

First Ashes Test begins in Brisbane tomorrow

Warne's new tricks for old foes

BRISBANE, Australia, Nov 23: Shane Warne, who spun Australia to a 4-1 Ashes victory over England last year, has promised further torment for the old enemy in the first Test at the Gabba starting on Friday, reports Reuter.

"With the pitches over here being quicker than in England, they will have less time to adjust if they make a mistake," Warne told reporters on Wednesday. "I'd like to think I can take 34 wickets again this time."

"It's an advantage for me that I dominated their batsmen in England and it doesn't worry me that they might think they know how I bowl this time having seen me before."

"I know how they bat and their weaknesses as well, and even if they pick my variations, the ball might still turn, bounce or dip more than they expect and beat them all the same."

Warne has spoken in recent weeks of a mystery ball which he is considering unleashing during the series.

He said he had received some valuable advice from former Pakistan leg-spinner Abdul Qadir during Australia's recent tour.

"We had a good chat, he got a ball and we tried a few things," Warne said. "He showed me some amazing things, turning the ball on a carpet."

And Warne hinted at what his new weapon could involve when he said, only half-joking: "The key is what the ball does—it could spin back down the wicket to me."

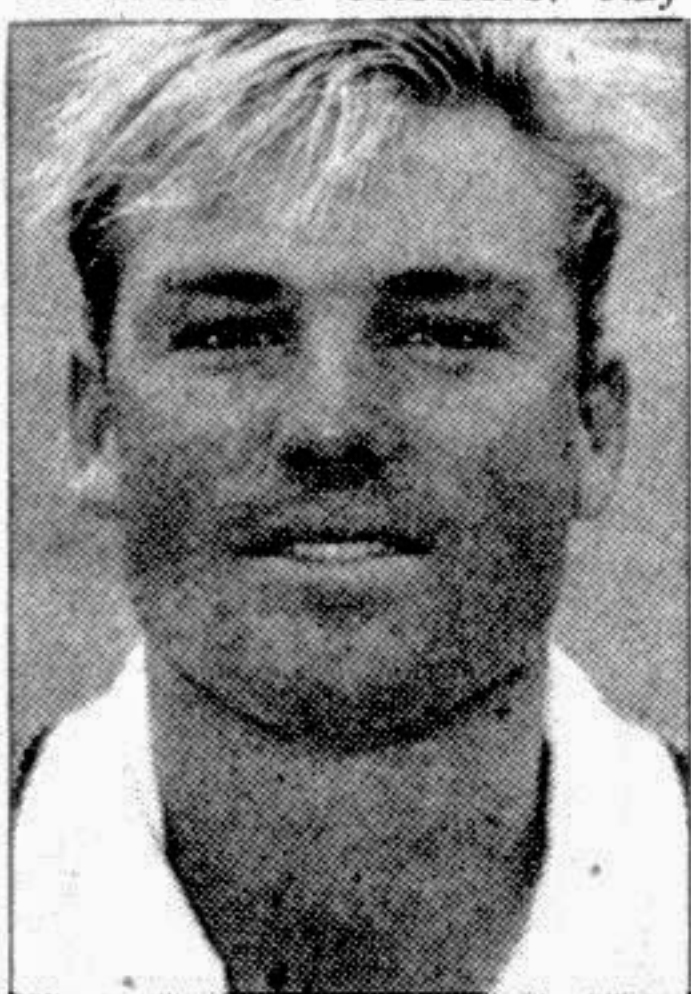
"I've mucked around with a few things in the nets, trying three or four different things."

"I'm still not 100 per cent confident but if I work out on Thursday and feel confident about things I will try the ball in the Test."

England, reeling from three crushing consecutive series at the hands of Australia, have suffered a series of setbacks

while the home side has enjoyed a virtually untroubled preparation.

The tourist lost strike bowler Devon Malcolm because of chickenpox on Tuesday, their form has deteriorated badly, while Atherton himself was the subject of some unflattering comments by England chairman of selectors, Ray



SHANE WARNE

Illingworth.

