



Share The Passion



On other side of the Atlantic

PASADENA, Calif. July 17: The World Cup has had its first taste of American organization, heat, humidity and hospitality.

Now it goes back almost to where it started, in cooler, creative, sometimes chaotic France, reports AP.

Organisers of the 1998 tournament have made careful note of how soccer's biggest event was staged in the highest profile nation in the world.

The French can't compete in terms of 90,000 seater venues and continuous sunny conditions enjoyed in the United States.

But soccer has its traditions and the French, who staged the third World Cup in 1938 and provided the original trophy, have soccer in their blood.

"US culture is not the same as French culture so it will be different in 1998," said Michel Platini, who guided the French team to the semifinal in 1982 and a European Championship triumph on home soil two years later.

"The French welcome will be a different thing."

The gifted former Juventus midfielder is on the organising committee for the 1998 event, which will have 32 teams in instead of the 24 who qualified for the tournament in the US.

Although that means more games will be played, the tournament will be no longer than the one staged in the United States.

Two teams will qualify from

each of eight first round groups and the competition, as now, will continue on a knockout basis.

"It will be the first time so many teams have participated," said Gerard Ernault, director of communications and special events for the 1998 competition.

"It will be the most univer-



MICHEL PLATINI said World Cup ever in 1998. Ernault was impressed by the way the Americans organized the 1994 competition and managed to fill the huge stadiums. But he feels the French World Cup will have something different.

"It will be the last competition of the century and, symbolically for us, it's very important because the World Cup was created by a French person, Jules Rimet, at the be-

ginning of the century," he said.

The first World Cup was called the Jules Rimet trophy and presented for keeps to Brazil in 1970 when they became first team to win it three times.

The French are yet to choose the venues for the 1998 tournament and haven't decided where in Paris to build a new stadium for the final and Ernault acknowledges there are a few disadvantages.

"We do not have such large stadiums as in America. Our stadiums hold about 40,000," he said.

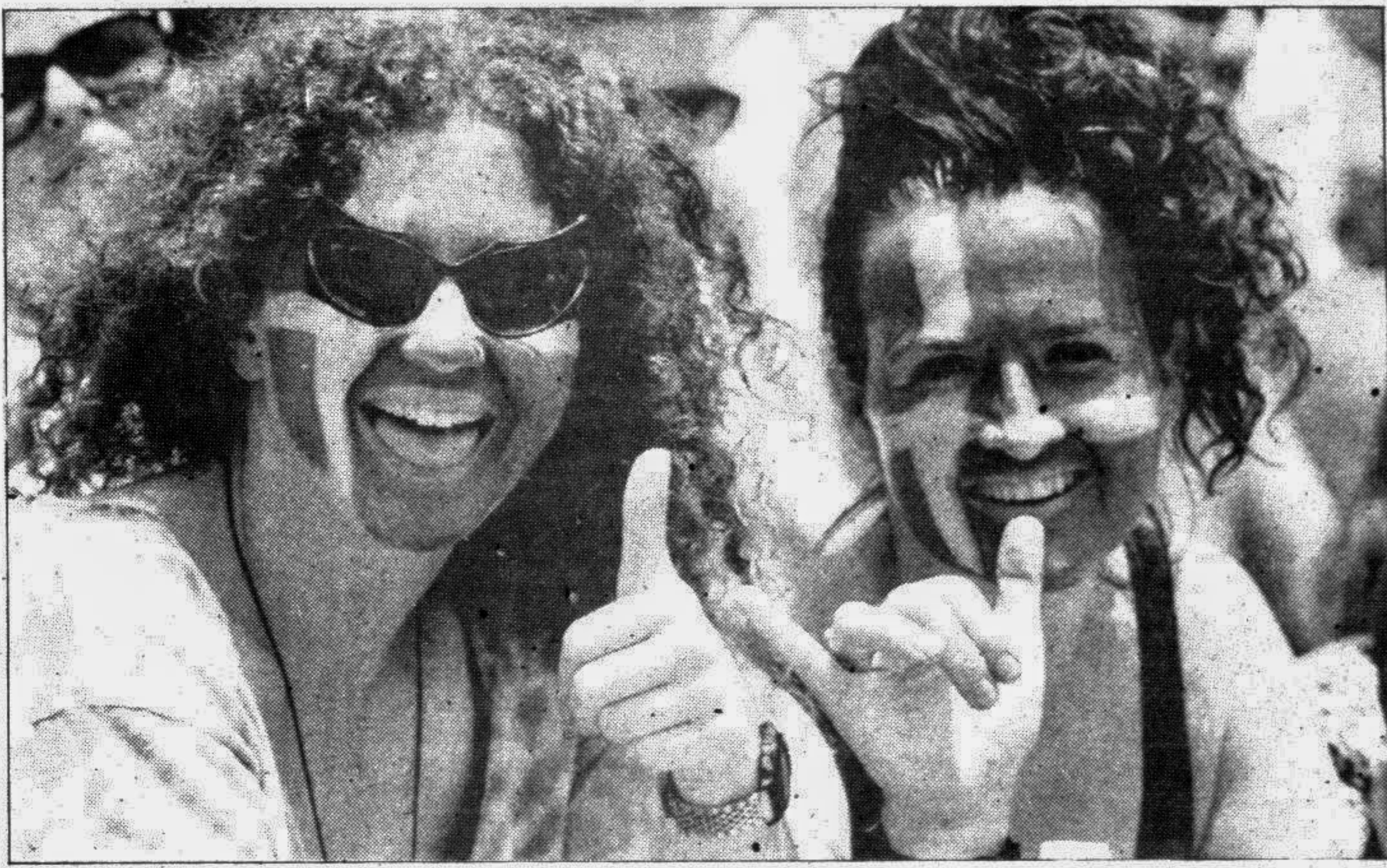
Among the advantages, however, is travel.

