



Olympic champion Jackie Joyner-Kersey of USA sails across the sandpit to win the long jump event at the IAAF Grand Prix in Paris on Sept 3. Ukraine's Inessa Kravets came second. — AFP photo

Joyner-Kersey, Morceli shine

PARIS, Sept 4: Nouredine Morceli of Algeria saw off the effects of illness and American Jackie Joyner-Kersey saw off arch-rival Heike Drechsler to be crowned Grand Prix athletics champions on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Each boosted their bank balances by 130,000 dollars collecting 100,000 dollars for winning the overall title and 30,000 dollars for winning their individual events at the season-ending finale. But while they both shared the glory, Morceli claimed the drama for himself. In the morning Morceli said he was too ill to run and told the organisers he was pulling out of the meeting because of bronchitis and a stomach bug. But the 24-year-old world record-holder at 1,500 mile and 3,000 metres, then changed his mind, climbed from his sick bed, went for a jog, and shook off the effects of the illness that has been bothering him for a week. He looked like a picture of health as he streaked away to win his race in 3:40.89 after a stunning 51.8 seconds last lap. But the intrigue that surrounded him all day returned when he failed to turn up for the medal ceremony. Joyner-Kersey, had a relatively straight-forward victory, collecting her 130,000-dollar prize money after winning the long jump.

The reigning Olympic and world heptathlon champion, who earlier this year cleared 7.49m, the second-longest jump ever by a woman, secured the latest honour in her Japanese eyes spike back.

Japanese eyes spike back

FUKUOKA, Japan, Sept 4: Japan came from behind to beat Brazil 13-15, 11-15, 15-5, 15-6, 15-12 on Sunday in the women's volleyball World Grand Prix, reports AP. Japan wound up the preliminary round with eight victories against one defeat and advanced into the final round in Shanghai, to be held Sept 9-11. Brazil, who are 7-2, took a berth in the final round regardless of outcomes of other matches being held in Manila and Guangzhou, said Kazuyuki Kojima, secretary-general of the Japan Volleyball Association.

In the day's second-match, Russia defeated Italy 12-15, 15-7, 15-10, 11-15, 15-10 for their fourth victory against five defeats. Italy were 2-7. Twelve nations — Australia, Japan, Brazil, Cuba, Taiwan, Germany, Italy, South Korea, Netherlands, Peru, Russia and the United States

already illustrious career with a leap of 7.21m, good enough to win the overall title for the first time.

Samuel Matete of Zambia collected 80,000 dollars for his second place overall and his victory in the 400m hurdles while Mike Conley of the United States won the triple jump and 60,000 dollars for finishing third.

Svetla Dimitrova of Bulgaria won 80,000 dollars for finishing second overall and winning the 100m hurdles and Sonia O'Sullivan of Ireland 60,000 dollars for finishing third overall and winning the 5,000m.

The huge cash incentives for winning the overall Grand Prix titles plus substantial amounts for taking the individual titles in each event, guaranteed a high level of drama and excitement throughout the afternoon.

With points awarded for performances, and with Morceli's appearance in doubt until the last minute, a sizeable number of athletes were in contention for the overall prizes.

Another thread of intrigue



NOUREDDINE MORCELI was woven into the final as performances in different events were evaluated for a tiebreak scoring method. This ensured that athletes

Tiananmen still haunts Chinese government

BEIJING, Sept 4: The government has barred a Chinese athlete from competing in international games for the disabled because his legs were crushed by an army tank during the bloody crackdown on the 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy movement, reports AP.

Chinese authorities were afraid foreign reporters would start asking embarrassing human rights questions if they found out how the athlete, Fang Zheng, was disabled, a friend, veteran activist Xu Liangying, said late Friday.

Fang told Xu about his expulsion from the games the day before he was forced by sports officials to leave Beijing and return to his home on Hainan Island, in the South China Sea, where he sells drinks and household items from a small roadside stall.

An official for the Far East and South Pacific Disabled Games, which are to open Sunday, said she knew nothing of the incident and could not comment.

China's Communist government has used the games to spotlight its efforts to improve the lives of the nation's disabled.

