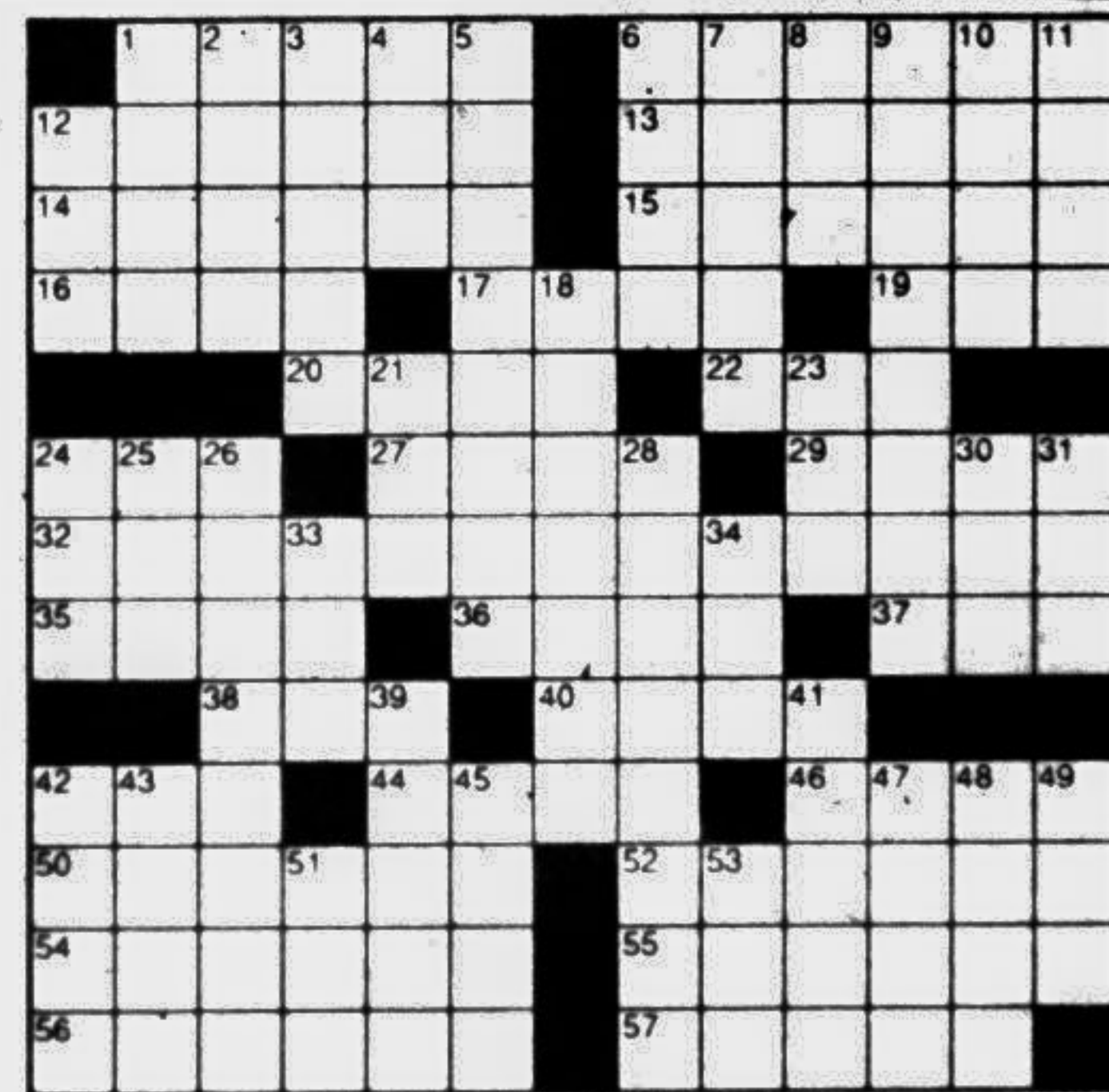
It will be the 52nd pro fight for the 32-year-old Randall, but is first world title shot despite his success. His record is 48-2-1, with 39 knockouts.

"I thought about giving up the game several times, but it's in my blood," Randall said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	38 Abbr. after a proof	monk	24 Small bit
1 Public square	40 Filches	3 In any way	25 Skilled one
6 Wintry, in days of yore	42 Bud's partner	4 Last chapter of the OED?	26 Elaborate fabric
12 Defeated	44 Staffs	5 Word game	28 Blizzard wear
13 Worker's bio	46 Fuss	6 Hillside	30 Tribute in verse
14 Fleet	50 Lawrence's bailiwick	7 Ran into again	31 Away from NNE
15 Ms. Earhart	52 Paradise	8 Avail oneself of	33 Bambi's aunt Ena, e.g.
16 Remote control's forerunner	54 Life's work	9 Bush fruit	34 Intricate weaving
17 Exultation	55 Locomotive	10 Grenoble girlfriend	39 Not as wet
19 Foundation	56 Respectable people?	11 Guide album	41 Western outlaws' target, for short
20 Zhivago's love	57 Unkempt DOWN	12 Michael Jackson	42 Football feature
22 Place-kicker's pride	1 Graceful woman	18 Short rope	43 Evangelist Roberts
24 Trump's casino hotel, for short	2 Tibetan	21 Copper head?	45 Galley array
27 Resounding blow	Solution time: 24 mins.	23 — Locka, Fla.	47 "Metamorphoses" poet
29 Those earning money	FRATERNITY		48 Say it isn't so
32 Hepburn's quartet	FRATERNITY		49 Inseparable
35 Erte's style	FRATERNITY		51 Quilting party
36 January event	FRATERNITY		53 Hydrocarbon suffix
37 Evergreen	FRATERNITY		

