

Sport

Memory's montage '94

By Lenin Gani

LOOKING back at the major stories of the year it was one characterised by the three S's—sensational, successful and scandalous.

Without a doubt Brian Charles Lara's achievements would certainly rank him at the top of my list. Not only did the little prince of Trinidad go about eclipsing the mystical 365 mark of Sobers he also smugly

dropped. George Foreman defied all logical explanation to become boxing's oldest heavyweight champion at the ripe old age of 45.

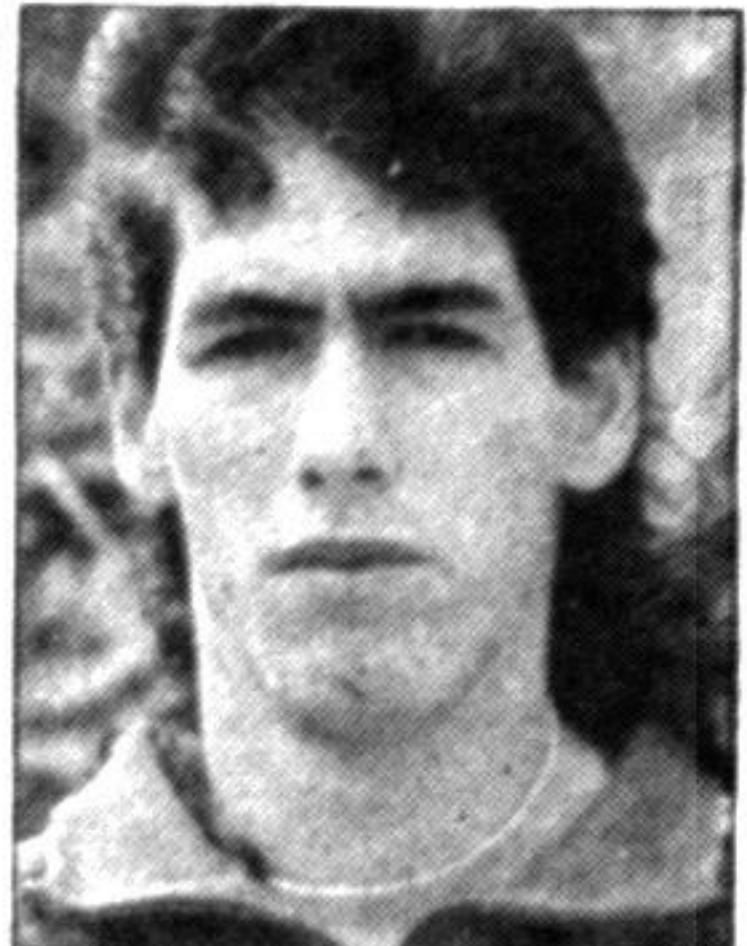
After waiting 24 years since their last triumph in Mexico, Brazil lifted the World Cup for an unprecedented fourth time. Kapil Dev had a unique dou-



GEORGE FOREMAN



IVAN LENDL



ANDRES ESCOBAR

shed Harif Mohammad's first-class world record for good measure.

Australian leggie Shane Warne will savour 1994 for a long time to come after completing his first hat-trick in an Ashes Test since compatriot and fellow-spinner Hugh Trumble in 1903-04 on the final day of the second Test against the old enemy.

Even with English cricket in the doldrums one could always rely on skipper Mike Atherton's integrity. But after being caught with dirt in the pocket who knows.

His former Pakistani counterpart Imran Khan dropped a bomb-shell too after admitting to ball-tampering during an English county match back in

couple of games the mercurial Argentine is his old brilliant self. But testing positive for a banned substance costs him a record 22nd World Cup appearance.

Tonya Harding showed us how the obsession to win consumed her. Ironically Nancy Kerrigan still recovered to take the silver while Harding received nothing for all her scheming.

Teenage star Jennifer Capriati has seen it all. From catapulting to stardom to capturing an Olympic gold in Barcelona. The barrage of tournaments in the end had taken its toll and she began to feel burnt-out. Soon she was involved in petty crime. Even

ble. First overhauling Sir Richard Hadlee's 431 Test scalps and for a time being instant cricket's highest wicket taker until Wasim Akram dethroned him.

The Sino drug scandal at the Hiroshima Asian Games, the Grobbelaar bribery affair in Britain and match-fixing in Malaysia hurt organised sport considerably and best be forgotten.

Before another year goes by, a fitting end it would be to pay tribute to those departed or who have simply called it a day. Notable names include: Brian Johnston, Ayrton Senna, Andres Escobar, Billy Wright, Peter May, Allan Border, Kepler Wessels, Kapil Dev, Martina Navratilova and Ivan Lendl.

