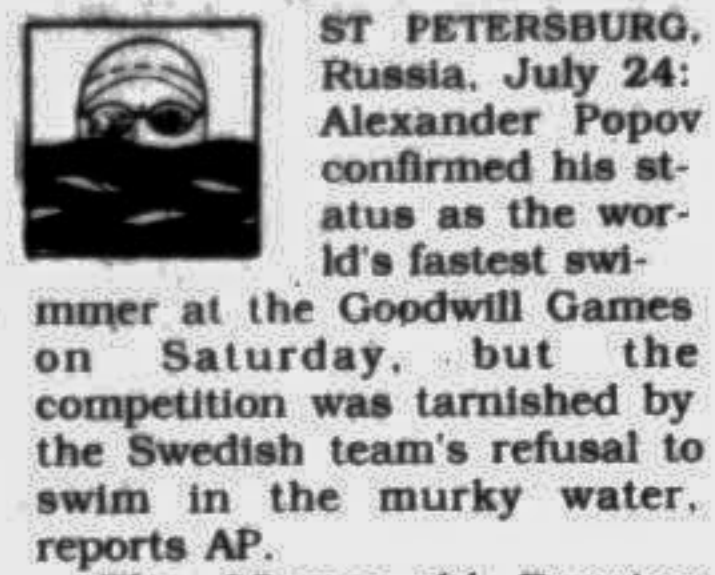


Popov sets record straight



ST PETERSBURG, Russia, July 24: Alexander Popov confirmed his status as the world's fastest swimmer at the Goodwill Games on Saturday, but the competition was tarnished by the Swedish team's refusal to swim in the murky water, reports AP.

The 22-year-old Russian was ahead all the way in his 50-metre showdown with world record-holder Tom Jager of the United States, put Popov's winning time of 22.55 seconds was well off Jager's record of 21.81.

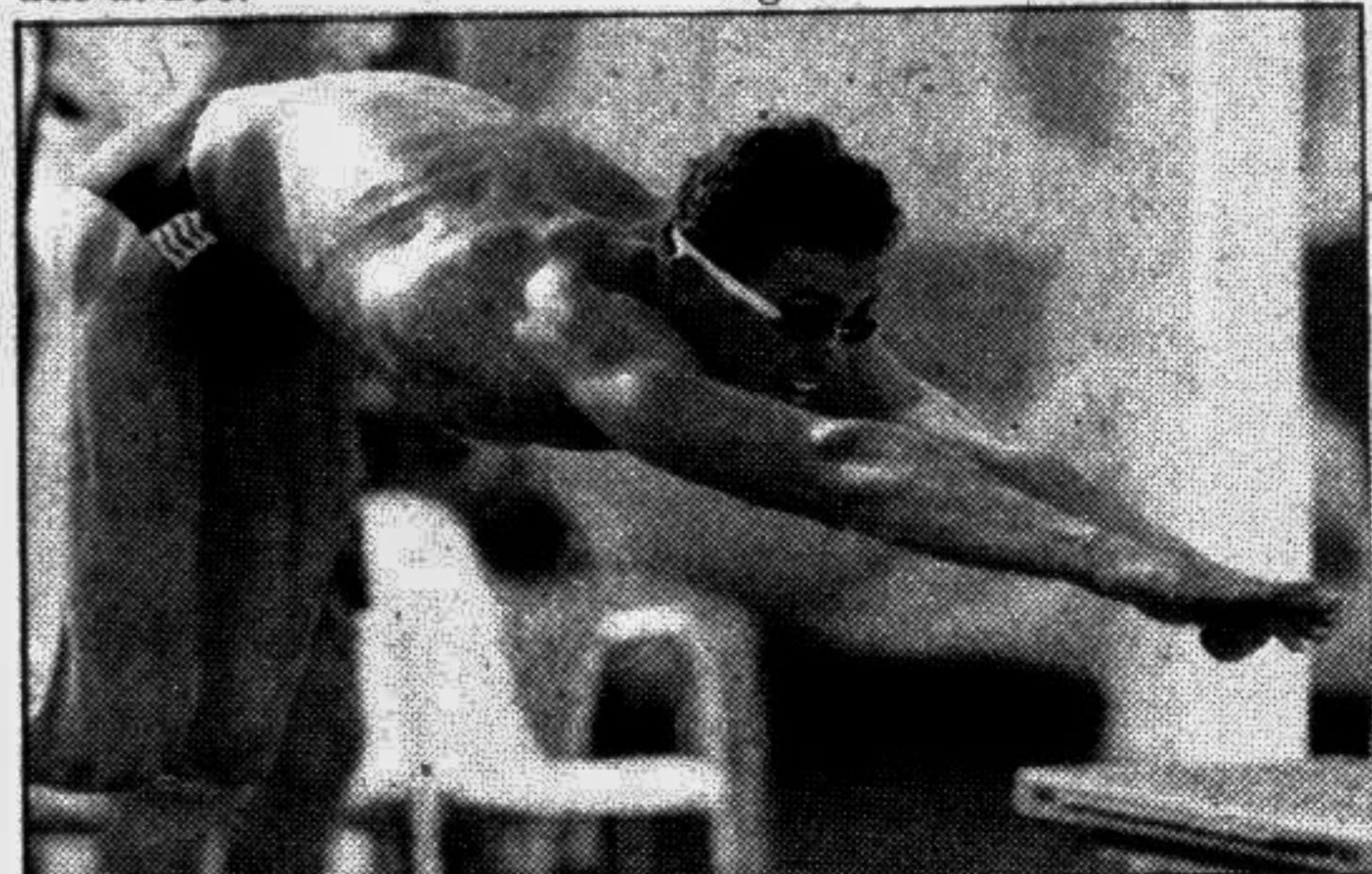
"I'm not like a world record-breaking machine," said Popov, who recently claimed the world record at 100 metres. "I'm not ready for the record yet, maybe when Tom retires."

