

Brothers manage room



Brothers Union pipped Greater Mymensingh Cricket Club (GMCC) to the post for the last berth in the super league when they carved a cloudy two-wicket victory over Victoria Sporting Club while champions Bangladesh Biman sustained their splendid success spree in style at the cost of a hapless Sadharan Bima in yesterday's two Navana Premier Division cricket ties.

At the Dhaka Stadium, Brothers collected their seventh victory — an extremely vital one for a place in the super league — when they posted 157 for eight in 41.3 overs overhauling GMCC's 45-over total of 156 for nine.

Sohail Islam with an unbeaten 40 and Pakistani Amir Hanif and Sajal Chowdhury with 36 each were the major run getters for Brothers who, many doubted, had the result contrived favourably before the beginning.

Iqbal Hossain snatched three wickets for 20 while left-arm spinner Biplob Sarkar picked another two for five runs.

Earlier, Victoria mustered 156 for nine in 45 overs. Indian Vishal Singh Yadav topscored with 50 followed by Quamrul Islam's unbeaten 30 and Indian Rajinder Singh's 21.

In the day's other match, played at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, champions Bangladesh Biman, fresh from their highly commendable four-run victory over giants Mohammedan Sporting Club, crushed Sadharan Bima by 72 runs.

Cricketers of the national airlines rounded off their first round engagements on a winning note when the insurgents, set a victory target of 232 in 45 overs, could muster 159 for nine.

With seven victories from nine matches already under their belt, Biman batsmen yesterday batted sensibly to raise 231 for seven.

Experienced Shah Nawaz Shaheed topscored with 62

Sports Reporter

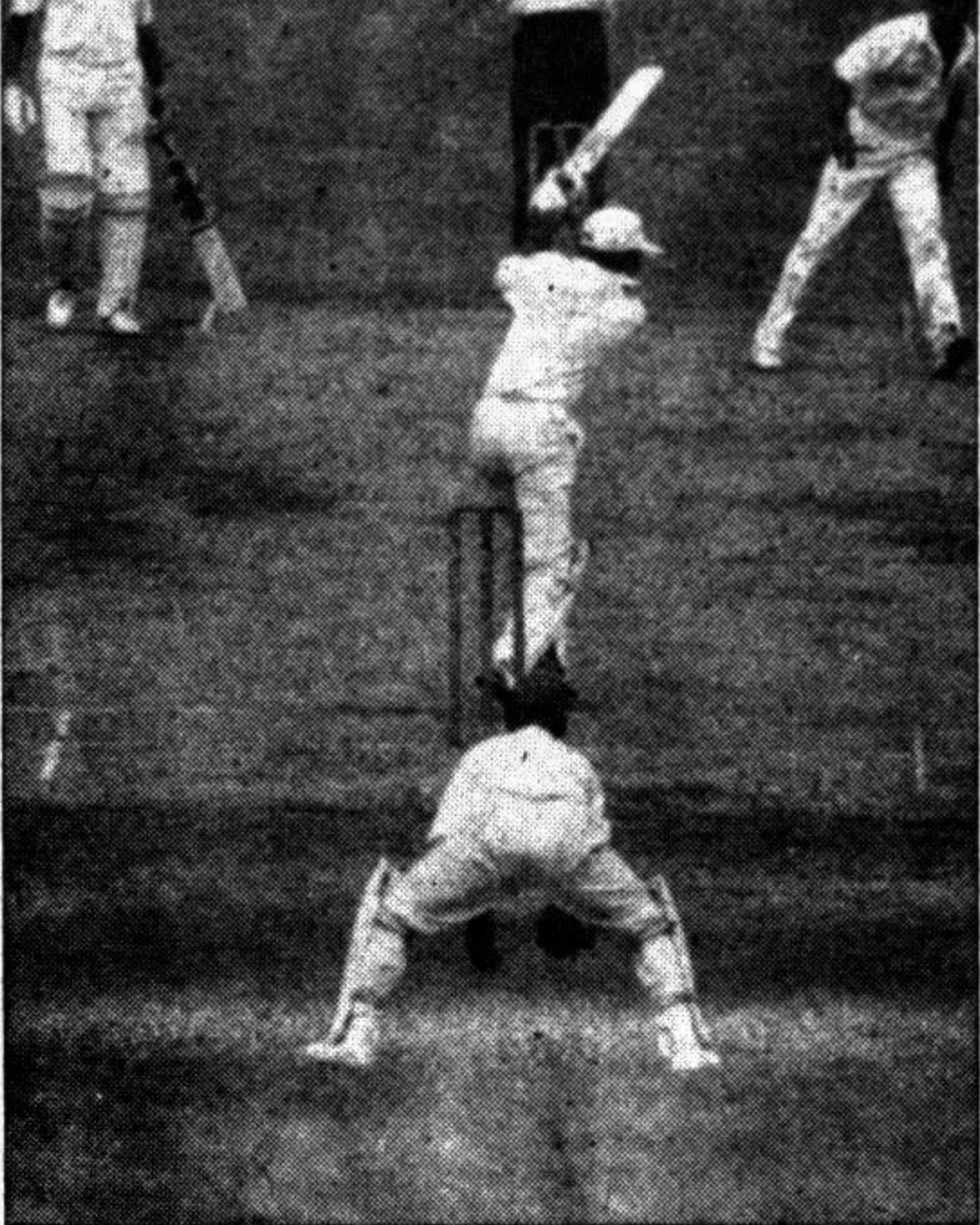
containing five hits to the fence.