No place for Salenko in Russian squad

MOSCOW, Dec 31: Russian national coach Oleg Romantsev finally spelled out on Friday that he had no room in his squad for Valencia striker Oleg Salenko, who this year set a World Cup record by scoring five times in a single game, reports Reuter.

"Every coach has his own concept... at this time my assistants and I are selecting those players who we think can help us the most," he told a live soccer discussion programme on Russian television.

"It's time we stopped bringing up this topic so often because it's starting to bore me," he said when asked why Salenko was no longer playing for Russia.

Romantsev dropped Salenko for the European Championship qualifier against San Marino in October, saying he had not earned the right to automatic selection.

Russian journalists say Romantsev does not like Salenko, one of a number of players who rebelled against former coach Pavel Sadyrin before the World Cup and then changed their minds.

Salenko — who scored a record five goals against Cameroon and finished as joint leading scorer in the World Cup — insists he should be in the squad and says Romantsev wants to drop all those rebels who returned to the fold.

"Everything with the other players was done more quietly. If I had not scored those five goals against Cameroon it would have been easier to write me off," Salenko told Sport Express newspaper last week.

Their change of heart did not prevent the team crashing out of the World Cup in the first round.

Looking ahead to 1995

Lining up for the Hall of Fame — and shame

By Phil Minshull

Even without the special excitement of the Olympics or World Cup soccer, sports fans can look forward to a year of thrills and spills — as well as more controversies over drugs and money. Gemini News Service scans the sporting calendar.

LITTLE is certain in the sporting outlook except that drugs and money will continue to cause controversy.

The world of swimming has been blown apart recently by the apparent consumption by the all-conquering Chinese women of the male hormone testosterone to boost their performance.

Strong swimming nations such as Germany are so dismayed by the revelations which followed the announcement of 11 positive drug tests at the Asian Games that they are boycotting the World Cup short course meeting in Beijing in January.

Inevitably, more sportsmen and women will join Argentinian soccer legend Diego Maradona and Sierra Leonean athlete Horace Dovel in the drugs hall of shame as international federations step up their attempts to wipe out the menace of performance enhancing drugs.

Money has also got out of hand, as was shown by a year in which baseball's World Series was wiped from the calendar for the first time in its history in a dispute over salaries.

Nevertheless, professional sports wages will continue to rise and transfer fees to escalate.

Even in notoriously amateur sports such as athletics or rugby union the superstars are millionaires in Europe and North America, the tax authorities are taking a close look at some of the earnings of amateur sportsmen and women and more financial scandals will surface.

But fans have a lot to look forward to in 1995, even without the Olympics or soccer World Cup. In May and June South Africa stages the Rugby World Cup and the Athletics World Championships takes place in Sweden in August.

Among the athletes on display in Sweden will be the incomparable Russian pole vaulter Sergey Bubka, aiming for an incredible fifth title. Champions expected to retain their crowns include Algeria's middle-distance marvel Noureddine Morceli and Cuban high jumper Javier Sotomayor. Both athletes were so far ahead of the opposition in 1994 that only an injury or a major upset look capable of preventing them retaining their titles.

Rapidly improving Australian sprinter Cathy Freeman and Kenya's Tecla Laroupe, 21-year-old winner of the New York Marathon, may also be seen on the medal rostrum.

Best bet for success in South Africa is a Southern Hemisphere side, New Zealand and Australia won the first two editions of the World Cup and few would bet against them or the hosts on their own turf.

A resurgent Wales could lead the way for the European nations, but much of the interest will focus on the newly emerging nations. Ivory Coast beat off Namibia and Zimbabwe to qualify for the first time and untraditional rugby nations such as Canada and Italy are making rapid improvements.

Soccer, though, is still the world's most avidly watched game. Week in, week out fans will continue to follow the



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Manchester United are fighting hard to retain their title in an English Premier League which still attracts huge television audiences around the world despite the relative lack of success of the national team.

In cycling, no credible challenger has emerged to Spain's Miguel Indurain. If he can win his fifth consecutive Tour de France next July he will go in the record books as the first person to do so, ahead of such greats as Eddy Merckx and Jacques Anquetil.

On four wheels, the season which stretches from March to November for Formula One motor racing looks set to be dominated again by the duel between Germany's reigning world champion Michael Schumacher and Britain's Damon Hill. The return of the 41-year-old former world champion Nigel Mansell, after nearly two years racing Indy Cars, may add another dimension.

