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Argentina thru' to final



goals helped Argentina cruise into their first Olympic final since 1928.

The lanky striker, set to play for Italy's Parma next season, headed home a cross to give Argentina the lead in the 56th minute. And he fired a low 18-year shot for the second six minutes later.

Portugal's Vidigal hit the post and Nuno was foiled by a reflex save by Argentine goalkeeper Pablo Cavallero near the end. But the South Americans deserved a victory before 78,212 fans at Stanford Stadium with their far more enterprising play.

In the 22nd minute, Hugo Morales almost gave Argentina the lead with a firmly struck angled shot from the edge of the Portuguese area that was dropping but just cleared the crossbar.

Playing with just one striker, Nuno, Portugal threatened rarely in the first half, although midfielder Dominguez occasionally caused trouble with some weaving runs that failed to produce chances.

A small group of noisy Argentina fans tried to gain the support of the American fans by chanting "U-S-A," but there was little to cheer until their team took control.

Argentina slowly took control, with Morales stealing the ball in the 39th minutes, cutting inside and firing just wide of the right post from 25 yards.

Seconds later, Portugal broke through but Argentine keeper Cavallero raced off his

line and grabbed the ball before an unmarked Dominguez had time to reach it.

Argentina's best chance of the first half came when Portuguese keeper Gomes made a sliding foot save and the ball deflected across the area to Claudio Lopez.

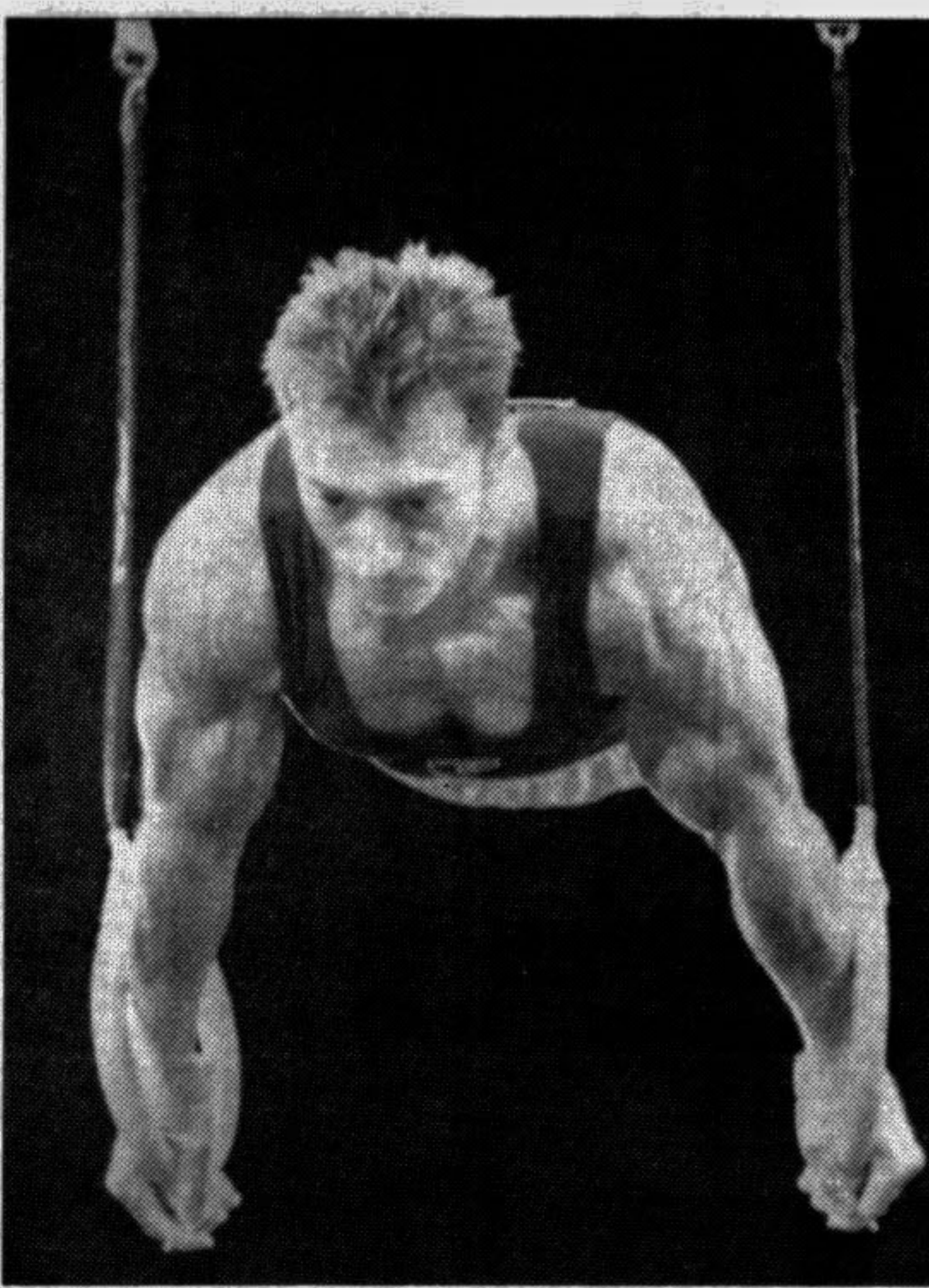
Lopez volleyed the ball but Nuno Afonso was trailing the play and extended his leg to knock it wide only a yard from the goal.

