

Best-of-three WSC finals begin today

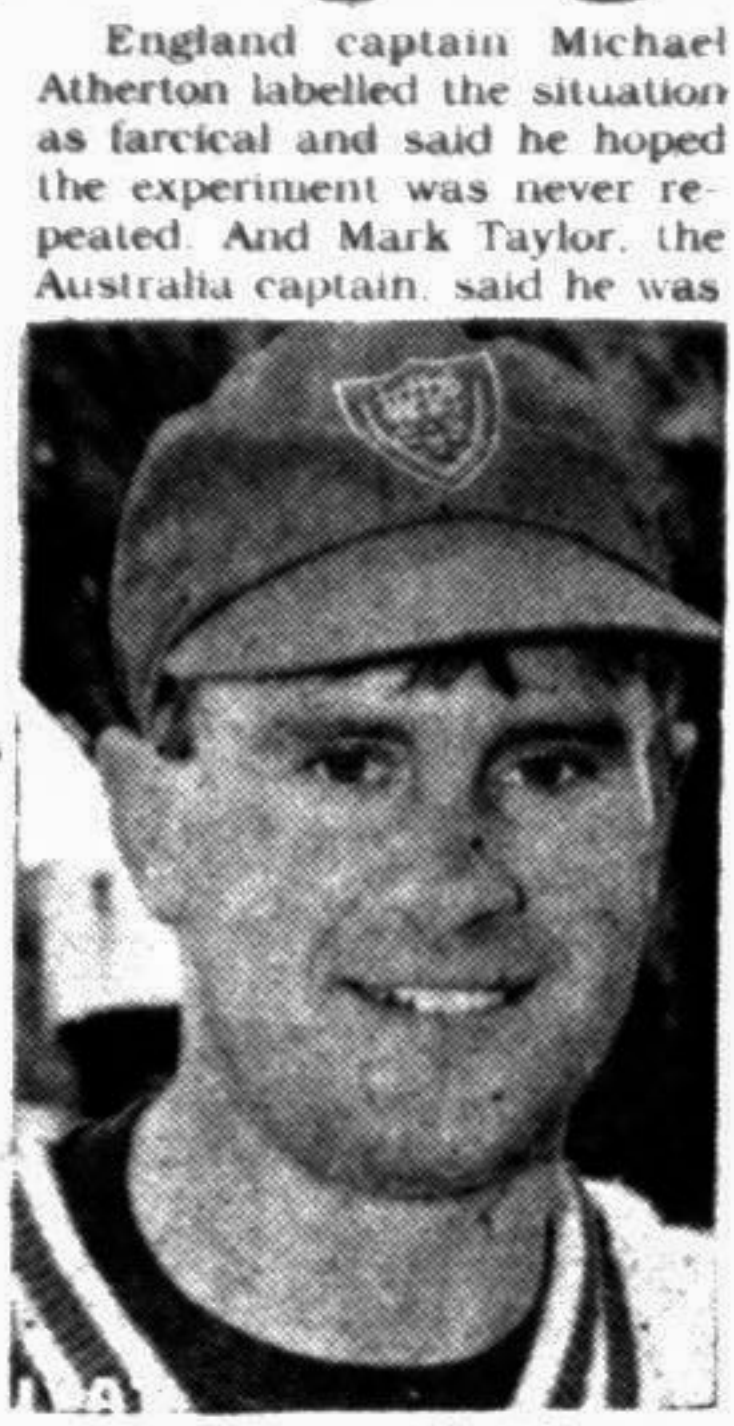
Boys come up against men

SYDNEY, Jan 14: Two teams from the same country will battle it out in the World Series Cricket finals starting in Sydney on Sunday — a contest which some fans have described as farcical, reports Reuters.

Australia A were introduced to the annual one-day tournament to generate added interest and showcase the country's emerging talent. They have reached the finals ahead of England and Zimbabwe and will face the senior Australia side.

The idea that a world tournament should be contested by two sides from the same country seems strange enough. But the fact that batsman Michael Bevan, off-spinner Gavin Robertson, wicket-keeper Phil Emery and seamer Paul Reiffel have been selected for both sides has added to the ridicule.