Because the United States is so large, "teams and fans had major tasks planning their travel ahead because no one knew where they would be going after the first round.

France is about one seventh the size of the US so that should not be a problem, Ernault said.

Heat and humidity won't be a problem, either. France will probably enjoy its best weather of the year but players will not be gasping in the upper 30s and 40s Celsius (90s and 100s Fahrenheit) like in Orlando, Dallas, Stanford and Pasadena.

The kickoff times, usually mid-evening local time on weekdays and afternoon at weekends, will suit Europeans and Africans who watch on TV while Asians may have to wait up until early morning and North and South Americans will see the games in the early afternoon or mid-morning.



Two Swedish fans with their faces painted in national colours cheer their side on before the start of the third-place decider of the World Cup against Bulgaria at the Pasadena Rose Bowl on July 16. — AFP photo

BCCB picks 15 for Malaysia meet

The Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) has named a 15-man squad for the upcoming international youth cricket championship to be held in Malaysia next month.

Naimur Rahman Durjoy, who plays for Mohammedans, has been named the skipper while his clubmate Khaled Masud Pilot will be the vice-captain in the eight-team meet.

Besides Bangladesh, Test-playing Sri Lanka, JAE, Holland, East and Central Africa, Papua New Guinea, Canada and hosts Malaysia will take part in the meet.

The selected players are: Naimur Rahman Durjoy (captain), Khaled Masud Pilot (vice-captain), Zayed Omar Belim Golla, Sharfuddinul Iqbal, Shahid Saikat, Shariful Haq Plabon, Zakaria Imtiaz, Mofizul Islam Biplob, Shahriar Hossain Bidyut, Mehrab Hossain, Shahid Ahmed Sajal, Morshed Ali Khan Sunon, Sayed Rakib Hassan Bappi, Al-Amin, Mosadir Litu and Sohel Islam.

The players have been asked to report at the BCCB office at 5 pm today.

SE Asia's biggest stadium opened

KUALA LUMPUR, July 17: Southeast Asia's biggest stadium has been opened in Malaysia's central Selangor state in an attempt to draw international sport, reports AP.

The 460 million ringgit (180-million dollar) Shah Alam Stadium, launched by the ruler of Selangor late Saturday, can house up to 81,000 spectators, officials said.

The stadium is equipped with an Olympic standard synthetic track and football field, similar to the ones in Italy, Saudi Arabia and Japan, said Selangor chief Minister Muhammad Taib at the opening.