Ten minutes into the second half, Argentina went ahead with a simple goal. Ortega sent Lopez down the right, he fired over a well-flighted cross and it landed perfectly on the head of Crespo, who powered home a 6-yard header.

They added a second when Crespo worked free off a series with Jose Chamot and Arnaldo Ortega on the left and struck a low shot that Games got his fingertips to, but saw the ball glance in off the right post.

Brazil have a high-powered lineup, including two of their 1994 World Cup stars, striker Bebeto and defender Aldair. Big names Juninho, Roberto Carlos, Ronaldinho and Rivaldo also are expected to face the Nigerians, who have Sunday Oliseh suspended but will also be able to field star players Daniel Amokachi, Emmanuel Amunike, Gus Okocha and Nwankwo Kanu.

Like the two other semi-finalists, neither Brazil nor Nigeria have won the Olympic title but the Brazilians were runners-up to France in 1984 and to the Soviet Union in 1988.



Four-time world champion Yuri Chechi of Italy performs at an exhibition show at the Georgia Dome on July 30.

— AFP/UNB photo

Indonesian pair lifts badminton doubles crown

ATLANTA, July 31: Rexy Mainaky and Ricky Subagja of Indonesia won the men's doubles badminton gold medal here today, beating Cheah Soon Kit and Yap Kim Hock of Malaysia 5-15, 15-13, 15-12, reports AFP.

The bronze medal was decided on Tuesday night when the Indonesia duo of Antonius and Denny Katono beat Soo Beng Kiang and Tan Kim Her of Malaysia 15-4, 12-15, 15-8.

Imran has the last laugh

LONDON, July 31: Former England cricketers Ian Botham and Allan Lamb Wednesday lost their libel action against Imran



Khan, the former Pakistan captain, over allegations of racism, class, and — in Botham's case — ball-tampering, reports AFP.

Australia, S. Korea in final

ATLANTA, July 31: Australia thrashed the Netherlands 4-0 on Tuesday and ended South Korea's day-long wait for confirmation that they had made the women's hockey final, reports agencies.

A corner goal by Eun-Jung Chang earned South Korea a 1-0 win over Germany in the morning, but they had to wait all day to know whether their narrow win was enough.

Olympics: What's on today

ATLANTA, July 31 (Reuters): Timetable for the 13th day of Olympics competition on Thursday (all venues Atlanta unless stated, all times BST):

Athletics

7:00 pm: Decathlon — 110 metres hurdles.

7:30 pm: Women's high jump qualifying round.

8:00 pm: Decathlon — discus.

8:05 pm: Women's long jump qualifying round.

1:00 am (Fri): Decathlon — pole vault.

