

## Real Madrid in real mess

MADRID, Mar 8: Real Madrid on Monday fired coach Benito Floro following the team's weekend defeat by First Division strugglers Lerida, reports Reuters.

Chairman Ramon Mendoza named former player and member of the technical staff Vicente del Bosque as caretaker coach until the end of the season.

The sacking of Floro, who came to Madrid from Albacete at the start of the 1992-93

season, climaxed a board meeting dedicated to discussing yet another crisis in a stormy year for Spain's most famous clubs.

Real lost 1-0 at home to Paris Saint Germain in a European Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final first leg last Thursday and Sunday's defeat in Lerida was the final nail in Floro's coffin.

His job had seemed on the line at least twice before this season as Madrid have slogged and soared through a rollercoaster series of successes and failures.

Their surprise defeat in Lerida left them in third place in the league, five points behind leaders Deportivo Coruna and two behind champions Barcelona.

Floro declined any comment to reporters as he left the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium after his dismissal.

Del Bosque, with the club for 25 years, said his first priority would be to try to motivate the team for next week's return leg against Paris Saint Germain.

"The next league match against Rayo Vallecano is also important but I am looking in particular at the game in Paris. He said he had always had excellent relations with the club's players and was convinced the team would give him their full support.

General manager Ignacio Arias told Spanish state radio the dismissal of Floro had been painful for the club but the board was unanimous.

"When results go badly for you it is usually the coach who is sacrificed. The board felt this was the moment," Arias said.

said. "He took it very well, very elegantly with good spirit," Arias said of Floro's reaction to the news of his sacking.

Del Bosque said it would be dangerous to introduce any radical changes to the team's style of play at this late stage of the season.

"The worst thing that can happen to a team is to break completely with the previous system," he said. "We are going to work with a different kind of attack but it will only be a small reform."

### Napoli face mutiny

NAPLES, Italy, Mar 8: Napoli players on Monday demanded that the club hand over salaries that they claim have gone unpaid for three months, reports AFP.

All the first team squad signed in open letter setting out their plight which was also sent to the players' union, according to their lawyer.

The players warned that if the money was not paid in 20 days they would consider their contracts terminated. But as they will remain registered with Napoli until June 30 they should still finish the season before moving to new clubs.

Napoli have run up crippling debts since winning the Italian title in 1987 and 1990 and the UEFA Cup in 1987 with Diego Maradona as captain.

Italian Football Federation president Antonio Matarrese and Naples mayor Antonio Bassolino have been negotiating a rescue deal with several banks.

### Germany still on top

KANSAS CITY, Mo., Mar 8: Germany remained on top of the Sprint Soccer Poll for the 10th consecutive week, organizers of the poll said Tuesday, reports AP.

Germany earned 33 of a possible 37 first-place votes for a total of 359 points in the weekly ranking of the top 10 national teams as voted on by a panel of international soccer journalists.

Brazil, which received one first-place vote, followed with 334 points. The Netherlands remained in third place, with 276 points, while Italy, with two first-place votes, held on to fourth with 248 points. Argentina, with one first-place vote, was fifth with 193 points.

Rounding out the top 10 were Colombia, 186 points; Spain, 131; Belgium, 92; Norway, 51, and Cameroon, 49.

Mexico, with 47 points, just missed a spot in the top 10.

Results of the Sprint Soccer Poll, a weekly ranking of the top 10 national soccer teams worldwide, as chosen by a panel of 37 international soccer journalists. The rankings are based on a 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 system, with first place teams receiving 10 points, second place receiving 9, etc. First place votes are in parentheses:

1. Germany (33) 359 points
2. Brazil (1) 334
3. Netherlands 276
4. Italy (2) 248
5. Argentina (1) 193
6. Colombia 186
7. Spain 131
8. Belgium 92
9. Norway 51
10. Cameroon 49

Also receiving votes: Mexico 47, Sweden 36, Russia 16, Bulgaria 5, Nigeria 4, United States 4, Ireland 3, Bolivia 1.

### UEFA to look into it

BERN, Switzerland, Mar 8: UEFA have opened an inquiry into allegations of corruption against Italian club Torino. Arsenal's opponents in the European Cup Winners' Cup, reports AFP.

But the European governing body added, in a statement released Monday, that no decision will be taken before the second leg of the Arsenal-Torino quarter-final.

