

Column One DID U' KNOW? (The Professor does) HAT the term 'popping crease' originated in the 17th and early 18th century when a small hole used to be dug in front of the stumps, instead of the line that is drawn these days. To score a run, a batsman had to put the bat into the hole before the keeper or a fielder could drop the ball in it. In 1744, a distance of 46 inches between the bowling and the popping creases, came to centre, was laid down. This was representative of the old English unit of cloth. In the 1819 modification of Laws, this was increased to 58 inches as it stands to the present day.

SPORTS TALK



Arjuna Ranatunga (Sri Lanka captain) 'Whether we win or lose, it is the best thing that has happened to Sri Lanka sport.' Quoted on the eve of Sri Lanka's World Cup final against Australia.

SPORTS WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Sports WHIZZ KID competition-30

Tick the Correct Answer (Competition closes: 8 p.m. Mar 22, 1996)

- 1. How many wickets did West Indian fast bowler Curtly Ambrose take in the World Cup '96? 8 wickets 10 wickets 12 wickets

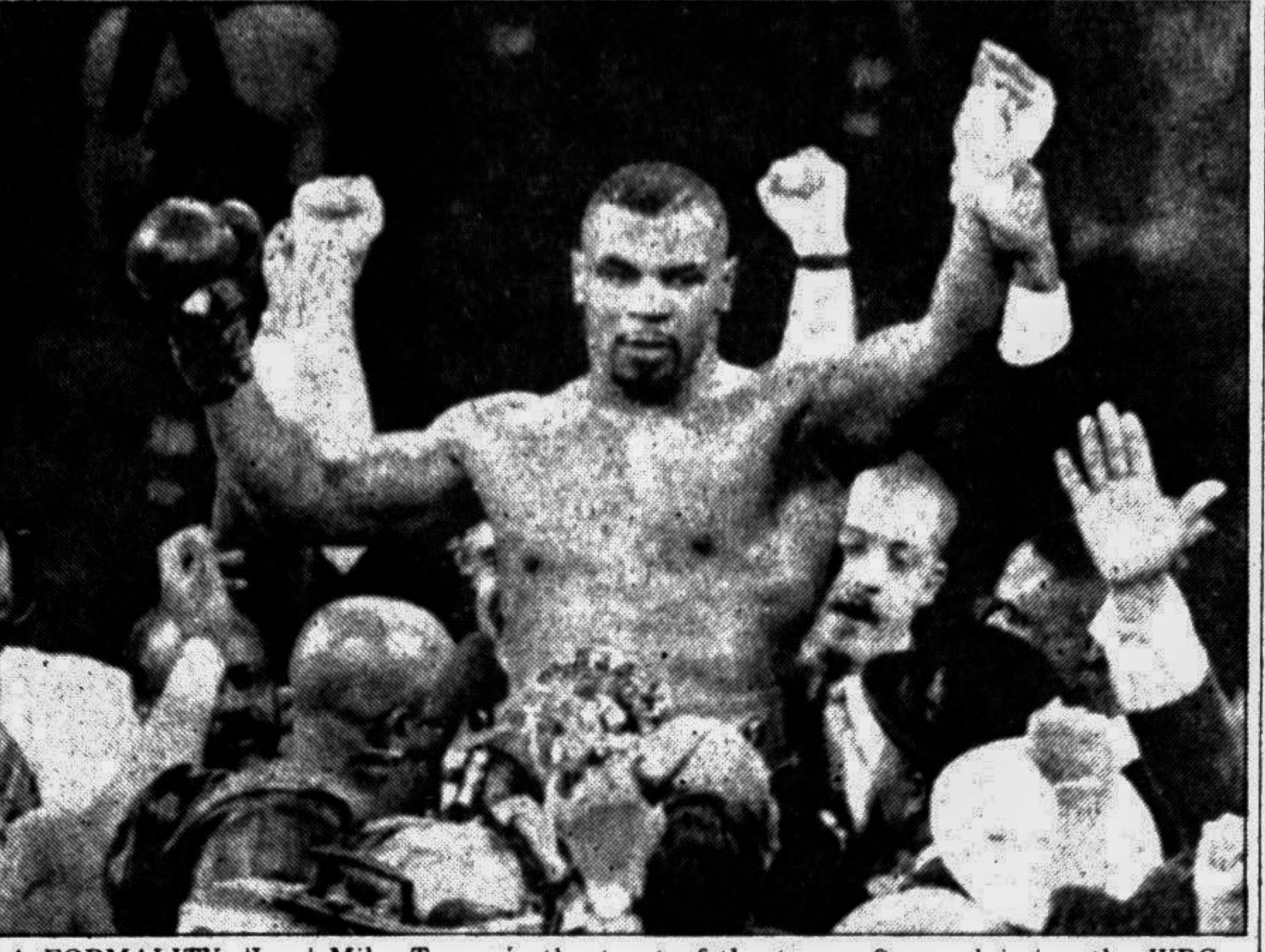
Name: Roll No: School Address: Phone: (if any)

