

Revelation across Great Wall

TOKYO, Nov 28: Chinese swimmer Lu Bin, who won four golds and two silvers at last month's Asian Games, was one of 11 Chinese athletes who tested positive for drugs at the games, the Kyodo news agency said on Monday, reports Reuters.

Kyodo, quoting sources at the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), said eight of the athletes who tested positive were swimmers.

Lu set a world record for the 200 metres individual medley at the Games on October 7. She also won gold in the 50 metres freestyle, two relay golds and finished runner-up in the 100 metres freestyle and 100 backstroke.

At the Rome World Championships in September, Lu won the 200 individual medley title plus two relay golds and finished runner-up in the 100 metres and 200 metres freestyle.

Kyodo said world 400 metres freestyle champion Yang Aihua, who had already been banned for two years by the International Swimming Federation (FINA), was also one of the eight.

It said the three other positive tests involved a track and field athlete, a cyclist and canoeist.

Earlier Muttaleb Ahmad, director-general of the Kuwait-based OCA, said he had been informed that 11 Chinese had tested positive but declined to identify the athletes or say which events they had competed in.

Ahmad said final tests would be carried out to confirm the findings.

"We expect a final and official report on this situation to reach us by the end of tomorrow (Tuesday) and only then can the OCA make an official statement on this matter," he said.

An official of the information section to the national sports commission in Beijing said: "We have not received any notification from the Olympic Committee of Asia, so we cannot make any comment."

In Lausanne, FINA said it had no information on any positive tests.

"We have not received any information from the organisers of the Asian Games," FINA

director Cornel Marculescu said. "It is up to them to take a decision first and then to inform us, but we have no information yet."

Meanwhile, AP reports: The performance of China's athletes at last month's Asian Games often seemed too good to be true. Reports Monday quoting Games officials said some of them probably were.

According to several Japanese media reports, organising commission officials said banned substances have been detected in the urine samples of 11 Chinese athletes who participated at the Games, Asia's version of the Olympics.

The officials, who were not named, reportedly said the samples indicated the athletes had abnormally high levels of testosterone or other performance-enhancing substances in their systems.

The names of the athletes were not released pending official confirmation, but the reports said six — two women and four men — competed in swimming. The others were in track and field, rowing and other events.

The Chinese women's swimming team won all 15 titles at the Games, which were held in Hiroshima, and 137 of the total 337 events held.

Asian Games organisers contacted by the Associated Press confirmed the head of their medical commission was in Tokyo in connection with the tests, but refused to comment further.

A spokesperson for the lab where the tests were conducted, Mitsubishi Chemical

JCL, refused to comment. The doctor who supervised the tests could not be immediately reached.

The reports come just days after FINA, the international swimming federation, banned world champion swimmer Yang Aihua from competing for the next two years because she tested positive for testosterone in surprise tests just prior to the Asian Games.

Yang won the 400-metre freestyle at the World Championships in September, part of a Chinese onslaught that stunned swimming fans. Chinese women won no less than 12 of 16 golds at stake, and set five world records in the process.

Though they did not name China, more than a dozen coaches at the championships lodged a formal complaint over doping in the sport and requested stricter tests. That led to the surprise testing held just days before the Asian Games began Oct 2.

FINA officials said the results of those tests indicated possible drug use among several other Chinese women swimmers, but were inconclusive.

Though Chinese sports officials insist they oppose drug use among athletes and publicly threaten to deal harshly with offenders, Yang's case is by no means the first.

Five Chinese swimmers have failed doping tests over the past two years — equaling the total number of athletes from other countries that have tested positive in FINA tests over the past 22 years.

Yang is at least the 34th Chinese athlete to flunk a doping test since 1987. Chinese officials acknowledge 24 of their athletes tested positive last year alone.

Another top female athlete, discus thrower Qu Qiaping, tested positive for anabolic steroids in an out-of-competition test Sept 26.

Monday's reports, if confirmed, would raise serious doubts about the effectiveness of testing in general.

Only one athlete — the captain of the Thai men's soccer team — was announced to have flunked a doping test during the two-week long Asian Games, which closed Oct 16.

He had already left the country before the announcement was made, however.



