

## Ajax, Dhanmondi upended

Sports Reporter

Upset was the order of the day in the First Division Super league as the leaders Ajax Sports Club and the co-sharer Dhanmondi Club suffered stunning defeats at different city venues yesterday.

On the western strip at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Gopibagh Friends Association posted an exciting five-run victory over Dhanmondi Club. In a low-scoring affair, Dhanmondi, chasing a modest Gopibagh total of 167 in the 45 regulation 45 overs, could garner 162 before being all out with five balls to spare.

After a disastrous start with Dhanmondi reeling at 39/3, Pakistani Nasir Khan and Murtoza combined to steady the rocking boat putting on 46 runs for the fourth wicket. Nasir scored a rapid-fire 32 off 36 balls while Murtoza contributed a patient 30 before both were dismissed in quick succession.

After the departure of the two set batsmen Dhanmondi experienced a dramatic collapse, losing their last seven wickets for 77 runs. Although Goerghy with a defiant 31 fought a lone battle, the fate of the league leaders was eventually sealed in the final over when, Shaheen, who did the unenviable job of bowling the last over, had him caught by Babu in his first delivery.

With the prized scalp of Goerghy, the Gopibagh new-ball bowler finished with two for 19 while fellow pacer Prince, who was responsible for early Dhanmondi debacle, scalped three for only 28 runs in his quota of nine overs. But it was Babu who overshadowed the Gopibagh pace duo. The twacker returned most successful with four for 33 in his nine overs.

Earlier, electing to bat after winning the toss, Gopibagh scored a not-so-impressive 167 for nine in their share of 45 overs. Opaer Suntu scored 25 while Azim and Sapu, the two middle-order bats, contributed highest 26 runs apiece. Besides, wicketkeeper Liton hammered a run-a-ball 18.

For Dhanmondi Manzurul and Sabir Khan took two wickets each.

Meanwhile, away at the City Club ground, a brilliant all-round performance by Pakistani Rais Ahmed heeded Azad SC's record of a resounding six-wicket win over Ajax SC.

The useful Pakistani recruit of Azad took two wickets for 30 runs in restricting Ajax to an achievable total of 182 and then went on to hammer a dazzling half-century to propel his side to an easy win.

## Acme Div II cricket scores

Sports Reporter

Azad Boys Club, Kathal Bagan, Udayachal and DOHS won their respective Acme Second Division cricket league matches played at different city venues yesterday.

On the western strip of the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, former national cricketer Jahangir Shah Badsha hammered an unbeaten half-century to guide Azad Boys to a facile six-wicket win over Bangladesh Railway.

In a high-scoring affair, Badsha, a stalwart of yesteryears and currently a national selector, blasted a captain's knock of 77-ball 58, as Azad, facing a commanding Railway total of 219 in the 40 over match, rattled up the required 220 for six with eight balls to spare.

Badsha apart, opener Nasirul Hossain hammered a breezy 52 off only 42 deliveries while Ishraq, who shared a vital 97-run stand for the fourth wicket with his captain, scored a cracking 51.

Earlier, the Railway total was built around a brilliant 79 off 69 balls from their middle-order bat Ahmed Rajib. Wicket-keeper Harris with 38 and lower-order bat Jissar, who remained unbeaten on 28 off 20 balls, were the other notable contributors for the vanquished.

Among the Azad bowler seamer Masud Rana took two wickets for 27 runs while Nadir Shah, young brother of Jahangir Shah Badsha, also claimed two wickets.

At the Dhanmondi Club ground, Udayachal recorded a huge 103-run win over Nirman Eleven.

Battling first, Udayachal piled up a mammoth total of 263 for eight in their share of 40 overs. Skipper Shipu hammered a blazing 73 off 53 balls laced with seven hits across the rope and three huge sixes.

In reply, Nirman, facing an uphill task of scoring more than 6.5 runs per over, could muster only 160/9 after exhausting their quota of 40 overs.

At the Mohakhali T&T ground, Kathal Bagan defeated PWD SC by 83 runs.

