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Penalty costs Deportivo dear

Barcelona's fourth in a row

MADRID, May 15: Deportivo Coruna missed a penalty a minute before the end of their last match of the season to hand a fourth consecutive Spanish league championship to Barcelona on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The penalty miss by defender Miroslav Djukic consigned Deportivo to a 0-0 draw

that of Deportivo, who seemed to have been presented with the league title after a see-saw struggle with Valencia when Nando Martinez was felled in the penalty area in the 89th minute.

Djukic, one of the undoubted Deportivo stars throughout the season, stroked his shot towards the left hand post but Valencia's second string goalkeeper Jose

It was Romario's 30th goal



Barcelona players Ferrer (L), Sergi (C) and Goikoetxea (R), celebrate after their team clinched a fourth consecutive time on Saturday. Barcelona beat Seville 5-2

— AFP photo

Gonzalez dived to save.

Earlier Deportivo had several chances and Brazilian striker Bebeto saw two shots on the turn saved by Gonzalez. But Valencia, recovered from a mid-season slump, were always dangerous on the counter-attack and the match could have gone either way.

With developments at both matches being relayed blow by blow on scoreboards, Deportivo's fans went wild when Argentina international Diego Simeone put Sevilla ahead at Barcelona in the 11th minute.

Deportivo had led the league from the 14th week and at one stage were five points clear of the Catalans. But, with Barcelona showing the form of champions in the crucial final games, the pressure finally told on the relatively inexperienced Galicians.

Barcelona had to suffer agonies in the deciding game against Sevilla, going in at halftime 1-2 down.

But in the second half they turned on full power to sweep the opposition aside and give themselves the perfect launching pad for next Wednesday's European Cup final against AC Milan.

Their agony was nothing to

of his first season with Barcelona, making him comfortably the league's leading scorer.

Midfielder Jose Baker put the icing on the cake with a shot over Unze to make it 5-2 two minutes from time.

In the third match played on Saturday, Athletic Bilbao beat Tenerife 3-2 to qualify for a UEFA Cup place next season at the expense of Sevilla.

The Basques had to win and Sevilla to lose for Athletic to finish fourth and be the third Spanish team in UEFA competition.

The two other places go to Deportivo and third-placed Real Madrid. Barcelona will play in the European Cup again while Real Zaragoza contest the Cup Winners' Cup.

Today's remaining league fixtures will decide relegation and promotion issues between the First and Second Divisions.

The bottom two from Division One go down automatically and the first two from Division Two go up. Seventeenth and 18th in the First Division play off against third and fourth in the Second to decide if they stay up or take the drop.

But nine minutes later Barcelona's ebullient Bulgarian striker Hristo Stoichkov restored order with an imperfectly hit volley which bounced past the clutching fingers of Sevilla goalkeeper Juan Carlos Unze.

The big surprise still seemed a possibility when the Andalucians went ahead again a minute before half-time, Croatian Davor Suker diving to head home near the bar post.

In the second half the impressive skills of Danish international Michael Laudrup and the dynamism of Stoichkov were Sevilla down and it was

Stephenson's spell sinks Hampshire

LONDON, May 15: Franklyn Stephenson, still a considerable all-round force at the age of 35, proved his worth for Sussex yet again on Saturday with five cheap wickets in the English county championship, reports Reuter.

The tall West Indian, who took five for 41 in the first innings against Hampshire, followed up with a burst of five for 39 from 18 overs as the visitors struggled to 112 for five on the third day of their four-day match at Hove.

Stephenson, who signed for Sussex two years ago, completed the double of 1,000 runs and 100 wickets for Nottinghamshire in 1988 during an era when the Trent Bridge pitch was notorious for helping quick bowlers.

With Richard Hadlee, Clive Rice and now Stephenson all departed, the pitch at Trent Bridge now favours the slow bowlers and on Saturday Andy Afford took full advantage to spin Nottinghamshire to victory over Durham with a day to spare.

Left-arm Afford took five for 32 in a 10-over spell to send Durham tumbling from 64 for one to 155 all out leaving Notts needing just 113 for victory.

They achieved that target easily after the early loss of Paul Pollard with West Indian Test batsman Jimmy Adams hitting an unbeaten 37.

Graine Hick, who has gone nine months without a first class century hit 150 for Worcestershire against Gloucestershire the day before the England team for the first one-day international against New Zealand is due to be announced.

Hick overcame a testing spell from West Indian opening bowler Courtney Walsh, the Gloucestershire captain, to record his 73rd first class century with a total of 20 fours and two sixes from 242 balls.