He enjoyed excellent support from Habibul Bashir with the stylish right-hander making 59.

Ziaur Rashid contributed 34 while the tall Ahmad Fayaz remained unbeaten on 23.

Anwar with two for 44 was the most successful Bima bowler.

Kiran made 43, Anisur Rahman 35 and Naqib an



Action from yesterday's one of the two Navana league matches between Brothers Union and Victoria Sporting Club at the Dhaka Stadium. Brothers beat Victoria to ensure a place in the six-team super league.

— Star photo

undefeated 32 as Sadharan Bima used up their quota of 45 overs for 159.

Skipper Enamul Huq was the pick of the Bima bowlers. The left-arm spinner and one of the most constant component of the national team had a bag of three for 24. Off-spinner Zia took two for 35.

TODAY'S MATCH

Abahani vs Mohammedans (Dhaka Stadium)

Siddons shines for S Australia

SYDNEY, Mar 10: South Australia captain Jamie Siddons hammered 170 against Sheffield Shield leaders Queensland on Thursday to boost his side's bid for a place in the final, reports Reuter.

Siddons guide the home side to a commanding 392 for five at the close on the first day at Adelaide Oval after losing the toss and being put in to bat.

In other matches, Tasmania scored 273 in their first innings against Victoria at Hobart's Bellerive Oval, while the first day's play between New South Wales and Western Australia in Sydney was washed out.

Victory for South Australia would put them level with Queensland at the top of the table with one round of matches remaining.

Siddons hit 26 fours and a six in his four-and-a-half-hour innings and moved up from 10th to seventh on the list of all-time run scorers in the Sheffield Shield with 7,677 runs from 102 appearances at an average of 48.26.

Third-placed Victoria, who need a victory to retain any hope of reaching the five-day final starting on March 24, were held up by Tasmania skipper Rod Tucker, who hit 93 after his side had been reduced to 130 for seven.

Western Australia, still with an outside chance of making the final, were frustrated by the weather in Sydney as the day's play against champions New South Wales was abandoned following several days of heavy rain.

For all the wrong reasons

RIO DE JANEIRO, Mar 10: Fiery Brazilian striker Edmundo has hit the headlines for the wrong reasons once again after he kicked and smashed a television camera following his team Palmeiras' 1-0 defeat away to Nacional of Ecuador, reports Reuter.

Edmundo was leaving the field after Tuesday's Libertadores Cup game when he jostled with a cameraman who fell but managed to film the striker lashing out at the camera.

"I tripped over the cable and the camera hit me as it fell and I ended up kicking the camera," Edmundo said afterwards.

The strike had seen a penalty kick saved during the game.

Edmundo was banned for four games and 30 days last year for attacking two players during a Brazilian championships match with Sao Paulo.