Hamed too hot to handle

GLASGOW, Scotland, Mar 17: Britain's Naseem Hamed retained his WBO featherweight title Saturday, stopping Luis Lawal in just 31 seconds in the first round, reports AP. The 22-year-old Briton knocked Lawal after about five seconds with the first right and he threw, and then knocked him down again with another right hand just a few seconds later as the fight was topped.

Holmes wins WBC crown

LAS VEGAS, Mar 17: Keith Holmes needed only one punch to turn a tactical fight into a smashing championship win, reports AP. Holmes used a devastating right hand in the ninth round Saturday night to upset Quincy Taylor and win the WBC middleweight championship in his first bid for a professional title. The ninth-ranked contender was narrowly ahead on the cards of the three ringside judges when he threw a right hand counter that put Taylor on the canvas for the first knockdown of the fight. Taylor, 160 pounds (72.6 kilos), got up but was shaky and Holmes went right after him, landing a succession of head punches that prompted referee Richard Steele to step in and stop the fight at 1:43 of the ninth round. The fight was on the undercard of Frank Bruno's WBC heavyweight title defense against former champion Mike Tyson at the MGM Grand hotel. Until the knockdown, the two left-handed middleweights had fought a cautious and tactical fight as Taylor tried to defend for the first time the 160-pound crown he won last August 19 by stopping Julian Jackson.



A FORMALITY: 'Iron' Mike Tyson is the toast of the town after reclaiming the WBC heavyweight crown from Frank Bruno in Las Vegas on March 16. Tyson tamed Bruno with a technical knock-out in the third round. — AFP/UNB photo

