



Kenyan Moses Kiptanui poses in front of a display showing the time he clocked during the men's unofficial distance of two miles at an athletics meet in Belgium on July 30. Kiptanui beat Morocco's Khalid Skah's world mark of 8:12.17.

Cuban reign about to end?

ST PETERSBURG, July 31: The resurgent Russians are threatening Cuba's dominance of amateur boxing after a series of outstanding results at the Goodwill Games, reports Reuter.

Russian boxers beat Olympic flyweight champion Joel Casamayor and Olympic light-middleweight champion Juan Lemus on their way to winning five golds, just one behind Cuba.

The Cuban squad took advantage of the Soviet Union's collapse to gather seven golds at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics but Russian boxing seems to have overcome its financial problems and is clearly on the road to recovery.

Cuban coach Alcides Saggaro declared himself satisfied with the haul of six gold medals but he will surely be worried both by the way some of his fighters performed and also by the emergence of Russia as a worthy successor to the defunct Soviet Union.

"The Cubans looked a bit tired — you could see that. There's no doubt they're the leading power but they're not as strong as they used to be," said Yuri Markov, secretary-general of the Russian Boxing Federation.

Saggaro may not be too happy about the defeats but International Amateur Boxing Federation (AIBA) president Anwar Chowdhury believes they are good news for the sport.

"From AIBA's point of view it is very good that the total supremacy of one country will end. I am happy the Cubans did well but it is not a good situation from other countries' point of view," he said in an interview.

"At the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games I think we'll have stronger competition from many countries."

"It's possible the Cubans won't be able to repeat their achievement in Barcelona, not because their standards have fallen, but because other countries have risen."

US coach Tom Coulter ad-

ded: "A lot of countries are catching up with the Cubans. You can see they were in a lot of trouble during some of the bouts."

Saggaro insists that Cuba will continue to stay at the top of the tree.

"All the teams are improving but Cuba will remain among the dominant boxing nations," he said.

Chowdhury, paid tribute to the Cubans' training methods, and said that although the squad might win fewer gold medals at Atlanta there was no chance of their boxing programme collapsing.

"One of the Cubans' strong points is their international exposure — go to every international tournament and they're there. They always stake the strongest team," he said.

"Coaches in other countries are usually newly-retired boxers, while in Cuba the coaches have masters' degrees. They take camera with them wherever they go. They have information on every boxer in the world."

Stoltenberg stuns Courier

TORONTO, July 31: Australian Jason Stoltenberg reached his second successive tournament final with a 3-6, 6-0, 6-1 semifinal drubbing of fourth-seeded Jim Courier on Saturday at the 1.72 million dollar Canadian Open, reports Reuter.

The unseeded Stoltenberg next takes on eight-seeded Andre Agassi, who beat him in their two previous encounters, in today's final.

The 20th-ranked Agassi, a champion here in 1992, beat sixth-seeded Wayne Ferreira 6-4, 7-5 to move into the final.

The 33rd-ranked Stoltenberg is red hot on this year's summer circuit.

Last week in Washington, DC he lost in the finals to Stefan Edberg of Sweden.

Stoltenberg considers his spectacular one hour, 29 minute performance against the 12th-ranked Courier here a career highlight.

"I feel it is my best win," Stoltenberg said. "Now Courier isn't in the top 10 now, but I consider him a top ten player. It's nice to control a match against someone who has won four Grand Slam titles and has been member one."

Despite the semifinal loss, Courier will move back into the top 10 when the new rankings come out Monday.

"I don't have any regrets about this match," said Courier, who has a 5-2 career ma-

Tennis stars on a mission

NEW YORK, August 31: Former world number-one Monica Seles and current rankings leaders Steffi Graf and Pete Sampras are among celebrities invited to compete at a pre-United States Open tennis benefit here in memory of Arthur Ashe, reports AFP.

Also on the list of those wanted at the Arthur Ashe Foundation for the Defeat of AIDS tennis challenge is Jennifer Capriati — the teenager who quit the WTA Tour last year and who has been treated for drug abuse.

American comedians Bill Cosby and Alan King will serve as masters of ceremony for the August 28 event, which comes one day before the start of US Open play at the US tennis center here.

Others invited to play include Andre Agassi, John McEnroe and Martina Navratilova, who is expected to make the Open her final Grand Slam event.