A front-page article Friday in the China Women's News featured Deng Pufang, the son of senior leader Deng Xiaoping, recounting how China has built 60 vocational schools for the disabled and taught 50,000 deaf people to read in the last six years.

Disabled Games begin in Beijing

BEIJING, Sept 4: At a stadium awash with laser lights and enlivened with mass gymnastic dances, the Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled began Sunday in Beijing with more than 2,000 athletes from 42 countries participating, reports AP.

The Games, which the government has used to spotlight its efforts to improve the lives of the nation's disabled, were launched with a lavish ceremony and the lighting of a flame from a torch lit last week at the Great Wall.

Among the many officials attending the opening ceremony was Deng Pufang, a paraplegic who is the son of China's senior leader Deng Xiaoping.

During the weeks leading up to the Games, Chinese authorities have held scores of events intended to publicize efforts to help the nation's 50 million disabled, who have benefitted greatly from Deng Pufang's visibility and influence.

The disabled athletes who are optimistic about life and tenacious in braving their difficulties set good examples for the non-disabled in facing the challenges of everyday life," the official People's Daily said in an editorial Saturday.

In the past 10 years, China has established a foundation to aid the disabled with rehabilitation programmes, education, sports, employment and other activities; enacted a law to protect the handicapped and established policies to encourage businesses to give them jobs.

About 60 per cent of disabled Chinese are employed, and many handicapped people remain shut away in their homes, unable to obtain education or other training.

Few public places have made any provisions for the handicapped, few of whom have access to modern rehabilitation facilities.

"There is still plenty of room for improvement," the official China Daily said in an editorial Saturday that noted that further improvements would depend on the nation's overall economic development.

China favourites in Asiad b'ball

HIROSHIMA, Japan, Sept 4: Asian basketball champions China will spearhead the 10-team men's tournament and six-team women's event when the 12th Asian Games get underway in Hiroshima next month, reports AP.

In a draw held in Hiroshima Saturday, the Chinese men were set to lead the preliminary Group A round robin competition against Japan, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia and Palestine.

South Korea, bronze medalists at the Asian Championships in Jakarta, will take on Iran, who were fourth in Jakarta, the Philippines, the United Arab Emirates and Kazakhstan in Group B.

The top two teams from each group will advance to the knock-out semi-finals.

The Chinese women, the runners-up at the World Championships in Sydney in June, are favoured in the women's event which includes South Korea, silver medalists at the Asian Championships; bronze medalist Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Kazakhstan.

Agassi, Chang safely through



NEW YORK, Sept 4: They were the perfect antidote to slam-bang tennis. Andre Agassi winning in three sweet sets, Michael Chang in just one and a half, each showing why baseliners are dominating this year's US Open, reports AP.

The way they played Saturday, Agassi and Chang looked as if they were sharpening up for the final. Too bad one must bump off the other in the round of 16.

Agassi beat the tougher opponent, No 12 Wayne Ferreira, 7-5, 6-1, 7-5, and he did it in a thoroughly convincing fashion. Ferreira was so frustrated he was reduced to childish fits of racket-throwing and ball-whacking.

Chang was equally in command of his match but got away in half the time when Jim Grabb retired with an aggravated shoulder injury while trailing 6-1, 4-1. Chang played his best tennis so far, serving like a bigger man and chasing down almost everything.

It is no coincidence that Agassi and Chang are playing so well. So, too, are other baseliners like No. 3 Sergi Bruguera, who beat big Marc Goellner 1-6, 6-4, 6-2, 6-7 (7-4), 6-1, and No. 13 Thomas Muster, who beat Thomas Enqvist, 6-0, 6-4, 6-2. Richey Reneberg, an unseeded baseliner who upset Boris Becker in the first round, reached the fourth round with a 2-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7-4), 6-2 victory over Richard Fromberg.

No 9 Todd Martin, a classic serve-and-volleyer, struggled through five sets in the first round. He's stayed back more ever since, and on Saturday night he approached the net about half as often as Patrick Rafter in beating him 7-5, 6-3, 6-7 (7-3), 6-2.

The same pattern has developed on the women's side. Defending champion Steffi Graf is coming in only on short balls, and she saw a lot of those as she put away 23 of 24 net approaches in a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Radka Bobkova. Graf had a nose bleed in practice but experienced no trouble during the match.