The authorities hope to make Shah Alam, the Selangor capital city, a centre for international sports, said Muhammad. The Malaysian motor cycle Grand Prix is already held on a nearby track at Shah Alam.

Spread on a 180 acres (72 hectares) site, the new stadium has an international standard athletics track and the football pitch has a 700,000 dollar drainage and irrigation system. The stadium also has the world's second largest scoreboard — the largest being in Germany.

Smith axed from England Test squad

LONDON, July 17: South African-born England batsman Robin Smith was dropped Sunday from the team to play the historic first Test against the country of his birth starting at Lord's Thursday, reports AP.

England team: Mike Atherton (captain), Alec Stewart, Graham Gooch, John Crawley, Graeme Hick, Craig White, Stephen Rhodes, Phillip DeFreitas, Darren Gough, Ian Salisbury, Angus Fraser, Shaun Udal.

It's been an odd World Cup

NEW YORK, July 17: It's been an odd World Cup.

Host America's first cup tournament has been a hit at the turnstiles, with TV networks buoyed by surprise ratings, and with merchandisers. It's also had a stream of threats, scams, tragedy and walkouts. Some examples:

— On the day Italy beat Bulgaria to advance to the World Cup final, thieves using a Somerset Hills, hotel master key stole \$30,000 cash from the Italian players' rooms. The hotel said it would reimburse players for the losses. Star striker Roberto Baggio lost \$8,000 himself. New Jersey police, however, ruled as unfounded a break-in reported in June by the Greek team at their Giants Stadium locker room.

— Speaking of scams, nearly 400 Irish fans were left stranded in the States in a ticket scam that got them to the Boston and New York area but then saw the London tour guides supposed to escort them outscaping their World Cup tickets. Sports authorities eventually gave the conned fans passes.

Colombia made much of the bad news at the cup. A pre-tournament favourite of no less a soccer authority than Pele, Colombia lost to the United States when one of their players accidentally knocked in an own-goal. The team was the first eliminated from the cup. Then gunmen upset with Andres Escobar's own-goal shot him to death before dawn in the parking lot of a Medellin bar.

— Mexican fans made a mess of things too. Two died

and hundreds were hurt in celebratory masses in downtown Mexico City following Mexican win in the cup. Hispanic fans rooting for the Mexican team roared down Huntington Park streets in suburban Los Angeles, injuring police and by-standers.

— Diego Maradona, who led Argentina to the title in 1986, led his team down the tubes when he tested positive for banned drugs and was suspended from the cup. Argentina, who had been routing opponents, feel meekly the next two games and went home a quick second-round casualty.

— FIFA was fearful going into the games because the cup had never been hosted in the States. Its fears were justified because just days before the games began, only 29 per cent of the US population polled said it even knew the World Cup was being held on American soil.

— The upset US win over Colombia and a valiant try in a loss to Brazil on America's Independence Day led to huge rating hits for ABC and ESPN TV networks, which were surprised by how many households were tuning into the 52 games. A record 3.6 million fans filled the nine US cup venues as well.

— One beneficiary of the World Cup was a spruced-up neighbourhood just outside Washington's RFK Stadium, where streets were suddenly resurfaced. Adrian Thompson said he had lived there 25 years when, bang, "international soccer comes to town and they're re-doing the streets."

— The Nigerian team had to such fortune. Nobody showed up — not even families — at

Lagos airport for its trip to the United States, where it had a spirited run before bowing out in the second round to Italy. Nigerian players lashed out at the end at coach Clemens Westerhof for his on-field strategy; Westerhof resigned and departed on a biking trip with his son.

— Pasadena officials were insulted when World Cup organisers put up a giant sign at the Rose Bowl indicating the site of the final is part of Los Angeles. It's not; Pasadena is a pleasant suburb east of LA City officials demanded the sign come down.

— LA police tried a quick one themselves, warning of a "blue flu" sickness on the eve of World Cup play unless they got a raise. They even threatened to put an ad in overseas newspapers saying the city wasn't safe, unless they got their first raise in two years.