The International Cricket Council does not recognise A-team matches as official one-day internationals. So the best-of-three finals, which continue in Melbourne on January 17, and if necessary, January 19, are, in effect, exhibition matches.



MARK TAYLOR against the A team reappearing after this season "at this stage." Taylor, a known opponent of the concept, dislikes the idea of asking the crowd to choose between two Australian sides. When asked what the purpose of the finals was now, he said: "Good question."

England captain Michael Atherton labelled the situation as farcical and said he hoped the experiment was never repeated. And Mark Taylor, the Australia captain, said he was "I don't really know the point of this situation but I just hope we can win two of the matches to show that the first team is better than the second eleven," he said.

However, Australia coach Bobby Simpson and Greg Chappell, Simpson's opposite number in the A side, both came out in favour of the all-Australia finals.

"It's a wonderful experience for the new players to play in front of big crowds against international sides and that should be a help for the future," said Simpson.

The 38,000 fans, who turned up to watch the A side play England on Thursday, are testimony to the popularity of the idea.

Simpson added: "It is not a bad idea to have the senior players looking over their shoulders and being tested in the middle by players vying for their places."

"It happens in Sheffield Shield cricket so our players should not be worried about it."

Chappell said: "The only reason Mark Taylor didn't want the A side in the finals was because he knew we would present Australia with their biggest test."

Forget clinches Adelaide Int'l tennis title

ADELAIDE, Jan 14: Guy Forget of France beat Australia's Patrick Rafter 7-6 (7-3), 7-6 (11-9) Saturday in the final of the Adelaide International exhibition tennis tournament, reports AP.

It was Forget's third win in as many matches in the six-man invitational event at Memorial Drive. He beat Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia and Todd Martin of the United States earlier in Group B matches.

Rafter had qualified from Group A that had also grouped American players Andre Agassi and Jim Courier. All three finished with 1-1 records.

Courier beat Rafter 6-3, 6-3 in an earlier match Saturday that was postponed by rain from Friday night, but Rafter advanced because he has won more games than Courier or Agassi in his group.

Rafter led 5-4 and 40-0 in the second set before letting Forget off the hook. In the second-set tiebreaker, Rafter held two more set points but could not convert them.

"I think overall it was a good fight," said Forget. "When you're playing a match where both players are serve and volleyers, two mistakes in a row can really make a difference."

Rafter said he let up when holding the three set points at 5-4.

"I sort of relaxed a bit on one or two points, and he came up with some pretty good returns," said Rafter.

Unlucky 13 for Aouita

HAMILTON, Ontario, Jan 14: Friday the 13th proved an unlucky night for a comeback from retirement for Moroccan track star Said Aouita, reports Reuters.

The 35-year-old Aouita began his comeback after more than two years away from competition at the Hamilton Spectator Indoor Games, but could finish no better than fourth in the 3,000 metres.

Before the race the Prince of the Desert said he wanted to break the indoor mark of eight minutes and two seconds and he sounded as if he believed he could actually do it.

But Aouita was in the middle of the pack throughout the race and never challenged for the lead.

Still he said he was happy with his race and was not concerned with falling well short of his goal after training for just three weeks.

Canadian Graeme Fell, who is also 35, won the race in 8:06.76.

Fell, who won a bronze medal in the 3,000 at the Commonwealth Games last year, made a late charge to edge American Thomas Nohilly by a mere hundredth of a second.

Aouita was fourth in 8:08.47.

IAAF recognises Caiyun's feat

MONACO, Jan 14: China's Sun Caiyun is the first woman's pole vault world record holder, the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) announced here Friday, reports AP.

Caiyun's record of 4.05 metres was set in 1992 in Nanjing but records in the women's pole vault, along with women's hammer throw, have only now been recognised by the IAAF.

Tasmanian Open title Meshki's

HOBART, Jan 14: Georgia's Lela Meshki won the US \$107,500 dlr Tasmanian Open women's tennis championship Saturday, defeating China's Fang Li 6-2, 6-3, reports AP.