No 4 Mary Pierce, who

practically lives on the baseline, beat Judith Wiesner 6-2, 6-4.

No 6 Lindsay Davenport tried rushing the net, but was too slow and got caught out of position too often as she converted only 22 of 33 approaches in a 6-3, 7-6 (7-1) loss to No 44-ranked Mana Endo.

No 7 Jana Novotna, who charges the net at Wimbledon, mostly stayed back to beat Patricia Hy 6-1, 6-2. The same was true of No 11 Amanda Coetzer, who beat Mariana de Swardt 6-1, 6-3; and Magdalena Maleeva, who beat Shaun Stafford 6-3, 7-6 (7-3).

The hardcourts and slightly fuzzier balls are a little slower this year, creating a nice balance between the speed of Wimbledon's grass and the rusty, dusty rallies of the

French Open's clay.

"If you take the atmosphere out of it, and some of the noise and some of the hecklers, this is certainly the fairest court because you can serve and volley unlike on clay, but you can stay back," Martin said. "It gives everybody an equal shot at winning the tournament."

"If you hit a good volley, then it is a good volley. If you don't hit a good volley, then you're going to pay for it sometimes. And that's the way tennis should be. That is what all the complaints were about at Wimbledon. But it's hard to make a grass court slow. It's much easier to make a hard-court slow, and they've come up with a pretty good composition of court and ball."

Even serve-and-volleyers like defending champion Pete Sampras are taking notice.



Fourth-seeded Mary Pierce of France smiles during her third round match against Judith Wiesner of Austria in the US Open in New York on Sept 3. Pierce cruised to a 6-2, 6-4 victory. — AFP photo

staying back more instead of rushing in as they do all the time at Wimbledon. Sampras has the ability to play different ways, so the subtle change of speed this year shouldn't affect him. For Becker, the changes surprised him and drove him out quickly.

Agassi, unseeded with a No 20 ranking, is thriving here so far, though getting past Chang won't be easy.

"Michael is playing some great tennis and I am definitely going to have my hands full against him," Agassi said. "But when I am hitting the ball well, concentrating this well, I like my chances against anybody."

"I wasn't scared to take chances at the right time (against Ferreira). I'm using all parts of my game right now. That's when I'm playing my best tennis, when I'm using the angles and the lines."

A year ago, Agassi lost here in the first round. He reached the final in 1990, only to get crushed by Sampras.

"When you compete at a high level, then you want the players to respect you for what you can do and you want them to fear having you on their side of the draw," Agassi said. "When you go out here and you take guys as good as Wayne and you can beat him handily, it is such a confident feeling for me."

Chang won't take Agassi for granted but is feeling pretty confident himself after boosting the power in his game with upper body work and practice on his serve. Getting off easy against Grabb didn't hurt.

"Sometimes if you play a five-set match it can really take its toll on you, physically," Chang said. "Then all of a sudden, things start to hurt here and there. I am actually going to go out and hit a little bit more because I've come from having two days off, so I want to be able to try to stay sharp."

Taipei doesn't want to give in

TAIPEI, Sept 4: The government has urged President Lee Teng-hui to attend the Asian Games in Japan next month despite threats from rival China to boycott the Games in retaliation, according to Premier Lien Chan, reports AP.

Lien announced the decision at a gathering of lawmakers of the governing Nationalist Party Saturday night. He said the Cabinet also urged Lee to attend the Games as 'head of state.'

Lien's announcement, the first clear government stand on whether Lee should attend the Games, was applauded by the lawmakers.

Sheik Ahmad al-Fahad of Kuwait, president of the Olympic Council of Asia, invited Lee two months ago to attend the Games in Hiroshima Oct 2-16. Lee has given no indication whether he would accept the invitation.

Taiwan is one of the 42 contingents entered in the Games. Its athletes will compete under the banner Chinese Taipei to differentiate themselves from athletes representing the People's Republic of China.

China threatened to boycott the Games if Lee attends. It considers visits by Taiwanese leaders to Japan to be a violation of the diplomatic relations it established with Tokyo in 1972.

