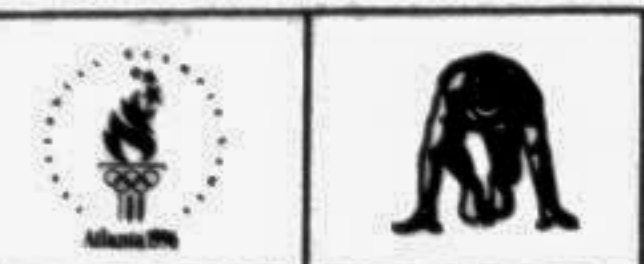


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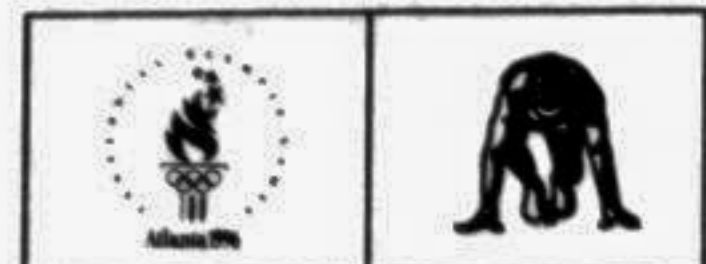


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Last rites for the oldies



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nise they are about to say goodbye.

"I stayed around until 35 to come to Atlanta," Lewis said. "I'm going to have a good time and when it's over I'm going to say, 'Hey, I gave it my all. I had a great time and I was really happy I stayed around.'"

It hardly seems 12 years ago that Lewis was overwhelming the 1984 Games with his calculated, almost choreographed, victories in four events.

The enduring image is of Lewis, a brash 23-year-old, parading around the Los Angeles Coliseum with a giant US flag.

On the same track, 22-year-old Jackie Joyner-Kersey saw her first glimpse of Olympic greatness. With the world's top heptathletes absent because of a Soviet-led boycott, Joyner missed the gold medal by just five points, mainly because of a subpar effort in her specialty, the long jump.

Four years later, by then married to her coach Bob Kersee, Joyner-Kersey was at the top of her demanding game. She demolished the competition with a world record 7,291 points in Seoul just 26 days after becoming the first woman to top the 7,000-point mark. A few days later, she won the gold in the long jump, too.

There was no world record in the 1992 Games, but Joyner-Kersey easily outdistanced the competition. Lewis got golds in the long jump and

400-metre relay, bringing his Olympic total to eight golds and a silver.

Lewis and Joyner-Kersey, 34, both have come face-to-face with their athletic mortality this year.

At the US trials, Carl was no longer king, finishing fifth in the 200 and dead last in the 100-meter final. He made the team by a mere inch (2.5 centimeters) in the long jump — the event he once dominated like no other, going unbeaten for 10 years.

It took a world record by Powell to end that streak.

Powell and Lewis will vie in the long jump for a third Olympics.

But Powell, too, almost didn't make it to Atlanta, jumping from sixth to first on his final try at the US trials.

"It would have been heart-breaking, I thought about that, too," Powell said. "But now I can smile."

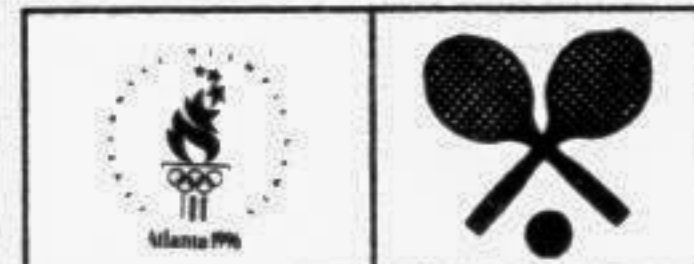
At 36, Ottey is one of the best female sprinters of all time. She is in her fifth Olympics, but has never won more than a bronze medal. She has won four of them, as long ago as 1980 and as recently as 1992.

