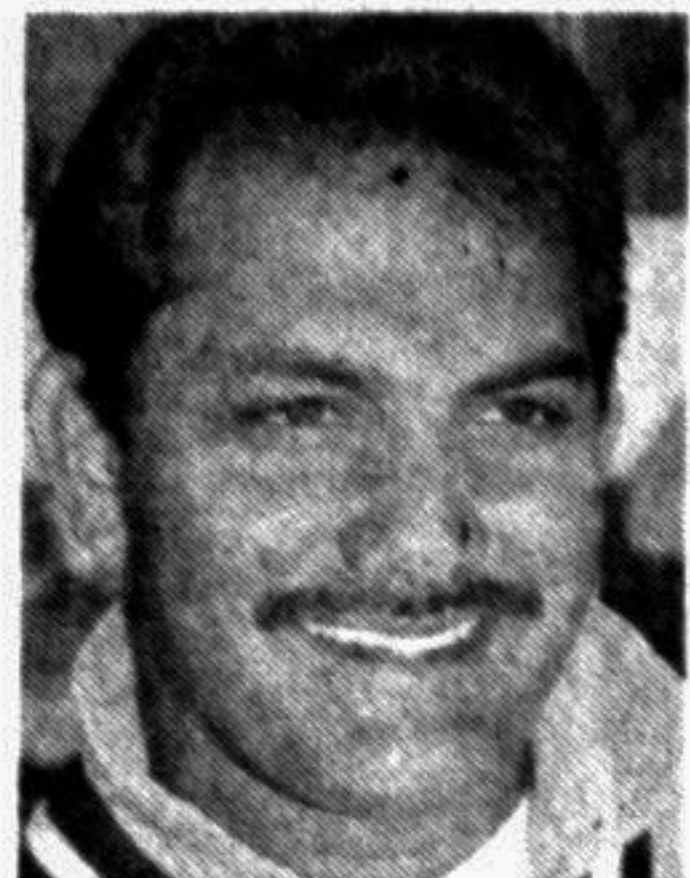


Column One
SPORTS TALK



Md Azharuddin
(Indian Test captain)
They (the South Africans) were the best team on view here in Sharjah. Both the Indian and Pakistani teams can learn a lot from their dedication towards the job at hand.

DID U' KNOW?
(The Professor does)

THAT because sportsmen have to do a lot of travelling to venues hosting international competitions, particularly after the advent of commercial air travel, there have been major tragedies that have evoked public grief.

On February 6, 1958 the famous Manchester United football team was returning home from a European Cup tie in Yugoslavia. After a stopover in Munich their plane tried to take off in snowy conditions but plunged into fields surrounding the airport, killing forty four people, including seven of the team. Another player died shortly after from injuries received in the crash.

Nine years earlier, the entire Italian national football squad plus most of the famous Torino team died in an air crash. In 1961, the entire US ice skating team was killed in an air crash en route to Czechoslovakia.

Twenty years later, the entire US boxing team died in an air crash in Warsaw. Teams travelling together can get engrossed in revelry. So, one has to be extra careful, always.

Sports WHIZZ KID
COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Sports WHIZZ KID
competition-35

✓ Tick the Correct Answers

(Competition closes: 8 p.m. April 26, 1996)

1. Who won the Pepsi Cup at Sharjah in 1995?	Pakistan	India	South Africa
2. Bayern is a football team from which country?	Germany	France	Italy
3. Which of these is most modern?	Football	Cricket	Basketball
4. The swimming event combining all strokes is:	Medley	Freestyle	Composite
5. A healthy diet means more:	Exercise	Sweets	Fats

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

Zolkin Bowe's next foe

NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana, Apr. 20: Riddick Bowe has come here to begin preparations for a fight within the next three months even as the jumbled heavyweight boxing world title picture becomes clearer, reports AFP.

Bowe plans to fight Russia's Alexander Zolkin in June or July. He has come here to work with nutrition expert Mackie Shiltone, who will keep the overweight fighter on a strict vegetarian diet.

Bowe has not fought since knocking out Evander Holyfield last November.