4:30 am (Fri): Decathlon — javelin.

4:50 am (Fri): Women's 200 metres semifinals.

5:10 am (Fri): Men's 200 metres semifinals.

5:30 am (Fri): Women's 1,500 metres semifinals.

5:55 am (Fri): Men's 1,500 metres semifinals.

6:25 pm (Fri): Men's 400 metres hurdles final.

6:45 pm (Fri): Women's 200 metres final.

7:00 pm (Fri): Men's 200 metres final.

7:15 pm (Fri): Men's 5,000 metres semifinals.

9:05 pm (Fri): Decathlon — 1,500 metres.

Soccer

4:00 am (Fri): Brazil v Norway, women's bronze medal match (Athens, Georgia).

6:30 pm (Fri): China v United States, women's gold medal match (Athens, Georgia).

Hockey

6:30 pm: Men's play-off for places 9-10.

6:30 pm: Men's play-off for places 11-12.

9:00 pm: Men's play-off for places 7-8.

3:00 am (Fri): Women's bronze medal match.

5:30 am (Fri): Women's gold medal match.

Table Tennis

2:30 am (Fri): Men's singles final.

Tennis

9:00 am (Fri): Men's singles semifinals.

Andre Agassi (US) v Leander Paes (India).

Sergi Bruguera (Spain) v Fernando Meligeni (Brazil).

1:00 am (Fri): Women's double gold medal match.

3:00 am (Fri): Men's doubles gold medal match.

Volleyball

6:00 pm: Men's classification match.

8:00 pm: Men's classification match.

11:30 pm: Women's classification match.

2:00 am (Fri): Women's classification match.

5:30 am (Fri): Women's semifinals.

8:00 pm (Fri): Women's semifinals.

10:15 pm: Kim Dong-Moon/Gil Young-Ah (South Korea) v Park Joo-Bong/Ra Ky-ung-Min (South Korea), mixed doubles gold medal match.

Essex in NatWest Trophy semis

LONDON, July 31: A quick-fire hundred from Australian Stuart Law on Tuesday helped Essex to a place in the semifinals of the 60-over NatWest Trophy as they comfortably beat Hampshire by 100 runs at Southampton, reports Reuter.

But an unbeaten century from compatriot Dean Jones failed to force a victory for Derbyshire in a tight contest with Lancashire, who won by two runs.

CENTENNIAL GAMES CHIPS

ATLANTA, July 31 (AP & AFP): Olympic Games diary:

CUBANS START DESERTING CAMP

A longtime boxing trainer for the Cuban national team who abandoned the Olympics surfaced Tuesday, saying he feared reprisals from the Cuban government and would seek political asylum.

Mariano Leyva choked back tears as he told reporters his wife of 23 years and four children remain in Cuba, where he has had disputes with trainers over how hard Cuban fighters are pushed.

Leyva was contracted out by Cuba's government to coach Mexico's Olympic boxers. On Saturday, the 13-year veteran of his homeland's national boxing team left Atlanta, with the help of friends from Miami.

"I don't come to this country for material things," Leyva said. "I come here for spiritual reasons."

He said he didn't plan on defecting, but did so because of a conflict with a Communist party official.

Leyva feared reprisals upon his return after the Olympics.

"I had certain problems back home so I decided I had to stay for my freedom," said Leyva.

His troubles began with his vocal opposition to Cuban boxers being pushed too hard by other trainers and into weight categories he thought they should not be fighting in.

FLOWERS FILL THE BILL

Flowers are selling fast in the Olympic Village, and roses are the most popular choice.

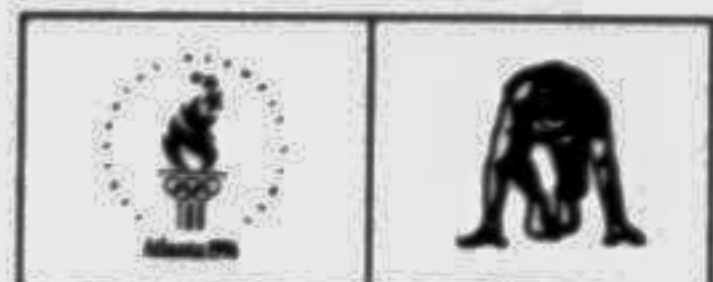
Fans from all over the world are ordering flowers for their favourite athletes via the florists, said Susie Pedro, the manager of the Village Florists.