The Ashe Foundation, formed in 1992, has raised more than four million dollars to combat AIDS, which contributed to the death of the former tennis star that originated the organisation.

Courier, who hasn't won a title since Indianapolis last August, was strong in his first set.

But the match turned dramatically in Stoltenberg's favour when he turned on the heat in the second set and Courier failed to handle the pressure.

In 440 matches going back to 1987, this was only the seventh time that Courier lost a set 6-0.

In the first set, Stoltenberg posted 11 unforced errors while Courier had only three.

In the final two sets, Stoltenberg was near perfection with only six unforced errors — four in the second set and two in the third.

Courier, who had not lost a set en route to the semis, crumbled in the final two sets. He made a total of 25 unforced errors — 13 in the second set and 12 in the third set.

Courier won only one of the last 13 games. With Stoltenberg leading 3-6, 6-0, 5-0 and 0-40, Courier won the next five points to hold his serve in that sixth game of the final set.

Both Agassi and the 18th-ranked Ferreira, who never played each other before, were tired from long quarter-final matches Friday. It also did not help that they played under heavy conditions in a day that had frequent periods of rain.

Agassi handled the situation better than Ferreira.



German rider Andras Wieser loses his balance and slips over a fence while his horse Poker Face rides on during the cross country event of the World Equestrian Games in Amersfoort, the Netherlands yesterday.

Kiptanui's feat

HECHTEL, Belgium, July 31: Kenyan Moses Kiptanui set a world best for two miles with a time of eight minutes 09.01 seconds at an athletics meeting on Saturday, reports Reuter.

World steeplechase champion Kiptanui, holder of the world 3,000 metres and 3,000 metres steeplechase records, unleashed a scorching three-lap solo run to better the previous mark of 8:12.17 by Moroccan Khalid Skah, set at the same track on July 31 last year.

The British-based Kenyan was paced in the first part of the race by Ireland's Frank O'Mara, who also assisted Kiptanui in his unsuccessful attempt on the world 5,000 metres mark at the Goodwill Games last Tuesday.

Kiptanui said afterwards: "I'm not really surprised. I had hoped for 8:08. It was fairly easy. I can definitely do better — 8:05."

He said he would now take a two-week break from competition. "First I'll rest for a week. Then I want to go below eight minutes in the 3,000 metres steeplechase race in Zurich, that's my main goal."

Russian Lyubov Gurina set the fastest time of the year in the women's 800 metres when she clocked one minute 56.60 seconds. Maria Mutola of Mozambique had set the previous best of 1:57.63 at the Goodwill Games in St Petersburg on Thursday.

IAAF's demand

ST PETERSBURG, July 31: The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) urged the US government body on Saturday to send immediately all its documents on banned hurdler Danny Harris to the federation's headquarters in Monte Carlo, reports Reuter.

Earlier USA Track and Field (USATF) president Larry Ellis said the American body was considering legal action to get the drugs ban on Harris lifted before the end of the northern season.

Harris, the 1984 Olympic 400 metres hurdles silver medalist, was banned for four years in 1992 after testing positive for cocaine.

He was reinstated by the American governing body USA Track and Field (USATF) last year and ran in four European meetings this season.

However, the IAAF banned him from the London Grand Prix on July 15, saying only its council had the power to reinstate banned athletes. The next council meeting is not scheduled until November.

IAAF spokesman Christopher Winner told Reuters that to his knowledge the federation had not received any communication from USATF or from Harris' coach Bob Kersee.

"If Larry Ellis and USATF feel so deeply and so strongly about Danny Harris then it's incumbent for them to send the documents to the IAAF," Winner said. "Action is what's required now, not more talk."

Ellis told reporters at the Goodwill Games that legal action was now a possibility.

"We are going to have our lawyers try to explore the possibility of trying to expedite this before November," he said.

"Sometimes when you are dealing with the IAAF you should go there with a good lawyer."

Ellis said reinstating Harris would be a signal from the IAAF that he had achieved something worthwhile in breaking his dependency on cocaine.

"For someone to fall himself out of the morass that he was in with drugs is just fantastic," Ellis said.

Fans long for the bad boys of the good old days

By Daniel Girard

A shortage of personalities and temper tantrums among the world's top male tennis players is being blamed for a drop in attendance at this year's Wimbledon Championships. Gemini News Service reports that big serves and bigger money have seen the game lose points with fans.