The green water at the SKA pool — caused by a filtration problem that delayed the start of swimming one day — prompted the Swedish team to withdraw at the last minute and generally kept the swim times average. The problem was compounded by brief power failures at the venue and general disorganisation.

"It's OK to race in it, but it's not what everyone would like," said American Nicole Haislett, a three-time gold medalist at the Barcelona Olympics. "It's by no means good. I definitely would say it hurts performance. You could only see

about two feet in front of you." Haislett was third in the 100-metre freestyle won by Angel Martino of the United States, whose time was a mediocre 56.02 — a sign that many of the swimmers are still peaking for September's World Championships in Rome.

American Melvin Stewart, world record-holder in the 200-metre butterfly, beat chief rival Russian Denis Pankratov in a slow 1:58.46. Stewart, nursing a sore throat, said he would have his tonsils removed next week, which would keep him from defending his world title at 200.



POPOV ... proves a point

"To be honest, I felt weak the whole way. Pankratov could have won — he's obviously cycling (preparing) for the World Championships," Stewart said. Stewart joked about the wa-

ter and said swimmers had nicknamed the pool the "black lagoon."

"I slowed at every turn, it was difficult to see the wall," he said. "The pool out here has been black, brown, green, brown — it's been an adventure. It's looked like (today) they filled the pool with Gatorade, but it didn't taste like it."

The only bright spot was the strong showing by the Chinese, who won four of the five women's events in the morning session. Ten more races were scheduled Sunday night.

Nat'l TT results

Sports Reporter
Ansars women and Madaripur boys romped in the Meril 19th national table tennis championship yesterday when they collected the women's and boys' title respectively at the Pabna district gymnasium.

In the boys team event final, Madaripur paddlers, Sagar and Selim won the first two matches against Tuhin and Mahboob of Dhaka by the odd game in three before Shaon completed the victory with a 21-6, 21-14 point thrashing of Aziz.

The story was reversed in the women's team event final where Ansars sauntered past Madaripur 3-0.

Ansars' two national colours Zulekha and Nilu trounced Shamima and Shabana respectively in the singles and went on to do an encore together winning the doubles tie of the same combination.