Sent into bat in the morning, Kathal Bagan piled up a fairly safe total of 227 before being all out in the last over. Tutul scored a rapid-fire 52.

For PWD Habib claimed four wicket for 38 runs while Masum took three for 36.

In reply, PWD were skittled out for a paltry 144 in the face of some accurate bowling from Murshed and Riad, who shared seven wickets between them. Murshed finished with four for 24 while Riad finished with three for 43.

Meanwhile, in the other match of the day at the Mirpur Outer Stadium, Lalbagh Anwar, aided by a whirl-wind 86 from Mishu, scored 231/7.

But Mishu's early thunder was overshadowed by DOHS, who went on to overhaul the commanding Lalbagh total with 13 balls to spare.



World number one Steffi Graf of Germany signs autographs for her Japanese fans after a second round match against American Lisa Raymond at the Toray Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo yesterday. Graf won 6-3, 6-2. — AFP/UNB photo

## Graf, Hingis in quarters



TOKYO, Jan 29: Steffi Graf of Germany was back in form as she eliminated American Lisa Raymond 6-3, 6-2.

Wednesday in the second round of the 926,250 dollars Toray Pan Pacific women's tennis tournament, report agencies.

It was the 27-year-old Graf's first match since her fourth-round exit in the Australian Open and since her father was convicted of tax evasion.

When the top-ranked woman tennis player was asked if her father's conviction disturbed her play in any way, she answered tersely.

"No, it didn't," she told a press conference.

Her father, Peter Graf, was sentenced in a German court last Friday to three years and nine months in prison.

Asked if she would consider leaving Germany for good because of the taxation problem, she was equally dismissive: "Absolutely not."

She said the toe infection she suffered in the Australian Open is gone and she feels fit and fine.

Graf had praise for the Australian Open champion Martina Hingis of Switzerland, who also advanced to the quarter-finals "Wednesday" by defeating Italy's Gloria Pizzichini 6-1, 6-0.

"Her Grand Slam came a little earlier than mine. She is really progressing fast."

In Melbourne, the 16-year-old Hingis became the youngest

Grand Slam champion this century.

In the Toray Pan Pacific, one of the Women's Tennis Association's biggest events other than the Grand Slam series, Graf and Hingis are seeded first and second respectively, so that they could possibly meet in Sunday's final.

Hingis said she wouldn't have preferred a tougher match to begin with.

"I'm happy with the way she played," she said. Hingis received a first-round bye along with Graf and two other seeds.

"I like this kind of fast (indoor) surface because you don't have to run so much," Hingis said. "I play a fast game so I like it."

Hingis said Graf is a great athlete she would like to emulate. "But she has a completely different game than I have. I'll just try to play my best tennis."

"I think I have pretty good chances to get to the highest possible. But I'm No. 2 in the world and it is also hard to stay there," Hingis spoke of the WTA world ranking.

In another major match, defending champion Iva Majoli of Croatia, No. 5 seed, advanced to the second round with a 6-4, 7-5 victory over qualifier Ludmilla Varmuzova of San Marino.

"It's the first match and it's always tough. The surface is so different," said Majoli, the No. 7 player in the world. "I definitely have to improve my energy for the next match."

The 19-year-old Croat, pitted against Varmuzova in her first match since a first-round loss at the Australian Open, stormed back from 2-5 down in the second set, saving two set points, before scoring the victory.

Both Majoli and Varmuzova had five break chances in the first set, with the Croat converting twice and Varmuzova once.

Majoli made a forehand-error four times in a row to go down 2-4 in the second set and failed to break back in the seventh game after having five advantage points.

Majoli, however, never stopped hitting hard and staved off Varmuzova's double set points at 15-40 in the ninth game, forcing her into making errors, she did not give another chance to a dispirited Varmuzova.

On Tuesday Steffi returned to tennis after one of the worst weeks of her life and looked in great form as she won an exhibition doubles match with Pam Shriver.

Shrugging off fears that her game might suffer after her father's conviction she and her American partner demolished Japanese opponents Kyoko Nagatsuka and Yuko Yoshida 8-0 in a match limited to two service games per player.

