

Taylor hits career-best 97 against Kiwis

Aussies sail to finals



AUCKLAND, Feb 19: Australia qualified for the century limited-overs series cricket final with a comfortable 27-run victory over New Zealand at Eden Park on Sunday, reports AP.

New Zealand, chasing a Mark Taylor-inspired Australian total of 254 for five, were restricted to 227 for nine despite two fine half-centuries from left-handers Mark Greatbatch and Stephen Fleming.

The in-form pair of Greatbatch and Fleming put New Zealand on course for victory, but medium pacer Paul Reiffel, returning for his second spell, ran through the lower order as the home side collapsed and lost five wickets for 36 runs.

Australia remain unbeaten in the four-nation tournament with two wins in as many matches. Australia now play India in their final round-robin match in Dunedin on Wednesday.

New Zealand and South Africa, with a win each from two games, will decide the other finalist when both teams meet in Christchurch on Thursday. India failed to qualify, losing their first two games.

After losing opener Brian Young in the fourth over and then skipper Ken Rutherford (7) at 42, Greatbatch and Fleming burgeoned their way in a 82-run third-wicket stand.

Greatbatch, in particular, was severe on the Australian pace attack, hitting two sixes and couple of boundaries before being overshadowed by Fleming, who scored his 53 runs off 71 balls with the help of seven fours.

A rash stroke ended the threatening stand and loss of wickets in regular intervals ended New Zealand's hopes of victory.

Reiffel bowled a brilliant second spell — three maiden overs — while claiming the wickets of Greatbatch and then Justin Vaughan.

He finished with three for 35 and was well supported by

his new-ball partner Glenn McGrath who picked up two for 40.

Skipper Taylor hit his highest one-day score — 97 in his 72nd outing — and shared a rollicking second-wicket stand of 147 runs with Mark Waugh, who set the pace with a sweetly timed 74 runs.

Australia, winning the toss and batting, suffered an early drawback, losing opener Greg Blewett to the seventh ball of the innings.

New Zealand, opening the attack with off-spinner Shane Thomson, had Blewett neatly caught by Stephen Fleming at short mid-wicket.

Taylor and Mark Waugh in particular made a mockery of the New Zealand attack, helping themselves to a 188-ball stand and putting behind the early hiccup.

Taylor improved on his 94 against Sri Lanka in 1993-94, hitting eight boundaries in his

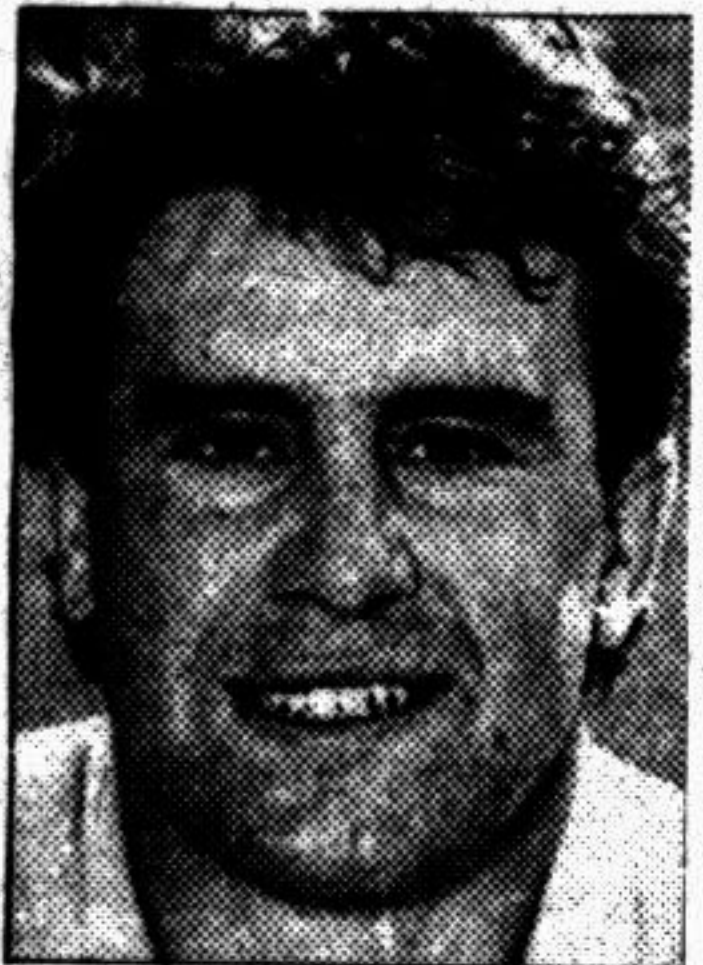
wicket. Pringle, returning to the New Zealand side after a seven-day suspension by the New Zealand Cricket, picked up two wickets for 54 runs.