Meshki, the fifth seed and ranked 33rd in the world, needed only 72 minutes to beat Fang Li, breaking the Chinese player's serve in the fourth game of the first set to take a 3-1 lead which she extended to 5-1 before taking the set.

She continued her dominance from early in the second set, breaking Li's serve in the second game for 2-0.

Meshki went to a 4-1 lead using an impressive array of ground strokes and passing shots and despite a mini revival from Li, ranked 66th, the Georgian kept her head to win the match.

"It feels great to take the title," Meshki said. "It's a great start for the year and I feel my form is good leading to the Australian Open."

The tournament, which began last year, suffered a setback this year when top seed Ines Gorrochategui of Argentina withdrew before the first round with a knee complaint. Second-seeded American Chanda Rubin was forced out before her second-round match with an ankle injury.



Argentina's Gabriela Sabatini plays a forehand return to Mary-Joe Fernandez of America in her semifinal match of the New South Wales Open tennis championship in Sydney yesterday. Sabatini won in straight sets 6-1, 6-4 and will play Lindsay Davenport in final today.

Pat McEnroe wins NSW Open

SYDNEY, Jan 14: American Patrick McEnroe made it fourth time lucky Saturday when he beat Richard Fromberg for his first career ATP tour singles title in the New South Wales Open tennis championship, reports AP.

McEnroe, brother of former world No. 1 John McEnroe, who telephoned before the match with advice, triumphed 6-2, 7-6 (7-4) in a one-hour, 42-minute final on the White City Center Court.

In the women's semifinals of the US \$50,000 dollars tournament, American Lindsay Davenport and Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina set up a

repeat of their Virginia Slims championship decider of last November with wins.

Sabatini, who broke a 2-1-2-year drought with victory in the Slims final, beat American Mary Joe Fernandez 6-1, 6-4 in the second semifinal Saturday.

Earlier, Davenport advanced when titleholder Kimiko Date of Japan forfeited their semifinal with an abdominal muscle strain with the top-seeded American leading 6-4, 4-1.

It was a delighted McEnroe who saluted the crowd after Fromberg punched a backhand volley wide. Victory was sweet for the New Yorker better known as a doubles player and long used to living in the

shadow of his famous brother. "Singles for me takes a lot of hard work," said McEnroe, beaten in the finals at Auckland and Basle last year and Chicago in 1991, where he lost to his big brother.

"That is what I have done over the years...try to get a little bit better."

A laid-back McEnroe, a semifinalist at the 1991 Australian Open, insisted he would not "have lost any sleep" if he'd been beaten.

But he added: "It feels great. I'm not the kind of guy to get obsessed about something. My goal is to improve and if that means I can win some titles, that's great."

He said brother John, winner of seven Grand Slam singles titles, had telephoned from New York with "helpful hints" on how to beat Fromberg.

"I took the advice and it worked well," he said.

The New Yorker should also thank first-round rival Karsten Braasch of Germany who had over-ruled an "out" call on a McEnroe down-the-line forehand on the first of five match points against the American.

"Maybe he thought he was OK with all the others he had," quipped McEnroe, who won US dlr \$43,000. "I've got to take him out to dinner."

Against Fromberg, attempting to become the first local winner of the title since 1988, he played aggressively, making his opponent run non-stop.

After taking the first set in 36 minutes by breaking in the fourth and last games, McEnroe found himself down 2-4 and a point away from a 2-5 deficit before clawing back.

"I felt like I was playing well and if I lost the second there was still a way to go, but I just tried to get back," said McEnroe, who also trailed 3-0 in the tiebreaker.

A missed overhead smash by Fromberg allowed McEnroe back to 3-3 and he took four of the next five points for victory.

Date, world-ranked eighth and seeded third led 4-1 and had a point for 5-2 in the first set before losing her next five service games as the stomach injury, suffered in practice in Japan, took its toll.

Davenport, 18, while happy to advance, believes she still has to improve her game.

Second diving gold for China

SYDNEY, Jan 14: Chinese divers picked up a second gold Saturday in a close contest at an international meet in the Sydney Olympics 2000 diving pool here, reports AFP.