No one was more elated to make it to Atlanta than Slaney, whose injury-ravaged career includes many records but no Olympic medals. As a youngster, anything but a victory would have been a disappointment. At age 37, she was thrilled to finish second in the 5,000 at the US trials.



AN SPECTACULAR EXPLOIT: Ji Liya of China performs on the uneven bars during the women's team optional in the Olympic gymnastics competition at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta on July 23.

Agassi toils, Seles sails



STONE MOUNTAIN, Georgia, July 24: Fierce heat and humidity sapped the energy of competitors on the opening day of the Olympic tennis tournament on Tuesday as temperatures soared towards 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 Celsius), report agencies.

Defending champion Marc Rosset, launching the Centre Court programme at the New Stone Mountain Tennis Centre some 30 km east of Atlanta, said he had rarely experienced such demanding conditions.

"After one set I was almost dead," said the Swiss player, who beat Moroccan Hicham Azzi 6-2, 6-3 in his match. But he confessed he saw a potential omen in his initial success.

"When I won in Barcelona, I also beat a Moroccan."

Against Azzi, the 2.01-metre (6-foot-7) Rosset served inconsistently but hit 17 winners and closed out the match in 64 minutes.

Andre Agassi scraped through his first Olympic test but acknowledged rapid improvement will be needed if he is to capture the gold medal he has set his heart on.

The top seed's 7-6, 7-6 first round victory over Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman was as

close as the scoreline suggests and was not the sort of performance to send tremors through a below strength men's field.

"It was certainly a close call," admitted Agassi, who sported a long-sleeved shirt despite the high temperatures and a cycling cap with USA emblazoned on the upturned brim.

"Every time you win two tie-breakers, you've got to feel pretty fortunate. If all had been fair out there, we'd have been playing a third set."

Agassi had to save two set points before taking the opening tiebreak 8-6 and was 5-4 down in the second set with Bjorkman preparing to serve. He also received a warning for an audible obscenity yet insisted afterwards his faults were curable.

Jan Siemerink and Carlos Costa were less fortunate, bowing out in straight sets to Australian Todd Woodbridge and Italy's Andrea Gaudenzi respectively.

It was a breeze in the heat for Monica Seles.

Seles, the women's top seed, allowed Li Chen of China only four games in a 6-0, 6-4 drubbing.

Seles swept the first set in just 22 minutes, and Li double-faulted four times after taking a 3-2 lead in the second set.

Reid, determined to get the United States back on the winning track, beat Korean Wan-Kyun Lee 2-0 despite being kneed by the man from Seoul in the process.

International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch put in an appearance early in the evening, taking his VIP seat just in time to watch Israel's lone boxer Vladimir Neiman go out 18-7 to Kazakh Bolat Djumadilov.

A team official agreed that Israel's boxing tradition was not great. "We are very good at chess," he said.

Samaranch also witnessed Ireland's Damaen Kelly make a remarkable escape from 9-6 down against strong Bulgarian Julian Strogov to scrape through 12-11 in the dying seconds.

Germany's flyweight world champion Zoltan Lunka easily saw off Mexican Martin Castillo 13-7.

"He still has something you know," she said, resting weeping in her eyes. "I can't put it into words, but it was very emotional for me that night."

Cuba keep the pace



ATLANTA, July 24: Light-middleweight Alfredo Duvergel joined eight other Cubans through to the second stage of the Olympic boxing tournament on Tuesday as the first American fighter fell by the wayside, reports Reuters.

Duvergel, who won his place at Atlanta by topping Olympic gold medalist Juan Lemus as Cuban national champion, pinched past Poland's Jozef Gilowski 10-2.

Watched by a rowdy Cuban contingent that included heavyweight champion Felix Savon and triple Olympic champion Teofilo Stevenson, Duvergel led 6-0 after round one.

Maikro Romero earlier dominated the first direct Cuban-American battle of these Games, hastening US flyweight Eric Morel's professional debut by outpointing the Puerto Rican-born boxer by an overwhelming 24-12 margin.

He dominated the first round 9-1, inflicting a standing eight count on Morel with 17 seconds remaining after catching him with a hard right followed by a left hook.