Tyson brings belt back

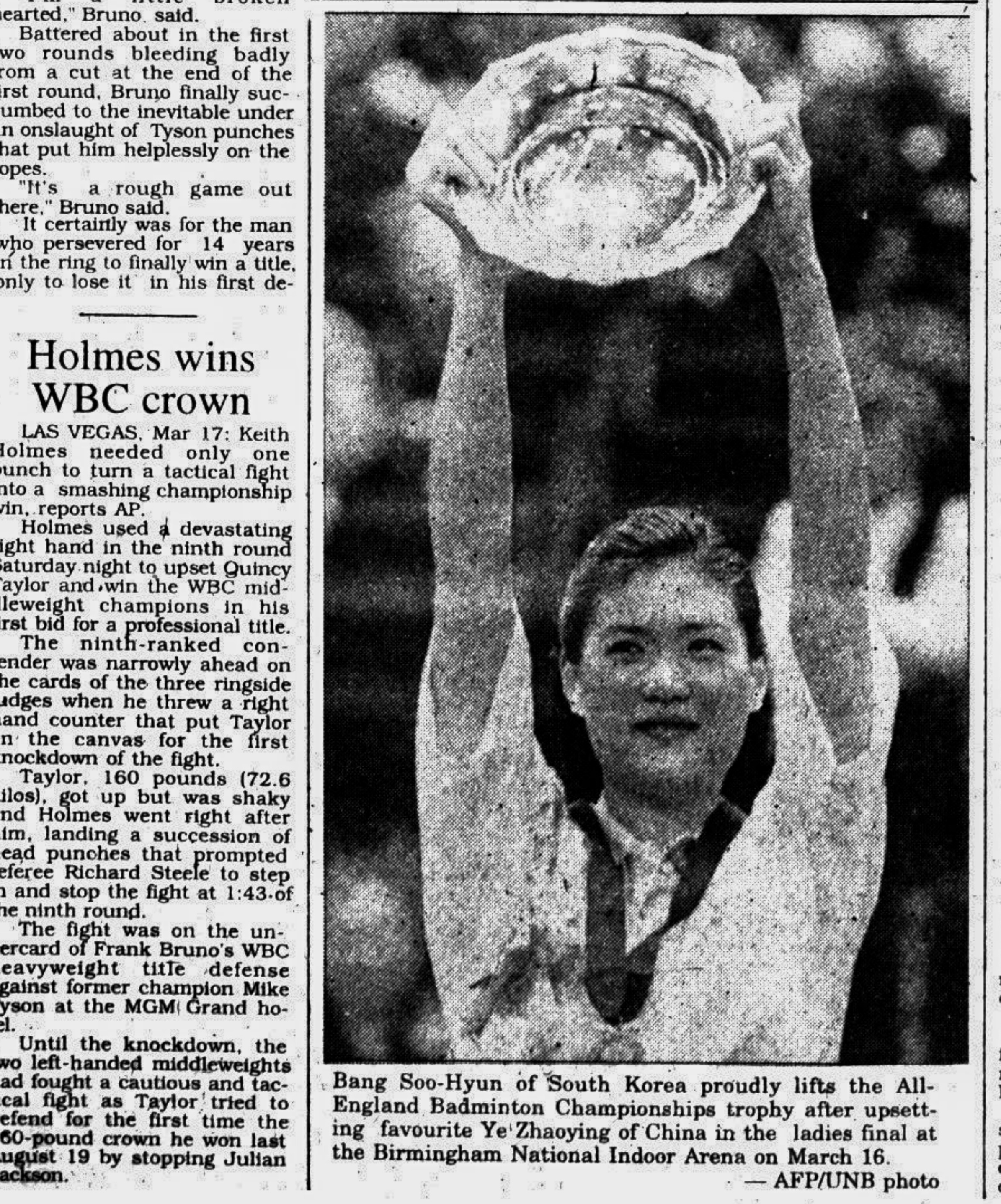
LAS VEGAS, Mar 17: Iron Mike Tyson got a piece of his undisputed heavyweight championship back Saturday night by stopping Frank Bruno in the third round before a roaring crowd of more than 16,000 at the MGM Grand Garden, reports AP. Five-thousand British fans had roared 'Bruno! Bruno! Bruno!' before the opening bell. But Tyson quickly silenced them as he dominated the defending WBC champion from Britain. 'It's my time,' Bruno had said. But from the opening seconds, it was Tyson's time and when it was over, he threw up his arms and fell to his knees. The end came with Bruno sitting on the lower strand of ropes after a tremendous Tyson barrage. Referee Mills Lane called a halt at 50 seconds of the third round. 'I'm a ferocious fighter,' Tyson said before the match, and while he was often wild in only his third bout of a comeback that started last Aug 19, he was too much tiger for the 34-year-old Bruno. Bruno had said he didn't think Tyson was nearly the same fighter he met Feb 28, 1989 when Tyson won the undisputed championship. But in that fight, Bruno had rocked Tyson and put up a good scrap until being overwhelmed in the fifth round. Saturday night, Bruno hardly landed any effective punches and was in trouble almost from the outset. Tyson landed a right to the head followed by a left-right to the head late in the first round, and Bruno was cut over the left eye. In the second round, Tyson shook Bruno with a hook and then a right hook. He wobbled him again with a three-punch combo just before the bell. Bruno was penalised a point by Lane for continuing to hold. 'Because he knew he was going to get knocked out,' Tyson said. The end came in the third round when the 220-pound (100-kilogram) Tyson wobbled Bruno with a left hook to the head. Tyson followed with an 11-punch barrage and landed eight of them. Bruno sank against the ropes, with the ropes holding him up. Lane didn't bother to count and merely reached down to remove Bruno's mouthpiece. At the end, Tyson went to Bruno and put his arms around him. It was Tyson's first championship fight since he lost the undisputed title on a 10th-round knockout to Buster Douglas on Feb 11, 1990. He fought four times after that fight but then had to serve a 3-year prison term after being convicted for rape. He was released from prison last March 25.

