

In the line of DMFA Cup semis

Sports Reporter

The semifinal line-up for the third Dhaka Metropolitan Football Association (DMFA) Cup will be decided today with the completion of the eight-team second round.

Star-studded Muktiyoddha Krira Chakra Sangsad will take on lowly Bangladesh Boys in day's first match scheduled for a 4 pm start at the Dhaka Stadium while reigning champions Mohammedan Sporting Club face Arambagh Krira Chakra in the second encounter at the same venue from 6 pm onwards as the curtain-raising meet of this year's domestic football season resumes today after a four-day recess on account of the holy Eid Ul Azha.

Mohammedans have already fortified themselves among the last four with four full points from two pool matches. They blanked Bangladesh Boys 5-0 and went on to overpower fancied Muktiyoddha 3-1 in an exiting encounter.

Muktiyoddha, who took yesterday by storm luring almost all the national players from the traditional powers of local football, have only a formality left to ensure a semifinal berth. They have so far collected two points beating Arambagh 2-0.

Their loss to Mohammedans made it imperative for them to win today's match and the inexperienced Bangladesh Boys are highly unlikely to thwart their expected march into the semifinals.

Abahani, the other most crowd-pulling heavyweight besides Mohammedans, have topped their way to the semifinals and that too as the Group B, champions, despite being waylaid by Muktiyoddha's recent 'player coup'.

Brothers Union after a very unpromising start made it to the semis too delivering the goods in the nick of the time with a 1-0 win over Abahani in their last group match.

The much impeded tournament comprising all 20 Senior Division teams has come a long way when viewed against the backdrop of the bickering between the organisers DMFA and two of the top teams — Mohammedans and Abahani over shift in the tournament dates.

The meet remained suspended for eight days and only after hectic reconciliatory efforts did the meet go on the wheels again.

Eng-NZ 2nd one-dayer washed out

LONDON, May 24: Steady rains Sunday forced cancellation of the second one-day international between England and New Zealand at Lord's, reports AP.

The match was originally scheduled for Saturday, but was postponed for 24 hours after persistent showers began falling in the London area Friday night, creating pools of water on the outfield.

By early Sunday, another one inch (2.5 centimeters) of rain had fallen, and umpires David Shepherd and Alan Whitehead initially ruled after an inspection that no play would be possible before lunch. A follow-up inspection revealed a saturated field and the game was called off.

The wash out gave England the series victory by virtue of their 42-run victory in the first match last Thursday at Edgbaston.

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Scindia's robust optimism

NEW DELHI, May 24: India and Pakistan have set aside their bitter political differences in an attempt to ensure the cricket World Cup they will cohost with Sri Lanka in 1996 is a success, reports AFP.

"We are one on this," said Madhavrao Scindia, the former Indian cricket chief who heads the Pak India-Lanka joint Organising Committee (PILCOM). "Nothing will stop us from making it a grand success."

Ever since the Indian sub-continent pipped favourites England last year in a bitter tussle to stage the sixth World Cup finals, doubts have been rife whether the joint bid would work.

Cricket establishments around the world have argued that India and Pakistan, who have not hosted each other at cricket since 1989, cannot possibly work together to organise the World Cup.

Ties between the two countries have worsened in the past four years over a Muslim secessionist campaign in Indian Kashmir which New Delhi accuses Pakistan of fuelling. The neighbours have fought two wars since 1947 over Kashmir.

But Scindia, a political heavyweight in the ruling Congress-I Party, remains unfazed.

"We successfully co-hosted the World Cup in 1987 and there is no reason why we can't do it again," he told AFP.

"Cricket is a religion in this part of the world. Everything pales before it."

The 1996 World Cup, tentatively scheduled to be played between January and March, will be the biggest ever with 12 teams taking part in the 37-match jamboree budgeted at about 50 million dollars.

Seventeen matches will be played in India and 16 in Pakistan including the final at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium, while four will be staged by Sri Lanka.

India and Pakistan will share the four quarter-finals while both the semifinals will be held in India.

Pakistan were allotted the final because India had hosted the championship match in 1987 when Australia beat England at Calcutta's Eden Gardens.

Scindia, who held preparatory meetings in New Delhi last week with Pakistani official Arif Abbasi, foresees no problems in case India and Pakistan were to clash in the knock-out rounds.