Graf showed few signs of lingering effects from a toe infection and heat exhaustion which contributed to her surprise fourth-round defeat last week in the Australian Open in Melbourne.

## Nigeria's new soccer coach

LAGOS, Jan 29: The Nigerian super eagles appointed a new head coach in the wake of the dismissal of Shuaibu Amodu for "gross misconduct" towards sports authorities, officials announced here Tuesday, reports AFP.

Monday Sinclair replaces Shuaibu Amodu who was sacked last Sunday by the Nigerian Football Federation (NFF).

Sinclair, an apostle of Brazilian and Dutch style of football, had earlier been a player in the national football team in the 1960s.

He has coached several Nigerian teams such as the Sharks FC of Port Harcourt, Rangers International of Enugu and Iwuanyanwu National of Owerri, all First Division teams.

Peters was in charge of the under-23 team to the Cairo 1991 all-African Games. As part of the re-organisation, six coaches, two of them who assisted Amodu — Willy Bazuaye and Kelechi Emetole — have also been sacked.

Emeka Iyama, an official of the Nigerian FA technical committee, said Amodu's suspension might be connected with recent remarks about sports minister chief Jim Nwobodo and NFA officials.

Amodu's wife was also recently reported by the local press to have made statements which the minister and sport officials considered as either insulting or tantamount to insubordination.

Former internationals, Emmanuel Okala, Best Ogedegbe and Muzabitu Aliyu have been appointed as goal-keeper trainers under the re-organisation.

Tunde Disu, head of the technical department of the NFA, would now coach under-21 team, popularly called the "flying eagles".

The under-21 team under Disu won the silver medal at the under-21 World Youth Championship in Saudi Arabia in 1991.

## De Bilde joins Eindhoven

BRUSSELS, Jan 29: Contraverted Belgian striker Gilles De Bilde, currently serving a three-month suspension for hitting an opponent, has left Anderlecht and signed a 4 1/2-year deal with PSV Eindhoven, reports AP.

De Bilde, a mercurial forward who won Belgian soccer's 1995 MVP award, is not allowed to play in Belgium or abroad until the end of March because he broke the nose and eyesocket of a defender in a Belgian league match in December.

Combined with his lacklustre performances and goal-scoring drought since joining Anderlecht last season, it made the position of the 25-year-old untenable at Belgium's most prestigious club.

"I have had a very difficult period now and I hope it will be behind me now," De Bilde said.

## Riddick faces lawsuit



NEWARK, New Jersey, Jan 29: Having twice lost to Riddick Bowe on disqualification for low blows, heavy weight Andrew Golota is suing Bowe and Madison Square Garden over the riot following their July bout in New York, reports AP.

Golota and cornerman Sam Colonna charge they were injured because Bowe was negligent in supervising his employees and because the Garden failed to provide adequate security.

Golota and Colonna are seeking an unspecified amount of money for medical expenses and pain, according to the lawsuit filed in state Superior Court in Jersey City.

They also name as defendants Bowe, manager Rock Newman, Spencer Promotions and Spencer employee Jason Harris. Golota, who left Poland in 1990 and fights out of Chicago, listed Jersey City as his residence in the lawsuit.

New Jersey law prohibits plaintiffs from putting damage figures in lawsuits, but a newspaper in Warsaw, Poland, said they seek 5 million dollars.

The lawsuit, filed Thursday, is the latest stemming from the 30-minute chair-swinging riot over the riot following their July bout in New York, reports AP.

Three Brooklyn men who said they were injured filed a 4.5 million dollars suit in July against the arena, Bowe and Newman.

"We had a full complement of security on duty which had handled five previous arena fights without incident," said John Cirillo, a Garden senior vice president. "Our security acted appropriately and if it weren't for the action of a few individuals who had total disregard for everyone else's welfare, the incident wouldn't have happened."

Newman, reached at his Spencer Promotions office in Washington, denied the lawsuit: "It's another dumb, low-blow by Golota, that he will get disqualified for again."

The Garden brawl began after Golota was disqualified in the seventh round for landing low blows. With Bowe on the canvas, Newman and other members of Bowe's entourage charged across the ring.