— Cameroon players threatened their own walkout. It seems they hadn't gotten money for months and on the eve of their first cup match in threatened not to play unless paid. Cameroon officials with suitcases of cash showed up in time; the players played ... and went out in the first round.

— A Macao coffee shop owner also went out, suffering a fatal heart attack after staying up late, two straight nights watching World Cup play live from the States.

— Hyundai shippard workers went on strike to watch Korea play in the World Cup, timing the walkout by the 25,000 workers for just before the Korean squad took the field against Bolivia in first-round action. It didn't matter much; neither team scored and neither passed on to the next round.

Iran allows women back in

TEHRAN, July 17: Iranian sports authorities decided to waive a law barring women from watching live sports events and allow them to attend the Asian Football Youth Games opening here Monday, the official Iranian news agency Irna said Sunday, reports AFP.

Football Federation chief Amir Abedini told Irna that families would be allowed in stadiums during the Games to accompany their teenage children who were too young to attend on their own.

However, the ban would only be lifted for matches between under-16 footballers from Iran, Indonesia, India and Bahrain, in Group Four of the Asian Games, he said.

Women were banned from public sports events after the 1979 Islamic Revolution as part of moves to segregate the sexes according to Islamic principles.

The latest decision appeared to be a compromise between the federation, which wants the ban lifted, and Islamic hardliners opposed to any easing of the restriction.

The federation announced on July 9 that women would be allowed into stadiums to watch football matches live, prompting sharp criticism from the radicals.

"What is the purpose of having women at our stadiums and to what degree could their presence help our young footballers achieve success?" asked the Daily Kayhan.

The Jomhuri Islami newspaper also opposed any lifting of the ban, saying it would be contrary to Islamic and revolutionary values.

Sweden in Davis Cup semis

CANNES, France, July 17: Sweden knocked France out of the Davis Cup Sunday just hours after French tennis lost one of its Davis Cup masters, reports AP.

Stefan Edberg put Sweden in the Davis Cup semifinals as he beat Cedric Pioline of France in the first of Sunday reverse singles, 6-4, 6-3, 6-1.

The victory gave Sweden an unbeatable 3-1 lead with the final singles to play. Henrik Holm of Sweden was scheduled to play Olivier Delaite of France. Delaite was called to substitute for Arnaud Boetsch, who had to withdraw due to shoulder and hip problems.

Sweden now awaits the winner of the US-Netherlands quarterfinal. It was the seventh time that Sweden has won against France in 10 Davis Cup meetings.

Ironically, France lost this year's Davis Cup quarterfinal to Sweden hours after Jean Borotra, one of the famed "Four Musketeers" of French tennis, died.

A minute of silence was held before the start of the day's play.

With temperatures above 40 degrees Centigrade (104 F) on the court for the third day, Edberg easily beat Pioline.

Defence — unnoticed, unsung

LOS ANGELES, July 17: The unsung heroes of the World Cup are not in the business of scoring glorious goals like Roberto Baggio, make no spectacular saves like Thomas Ravelli and rarely carve out clear chances like George Hagi, reports Reuter.

But the defenders with the unglamorous job of stopping the tournament's glory hunters from scoring have a vital and often decisive role to play and it is no coincidence that finalists Brazil and Italy possess the best in the business.

When a FIFA panel of experts chose their team of the US final on Saturday they took their entire defence line from the two teams who meet in Sunday's showdown in Pasadena.

Small boys imitating the World Cup gods they see on television will pretend to be a Romario, a Juergen Klinsmann or a Hristo Stoichkov in a kikkaboo with their friends.

Few would leap into action proclaiming they were Jorginho, Marcio Santos or Paolo Maldini. But these players are the rocks on which Brazil and Italy have built success and form FIFA's back three in their All-Star team.

A month before the tournament Marcio Santos was an obscure reserve in the Brazilian squad, on Saturday he earned the ultimate accolade of being described by no less an authority than Pele as the best defender in the World Cup.

Marcio Santos at 24 the youngest member of the Brazilian back four, is a central defender with Bordeaux in France. He won his place in the side only because of injuries to the more experienced Ricardo Gomes and Carlos Mozzer.