SCOREBOARD Scoreboard of the New Zealand Centenary series one-day international between Australia and New Zealand today:

Table with columns: AUSTRALIA, O, M, R, W. Rows include G Blewett, M Taylor, M Waugh, D Boon, S Waugh, R Ponting, I Healy, Extras, Total, Fall of wickets, Did not bat, Bowling, Morrison, Thomson, Pringle, Cairns, Larsen, Vaughan.

Table with columns: NEW ZEALAND, O, M, R, W. Rows include B Young, M Greatbatch, K Rutherford, S Fleming, C Cairns, S Thomson, A Parore, J Vaughan, G Larsen, C Pringle, D Morrison, Extras, Total, Fall of wickets, Bowling, McGrath, Reiffel, Waugh, May, Blewett, Boon, M Waugh.

Result: Australia won by 27 runs. Man-of-the-match: Mark Taylor (Australia).



MARK TAYLOR ... m-o-m

128-ball innings before medium pacer Chris Pringle found the leading edge to hold on to a return catch.

Mark Waugh, having scored his runs off 97 balls, fell to a brilliant catch by bowler Justin Vaughan.

David Boon ended a series of low scores with a pinch-hitting 44 runs off 42 balls and helped Taylor add another 64 runs off 68 balls for the third

Four new faces in SL squad

COLOMBO, Feb 19: Sri Lanka will try their sixth wicket-keeper in three years as they take four newcomers on a tour of New Zealand starting Monday, reports AP.

Included in the 16-member squad is Chamara Dunusinghe, a 23-year-old junior keeper in the senior squad for the first time. He toured Bangladesh recently with the Sri Lanka team.

Sri Lanka will play two Tests and three one-day internationals while in New Zealand from February 21 to April 3. The team will then fly to Sharjah for a four-nation limited over tournament.

Dunusinghe is among four new faces in the squad, again led by all-rounder Arjuna Ranatunga. The other three are fast bowler Janaka Gamage, left-arm spinner Jayantha Silva and batsman Chaminda Mendis.

Dunusinghe is the sixth wicketkeeper to be tried in the past three years. He will replace Pubudu Dassanayake who started well but has faded recently.

Opening batsman Mendis was a last-minute inclusion to the side following the withdrawal of veteran opener Roshan Mahanama due to injury.

Ranatunga is in good form having smacked a power-packed century in a domestic final at the weekend. Another all-rounder Sanath Jayasuriya, also made a ton in the same match.

Ranatunga is determined to maintain his record of not having lost to New Zealand under his captaincy. He has to his credit one victory over New Zealand in the last six Tests between the two sides.

Sri Lanka will hope that its bowling department, which has let the side down very often, would produce a sterling performance during the forthcoming tour.

Left-arm Jayantha Silva would add variety to the slow attack by teaming up with off-spinners Muttiah Muralidharan and Ruwan Kalpage. Newcomer Gamage will make-up the four-man pace attack.

Sri Lanka squad: Arjuna Ranatunga (capt), Aravinda de Silva, Dilip Samaraweera, Chaminda Mendis, Asanka Gurusinghe, Sanjeewa Ranatunga, Hashan Tilakaratne, Sanath Jayasuriya, Ruwan Kalpage, Chamara Dunusinghe, Muttiah Muralidharan, Pramodya Wickremasinghe, Janaka Gamage, Jayantha Silva, Chaminda Vaas, Ravindra Pushpakumara.

Schultz to face Likhovtseva in Iga Classic final

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oklahoma, Feb 19: Top seed Brenda Schultz of the Netherlands and Russian teenager Elena Likhovtseva took drastically different routes into the final of the Iga Classic women's tournament on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Schultz needed just 64 minutes to power her way past eighth-seeded American Patty Fendick 6-2, 6-2.