Tennis is likely to have an unpredictable year. Pete Sampras still leads the way in the men's game but the mercurial, charismatic Andre Agassi took the US Open in September. Others such as Michael Chang and Goran Ivanisevic lie in wait should Sampras slip up.

With Monica Seles seemingly destined never to return to the game she dominated so thoroughly, the women's competition is wide open. Steffi Graf, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario and Conchita Martinez all won titles last year but the bright new hope on the horizon is Lindsay Davenport of the US.

A number of prodigies who have barely reached puberty will be playing on the women's circuit but after the problems of Jennifer Capriati an element of sanity seems to have returned. An age limit of 15 has been placed on professionals next year, rising to 16 the year after.

— Gemini News

Milla to play in Indonesia

YAOUNDE, Dec 31: Former Cameroon international Roger Milla has come out of retirement to sign with an Indonesian club, it was revealed here on Friday, reports AFP.

Milla, who became the oldest player to appear and score in a World Cup in a 6-1 loss to Russia in San Francisco, left for Jakarta on Wednesday.

However Milla's departure surprised both the Cameroon Football Federation and the sports ministry as he is officially still the administrative director of the national side.

Milla was arguably the major personality at the 1990 World Cup in Italy as his goals, celebrated with his own 'snakehips' style dance, helped Cameroon to the quarter-finals.

Queen honours Ferguson

LONDON, Dec 31: Soccer manager Alex Ferguson of Manchester United and retired New Zealand Rugby Union star Grant Fox were among several sports personalities named on Saturday in the Queen's new year's honours list, reports Reuter.

Ferguson, who guided his club to two successive English league titles and the double last season, was made a Commander of the Order of



ALEX FERGUSON

the British Empire (CBE). "It's the best birthday present you could get," said Ferguson, 53 on Saturday, whose side won the league and FA Cup last May, becoming only the fourth English team this century to do the double.

Ferguson, a Scot, was 10 years ago made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) following his Scottish league and Cup double as manager of Aberdeen.

Although Ferguson failed in his bid to emulate the late Sir Matt Busby and bring the European Cup back to Old Trafford, his CBE is seen as a fitting reflection of his success in returning the glamour to one of English football's most illustrious names.

"I think it's a recognition of the club and our achievements over the past six years," he said. "We've also had the honour of the knighthood for Bobby Charlton earlier this year and now this award for myself."

A CBE also went to English rugby football union secretary Dudley Wood, who is set to retire in July after the World Cup in South Africa.

Master goalkicker Fox, who retired this year after scoring a New Zealand record 645 points in 46 Test matches — the second highest in International Rugby Union — was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

Welshman Jonathan Davies, one of the most successful converts to rugby league after starting for his country as a Rugby Union flyhalf, was also awarded an MBE.

"It's a great honour and nice to be appreciated like this for services to the game of rugby in general," the Britain Test star said.

Javelin-thrower Steve Backley, who retained his European and Commonwealth titles in 1994, was rewarded for his battling comeback from a catalogue of injuries by being made an MBE.

Backley, who is training in the Canary Islands, said: "I am really chuffed. I have won medals in athletics and other awards within the sport. But I am truly delighted to get some recognition from outside the sport."

MBEs also went to 26-year-old gymnast Neil Thomas, silver medalist at the 1993 World Championships, and Lisa Opie, the squash player from the Channel Islands who broke a 30-year home drought by lifting the British Open title in 1991.

Delighted Brazil, disgraced Maradona

PARIS, Dec 31: Brazil's popular fourth World Cup win and Diego Maradona's 15-month ban for failing a drugs test made 1994 a bitter-sweet year for international football, writes AFP.

Brazil, though never as entertaining as the 1970 World Cup winning side, were for most people the best team at USA '94.

Their 3-2 penalty shootout win over Italy, following a goalless draw after extra time, proved a dramatic, if hollow climax.

Brazil keeper Taffarel walked to the east end goal of Los Angeles Rose Bowl with Italian, opposite number Gianluca Pagliuca at the beginning of the shoot-out. They agreed fate would decide who won the title, and wished each other luck.

Roberto Baggio skied Italy's fifth kick over the bar to send Brazil's players on a dance of triumph around the pitch under the burning sun.

Perhaps justice had been

mouth incidents in World Cup final history. Mauro Silva shot at Pagliuca, who dropped the ball, saw it bounce off a post and back into his hands.

Baggio hit over the bar and Aldair cut off a Massaro break, but Brazil's disciplined defence was mostly tidy and professional till the final whistle.

The Brazilians also won two other FIFA awards — as the most entertaining team and the most fair play.

The players also dedicated their triumph to another Brazilian hero, racing driver Ayrton Senna, who died after crashing on May 1 at Imola.