Kiwis crumble yet again

LONDON, May 15: Rein spared New Zealand's blushes on Saturday after another dismal batting collapse but failed to save them from a roasting by team manager Geoff Howarth, reports Reuter.

New Zealand collapsed from 34 for one overnight to 101 for nine in their second innings on the third and final day of their match against an under-strength Middlesex before rain brought the match to a premature close.

"It's not good enough," Howarth said. "People have got to get their act together and start producing the runs.

"We've done a lot of talking about the need for consistency but sometimes talking is not enough."

The experienced players have to pull their weight and start playing as I know they can."

"This is the fourth innings out of six in first class matches on this tour when we've lost a stack of wickets in one session. We've got to toughen up. At the moment positions one to 11 are a problem."

New Zealand, 127 runs ahead of the county champions, who were without five first team players, played one wretched shot after another to give Middlesex every chance of a win before the rain set in.

Captain Ken Rutherford was the worst culprit of all after hitting five boundaries in a promising innings of 23.

Then, as so often in the past, he threw his wicket away, dabbing a delivery from left-arm pace bowler Charles Taylor straight to wicket keeper Keith Brown.

It took the last pair Dion Nash (17 not out) and Danny Morrison (10 not out) to show the weakened Middlesex attack was not unplayable as they added an undefeated 28 for the ninth wicket, the biggest partnership of the innings.

Gidamis Shahanga of Tanzania acknowledges the cheers after winning the annual Munich marathon race with a time of 2:17:27 yesterday.

Peerless Zia

Sports Reporter

International Master Ziaur Rahman beat challenger Ali Amjad Mintu of Dhaka Metropolis to regain solo lead in the qualifying round for the 20th national chess championship after the eighth round at the National Sports Council chess room yesterday.

With this win Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh Biman raised his collection to seven and consolidate the top spot of the eleven round qualifying meet.

Ten players with six points each, followed the leader. They are — International Women's Master Rani Hamid and Rezaul Haq of Biman, Kalmullah Khan and Khandaker Kayes Hassan of Ansars, Saifuddin Labu and Shabana Parvin of BTMC, Abdullah at Rakib of Narayanganj, Ali Amjad Mintu of Dhaka Metropolis. Nahid Miazid of Chittagong and Sheikh Nasir Ahmed of Dhaka University.

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Kasparov consolidates lead



AMSTERDAM, May 15: Professional Chess Association (PCA) world champion Garry Kasparov extended his lead in the third round of the VSB Bank tournament on Saturday when he beat Dutchman Jan Timman in a hard-fought game, reports AP.

The 31-year-old Russian has two and a half points, a point ahead of both Britain's Nigel Short and world number five

Vassily Ivanchuk of Ukraine, who drew their third round game.

Timman, looking for his first win in the four-player tournament, had the advantage of the white pieces, he started with an unrecognised opening, sidestepping Kasparov's huge knowledge of opening theory.

"Obviously he is not prepared to get into an opening debate with Kasparov," said Dutch Grandmaster Gert Lighterink.

The game crystallised into a traditionalist against modernist battle, with Timman aggressively pushing pawns to occupy the centre and Kasparov, increasingly cramped for space, putting pressure on the centre from the flanks.

The heavy-browed Kasparov spent more than his usual amount of time frowning and pacing up and down the playing arena, while Timman's Dutch compatriots in the analysis room started to get excited about the slight advantage he seemed to have.

Timman tried to approach

Kasparov psychologically. The D-pawn is the spear point of his position," said Dutch International Master Paul Boersma, as he watched his rampant pawn buckle, but switched his attack to the king's side.

With his back to the wall, Kasparov defended precisely and began to counter-attack. The curly-haired Dutchman watched his rampant pawn buckle, but switched his attack to the king's side.

The tournament includes all but one of the contenders in 1993's two rival World Champions.

The missing name is Russian Anatoly Karpov, ranked two in the world on playing strength, who last autumn beat Timman for the International Chess Federation (FIDE) world crown.

Kasparov and Short, who were due to contest the world crown under FIDE's auspices, broke away last year and founded the PCA to run their title match. FIDE retaliated by staging a new championship between losing semifinalists Karpov and Timman.

In Monday's fourth round 25-year-old Ivanchuk has white against Kasparov and Timman white against Short, 29.

The VSB tournament, with total prize money of 37,500 guilders (20,000 dollars) has six rounds with players meeting each other twice, once with the white pieces and once with black.

More importantly, Otta Rehagel's team were able to seal a place in Europe next season in the Cup Winners' Cup, a competition they won two seasons ago.

Essen, bidding to win the Cup for the second time after 1953, put the more glamorous northern side under intense pressure after forward Daouda Bangoura pulled a goal back in the 50th minute.