A Bowe-Zolkin bout could be on the card with World Boxing Council champion Mike Tyson's planned title fight July 13 against World Boxing Association champion Bruce Seldon in Las Vegas.

Tyson might not be able to put the WBC crown up for grabs because Britain's Lennox Lewis has won a court judgement saying he must be the next to fight for that crown.

A court has also ruled against South Africa's Farns Botha in his bid to block the International Boxing Federation from staging a title bout without him. He was stripped of the IBF title after testing positive for steroids.

The vacant IBF crown will go to the winner of a June 22 fight in Berlin between Germany's Axel Schulz and American veteran Michael Moorer, who was champion until being knocked out by George Foreman.

Sampras survives toughie

TOKYO, Apr. 20: Pete Sampras defended his world number one ranking by fending off the challenge from Mark Woodforde of Australia today to reach the final of the Japan Open, reports AFP.

The American, who regained the top spot by winning at Hong Kong last weekend, stood firm in his service games to take a 7-6(7/5), 6-4 victory over the doubles specialist.

Clay court specialist Thomas Muster of Austria, who is playing in Barcelona, would have had a chance to regain the number one ranking if Sampras had lost the semifinal.

"Each time I played him, he does give me problems, especially his change of pace from his heavy top spin forehand to hit a very low slice," Sampras said of his match against Woodforde.

"He doesn't have a big weapon, but he does everything really well, he's a crafty, good solid player, he doesn't give you a rhythm out there."

Woodforde won two points on Sampras' serve in the crucial tie-breaker to lead 5-4, but the American broke back on the following two points and took the set with a free point on his serve.

"It was a big moment in the match," Sampras said of the tie-breaker. "The big point was the first point. He hit a couple of overheads that he could have got up an early mini-break, and he did give me a gift on the set point. He missed an easy return."

The Australian tenaciously staved off five break points throughout the match, but Sampras used his hard-hit forehand to force woodforde a backhand error to score the only break in the seventh game and held onto the victory.

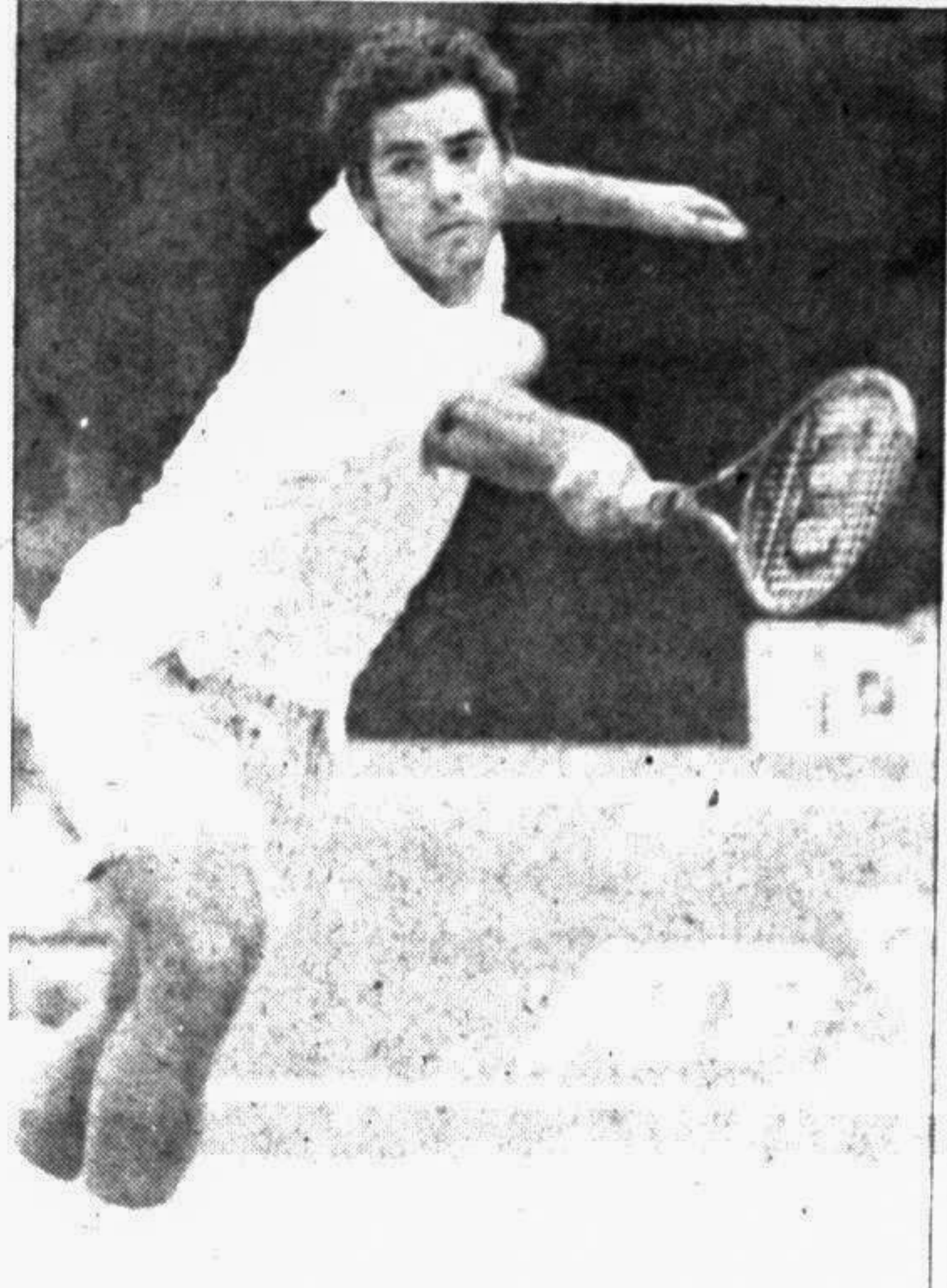
Richey Reneberg, who upset fellow American Michael Chang in the quarter-finals Friday, made it an all-American final beating Hendrik Dreekmann of Germany 3-6, 6-4, 7-6(7/4).

