

Ajax Div Two cricket champs

Sports Reporter

Ajax Sports Club became champions in the Second Division cricket league when they posted a facile six-wicket win over Gopibagh Friends Association in the final at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Both Ajax SC and Gopibagh Friends booked their places in next year's Milnars First Division cricket league after finishing at the top of their respective groups of the six-team super league play-off, leaving the final of merely an academic interest.

Ajax reached the victory target of 130 runs for the loss of four wickets in 36.2 overs after bowling the Gopibagh cricketers out for 129 in 37.4 overs.

Bhola and Babu, who tore the Gopibagh innings apart, finished with three and four wickets respectively. Saiful was the only Gopibagh batsman who could withstand the stormy Ajax attack making 41.

In reply, Ajax cantered to 130 with Moni and Dola, forming the mainstay of the victory charge with an unbeaten 60-run stand for the fifth wicket. Moni scored 46 and Dola 31.

Azhar replaces Ian Bishop

LONDON, Apr 8: Indian cricket captain Mohammad Azharuddin has replaced injured West Indies bowler Ian Bishop as Derbyshire's overseas player for the coming English season, reports Reuters.

Derbyshire had hoped Bishop would spearhead their new-ball attack with England fast bowler Devon Malcolm, but the 26-year-old Trinidadian ruled himself out because he could not guarantee his fitness following a year out of the game with a spinal stress fracture.

Azharuddin returns for his second season at Derbyshire after playing for the county in 1991 when he topped their batting averages with 55.40 and scored 1,773 runs in the county championship.

Bishop, who topped the first-class bowling averages in his second season for Derbyshire in 1990, hopes to sign a new contract with them when his current one runs out at the end of this season.

Lara joins Warwickshire

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, Apr 8: West Indian Brian Lara signed for England county team Warwickshire on Thursday and immediately told his new teammates: "I'm expecting a lot from you," reports Reuters.

The brilliant batsman put pen to paper at Kensington Oval after completing his preparations for today's fourth Test against England.

Lara is already looking forward to spending an English summer on the county circuit.

"I always play to win and I will expect a lot from the other guys in the Warwickshire team," said the 24-year-old Trinidadian. "I hope they expect a lot from me and I'll try to produce for them."

Lara has been in brilliant form during this series, scoring a memorable 167 in Guyana. He was approached by Warwickshire when their first choice stand-in for South African Allan Donald, Indian all-rounder Manoj Prabhakar, broke down with a back injury.

Soccer players' transfers from today In the line of sensation?

Sports Reporter

Amid heightening expectations of drama the inter-club transfers of footballists for 1994 season begins today.

Previously expected to be another sensation starved affair like last year, the annual economic encounter between different club officials and players looks set for a heady climax during the next few days. Transfer deadline is scheduled to expire on April 15.

Club officials won the first round in the prelude to the transfers by striking a deal among themselves with the unwritten covenant culminating in a pool of 21 most sought-after local footballers. Spread among the top three clubs — reigning champions Mohammedans, runner-up Abahani and Brothers — these footballers, most of whom are national colours, hold the key to the balance of strength in the league, normally regarded as the *piece de resistance*.

A list of seven 'essential' players were prepared by the club supremos which by virtue of the gentlemen's agreement promised to stand free from

the threat of enticement by rivals. The pricey booters, whose morale underwent a real dunking ever since the utterly poor performance of the Bangladesh national team, were cornered by the renewal of the deal, which came into being last year, to arrest the steadily climbing rate of star booters of the country.

Stunned by the novelty and innovation of this coup de grace from the officials, players danced to the unfamiliar tune, never forgetting though what many players dubbed as an act of backstabbing.

With the advent of this year's transfer season, the psychological warfare grew in-tense with the Football Players' Welfare Association playing a pioneering role to uphold players' cause. The main source of suffering was, of course, the drastic cut down in the rate of players. Suffice it would be to cite that Monem Munna, a star defender who only a couple of years ago bargained a fee in the vicinity of 20 lakhs, had to be content last year with a reported payment of Tk five lakhs. So was the fate of the star players like Rumman Bin Wali Shabbir, Kaisar Hamid etc.

Last year's suppressed bickerings boiled hard as star footballers lined up to come up with something like a *ruse contra ruse*. The bottom line of their sometimes clandestine and sometimes open meeting was — "Let us leave if you do not have the money!" The message to the club officials is in the process of being concretised as ten top footballers like Jewel Rana and Barun Dewan of Mohammedans; Rumi, Masud Rana, Mamun Joarder and Mohsin of Abahani; Rakib, Ataur, Parvez and Moon of Brothers have reportedly kept the club officials on tenterhooks by steering clear of the worried club supremos. So uptight was the officials of Abahani Krira Chakra that they literally locked Gaus, the dark elusive forward, for fear of losing him in what now promises to be a high voltage transfer drama.