Palmeiras, who have offered to pay for repairs to the damaged camera, face Emelec of Ecuador today in another Libertadores Group Four match.

Ferguson may step down in '97

LONDON, Mar 10: Manchester United's Alex Ferguson may decide to give up the managership by 1997, according to a press report, reports AFP.

Ferguson was quoted in Friday's Daily Star as saying: "I'll probably step down at the end of my current contract in a couple of years — but then you never know in this game."

The Old Trafford boss cautioned: "Retirement will be a very difficult decision. I'm feeling in great shape. I'm back in my old routine of working regularly in the gym and I feel fit."

Glaswegian Ferguson, 53, has won two premiership titles, two FA cups, the League Cup and the European Cup Winners' Cup since he moved to Old Trafford from Aberdeen in the autumn of 1986.

Wasim Akram arrives

Sports Reporter
Former captain of the Pakistan national cricket team Wasim Akram is all set to make his debut in the local club cricket today as champions Abahani Krira Chakra take on arch-rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club in the last match of the first phase of the Navana Premier Division cricket league.

A terror with the ball to the batsmen worldwide, the big southpaw, who had his registration formalities completed for Abahani in an earlier visit, will take part in four matches including today's one.

Apart from the psychological booster that Akram's mere presence on the ground would ensure, Abahani, last year's joint champions with Bangladesh Biman, who started off the season in style earlier winning Damal Summer tourney, the traditional curtain raiser, will draw inspiration from the fact that their bitter rivals are pretty downcast at the moment with the latest of their three defeats being only two days' old.

A victory would help Abahani finish jointly on top of the points table along with Kalabagan who have a first-leg break-up of nine wins against only one defeat.

Mohammedans, to whom Kalabagan owe their only defeat, have a demoralising record of six wins and three defeats and look appear quite fatally faltered in their quest for regaining the title.

Asian jr b'ball

MANILA, Mar 10: Results of semifinal round games on Friday in the 13th Asian junior men's basketball championship, reports Reuter.

China beat Thailand 98-45 (halftime 49-24).

South Korea beat Jordan 69-51 (halftime 28-27).



AKRAM AGAIN... cricket's most deceptive paceman Wasim Akram is seen with Abahani coach G S Hassan and captain Gazi Ashraf Hossain on his arrival at the Zia International Airport yesterday. The former Pakistan captain is in Dhaka to play a number of matches for Abahani in the Navana Premier Division league.

— Star photo by Anisur Rahman

Illingworth wants to have a chat with Atherton

LONDON, Mar 10: New English cricket supremo Ray Illingworth said on Thursday he planned an early meeting with captain Mike Atherton, but would not comment on whether Atherton's job as skipper was secure, reports Reuter.

"I think it's fair to say because of what happened during the winter that me, and his need to sit down and have a good chat about one or two areas," said Illingworth, now manager as well as chairman of selectors following Keith Fletcher's sacking on Wednesday.

Illingworth has generally backed Atherton's captaincy over the last 12 months, but offered no hint of a quick reappointment announcement.

"The captaincy is a job for the selectors to consider," said Illingworth. "He's technically all right but I do not want to get too involved now talking about his captaincy," he said.

"We worked together all right last summer. We've come through some sticky, dirty situations. I have not spoken to Mike yet because he's still on holiday in America but he is phoning me when he gets back this weekend."

Illingworth was clearly unimpressed by what he found when he visited Australia for the second and third Tests.

"I've never seen or been involved in an unhappy dressing room that produced a successful team," he said Thursday. "When I was in Melbourne and Sydney during the winter I felt there was a difference between our dressing room last August and the one in Australia."

The whole atmosphere did not feel the same. It's difficult to put your finger on it but you get a feel for these things.

"That's what I thought was our biggest problem out there. And it was probably one of the main reasons we did not perform as well as we should have done."

"We have to get absolute pride back in playing for England. That's a big thing. When you put on that blazer or sweater with the three lions and crown you should feel something."

King's Cup boxing on

CHIANG MAI, Thailand, Mar 10: Australia, Mongolia, Indonesia and host Thailand will have the most boxers in the ring Saturday for the finals of the 20th King's Cup Amateur Boxing Championships, reports AP.