Yesterday's answer 6-19

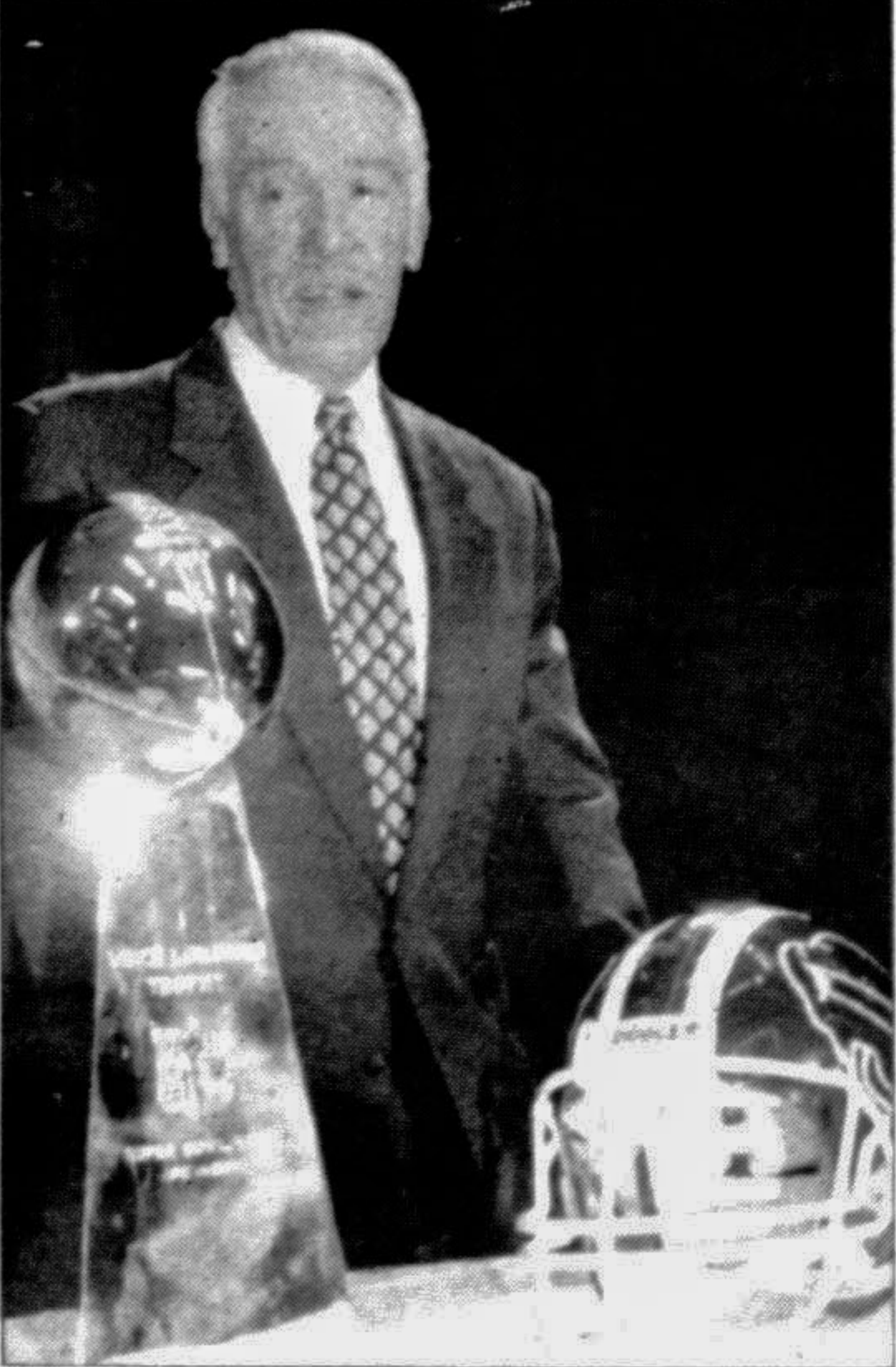


CRYPTOQUIP

PLIT VYSRNG JMFXTWRJ
OALLNP MFTRC QTDD
QFWCCTR OSC GLS
VMR QTTX CYTI LSC

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: YOUNG POOL PLAYER IS GETTING BETTER, BUT HE ISN'T UP TO SCRATCH. Today's Cryptoquip clue: Q 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.



Buffalo Bills head coach Marv Levy poses with the Vince Lombardi Trophy which will go to the winner of Super Bowl XXVIII between the Bills and defending champions Dallas Cowboys on Jan. 30.

— AFP photo