"Roses have been a big hit, she said, we can't get enough in here."

CUBANS GOING GREAT GUNS

Cuba, as expected, go into the quarterfinals of the Olympic boxing competition today with the most qualifiers. Cuba has nine boxers in the

Contrasting last rites for charismatic Cs



ATLANTA, July 31 (AFP): Linford Christie and Carl Lewis will leave the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games with brutally contrasting memories to accompany them into retirement.

No script writer could have offered Lewis a more perfect final curtain. And none could have dreamt up the nightmare scenario that marked Christie's going.

The pair, however, had cut such similar figures on their arrival at Atlanta.

Both reigning champions, both writhing off as 30-somethings and both still bragging, unstopably and implausibly about their chances. Both had been expected to leave well beaten and their egos well bruised.

Lewis, however, rolled back the years to perform like the magical 23-year-old who had claimed four gold medals in Los Angeles, 12 long years ago.

During those years, "sixteen hairstyles ago" as he put it, the American lost just four centimetres in performance, the difference between his 1984 winning jump of 8.5m and the third-round 8.50 that he conquered up in Atlanta.

After only just making the Olympics at all — by three centimetres in the US trial — and only just reaching the final — with his last qualifying jump — it seemed Lewis had late on his side.

Christie, in contrast, lost a big chunk of his reputation after being disqualified from the 100m final for two false starts.

The British athlete's agony was understandable and his protests legitimate.

But soon he was angrily throwing away the red flag marking his lane, trying to milk applause just when Donovan Bailey was celebrating

his world record — a moment's delay and even a sporting handshake with the winner might have been wiser — and then fronting up with bronze medalist Ato Boldon, who accused Christie of lacking respect for the other starters.

When he needed it most, the 36-year-old Christie, who once held a Grand Slam of Olympic World, Commonwealth and European titles, failed to find the dignity of a true champion.

Perhaps he had been pampered too long by superstardom to remember much about sportsmanship.