"It is a match everyone looks forward to," he said. "Any city, whether in India or Pakistan, would love to hold such a match and would obviously take steps to ensure there is no trouble."

But Scindia did not rule out the possibility of roping in Sharjah in the UAE, where India and Pakistan played, recently in the Australasia Cup, as an additional venue, if necessary.

Sharjah had requested us to allot them a match especially since the UAE has qualified for the World Cup. We have an open mind on the issue," he said.

A clearer picture about the itinerary will emerge when PILCOM meets in London on July 8 and 9 soon after the annual conference of the International Cricket Council.

"I am confident cricket will bring the peoples of the two nations closer," Scindia said. "The World Cup will be a significant event in the history of the sub-continent."



M SCINDIA

By drawing India and Pakistan in separate groups for the preliminary league, organisers have ensured the two Asian rivals do not meet before the knock-out rounds. It also means less travel for teams across the gigantic sub-continent.

Pakistan, the reigning champions, will host all matches in Group B which also has England, South Africa, New Zealand, Holland and the United Arab Emirates.

India will hold all but four league matches in Group A that comprises the West Indies, Australia, Sri Lanka,



An AFP undated file photo shows Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona in action. Much will depend on the wizardry of Maradona if Argentina are to win a third World Cup during next month's finals in the United States.

Lara larrups Somerset

LONDON, May 24: The unstoppable Brian Lara smashed his fifth successive first class century as Warwickshire won a race against the clock to beat Somerset in the county championship on Monday, reports Reuter.

In the process, the West Indian also hit the fastest century of the season, needing just 72 balls.

He scored 136 from 94 deliveries with 14 fours and two sixes before being bowled by leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed.

There were 20 balls remaining when Warwickshire achieved their victory target of 321 off 53.4 overs for the loss of four wickets.

Lara's innings continued a remarkable sequence which began with his world record Test score of 375 against England and continued with scores of 147, 106 and 120 not out for Warwickshire.

He needs one more century to join the illustrious company of three players who have scored six in successive first class innings — Australia's Donald Bradman, CB Fry of England and Mike Procter who was playing for the then Rhodesia.

Tendulkar to lead India against World XI

NEW DELHI, May 24: Cricket fans of Calcutta and Delhi are in for a rich cricket fair, reports PTI.

An Indian XI, led by Sachin Tendulkar, will clash with a World XI, in Calcutta on June 1 and in Delhi on June 3 to provide funds for the benefit of Arjuna awardees.

Stalwart all rounder Kapil Dev, who is organising the two day-night matches at the instance of Sports Minister Mukul Wasnik, told reporters here last night that a package of assistance, different from that provided by the government to sportspersons so far, was being worked out.

He expressed the hope that this effort would become an annual fixture and matches would feature matches in other disciplines like hockey, football, tennis and, even chess if support is forthcoming.

The world's leading wicket-taker, both in Tests and in one-dayers, conceded that the weather would be too hot. "But, with the cricket programmes being tightly arranged, this was the only time we could get."

That was the reason, he said, the two matches were arranged in Calcutta's Eden Gardens and Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, as day nighters. The two matches, of 45 overs each side, would be played from 1530 hrs to 1830 hrs and 1900 hrs to finish.

Kapil Dev said the match in Calcutta would be for the Coal India Cup and the one in Delhi for Four Square Cup.

To attract fans, he said, a raffle would be held in Delhi of the tickets sold and the person holding the lucky number would receive a car donated by Luxor.

Indonesia's fine double

JAKARTA, May 24: Indonesia stamped their dominance over international badminton by winning the Thomas and Uber Cups — the sports' premier team competitions — with a masterful display of skill, tenacity and teamwork, reports Reuter.

The wins, achieved in front of thousands of partisan fans during the 10-day meet that ended on Saturday, sounded an ominous warning to the badminton world that Indonesia would be a formidable giant to topple.

"There is no question that Indonesia's men are the top in the world," Michael Dickhausen, a German national junior badminton coach, told Reuters.

"For the women, Susi Susanti should continue to dominate until 1996, at which time Mia Audina will be among the top players," he said.