Illingworth said he was unhappy at not being consulted during the early weeks of the tour but Atherton subsequently rejected talk of a rift, saying the pair had spoken on Wednesday morning.

"I'd always planned to ring him before the Test and it was a very amicable chat. He wished me and the boys well for Friday," said Atherton.

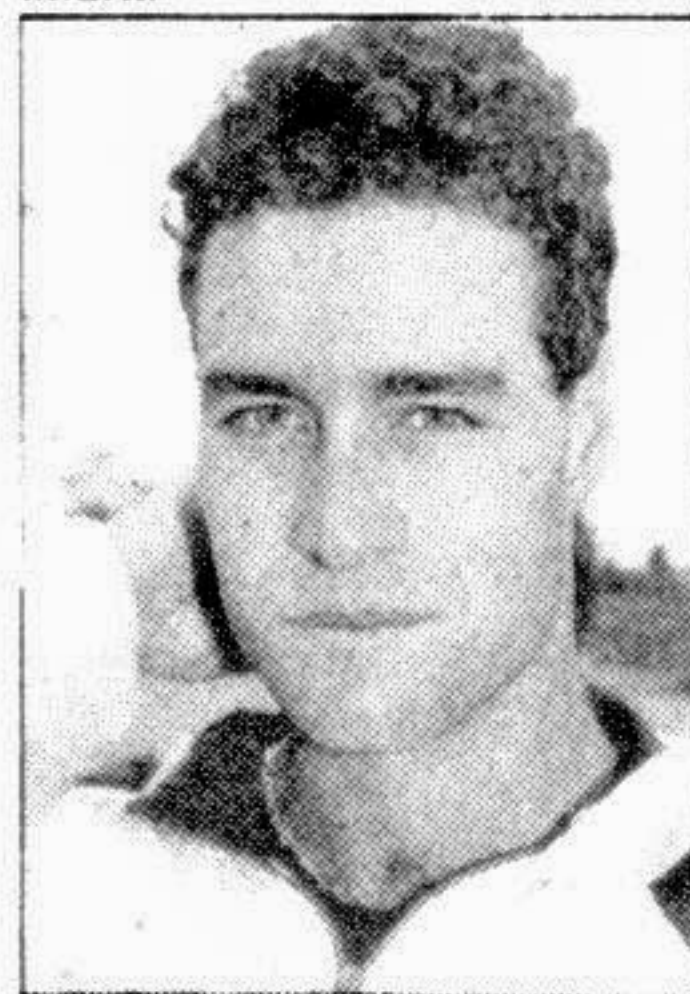
Despite the internal upheavals and his side's dismal Ashes record, Atherton stressed his confidence when he told reporters on Wednesday: "The mood in the team is good and everyone is looking forward to Friday."

"We almost won the last Test we played (against South Africa) in three days, that was a stunning performance and we want that kind of attitude and aggressive cricket from the players this time too."

By contrast, Mark Taylor's side have been boosted by their return from injury of wicket-keeper Ian Healy and middle order batsman Steve Waugh

with the selectors keeping faith with the side who were unlucky to lose 1-0 in Pakistan this month.

Waugh will not be able to bowl after injuring his shoulder in Pakistan but Australian coach Bobby Simpson said he expected his side to compensate for his absence from the attack.



MICHAEL BEVAN

BEVAN DOUBTFUL

While Warne's bubbly mood was good news for Australia, batsman Michael Bevan was confined to bed with an illness team officials fear could be chicken pox.

Bevan — the outstanding performer on Australia's tour of Pakistan — woke on Wednesday morning complaining of a sore throat and general nausea, the early symptoms of chicken pox.

"Michael has the same symptoms that can indicate chicken pox but we can never be certain until he actually comes out in spots," said team physiotherapist Errol Alcott.

"Should Bevan be forced out of the Test, West Australians Justin Langer and Damien Martyn would be at the top of the list of likely replacements."

Langer played in the third Test at Lahore earlier this month in place of the injured Steve Waugh and scored a diligent 69. Martyn has not played Test cricket since the second Test against South Africa in January

this year but captained the Australian XI against England in Hobart last weekend, top-scoring with 103.