Shi Lei took top slot in the women's platform event in this Southern Cross Grand Prix with 470.79 points.

She was a fine entry ahead of Russia's Svetlana Timoshinina with 470.71, and with Australia's 19-form Vynicka Arlow of third.

In another close finish Friday, China's Yang Lan and Russia's Yulia Pakhalkina tied for the gold medal in the women's one-metre springboard final after the Russian had swept up from third place with a great dive.

After two of the event's three days, China has won two gold medals with Russia, Sweden and Australia at one apiece, with two events to be decided Sunday.

The presence of the Chinese divers at the Grand Prix has been free of the controversy which had earlier plagued Chinese swimmers.

Australian swimmers have been circulating petitions demanding the banning of China from international swimming competition because of what they describe as "overwhelming evidence of systematic doping in the country."

The petitions call on the peak Australian swimming body to follow the lead of the Australian Swimming Coaches Association (ASCA) in calling for FINA, the international swimming body, to impose a four-year ban on the Chinese.

The ASCA call came after seven Chinese swimmers failed drug tests administered at the Asian Games in Hiroshima in October.

Australian swimming coaches told AFP that they did not object to the presence of the divers.

Earlier this week the Chinese divers had competed in New Zealand.

Michael Murphy of Australia won the gold in the men's three-metre springboard. The dual Commonwealth Games gold medalist finished almost 26 points ahead of World Championship silver medalist Dmitry Sautin of Russia with China's Fan Huaquang another nine points back in third.

Kanhai's accent on practice

HAMILTON, Jan 14: West Indies cricket coach Rohan Kanhai wants to make the most of the limited match practice preceding his team's first one-day international against New Zealand, reports AP.

The tour opener — against the Sir Ron Brierley XI on Sunday — is one of just three games for the West Indies before they play three one-dayers in six days, the first on Jan 22.

They then play a three-day game against Otago before two Test matches on their month-long tour.

Kanhai is aware of the West Indies' poor Test record in New Zealand — they lost the 1979-80 series and drew the 1987 series — and wants to correct the balance on this tour.

"We know what we have to do and only our best will be enough to beat New Zealand," Kanhai said Saturday. "We will try our best to give everybody time in the middle."

Captain Courtney Walsh is the only player to have toured here before while only three other players — Curtley Ambrose, Brian Lara and

Anderson Cummins — played in the World Cup in New Zealand three years ago.

Since taking over as coach in 1992, Kanhai has lost from his team experienced players such as Desmond Haynes, Richie Richardson, Gus Logie, David Williams and Patrick

themselves in the West Indies side for the years to come," he said.

The West Indies team for Sunday's match is rich with all-rounders and Kanhai said up to four players — Stuart Williams, Sherwin Campbell, Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Roland Holder — were staking claims as opening batsmen.

With retired internationals Lance Cairns, John Wright and Australian Jeff Thomson lending a relaxed look to the Brierley XI, the side has enough talented players — including likely New Zealand team members Nathan Astle and Dipak Patel — to make a contest out of the game.

**TEAMS**

**WEST INDIES:** Courtney Walsh (captain), Keith Arthurton, Sherwin Campbell, Stuart Williams, Roland Holder, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Brian Lara, Jimmy Adams, Anderson Cummins, Curtley Ambrose, Winston Benjamin.

**BRIERLEY XI:** Lance Cairns (captain), John Wright, Jeff Thomson, Roger Twose, Graham Burnett, Grant Bradburn, Mark Bailey, Dipak Patel, Nathan Astle, Paul Jarvis, Robbie Hart.

Patterson. "We have some experienced players but this is mainly a young side and this tour is a chance for them to establish

be predictable. I'm working on mixing my game up a bit more."

Sampras said Chang's serve was one of the keys to the result. "That's the best he's ever served against me," he said.

In consolation round matches, Stefan Edberg of Sweden defeated Wally Masur of Australia, 7-6 (7-2) 6-4 and Australian Jason Stoltenberg beat Germany's Michael Stich 6-4 6-4.