Carbajal captures IBF title

LAS VEGAS, Mar 17: Michael Carbajal won the vacant International Boxing Federation junior flyweight championship with a unanimous 12-round decision over Mexican Melchor Cob-Castro on Saturday, reports Reuters. There were no knockdowns in the fight, which Carbajal dominated, with harder combinations and excellent defence. The three ringside judges scored the bout 115-113, 117-111 and 116-112 for the American. 'I kept the pressure on him all night,' Carbajal said. 'I finally won a decision. I feel great. I'm tired, but I'm happy.' Asked what his next goals were, Carbajal said: 'I want to fight everybody. I want to unify the titles. I'm bringing the belt back to Phoenix.'

Some solace for Bruno

LAS VEGAS, Mar 17: The end that even Frank Bruno's most ardent fans feared, came sooner than most thought, before their man ever loosened up enough to throw a good punch, reports AP. Six minutes and 50 seconds of battle ended with the unusual sight of Tyson leaning over Bruno on one side in his corner, consoling him while his wife, Laura, did likewise from the other side on the ring apron. The thousands of British fans who travelled so far to see so little stood in stunned silence, trying to comprehend how the man who held the heavyweight championship could do so little after training so hard. 'I'm a little broken hearted,' Bruno said. Battered about in the first two rounds bleeding badly from a cut at the end of the first round, Bruno finally succumbed to the inevitable under an onslaught of Tyson punches that put him helplessly on the ropes. 'It's a rough game out there,' Bruno said. 'It certainly was for the man who persevered for 14 years in the ring to finally win a title, only to lose it in his first defeat against a man he had gone five rounds with before losing seven years ago. Aside from a few left jabs, Bruno barely laid a glove on Tyson. His best weapon was to graze on and hold, and even that didn't work when referee Mills Lane penalized him in the second round. 'I was trying to use my weight against him, lean on him,' Bruno said. 'He was just too fast. He got away from me.' Bruno had gone into the fight a 5-1 underdog, down from 10-1, as money from his British fans poured into the sports book at the MGM Grand Hotel in the hours before the fight. But from the opening bell it was clear that this was the Bruno who lost three title fights before finally winning against Oliver McCall last September in a modest upset. The same stiff, unbending fighter who ran out of gas in so many fights was back, but not for long against the most feared fighter of his time. By the end of the first round, with Bruno bleeding in his corner, the outcome was all but certain. When he was battered again in the second round, the only question was how much longer it would last. Fifty seconds more to be exact, ending with Bruno half sitting on the second strand of the four-strand ring ropes, the only thing holding him up. Lane moved in and stopped the fight, more to Bruno's relief than anything. 'I tried my best,' Bruno said. 'Tyson is a little better than I thought.'



Bang Soo-Hyun of South Korea proudly lifts the All-England Badminton Championships trophy after upsetting favourite Ye Zhaoying of China in the ladies final at the Birmingham National Indoor Arena on March 16. — AFP/UNB photo

Aussie-World XI tie Thursday

MELBOURNE, Mar 17: Sri Lankan batsman Sanath Jayasuriya, fast bowler Chaminda Vaas and Pakistan leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed were today added to the World XI to play Australia in a one-day match here Thursday, reports AP. The final World XI team will be chosen from 13 players this week as several members have still not confirmed their availability to the Victorian Cricket Association. The match marks the VCA's centenary year. The organisers have had difficulty selecting a World XI side due to the uncertainty over commitment after the World Cup. They had been hoping to attract the batsmen, Sachin Tendulkar of India and West Indian Brian Lara. However, the duo have other engagements. West Indies skipper Richie Richardson is likely to be the World XI skipper. SQUAD (Probable) Richie Richardson (captain - West Indies), Mushtaq Ahmed (Pakistan), Martin Crowe (New Zealand), Aravinda de Silva (Sri Lanka), Dean Jones (Australia), Romesh Kaluwitharana (Sri Lanka), Sanath Jayasuriya (Sri Lanka), Shaun Pollock (South Africa), Jonty Rhodes (South Africa), Heath Streak (Zimbabwe), Paul Strang (Zimbabwe), Chaminda Vaas (Sri Lanka), Waqar Younis (Pakistan).