Vice-captain and wicket-keeper Ian Healy, meanwhile, has predicted that the Gabba pitch will aid both Australia's slow bowlers: Warne and Tim May.

"I thought the track looked a little dry when I saw it for the first time and I reckon it should spin," Healy said.

"I would be expecting to have a fair bit of work up at the stumps during the game."

"We've got Mark Waugh to bowl his medium pace and Michael Bevan too, who can bowl medium pace or his left-arm wrist-spinners. And if we play the two spinners (Shane) Warne and (Tim) May, we've got a great attack to back up the fast men," Simpson said.

TEAMS

Australia (from): Mark Taylor (captain), Michael Slater, David Boon, Mark Waugh, Michael Bevan, Steve Waugh, Ian Healy, Shane Warne, Tim May, Craig McDermott, Damien Fleming, Glenn McGrath. England: To be announced.

Paying thru' the nose

BEIJING, Nov 23: Liu Dong, China's world 1,500-metre run champion, has decided to auction her gold medal to raise money for her training for the 1995 worlds and 1996 Olympics, reports Xinhua.

The Chinese world champion, ousted from Ma's family army due to an argument between the coach and herself, said that she was to sell the gold medal she won at the Stuttgart World Championships in 1993, according to Wednesday's edition of the China's Youth News.

Liu was quoted as saying: "Though the gold medal symbolises what an athlete can achieve in her career, intensive training for future events is all the more important."

The world champion was scrapped from the Chinese team for last year's Asian Tack and Field Championships and this year's Asian Games.



World number two Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain inspects a wax replica of herself during the inauguration of a hall dedicated to tennis aces at the Madrid Wax Museum.

SA stun Olympic champs

Argentine coach Miguel McCormack was brutally frank in his assessment: "We did our best and it was not good enough."

Lachlan Elmer and Mark Hager scored first-half goals as top seed Australia struggled to their victory over tournament rookie Belarus.

Left-half Elmer flicked home a penalty corner in the 7th minute and substitute

Christian Blunck shot the Germans ahead in the 7th minute from a penalty corner but the African champions rallied under the leadership of former Oxford University captain Wayne Graham and levelled with just 20 seconds remaining.

Coach Gavin Featherstone, an Englishman, predicted his team will cause more surprises in Pool B of the 12-nation tournament.

"It's my aim to take South Africa, playing in their first World Cup, to the semifinals," Featherstone said. "Today we showed we are capable of doing it. Germany were lucky to get away with what they did. Very lucky."

German coach Paul Lissek said his team had been too nervous.

"After we got the goal I thought my team would play calm and clever, but it was the opposite," Lissek said.

Pakistan and Australia both scored straightforward victories, stamping themselves as the teams to beat in Pool A.

Three-time Olympic champions Pakistan trounced Argentina 3-0, while Australia were less impressive in defeating Belarus 2-0. While Australia were less impressive in defeating Belarus 2-0, England and Spain played to a 0-0 draw.

Kamran Ashraf gave Pakistan the lead in the 30th minute and Tahir Zaman converted a penalty stroke in the 60th. Wasim Feroze added the third goal four minutes later.

Pakistan dominated the midfield through captain and playmaker Shahbaz Ahmed.

"We didn't play well, we missed so many chances," said Pakistan coach Abdul Rashid. "It was our first game and our defence was a little disjointed, but in the future it won't be."

He was awarded 27 million dollars in damages though the decision was later reversed in the US Supreme Court.

Ford was nominated as one of four representatives of the international Olympic federation after his name was put forward by the winter federations.

Four more were chosen by the IOC, four by the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) and four by athletes as well as four independents.

ICAS takes control of the IOC's court of arbitration for sport which will in future be run independently of the Olympic body.

Sickening!

BONN, Nov 23: One-time Russian gymnast Olga Kovalenko accused her former trainers here on Monday of forcing her to become pregnant and then have an abortion as an alternative to taking performance-enhancing drugs, reports AFP.