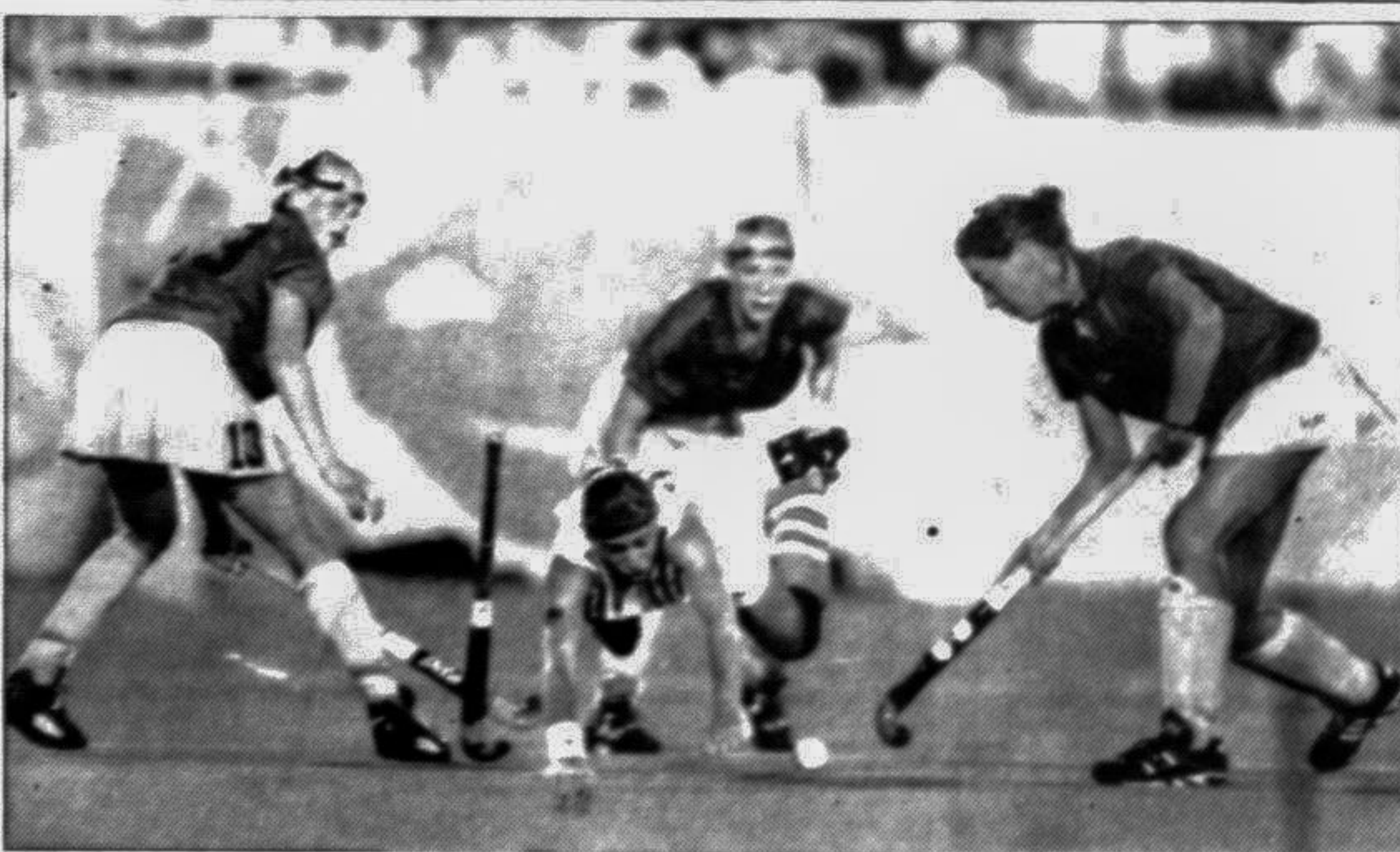
Irony of ironies, Christie had been involved in an early similar incident last year. Knocked out of the British Championships 100m semifinal, the organisers had allowed him to run the final as a guest, which he promptly won before taking a lap of honour along

side a rather confused Darren Braithwaite, the classified winner.

Lewis, in contrast, was all sweetness and light at Atlanta. But then it was probably easier to do after he had just equalled the track and field record of nine Olympic titles and of four consecutive golds in one event.

It was easy to forget that this was the same man who attacked Johnson for lack of charisma last year — "He doesn't have it," he said just before Johnson ran an unprecedented 200 and 400 World Championship double — and used to answer "Linford who?" When asked about his great rival Christie. The statistics are clear about one thing.

Lewis ranks right alongside, if not above, the all-time greats of athletics. Christie ranks among the best sprinters ever to run the 100.



Australia's Nova Peris-Kneebone tumbles on to the turf the Dutch defenders take control of the ball during their Olympic hockey semifinal clash on July 30. Australia advanced to the final with a 4-0 thrashing one the Netherlands.