Chang surprises Sampras

MELBOURNE, Jan 14: Michael Chang served flawlessly surprised world No. 1 Pete Sampras in straight sets Saturday in an all-American final of the Colonial Classic exhibition tennis tournament at Kooyong, reports AP.

Chang did not drop serve in the match as he defeated Sampras 7-6 (7-4), 6-3 to boost his confidence for the Australian Open championship, which starts Monday at the National Tennis Center.

Chang, who is not noted for his service power, dropped only two points in his first six service games and then won the last four points of the tiebreaker.

He served a total of 10 aces and repeatedly chased down Sampras' shots.

The first set took 46 minutes, but Chang — the No. 5 seed for the Open — then sped through the second after breaking Sampras' serve in the sixth game. He clinched the decisive break with a backhand crosscourt that hit the line.

Chang and Sampras have been rivals since they were seven years old. Although Sampras is higher-ranked, Chang has won six of their 10 competitive matches.

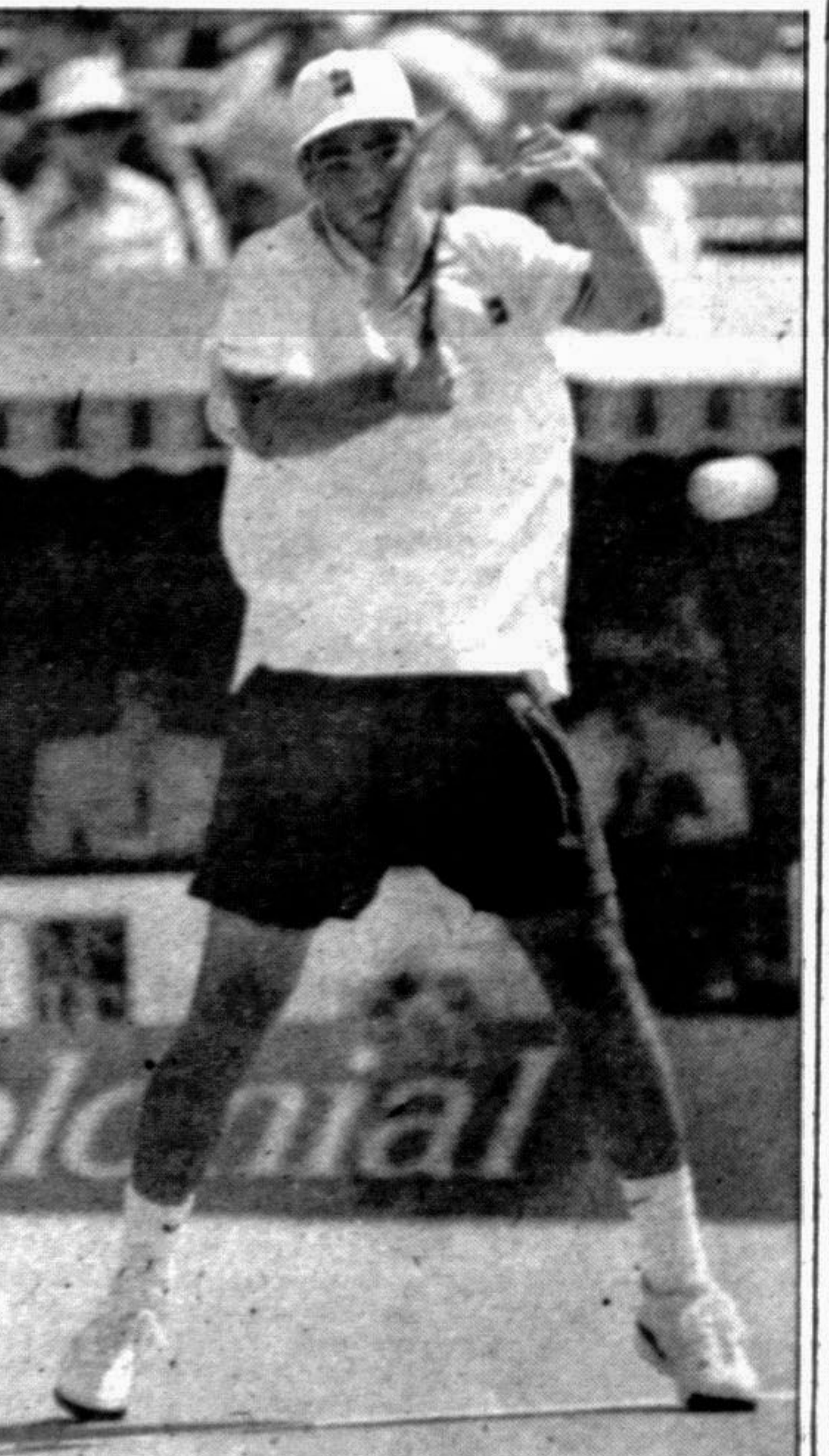
Chang scored victories over former Wimbledon champions Pat Cash and Boris Becker on his way to the final.