Dynasty Cup soccer results

HONG KONG, Feb 19: A brace of goals for Hisashi Kurosaki was the heart of Japan's 3-0 win over hosts Hong Kong in the opening game of the Dynasty Cup tournament today, reports AP.

Kurosaki took the leading role in the absence of star striker Kazuyoshi Miura who could not get away from Italian side Genoa for the tournament which will be a key test for Japan and World Cup rivals South Korea. Japan are rebuilding after failing to reach the last World Cup finals.

His first goal in the 41st minute was made by a brilliant pass through the Hong Kong defence by Masakiyo Maezono. Kurosaki hit on the ball which took a deflection from the goalkeeper.

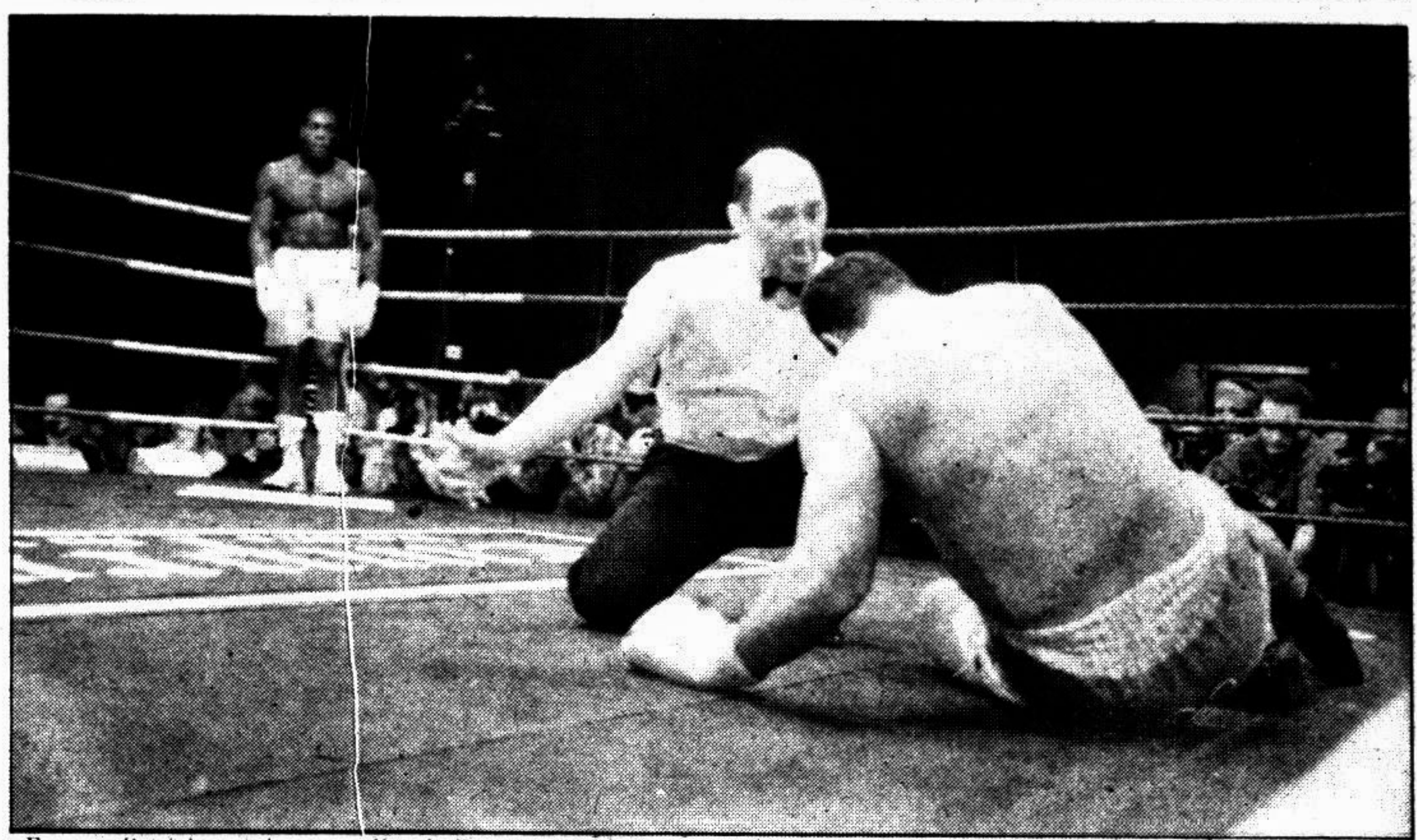
Japanese skipper Tetsuji Hashiratani scored the second with a header from the near post. Kurosaki hit his second against an outclassed Hong Kong side with a thundering left foot shot from outside the penalty area.