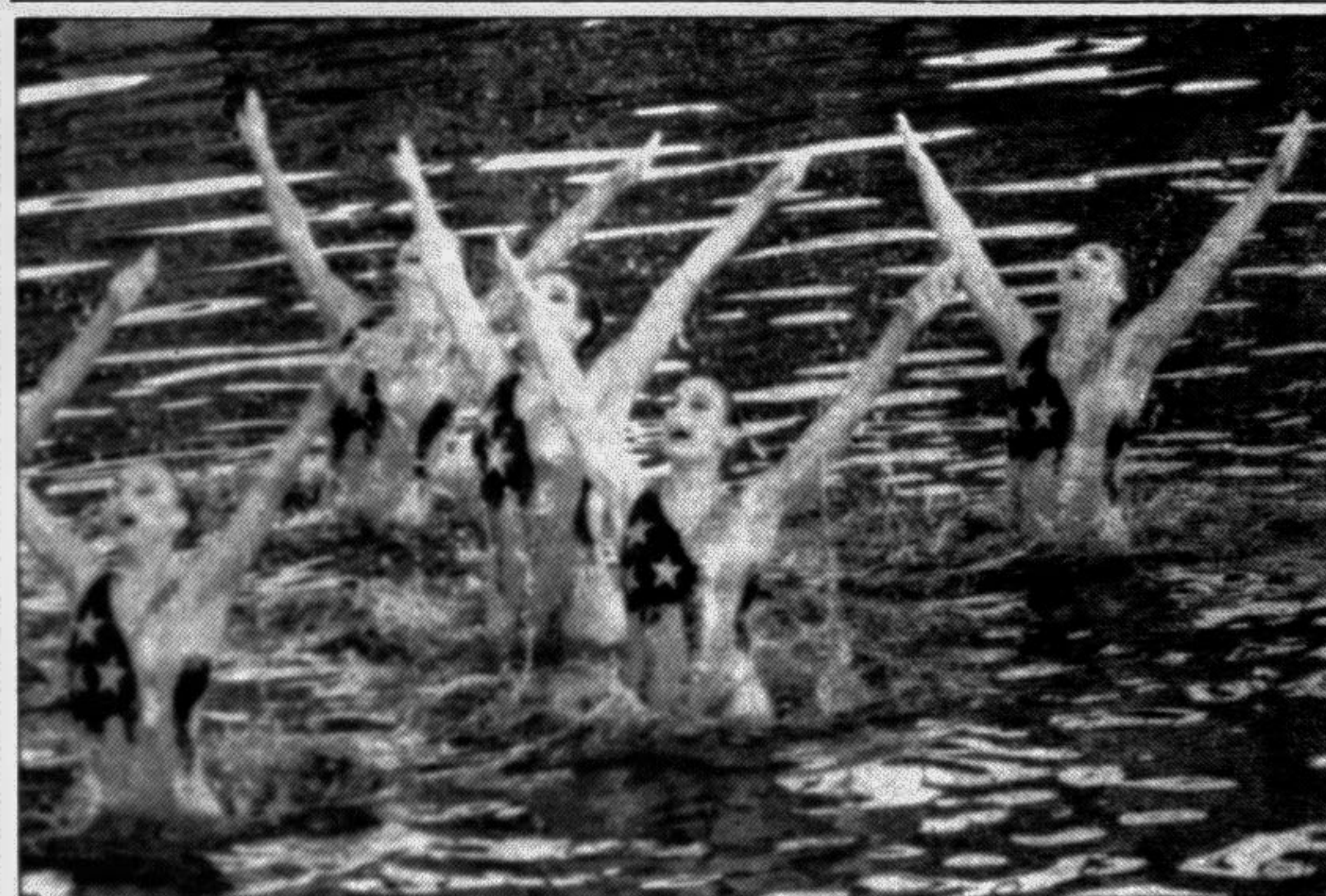
— AFP/UNB photo



MEDALS TABLE

ATLANTA, July 31 (Reuters): Medals table after the 11th day of competition at the Atlanta Olympics on Tuesday (tabulated under gold, silver, bronze):