While they were at the top of their sport, tennis players like Nastase, Jimmy Connors and John McEnroe were also considered a scourge on it. Fans booed them. Tournament officials fined them. They were players everybody loved to hate.

The trio, whose volatile relationship with the gentlemen's game stretched from the 1970s to the early 1990s, were often considered a disgrace for their verbal abuse of opponents, officials, spectators and anybody else who got in their way.

But they were also players everybody loved to watch. And in these days of reduced television coverage and falling attendance at tournaments, tennis officials are wishing they could bring back the bad boys.

"There are not enough charismatic figures," lamented Chris Goringe, chief executive of the Wimbledon Championships. This year, attendance at his tournament, considered the top event in the world, was down despite consistently good weather.

While the farewell tour of Wimbledon by Martina Navratilova, the grand old lady of tennis, helped fill seats, it is men's matches that were expected to sell tickets and the image of the game. Considered by many sports fans to be devoid of personalities, the men's circuit has recently been losing its public appeal.

Wimbledon officials' dream that deficiencies at the gate of this year's event could be wiped out by the baggy shorts, long hair and designer stubble of former champion and current tennis playboy Andre Agassi were dashed when the American was bounced from the competition in the fourth round.

Some of the loudest ovations of the fortnight were reserved for Agassi, who many observers and even more fans consider the last remaining player with flare. His post-match ritual of stripping off his sweat-soaked tennis shirt and throwing it into the crowd got more cheers and screams of delight than virtually all the on-court action.

By comparison, big-serving American Pete Sampras, the world's top-ranked player, is frequently branded as a boring technician because of his quiet, efficient dismissal of opponents.

There are many theories volleyed around about what accounts for the loss of personality in men's tennis. Some observers say the huge prize money offered in tournaments over the past decade has made it big and serious business. When victory was not as lucrative, players were more likely to be more outgoing to sell themselves to win contracts to advertise everything from sports goods to soft drinks.

Czech-born American star Ivan Lendl, who dominated the game in the latter half of the 1980s, says of his dour on-court demeanour that tennis was his job and that few people he knew laughed at work. Most of today's players have adopted Lendl's attitude rather than the brashness of Nastase.

Connors or McEnroe.

Others note that the equipment used today is dramatically different from that used a few years ago. Larger-headed racquets enabling players to propel the ball at lightning speeds have reduced the number of thrilling rallies in matches. The powerful serve is the new king of the court.

One of the best illustrations of that came in the 1991 Wimbledon men's final between Germans Boris Becker and Michael Stich: during the two-and-a-half-hour match the players spent just seven minutes hitting the ball.

Recognising the decline in public appeal of their game, men's tennis officials have recently made a couple of cosmetic adjustments. To speed up play, the time players are allowed between points was

the prize money offered.

"What tennis has to do now is adapt or die," says Jack Milner of The Citizen in Johannesburg.

Milner, who has covered tennis for more than a decade, says the game's officials must do more to sell the sport and its personalities to the public. Holding post-match interviews on court in front of the spectators or bringing players out to tournaments on their days off to talk to fans would go a long way to generating more interest, he says.

Former Wimbledon champion John Newcombe of Australia was strong in his condemnation of the way many of today's players take but do not give back to the game.

"It's a selfish act simply to play matches, take the money and have a to-hell-with-any-



Yesterday's nightmare, today's dream

reduced from a half minute to first 25 seconds and most recently 20 seconds. There has also been talk of limiting players to one serve instead of the current two.

Whatever the reasons, few doubt tennis is in trouble. While tournaments such as Wimbledon, which has existed for more than a century, are considered secure, there is a fear for the future of other smaller events that are the backbone of professional tennis. With fewer spectators and less television coverage, sponsors may look to put their money elsewhere, reducing

one-else attitude," he told The Sun newspaper in Britain.

"If it was me up there today I'd be ashamed of letting down all the great champions who have created the history of tennis," said Newcombe, who won Wimbledon titles in 1967, 1970 and 1971. "What a disaster to leave behind selfishness as your legacy."

About the author: DANIEL GIRARD is a reporter with The Toronto Star newspaper. He is currently on a one-year internship with Gemini News Service sponsored by the International Development Research Centre in Ottawa.

