

Bubka to skip Euro meet

HELSINKI, Finland, Aug 6: Sergei Bubka, who has broken more world records than any other athlete, will be the biggest name missing from the European Championships starting Sunday, reports AP.

He's not injured. In fact, the Ukrainian is in better shape than ever, having raised the world pole vault record by his usual one centimetre to 6.14 metres (20 feet-1 3/4 inches) Sunday in the altitude of Sestriere, Italy.

Bubka says that the windy conditions that often prevail "in one of the toughest stadiums in the world for pole vaulting" convinced him to skip the biggest athletics meet of the season.

The complaint has merit. Many pole vaulters hate the often swirling winds in Helsinki's renovated Olympic Stadium, where Bubka won the first of an unprecedented four straight World Championship titles in 1983.

But another reason could be the lack of prize money in major championships like the Olympics, World and European Championships.

The International Amateur Athletic Federation has come under increasing pressure from athletes, who have threatened boycotts unless they get prize money.

Winners at the 1995 World Championships in Göteborg, Sweden, will receive luxury Mercedes cars — just as they did at the 1993 worlds in Stuttgart, Germany.

In the Europeans, athletes compete for glory only.

Bubka received a dirh 130,000 Ferrari from the Italian organisers for setting his 17th outdoor world record Sunday — and 35th overall — and has signed up to compete in several lucrative meets after the Aug 7-14 championships.

His decision to skip the Europeans led many Finnish athletics officials and fans disappointed.

Ilkka Kanerva, president of the Finnish federation, said

that Bubka should be punished for not competing.

But Kanerva denied that Bubka had demanded appearance money to come to Finland.

"At least he never asked me for it," Kanerva told the Suomenmaa newspaper. "I didn't engage in such a conversation with him. It could be that he demanded money separately from sponsors."

With Bubka absent, France's Jean Galfione leads the contenders in Thursday's pole vault final. Galfione is the second-best vaulter in Europe this season, having cleared 5.94 (19-6).

Others include Igor Trandenkov, whose best is 5.89 (19-4) this season, and fellow Russian Denis Petushinskiy and Estonia's Valeri Bukrejev, both of whom have cleared 5.86 (19-2 3/4).

While Bubka rests, Olympic and world champion Linford Christie is eager to return to competition in the 100 metres after being sidelined three weeks with a left hamstring injury.

The 32-year-old British veteran was injured in a Grand Prix meet July 16 in London, where he lost to Jon Drummond of the United States.

Christie missed five meets,



SERGEI BUBKA

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An early setback for Norway

HELSINKI, Finland, Aug 6: Norwegian Athlete Federation decided to withdraw Okeke from the Aug 7-14 championships.

Pseudoephedrine is found in an allergy prep, which was given to Okeke by a doctor, and the athlete used the prep without knowing it contained illegal substances, Lars Martin Kaupang, president of the Norwegian Federation, said in a statement.

Okeke, who is ranked third in Europe at 100 metres in 10.16 seconds and sixth at 200 metres in 20.49, could face a three-month ban from competition by the IAAF.

Okeke's withdrawal leaves Olympic and world champion Linford Christie of Britain as an even bigger favourite to win his third straight European title in the 100. Qualifying starts Sunday.

Several other athletes have been banned for similar ephedrine-related violation, including three former US Olympic medalists — long jumper Larry Myricks, hurdler Greg Foster and 400-metre runner Antonio McKay.

Ephedrine is contained

in many over-the-counter medications and are banned in Olympic sports. In the 1972 Olympics at Munich, Germany, US swimmer Rick DeMont was stripped of a gold medal for use of an asthma medication.

The last big Norwegian track star to be banned from competition was shot putter Georg Andersen, who lost his 1991 World Championships silver medal after failing a drug test. He served a two-year ban.

Okeke's withdrawal was a big blow to the Norwegian team morale. After Norway's tremendous medal haul in the last two Winter Olympics and the soccer team's berth in the World Cup finals, Norwegian track's ambitious, well-funded programme was starting to pay off.