Harris struck Golota several times on the head with a cellular telephone. The wounds required about 13 stitches, said Golota lawyer Thomas DiBiase.

Garden security guards and 250 police officers cleared the arena of 11,000 people.

Over a dozen people were arrested and four members of Bowe's entourage were charged in connection with the fight. Harris, the only one charged criminally, pleaded guilty to assault last year, DiBiase said.

## 1997: Going for gold—in medals and money

Phil Minshull writes from London

Despite the absence of the Olympics and World Cup soccer and rugby, the new year promises sporting excitement. Gemini News Service looks at the stars and spectacles with the potential to bring the crowds to their feet.

NEARLY 2,000 competitors from 200 countries are expected to converge on Athens in August for the World Athletics Championships, the most prestigious event in the sporting calendar after the Olympics and soccer World Cup.

Many of the Olympic heroes from Atlanta will be there. United States' sprinter Michael Johnson will defend both the 200m and 400m titles he won in Gothenburg two years ago, a feat he repeated to worldwide acclaim in Atlanta.

But even the incomparable Johnson may have the plaudits stolen from him by Russian pole vaulter Sergei Bubka, who won his first world title at the inaugural Championships in 1983, when only 19. Bubka has gone on to win his even at every subsequent World Athletics Championships.

Another eagerly anticipated appearance is that of US Olympic long-jump champion Carl Lewis, who will be attempting to add to his impressive collection of eight World Championships gold medals.

Long distance events promise exciting African clashes, with Ethiopia's Haile Gebrselassie, Kenya's Paul Tergat, Burundi's Venuste Nyiragabo, and Morocco's Salah Issouy vying to step up to the medal podium.

In the women's events, Russia's Svetlana Masterkova, Olympic gold medalist in the 800m and 1,500m and a double world record breaker in 1996, will be under scrutiny to prove that she is more than a one-year wonder.

Syria's Ghada Shouaa will be out to consolidate her reputation as the top sportswoman in the region and retain her heptathlon title. In addition, Shouaa has her sights on US track star Jackie Joyner-Kersey's eight-year-old world record for the event.

May will see the head-to-head duel between Michael Johnson and Canada's Donovan Bailey, who set a world 100m record of 9.84 seconds when winning the Olympic title. The Toronto confrontation takes place over the unusual distance of 150 metres. The one million dollars prize is the richest ever awarded in athletics.

Soccer enthusiasts will get most of their kicks at the club level. The European Cup Champions' League is heading for an outstanding climax with former winners England's Manchester United, Holland's Ajax Amsterdam and Italy's Juventus among the favourites.

Argentina's River Plate aims to retain the Libertadores Cup for South America's top club,

while Africa will inaugurate the new Champions' League. Egyptian club Zamalek start as favourites after their 1996 Champions Cup victory.

The 1998 World Cup qualifiers will be played throughout the year, with trouble already looming for the Czech Republic, Ghana, Spain, Tunisia and Uruguay, who have already dropped points and face some tricky opponents in the months ahead.

Motor racing looks set for its most open season for years. Reigning world champion Damon Hill has moved from Williams to the underdog Arrows team, and Germany's Michael Schumacher is still finding his feet at Ferrari. Canada's Jacques Villeneuve, Hill's former Williams teammate, is bidding to put a new name on the World Championship trophy.

Super-middleweight boxer Roy Jones is pound-for-pound the most exciting man in the ring, but the big question for fight fans is whether heavyweight Mike Tyson can regain his poise and world title after his November knock-out by Evander Holyfield. Iron Mike is looking a bit rustier these days, but a rematch with Holyfield, tentatively scheduled for June, could net each boxer 40 million dollars.

Not that Tyson needs the cash. Forbes magazine estimated that he was the highest-earning sportsman in the world last year, with 75 million dollars.

A little way behind him was basketball star Michael Jordan, with earnings of just over 50 million dollars. His team, the Chicago Bulls, hope to remain National Basketball Association champions, but the Houston Rockets — winners in 1994 and 1995 — have announced themselves as early season contenders. How much Hakeem Olajuwon can contribute, however, has become questionable after two recent heart scares.