Although only tokens will be on sale today at the DMFA office for interested players, the struggle for retaining or regaining players may spring quite a few surprises as some of the top players are in the line of joining mediocre teams like Muktiyoddha Sangsad if only for the sake of vengeance.

Dust settles after more desertions

Mahanama plays Phoenix



COLOMBO, Apr 8: Shri Lanka cricket captain Arjuna Ranatunga and three players, as well as five selectors, quit in a furore over a fitness test but a new side was named quickly for this month's tour of Sharjah, reports Reuters.

A spokesman for Sports Minister Nanda Mathew told Reuters the minister approved the new squad, with Roshan Mahanama replacing Ranatunga as captain.

Selectors retained 11 players from the previous 14-member team and picked four new ones to replace those who quit.

Five of the seven selectors also joined Ranatunga in resigning in a row over the fitness test that failed experienced batsman and vice-captain Aravinda de Silva and four others, including Ranatunga's brother, in a pool training for the event.

Fast bowler Pramodya Wickramasinghe, off-spinner Muttiah Muralidharan and opener Dulip Samaraweera then pulled out of the 14-member squad for the six-nation Australasia Cup starting on April 13.

But Sport Minister Mathew, whom many blamed for the crisis, said he was determined not to bow to pressure.

"We are a country of 17 million people. Even if all 14 players resign, we should be able to field a team," he told reporters.

With opposition mounting to the controversial test conducted by two doctors from the Sports Ministry, supporters of Ranatunga and de Silva — both popular sports figures — stalked the cricket board headquarters demanding an explanation.

Police were called to pro-

test members of a new selection committee meeting on Thursday night. No incident



ROSHAN MAHANAMA was reported.

The crisis began on Tuesday when De Silva was left out of the squad for the one-day Sharjah tournament after failing the fitness test.

Ranatunga, De Silva and the selectors said those conducting the test were incompetent and they added that a request for a second test was turned down.

De Silva, undoubtedly Sri Lanka's best batsman, challenged his dismissal, saying the fitness test was not done by qualified doctors.

"I fell the results of the tests were unreasonable, and I am willing to challenge it at any time," he told reporters. De Silva received 30 per cent in the fitness test, far below the 50 per cent required for selection.

Mathew rejected the allegations, saying it was a fair fitness test, which everyone had to undergo, and the doctors were competent. He appointed a new selection committee.

"I can't tell the medical

specialist to issue a certificate to suit one individual," he told the island newspaper.

The two doctors said in a statement that they lowered the test standard to 50 per cent from 55 per cent because most players from the 25-member pool were physically unfit.

Mahanama, a prolific opener who earlier replaced De Silva as vice-captain, will now have Hashan Tillakaratne as his deputy.

Last month, Ranatunga was retained as captain despite criticism of his handling of the Indian tour in February when Sri Lanka lost all three Tests by an innings.

A board committee, probing reasons for the defeat, cited too much cricket, lack of communication between the captain, his deputy and the rest of the team and poor fitness as some of the causes for failure.

Gazza goes to hospital

ROME, Apr 8: England soccer star Paul Gascoigne broke two bones in his right leg during training on Thursday and may need surgery, his Italian club Lazio said, reports Reuters.

A spokesman said the 26-year-old player, one of the world's most talented midfielders, was taken to Rome's San Giacomo hospital by ambulance from the First Division side's training ground near the Italian capital's Olympic Stadium.

He was having X-rays. "He may need to be operated on to insert a pin," the spokesman told Reuters, adding that the tibia and fibula bones had both been fractured.

Gascoigne's long term absence would be a major setback to new England international coach Terry Venables.

Ctg. Mymensingh in schools cricket qtrs

Sports Reporter

Chittagong Govt High School and Mymensingh Zilla School booked their places in the round of eight in the 12th Nirman schools cricket tournament, recording steady wins in their respective group finals at different city venues yesterday.

Chittagong Govt High fought their way back from the verge of defeat against Comilla Zilla School, squeezing out a squeaky two-wicket victory at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

In a match dominated by the bowlers on the eastern strip of the stadium, the winners, after being given solid start by the opening pair of Liton and Arif, who put on 42 runs in 7.5 overs, lost six wickets in the space of 24 runs to be placed precariously at 91 for eight.