His calm, authority, sound

positioning and superb tackling have marked him out above the rest and he has even found time to go forward and show the attackers how it is done with an excellent headed goal against Cameroon.

Jorginho, arguably the best right back at the 1990 finals, is more in evidence thanks to his surging runs down the flank, one of which led to Romario's goal against Sweden to put Brazil in the final.

"He's the only one who gives speed and control to the Brazilian game, said an admiring Pele.

When Ricardo Rocha dropped out with injury in the first match against Russia, Brazil were able to plug the gap by slotting in Aldair alongside Marcio Santos in central defence.

The Roma defender, a last minute call-up to the squad, has been magnificent in a defence which has conceded just three goals in six games and kept a clean sheet in four.

Brazil may be more famed for the traditional artistry of their midfielders and forwards but the never ending depth of their back row players was shown when Leonardo was suspended from the competition after elbowing American Tab Ramos.

The 30-year-old Branco, reputed to be off form and well past his best, stepped in to do a flawless job at left back and fired home a spectacular 30-metre free-kick to boot to win the quarter-final against the Netherlands.

The Italian defence, hit by injury and suspensions may lack the same solidity but in Maldini they have a man destined to go down in soccer history as one of the greatest of all time.

A fixture in the Italian team since he was a teenager, Maldini switched effortlessly from his customary overlapping left back role to the con-