Werder were relieved to pick up the trophy for the third time after triumphs in 1961 and 1991.

The club have major financial problems and licensing irregularities and forced to play amateur football in a regional league next season.

Bremen win German Cup final

BERLIN, May 15: Last year's league champions Werder Bremen rescued some pride from their disappointing season when they beat Second Division Rot-Weiss Essen 3-1 in the German Cup final on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Bremen, who could finish only eighth in the Bundesliga and failed to impress in the European Champions' league, clinched the Cup with first-half goals for Dietmar Beiersdorfer and Austrian Andreas Herzog and an 88th-minute penalty from New Zealander Wynton Rufer.

But the Bundesliga team had to endure a nervous second half before Rufer made sure of victory.

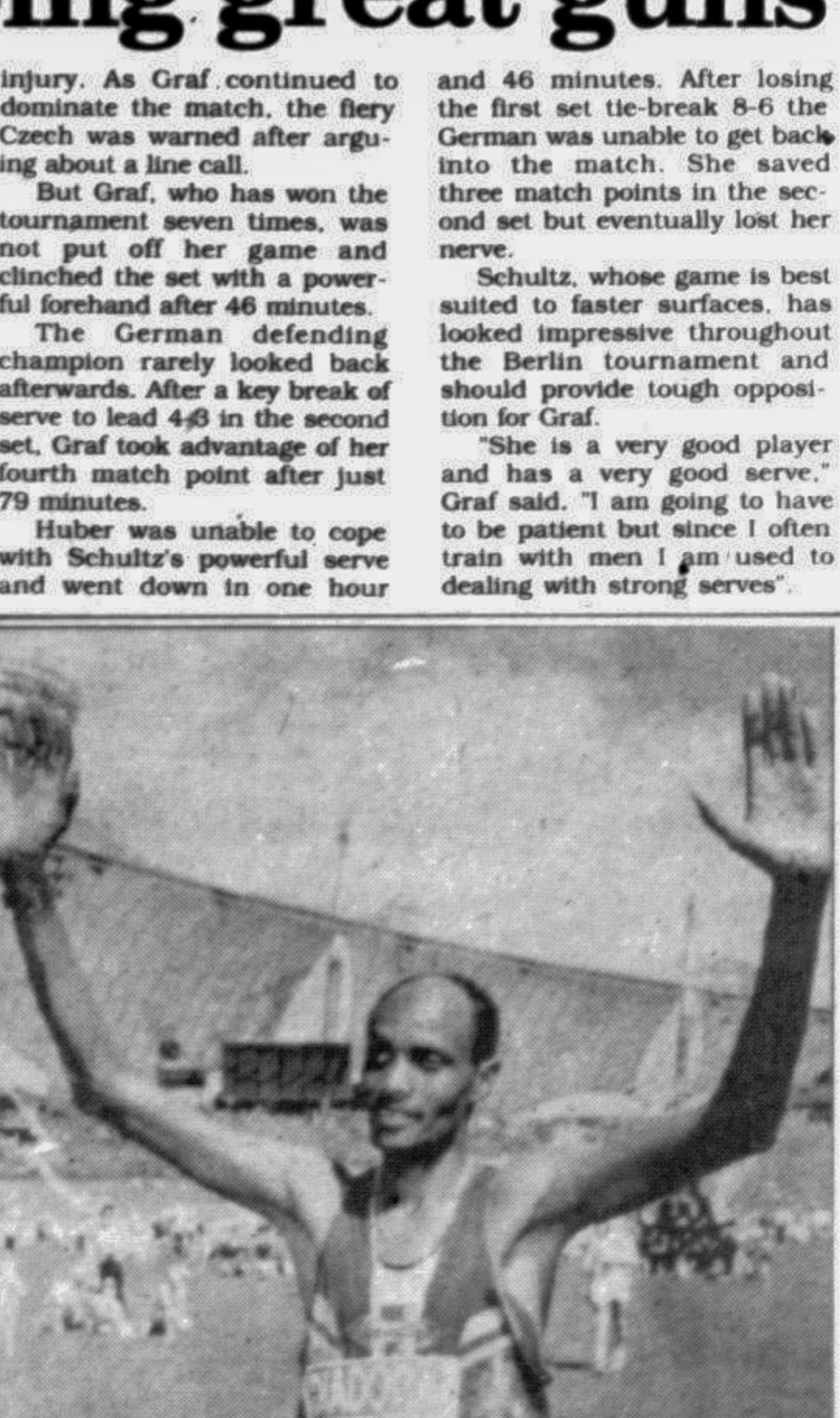
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Essen had caused an upset by reaching the final.

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— AFP photo

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