Far from familiar farm

NEW YORK, Sept 4: She is 23 years old and a long way from the farm in the Midwest of the United States, where she grew up feeding the hogs and riding a tractor with her father.

Ann Grossman remembers those days fondly. She also remembers how tennis came to rule her life. How she practised for hours on end, and if all did not go well, faced stinging rebuke from her father, insults that flew like volleys off a racket.

"I really did hate myself growing up because tennis was everything to my dad," she said. "And if I won, I was great. And if I didn't, I was like nothing. And when you're an adolescent, you think there's something wrong with you. You don't know. And now I've gone back and gotten the anger out from my dad."

Grossman spoke Friday from the US Open, after she beat ninth-seeded Mary Joe Fernandez in the third round. It was not so much a news conference as a therapy

session, reports AP.

Her father, Bill Grossman, died three years ago. He was, by trade, a farmer in Grove City, Ohio, but also a coach. He smelled the big money of tennis in the 1970s, and set his daughter on the yellow brick road. Ann Grossman didn't have much to say about it.

She talks of him now in the complicated language of entangled family relationships: hostility and fear, love and respect. But most of all there is a sense of acceptance and growth.

"I wouldn't be here if he didn't push me," she said. "They have to push but they have to know when to stop. And that's difficult for a parent, and it's kind of scary.... What I've done is gotten out a lot of the anger. So when I go on the court, all those bad memories don't come back to haunt me. And now, I'm free."

The story is a familiar one in this sport: the tennis-obsessed parent who plays the dangerous role of coach, trainer, confidant, role model, agent. The most treacherous case is

Jim Pierce, the father of Mary

there, whose abusiveness was such that he was banned from attending women's tournaments.

But, to one degree or another, there are other examples. And maybe Steffi Graf, Andrea Jaeger, Jimmy Connors or Aaron Krickstein can understand something of where Grossman has been.

Grossman, on the tour since 1988, says she talks to the younger players, offering whatever advice she can. She feels a sense of responsibility and hopes they can come around the way she has.

"Before, I used to be so tense, not able to flow on the court," she said. "Now, with what's happened, I've let everything out and I can go out and enjoy myself. Everyone talks of the grind of the tour, and I'm having the best time. I'm not making my wins and losses my worth."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

1 — Gras	King's Christine, e.g.	4 Late-night arrest abbr.	24 Aviv lead-in
6 Clergy member	44 Despondent	5 Betrayer's surname	25 Cologne-label word
12 Subsidiary rulings	46 "Time — essence"	6 Vigorous campaign finish	26 Footnote indication
13 Matchless	50 Author Fallaci	7 Chips in chips	28 Done in a glossy
14 Koran tongue	52 Nabokov's nymph	8 Carnival setting	30 That (Sp.)
15 Dark brews	54 Super-market sections	9 Rocky, e.g.	31 Venomous viper
16 Actor/comedian Carvey	55 Puts into office	10 Inning sextet	33 Nevertheless
17 Run the run	56 Clientele	11 Egg container	34 Standardized test: abbr.
19 Follower: suffix	57 Classroom array	18 Reindeer	39 Dogpatch lad
20 The O'Hara estate	DOWN	21 Neighbor of Pak.	41 McKinley's birthplace
22 Letter opener	1 "— Breck-inridge"	23 Actor Holm	42 Inverness, e.g.
24 Afternoon social	2 Senator Cranston	3 Morocco's	43 Domingo show-stopper
27 Frankenstein monster's fear	3 Morocco's	Solution time: 24 mins.	45 Colleen
29 Vicinity	PAW CHAS PHIL		47 Morally corrupt
32 Casual quality	ANA HALL AURA		48 Ed and Mel of baseball
35 Troubadour's instrument	GARGOYLE SEAM		49 Monogram of Ot Blue
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CRYPTOQUIP

Q K D P A J Q T V W F K V Z H - W A P L

F S Y V C Z S V A A J P D J E X Q C J

J F N V W X Y A Q T V

L H N Q J S Q E J

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: PAY YOUR ELECTRIC BILLS SWIFTLY IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE KEPT IN THE DARK.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: L 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.