LU BIN

IAAF ban on Harris goes

BARCELONA, Nov 28: American Danny Harris cleared the biggest hurdle of his career on Sunday when the International Amateur Athletic Federation reinstated him in the sport and quashed his four-year doping ban for cocaine, reports Reuters.

The unanimous decision by the council of the world governing body officially brought to an end the 1984 Olympic 400 metres hurdles silver medalist's nightmare descent from world class athlete to cocaine addict.

It also ended a lengthy legal battle which began when Harris, now 29, failed a dope test for the drug in February 1992.

Although the ban was due to run until February 28, 1996, the IAAF invoked their "exceptional circumstances rule" for the first time.

They lifted the ban because they are convinced Harris has broken his addiction to the drug.

IAAF president Primo Nebiolo, in urging the council to lift the ban on the American said: "We are very serious and very hard on doped athletes but in some cases we must show we are human."

Arne Lundqvist of Sweden, the IAAF's doping committee chairman and an IOC member, also told the council before they voted: "I am convinced Danny Harris is now clean and will stay clean—even if you refuse to re-instate him."

But the council, convinced by the arguments, voted unanimously to allow him to compete with immediate effect.

The council will also consider today an appeal by the Kenyan federation to lift a four-year ban imposed on John Ngugi, the 1988 Olympic 5,000 metres champion, after he refused to take a random test.

But they will not deal with the case of Peter Gordon, a British discus thrower suffering from cancer. Gordon failed a dope test as a result of his condition which was diagnosed later.

The British federation have re-instated him but he is not allowed to compete until the IAAF have officially cleared him.

IAAF press spokesman Christopher Winner said the council were unable to do that because British federation officials had failed to give them any papers, documentation or medical history relating to the case.

Harris's case was complicated and went through a number of legal twists.

The athlete, who in Madrid in June 1987 became the first man to beat the legendary Ed Moses in 122 races, later began using cocaine heavily and in February 1992 failed a routine test for the drug.

He had been ranked second in the world the previous year but the four-year ban imposed meant he missed the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and the 1993 World Championships in Stuttgart.

But by June 1992, Harris had decided to check into a substance abuse programme and later began a lengthy battle to clear his name.

Earlier this year he was reinstated by the US federation and ran in four European meetings before the IAAF belatedly discovered he was running while still officially