Russian gymnasts take gold

ST PETERSBURG, July 31: An experienced Russian side won the Goodwill Games women's team gold medal on Saturday with victories in three of the four individual exercises, reports Reuter.

The Russians won the floor, vault, and uneven bars and finished second in the beam to amass 117.375 points.

Romania finished second and Ukraine third ahead of the United States, who were never in contention despite fielding double world champion Shannon Miller.

The Russian gymnasts, three of whom placed in the top 12 of the 1994 World Championships, took an early lead of 0.350 points on the uneven bars.

They increased their margin to 0.525 after the beam and dominated the floor exercises where their worst individual score was 9.775.

The Americans performed differently throughout, but Miller at least registered the single best score of any event, 9.950 for the floor exercises.

China left many of their best athletes behind and the team's chances of gaining a medal were wrecked before the start when Dinli Fan fell heavily on her left elbow from the uneven bars while warming up and had to pull out.

Luli, who won the uneven bars at this year's World Championships, was well below her best and managed only 9.575.

Russians win Goodwill Games water polo title

ST PETERSBURG, July 31: Russia beat Germany 11-9 in the Goodwill Games water polo final on Saturday to set the stage for September's Rome World Championships, reports Reuter.

Italy and Spain, who contested a famous Olympic final in 1992, had to be content to play off for bronze, with the Italians again coming out on top, this time by 9-8.

Russia and Germany, who managed only seventh and ninth place respectively at last year's European Championships, were tied 7-7 midway through the third quarter when Mixim Apanasenko and Serge Ilyev scored twice for Russia inside a minute.

After the way they played here, the Russians must be among the favourites for Rome, along with Hungary and Italy. Germany's coach Nicolai Pirotu said.

European silver medalists Hungary were the only one of the world's top six teams not to field their best side at the Goodwill Games.

Spain rarely looked like avenging their defeat against Italy in the turbulent 1992 Olympic final, settled after three periods of extra times. Flavio Gandolfi, a scorer in that final, fired the winning goal from eight metres 48 seconds from time.

Honeyghan's title stripped

LONDON, July 31: Former world welterweight champion Lloyd Honeyghan was stripped of his Commonwealth light-middleweight crown on Friday, reports AFP.