Meanwhile, in the men's team event, Biman and Narail won the final both winning the best of three sets against Ansars and Dhaka respectively.

Swedish natants withdraw

ST PETERSBURG, July 24: Sweden's swimming team pulled out of the international Goodwill Games shortly before the start of competition today, saying the water in the race pool was too cloudy, reports Reuter.

Organisers of the Games, which only opened on Saturday, had already had to postpone the start of the showpiece swimming programme by a day because the water was a murky brown.

By Sunday it was a cloudy green, but the Swedish team including Olympic and world silver medalists Anders Holmertz and Tommy Werner decided this was inadequate compared with the sparkling blue pools spectators and swimmers are used to.

Harris may return

ST PETERSBURG, July 24: Suspended 400-metre hurdler Danny Harris, the 1984 Olympic silver medalist, could be reinstated in about three weeks, reports AP.

Harris' coach, Bob Kersee, met Sunday with IAAF president Primo Nebiolo in an effort to clear the way for the American runner's return.

"I will be happy to listen to this case," Nebiolo said. "We are open to resolving the situation. I hope the boy will apply to us and explain what he has done."

Harris was banned by USA Track and Field for four years in 1992 after testing positive for cocaine.

Berasategui wins Mercedes Cup

STUTTGART, Germany, July 24: Spain's Alberto Berasategui overcame searing heat Sunday to outfight Italy's Andrea Gaudenzi 7-5, 6-3, 7-6(7-5) and capture his third career title at the dir 1.04 million Mercedes Cup, reports AP.

Berasategui, the French Open finalist, relied on his unorthodox forehand to win the big points against Gaudenzi, who was playing in his first final of a major tournament.

The fourth-seeded Berasategui rallied from 2-4 down in the third-set tiebreaker, helped by Gaudenzi's mistake of allowing a passing shot to go by that landed inside the court.

Both men pressed the attack, trying to end points early in the heat where temperatures on court were recorded at 120 degrees Fahrenheit (49 degrees Celsius).

"I thought if I lose this set, I'm very tired. But I thought Gaudenzi wasn't much better off," Berasategui said.

Berasategui, now ranked 14th in the world, will crack the Top 10 with the title. Ranked 91st at this time last year, he has reached eight play court finals within 11 months.

Gaudenzi, another player on the rise, tried to attack Berasategui's backhand, but the Spaniard counterpunched by spraying forehand winners all over the court. He finally closed out the match in one hour and 58 minutes when Gaudenzi's forehand sailed long.

"That's my tactic," said Berasategui. "I walk around my backhand and hit my forehand as hard as I can."

Berasategui won the first set when he anticipated another serve by the Italian to his backhand, then sent it flying down the line at set point to win 7-5.

Gaudenzi has climbed from 172nd in the world rankings to 29th during the past year, but has yet to win a major tournament. He has won both the French and US Open junior titles.

Berasategui took home dir 152,000 for his title, while Gaudenzi earned dir 80,500.



Australian heptathlete Jane Flemming, 29, yesterday appeared on the cover of a new calendar to be launched in Sydney this week wearing only gold paint. The double-gold medalist convinced a dozen of Australia's most beautiful female athletes to shed their clothes for the controversial calendar as a fundraiser to help send the track and field team to the Commonwealth Games in Victoria, British Columbia in August. — AFP photo

Graf's twin wins in a day

MAHWAH, N.J., July 24: Steffi Graf won two matches in contrasting styles and on different surfaces Saturday to reach the final of the Pathmark Tennis Classic, reports AP.

The top-ranked player on the WTA tour cruised to a 6-2, 6-1 victory over Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere in a rain delayed semifinal after having survived a 7-6 (7-1), 7-6 (8-6) completion of a quarterfinal match over No. 7 Pam Shriver.

Graf will face 54th-ranked American Lisa Raymond in today's final.

Against the fifth-seeded Maleeva-Fragniere, Graf ran off six straight games for a 6-2, 3-0 lead. Rain then halted play and the match was eventually finished at a nearby indoor facility. Graf won three of the final four games.