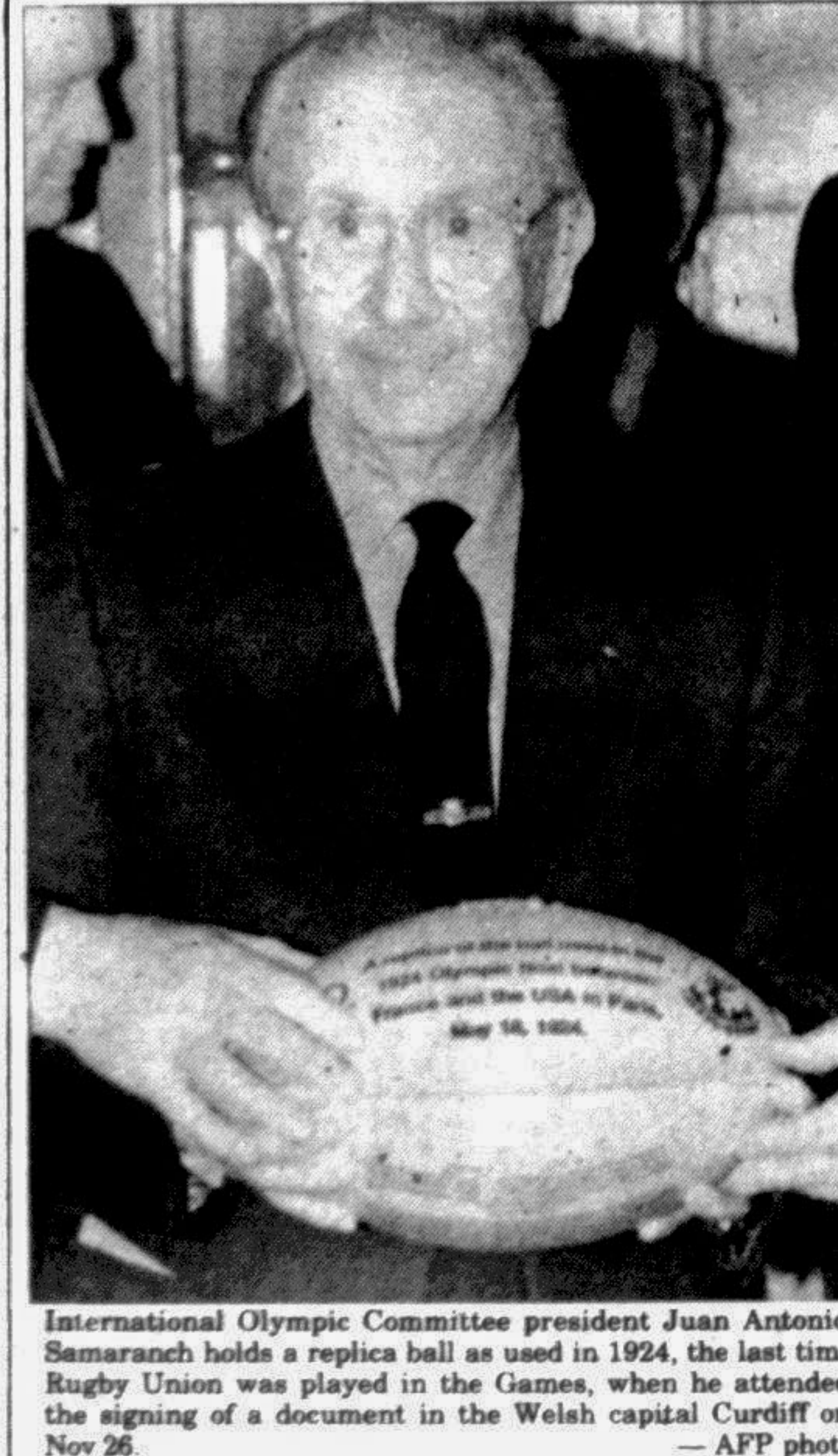
banned. He was pulled out of the London grand prix on July 15 only hours before the start of the meeting.

But 10 days later came the first indication that the IAAF were prepared to review the case when Nebiolo told the athlete's coach Bob Kersee that although he was not yet allowed to compete, he should take this case for reinstatement to the IAAF.

The federation's press spokesman Christopher Winner said on Sunday: "The Danny Harris decision does not represent a softening of the IAAF's anti-drugs policies."

"The council intends to ensure that anti-doping measures are increased, but agreed that special matters arose in this case."

"Danny Harris will also continue to be tested frequently and randomly in the future."



International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch holds a replica ball as used in 1924, the last time Rugby Union was played in the Games, when he attended the signing of a document in the Welsh capital Cardiff on Nov 26.

She does church a service

BUCHAREST, Nov 28: Gymnast-turned-national hero Nadia Comaneci completed her homecoming tour of Romania on Sunday with a call on its religious leader, reports Reuters.

"After winning all her medals and entertaining the world Nadia gave a very Christian performance this evening," Romanian orthodox church patriarch Teoctist said.

"She brought here some people who didn't pass a church threshold for a long time," the white-bearded Teoctist said of the Comaneci entourage of journalists and bodyguards.

Comaneci, the first Olympic gymnast to score a "perfect 10", has made a point of visiting the political leaders who have replaced executed dictator Nicolae Ceausescu whose communist regime created the young gymnast.

President Ion Iliescu and Prime Minister Nicolae Vacaroiu have all feted Nadia who at 32 is still a national hero in a country with little to shout about amidst the economic decline and uncertainty of the post-communist era.

A favourite of the Ceausescu family she fled the country five years ago, less than a month before Ceausescu fell.

She has never fully explained what drove her to flee across the Hungarian border or why it has taken her five years to return from her new life in the United States.

Her homecoming has been a huge event in Romania with crowds calling "Nadia, Nadia, Nadia" at every stop.

The emotional return — including her first meeting in half a decade with her father — has been carefully scripted for exclusive cover by an American television channel. She has brought her photogenic double Olympic gold medal-winning US gymnast husband Bart Conner along for the event.