"In conducting their inquiries relating to the Italian football club Torino Calcio, the authorities in that country have come across various incriminating evidence that has a direct bearing on UEFA's club competitions," said the statement.

"It is alleged that the hospitality and services offered to referees and linesmen officiating at Torino Calcio's home matches exceeded the standard requirements for such occasions."

The UEFA control and disciplinary committee will hold a hearing in Zurich on March 18 with Torino officials called to explain the evidence against them.

"In the light of the hearing, the committee will then decide what further measures have to be taken in the interest of the game of football," said the statement.

### Arcel dies

NEW YORK, Mar 8: Ray Arcel, who trained 22 world boxing champions in a career that spanned 65 years, died on Monday of leukemia. He was 94, reports Reuters.

Arcel's first world champion was Charlie Phil Rosenberg, who won the world bantamweight championship in 1925.

Among Arcel's other champions were Jack "Kid" Berg, a Briton who won the world junior welterweight title in 1930; lightweight champion Benny Leonard, who won the title in 1917; and Roberto Duran, who captured the lightweight title in 1972. Arcel also was in Larry Holmes' corner when he retained his heavyweight title against Gerry Cooney in 1982.

Even after he retired from boxing, young fighters continued to seek his advice, including Olympic champion Mark Breland and up-and-coming heavyweight Shannon Briggs.

"In this, the most brutal and uncaring of all businesses, he was the most caring person I ever knew, in or out of it," said syndicated sports columnist Jerry Izenberg, a longtime friend of Arcel's.

"He was clearly the greatest trainer who ever lived, as proven by the fact that he trained more champions," Izenberg said. "As a disciplinarian, he had the look of a Talmudic scholar."

"Once he came to spend a weekend, and I had gained weight. He got off the train and just looked at my stomach and shook his head. I went on a starvation diet and took off 20 pounds (9 kg) before I would dare see him again."

Arcel is survived by his wife, Stephanie.



Russian Garri Kasparov (L) about to make the opening move of his ninth-round match against American Gata Kamsky in the Linares chess tournament on Monday. Kasparov won. — AFP photo

## Harding's dernier ressort



PORTLAND, Ore., Mar 8: Figure Skater Tonya Harding asked a court Monday to block the US Figure Skating Association (USFSA) from holding a disciplinary hearing on the Nancy Kerrigan assault which could end her career, reports Reuters.

A USFSA panel has scheduled a disciplinary hearing Thursday in Colorado Springs to decide if Harding was guilty of any wrongdoing in January's attack on Kerrigan, her rival.

If it finds Harding violated its code of ethics, the panel could strip her of association membership, stopping her from taking part in official competitions.

Harding's attorneys filed suit in Portland asking for a court order to stop the USFSA from going ahead with the hearing until a criminal investigation against her over the Kerrigan assault, and any subsequent prosecution, is complete.

They also sought an order to stop the USFSA preventing Harding from taking part in the 1994 world figure skating championships which start in Japan March 22.

The suit, filed in Multnomah county court in Portland,

also asks for unspecified compensatory damages.

In an affidavit accompanying the suit, Harding, the US figure skating champion, said she had done nothing to warrant her removal from the World championship team.

"I would be irreparably harmed if I were not allowed to compete," she said.

Prosecutors in Portland are looking into allegations by Harding's ex-husband, Jeff Gillooly, that she was involved in the plot to assault Kerrigan, who was hit on the leg with a metal bar during the US figure skating championships in Detroit January 6.

Harding, who won the championship in Kerrigan's absence, has not been charged and insists she is innocent.

Gillooly has pleaded guilty to racketeering over the assault plot. Harding's bodyguard and two other men have also been charged.

The suit says that Harding's attorneys should be given more time to prepare for the USFSA hearing, saying what it called USFSA's "unilateral, premature" setting of the hearing date is "unreasonable, arbitrary and capricious."

The suit said that, unless the court prevented it, the

USFSA would "try" Harding Thursday even though it said she could not be prepared by then to defend herself fairly.

It said Harding would undoubtedly be found "guilty" of violating some USFSA rule and deprived of her membership registration, effectively ending her competitive career.

Harding's suit was filed in state court, but the Colorado-based USFSA filed a motion asking for it to be transferred to federal court. A hearing on the motion will be held before US district judge Owen Panner this afternoon.

In Colorado Springs, a USFSA spokeswoman said she had no knowledge of the lawsuit.