Kovalenko who took part in the 1968 Olympics, said in an interview on German television: "The doctors told us that the body of a pregnant woman produced more male hormones and could therefore become stronger."

Kovalenko, 44, broke down as she revealed she became pregnant by her boyfriend and then had an abortion after ten weeks. She added she would not have been allowed to take part in the Games if she had refused.

McRae eyes unique record

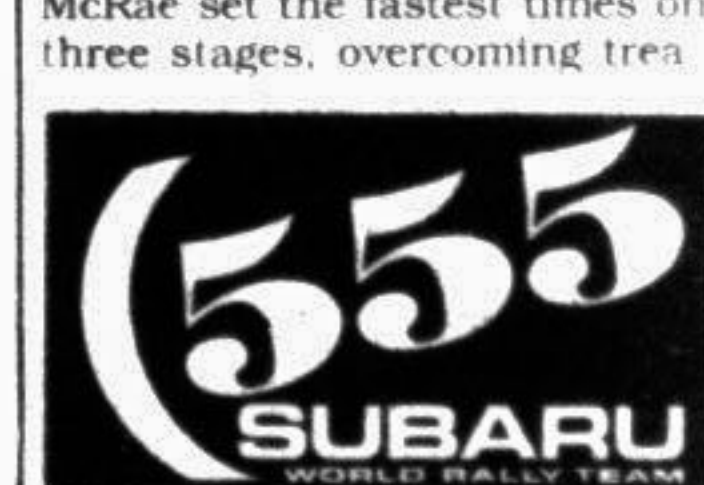
Scotsman Colin McRae is on target for an historic win in the RAC Rally, what would be the first win by a Briton on the event since 1976. Continuing an impressive dominance of the four-day rally by the 555 Subaru World Rally Team, Spaniard Carlos Sainz is tucked in behind McRae in second place and is in line for a third World Championship in four years, says a press release.

Tuesday was the most dramatic day on the RAC Rally for years as it circumnavigated the muddy forests of west Wales. McRae set the fastest times on three stages, overcoming trea-

cherous stages covered in thick mud.

Most of the focus has been on Frenchman Didier Auriol who has climbed from mid-field to 9th place after an accident earlier in the event. Auriol is the championship leader by eleven points and Carlos Sainz remains second.

Auriol must finish seventh to take the title.



Li lifts China even higher

ISTANBUL, Nov 23: Li Hongyun kept the Chinese teenage women in command with victory in the 64 kg class at the World Weightlifting Championships on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Eighteen-year-old Li, who won the world title in Melbourne last year, lifted 105 kg in the snatch and 130 in the jerk to total 235 and break five world records in the process.

Kuo Su-Fen of Taiwan came in second with 205 and Hungarian Erzsebet Marcus was third with 197.5.

Li, who reportedly lifted an amazing 145 snatch and 157.5 jerk in the Chinese Championships last year, said a neighbour told her to try the sport when she began beating up boys at primary school.

She said she did eat the turtle blood soup made famous by China's women runners, but felt her success lay more in her five hour's training daily.

Li is the only experienced Chinese woman lifter to come to the championships, but China's young first-timers are ensuring their older compatriots are not missed.

Teenagers Yun Yanhong, Wang Cheng and Zou Feie won the 46, 54 and 59 kg categories and China did not enter the 50 kg.

None of them had competed in a big championship before.

China hold all the women's combined weightlifting world records but those who won at the Asian Games in Hiroshima last month decided it was too soon to compete again in the worlds.

Chinese team officials say the men will catch the rest of the world by the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

CUBAN REGAINS IT

Meanwhile, Cuban Pablo Swedish Davis Cup captain to step down

STOCKHOLM, Nov 23: Sweden's veteran Davis Cup captain John-Anders Sjogren announced Tuesday that he will step down after his team takes on Russia in the finals from Dec 2-4, reports AP.

Not surprisingly, Sjogren chose Stefan Edberg, Magnus Larsson, Jonas Bjorkman and Jan Apell to play against Russia. Veteran Anders Jarryd is a substitute.