Reneberg, ranked 63rd against Dreekmann's 79th ranking, squandered one match point leading 5-4 and 40-30 in the final set, but broke the German's serve twice to get ahead 6-3 in the crucial tie-breaker before serving out for the match on the third match point.

It was sweet revenge for the American, who bowed to the German in the 1994 French Open third round in their first encounter.

In the women's singles action, defending champion Amy Frazier booked a final place against local favourite Kimiko Date for a re-match of last year's final.

The American, who stopped Date's fourth straight Japan title last year, squandered two match points in the second-set tie-breaker — one on a double fault — before prevailing over Japan's Naoko Kijimuta 6-3, 6-7(7/9), 6-1.



World No. 1 Pete Sampras of the United States stretches for the ball during his quarterfinal match against Frenchman Guy Forget in the Japan Open in Tokyo on April 19. Sampras won 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Malivai makes the big league

HAMILTON, Bermuda, Apr. 20: Top-seeded Malivai Washington reached his first ATP semi-final of the year when he beat qualifier Bill Behrens 6-3, 6-4 here Friday in an all-American showdown at the ATP Bermuda Open, reports AFP.

Behrens, rated 707th in the world, rallied in three qualifying matches and survived cramps just to make the main draw. He then ousted eighth-seeded Scott Draper of Australia and Swedish Davis Cup player Jan Apell in his first-ever ATP Tour triumph.

Washington now faces another newcomer and qualifier — Mariano Zabaleta, the world's top-ranked junior player last year.

Zabaleta of Argentina beat Germany's Dirk Dier 7-6(7/4), 6-2 to reach the semifinal.

Zabaleta, 18 and the youngest player at the event, has yet to drop a set in the 305,000-dollar event, which plays the champion 43,000 dollars.

Uruguay's Marcelo Filippini also advanced to the last four when he ousted sixth-seed Vincent Spadea of the United States 6-4, 3-6, 6-4. He is now one match away from an eighth career final — the first since last May in Bologna.



Scene from yesterday's qualifying round matches of the Dhaka metropolis chess league at the NSC chess room.

Gays gear up

ATLANTA, Apr. 20: The Olympic torch relay will bypass a suburban county that adopted an anti-gay resolution three years ago, organisers announced Friday, reports AP.