"I feel my game is where I want it to be," said Graf, who was referring to the layoff following her stunning first-round loss at Wimbledon.

Graf withstood the booming serves of Shriver in the quarterfinals. She raced to a 4-0 lead in the first tiebreaker and later rallied from a 1-3 deficit in the second-set tiebreaker in

a match that was suspended Friday night because of rain. The four-time Pathmark champion was leading 3-2 with a service break when play was halted.

Raymond, the US collegiate champion in 1992 and 1993, used a strong serve and an effective backhand slice to defeat 241st-ranked Nina Louarasbishvili of Georgia 6-2, 6-3 in a night semifinal that lasted 51 minutes.

Louarasbishvili, world junior champion in 1993, had beaten Jana Novotna of Czech Republic and Marketa Kochta of Germany in earlier rounds.

He struggled early in the match, losing two of his first three service games, then seemed to settle down late in the first set.

Wheaton had Stoltenberg on the ropes early in the second set, leading 2-1 with a break in hand, when the momentum shifted once more.

With Stoltenberg serving at deuce, Wheaton hit a return that seemed to catch the sideline but was called out.

Stoltenberg rallied to win the next point, then won the last four games of the match.

"It wasn't really a critical point, but it was a big let down mentally," Wheaton said. "I felt I was starting to come back in the match, and I just didn't need anything else to go against me."

Stoltenberg conceded it was a critical point in the match.

"I wasn't really doing very well with my first serve, and he kind of had me going for a little bit," he said. "I was fortunate to get out of that game without being broken, and it gave me a big lift."

Edberg cruises into final

WASHINGTON, July 24: Second-seeded Stefan Edberg defeated Buron Black of Zimbabwe 6-4, 7-5 in a rain-delayed semifinal match at the 625,000 dollar DC Classic tennis on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The Swede's opponent in today's final will be 14th seeded Jason Stoltenberg of Australia, who outplayed American David Wheaton 6-4, 6-2 in the other semifinal of this hardcourt tournament.

Edberg, who has slipped to number seven in the world, has struggled with his serve all week but the strength of his volleying and service return game carried him past Black.

Edberg took a 3-2 lead in the first set by becoming the first to hold serve. But play was halted at that point by rain for 74 minutes.

Once play resumed, Edberg controlled Black the rest of the set after turning back a potentially threatening break back point in the eighth game with a textbook serve to the backhand and a forehand vol-

ley winner to go up 5-3.

Black, ranked 75th, raced to a 3-0 lead in the second set with two service breaks in hand, as Edberg's serve briefly deserted him.

Although the Zimbabwean squandered one of his service breaks, he reached set point on his serve at 5-3 but Edberg saved the set point with a backhand passing shot and then broke Black with a backhand lob.

Edberg held for 5-5, broke Black with a sizzling backhand passing shot and served out the match.

"I haven't served that well this week. When I got down in the second set I knew I had to keep the pressure on him, but he was hitting the ball close to the line. I just kept hanging in there," said Edberg.

Stoltenberg dominated a sluggish Wheaton, breaking his service five times.

Wheaton, the lone American in the semis, looked tired after having played three matches on Friday due to rainy weather that has plagued the tournament for much of the week.

Sigei omitted from Kenyan C'wealth squad

NAIROBI, July 24: New world 10,000 metres record holder William Sigei has been shut out of Kenya's Commonwealth Games team less than 24 hours after his epic feat, reports AFP.

In Oslo on Friday night, 24-year-old Sigei shattered the world mark by more than six seconds with a time of 26min 52 sec, eclipsing the record set by his compatriot Yobes Ondieki in the same stadium a year ago.

But if members of the Kenya Amateur Athletics Association (KAAA) were impressed they weren't showing it on Saturday.

KAAA chairman Isaisah Kiplagat said here Sigei had been excluded from the Commonwealth Games squad because they had preferred to compete at Grand Prix meets abroad rather than the Games trials back home.

Also missing from the team are world 3,000 metres steeplechase champion and record holder Moses Kiptanui, Olympic 1500 metres champion William Tanui and Olympic 400 metres bronze medalist Samson Kitur.