"It is a great confidence-booster to beat guys like Boris and Pete so close to a Grand Slam," he said.

Chang will be playing in only his third Australian Open and has not previously made it past the third round.

"I felt really good these past few days. When you are playing against a field of this caliber it is a great opportunity before a Grand Slam."

"I'm just wondering why I haven't come down to Australia a few more times. I wouldn't be here if I didn't give me



World number one Pete Sampras through with a forehand return during his semifinal match against Swede Stefan Edberg at the Kooyong tennis classic in Melbourne on Jan 13. Sampras won 6-3, 6-7(4-7), 6-2.

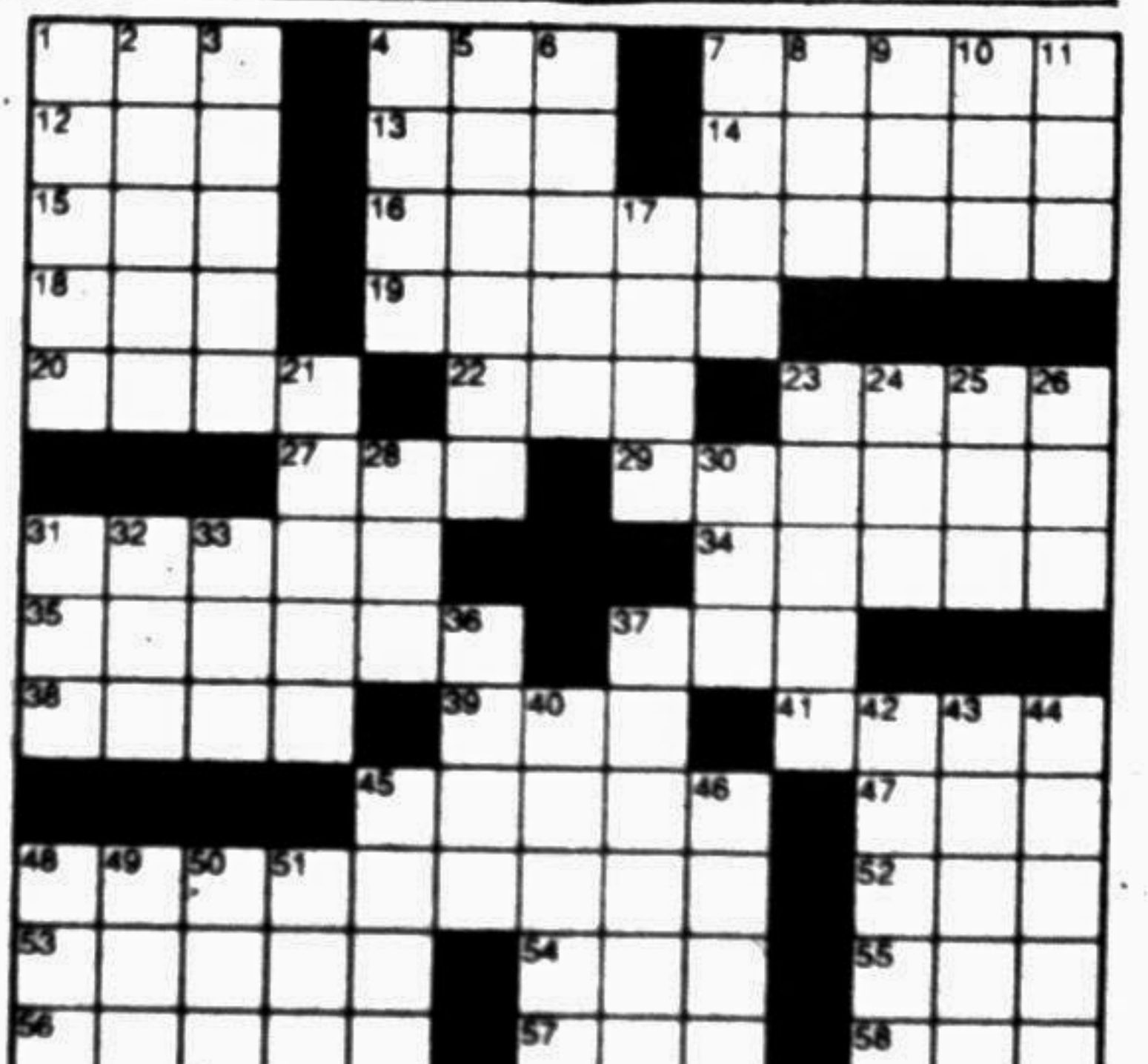
Two more Foreman's way

NEW YORK, Jan 14: Heavyweight champion George Foreman took two on Friday.

He won both Fighter of the Year and Manager of the Year designations from the Boxing Writers Association of America, reports AP.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Bird's crop
  - 4 Swab
  - 7 Inexpensive
  - 12 Oklahoma city
  - 13 Docs' org.
  - 14 Crowd
  - 15 Trygve's successor
  - 16 Herald
  - 18 Past
  - 19 Sacrifice
  - 20 Fix
  - 22 Corn spike
  - 23 Over 50 percent
  - 27 Salamander
  - 29 Rhododendron's cousin
  - 31 Auto style
  - 34 Demand
  - 35 Soak up
  - 37 Golden, in Grenoble
  - 38 Daily fare
  - 39 Harvard's rival
  - 41 Egg part