Harding's lawyers followed a similar strategy when the US Olympic Committee set a hearing which could have led to Harding being barred from last month's Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway.

Harding's attorneys sued to block that hearing and sought more than 25 million dollars in damages. The two sides eventually settled, allowing Harding to take part in the Olympics where she finished eighth.

Kerrigan recovered from her leg injury to win the Olympic silver medal.

### Top Russian duo to skip World Championships

MOSCOW, Mar 8: Russia's gold and silver medalists from the Lillehammer Olympics have joined a growing number of top figure skaters who will skip the World Championships this month in Japan, reports AP.

Pairs champions Yekaterina Gordeeva and Sergei Grinkov and silver medalists Natalya Mishkutyonok and Artur Dmitriev will miss the championships beginning March 22 in Chiba, Japan.

Valentin Pliseyev, chairman of the Russian Figure Skating Federation, said the pairs have accomplished their main goals for the season and are now working on returning to the professional circuit.

Both couples turned professional after competing in previous Olympics. They took advantage of new rules allowing them to regain their amateur status for the Lillehammer Games.

Russia's Olympic ice dance champions Oksana Grishchuk and Yevgeny Platov and silver medalists Maya Usova and Alexander Zhulin are expected to compete in Japan, as is men's champion Alexei Urmanov.

Such well-known skaters as Nancy Kerrigan, Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean, Kurt Browning and Viktor Petrenko will be no-shows in Japan.

### Marathon man

PRAGUE, Mar 8: Czech runner Pavel Nechansky on Monday finished his 280th daily marathon without a day's break and is claiming a world record, reports AFP.

The CTK news agency said the marathon running feat started on June 1 last year and beat the 279 marathons run by American Robert Sweeall between October 1982 and July 1983.

Nechansky plans to carry on his daily 42 km run between the towns of Pilsen and Nyrany in Bohemia until March 27.

## Seeking protection for the baby champs

By Paulo David

The setting up by a group of Belgian parents of an organisation to protect the rights and interests of young athletes illustrates a growing concern about the dangers faced by sports players who are teenagers — or even younger. Gemini News Service looks at children's rights on the playing field.

After the collapse of East Germany, it was proved that the fallen regime gave drugs to children in state-directed sports institutions. But, pressure on child sports stars knows no political boundaries: about 40 promising East German soccer players aged between 13 and 17 have been "bought" by West German clubs.

So what? many people would say — sport is a healthy activity, a good training ground for life, a source of fulfillment and can offer high earnings. But competitive sport can damage children's mental and physical development, and contravene their rights.

When US Olympic gymnast Kim Zmeskal was 15, she trained eight hours a day, almost had a nervous breakdown and failed to win a medal.

"The greatest sacrifice I made for gymnastics was my body," she says.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child lays down a right "to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health," but over-training, encouraged even by ambitious parents, can be bad for health. Is it normal for a 16-year-old girl, without buttocks or breasts, to be 1m32 tall and weigh under 30 kilos; or for parents to encourage 12-year-old boxers to knock out their opponent, which in medical terms means concussion and a short spell of coma; or for an eight-year-old weightlifter to hoist 45kg; or for 15-year-old swimmers to have already turned their shoulders 1.5 million times?

Drugs, as in adult sport, are a particular threat. Several countries are suspected of doping their baby-champions for the glory of the nation.

Two Bulgarian gymnasts, 14-year-old Maina Hristova and 15-year-old Mirela Peneva, came up positive in drug tests. They had absorbed diuretics in order to lose weight rapidly and to cover evidence of another illegal substance.

A fortnight later, tests showed that six Bulgarian weightlifters were also positive, including 17-year-old Nayden Rusev.

In the US, two million "body-builders" — 500,000 of them under 18 — use illegal steroids.

Last year the Canadian Centre of Doping in Sport claimed that almost 83,000 children between the ages of 11 and 18 had been using anabolic steroids.

One of the problems is that few coaches give full explanations of the dangers of drugs involved in training. Since sport is an affair handled by adults, the danger of exploitation is clear.