Morel, who had planned to turn professional after the Games, could not complain about the result.

It was left to light-middleweight David Reid, easily overpowering a lanky Korean with a suspect defence and a strong left knee, to restore wounded local pride and become the seventh US boxer through the opening bout stage.

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Monica's Ali fixation

ATLANTA, July 24: When Monica Seles, the top women's seed in the Olympic tennis event, spotted Muhammad Ali in the athletes' cafeteria, it brought childhood memories flooding back, reports Reuters.

"My dad always told me to watch tapes of his fights," Seles recalled after winning her first round match easily, 6-0, 6-4 over China's Li Chen.

"When he boxed he would always have unbelievable footwork. But mine is not there."

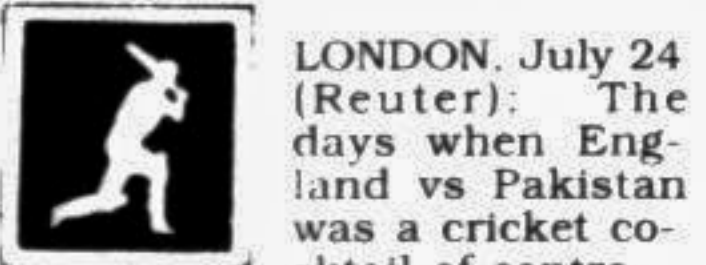
Seles, who is staying in the Olympic Village, said her most moving moment of the Games so far was meeting Ali.

"I saw a big crowd in the cafeteria and I wondered who it was," she said. "I had my picture taken with him and I got his autograph."

"He still has something you know," she said, resting weeping in her eyes. "I can't put it into words, but it was very emotional for me that night."

Lord's Test begins today

Foes vow to play fair



LONDON, July 24 (Reuters): The days when England vs Pakistan was a cricket cocktail of controversy, confrontation and crisis may be numbered.

Mike Atherton and Wasim Akram, captains in the three-Test series starting at Lord's on Thursday, want to play the matches in a competitive but friendly atmosphere.

Their common aim will be helped by having been Lancashire teammates over the

want to talk about the past. We are here to play positive cricket and then go home quietly like other teams do.

"Things are bound to heat up at some point on the field but my relationship with both David Lloyd and Atherton will help if there are any problems."

While series between England and Pakistan have produced many flashpoints, including the figure-wagging confrontation between Mike Gatting and umpire Shakoor Khan at Faisalabad in 1987, the cricket has usually been compelling.

There is every prospect of a fascinating contest this time, with Akram, Waqar Younis and Mushtaq Ahmed set to give England's batsmen a searching examination by swing, speed and spin.

Mushtaq is a more formidable opponent than when Pakistan last toured here four years ago, having learned the value of patience by watching Australian fellow leg-spinner Shane Warne, as well as developing his skills during two county seasons with Somerset.

Atherton, Graham Thorpe and Nasser Hussain, though his entry into the series may be delayed by a finger injury, will relish the duel while Graeme Hick must hope his 150 in Worcestershire's last county championship match marks a turning point in his fortunes.

Pakistan were given a boost on Tuesday when opener Saeed Anwar was cleared of a serious stomach problem.

"Saeed has been given a clean check after his blood tests," tour manager Yawar Saeed said.

He added fast bowler Waqar Younis, who suffered a hamstring injury last week would also probably play.

"We will give him another workout tomorrow just to

make sure but he is an experienced professional and will know himself whether he is up to the demands of a Test match."

The experienced Salim Malik is struggling for runs and the talented Inzamam-ul-Haq has yet to make his mark at Test level in England — he scored only 66 runs in his four Tests in the 1992 series.

However, Saeed Anwar, who has hit three four centuries and is averaging more than 100, and Aamir Sohail can be a commanding opening pair. Ijaz

Ahmed warned up for the opening Test with a match-winning century against Kent, and wicketkeeper Rashid Latif and Akram offer depth to the batting.

