

Aussie grip slackens

VICTORIA, Aug 22: English and Canadian swimmers loosened the Australian stranglehold on Commonwealth Games swimming on Sunday, with three record-breaking wins against the odds, reports Reuters.

England's backstroke prospect Adam Ruckwood broke his own British mark and the Games record in the 200 metres, grabbing the lead in the final length to win in two minutes 0.79 seconds.

"There's always a bit of needling between England, Canada and the Aussies and it's nice to get one over on the Aussies," said Ruckwood, 20 next month.

Canada's Kevin Draxinger, who retired from swimming after the race to start medical college on Monday, added silver to the bronze he gained at the last Games in Auckland.

He clocked 2:02.1, with Scott Miller of Australia, favourite to add to the gold he won in the 100 butterfly on Saturday, third in 2:02.43.

Stephen Clarke earned Canada's eagerly-awaited first swimming gold and avenged his narrow defeat by Miller on Saturday, when he touched ahead of Australia's Chris Fydlir in the 100 metres freestyle.

"I was up late last night thinking about what might have been," Clarke said, adding he went more steadily in the first 50 metres to avoid burning himself out as he had done in the butterfly.

Clarke said the whole team had breathed a sigh of relief after his win.

"We knew the Aussies had the dominant team," he said. "But now we've got one back we can perhaps just relax a bit," he added.

Clarke's time of 50.21 was a Canadian record. Fydlir, silver medalist in Auckland, clocked 50.15, with defending champion Andrew Baldon of Australia third in 50.71.

The last gold to elude the Australians went to England in the women's 4x100m freestyle relay, where Karen Pickering, gold medalist on Friday in the individual event, made up nearly a second over the last 50 metres to beat the Australian favourites.

"I stretched out my stroke in the last 50. Over the last few strokes I could not wait to touch the wall," Pickering said.

The team, spearheaded by Susan Rolph and with Alex Bennett and Claire Huddart swimming the middle legs, finished in a Games record 3:46.23, breaking the British record too.

"It's good just to keep showing the Australians they are not unbeatable," a gleeful Pickering added.

But the Australian women proved invincible in the 400m freestyle and 100m backstroke, winning gold and silver in both. Hayley Lewis, under pressure to do well after a five-gold haul in Auckland, came home in 4:12.56, ahead of compatriot Stacey Gartrell in 4:13.06.

"I lost count of the number of people asking me back home if I was going to get another five," the Olympic silver medalist said.

Defending champion Nicole Stevenson pulled out all the stops in the backstroke to win in 1:02.68 from lane one.

Stevenson managed only seventh fastest in the heats, making the final by just 0.2 of a second. "That scared me a little so I decided to take it out from the start," she said.

Elli Overton, added silver to the medal gold she won on Friday, finishing in 1:02.90.

England's successful night was capped by bronzes in both races with Katharine Osher coming home in 1:03.27 in the backstroke and Sarah Hardcastle finishing in 4:13.29 in the 400m free.

Hardcastle, who won the title in Edinburgh eight years ago, was persuaded to make a comeback by her fiancé and said she was delighted with the medal but disappointed with her time well down on her Games record 4:07.68.

On Saturday, Canada's Curtis Myden swam himself into a faint in an abortive attempt to loosen Australia's grip on Commonwealth swimming.

But the buoyant Australians still won all five finals, boosting their gold medal tally to nine out of 10 after two days of Games competition.

Myden, who led the 400 metres individual medley until the last, gasping 25 metres, collapsed during the medal ceremony and had to be carried away on a stretcher after the anthem.

Matthew Dunn won in a Commonwealth record four minutes 17.01 seconds, with Myden second in 4:17.73.

"My head was a bit buzzy. When I was getting my medal, I was getting kind of blurry," Myden said later. He said he had been examined and would be fit for the 200 medley on Wednesday. "Maybe I just went off too fast," he added.