The Convention also refers to the right to education, but it is difficult, if not impossible,

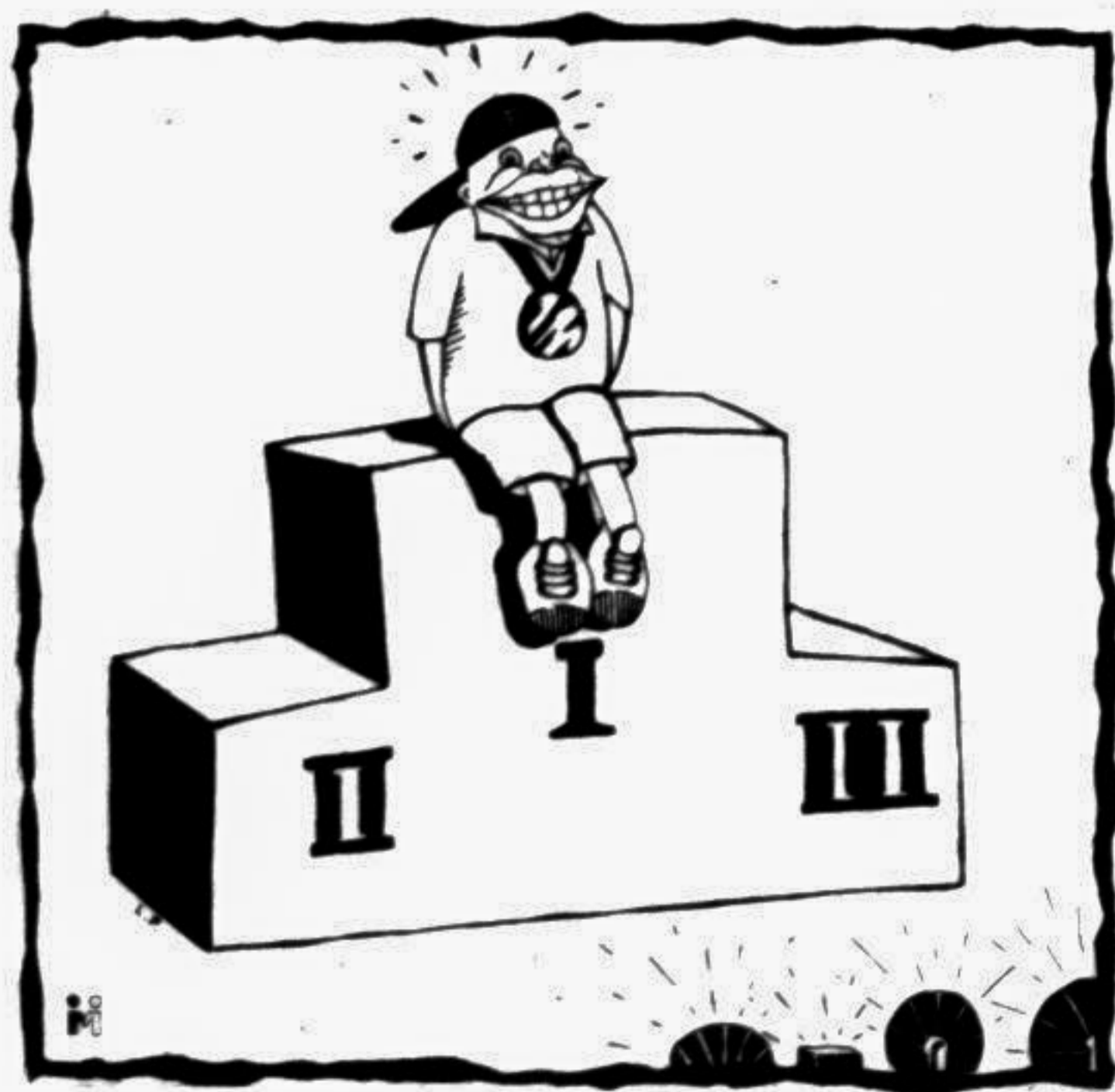
for a child on an intensive sports training programme to follow a normal school curriculum. This is as true in the US, where athletes often receive degrees because of sporting achievements, without even passing the academic examinations, as it was in the former Soviet Union, when young champions received school and university diplomas while their education was utterly deficient.

Special sport-and-study schools have been set up in a number of countries — sometimes in order to stop youngsters playing with rival clubs.

Says former French soccer star Michel Platini: "I have a son and I would never put him in a training centre before he was 17. It shouldn't be allowed."

In cases where young athletes sign a professional contract with a club, sponsor or sports manager, exploitation is no so much a matter of underpayment as of exploitation of young talent while the children are unable to judge their true professional value or to decide which road their sporting activity should take, at a time when they are still growing, physically and psychologically.