South Africans looking forward to England '99

KARACHI, March 17: South Africa are already looking at ways to do better at the next World Cup after being knocked out of the current tournament by West Indies on Monday last, reports Reuters. Coach Bob Woolmer said: 'We will go back to the drawing board and learn from this World Cup and plan for the next one.' The South Africans, who won all five Group B matches, lost to West Indies by 19 runs in Monday's quarterfinal. 'We can't sit still. It was disappointing losing but we've got to look down the road now,' Woolmer said. He has been given plenty of opportunity to do so during the coming 12 months, with nine Tests and 24 one-day internationals scheduled. The next World Cup is in England in 1999. South Africa's captain Hansie Cronje was quick to admit, too, his team could benefit from their experience during the past four weeks. 'We certainly learnt a lot here,' he said. Yet both Cronje and Woolmer can be encouraged by the fact that their relatively youthful squad made a major impact at this tournament enhancing their growing reputation in limited-overs cricket. At the last World cup in Australia and New Zealand four years ago, South Africa rode a late emotion to reach the semifinals on their return to international competition after more than two decades of apartheid-enforced isolation. They were denied the chance to snatch a place in the final on their Cup debut by controversial rules for rain-interrupted games, and it was England who went through. South Africa's subsequent one-day form was chequered, and they arrived on the subcontinent for this tournament having lost more limited-overs internationals than they had won. However, their 6-1 trouncing of England in a one-day series at home in January and then the five successive group wins in this World Cup turned that statistics around - and, more importantly gave the side a new-found confidence.

Bang dashes Ye's hopes

BIRMINGHAM, England, Mar 17: World champion Ye Zhaoying was routed 11-1, 11-1 by old adversary Bang Soo-Hyun of South Korea in the All-England badminton championships women's final on Saturday, reports Reuters. Bang, twice a runner-up in the All-England and a silver medalist at the 1992 Olympics and the 1993 World Championships, was delighted to put the loser's tag behind her. She was in excellent touch on Saturday, adding the scalp of China's Ye to that of Susi Susanti, her semifinal victim. But Ye, the world number one, hardly helped her cause in an embarrassing 20 minutes, making a succession of unforced errors. It was a big disappointment for an enthusiastic 5,000-strong crowd on a showpiece day. The fans had already seen three somewhat one-sided finals, in sharp contrast to some entertaining fare on the first three days. Said Bang: 'Over the years my matches with Ye have been about 50-50. I think today was different because I had gained confidence from beating Susanti last night. 'At the beginning of the first game today Ye made a few mistakes and that also gave me confidence.' But Bang beaten in the 1993 final by Susanti, confessed that Friday's victory was more satisfying because she had lost to her many times. Ye, known as the cat for her stealth-like on-court qualities, punching swift and hard, declined to comment after her defeat.

Gritty Graf back in style

INDIAN WELLS, California, Mar 17: Steffi Graf, playing her first tournament in four months, came from behind in two tiebreakers Saturday to beat Conchita Martinez on a sweltering afternoon and win the State Farm Evert Cup, reports AP. Graf, who had bone spurs removed from her left foot on Dec 15, took a 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (7-5) victory over Martinez as temperatures topped 110 degrees countryside. A young ball boy fainted about 30 minutes into the match, but he was fine after being taken out of the heat. In the men's Newsweek Champions Cup, also played this week at the Hyatt Grand Champions resort, Michael Chang and Paul Haarhuis won their matches Saturday to move into Sunday's finals. Chang, at No. 5 the highest seed left in the tournament, defeated Marcelo Rios 7-6 (8-

6), 6-3. Haarhuis, who made it to the semis with a victory over Pete Sampras, beat Goran Ivanisevic 6-2, 7-6 (8-6). Graf, who shares the world No. 1 ranking with Monica Seles, trailed Martinez 4-2 in the first-set tiebreaker before winning five of the next six points. In the second set, when the heat contributed to five straight service breaks at one stretch, Graf fell behind 5-2 in the tiebreaker. But she, then served an ace, one of only five for her in the match. Graf went on to win when Martinez double-faulted on the 10th point, hit into the net on the 11th, then hit her return wide on Graf's final serve. Graf made 53 unforced errors to 42 by Martinez. However, Graf was able to turn it up a notch after she fell behind in the tiebreakers. 'I think we both didn't play our best tennis. That was pretty obvious,' Graf said. 'Obviously the heat was a big factor, but still...