Pakistan will be happy to start the series at Lord's — they won the 1982 and 1992 Tests there and drew a rain-ravaged match in 1987. By contrast, England have found Test wins at the game's traditional headquarters few and far between.

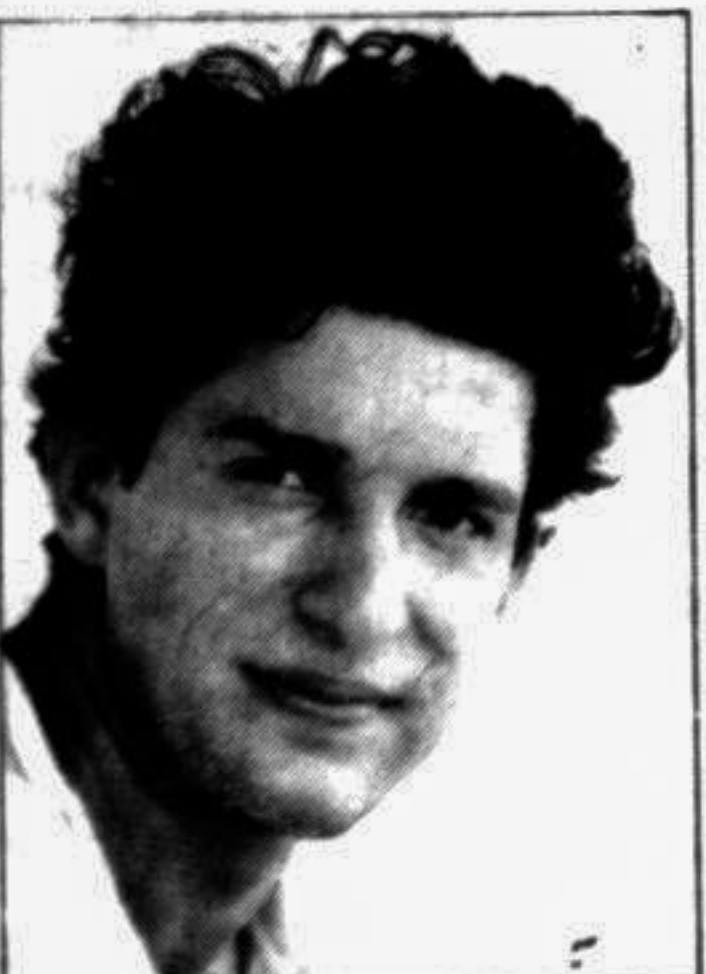
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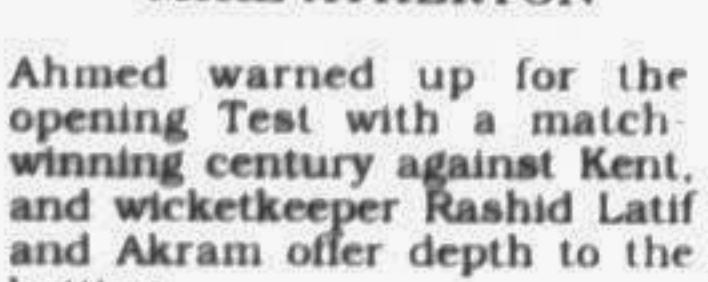
WASIM AKRAM

last eight years and also by the presence of David Lloyd, their county's former coach who is now doing the equivalent job with England.

Atherton said: "Both teams in the coming months will need to maintain their sense of perspective."

"But I hope that our friendship will win the day and that while the cricket will be competitive on the field, common sense will prevail off it."

Wasim said: "We do not



MIKE ATHERTON

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Sport rues the course



LONDON, July 24: Former England cricket players Ian Botham and Allan Lamb were accused in the High Court on Tuesday of spurning the "hand of friendship" offered them by former Pakistan cricket captain Imran Khan, reports AFP.

Botham and Lamb are suing Imran over an "offensive personal attack" on them in India Today magazine which, they said, called them racist, uneducated and lacking class and upbringing.

Imran, who denies libel, says that his words were taken out of context and that he was only trying to defend himself.