Dunn said he had almost given up with Myden so far ahead. "It was just head down and go for it. Everything was hurting at that stage."

The women's 200 metres breaststroke also proved a sparkling race with Samantha Riley, finishing 0.77 of a second outside the world record held by compatriot Rebecca Brown, who trailed home second.

Riley swam the third fastest time ever with 2:25.53 to set a Games record.

But a tearful Brown, said she had tensed up before the race and was bitterly disappointed. "I did not think my stroke was right at any time during the race," she said.

Riley and then Brown had already broken the Games record during the morning heats.

Riley said she would like to go even faster at the World Championships in Rome next month. "But I'm not making any world record predictions."

In the men's 100 metres butterfly, Scott Miller edged out Canada's Stephen Clarke, finishing in 54.39 against 54.45 for Clarke.

Miller's fine performance came just three weeks after a bout of chicken pox.

The Women's 200 freestyle proved a slow race by comparison. Favourite Susan O'Neill won in 2:00.86 to make up for a disappointing fifth place in Friday's 100 race.

Teammate Nicole Stevenson was second and Friday's gold medalist Karen Pickering of England third.

"I came in today with high hopes, but I did not have my usual kick over the last 25 metres," Pickering said.

But the final race of the night did produce another record-breaking time, with the Australian 4x200 metres relay team clocking 7:20.80 to better their performance in Auckland four years ago.

The win meant a second gold for Dunn and for world 1,500 metres record holder Kieren Perkins, who won the 200 metres freestyle on Friday.

New Zealand, whose anchorman Danyon Loader almost caught Perkins in the last 25 metres, were second in 7:21.67 and England third in 7:26.19.

MEDALS TABLE

Commonwealth Games medals table after the third day of competition on Sunday (tabulated — gold, silver, bronze):

| | | | |
|------------------|----|----|----|
| Australia | 19 | 13 | 10 |
| Canada | 17 | 11 | 9 |
| England | 6 | 10 | 10 |
| New Zealand | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| India | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Nigeria | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Sri Lanka | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Northern Ireland | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Scotland | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Malaysia | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Wales | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Pakistan | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Cyprus | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Guernsey | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Hong Kong | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| South Africa | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Zimbabwe | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Note: Disabled medals are not included.

No silver or bronze medals awarded in the men's pairs running target shooting event, no bronze awarded in women's 50-km team cycling time trial and women's 4x200 freestyle swimming.

English shuttlers reign

VICTORIA, Aug 22: England maintained their unbeaten record in Commonwealth Games team badminton when they defeated Malaysia 3-2 in the final on Sunday, reports Reuters.

It was their fifth gold medal since the event was introduced in Edmonton in 1978.

As expected, the outcome depended on the mixed doubles after Malaysia won both men's events and England dominated the two women's matches.

The mixed could scarcely have been closer or more exciting.

England had a strong pairing in all-England champions Nick Ponting and Joanne Wright and, when they took the first game 15-4 against Kim Her Tan and Zamaliah.

Sidek, it seemed England were already halfway to the top of the rostrum.

But Malaysia fought their way back into the match, taking a tense second game 18-16.

The decider was strewn with errors, with Ponting for a time unable to serve in court and Sidek also showing his nerves with a string of mistakes. But in the end the reliable and at times brilliant Tan also succumbed and was unable to prevent the inevitable.

Ponting summoned up a final smash to clinch victory 18-16 and a relieved England team celebrated wildly.

The Malaysians, traditionally weak in the women's events, could feel pleased with their performance in taking the silver after returning home empty-handed from Auckland four years ago.

The final began with Rashid Sidek wasting little time in

disposing of Peter Knowles 15-8, 15-5 to give Malaysia an early lead.