Indonesia's men's team, already the world's best, boasts six of the world's top 10 singles players and the two highest-ranked doubles pairs.

Proof of Indonesia's depth of talent was highlighted during the final against Malaysia on Saturday, when world number one Joko Suprianto did not play because teammate Heryanto Arbie had a better record against Malaysia's top player, Rashid Sidek.

Dickhausen said one of the reasons for Indonesia's success was their efficient training techniques and ability to spot talent.

"They have the best training system in the world. We do not have anything to compare with this in Europe. They take players at a very young age and nurture them through," he said.

The victories, however, were marred by the behaviour of zealous Indonesian fans who disrupted both finals with their constant baiting of opposition players. During the men's final fans also threw plastic bottles at Malaysia's players.

Indonesia's men defeated Malaysia 3-0 in a controversial shortened tie. On Friday Indonesia's women scraped home against defending champions China after earlier dispatching match favourites, South Korea in the semifinal.

"It felt it was best for safety reasons (to stop the match). There were probably more than 12,000 spectators in the stadium and it has a capacity for about 10,000," Rager Johansson, honorary chairman for both events, said after the men's final.

The win by Indonesia's women, their first in a 19 years, heralded the debut of 14-year-old Mia Audina, who showed remarkable maturity and coolness in beating China's Zhang Ning in the decisive fifth rubber for the Indonesian win.

Audina, with one of the few all-out attacking games in women's badminton, appears destined to take over world number one Susi Susanti's mantle in the future.

Martina, Sabatini ousted

PARIS, May 24: Gabriela Sabatini joined Martina Navratilova as a stunned first-round upset victim Tuesday at the French Open, reports AP.

Sabatini, a former US Open champion, won the first set against 108th-ranked Silvia Farina of Italy, then stumbled to a 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 defeat. It was the first time since the 1985 US Open that the Argentine, seeded eighth here, lost in the first round of a Grand Slam.

Another big-name loser was Ivan Lendl, a four-time French Open champion who failed to earn a seeding this year. He lost in the first round for the second straight year, this time 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 to France's Arnaud Boetsch.

Courier, the 1991 and 1992 champion but now only the No. 7 seed, downed France's Jean-Philippe Fleurian, 6-1, 6-4, 6-4.

Bruguera, a surprise victor over Courier in last year's final, is seeded only sixth and has been struggling with shoulder problems. But the Spaniard's muscular baseline game looked devastating through most of his 6-1, 6-1, 7-6 (-7-3) win over 68th-ranked Martin Damm of the Czech Republic.