"We've been lucky and I didn't expect so good results so soon," Norwegian head coach Trond Pedersen said recently.

At least 10 Norwegians could win medals in the European Championships and Norway could very well finish among the top 8 in the final medal standings.

After speaking with the Norwegian Sports Federation, the highest sports body in Norway, and Arne Ljungqvist of Sweden, chairman of the IAAF doping commission, the Nor-

Dream Team shows real thing

TORONTO, Aug 6: Dream Team II answered their wake-up call at the World Basketball Championships, creating the harsh reality everyone expected from them, reports AP.

Shaquille O'Neal scored 22 points and the US team of National Basketball Association stars routed China 132-77 here Friday, clinching a second-round berth on the 16-team event.

Dream Team's disappointment over a 115-100 opening victory over Spain provided motivation for the blowout.

"The first game was on our minds a little. It played a big part in this game," US guard Reggie Miller said. "We didn't show our best. This time we came out relaxed and determined to get our big guys into the show more."

Miller and Dominique Wilkins each scored 15 points while Alonzo Mourning and Joe Dumars both had 13 and Shawn Kemp and Kevin Johnson scored 10 apiece. And O'Neal said the Dream Team has still more to show.

"We played a lot better, but I still think we can play a little higher," O'Neal said. "We played good defence and played well together."

Croatia, Australia, Canada and Russia also clinched second-round berths with triumphs Friday. Three more spots in the final eight are at stake in first-round games this weekend.

The US team jumped ahead 17-4, pulled to a 71-38 half-time lead and extended the lead as high as 57 points near the finish.

"We played to our top level but we still had a lot of problems," China coach Xingqun



Kevin Johnson of the United States shrugs off a challenge from Weidong Hu of China during the World Championships in Hamilton, Canada on August 5.

Rakib wins schools chess title

Sports Reporter

Abdullah al Rakib became unbeaten champion of the ninth schools chess tournament when he drew with Tipu Sultan in the last round of the nine-round Swiss league competition at the chess room of the National Sports Council yesterday.

Rakib, a student of Narayan-ganj High School who had an impressive run in this year's national chess championship, only a draw with Tipu Sultan of Dhaka Collegiate School and he duly got the desired half a point to clinch the title.

Rakib, who had earlier won his first eight matches, finished with eight and a half points ahead of Shakil and Bobby who collected eight points each.

But Shakil of Nakhla Para Hossain Ali School finished runner-up collecting 42 points in the tie-breaker.

Shakil beat Hasan Imam while Bobby who finished third defeated Royal in the last round.

Enamul Hossain Rajib of St Gregory's School and Tipu Sultan finished fourth and fifth respectively earning seven and a half points each.

Royal, who got seven points, finished top among the primary level students while Daisy of Ideal School, who topped among the five girls in the meet, also collected seven points.

A record 272 players from 67 schools took part in the meet organised by Bangladesh Chess Federation.

Gelfand books his place

HYDERABAD, India, Aug 6: Former Soviet junior champion Boris Gelfand of Belarus booked a maiden appearance in the World Chess semifinals by defeating Vladimir Kramnik of Russia here Saturday, reports AP.

The 26-year-old Gelfand made just three moves to wrap up the eighth game of the quarter-final, which was adjourned on Friday after 60 moves. Gelfand finished with 4.5 points against his rival's 3.5.

The win earned Gelfand a cash reward of 45,000 Swiss Francs (about 33,835 dollars). The 19-year-old Kramnik's disappointment was softened by a purse of 25,000 Swiss francs.

The outcome of the other two quarter-finals is likely to be known after Sunday's matches.

Grandmaster Vishwanathan Anand of India and Gata Kamsky of the United States will play the tie-breaker after securing four points each in their eight-match round.

Valery Salov needs a draw in the final game against Dutch Grandmaster Jan Timman to secure the winning target of 4.5 points. A victory for Timman would force the match into a tie-breaker.