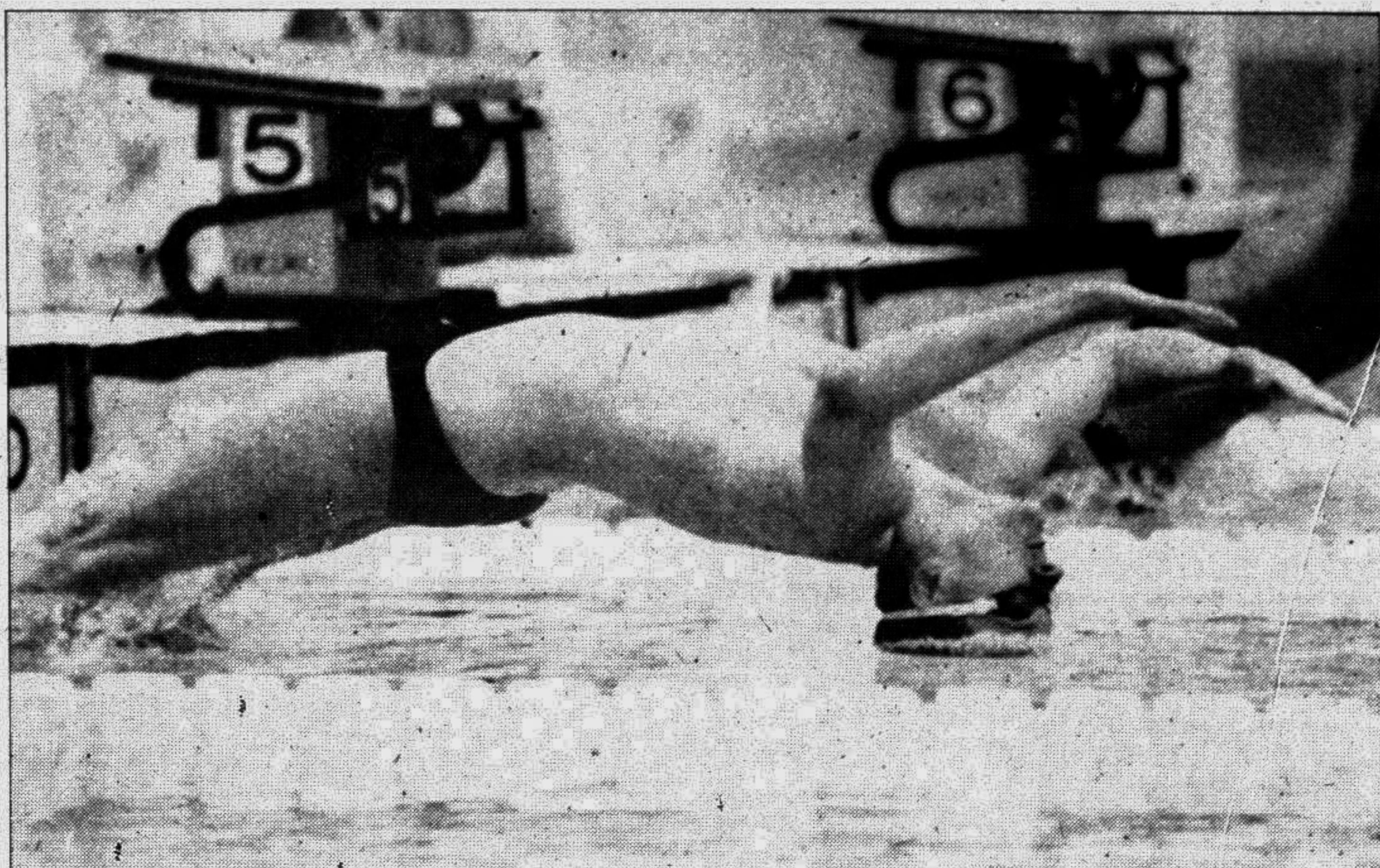
Then Jo Muggeridge achieved a crucial result for England when she fought back from 3-8 down in the second game to beat Wai Leng Lee 11-2, 11-8.