Gay rights activists had threatened demonstrations if Cobb County was included in the torch relay, which begins in Los Angeles on April 27 and concludes in Atlanta on July 19.

"It is our goal to make the torch relay an exciting and memorable experience. We want to focus on the excitement of the event and not be distracted by other issues," the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games said in a statement.

In 1994, ACOG pulled Olympic volleyball competition out of Cobb County because of a furor over the resolution.

Cobb commissioners have refused to rescind the 1993 resolution, which says "lifestyles advocated by the gay community are incompatible with the standards to which this community subscribes."

Bill Byrne, chairman of the county commission, did not immediately return a telephone call seeking comment Friday.

John-Ivan Weaver, co-chairman of the activist group Olympic Out of Cobb, said, "We have worked hard to make sure they uphold the Olympic ideals. Cobb County is not a place that deserves the Olympics."

Most of the torch's route has been announced over the past few months but the final leg in metropolitan Atlanta was not mapped out in Friday's announcement.

Delightful day for oldies

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, Apr. 20: Experience turned out to be an intangible Friday night as three defending champions revalidated their respective titles at the 1996 World Gymnastics Championships, reports AP.

Belarus' Vitaly Scherbo, a five-time Olympic gold medalist in 1992, cruised through the first of his four finals here to win gold in the floor exercise while Youri Chechi, of Italy, the defending ring titlist, nailed his routine at the start of the rotation and no one could keep up to earn his third consecutive rings gold.

In the pommel horse, however, it was North Korea's Gil Su Pae who prevailed over defending champion Donghua Li, of Switzerland. Gil, competing in his first Worlds, won the gold while Li had to settle for silver as only 0.13 separated the top two slots.

For the women, uneven bars defending champion Svetlana Chorkina, of Russia, repeated, but this time she had to share the podium with Belarus' Yelena Piskun, who put together

a routine that included a double full-in, back-out dismount to finish in a tie at 9.875.

Romania's Simona Amanar yielded her top spot in the vault to teammate Gina Gogean, who did not yield an inch in her landing a two and half twist layout on her second vault. Amanar ended up with the silver while Cuba's Annia Portuondo won the first ever medal by a Latin American gymnast at a World Championship.

It was a sour night for the US team as all three of its finalists had mishaps on their respective routines to finish away from the top spots.

Chris LaMorte, a former NCAA rings champion from the University of New Mexico, had a difficult time keeping the rings close to his body and missed two uprisers to finish in seventh place.

"I can't say I'm disappointed," LaMorte, competing in his first Worlds, said. "I accomplished my goal, which was to reach the final and I was just one tenth (of a point) from second place and I didn't stick my dismount."

In the uneven bars, Dominique Dawes, from Silver

Springs, Md., missed her signature twisting release move for the second consecutive night and her arms gave out on an uprise to finish in a disappointing 11th place with a dismal 8.787 showing. Jaycie Phelps, of Greenfield, Ind., finished in eighth place.

"I came here to build a reputation for myself as a consistent gymnast," Phelps, the veteran of the young US team with three Worlds under her belt, said.

For Scherbo, who spent the winter out of the gym and in a hospital room caring for his wife after she had a near-fatal car accident, Friday marked a major step forward for the reigning Olympic all-around champion.

Scherbo didn't return to full-time gymnastics until late February and considering I only had a few weeks to get ready, I feel pretty good about this results," Scherbo added while sipping a beer with a smile.

Scherbo, the defending world champion in the floor exercise and parallel bars, will round out his 1996 Worlds performance in Saturday's vault, parallel bars and high bar finals.

Bad news for Pankratov

LONDON, Apr. 20: World besting times swum by European champion Denis Pankratov cannot be recognised as records because no doping controls were carried out, the International Amateur Swimming Federation (FINA) said on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

Pankratov eclipsed the short-course world marks in the 100 and 200 metres butlerly at a World Cup meeting in Paris, clocking one minute 52.34 seconds in the 200 on February 3 and 51.94 seconds in the 100 the following day.