However, with the victory target being a meagre 92, they eventually made it with no further damage, collecting the required runs in 27.1 overs.

Liton with 22 and his opening mate Arif (16) played with ease before Hassan, introduced halfway through the innings, simply tore the innings apart. Hassan finished with fantastic figures of five for 14 in eight overs. Amit also bowled well to capture one for 15 in seven overs.

Earlier, Irfan was equally devastating in his spell of 6.3 overs, which earned him five scalps for only eight runs as the Comilla schoolboys struggled to 91 in 35.3 overs.

Thirty-two extra runs constituted the foundation of the poor total with Shipar and Tareq providing the two double-digit scores by the batsmen. Shipar topscored with 21 and Tareq made 17.

The other match, played at the Dhanmondi Club ground, was also a low-scoring affair with Mymensingh Zilla School, making first use of the wicket, setting up a victory target of 140 runs for the Rajbari students.

Mymensingh Zilla School, bolstered by two fine innings from Afrose (34 not out) and Anwar (25), scored 139 for seven in the stipulated 40 overs.

In reply, Rajbari Govt High folded their innings in 37.2 overs — 17 runs short with five batsmen making it to the double figures.

Aussies 203 for six

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa, Apr 8: Australia, bolstered by a hard hit 41 by Ian Healy managed 203 for six in their allotted 50 overs in the final one-day game in the eight-match series Friday, reports AP.

Australia, deciding to bat on a bare Springbok Park pitch, struggled hard against a disciplined South African attack which for most of the innings kept the runs down.

Right-hander Healy grabbed useful runs in the closing stages of the innings and batting with skipper Allan Border (11) hit 41 runs off 36 balls.

He struck medium pace man Fanie de Villiers for three boundaries and scored his runs off 30 balls.

After the innings had got off to yet another disappointing start — 31 for two in 13 overs — opener Michael Slater and David Boon were made to work hard for runs with a stand 38 off 77 balls.

Slater and Boon replaced out of form Matthew Hayden and Dean Jones respectively. Slater, frustrated by being unable to force the pace against left arm spinner Tim Shaw and dropped on 28 by Andrew Hudson on the long off boundary, fell two overs later, smartly stumped for 34 runs.

Flo Jo hurt

LAKE FOREST, Calif. Apr 8: Olympic gold medalist Florence Griffith-Joyner sustained minor injuries when hit-and-run driver struck her limousine on a freeway, reports AP.

Griffith-Joyner, her husband, Al Joyner, and their chauffeur were travelling north-bound near Lake Forest when a car driven by Eloy Adelberto Griego Jr struck the rear of their vehicle, said officer Bruce Lian, spokesman for the California Highway Patrol.

Griego fled the scene of the crash at 5 am Thursday and was arrested later while trying to hide in the attic of a nearby home, Lian said.

Griffith-Joyner, 34, and chauffeur Eugene Allen Lyles, 50, complained of neck and back pain after the crash and were taken to Saddleback Memorial Medical Centre in Laguna Hills, Lian said. They were treated and released, hospital spokeswoman Jennifer Lefebvre said.

Griego, 49, whose last known address was Albuquerque, NM was booked into Orange County Jail on suspicion of felony hit-and-run driving and attempted breaking and entering, Lian said.



HAPPY TRIO: British number one Matthew Yates (R) celebrates his victory in the Sydney mile roadrace with compatriots runner-up Steve Cram (L) and women's winner Kelly Holmes (C) in Sydney yesterday. — AFP photo

Britons shine in Sydney



SYDNEY, Apr 8: Matthew Yates of Britain surged clear over the final 200 metres (yards) Friday to win the Sydney mile road race ahead of veteran compatriot Steve Cram, reports AP.

Yates, the current British and former European indoor 1,500 metres champion, clocked a race record time of three minutes, 52.15 seconds for the lunchtime dash down George Street in Sydney's commercial heart.

Cram, the former world mile record holder and Sydney winner in 1991, was timed at 3:52.9 just seven weeks after undergoing surgery on a calf injury. Australian Pat Scammell was third in 3:53.4.

Kelly Holmes, the British 800 metres champion, surprised Olympic 1,500 metres champion Hassiba Boulmerka of Algeria to win the women's mile in 4:29.21 as Boulmerka faded over the closing stages.

Boulmerka clocked 4:34.20, two-tenths of a second ahead of third-placed Australian Liz

Miller. The winners of both the men's and women's races collected 10,000 Australian dollars (dlsr 7,000) and a new Holden Nova automobile provided by race sponsor Kellogg's.

"I'm in reasonable shape right now," said Holmes, who trains on army assault courses to boost her fitness and had not competed over the mile distance before.