Sjogren, nicknamed "Jon-te," will be stepping down after serving nine years in two separate stints as captain of the Swedish Davis Cup team.

"It was a tough decision, but it feels right to hand over to a new hand," the 56-year-old Sjogren said.

Lara regained his world 76 kg weightlifting title after two years' absence from the worlds and a year out of big internationals.

Lara, who lifted 365 kg combined with a 162.5 kg snatch and a 202.5 kg jerk, was champion the last time he competed in the worlds in 1991.

He won the Olympic silver medal in 1992, but Cuba did not enter a team in the 1992 and 1993 World Championships.

Lara, who did not feel he had suffered from his absence, dedicated his medal to Cuban leader Fidel Castro:

"Castro is the father of all Cubans — of course I give my medal to him," Lara said.

The silver medal went to the dark horse of the competition, Germany's Ingo Steinhofel, who won the snatch with 165 kg to total 362.5 kg. Steinhofel last won a world medal when he took silver in 1989. He was silver medalist

in the 1988 Olympics in Seoul. Reigning European champion Rouslan Savchenko of Ukraine was third with a total 360.0 kg.

All world records stayed intact as Lara failed in his attempt to jerk 205.5 and break Savchenko's 205 kg record set in last year's worlds in Melbourne.

The defending champion and favourite, Alt Orazdurdiev of Turkmenistan, was nowhere after pulling out of the jerk following a failure at 197.5.

Orazdurdiev, who won the 1989 and 1990 World Championships, came to the championships with a knee injury that ultimately proved too painful.

He is no stranger to disappointment. He was pulled off the "United Team" of former Soviet republics for the Barcelona Olympics at the last possible minute for no apparent reason.

The Turkmen, who had been odds-on favourite, left in tears after his withdrawal.

Thai-Bangla pair in semis

ISLAMABAD, Nov 23: Shaameem Ahsan Roni of Bangladesh and Tepakasikul Akkasi of Thailand moved into the semifinal of the boys' doubles in the Pakistan international junior tennis championship at the Islamabad club here today, reports BSS.

The pair beat Gautam Mehra of India and Cedric Babu of Uganda 7-6 (7-3), 6-2 in an exciting quarter-final.

The winners will play Iran's Amir Hussain Rafat and Farshad Talavak in the semifinal. Amir-Farshad pair beat Thailand's Udomchake Danal and Sirisap Chanapong 6-2, 6-2.

The other two pairs in the boys' semifinals are from Pakistan.

DIV II cricket from Nov 30

Sports Reporter

The Acme Second Division cricket league involving 32 teams split into four groups will begin from November 30.

On the opening day, Kathalagan will take on Lalbagh Anwar at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium while the other match of the day between Young Pegasus B and Dhanmondi Progoti Sangha will be played at the Mirpur Outer Stadium.

Hide asks for more

LONDON, Nov 23: World Boxing Organisation heavyweight champion Herbie Hide's scheduled title defence against Riddick Bowe will go to purse offers after the British fighter rejected a dir 3 million offer, reports AP.