Coach Shu Kamo admitted it had been a slow start but put that down to Japan's long lay-off. "The longer it went on the better we got, and things will get even better as the tournament goes on."

South Korea had to be content with a 0-0 draw against China in the second match of the day after wasting many chances.

Choi Yong-Su, the 21-year-old skipper of the essentially Olympic squad Korean side, was the worst culprit in the missed opportunities. In the 73rd minute he scooped the ball over from five yards.

But Ou Chuliang, teenaged goalkeeper for the Chinese team that won the silver medal at last October's Asian Games, made several spectacular saves to keep China in the match.



Former British number one Frank Bruno stands in a neutral corner as the referee counts out Rodolfo Marin of Puerto Rico after a first round KO during their bout at the Bath and West Showground in Shepton Mallet, England on Feb 18.

Bruno too good for Marin

SHEPTON MALL, England, Feb 19: Frank Bruno, who is gunning for a world title fight with WBC champion Oliver McCall, needed only 65 seconds to knock out Puerto Rican heavyweight Rodolfo Marin Saturday, reports AP.

The 33-year-old British fighter, who has unsuccessfully fought for the world title three times before, had Marin on the floor twice during the brief fight at the West of England Showground.

He landed a right hand to the top of Marin's head that sent him to the floor after only 30 seconds.

Marin got to his feet after a count of five and Bruno went on the attack again, landing two sharp left jabs and following with a left hook that ended the fight.

It didn't appear to be a powerful blow, but it was too much for Marin, who failed to

make referee John Coyle's count.

Bruno's promoter, Frank Warren, is lining Bruno up for a fourth world title challenge after his losses to Tim Witherspoon (1986), Mike Tyson (89) and Lennox Lewis (93). Warren, who has links with Don King, wants to put him in with McCall, the World Boxing Council champion who took the title from Lewis.

"It was easier than I expected, but I could not afford to mess around," Bruno said. "He has gone the distance with WBC No 3 Joe Hipp and because of that I had to give him respect."

"I'm sorry it did not last longer for it was a great crowd, but that's boxing."

"No way was he a fat, out-of-shape heavyweight. He came over here trying to put up a good fight but I did a cool, clean, calculated job on him," Bruno said.

"That is all I can do — perform to the best of my ability

and get the fight over as quickly as possible.

"If you don't believe that go into his dressing room now and feel his head."

Marin's manager, Felix Zabala, agreed. "He tried his best but was nailed by hard punches and could not continue," Zabala said.

"You should give credit to Frank Bruno. My fighter told me it was the hardest he had been hit in his life."

It was the 38th victory for Bruno against four losses. It was Marin's fourth defeat against 20 victories and in 1991 Riddick Bowe, later to become undisputed world titlist, broke his jaw in a two-round stoppage victory.

Bruno was at his heaviest ever for this fight, scaling 246 pounds (111.6 kilograms). Although both fighters were equal in height at 6 feet 3 (1.90 meters), Bruno was 13 pounds (5.9 kilos) heavier than the Puerto Rican.

Tejedor takes IBF crown

CARTAGENA, Colombia, Feb 19: Colombian Francisco Tejedor became the IBF flyweight champion Saturday night when his opponent, Jose Luis Zepeda of Mexico, failed to come of his corner for the seventh round, reports AP.

Zepeda, who had initially fought well, was beaten so badly in the sixth round that he stayed in his corner at the bell for the seventh, calling out "No more!" before 4,000 boxing fans in a sports stadium in this Caribbean port city.

His manager, Carlos Monroy, said he didn't want Zepeda to go out again for the seventh round.

"I opted to stop the fight because Zepeda was in bad shape and I preferred not to run any risk," Monroy told reporters later.

Zepeda said he would fight perhaps one more bout and then retire.

"I've been boxing for a long time," the weary, beaten 29-year-old said.

Tejedor cried with joy after the fight and was congratulated by his parents.

The International Boxing Federation title had been vacant. Picifit Sibrachachan of Thailand had held the title, and beat challenger Zepeda by decision in May in Bangkok. But the decision was disputed, and the IBF ordered the Thai to fight Zepeda again for the title.