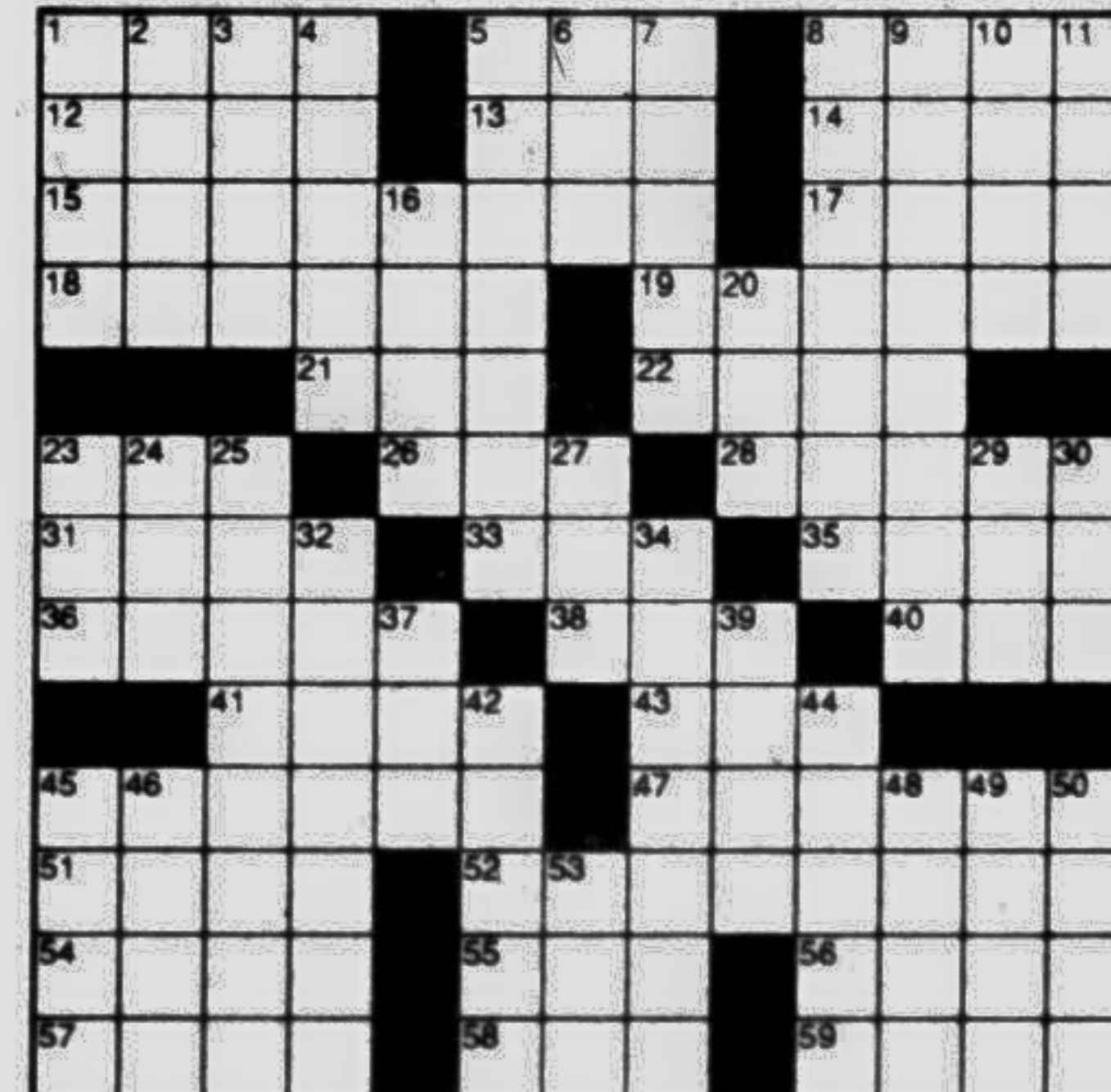
The 34-year-old Englishman, who won the title in January 1993, failed to defend it before the expiry of a deadline set by the Commonwealth Boxing Council.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	1 Sea dog	5 Cornfield comment	8 Place of worship?	12 Hodge-podge	13 Wave (Sp.)	14 Unrivaled	15 Pigskin	17 Tittle	18 Piano fixers	19 Like a small "I"	21 A welcome sight	22 Four-letter word	23 Vacationing	26 Ever-green	28 Parade feature	31 Cross	33 Tabloid	35 "Sesame Street" monster	36 Old market-place	38 Josh	40 Conk out	41 Mexican munchie		
43 Michael Jackson album	45 Sausage in Shropshire	47 Sagan's "Brain"	51 Enthusiastic, plus	52 Fancy steppin'	54 Troubadour's instrument	55 Compass-point suffix	56 Hungarian politician	57 Act	58 Sanctions	59 Gin flavor	1 Quick to yield	2 Fraternal fielder	3 Celebrity leads	4 Family symbol	5 Sled	6 The whole ball of wax	7 Handford's lost boy	8 Slightly	9 Secure position	10 Pre-	11 Patronize the book-mobile	16 Hee-haw	20 Lummo	23 Man-
24 Pea soup, e.g.	25 Where an asterisk leads	27 Conflict	29 Parisian pal	30 Place-kicker's pride	32 Schlepped	34 Tash's sometime cohost	37 Top-notch player	39 Homer's bad boy	42 Gluck hero	44 "20/20" cohost	45 Hardly hirsute	46 Chills and fever	48 Stoker's supply	49 Jason's ship	50 Terrier type	53 Mork's home planet								

Solution time: 21 mins.

WATT	GPA	TEEM
ALOE	RON	URDU
GADABOUT	RIGGS	
SID	LOT	KNEES
JIM	DIA	
WADUP	CYMBALS	
AMOS	ABE	OHIO
SYSTEMS	LUAUS	
ALP	SAT	
BAMBI	FUR	LBS
OLIO	MARABOUT	
MENU	ING	RONA
BENT	AGE	ANDY



CRYPTOQUIP

A Q J V Q R U D P Q T
S D K H R - K Q E D S E Q R V D Z Z Q K
V U T K P J U A Q R X R E ' U
H X W Q T H H U A Q H Q C S D K W
Yesterday's Cryptquip: WITH THE WEDDING SEASON APPROACHING, SCATTERED SHOWERS ARE PREDICTED.

Today's Cryptquip clue: S equals W

The Cryptquip 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.