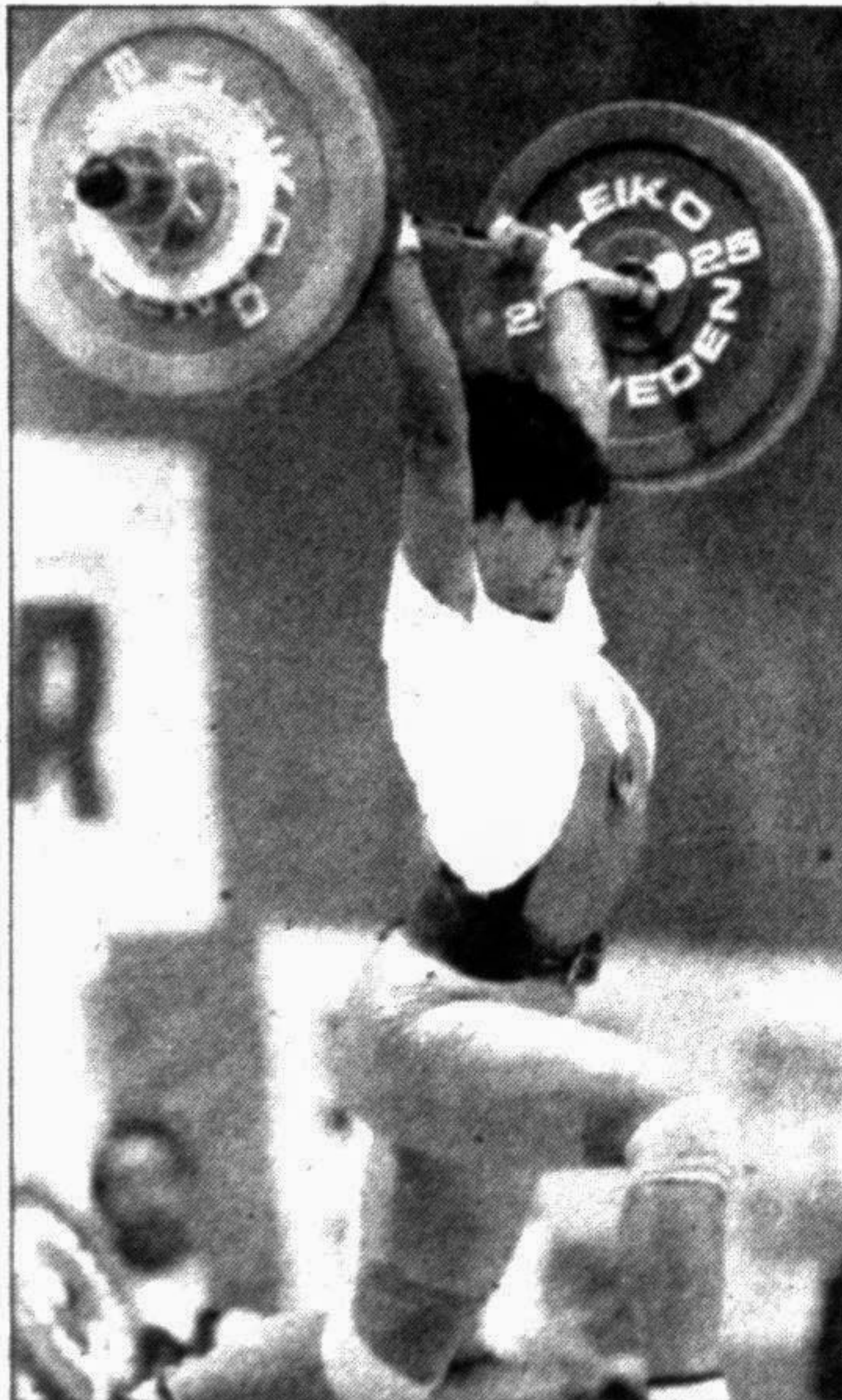
"While I am confident of beating Bowe, I believe I should be paid the right amount of money for what will be my biggest fight," Hide said Wednesday after turning down the offer made last week by Bowe's manager, Rock Newman.

Bowe, the former WBA and IBF champion, is the mandatory challenger for Hide's title. Purse offer bids are likely to coincide with the WBO's annual convention in Puerto Rico next month.

The Bowe fight will be Hide's first defence of the title he took from Michael Bentt in London last March.

The Nigerian-born fighter had been scheduled to defend the crown against Tommy Morrison last month in Hong Kong, but the bout was called off at the last minute because of financial problems.