Kiplagat said their absence would give emerging athletes the opportunity to prove themselves.

All clear for English cagers

KUALA LUMPUR, July 24: England trounced Singapore 70-40 on Saturday to clear the path for their last hurdle in defending the Commonwealth basketball championships, reports AP.

Duncan Rockledge delivered 13 points for the titleholders who pocketed another 57 to cast the helpless Singaporeans aside and grab their third victory in the tournament.

England play Canada today in their final bid to retain their supremacy in the six-nation event.

Canada beat Malaysia 97-43 and Nigeria thrashed Hong Kong 85-49 in two other matches Saturday.

Norm Froemel was the points leader among the Canadians with his 16 points while L. Erinfolami lead for the Nigerians with 17 points.

With the wins, Canada and Nigeria have a fair chance of vying for today's title, both have collected three victories in the tournament, with another match each to play.

Hong Kong and Singapore, without any wins, have fallen on the wayside, along with Malaysia, which has only two wins.

Hill retains WBA crown

BISMARCK, North Dakota, July 24: Virgil Hill retained his World Boxing Association light heavyweight crown by taking a unanimous 12-round points decision over fellow-American Frank Tate on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Judge Hubert Earle scored it 119-108, Luis Rivera made it 119-107 and Julio Roldan 118-110 in favour of Hill, who improved his record to 39-1.

Tate dropped to 34-3.

Spain complete fine treble

FRANKFURT, July 24: Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Conchita Martinez combined to win six straight sets and give Spain their third Federation Cup title in four years Sunday, sweeping past the United States 3-0 in the final, reports AP.

Martinez opened with a straight-set victory over Mary Joe Fernandez, 6-2, 6-2 before Sanchez Vicario drubbed Lindsay Davenport even worse 6-2, 6-1.

Sanchez Vicario and Martinez, the No 2 and 3 ranked players on the WTA Tour, then teamed up to complete the rout, clobbering Gigi Fernandez and Mary Joe Fernandez in doubles 6-3, 6-4.

It was the second straight title for Spain, who won their first Federation Cup in 1991. They lost to Germany in the 1992 final. The victory also

denied the United States their 14th Federation Cup. The Americans' 13 titles are nearly double their next closest rival, Australia (seven).

The American team players had little chance against the overpowering Spanish duo in the singles matches.

Playing under a clear blue sky with the temperature about 34 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit), Martinez broke Fernandez in the second and eighth games of the first set. Fernandez had a break chances in the third, fifth and seventh games, but wasted them.

Martinez broke Fernandez at her first chance in the second set to lead 2-0, and after Fernandez held on her next serve, she was broken again to give Martinez a 5-1 lead.

Fernandez broke back to save off defeat, but Martinez broke the American once more to close out the victory.

Sanchez Vicario waited un-

til the third game to break Davenport, and with another in the fifth, easily won the first set. She broke the American, ranked sixth by the WTA Tour, in the first, fifth and seventh games to win in 63 minutes.

Sunday's championship confirms Spain's strong standing in the tennis world. Spain's Sergi Bruguera and Sanchez Vicario took the men's and women's titles at the French Open this year, and Martinez won the women's title at Wimbledon.

Sunday's final in Frankfurt was the last time the Federation Cup was to be contested under its best-of-three format in a one-week tournament.

Next year's competition will be played on a format similar to the men's Davis Cup, with the tournament spread out over the entire year and best-of-five matches contested over two days.

Martinez after Graf's spot

STRATTON MOUNTAIN, Vt., July 24: With her Wimbledon title almost a month old, Conchita Martinez has set her sights on a new target — No 1 in the world, reports AP.

Martinez can take another step toward the goal this week if she can defend her title in the Acra US women's hardcourt championships at Stratton Mountain. It will be her first tour tournament since she beat Martina Navratilova in the final at the All England tennis championships.

Now ranked No 3 in the WTA Tour rankings, a victory at Stratton could pull her closer to fellow Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, ranked No 2 and who also is entered. Top-ranked Steffi Graf is taking the week off.