The tie-breaker consists of two-game round where players are given 45 minutes for the first 60 moves and 15 minutes for every subsequent move.

A player needs to achieve 1.5 points from the two games — a win and a draw — to win the match.

In case no result is possible after the first round, there will be another two-game round, the next day. The winner after a second draw in tie-breaker will be decided by the drawing of lots.

The three winners will join world champion Anatoly Karpov in the semifinals to be played here next February.

Russians win Goodwill Games v'ball title

ST PETERSBURG, Aug 6: Russian women's volleyball team continued their form at the third Goodwill Games here on Friday evening, trouncing the United States 3-0 in the final, reports Xinhua.

The Russian spikers, who did not set a set at the Games, defeated the Americans 15-8, 15-11 and 15-4.

After losing the first set, and trailing 3-6 in the trailing second, the Americans strengthened their attacks as well as blocks and brought the score to 11-all.

However, the Russians, which showed better team work and strategy, claimed four consecutive points to take the second set and led the match at 2-0.

In a lopsided game in the third set, the winners took the last one with ease (15-4).

The Russian squad had eight aces, seven points from blocks and 21 from attacks while the Americans had four aces, four points from blocks and nine from attacks.

The United States won the silver medal.

In the play-off for the third place Friday afternoon, Japan edged China 15-5, 15-3, 6-15 and 15-11 to take the bronze medal.



Ukrainian skaters Irina Romanova and Igor Yaroshenko perform during the free dance of the Goodwill Games figure skating competition in St Petersburg yesterday. They won the gold medal after days of competition.

Bonaly bags lacklustre gold

ST PETERSBURG, Russia, Aug 6: France's Surya Bonaly, who missed four jumps, won one of the most uninspiring international women's figure skating contests in recent memory Saturday at the Goodwill Games, reports AP.

The four-time European champion's performance capped a lacklustre free skate session during which most of the skaters stumbled, fell and looked visibly tired from all the confusion that has surrounded this competition during the past week.

The exception was 14-year-old Michelle Kwan of the United States, who managed a solid routine to vault from sixth to second over the error-prone field.

Bonaly, the leader after the technical programme and the only big-name skater the organisers could attract, failed uncharacteristically at what she is known for: Big jumps and lots of them.

First a double axel became a single, then she fell on a triple lutz, touched down after another double axel and singled a flip. Her technical merit mark ranged from 5.2 to 5.7.

She won, however, because the other contenders skated nearly as poorly.

On Friday, there was almost

no one in the crowd, because changes in the skating schedule left fans and skaters dizzier than one of Bonaly's spin.

To Zayak, a former world champion, it did not seem like a big-time event at all.

It was almost like a local competition, said Zayak, who tumbled and stumbled with the best of them Friday to finish seventh. "Sometimes it helps with a lot of people in the stands to get the energy level up."

The women's competition was originally scheduled to start Thursday night. The event was postponed to Friday, then nearly switched to another venue because of problems making ice.

Turner, the American who launched the CNN global television network, must have liked the men's and pairs' free skates Friday night — a competition that probably closely mirrored to his Olympian dreams.

In front of a cheering, near-capacity crowd, hometown favourites won both events.

Olympic champion Alexei Umanov skated his familiar classical routine to Rossini to win the men's competition, while Artur Damitiev and Natalia Mishkutenok, skating almost flawlessly to Rachmaninoff with power and elegance, easily won the pairs.

Organisers had promoted the event as a near-sellout, but there were plenty of empty seats at the 7,000-seat Yubileiny Ice Palace, even though this was one of the few things on the skating schedule that hadn't been altered.

The free skate, like Friday's technical programme was a lackluster affair of sloppy skating. Ted Turner likes to compare the Goodwill Games to the Olympics, but if this was any indication, there is still a very long way to go.

On Friday, there was almost

Pugilist's posthumous problem

NAIROBI, Aug 6: Wrangling relatives have delayed the burial of Robert Wangila, who won black Africa's first Olympic boxing gold medal at Seoul in 1988 and died last month of head injuries suffered in a bout in the United States, reports Reuter.