The Thais managed to get six fighters into the showdown despite losing two to the scales before the semis Thursday in this northern city.

Hermansen Ballo of Indonesia in the light-flyweight division and Japan's Hirokuni Moto in the middleweight won without throwing a single punch after their Thai opponents failed to bring their weight under the limit.

Ballo will face China's Yang Ziang Shong while Japan's sole finalist will take on Peter Wanyoike of Kenya.

Another Indonesian, Rahman Kikiiki, will fight Thailand's Pramuanak in the flyweight division. James Swan of Australia faces Wichai Khadpo of Thailand in the bantamweight, and two Thais — Somchuk Kamsing and Pongsit Wiangviset — do battle in the featherweight.

In the lightweight division, it will be James Stanley of Australia against Lhagva Dugarbaatar of Mongolia and the light-welterweight class will be a clash between Mongolian Munkhaikhan Namjil and T Kalimov of Kazakhstan.

Conchita in qtrs

DELRAY BEACH, Florida, Mar 10: For the second consecutive day, Conchita Martinez battled the elements as well as her opponent as she advanced Thursday to the quarterfinals of the Delray Beach Winter Championships, reports AP.

Martinez, the second seed, prevailed in the gusting 25-mph (40-kmph) winds with a 6-0, 6-2 victory over Canadian qualifier Jana Nejedly.

On Wednesday, Martinez endured a four-hour rain delay before completing another 6-0, 6-2 rout over Catalina Cristea of Romania.

"It was cold," said Martinez, the first Spanish woman to win Wimbledon. "But once I was out there running, it wasn't so bad."

Earlier, Anke Huber, the third seed, beat Angelica Gavaldon of Mexico, 6-2, 7-5 to join two other Germans in the final eight, including top-seeded Steffi Graf and 12th-seed Barbara Rittner, all bunched in the top half of the draw.

Martinez breezed through a 22-minute, 6-0 first set and trailed 1-2 in the second before feeling off the last five games to complete the 50-minute wipeout.

Baggio back in his boots

ROME, Mar 10: Roberto Baggio is back.

The ponytailed playmaker saw his first action in over three months Wednesday and set up the goal in Juventus' 1-0 win over Lazio in an Italian Cup semifinal tie, reports AP.

Baggio will return to Italian First Division play in Sunday's 23rd round, which sees leaders Juventus hosting struggling Foggia while second-place AC Parma take on sixth-place Sampdoria.

The 1993 Golden Ball award winner last appeared in

a league match on Nov 27 against Padova, when he suffered a right knee injury that has sidelined him until now.

He's been hampered by injuries since before the World Cup last year, but on Wednesday showed strong signs of returning to the form that brought Italy five goals in three matches en route to the final against champions Brazil.

The feed that allowed fellow forward Fabrizio Revanelli to mark the winner against Lazio

was vintage Baggio: a freeing pass perfectly struck, created from nothing.

If Baggio can click with Ravanelli, Gianluca Vialli and Alessandro Del Piero, Juve have a realistic shot at becoming the first Italian club to win three titles in a year: the league, the Italian Cup and the UEFA Cup.

That's because the defence, particularly goalkeeper Angelo Perruzzi, has been spectacular of late. Perruzzi has allowed just one goal — on a penalty kick, against Brescia — in the second half of the season.

Against Foggia, however, the backfield will be deprived of German defender Jurgen Kohler, out suspended. Midfielder Giancarlo Marocchi is also disqualified from the match.

Foggia, who reached eighth place after the 14th round, have since lost five of eight matches and dropped to 14th in the 18-team league. They have been outscored 14-5 in that span, with just one goal in the last five games.

Striker Pierpaolo Bresciani, whose six goals lead the club, keys the attack and has failed to capitalise on scoring opportunities of late.

Parma, who trail Juventus by four points in the standings, will need to contain Dutch striker Ruud Gullit if they are to keep the pressure on the Turin side. Gullit scored twice in Samp's 3-0 defeat of AS Roma last round.

The Genoese side will be without stopper Riccardo Ferri, who injured his ankle during practice on Wednesday.