Country	G	S	B	Total
United States	25	28	13	66
Russia	19	14	9	42
France	13	6	13	32
China	12	15	8	35
Italy	11	6	9	26
Germany	10	12	19	41
Australia	7	9	18	34
Poland	6	5	3	14
Ukraine	5	5	5	15
Romania	4	5	6	15
Hungary	4	3	6	13
Greece	4	3	0	7
Cuba	3	5	7	15
South Korea	3	5	4	12
Japan	3	4	3	10
New Zealand	3	2	1	6
Switzerland	3	1	0	4
Ireland	3	0	1	4
Turkey	3	0	1	4
Canada	2	7	6	15
Netherlands	2	3	8	13
Kazakhstan	2	3	1	6
Brazil	2	2	5	9
Belgium	2	2	2	6
Spain	2	1	1	4
South Africa	2	0	1	3
Ethiopia	2	0	0	2
Belarus	1	4	7	12
Britain	1	3	5	9
Czech Republic	1	2	1	4
Finland	1	2	0	3
North Korea	1	1	1	3
Denmark	1	0	1	2
Slovakia	1	0	1	2
Yugoslavia	1	0	1	2
Armenia	1	0	0	1
Costa Rica	1	0	0	1
Ecuador	1	0	0	1
Hong Kong	1	0	0	1
Syria	1	0	0	1
Bulgaria	0	4	4	8
Sweden	0	2	1	3
Jamaica	0	2	0	2
Kenya	0	2	0	2
Austria	0	1	1	2
Norway	0	1	0	1
Argentina	0	1	0	1
Croatia	0	1	0	1
Namibia	0	1	0	1
Slovenia	0	1	0	1
Uzbekistan	0	1	0	1
Georgia	0	0	1	1
Israel	0	0	1	1
Mexico	0	0	1	1
Moldova	0	0	1	1
Mongolia	0	0	1	1
Morocco	0	0	1	1
Mozambique	0	0	1	1
Nigeria	0	0	1	1
Trinidad	0	0	1	1
Uganda	0	0	1	1



The synchronised swimming team of the United States exploits their technical routine at the Georgia Tech Aquatic Centre on July 30.

— AFP/UNB photo

England nursing its ego



LONDON, July 31: Players and selectors in the English Test team were nursing a badly bruised morale on Tuesday, the day after a batting collapse ripped the first Test against Pakistan and a promising summer from underneath them, reports AFP.

Mike Atherton and Alec Stewart looked comfortably capable of saving the first Test after resuming on 74 for one and taking them to 168.

But fast bowler Waqar Younis combined with leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed to bowl out England for 243, their last nine wickets falling for just 75.

Some of those batsman are bound to come under threat when the selectors meet next weekend to discuss the 13 who will travel to Leeds — with Graeme Hick favourite to be discarded.

The Zimbabwe-born batsman, who finished bottom of England's batting averages during the India series, managed just eight runs in the match and could not even find any sympathy from coach David Lloyd who, when asked about Hick's display, answered, "It's a tough game."

The 164-run defeat left

England facing an uphill battle after going one down in a three-Test series and the progress made during their triumph over India seem a distant memory.

Lloyd is now setting about to boost the flagging spirits before the August 8 rematch.

"It is a national game, a Test match, and we have lost and it is our job to pick ourselves up and win at Headingley."

"The disappointment is there for all to see in losing, but in football terms we are only 1-0 down at half-time."

Captain Atherton conceded: "It will be heard to come back but not impossible. We are looking to go and win at Headingley and then win the series in the final Test at the Oval."

Atherton, so often the saviour in a match-saving situation, fell to "a poor shot" just after lunch having forged a determined 154-run partnership with Stewart.

But once again, his dismissal sparked a rapid collapse with Stewart following him to the dressing room just two overs later and England's worst fears were realised as the rest of the batting line-up became a procession.

There are plenty of people with good records in that batting line-up," insisted

Atherton. "It just happened that myself and Stewy went quickly and then two new batsmen came out on a worn wicket."

"We fought hard for a couple of sessions but when you come to the crease with bowlers of this quality it is not easy."

Nasser Hussain and Chris Lewis, both picked for Lord's and ruled out after failing fitness tests, will now have to prove their fitness if they are going to come into consideration for Headingley.

In contrast, Pakistan enter this weekend's challenge match against Durham brimming with confidence after Waqar shrugged off a hamstring strain to claim four for 85 and Mushtaq grabbed five for 75 to precipitate their emphatic triumph.

"We are a different side when we go one up," warned captain Wasim Akram. "We are capable of beating any team in the world and we are going up to Leeds to try and finish off the series."

"We learned to bowl on the sport of wicket we have had here at Lord's. If it had been a seamer's sort of wicket then it could have been different, but we've now learned how to bowl on that surface, so we are going into the next Test with confidence."