The widow wants to give him a Muslim funeral in Nairobi. But three men, each claiming to be the boxer's father, have disputed her rights.

High Court judge Andrew Hayanga ordered the funeral delayed on Friday and told "all concerned parties" to appear before him for arbitration next Thursday.

Riot police were posted outside the Nairobi mortuary where the body was held.

The 28-year-old welterweight, who boxed professionally as Wangila Napunyi, died in Las Vegas on July 24, two days after American David Gonzales knocked him out in the ninth round.

Family disputes over burials have led to other hotly contested court cases in Kenya.

Wangila's three "fathers" all come from western Kenya, where custom demands that sons be buried in their tribal homeland.

Lawyers for Wangila's widow, Grace Akinyi, told judge Hayanga that the Boxer's will called for a Muslim funeral.

Wangila won black Africa's first Olympic boxing gold when he beat Frenchman Laurent Boudouani for the welterweight title at the 1988 Seoul Games.

US eves move into Goodwill Games b'ball final

ST PETERSBURG, Russia, Aug 6: The US women's basketball team rolled to 105-73 victory over China on Saturday to advance to the finals at the Goodwill Games, reports AP.

Lisa Leslie led the Americans with 24 points, while Dawn Staley added 21. Ruthie Bolton-Holtfield 15 and Sheryl Swoopes 11.

The US women, seeking their first gold medal in major international competition since 1990, will face France in Sunday's final. The French team, led by Isabelle Fijalkowski with 20 points, beat Russia 86-73 in Saturday's other semifinal game.

The US team led China 53-44 at the half, and pulled away throughout the second half. The Americans controlled China's towering centre, Zheng Haxia, who is listed at anywhere between 6-foot-8 (2.05 m) and 7 feet (2.13 m). She had 18 points and fouled out with about seven minutes to play.

Earlier, Canada beat Italy 82-48 for fifth place.

Bruguera, Medvedev cruise

PRAGUE, Aug 6: Top-seed Sergi Bruguera cruised past Czech Karel Novacek 6-2, 6-2 and second-seed Andrei Medvedev overcame a slow start to beat Spaniard Oscar Martinez 7-6 (8-6), 6-3 on Friday to reach the semifinals of the Czech Open, reports Reuter.