Soon Kit Cheah and Beng Kiang Soo overcame some tough first game resistance from big-hitting Simon Archer and Chris Hunt in the men's doubles to make it 2-1, only for Olympic medals double quarter-finalists Gill Clark and Julie Bradbury to assert their class with a 15-3, 15-3 win over Wai Leng Lee and Lee Wai Tan to square the match.

Hong Kong repeated their bronze medal success of 1990 in their last appearance at the Games while Australia also took a bronze, their first team medal in Commonwealth badminton.



The British badminton team celebrates after beating Malaysia in the final at the Commonwealth Games on August 21. It was their fifth title in a row. — AFP photo



England's Adam Ruckwood dives into the pool at the start of the men's 200 metre backstroke final during the Commonwealth Games in Victoria on August 21. Ruckwood took the gold medal and also set a new Games record time clocking 2:00.79. — AFP photo

Sorry!

VICTORIA, Aug 22: The Commonwealth Games organisers apologised on Sunday for raising a wrong coloured Nigerian flag at a medals ceremony for wrestling champion Jacob Isaac, reports Reuters.

Isaac, who won the 48 kg freestyle event on Saturday for Nigeria's first gold of the Games, looked stunned as a national flag with the wrong shade of green was raised at the awards presentation.

Games spokeswoman Amy Hart told reporters on Sunday the flag's background was a deep forest green background instead of bright green.

"The Nigerians expressed their concern and we apologise sincerely," Hart said.

Hart added that the Games flags had been supplied by the Canadian Federal Government and not all had been checked.

"We will be checking every single flag now," she said.

Shooters open India's gold account

VICTORIA, Aug 22: Pistol shooters Jaspal Rana and Ashok Pandit were bang on target to provide India with their first gold medal of the Commonwealth Games here yesterday, reports PTI.

Bombay-based veteran Pandit and rookie Jaspal Rana, an 18-year-old Delhi University sophomore, picked up the men's pairs centre-fire pistol gold with a new Games record of 1,168 points which bettered the four-year old mark of Australia's Philip Adams and Bruce Quick by three points.

The duo shrugged off indifferent form of the first two days and withstood mounting pressure to capture the gold on the heat's range. Rana, in fact, kept his nerves intact over the last five shots after his pistol malfunctioned in the duelling round.

The feat of Pandit, an individual gold winner in the same event at Auckland four years ago, and teenager Rana (a gold medal winner in the juniors section of the recent World Championship at Milan in the standard pistol event) brought much cheer to the Indian camp.

Women shooters Roopa Unnikrishnan and Kishori Ganguly also showed much improved form to bag a bronze in the women's pairs small-bore rifle (three-position) by logging 1,110 points.

Indian kabaddi team for Asiad named

BANGALORE, Aug 22: A ten-member Indian kabaddi team for the Hiroshima Asian Games was announced here today after three days of trials at the south centre of the Sports Authority of India, on the outskirts, reports PTI.

J S Gehlot, president of the Kabaddi Federation of India, who was also chairman of the selection committee, told pressmen while announcing the team that the penultimate coaching camp for the Games ended here today and the final phase of the camp would restart here on August 25.

He said of the 20 probabilities, 10 were selected unanimously purely on merit.

Following is the team: Rajarantam, Bhaskaran, Ganesan (all Tamil Nadu), Tirathraj (Delhi), Ashok Shinde and Raju Ghule (both Maharashtra), Avatar Singh (Services), Monivenkatappa (Karnataka), Biswajit Palit (West Bengal) and Surender Singh (Haryana).

Messrs Shantaram Jadhav and P Pandian would accompany the team as coach and manager respectively, he said.

Mitchell won't say a word



COLOGNE, Germany, Aug 22: American Dennis Mitchell put up a stone wall to questions about his

recent early morning brawl with a rival sprinter in a Zurich hotel lobby after posting a powerful win at the Cologne Grand Prix on Sunday, reports Reuters.