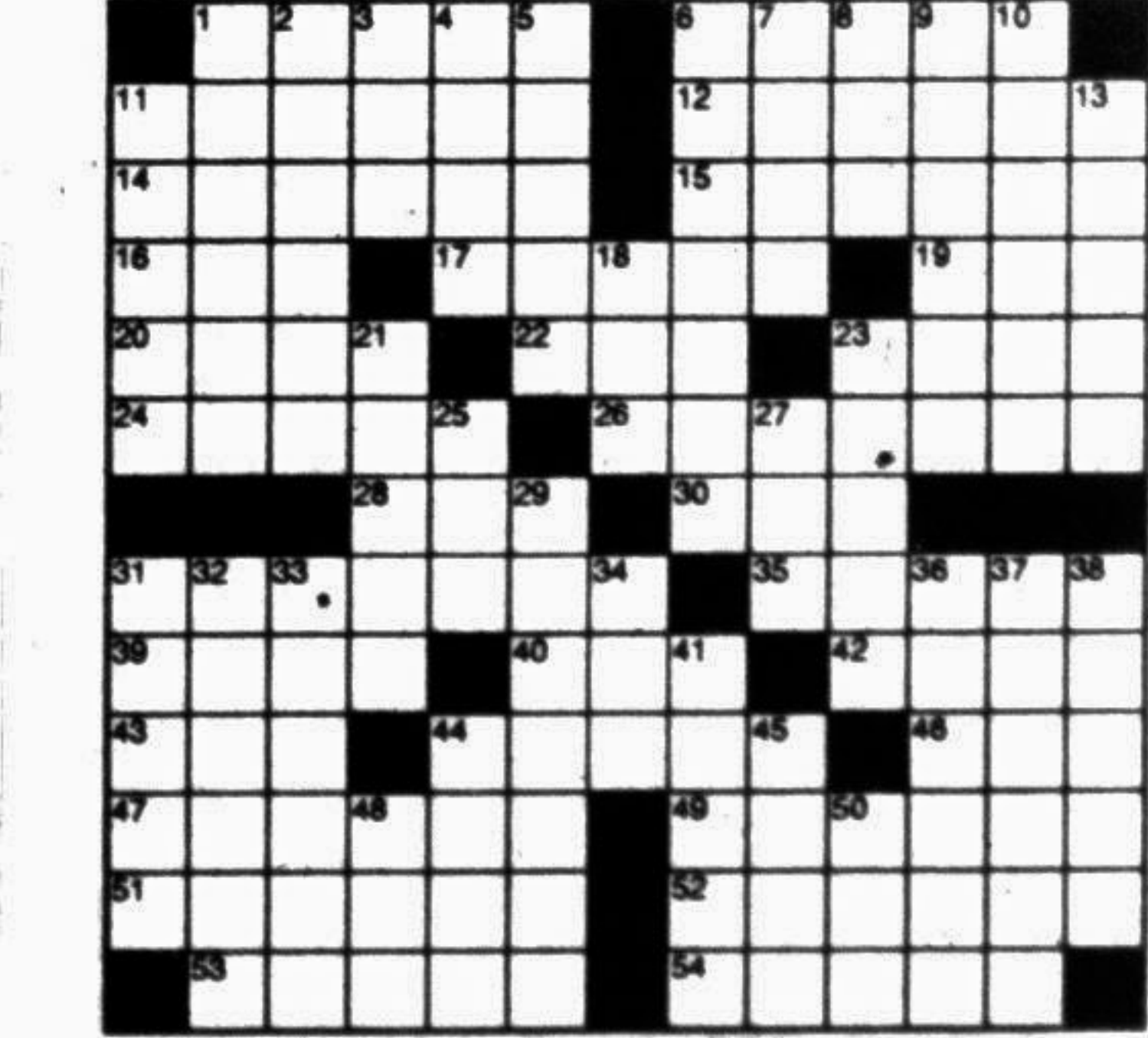
Bowe is preparing to fight unbeaten heavyweight prospect Larry Donald on Dec 3 in Las Vegas.



Chinese teenager Zou Feie in action during the World Weightlifting Championships in Istanbul on Nov 23. Zou set new marks for both the jerk and the snatch and jerk in her 59 kg class.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 28 minutes and a word bank at the bottom.



CRYPTOQUIP OF D SVDDOAWN FLMF CUBNGOUNI RVUICRF MFLN IOUUNB FMAWN OD SMB GVB FLN RVMBDN. Yesterday's Cryptiquip: TWO FUSSY WORKERS AT THE SOCK FACTORY DECIDED TO PAIR UP. Today's Cryptiquip clue: U equals N. The Cryptiquip 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.