But a FINA official, speaking by telephone from the federation's headquarters in Lausanne, said the Russian's times could not be recognised as world records because no doping controls had been carried out.

FINA decided last November in a package of anti-doping measures that doping controls should be carried out within 24 hours for a world record to be officially recognised.

Pankratov broke the long-course 100 and 200 metres butterfly records last year and is strong favourite to win both events at the Atlanta Olympics in July.

The short-course 100 butterfly world record remains with Canada's Marcel Gery (52.07) and the 200 butterfly with Frenchman Franck Esposito (1:53.05).

Tinge of a Cuban tragedy

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, Apr. 20: A bronze medal at the 1996 World Gymnastics Championships won't sooze Annia Portuondo's frustration. Knowing that she won't be in Atlanta this summer hurts her too much, reports AP.

"I won't get another chance to prove I'm the best. This is it," the 17-year-old Portuondo said looking at the other gymnasts coming off the floor. "I'm not going to the Olympics."

In a way, Portuondo, like the rest of Cuba's women's team, feels cheated — like an innocent victim of her country's political and economic situation.

"We didn't have enough money to send her to the 1995 World Championships, hence, she couldn't qualify for the Olympics," her coach Rene Sanson said as he consoled his student. "We don't have a lot of money for a lot of things so when it came to choose who was going to go to Japan, two gymnasts from the men's team went."

Unlike other sports, where qualifying for the Olympics is done in several events, the International Gymnastics Federation designated the 1995 World Championships in Sabae, Japan as its one and only Olympic qualifier.

"It's that simple. If you weren't there you aren't going

to Atlanta," Sanson said. "Forget about Annia. What if a gymnast was injured? What if there was any situation that came up? I don't think the system is very fair."

On Thursday, Portuondo qualified second for Friday's vault finals behind reigning world champion Simona Amanar, of Romania. Portuondo's teammate, Yureidis Bermudes Leyva, finished in eighth place on Friday.

Portuondo, a silver medalist in the balance beam and a bronze medalist in the vault at Atlanta, finished ninth here in the floor exercise.

"We have two world-class gymnasts here who won't be in Atlanta. I don't think she has much else to prove, do you?" Sanson asked. "Is it fair to tell them that she can't go just because we didn't have any money to send her? It borders on the ridiculous because there's no question about their talent or ability."

Even though the International Gymnastics Federation holds a wildcard for the Olympic meet, the Cuban Olympic Committee didn't make arrangements for neither Portuondo nor Bermudes to be eligible.

In order for FIG to even consider giving them a wildcard, the Cuban Olympic Committee had to apply for it through the IOC. They never did that," said FIG secretary-general Norman Bueche. "And for gymnastics, the application process is over. It is too late."

In a country where sports is a priority, gymnastics in general — let alone women's gymnastics — has had to take a back seat to baseball, volleyball and boxing.

The Cuban Ministry of Sports has slashed its operating budget each year since that country hosted the 1991 Pan American Games. Jose Fernandez, Cuba's Minister of Sports, said in a recent visit to Puerto Rico.

Papin fails to return home

PARIS, Apr. 20: Bayern Munich's unhappy French striker Jean-Pierre Papin seemed to have failed on Friday in his attempt to negotiate a return to France via the media, reports Reuters.

The French sports daily L'Equipe published an interview on Thursday with the former European player-of-the-year in which he said he hoped to come back to France to play for Montpellier next season.

But Montpellier president Louis Nicollin said he thought any such deal highly unlikely.

"Papin can come here anytime he likes," he said. "On condition, of course, that he's free. But I doubt if Bayern are prepared to grant us such a gift."

"Maybe if he scores a hat-trick in the UEFA Cup final, they will let him go as a reward for good and loyal service but, frankly, I wouldn't expect it."

Bayern recently took out an option to keep the striker for one more season though there have been rumours they would be prepared to let him go if they received a suitable offer.

Aussie Olympic trials begin today
Talbot sets his goals

SYDNEY, Apr. 20: The Australian swimming trials for the Atlanta Olympics get underway here Sunday with national head coach Don Talbot declaring "There's nothing frightening to us," report agencies.