However, one blemish must be noted on Brazil's record. Leftback-cum-left winger Leonardo was banned for elbowing American Tab Ramos, who fractured his skull just above his left ear, in their fourth of July match.

And Italy's Mauro Tassotti had a record six-match ban after an incident during the quarter final against Spain.

Argentina managed to grab their share of the limelight

ned on the list by accident

Maradona, who had been in fine form, was the first player to fail a drugs test in the finals since Spain's Ramon Aldere tested positive in 1986, also for taking ephedrine. But Aldere was not punished because it was ruled a doctor made an error in formulating a cold cure.

Scotland's Willie Johnston was sent home from the Argentina finals in 1978 after failing a test.

The tournament did, however, witness a number of World Cup firsts.

Its final was the first to be decided on penalties, US v Switzerland was the first match indoors, and Pagliuca became the first goalkeeper to be sent off in the finals — during Italy's game against Norway.

Oleg Salenko became the first man to score five goals in a match in Russia's 6-1 demolition of Cameroon.

In the same game Cameroon's Roger Milla, already at 42 the oldest player to compete in the finals also became

Belgium were denied a clear penalty in the 76th minute. Thomas Helmer clearly pulled down Jospin Weber in the penalty area, but Rothlisberger waved play on.

On a tragic note, came the shooting of Andres Escobar, days after the Colombian defender scored an own goal against the United States preceding his country's eventual first round elimination.

The killing, the motive for which will almost certainly never be known, stunned the footballing world.

Back on the field, Bulgaria created the shock of the tournament with their 2-1 win over Germany, never worst than final lists since 1982.

Ironically, Yordan Lechkov, who plays his club football for SV Hamburg, headed the winner. Hristo Stoichkov recently voted European-footballer of the year for his services to Bulgaria and Barcelona, had cancelled out Lothar Matthaus penalty.

German coach Berti Vogts said: "We made two serious mistakes — the wall was badly organised on Stoichkov's free kick and then Hassler should not have been the man marking Lechkov — and they punished us for them."

The World Cup aftermath was not all smiling and good cheer for Brazil.

Celebrations on their return were marred by a scandal involving state President Itamar Franco, the head of the Brazilian FA and the Finance Minister.

The Finance Minister quit after Franco overruled him to allow Brazil's 18 tons of excess baggage through at Rio Airport.

"Everyone, not only the middle class and the poor, must pay taxes. So must footballers," said Lopes Filho in disgust.

About one million dollars in duty should have been paid on items including 18 television sets, computers, refrigerators, fax machines, laser printers, microwave ovens, dishwashers and even a horse saddle.

Mario Zagalo was later appointed Brazil's coach after Carlos Alberto Parreira had joined Spanish club Valencia.

Zagalo won the World Cup as a player in 1958 and 1962, was coach in the 1970 winning side, and was Parreira's assistant this year. He is expected to continue the less popular, yet successful disciplined defensive style favoured by Parreira.

Ronaldo, PSV Eindhoven's six-million-dollar signing, and Ariel Ortega are set to star in that event for Brazil and Argentina respectively.

Michel Platini, co-president of the French 1998 World Cup organiser, vowed their expanded tournament — from 24 to 32 places — would be even better than the US version.

"We are organising the greatest World Cup ever," Platini said. "It will cost 1.5 billion dollars. We know we cannot match the attendances at USA '94, but we do believe we can make the 1998 event a great feast of football."



ROBERTO BAGGIO



DIEGO MARADONA



OLEG SALENKO

done. Brazil made the final with few hiccups, but Baggio seemed to be continually coming to Italy's rescue.

Arrigo Sacchi's men were facing a humiliating exit from the second round by Nigeria when Baggio equalised with just two minutes left. The 1993 footballer of the year then hit the winner in extra time.

Another strike, also two minutes from time, earned Italy a 2-1 win over Spain in the quarter-finals.

Baggio was again the hero in the semifinals with both goals in a 2-1 win over Bulgaria, who had just knocked out the defending champions Germany.

However, Brazil had the better of the final in open play. Romario had two chances and midfielder Mazinho and Branco could also have scored in the first 45 minutes.

Italy had a single chance in the first half when Franco Baresi, back in the side three weeks after a knee cartilage operation, put Daniele Massaro through.

Baggio, held back by a hamstring injury, was unable to score.

The second half, one of the most remarkable goals-



Things that keep you going in life's gruelling sets. When the proceedings at tennis courts turn drab lensmen's search for variety tend to obscure the game itself. After all the purpose of all games is to enliven the spirit. If it is not there in the middle, look elsewhere.

— Star photo by Elamul Haq