Comaneci has appeared in a glitzy fashion show and donned a crushed velvet leotard for a few cartwheels in front of an audience, many of whom were too young to have seen her win three gold medals and score seven 10s at Montreal in 1976.

Teoctist suggested he himself might have had a hand in her victory, recalling that he had blessed the Montreal Stadium: "I think that it had a contribution to Nadia's success."

Nadia had herself requested the meeting with Teoctist, the central figure in a church followed by 80 per cent of Romanians.

Teoctist appreciated the attention and the chance to reflect on the changes in Romania, even among its gymnasts since the overthrow of communism.

"Under the communist regime they (gymnasts) had to hide it when they wanted to make the sign of the cross before a contest, now they can do it openly," he said.

Comaneci's mother Stefania, herself deeply religious, told Teoctist: "When the priest christened Nadia, almost 32 years ago, my daughter tried to leap from the christening vessel. Then the priest told to all of us there: 'This girl will leap very high in her life.'"

A victory for experience

ISTANBUL, Nov 28: Veteran Belarussian Alexander Kurlovich scored a victory for experience by beating off rising Russian star, Andrei Cheremkin to win the over 108 kg class at the World Weightlifting Championships on Sunday, reports Reuters.

Kurlovich, 32, and already greying, broke six world records on his way to a final super heavyweight total of 457.5 kg and gave proof that his winning days are not yet over.

The 22-year-old Cheremkin's solitary jerk record of 252.5 kg was not enough to give him even one gold as Kurlovich swiftly overtook it with a jerk of 253.0 kg.

The 151.1 kg, pot-bellied Russian giant failed to hoist 260 kg at his final jerk attempt, and the crown of "strongest man in the world" belonged to Kurlovich.

"The best I had done in training was 240 in the jerk," said Cheremkin, who resembles a close-cropped soccer hooligan.

Kurlovich, now four-times world champion and owner of two Olympic medals, says he does not know if he will be around to defend his Olympic title in Atlanta.

"But it sure would be good if I could," he added.

The former Soviets have for decades enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the super heavyweight category, merely passing world and Olympic medals from one of its lifters to the next.

The exception came last year, with German Ronny Weller taking gold at the worlds, but he was out this year with injury and the title returned "home."

England end Pakistan run

SYDNEY, Nov 28: Pakistan lost their unbeaten record at the men's World Cup hockey today when a double strike from substitute Nick Thompson gave England a shock 2-0 win, reports Reuters.

Thompson's two goals against the Olympic Games bronze medalists set up a three-way tie between England, Pakistan and Australia at the top of Group A with one round of qualifying matches to play.

In-form Pakistan were handicapped by the absence of talented inside forward and captain Shahbaz Ahmed through injury and Tahir Zaman, who was suspended and failed to contain an impressive England side.

Shahbaz, who hopes to recover from a hamstring injury in time for the semifinals, was critical of his side's performance.

"It was hopeless play by the Pakistani team," Shahbaz said.

Pakistan manager Rashid Junior was more generous, saying: "England deserved to win. They played better than us."

Hosts Australia made up lost ground following their defeat by the Pakistanis on Saturday, beating Spain 2-1 with goals from centre forward Mark Hager and inside forward Paul Lewis.

Despite their loss, Pakistan, who head the group on goal difference, are favourites to qualify for one of the two semi-final places with a final match against winless Belarus.

Australia and England, also on six points from four games, will battle it out against each other on Tuesday for the other berth.

If the match ends in a draw, and Pakistan win or draw their

game, Australia will qualify as the home side have scored more goals than their rivals.

A shot by Jon Potter at the corner rebounded off a post and was returned quickly into the circle where Thompson put a powerful flick into the roof of the net.

England goalkeeper Simon Mason made three good saves before Thompson added his second with another high flick from his side's fourth corner of the match.

England coach David Whitaker said: "We were not afraid to take on the Pakistanis. Our players carried out our tactics in a stylish manner."

England, who first beat Pakistan at the 1986 World Cup, after 27 years of trying, have now won their last four encounters, which included a victory on penalties after a draw in the final of the recent Penang tournament.

Australia coped better than Pakistan with their selection problems, despite having to play without David Wansborough, who was suspended and injured pair Jey Stacy and Lachlan Elmer.