"It is up to me to maintain that shape for the Commonwealth Games in Canada later this year."

Holmes is a corporal and physical training instructor in the British Army.

"When she (Boulmerka) went behind me, I was waiting for a massive kick from her, but thankfully she stayed behind me," Holmes said.

Defending champion Mary Decker-Slaney of the United States withdrew from the race a few hours before the start with what organizers said was a recurring heel injury.

Decker-Slaney, 35, won the Sydney Mile in both 1991 and

1992, the last time it was contested.

Race publicist Wendy Hinton told the Associated Press that Decker-Slaney had been inconvenienced by the injury when she went for a run late Thursday.

A doctor later told her that running in the race could aggravate the injury and jeopardize her 1994 season, Hinton said.

Decker-Slaney has spent the past 10 months recovering after undergoing surgery on the heel injury last May.

Yates, 25, a former winner of the Fifth Avenue Mile in New York City, ran behind the leading pack before unleashing a withering burst of speed late in the race.

"Coming from the snow and rain in England it was pretty hot here today," Yates said.

"I told you I would come here and break the record and make it a real world event and I have. It's a great start to the season."

The previous race record, set by Cram in 1991, was 3:57.0.

Lendl melts in Holm heat



TOKYO, Apr 8: Top three seeds Pete Sampras, Michael Chang and Boris Becker breezed Friday into the semifinals, but fourth-seeded Ivan Lendl was a surprise elimination in the Japan Open tennis championships, reports AP.

Top-seeded Sampras, World's No 1 player, outlasted seventh-seeded Patrick Rafter of Australia 6-1, 5-7, 6-1 in the quarterfinal match on the hard courts of Ariake Coliseum.

In other quarterfinal matches, second-seeded Chang beat American compatriot David Wheaton 7-6, (7-3), 6-3 and third-seeded Becker of Germany, trounced sixth-seeded American Brad Gilbert 6-3, 6-0.

Henrik Holm, 11th seed from Sweden, blasting 15 service aces, and beat Czech-born American Ivan Lendl 5-7, 6-1, 6-2 in 2 hours, 14 minutes.

Holm slammed four aces, three of them in a row and kept the third game of the first set. He also blasted three straight aces to keep the sec-

ond game of the third set.

Sampras, seeking his sixth victory of the season after winning the Salem Open in Osaka, western Japan, last week, broke the eighth game of the second set at love for 5-3.

Rafter then rallied and took the next four games to win the second set.

Sampras regained his rhythm in the third set and won the third, fifth and seventh games at love.

Asked what happened in the third set after the 5-3 lead, Sampras replied, "Basically I just rushed to victory. I missed simple volleys and lost the set." As No. 1 player of the world, Sampras said he needs more mental toughness and better passing shots.

Wheaton, who has won five straight matches against Chang and lost only one, and Chang each broke twice in the first set.

Chang broke the third and ninth games of the second set. Chang said, "I tried to keep him on the back court, not allowing him to play his serve-and-volley game."

Wheaton said, "my service return was very well but I could not get my rhythm today."

In the rain-delayed third round match, sixth-seeded American Brad Gilbert struggled two tie-breaks before beating 12th-seeded Daniel Vacek of Czechoslovakia 7-6 (8-6), 6-7 (3-7), 6-3.

In the women's action, fourth-seeded American Amy Frazier downed Belgian Sabine Appelmans, No. 2 seed, 7-5, 6-2 and advanced into the finals.

Top-seeded Kimiko Date takes on third-seeded Japanese compatriot Naoko Sawamatsu in other semifinal match on Saturday.

BAF in office hockey qtrs

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Air Force became the first team to advance to the four-team Sonali Bank office hockey super league when they shared points with Sonali Bank in a 1-1 draw at the Hockey Stadium yesterday.

With this draw Air Force, unbeaten in the group matches, upped their collection to eight points from five matches.

In a rather tame encounter, Air Force and Sonali Bank played out the first half without a goal.

Asgar put Air Force into the lead in the 60th minute Ehtesham levelled the margin for Sonali Bank four minutes later.

The draw keeps Sonali Bank's hopes alive for a place in the super league. They now have five points from as many outings.

Sonali Bank must beat Bangladesh Army on Sunday for a berth in the four-team fray.

In the other match of the day at the same venue, Bangladesh Army pulled out in protest against Sadharan Bima's 37th-minute goal from a penalty corner.

Bangladesh Army, who claimed the ball hit the net and thus should have been disallowed, stayed out of the ground for the rest of the match.