But overtaking Vicario Sanchez is not Martinez's goal.

"I don't want to be the No 1 Spanish player; I'm hoping to be No 1 in the world," Martinez said in a telephone interview from Frankfurt, Germany, where she's playing in the Federation Cup.

"I'm working for it. I'm not

that far away. I think I'm playing very good tennis. I'm being more aggressive, more confident. I've solidified my No 3 ranking."

The dir 400,000 tournament begins Monday, but Martinez and Sanchez Vicario won't play until Wednesday. The final, with its dir 80,000 payoff, is Sunday.

Martinez beat Zina Garrison Jackson in last year's Stratton final in straight sets.

"I remember I won it and played some great tennis over there," Martinez said. This year, she and Sanchez Vicario, who also is playing her first tour tournament since Wimbledon, will have to adjust to changing court surfaces.

"It's going to be hard to get used to hardcourt. We went from grass (Wimbledon) to clay (Federation Cup) to hard-

court," Martinez said, and Frankfurt is a good example of the difficulty.

"I haven't been playing very good," she said Friday. "Not as well. It's very difficult to get used to the clay when I didn't have much practice on it."

Two top Americans, Mary Joe Fernandez and Gigi Fernandez, who will be at Stratton, also were in Frankfurt.

Mary Joe is ranked 11th, while Gigi is ranked 48th but was a semifinalist at Wimbledon. They are not related.

Gigi also is the No. 1-ranked doubles player in the world, and will be seeking a rare doubles Grand Slam at the US Open.

Garrison Jackson is not entered in this year's US women's hardcourt.



Italian Andrea Gaudenzi exults after winning his semifinal match of the international Weissenhof tennis tournament against Russian Andrei Chesnokov in Stuttgart on July 23. Gaudenzi won 6-4, 6-7, 6-3. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Niihau neckwear
5 Tactic from 9 Down
8 Unaltered fraction
12 Farm
13 Barcelona bear
14 Bantu language
15 With 5 Down, "Black Sox-er" Jackson
17 Tango type
18 Scout master?
19 Ozone-layer damagers
21 Oversell
24 The lass
25 Sagacious
28 Con
30 Tease
33 Tray contents
34 "Myra Breckinridge" author
35 Latin I word
36 Moo — gai pan
37 Hurler

DOWN

1 Shoemaker's shaper
2 Vocal comeback
3 Unyielding
4 Boil
5 See 15
6 Don Quixote's steed
7 Springsteen epithet
8 Blue hue
9 Leonard or Robinson
10 In a sick way
11 Part of "etre"

16 Powell costar
20 Oprah's competition
22 Twosome
23 Over
25 Humorous sort
26 Equi-
27 With "The," John Wayne's last movie
29 Yarn
31 Mischief maker
32 Greet the villain
34 Field /mouse
38 Clannish
40 "— new?"
42 Down Under bird
43 Cultivate
44 Blueprint statistic
45 Invitation notation
47 Say it isn't so
48 Cartoonist Peter
49 Ollie's pal
52 Bee follower
53 Chop

Solution time: 21 mins.

ALAS CBS VAST
SOCK OOH ARTA
SOHUMBLE RANG
LUB TRIBES
WHECK BLUE
HOPS SOANDSOS
OBI PENNS ELL
SOGALLED HEDD
DIAS BADGE
BRIVES VIM
LIKE SOINLOVE
WENT IWO EVIL
EMIR ELL TACK

Yesterday's answer 11-24

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12					13				14	
15					16				17	
18							19	20		
					21		22	23	24	
25	26	27					28	29	30	31
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33							34			35
36							37			38
							39	40		
									41	42
43	44						45		46	47
							48		49	
50							51	52	53	
54							55		56	
							57		58	

CRYPTOQUIP

S I A A - B H Y Z M S J I K M L
C G K Y W Y J D G I H A C G X B H
Y X A Y W Y J D M L L C G I
L H C X M L C G I A H J Z

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: GIVEN A MARVELOUS POSITION SELLING MATTRESSES, HE HAS TO SLEEP ON IT.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: L equals F

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.