The result can be burn-out at an early age.



French soccer player Laurent Roussey was described at 14 as the prodigy of the century. His parents signed a professional contract in his name. A few years later, following a few brief national and international successes and a succession of knee injuries, he became an anonymous player in a regional second division.

Italy, the parents of 11-year-old Luigi Quarticelli have signed a professional contract with top club AC Milan.

All this is currently uncontrollable, and no young champion is unprotected when it comes to situations which

a virtual legal vacuum. But the Council of Europe is now encouraging member states to adopt a European Sports Charter and a Code of Sports Ethics, though such documents are simply declarations of intent. And some countries, including The Netherlands, France and Switzerland, are eliminating placings and medals from sports competitions for the very young — Gemini News.

About the Author: Paulo David is Editor of International Children's Rights Monitor, in which a longer version of this feature first appeared.

## It's Trinkl's third in a year

ASPEN, Colo., Mar 8: Austrian Hannes Trinkl, who broke with tradition to pick his own starting spot, won the Sister City World Cup downhill Friday. It was his second downhill victory of the season and third victory on this circuit this year, reports AP.

Trinkl, who won the Bormio downhill and Super G at Lech, said "on every downhill you need a good pair of skis. Today I had that. My gliding was not excellent but good."

Trinkl had surprised his coach the night before, at the team captain's meeting, by picking his own position with a shout from the back of the room. "I saw Girardelli was starting at No. 8... I thought 10 would be a good number." His coach was going to start him

ahead of Girardelli.

Trinkl won with a time of 1 minute 38.95 seconds. Cary Mullen of Canada finished second at 1:38.98 and Girardelli was third at 1:39.06.

Trinkl said he had no problem being motivated after finishing sixth at the Olympics.

Mullen agreed that preparation was a key. "I really had fast skis on the top and my mechanic did a great job."

Olympic gold medalist Tommy Moe of Palmer, Alaska, who had hoped to match Bill Johnson's feat in 1984 of winning the first downhill after taking the gold, finished a disappointing 55th with a time of 1:42.21.

"I gave it my best. I think my edge level was off. I had the wrong pair of skis on. It was like skiing on spoons," he said.

A J Kitt was the top American finisher, at 14th. That, too, was a disappointment. He appeared to have last year's Aspen downhill when the FIS called it off in mid-evening saying the course was not safe.