Shilton set for a comeback

LONDON, Mar 10: Former England international goalkeeper Peter Shilton is set for a dramatic return to football's big time with English League Cup finalists Bolton, reports AFP.

The Sun newspaper revealed the 45-year-old keeper would be signed by the First Division side for the remainder of the 1994-95 season. Bolton manager Bruce Rioch reportedly had talks with Shilton on Thursday.

Shilton, who played for England in the 1990 World Cup semifinal, said: "I am not walking straight into the first team but Bruce wants me to compete for the top place."

Jordan to be a Bull again?

CHICAGO, Mar 10: Michael Jordan, estranged from the sport he adopted, is returning to the game he once ruled, a source told The Associated Press on Thursday night.

Jordan practiced again with the Chicago Bulls on Thursday, the third straight day he appeared at team headquarters, and will shortly trade in his baseball spikes for a new pair of Air Jordan basketball shoes.

A source close to Jordan, speaking on the condition he not be identified, said the three-time MVP has already made the decision to return to the NBA.

He's coming back, but he's in no hurry to get there, the source said. "He's going to take a couple of weeks to tune up."

Jordan retired suddenly only a few days before the start of the 1992-93 season. Though he has stayed in shape playing baseball, he "wants to make sure he's near the top of his game," the source said.

The ESPN cable television network also reported Thursday night that Jordan is returning. The network, citing a "reliable" but unidentified source, said he will come back, but not for a couple of weeks. ESPN said Jordan is intent on being in good shape and wants to discuss the future of the Bulls with team management.

Earlier Thursday, Bulls coach Phil Jackson talked about the prospect of Jordan's return.

After the Bulls' two-hour practice, Jordan drove off in his Range Rover without comment. And spokesmen for the Bulls, the Chicago White Sox, and Jordan's agent said no announcement was forthcoming.

Jackson said the distraction of Jordan's possible return made it tough for the Bulls to remain focused, but might help energize a lethargic team.

Jordan, 32, led the Bulls to NBA titles in 1991, 1992 and 1993. He then shocked the sports world on Oct 6, 1993, retiring with a 32.3-point scoring average, the best in

league history. Jordan said he had "reached the pinnacle," had nothing left to prove and just wanted to "watch the grass grow."

Rather than kicking back, however, Jordan provided another surprise a few months later when he announced he'd try to play baseball with the White Sox, who are owned by Bulls owner Jerry Reinsdorf.

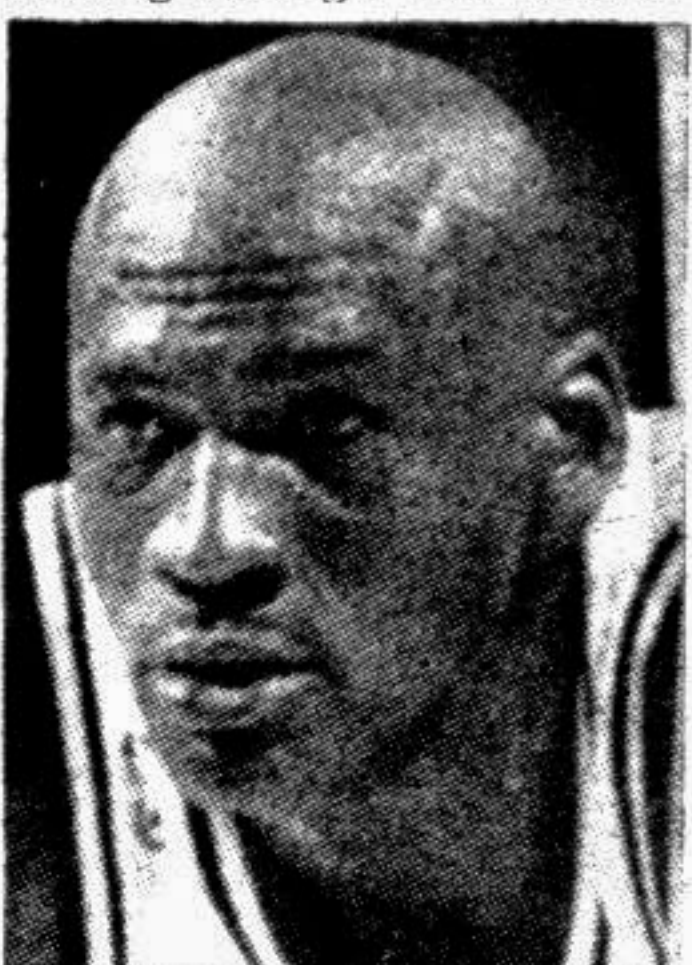
Jordan, who hadn't played baseball since high school, batted a low .202 at the Double-A Birmingham minor league team last season. He went to spring training hoping to move up to Triple-A Nashville this season, but the major league players' strike left him in limbo and he returned to Chicago.