American football and baseball champions have a tendency to stay on top only for a year. Do not expect either the Dallas Cowboys or New York Yankees to retain their titles. The Green Bay Packers and the Atlanta Braves could instead be the teams to watch in 1997.

Tiger Woods looks set to shake up golf. The 20-year-old American is the sport's brightest star for 30 years and has already won two tournaments since turning professional last summer.

Europe still has strong contenders for the mantle of the world's No 1 golfer with the British duo of US Masters winner Nick Faldo and Colin Montgomerie. South Africa's

Ernie Els, Zimbabwe's Nick Price and Japan's Masashi "Jumbo" Ozaki could also challenge strongly for golf's big prizes.

The Ryder Cup at the Spanish course of Valderrama in September should again be an exhilarating occasion as the US tries to turn the tables on Europe, narrow victors in 1995.

Men's tennis is going through a similar revival of interest, after several years of stagnation. Germany's Boris Becker started 1996 by winning the Australian Open and finished it in December by taking the 1.7 million dollars first prize at the Compaq Grand Slam Cup. Mix in world's No 1 Pete Sampras, French Open champion Yegor Kafelnikov, Holland's Richard Krajcek, and volatile but talented crowd-pleasers such as Croatia's Goran Ivanisevic, and men's tennis has an exciting year ahead.

By contrast, there are few new faces among the women. Monica Seles and Steffi Graf still dominate the top echelon of the game, despite persistent injuries. There is a huge gulf below them, which only Swiss teenager Martina Hingis seems to have a chance of breach.

Cycling's Tour De France offers one of the toughest challenges in world sport, and Spain's Miguel Indurain is still playing cat-and-mouse over whether he will make a serious effort to regain the title he won five times between 1991 and 1995. Perhaps his day has passed. Denmark's Bjarne Riis will try to repeat his 1996 victory in the gruelling three-week trek with Abraham Olano of Spain and Russia's Yevgeni Berzin among the main challengers.

Rugby Union fans will see the British Lions go to South Africa for the first time in 16 years. They play three Tests in June and July to decide whether northern or southern Hemisphere rugby has got the upper hand.

The ancient cricketing rivalry between England and Australia will also be rekindled in the summer when the Ashes are contested on English turf.

Inevitably, there will be scandals and shocks in 1997. Every year brings its drug revelations or tragedies such as the Guatemala crowd disaster that left 81 dead. But most fans will be looking forward to the coming year for what happens on the field of play rather than off it. — Gemini

About the Author Phil Minshull is a top British sports journalist who writes and broadcasts regularly for a range of newspapers, magazines and radio networks.

## Sino booters upset US

BEIJING, Jan 29: China beat a lacklustre US World Cup Wednesday in their first soccer friendly match since 1992, reports AP.

Veteran Chinese forward Hao Haidong scored in the 11th minute, with a sliding shot under the American goalkeeper into the back of the net.

Chinese defender Li Tie grabbed the second goal with a crisp right-foot volley off a cross in the 30th minute.

Eric Wynalda, a US veteran of the 1990 and 1994 World Cup, had a consolation goal for the visitors after 73 minutes, weaving round the keeper and shooting into the bottom left-hand corner of the net.

The US team, missing many of its top players, never appeared comfortable on the dusty pitch in Kunming, southwest China. The two teams meet again in Canton on Feb. 1 in their two-match friendly series.