Sibrachachan declined, citing poor health, so the IBF vacated the title, setting up the championship bout between Zepeda and Tejedor.

Christie cruises

VIENNA, Feb 19: Olympic and world 100 metres champion Linford Christie easily won a 60 metres indoor race on Saturday in 6.62 seconds, reports Reuter.

The 34-year-old Briton, who does not plan to run in next month's World indoor championships in Barcelona, finished well ahead of second-placed Czech Jiri Valik who clocked 6.74.

"Some days are better than others," Christie said afterwards.

Graf back on top again

PARIS, Feb 19: Back in a style from a three-month layoff, Steffi Graf crushed

Mary Pierce on Sunday in the final of the Paris Open and assured herself of regaining the No. 1 world ranking, reports AP.

Tour officials said the 6-2, 6-2 victory will move Graf ahead of Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario when new rankings come out Monday. It was Graf's first title since July.

Sanchez-Vicario took over the top ranking on Feb. 6 after Graf missed the Australian Open. Pierce, moving to No. 3

Italian Davis Cuppers want more money

MILAN, Feb 19: Italian Davis Cup players are demanding substantial bonuses for their quarterfinal-round match against the United States, reports AP.

Team captain Adriano Panatta said in Milan Friday that the Italian tennis federation is likely to accede to the request.

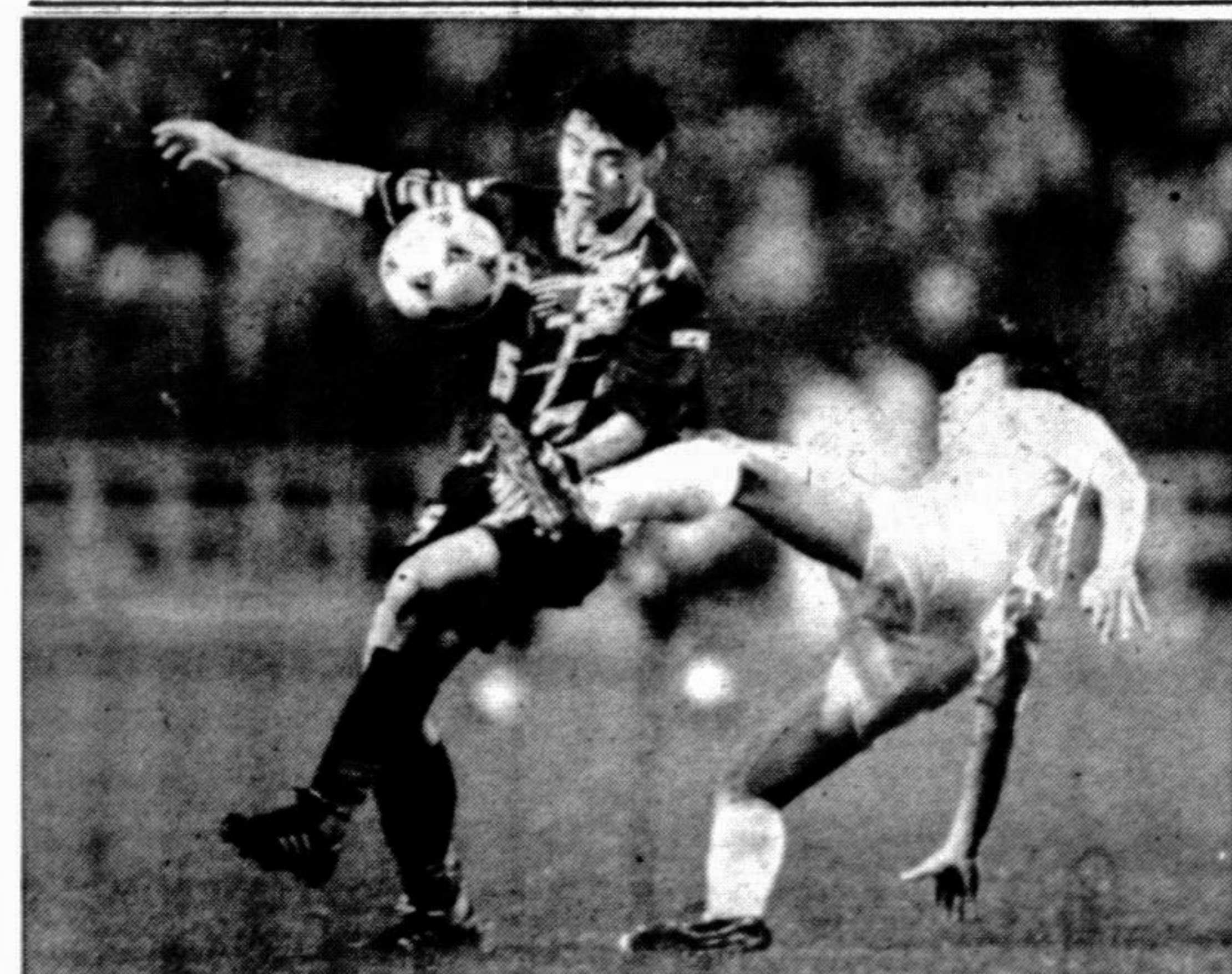
Renzo Furlan, Stefano Pescosolido, Andrea Gaudenzi and Cristian Brandi, the four who are likely to be called for the match next month, told a news conference that they have demanded at least \$172,000 be split among the players.