Keen attention will be focused on the times recorded by the leading Australians over the next seven days in the pool that will host the aquatic competition at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Talbot already has the benefit of the recent American and Chinese selection trials to guide him on the relative strength of his team going into the final months of preparation for Atlanta.

Australia, a swimming power in the 1950-60s, have made giant strides in recent years since Kieren Perkins' 1500 metre freestyle gold medal at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

Talbot's team swept through the 1994 Victoria Commonwealth Games capturing 53 medals — 25 of them gold — and followed up weeks later with four golds at the Rome World Championships, a 400-1500m double by Perkins and Samantha Riley's breaststroke double.

A clear indicator that Australia was fast overhauling number one United States came during the Pan Pacific

Championships in Atlanta last August — Australian swimmers claimed 13 golds, just two short of the United States.

Talbot, who has coached with great success in Australia, the United States and Canada, is looking forward to a buoyant series this week.

"The next seven days are going to show us that we are going to be very competitive at the very worst, and may be superior in other things," he said today.

Referring to the American trials in Indianapolis last March and the Chinese championships in Tianjin last month, Talbot said, "I don't think there's anything frightening that's happened at all, and that includes the Chinese girls as well."

"I feel they (China) are ahead of us in some events where we probably can't get to, but as a whole I don't think there isn't anything that we just about cannot do and it depends on how everybody is."

"I believe we're in a very good position for the Atlanta Olympics," he said.

World record holder Perkins will be involved in a three-way fight for two 1500m spots on the Australian roster on the final night next Saturday against Daniel Kowalski and Glenn Housman.

Meanwhile, Australia's world breaststroke champion Samantha Riley, whose preparations for this year's Atlanta

Olympics were disrupted by a positive drug test, said on Friday she had put the controversy behind her.

"A lot of people have been harping about it but I just want to forget about it," the former 100 metres breaststroke world record holder told reporters.

FINA's decision drew scathing criticism from China which has had 19 swimmers banned for doping violations in the last four years.

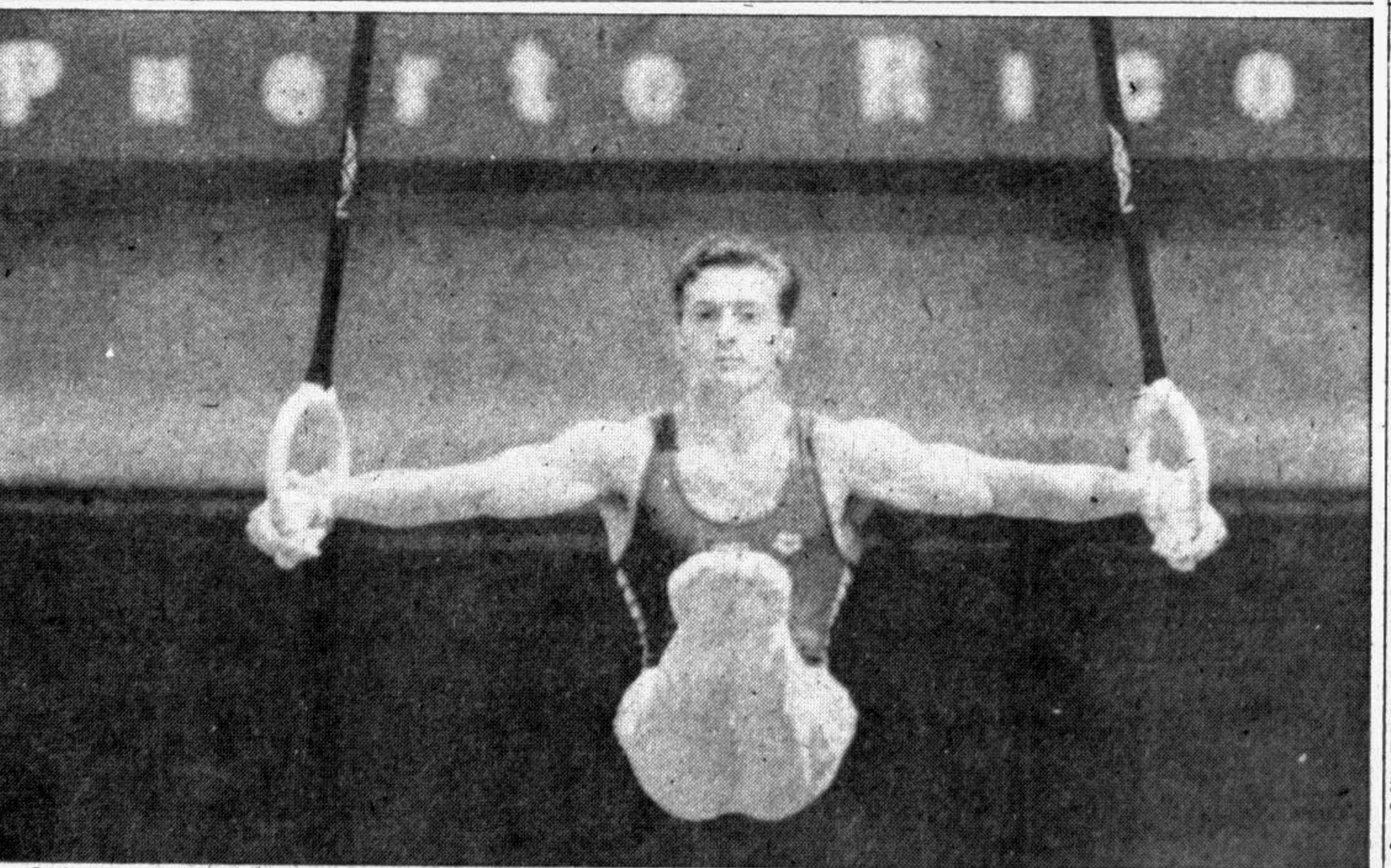
The 23-year-old Riley, who was clearly nervous at a news conference, said she was now concentrating on qualifying for Atlanta at the week-long trials.