Opening the former Pakistani skipper's case, George Carman, QC, said the jury might think it was "a thousand pities that these great warriors of sport could not have made their peace and shaken hands."

They should conclude that Imran Khan had offered "the hand of friendship" and did not want the court battle, but his offer was spurned.

Imran had written "perfectly decent kind letters" to them and offered them, in July 1994, a "golden opportunity" — which had been turned down flat — to set the record straight in an open letter to The Times.

It would have made the vital points that he had been seri-

ously misquoted in the India Today article and never suggested Botham and Lamb were racist — and would also have made it plain that he had never accused Ian Botham of cheating.

And Imran had intended to express regret if he had been misunderstood by others and caused distress to anyone or their families.

He added that nobody could deny the trial was "emotionally charged" with "issues of race, class and country moving in and out of this case like black clouds."

He asked: "Who raised the stakes in this case? Who wanted the battle?"

"Who are the volunteers to the court room and who is the conscript?"

Earlier, former England batsman David Gower, who scored more than 8,000 runs in Test matches before retiring to pursue a media career, said he had known Botham and Lamb for years and they were not racists.

Shown video footage of himself, Botham and Lamb looking at the ball during the 1982 series, he thought it looked as Botham was repairing the ball.

"Knowing Ian's thumbs — not intimately — but knowing them, I think he's pushing the ball back and my views is you are allowed to do that."

He had never seen Botham

tampering with the ball. Cross-examined by Carman, Gower agreed that Imran had sent him the same conciliatory letter he had sent Botham and Lamb after the appearance of a biography in which "negative comments" were attributed to him.

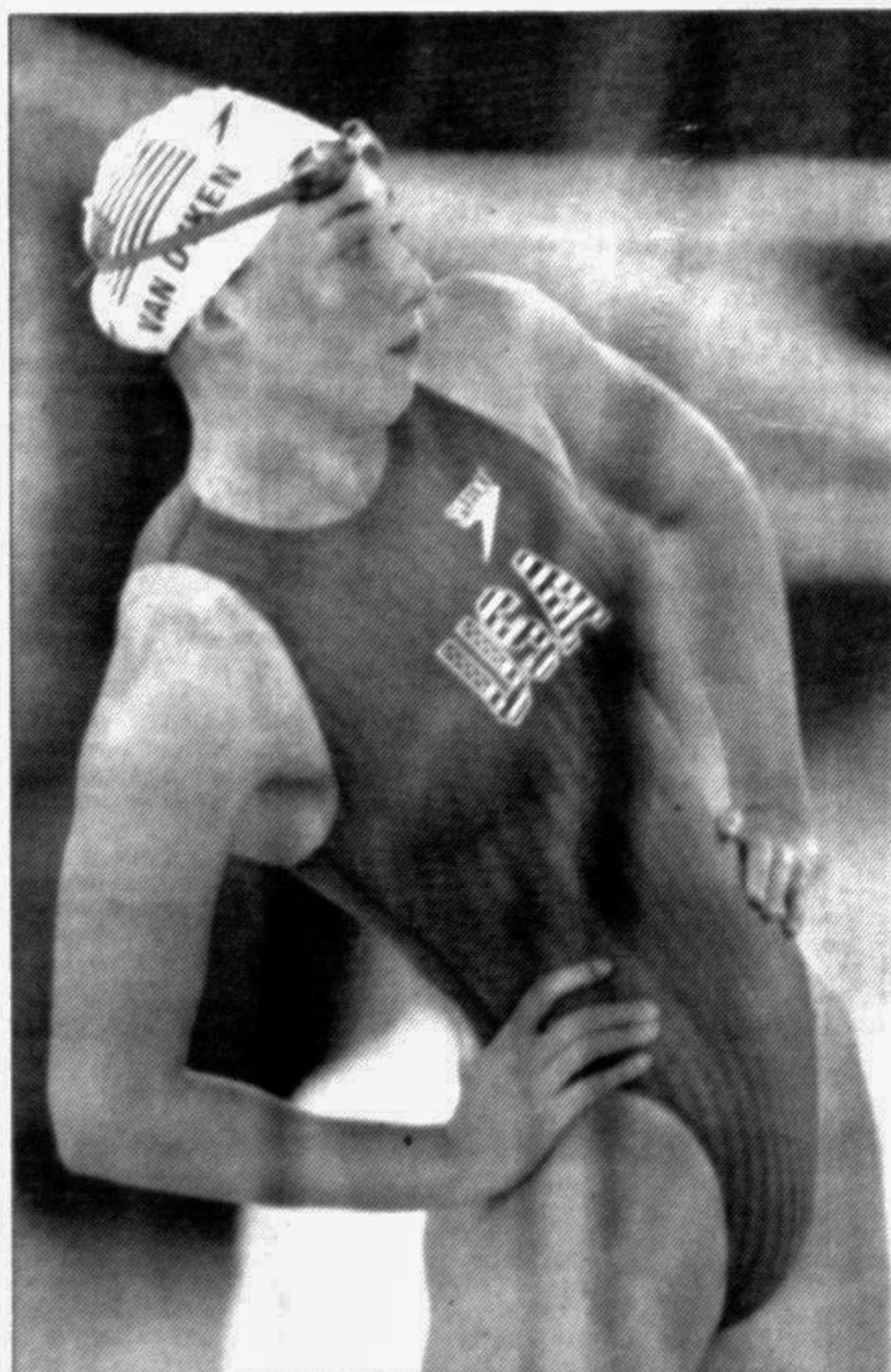
Gower agreed that he had written, in reply: "Fear not. You have no need to worry about the comments," and assured Imran that he was not hurt.