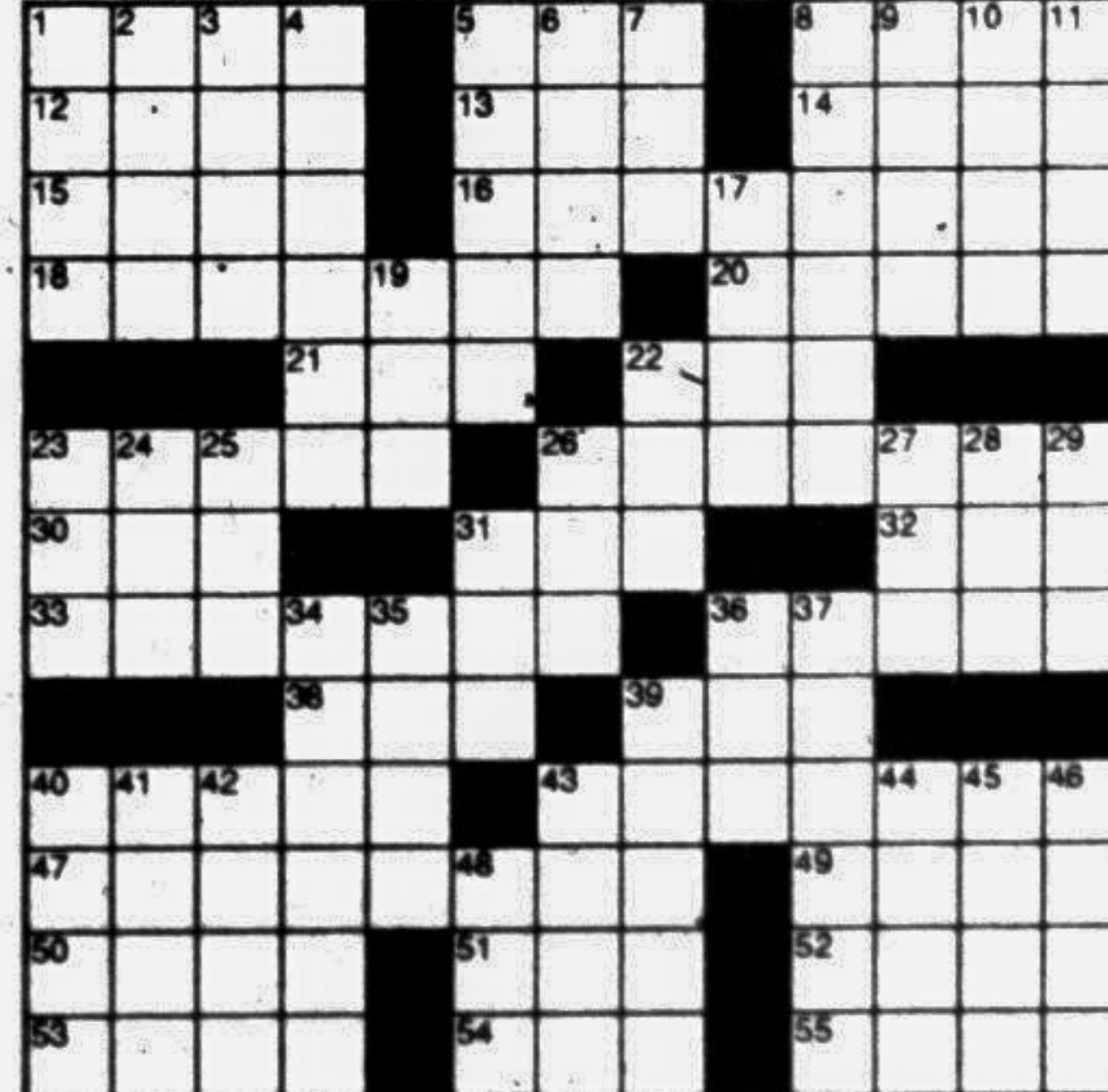
Bruguera, coming off the hard courts of last week's Canadian Open, has shown few signs of trouble adjusting to the slow clay in Prague, needing only 59 minutes to dispose of last week's Dutch Open winner.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	mouthful	artist?	24 Roman
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5 Truck	to public	Wonderful	25 Under the
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8 Herring's	48 Lotion	6 Like peas	of bellum
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tell —"	HOMES	8 Word with	28 Cleo's
13 Copy	51 Humorous	cord or tap	bosom
14 Prince	sort	9 "— Won	compan-
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pastime	53 Afflictions	10 Greatly	29 Japanese
15 Factory	54 Pinkerton	11 101 Dal-	theater
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22 Peninsula	3 Ledge	22 Enjoyment	zo's —"
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31 Beach			42 Netman
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36 Pizazz			45 ...and
38 Branch			a place
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protector?			46 Holler
40 "You —			48 Ram's

Solution time: 24 mins.

TOMS	MOO	TRAM
EDIT	ELL	OISE
NILE	SEESPOTS	
DELANO	GADDIS	
LADS	MOE	
HOTSPOTS	GOOD	
ASH	ANEYE	RUE
GAWK	TENSPOTS	
KIM	ROAR	
COCOON	PUEBLO	
INKSPOTS	SOAP	
REEK	EWY	TONS
CADS	LOS	OKAY



CRYPTOQUIP

DRJ FDDJ XJHMGWSH -
WRJS XFFJSZGWHS NXI
TGJSQ TDJ MGI TYXN
FYXZ.

Yesterday's Cryptogram: AMBITIOUS CARTOON-
IST SHUNNED BELTS, SO HE PRODUCES
SUSPENDED ANIMATION.

Today's Cryptogram clue: F equals P

The Cryptogram 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.