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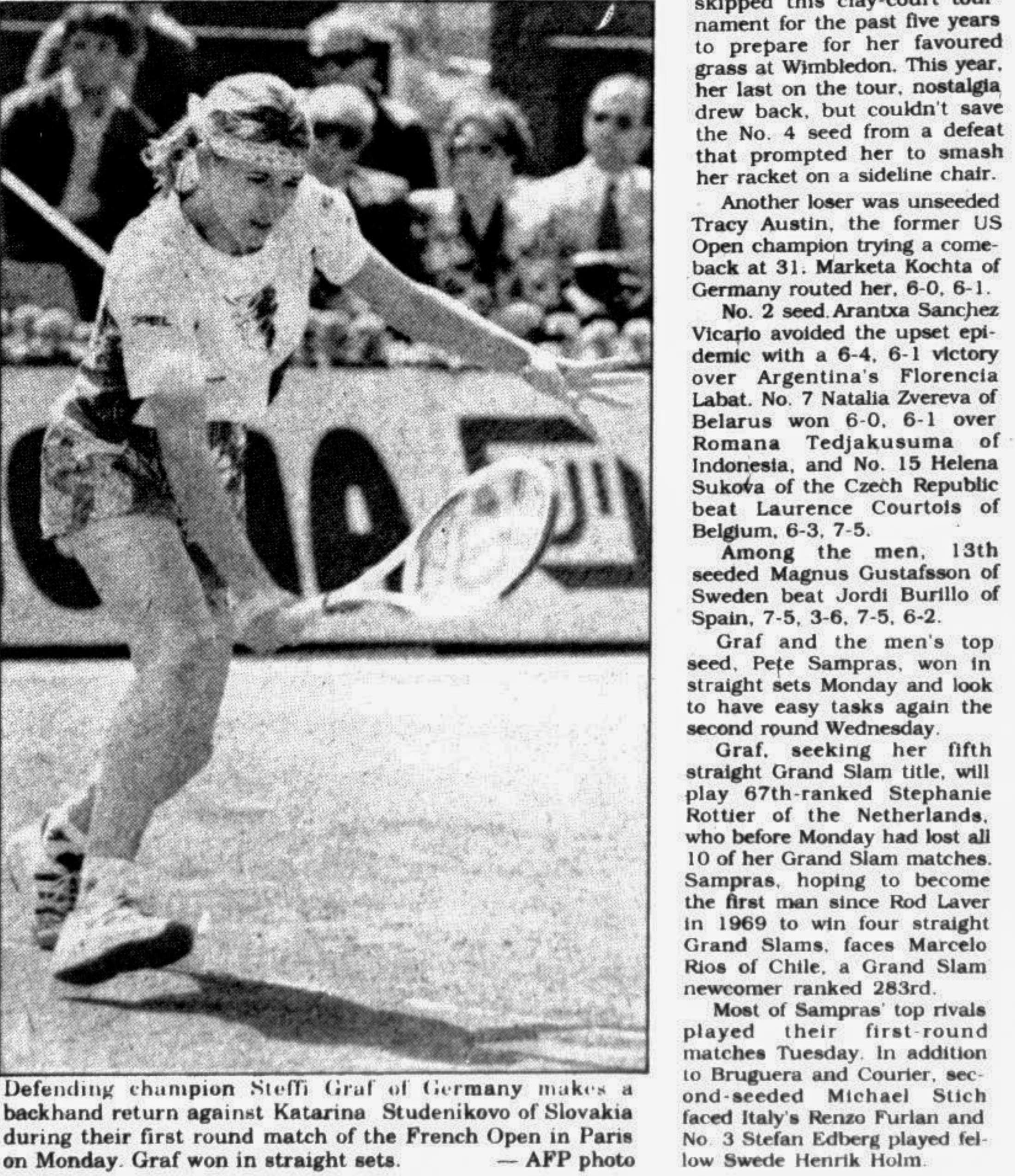
Sabatini, without a title in more than two years, lost on the same No. 1 court where she blew a 6-1, 5-1 lead to Mary Joe Fernandez in last year's quarterfinals. This time 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 to France's Arnaud Boetsch.

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Defending champion Steffi Graf of Germany makes a backhand return against Katarina Studenikova of Slovakia during their first round match of the French Open in Paris on Monday. Graf won in straight sets. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	1 Adjunctive for Jud	5 Farm cart	9 You can't stand to have one	12 Bouffant do	13 Cartoonist Peter	14 Mimic	15 "Topper" star	17 End for beat or peace	18 Common solecism	19 Bet both ways	21 Bucket handles	24 Vitality	25 "Desire Under the —"	26 Area between arches	30 Intent	31 Informal talk	32 Coach Par-seghian	33 With delicateness	35 Estival														
DOWN	1 Atl. counterpart	2 Son-gun link	3 Stick figure?	4 Missouri nine	5 Caution	6 "I smell —"	7 B&B	8 — doing (no)	9 Government-given tract	10 Buy — in a poke	11 Lapdog, briefly	16 Soldiers, for short	20 Conclusion	21 Abacus component	22 Inter-follower	23 New American	24 Wild and crazy	26 Unlikely	27 Chum	28 Part of QED	29 Missing the boat?	31 Brandy recipe	34 Gun-lobby org.	35 — Austen (mountain)	37 Torched	38 Philosopher	39 Mississippi feeder	40 Grate	41 Picnic hamperers	44 Charlotte of "Facts of Life"	45 Tribute in verse	46 Chihuahua cheer	47 — "Rosenkavalier"

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 9-21

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CRYPTOQUIP

RU PNRDUQRERN NWOVQ
NGPD EGTWOP GP
QVWUWTDV MGP QSD
PQQGD'P-PQGV MRQUDDP
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN THE LITTLE FISH SAW THE BIG FISH GET HOOKED, HE KNEW HE WAS FINISHED.
Today's Cryptoquip clue: N 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.