They took the lead through Mark Hager who deflected a cross, from the right, as early as the second minute. It was Hager's 139th international goal.

Javier Escude, who dominated the midfield for Spain in the first half, equalised in the ninth minute, lashing a shot into the roof the Australian goal although tightly marked.

Australia changed their tactics in the second half to deny Spain room in the midfield and their winner came from Paul Lewis in the 42nd minute as he followed up a penalty corner shot by Kenmark.

It was Australia's seventh successive victory over Spain.

Belgium gained their first

point of the World Cup, ensuring South Africa continued their draw sequence — four in a row — by holding the African champions 1-1.

Belgian captain Marc Coudron converted a 56th minute penalty stroke to cancel out a first half goal by Alistair Fredericks, the first ever goal by a coloured player for South Africa.

South Africa's point in the only Group B game of the day took them up to third, level on points with Germany and a point behind the Netherlands, who both have a game in hand.

Argentina recorded their first win in Group A, beating Belarus 4-1 with a hat-trick by Jorge Lombi. By winning they condemned Belarus to last place in the group and gave themselves a chance of making 5th-8th place play-offs.

East outpoints Malcolm

MANILA, Nov 28: Filipino Morris East scored an early knockdown and defeated World Boxing Federation welterweight champion Jeff Malcolm of Australia by a unanimous decision in a non-title bout Saturday night, reports AP.

East, a former World Boxing Association junior welterweight champion, knocked Malcolm down in the second of the 10 rounds with a left straight and right cross combination, the Philippine News Agency reported Sunday from Cebu, about 560 kilometres (350 miles) southeast of Manila.

Continuing the assault, East bloodied the 23-year-veteran Australian's nose in the fourth round.

Malcolm also suffered a cut in the corner of his left eye in the eighth round and East went for Malcolm's head until the end of the fight.

East was the fifth Filipino the Australian has fought so far.