After producing an explosive 100-metre victory in 10.13 seconds, Olympic bronze medalist Mitchell said he would be making no comment about the reasons, for exchanging blows with Nigerian Olapade Adeniken after Wednesday's Welklasse Grand Prix meeting.

The fight left blood stains on the grey carpet of the Athletes' Nova Par Hotel and Adeniken with cuts above an eye which needed stitches. The Nigerian was unable to compete in Friday's meeting in Brussels.

But, while the 28th-year-old American admitted there had been a fight, he told a press conference: "I have been advised by my associates and the IAAF (International Amateur Athletics Federation) not to make a statement about what did happen."

"Things that have been written about what I did and what my associates have done ... and about the reasons we had the confrontation are false. If I said we did not have a confrontation, I would be lying. But the things that have been said about me are false."

The IAAF, the sport's governing body, is to investigate the brawl. A meeting is due to be held before the Grand Prix final in Paris at the start of next month.

Mitchell seems keen not to say anything until the IAAF meeting. When reporters pressed him further on the incident at the press conference, his manager stepped in to say the sprinter would leave if the questioning continued.

The Mitchell press conference provided the only drama to a meeting which rarely reached great heights despite the presence of stars like Noureddine Morceli, Moses

Kiptanui and top women's sprinters Gwen Torrence and Irina Privalova.

Mitchell was not expected to lose the 100 metres in the absence of Britain's Olympic and world champion Linford Christie, who is competing at the Commonwealth Games, and American world silver



DENNIS MITCHELL

medalist Andre Cason, who pulled out of the race at the last minute because of a family illness.

But Mitchell was pushed all the way fellow American John Drummond, who finished second in 10.17.

Wearing his regular bright green outfit, Mitchell was given a good reception by the Cologne crowd despite the

Magnificent McShane

LONDON, Aug 22: British chess prodigy Luke McShane, 10, has become the youngest player in the world to avoid defeat by a Grandmaster, reports Reuters.

Luke, who started playing chess when he was five, held Romulad Mainka of Germany, who is 21, to a six-hour draw at a competition in London on Sunday night.

"It's probably my best result. I don't think I've ever played a Grandmaster in a long-play tournament before," he said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| ACROSS | neutral | Rabbit, e.g. | column |
| 1 Brood | 38 Lowly | Diner's | staple |
| 5 Unsuitable | worker | card | 16 Durocher |
| 8 Pleased | 39 Coffee | or | Buscaglia |
| 12 Gabor | vessel | 2 Pizzeria | 20 Invention, |
| and Le | 41 Roches- | fixture | originally |
| Gallienne | ter's love | 3 Treaty | 22 Made like |
| 13 Kimono | 43 Luxurious | 4 Inuit | 23 Aristocratic |
| accessory | home | 5 Fluffy | 25 News staff |
| 14 California | 46 John of | accessory | newcomer |
| city | rock | 6 Exemplar | 26 Blackbird |
| 15 Choker, | 50 Panache | of easi- | of puzzle- |
| e.g. | 51 Lose | ness | dom |
| 17 Finished | 54 Dearth | 7 Conked | 27 Livers? |
| 18 Set free, | 55 "Rocks" | out | 29 Quarry |
| maybe | 56 Singer's | 8 Michael | 31 Court |
| 19 Strip | come- | Jackson, | 32 Nol of |
| 21 React to | back? | trademark | Cambodia |
| a pain or | 57 Haber- | 9 One of the | 34 Galvaniz- |
| a pun | dasher's | Cavalier | ing stuff |
| 24 First St. | rackful | Poets | 38 BB |
| 25 Mafia | 58 Article in | 10 Estival | 40 Enlisted |
| kingpin | "Time?" | quaffs | personnel |
| 28 The Rape | 59 Roger | 11 Gossip- | 42 One's good |
| of the | | | name, |
| Lock" | | | for short |
| writer | | | 43 Hide |
| 30 It does the | | | 44 Jai follower |
| hole job | | | 45 Send out |
| 33 Important | | | 47 Mexican |
| numero | | | munch |
| 34 Horse in- | | | 48 — Rios |
| striped | | | (resort) |
| pajamas" | | | 49 Night light |
| 35 Bill's | | | 52 Pronoun |
| partner | | | from JFK |
| 36 Marceau | | | 53 Under- |
| portrayal | | | stand |
| 37 Run in | | | |