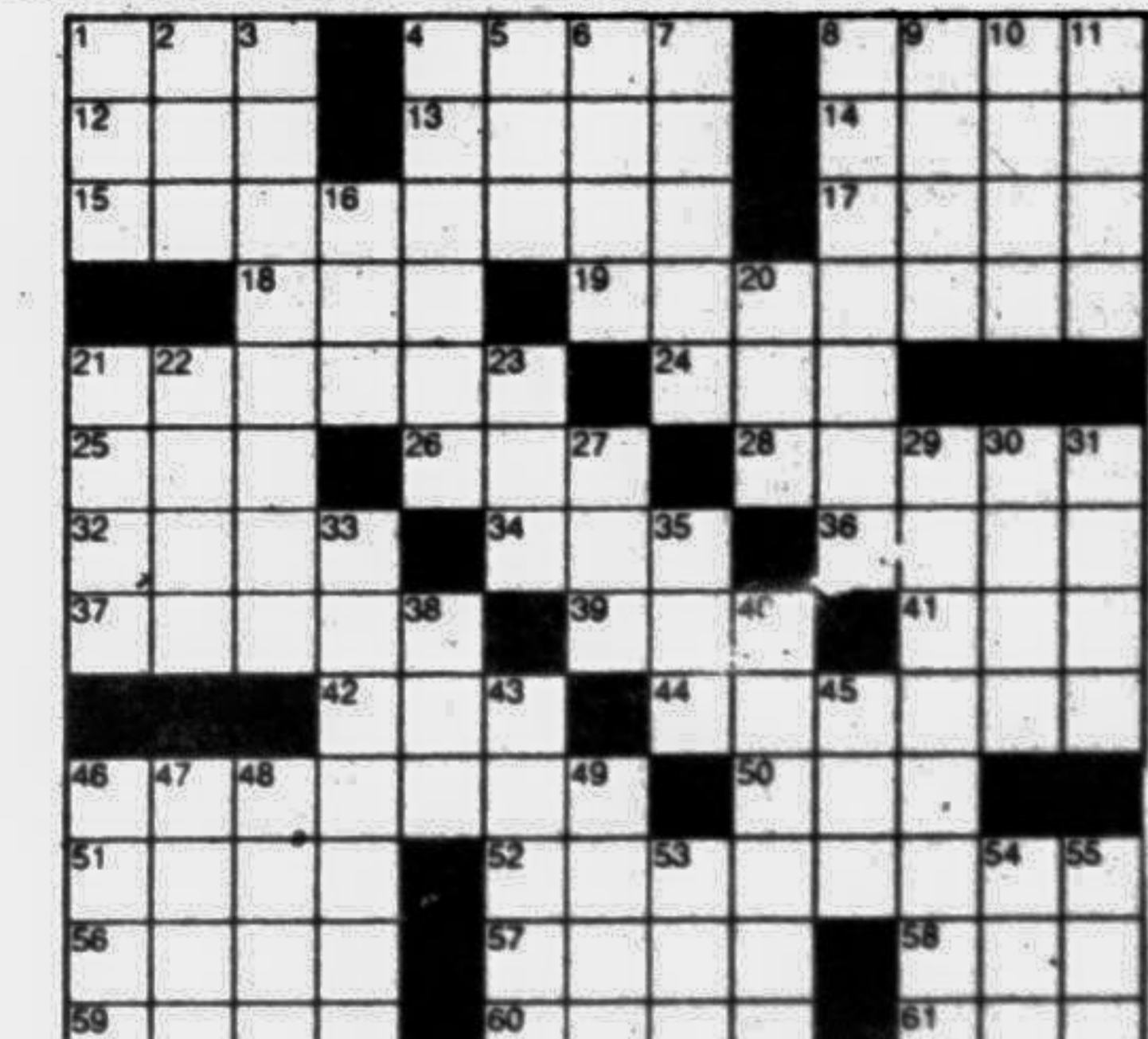
South African Jonty Rhodes, well known for his amazing fielding skills, plays one off his toes during a Tetley Bitter Challenge match against Northampton on July 16. South Africa made 296 for at the end of the first day. David Ripley, is the man behind the stumps. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 USO audi-ence, often 44
 - 4 Ecdysi-ast's move
 - 8 Bouffant do
 - 12 Essen expletive
 - 13 La Scala show-stopper
 - 14 Talon
 - 15 Opera singer Milnes
 - 17 Peregrinate
 - 18 Massage
 - 19 Fine French porcelain
 - 21 "Man of a Thousand Faces"
 - 24 Collar
 - 25 Destiny
 - 26 Aries
 - 28 Snappish sorts
 - 32 Medicinal plant
 - 34 Court
 - 36 Quaker's address
 - 37 Thought cost?
 - 39 Kramden's carriage
 - 41 Linguistic
 - suffix
 - 42 Rep's rival
 - 44 Intense fear
 - 46 Stupid
 - 50 Neighbor of Nev.
 - 51 Plant-growth regulator
 - 52 Robin's greenery
 - 56 Curry and Rice
 - 57 Story
 - 58 Prompt
 - 59 Clinton's hometown
 - 60 Skewer
 - 61 Relatives DOWN
 - 1 One state of matter
 - 2 Pronoun
 - from JFK
 - 3 Famed English cabinet-maker
 - 4 Clip-joint operator?
 - 5 Spoon-bender Geller
 - 6 Floss structure
 - 7 Michael of Monty Python
 - 8 Tumbler
 - 9 Whip
 - 10 Four-star review
 - 11 Has bills
 - 16 Diamond score
 - 20 Carnivore's throat
 - 21 Clean the erasers
 - 22 Links target
 - 23 Go way off course
 - 27 All the extras?
 - 29 Skilled sleuth
 - 30 Cancun coin
 - 31 Crystal gazer
 - 33 Biker
 - 35 Unconscious
 - 38 Longing
 - 40 Arcane
 - 43 Drizzles
 - 45 Crude
 - 46 High schooler's bane, often
 - 47 Hodge-podge
 - 48 Freeway access
 - 49 Bloke
 - 53 New Haven collegian
 - 54 Certainly, in Somme
 - 55 Where Daniel took charge

Solution time: 23 mins.

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ALI IDEA NOON
ZOO SAMBROWNE
ZETAS SIR
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SAMSNEAD KILO
UBI GENIE NAM
FEELS SAMSPADE
STOWE ISTO
ARC EIGHT
SAMM ALONE NEW
ATOP ARAM ARI
NEWS PEGS WON



CRYPTOQUIP

BUIBEH XFBNDIB BJBX-
XRMN ZTU XFBHIB H
JVVRWU: "R'P SJBERMN
PC SIC ZTBJFNT WJDDUNU."
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SAID OF DAMAGED PORCELAIN STATUE OF A MAN: IT'S GOT A CHIP ON ITS SHOULDER.
Today's Cryptoquip clue: X 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.