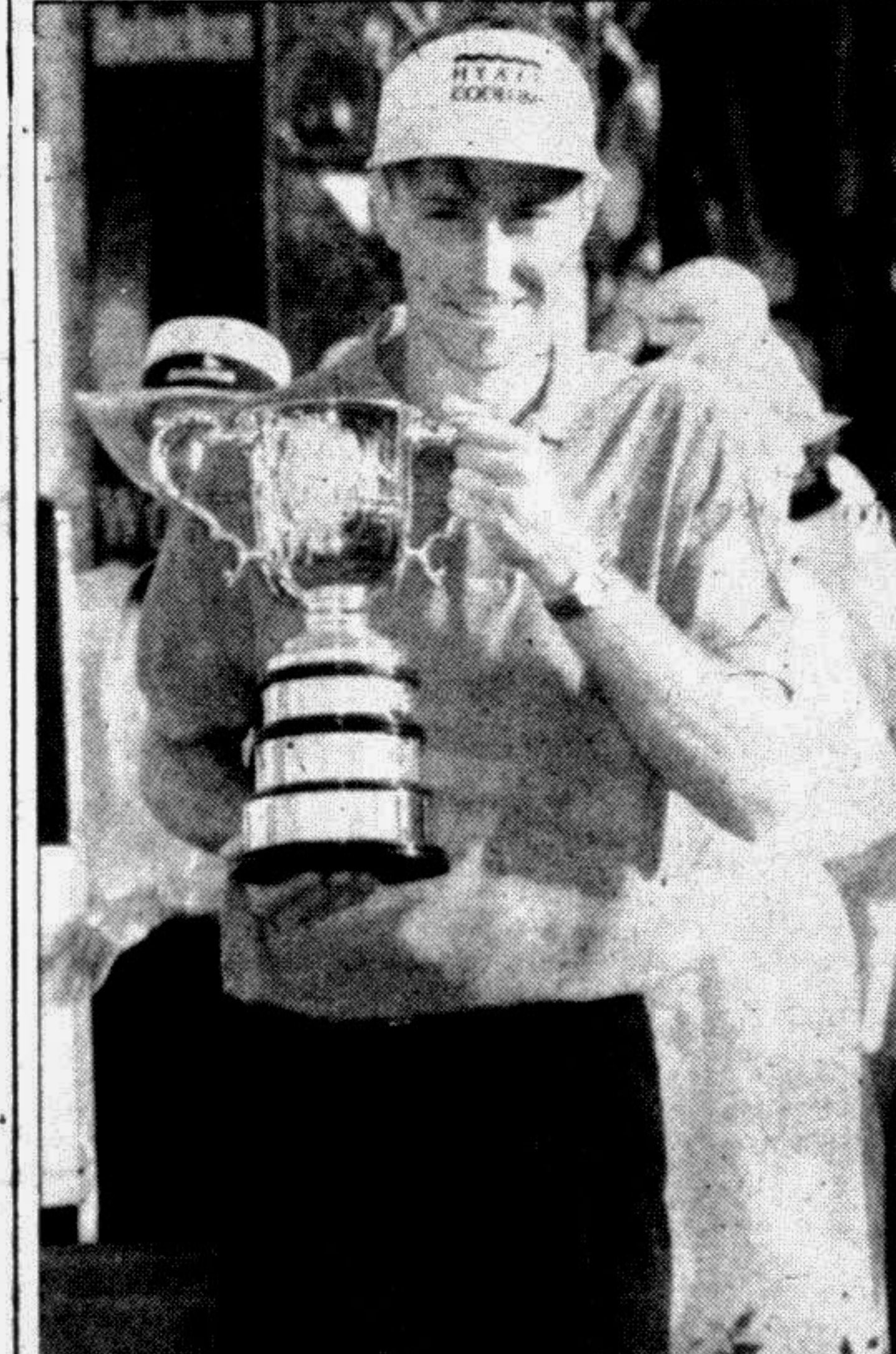
Hide cleared

LONDON, Nov 28: World heavyweight boxing champion Herbie Hide was cleared on Tuesday of assaulting his former lover Deborah Edmonds, reports Reuters.

Judge Peter Langan said her story was "wholly inconsistent" with photographs of her injuries and a doctor's testimony.

Hide, the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) champion, had been accused of attacking Edmonds in a jealous rage after seeing a photograph of her with another man.

But judge Langan, directing the jury to bring in a not guilty verdict, said: "Miss Edmonds gave a detailed account of two sustained assaults on her by a heavily-built man, one in her bedroom and one in the hallway."



Twenty-three-year-old Australian golfer Robert Allenby poses with the Australian Open trophy in Sydney on Nov 27. Allenby won after carding a nine-under par for the competition.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Pick-pockets

5 Hot tubs

9 Hiatus

12 Perry's creator

13 Pop singer

14 Past

15 Work two jobs

17 "Yes, Virginia..."

18 Certainly

19 Kegling

21 Letterhead

22 Capital on the Songka

24 Mrs. Zeus

27 Cribbage gadget

28 In the pre-war mode

31 Soul, on the Seine

32 Medieval tale

33 Garden tool

34 Newsman

36 Coffee-maker

37 Do longshore-

men's work

38 Smallest

40 Trumpeter

Hirt

41 Make wavy

43 Traction aids

47 Scott Joplin's style

48 Accentuate

51 "— du Lieber!"

52 Light bulb?

53 "Monster in a Box"

54 \$2 transaction

55 Lummo

56 Loathing

DOWN

1 Bruce's missus

22 Beater?

23 Not "er"

24 CBer's cousin

25 Ostrich's kin

26 Play-ground game

27 Calculator button

29 Card game

30 Archery bow wood

35 Rep.'s rival

37 Transport in a one-horse town?

39 Garden pest

40 Completely

41 Grouch

42 Marathon, for one

43 Confab

44 Taj Mahal city

45 "— Certain Feeling"

46 Eye ailment

49 Yes, to the J.P.

50 Tooth-paste lorm

Solution time: 22 mins.