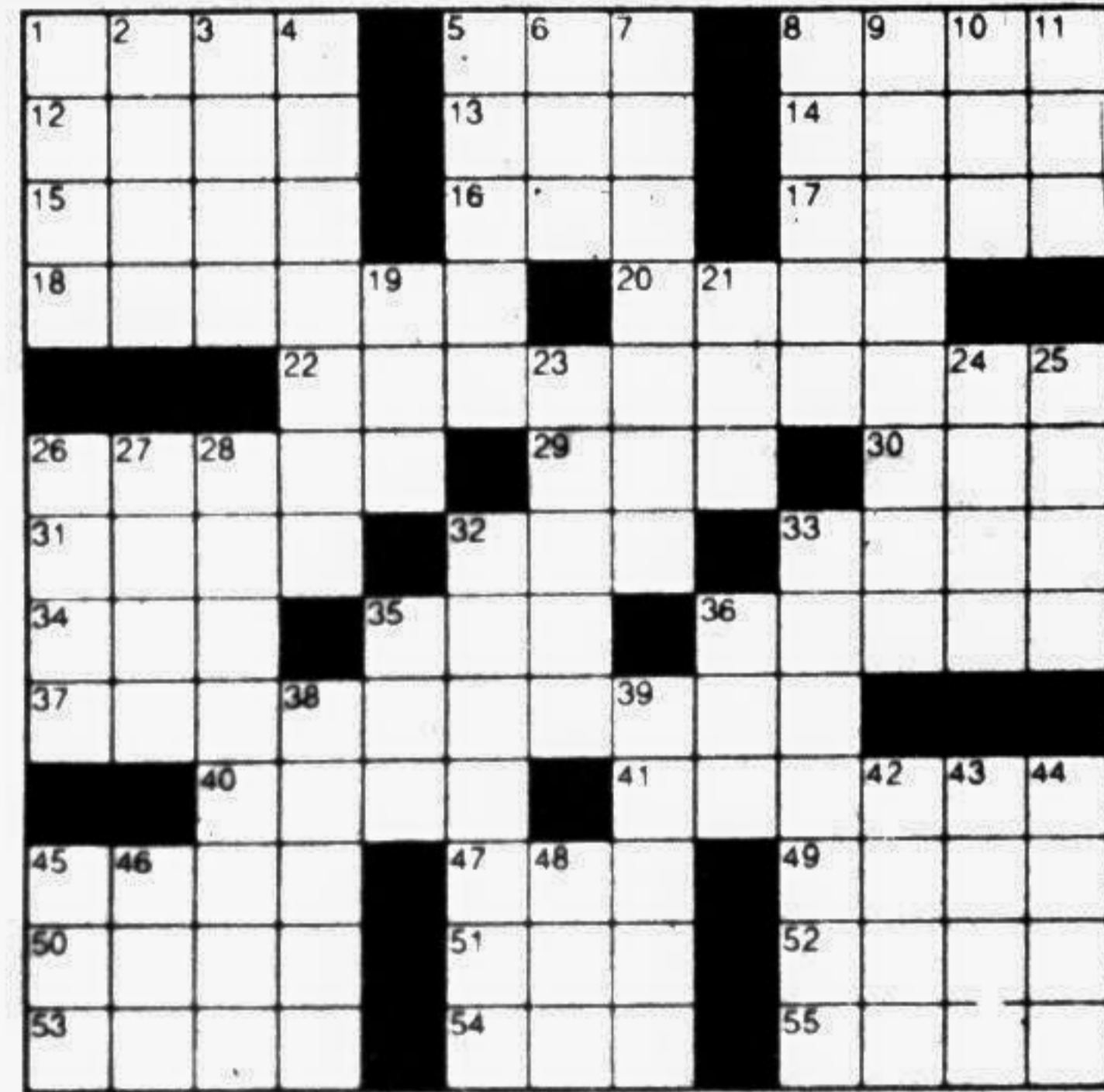
Trinkl's victory pushed him to within 15 points of fellow Austrian Patrick Ortleib in the overall downhill standings. Girardelli picked up 60 points for his third-place finish Friday and has 462 points. Trinkl's 100 points for first gives him 376.

"It's going to be hard to catch Marc Girardelli. I'm doing my best to catch him," he said. He gets another shot at Girardelli on Saturday in the America's Downhill here.

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

<b>ACROSS</b>	34 — not choose to run	53 Swelled school
1 Runs up the phone bill	35 "Norma"	54 Absolutely 10 The whole shebang
5 Tom Hanks movie	36 Vicinities	55 Campaign promises? 11 Actor Billy Williams
8 Slightly	37 Celsius	19 Craze
12 Peek follow	40 Comic strip news editor	21 Rubber-tree plant mover
13 Marseilles monarch	41 Annoy	23 "OK"
14 Entry in the ump's book	45 1960s musical	24 "The Music Man" locale
15 Carte	47 Bob's partner	25 Pitch
16 Abby's sis	49 Beetle	26 Stylish
17 Marooned one's place	50 Helper	27 Stash
18 Sheet music setups	51 DJ's stack, once	28 Burr role
20 Picnic race equipment	52 Send out	32 With bated breath
22 German physicist G.D.	Solution time: 23 mins.	33 Beer drinker's nosh
26 TV's "French Chef"	BOB LAP SUMO CAPON MANOR APPLES IT COSTS A LOT TO LEO CRAZY TON AHAS ALOE	35 Resort city
29 Canadian prov.	MARTY BAYED PILE SORE AND SCHWA FLA LOOK THIS SCHEAP RUNYON HENCE SILKY NICK TEE ERE	36 Fuss
30 Sticky stuff		38 Lost intentionally
31 Take on		39 Chasm
32 Quiche base		42 Half: pref.
33 Church array		43 Pennsylvanian port
		44 Decays
		45 Crone
		46 Football fill
		48 Mimic

Yesterday's answer 7-22



### CRYPTOQUIP

T G O Q C N - Y T G X O T B  
H C W G T X N O W I N  
A Z H B W I Y I B I A H N C  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: GOOD TREE SURGEON  
OFTEN USED LOOSE-LEAF PAPER.  
Today's Cryptoquip clue: Y equals B  
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.