NOTHING STOPS STEFFI: World number one Steffi Graf shows the audience the Evert Cup she won beating Spaniard Conchita Martinez in the final in Indian Wells, California, on Mar 16. Neither family crisis nor bad back could bar the gritty German in triumph over Conchita. — AFP/UNB photo

'I felt tentative on quite a few points and also the way I started the tiebreak. I was not going for the shots. When I was down 5-2 (in the second tiebreaker), I just relaxed and hit an ace. I started to be more offensive and she helped me on the last points.'

Secret behind their success!

NEW DELHI, Mar 17: It has been tense out in the middle during World Cup matches, but Australia found one way of coping with the pressure — they chewed more gum than anyone else in the 12-team tournament, reports Reuters. 'The Australian team by far has been consuming the maximum chewing gum,' AK Dhillon, general manager of the tournament's official chewing gum supplier, told the Times of India. 'We have been having a hard time supplying the stuff to them,' he added. The newspaper said Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne was the 'biggest chewer of gum' with West Indians Brian Lara and Richie Richardson not far behind.

Three cheers for the grounds men

LAHORE, Pakistan, Mar 17: Frantic work by groundstaff to help dry outfield enabled the World Cup final between Australia and Sri Lanka to start on time today, reports Reuters. There were several damp patches on the outfield at the Gaddafi stadium following heavy overnight rain, prompting those familiar with local drying conditions to predict the scheduled 2.30 pm start would have to be put back. However, the game started on schedule after an inspection by match referee Clive Lloyd. The pitch, the same one which yielded more than 500 runs during the Pakistan v New Zealand group match on March 6, looked dry enough, although conditions were forecast to remain overcast for most of the day. A local holiday has been declared in Lahore for the match and Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was expected to be among the 28,500 capacity crowd. Local newspapers predicted most of the support would be for the Sri Lankan team, adding it was 'entirely possible Sri Lanka may pull off what will be the mother of all upsets.'

Saudis harbour a hope

KUALA LUMPUR, Mar 17: Saudi Arabia will be gunning for Olympic glory Sunday, confident that they will be one of the three nations to represent Asia in Atlanta, reports AP. Coached by Ivo Wortmann, a Brazilian who has worked for most of the last decade in the Gulf, the team will be going against the usual attacking, carefree nature of typical Saudi football when they play South Korea in the Group B match here Sunday. But the fact that the Saudis are suppressing their natural attacking instincts is not something that disturbs Wortmann. 'My idea about football is, that when we have the ball we must attack and when we lose the ball, we have to get as many players as possible into defence,' he said. 'If you play defensively you bring the other team into your half. I like my team to close the space when we lose the ball and open up when we are in possession.' For a team to work so hard in overcoming what comes naturally, discipline is important and Wortmann is convinced that the players' attitude is perfect for the job. However, the same could

not be said of one former squad member, Lureh away from Wortmann's straight and narrow path by temptation off the football field. Striker and World Cup star Fahd al Ghashayyan, one of the rising stars of Arab football is missing from the squad. Officials, including Wortmann, will only say he is out due to disciplinary matters. The loss of Al Ghashayyan is a big blow for Wortmann who is worried about the first game against the Koreans. 'There could be some surprises and surprises are dangerous in football,' said Wortmann. The Saudis and the Koreans are expected to play a cautious

game in their opening match. The Koreans are without midfielder Go Jong-Su, a dynamic 17-year-old who was unable to join the team due to a skin disease. Kazakhstan, the dark horse in the Asian Olympic qualifying finals here, are hoping for a draw from China in the other Group B match Sunday. Even with the presence of top striker Oleg Livenko, who scored 10 out of Kazakhstan's 19 goals in the pre-qualifying rounds, team officials admit it would be difficult to break through the Chinese defence. 'At best, we hope to snatch at least one goal,' said Kazakhstan's team promoter S Hamida. China will probably have first-choice keeper Sun Gang and a very experienced defence in Xiao Jian, Zhang Enhua, Liu Yue and Zhu Qi. The four have all made 10 or more appearances for the Chinese Olympic side. The Chinese camp has been shrouded in secrecy as the management has declined to speak to the press until after the first round of matches. Kazakhstan eased through qualification in a group which featured one of Asia's top footballing nations — Uzbekistan, winners of the 1994 Asian Games gold medal in Japan.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer. Includes crossword puzzle grid and solutions for ACROSS and DOWN words.