BOLD GOT SCAB

OPITE ORO TUNE

CUSTARDS APSE

ASTERN GANAN

ROE AIDA

AMP WRY MIKAN

DAUB SIS NERO

SIDLE PTA SEW

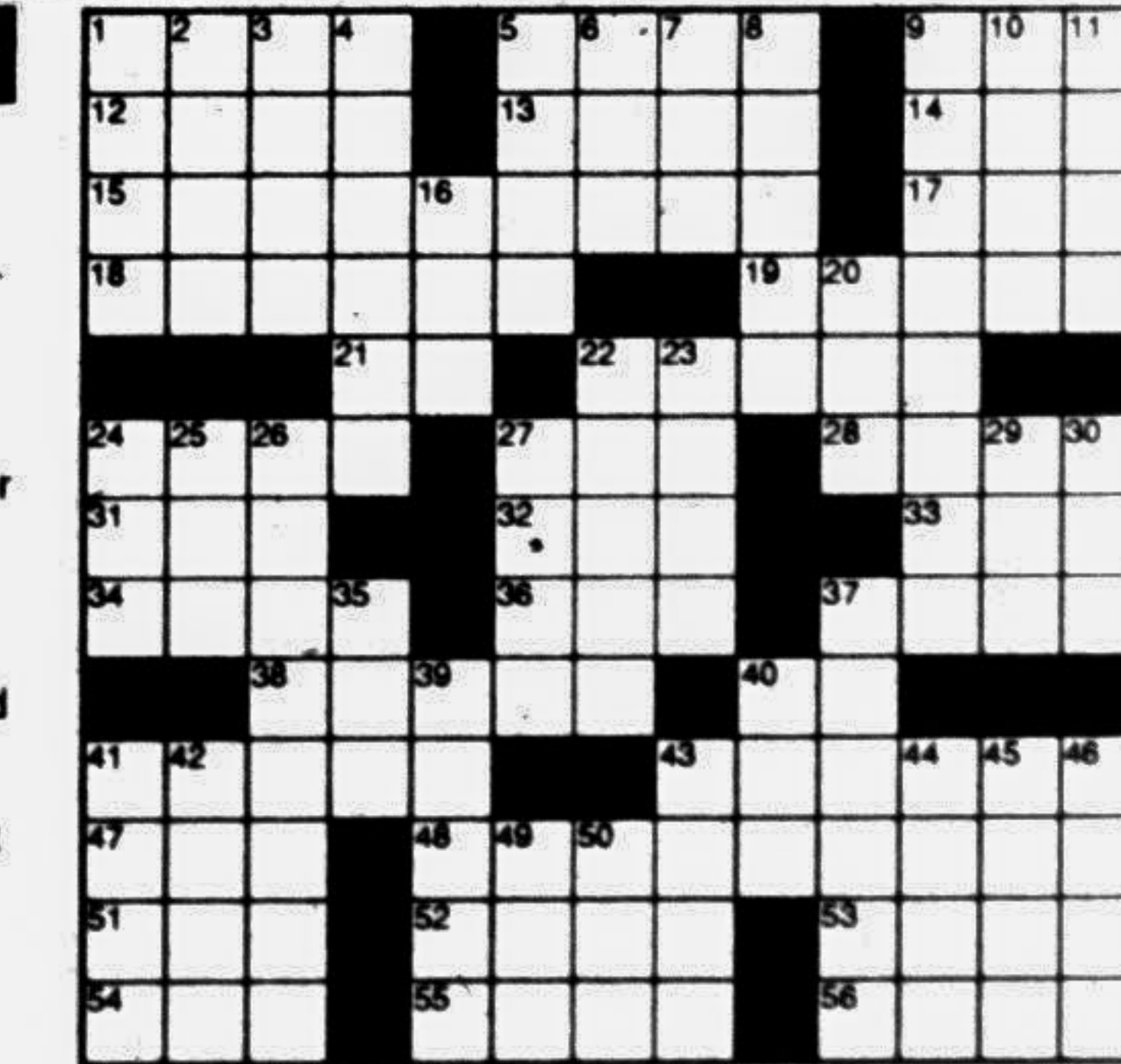
DARK AWE

FRINGE MORASS

LINK APLEPIE

EDGE THE CINE

WEST SID TAGS



CRYPTOQUIP

ATGVZ UBK YGCOVRCO

ATTJ YK MUTIKZ XDTQ

QPJRCO P BPMB TX

BRM APDKKD?

Yesterday's Cryptogram: HARBOR'S CAGEY DETECTIVE IS NOT DIVERTED BY A RED HERRING.

Today's Cryptogram clue: B equals H

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.