He missed one deadline for reporting to minor league camp in Sarasota, Florida. General manager Ron Schueler said Thursday that if Jordan didn't report by Saturday,

Jordan, who practiced with the Bulls a few times before spring training without drawing much attention, showed up Tuesday and watched films with Jackson and the other coaches.

Jordan then worked out with the team Wednesday and Thursday.

Jordan, whose number 23 has been retired and who has been honoured by a statue outside the new United Centre, was the first player on the court Thursday morning.



MICHAEL JORDAN

Hide stands in Bowe's way

LAS VEGAS, Mar 10: Riddick Bowe, ranked about being unranked by the three leading boxing governing bodies, will bid for the heavyweight title of the

WBO when he challenges Herbie Hide of Britain on Saturday night, reports AP.

The 12-round fight at the MGM Grand Garden will be a feather in the WBO's cap. It should give the organization a shot of credibility.

What Bowe really wants, however, is acceptance from the public as being the best heavyweight in the world. The WBO title is just something to strive for while he awaits bigger and better things — such as a fight with Mike Tyson.

Although Bowe has lost only once, on a majority decision in a rematch with Evander Holyfield on Nov 6, 1993, the former undisputed champion is not ranked in the top 10 by the IBF, WBA or WBC.

Rock Newman Bowe's manager, has said some unkind things about all three groups, and Bowe angered the WBC by throwing its belt into a trash can when it said it was going to strip him for not signing for a mandatory defence against Lennox Lewis.

Lewis, who has not fought since losing the WBC title to McCall last Sept 24 at London, is ranked in the top 10 by all three groups. Michael Moorer, who has not fought since losing the IBF and WBA titles to George Foreman, is ranked in the top 10 by the IBF and WBA.

The WBA has just withdrawn championship recognition from Foreman for not signing to make a mandatory defence against Tony Tucker.

HBO, which will televise the fight, is billing it only as a

heavyweight match, not as a championship bout.

Hide, a 23-year-old native of Nigeria who grew up in England, considers himself every inch a champion.

"I beat Michael Bentt, who beat Tommy Morrison, who beat George Foreman," he said. He does acknowledge, however, that more is at stake for him Saturday night than just a title.

Bowe was a 6-1 favourite, despite Hide's 26-0 record, with 25 knockouts.

It will be only the third fight for Bowe, 35-1 with 29 knockouts, since he lost to Holyfield. On Aug 13 at Atlantic City, Bowe hit Buster Mathis Jr while Mathis was down in the fourth round, but instead of disqualifying Bowe the New Jersey commission ruled the bout a no-contest. In his last fight, Bowe scored a 12-round decision over Larry Donald on Dec 3 at Las Vegas.

Hide hasn't fought since winning the WBO title on a seventh-round knockout of Bentt on March 19 at London. He was supposed to fight Morrison at Hong Kong in October, but that fight was canceled because of financial problems.

This will be Hide's first fight in the United States.

Bowe is getting \$1 million, but should he win, he will get \$10 million to fight Jorge Luis Gonzalez, a Cuban living at Las Vegas, on June 17 at the MGM Grand.



Frenchman Laurent Jalabert (L) leader in the overall standings, cruises with his teammate Switzerland's Alex Zülle (R) during the fifth stage of the 62nd Paris-Nice race between Murat and Saint Etienne on March 9. American Lance Armstrong won the stage. — AFP/UNB photo