Solution time: 21 mins.

| | | |
|----------|----------|------|
| FETE | DIM | WOWS |
| AMEN | ORE | AVEC |
| TUNGSTEN | RIGA | |
| LIKE | TENDON | |
| FUNNY | CANE | |
| EPEE | CHLORINE | |
| TOW | SHILL | CAM |
| ANTIMONY | COME | |
| PUPA | BONER | |
| CAOETS | EAR | |
| OPEC | HYDROGEN | |
| PUMA | OED | NORA |
| EPIC | PAY | ADAM |

South Africa's maiden medal

VICTORIA, Aug 22: Willem Engelbrecht, not even born when South Africa last competed in the Commonwealth Games, marked the republic's return to the fold with a road race cycling bronze on Sunday, reports Reuters.

The 32-year-old veteran carved himself a small place in the record books when he became the first South African to win a medal since the 1958 Cardiff Games, his country's last appearance.

While South Africa edged on to the medals table three days into the 10-day sports festival, Australia remained top, even though they failed to dominate the swimming finals for once.

Classy Canadian Stella Umeh won the women's all-round gymnastics crown while the men's equivalent went to England's Neil Thomas.

Umeh goes for four individual apparatus golds today before retiring from international competition.

Engelbrecht's third place was unexpected and controversial. He was promoted from fourth after England's Chris Lillywhite, third in the finishing sprint, was judged to have jostled Australian rival Grant Rice.

But there was no disputing the one-two finish by New Zealanders Mark Rendell and Brian Fowler.

Fowler cleverly engineered his compatriot's escape with just under two laps of the 182 km race remaining and was rewarded for his unselfishness with his third successive Games silver.

Australian Kathryn Watt won the women's road race by a 30 seconds margin from Canadian pair Linda Jackson and Alison Sydor.

IOC credibility on the line?

LONDON, Aug 22: Nine positive drug tests at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics were covered up, according to a BBC television programme, reports AP.