STEFFI GRAF

hard services that set up easy winners' with her forehand.

Pierce had trouble staying in the 67-minute match after dropping her service in the second game. Two Pierce errors and two forehand winners by Graf put the German up 2-0.



China's Liu Yue (R) lets some turf fly in a tussle with Korea's Cho Jong Hwa during their first round encounter in the Asian Football Confederation Dynasty Cup in Hong Kong yesterday.

Warnecke, Kennedy reign

GEISENKIRCHE, N. Germany, Feb 19: Germany's Mark Warnecke and Australian Angela Kennedy

took the final World Cup swimming meeting of the season by storm with world short-course records on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Warnecke celebrated his comeback after a motorcycle accident last year when he smashed the 50 metres breaststroke record with a powerful swim in 27.00 seconds.

The 25-year-old German, who was forced to miss last year's World Championships after injuring his shoulder in the accident, shaved 15 hundredths of a second off the previous best of 27.15 set by Dmitry Volkov of Russia in December 1989 in Lepont, Reunion.

Kennedy, who reclaimed the 50 butterfly record in the English city of Sheffield last weekend, produced another brilliant performance over the 100 butterfly in 58.77 to claim one of the oldest records in the book.

The previous best of 58.91

was set by American Mary Meagher in Gainesville, Florida back in January 1981.

Warnecke said the accident had had an influence on his attitude towards the sport.

"After the moped accident I had more will to win than before," the 1994 European

Palermo to host US, Italy Davis Cup tie

ROME, Feb 19: The Davis Cup quarterfinal match between Italy and the United States will be played on clay outdoor at Palermo, Sicily, the Italian Tennis Federation announced Sunday, reports AP.

The federation rejected bids by Rome, Milan and San Remo to host the March 31-April 2 series.

Italy are the underdogs. Team captain Adriano Panatta is expected to call Andrea Gaudenzi and Renzo Furlan for the singles and Stefano Pescosolido and Cristian Brandi for the doubles.

Gaudenzi is the highest ranking Italian on the ATP tour, in 19th place.

sprint champion said. "I also changed my training and that is paying off now. I am now the fastest sprinter in the world and have hopes about the 100 event."

"If I can get stronger and improve my stamina then things could look good for the Olympics in Atlanta, next year."

Organisers of the Geisenkirchen event had put a new car on offer for the best performer at the meeting. Kennedy, who turns 19 later this month, said the prize had helped her motivation.

"I wanted to swim the world record at the final meeting of the series because I wanted to take the Opel car back home. This is a very good incentive to setting a new record," she said.

Hungary's Olympic champion Krisztina Egerszegi finished off the record-breaking first day by setting a European short-course record for the women's 200 metres backstroke of two minutes 6.98 seconds.

She beat the previous time of 2:07.30 set by Italian Lorenza Vigerani last March in Paris.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 23 mins and a word bank at the bottom.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with numbers 1-51 and a key below it.

CRYPTOQUIP MFDUMJZ D KDRR XLEZZL JMU YLFDEZ: KYZJ ISAB VESPZE MX VESPZE LYDJ ISA DEZ. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: OUR WILD WEST BEAUTICIAN CLEARLY DYED WITH HER BOOTS ON. Today's Cryptoquip clue: F 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.