He agreed with comments by England cricket captain, Mike Atherton, that bowlers had "succumbed to the temptation of ball-tampering many a time, but it was not right that everyone was doing it."

Mike Atherton, accompanied by English cricket coach David Lloyd, took their seats in court as Gower said that ball tampering was not accepted by the game as a whole, and that virtually every player would like to see the laws upheld.

Women's hockey S Korea drub the Dutch

ATLANTA, July 24: Chang Eun-ju scored twice in the second half, one off a penalty corner, to give South Korea a 3-1 victory over the Netherlands in women's Olympic hockey on Tuesday, reports AP.



Amy Van Dyken of the United States having a light warm-up shortly before the start of the women's 100m butterfly qualifier at the Georgia Tech Aquatic Centre on July 23.

CENTENNIAL GAMES CHIPS

ATLANTA, July 24 (AFP): Olympic Games diary for today:

GUNNING FOR GEAR

Some of the volunteer staff working at the Atlanta Olympics have had offers of up to 3,500 dollars to sell some of the special T-shirts, hats and pin badges they wear. One security officer was offered 3,500 dollars for his helmet.

The police report that their officers have been offered more than 5,000 dollars for the baseball caps they have been wearing on patrol.

A TINGE OF IRONY

For Namibian Frankie Fredericks, the 1992 double sprint silver medalist, the Olympic Games are short on magic. "We were occupied by South Africa for so many years before our independence, and that took away some of the dreams I would have had as a youngster."

I did not grow up with that opportunity to dream. For me, it is just another big meeting, where I get another chance to race the best in the world. That's enough to make me happy."

COACH & CHOCOLATE

American sprinter Jon Drummond admitted his coach was refusing to leave his side 100m — all because of his love of chocolate biscuits. "I like chocolate chip cookies. I know that when he's with me, I can't eat them. So he's staying with me," he said.

TUTU VISITS 'DREAM TEAM'

South African Bishop Desmond Tutu and his grandson visited "dream Team iii" during a private workout Tuesday. He said the players had been as great an inspiration to him as he has been to them.

"He is one of the real heroes of this world, the challenges he has faced and the struggle with apartheid," said "Dream Team" centre David Robinson. "He has life or death struggles. We only face struggles on the court."

"It's a fantastic thing to meet people who have been such heroes and such an inspiration to our young men and women," said Tut