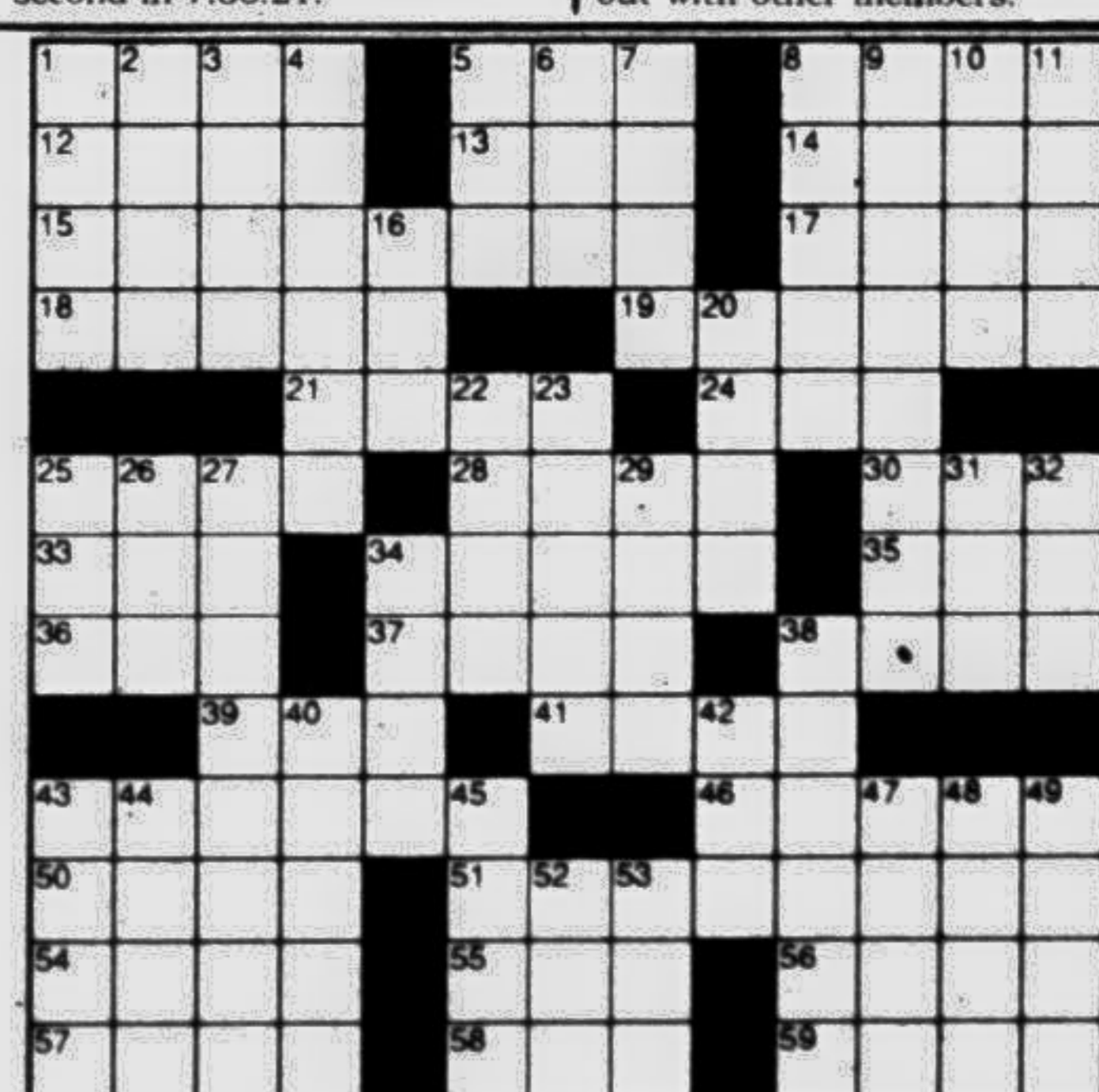
The drug-testing laboratory was shut down before the Games ended and files on the positive tests were destroyed, according to two anti-doping officials interviewed for Monday's "On The Line" programme.

While 12 positive doping cases were made public earlier during the Games, nine other positive tests were allegedly never acted upon during the last two days of competition.

Craig Kammerer, identified as director of the Olympic testing laboratory at UCLA at the time of the Games, told the BBC that five of the nine tests — which are divided into A and B samples — showed the presence of steroids. The others showed testosterone and ephedrine.

"The results were summarised and submitted to the International Olympic Committee medical commission with our proof of what the drug was," Kammerer said. "We waited as usual for a reply and an appointment and schedule for the opening of the B sample, but it never came. At the end of the Games, we had a whole slew of positives, but no competitor ever showed up for a B sample ... We were never given an explanation of why nothing was done."

The allegations were supported by Arnold Beckett, a Briton who was a member of the IOC medical commission. He was recently dropped from the commission after falling out with other members.



CRYPTOQUIP

Q D Q K S Y V V L Y H S Y D M
N K I H D N K N R C V K W N K
Q W Y K L M W E Y T H C O E M I
T I T H C O E M I Y R R C L V K
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SCIENTIST REMARKED TO HUMANS SHE HAD CLONED: "YOU MEN ARE ALL ALIKE!"

Today's Cryptoquip clue: T 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.