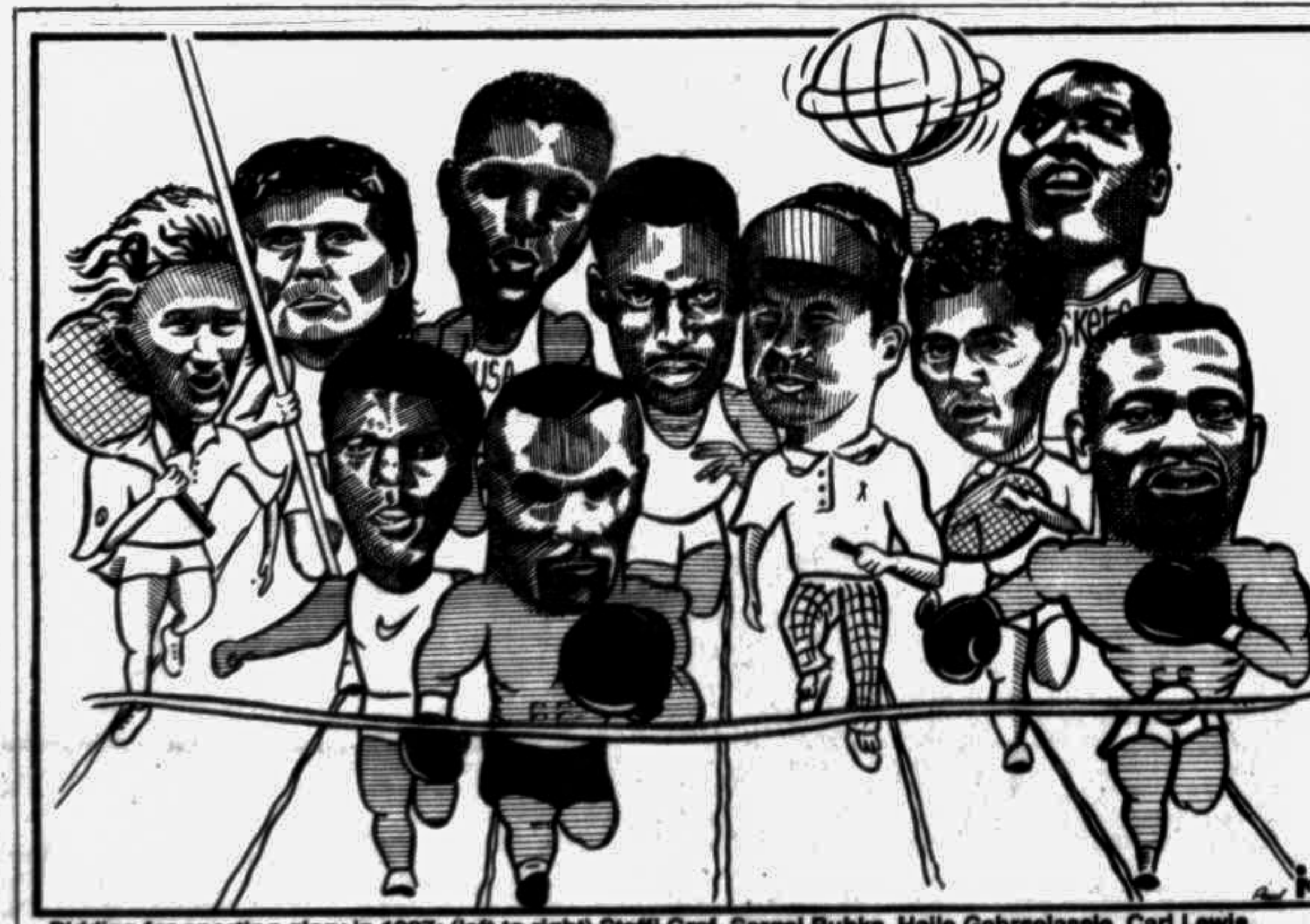
The United States played China three times in 1977 but only once since, a 5-0 victory over the Americans in 1992 at Stanford, California.

## Lu back with a bang

GLASGOW, Jan 29: China's disgraced swimming sensation Lu Bin won the 50m backstroke in the fifth round of the World Short Course Cup here on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Lu, competing for the first time outside her country after serving a two-year suspension for doping, insisted after winning in 28.74 that she was no drug cheat.

"It's a mystery to me how I tested positive," said the 19-year-old, who won the 200m individual medley at the World Championships in 1994. "I didn't use any drugs and now I want to show my ability as a swimmer is natural."



Bidding for sporting glory in 1997: (left to right) Steffi Graf, Sergei Bubka, Haile Gebrselassie, Carl Lewis, Mike Tyson, Michael Johnson, Nick Faldo, Pete Sampras, Hakeem Olajuwon, Roy Jones