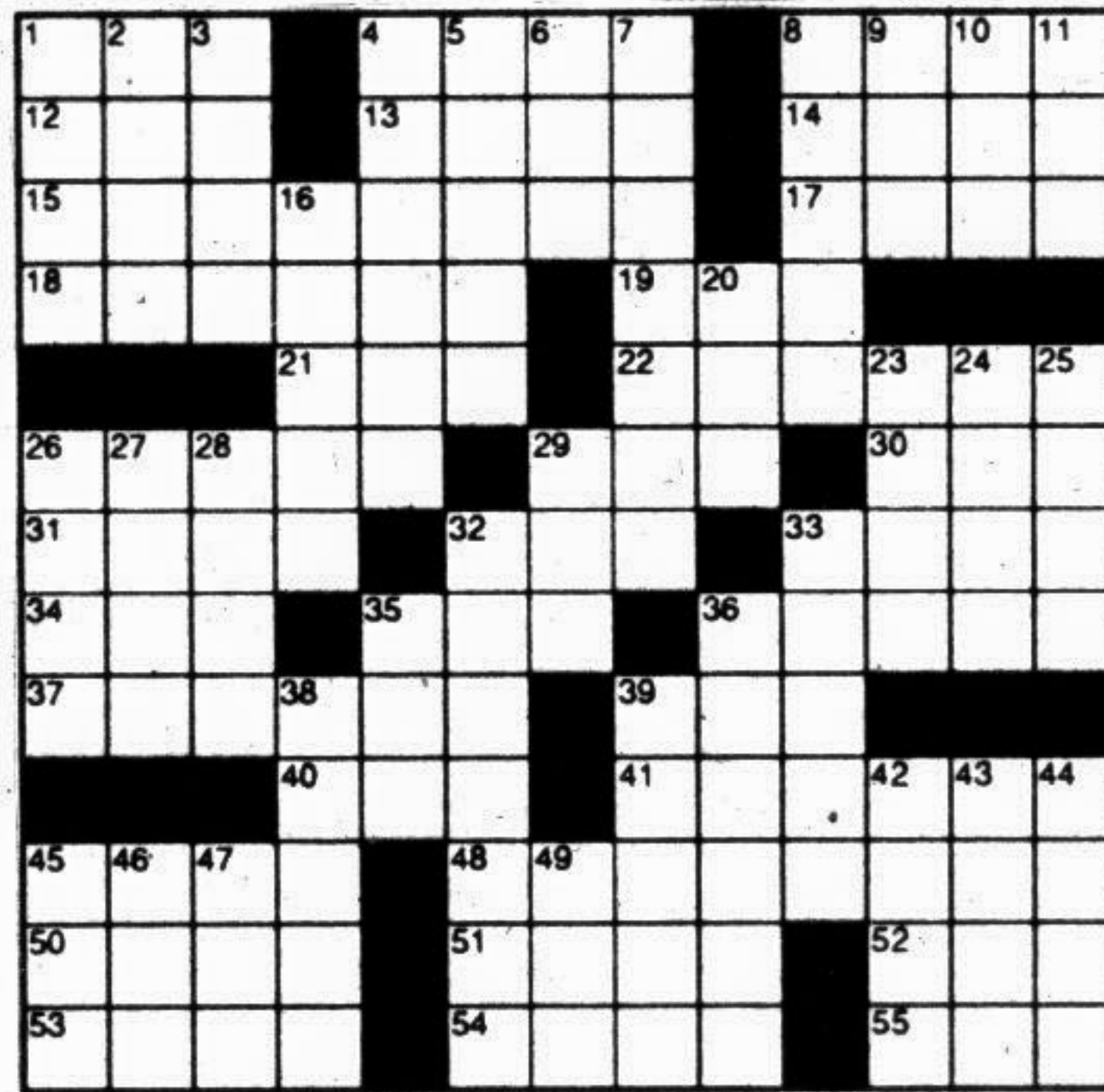
Abdur Razzak, one of the two umpires of the match, said the ball hit the board first before nestling into the net after Irtaza Kader Guddu struck the short corner. He also added that "according to the by-laws Sadharan Bima will earn full points with two goals to their credit."

The tournament committee will decide the fate of the match in a meeting today.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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Yesterday's answer 8-13



CRYPTOQUIP

NLC GBUUCGGSBT GCKEUL
SHE K VJSN SHE
MKM CYMCM, KG BGBKT,
JY K NJC

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: HANDY SUBURBAN HOMEOWNER'S MOTTO: "GET READY, GET SET, MOW!" Today's Cryptoquip clue: U equals C

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