  - 45 Magnificent
  - 47 "Barney"
- DOWN**
- 2 Miller's cast member
  - 3 Transport
  - 4 "I Remember"
  - 5 Brunch concoction
  - 6 Trattoria offering
  - 7 "Moonstruck" star
  - 8 Sweetie
  - 9 Work unit
  - 10 Citric
  - 11 Quencher
  - 12 Pitching stat.
  - 17 Gilbert of "Roseanne"
  - 21 Stop
  - 22 Saw
  - 23 Make it legal
  - 24 Of long standing
  - 25 Bishopric
  - 26 Pitch
  - 28 Chemin de —
  - 30 Wildlife conservation park
  - 31 Scoundrel
  - 32 Kyoto sash
  - 33 Exploit
  - 36 Swiss metropolis
  - 37 Bread
  - 40 Nigerian capital
  - 42 Orange variety
  - 43 Recluse
  - 44 Qantas spokes-beast
  - 45 "Pretty Woman" star
  - 46 Attracted
  - 48 Spacecraft compartment
  - 49 Simile center
  - 50 Transgression
  - 51 Moment
- POP TITO GINA**  
**IDA ALAS OLAM**  
**CAKEWALK ROOM**  
**IND CATWALK**  
**CASTRO RUN**  
**HIT YAM BURMA**  
**ADAM RIO PEAR**  
**PANIC DOC CCC**  
**SHE HENRYS**  
**JAYWALK ROE**  
**OLEO MOONWALK**  
**SEAR ELBA TOE**  
**HERD RAIN EGG**
- Solution time: 25 mins.**



**CRYPTOQUIP**

F T C R W Q E B K C F L L B  
T R R U G R T F F C F L T M L  
L C E G L B Z M B V Z - Z M B V Z  
B Y Y Y B K U Q M V W

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ACTOR'S DIFFICULT CHILDREN ARE GOING THROUGH A STAGE.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: E equals M  
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.