Riley, the reigning 100 metres and 200 metres world champion, must beat strong local competition to qualify for the Games.

Riley's main opponents in the 100 metres on Monday will be former world champion Linley Frame and Helen Denman.

In the 200 metres breaststroke on Wednesday, she is expected to be challenged by world record holder Rebecca Brown, Denman and newcomers Nadine Neumann, Brooke Hansoa and Debby Wade.

The top two finishers in each race will qualify for Atlanta, with the added rider that they must clock times that would put them among the eight fastest swimmers in the world this year.



Italy's Yuri Chechi performs on the rings during the World Gymnastics Championships in San Juan, Puerto Rico on April 19. Chechi won the event with a score of 9.825.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Future phalaropes
5 Hall of all parents
6 "Quien"
12 Catcall
13 Potsdam
14 Agriculturalist
15 Suggest
17 Fermi's bit
18 Tenants
19 Monastery
21 Scenery
22 Tourist's supply
23 "To Helen"
26 Trygve's successor
28 Part of a Santa costume
31 "Meet Me" — Louis
33 Blue
35 Remain
36 Cartoonist
37 Guiswite
38 "who?"
40 Ram's mate
41 Fe

DOWN

2 Heredity unit
3 "I've — Secret"
4 Nothing but net
5 For — boding
6 Put on a spheres
7 Show
8 Mews
9 Install robots
10 Ror — schach
11 "Desire" — Under the
16 Anthropologist Margaret
20 Chest protector
23 Snapshot
24 "Three Men — Horse"
25 Guess
27 Tank fill
29 Unrefined
30 Turn red?
32 Cherubim's subordinates
34 Manned
37 Thither
39 Turquoise craftsmen, perhaps
42 Gymnast Comaneci
44 Cap
45 Puerto
46 Acknowledged
48 Store founder R.H. —
49 On
50 Letterman's rival
53 Ending for east or west

Solution time: 21 mins.

CRYPTOQUIP

GTZD SQ QBFR TXB
TL LRF VTLRFBXWV SQ
NZSLXNR UTWZFBN
ATDEN AM RTU BFFG
Yesterday's Cryptquip: POOR GARDENER IS GOING FOR HELP FOR HIS RESEEDING HAIRLINE.

Today's Cryptquip clue: Z equals C

The Cryptquip 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.