

Incontrad v'ball Tangail reach final round

Tangail DSA yesterday emerged champions from Madhupur zone to reach the final round (men's) of the Incontrad inter-district volleyball championship outplaying Gazipur in straight sets, reports UNB.

Tangail are joined in the 10-team final round by defending champions Rangpur, Khulna, Rajshahi, Kushtia, Chittagong, Dhaka, Comilla, Dinajpur and Jhalakati.

In the women's group, 13 teams will play in the final phase. They are: Tangail, Comilla, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Pabna, Rajbari, Chuadanga, Bhola, Gazipur, Netrakona, Kushtia, Nilphamari and defending champions Khulna.

Both men's and women's groups will begin on Thursday at the Mirpur National Indoor Stadium.

Oliveira takes over Betis

SEVILLE, Spain, Aug 2 (Reuters/Internet): Antonio Oliveira will be presented as the new coach of Spanish first division side Real Betis on Tuesday, officials said on Sunday.

Oliveira, who coached the Portuguese national side in Euro 96 and last year led Porto to a League and Cup double, has signed a two-year deal with the Seville club.

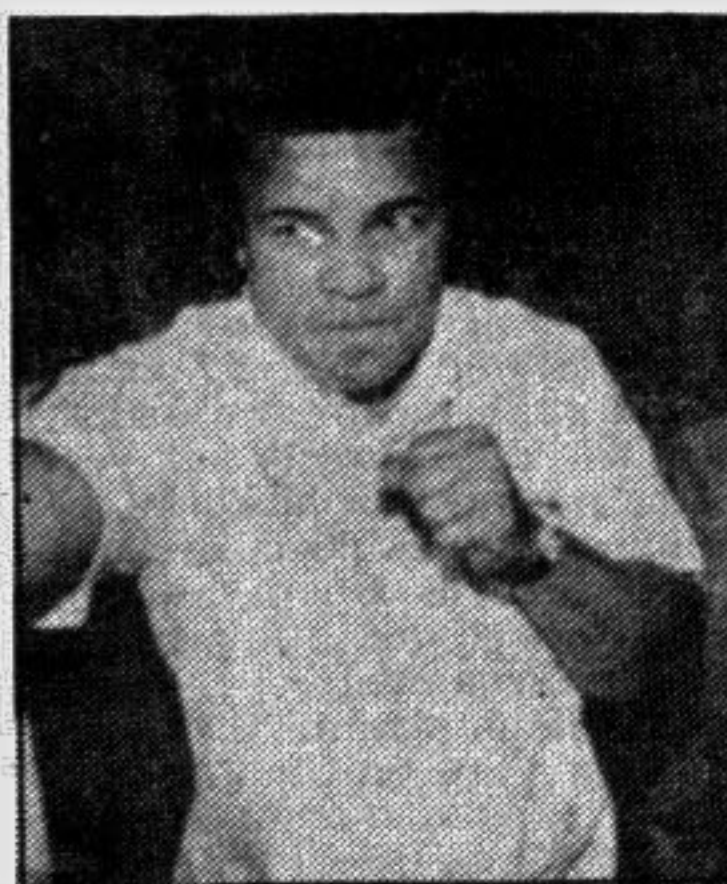
Betis president Manuel Ruiz de Lopera, who found himself without a coach for the new season following last week's surprise resignation of Luis Aragones, confirmed the appointment, saying: "We have chosen Oliveira because we needed a coach of stature."

"He has a good track record and knows how to manage star names."

That last attribute will perhaps be the most important as Oliveira's main task will be to bring the best out of Denilson, the Brazilian midfielder signed by Lopera for a world record fee of \$35 million.

Ali opts for 'magic cure'

BOCA RATON, Florida, Aug 2 (AP): Muhammad Ali reportedly is trying an experimental and unconventional treatment for the Parkinson's syndrome that has slowed his reflexes and made it difficult for him to talk.



A retired dentist and oral surgeon claims his resonance machine, which emits a weak magnetic field, could cure the former heavyweight champion. Ali has received five treatments, which consist of sitting between two magnetic black, 2 1/2-metre (8-foot) high circles on beach chair, according to The Palm Beach Post.

"I've been to 15 different doctors," Ali said. "None of them have been able to do anything." Jerry Jacobs' device was not familiar to Dr Robert Brodner, a West Palm Beach neurosurgeon who has performed brain surgery on about 60 people with Parkinson's.

"I don't know what this fellow is talking about. I only hope that he does," Brodner said. "Any treatment that doesn't have the potential to harm a patient can be considered."

Shearer puts speculation to rest

LONDON, Aug 2: England international striker Alan Shearer has pledged his future to Newcastle United, dismissing reports that he could quit the Magpies if they have a poor season in the English Premiership, reports AFP.

"I signed a five-year contract when I joined Newcastle and I'll be very surprised if I don't see it through," Shearer told today's edition of the News of the World.

"I'm as committed to the club as I have ever been. I've only been back in training a few days but I'm excited and eager about the start of the new season."

"I came here to win the game's honours and I don't see why those ambitions cannot be satisfied at Newcastle. My thoughts are shared by everyone at St James' Park, especially Kenny Daiglish. He is one of the most ambitious people I know."

"There is a quiet belief among the whole playing staff that we are going to get it right next season. We are all working flat out to make sure we get back among the elite clubs challenging for the title."



Michelle Kwan (C) of the USA acknowledges the crowds applause from the victory podium after the free programme routine of ice skating at the Goodwill Games in Uniondale on Aug 1. Gold medalist Kwan is being flanked by silver winner Maria Butyrskaya (L) of Russia and bronze medalist Victoria Volchkova also of Russia. — AFP photo

Jenny & crew hit the jackpot

UNIONDALE, New York, Aug 2 (AP): The money will come in handy for the four US women swimmers who won it. The team gold was worth its weight in memories for the others Saturday night.

The American team, led by Jenny Thompson and Cristina Teuscher, won the team gold after defeating Germany 78-44, its third straight dual-meet win at the Goodwill Games.

The gold medal is worth 50,000 dollars to the winning team, and since only four of the 18 team members are out of college, those four get to share the loot.

Thompson of Dover, New Hampshire; captain Lea Maurer of Crestwood, New York; Michelle Fox of Scotia, New York; and Ashley Tappin of New Orleans will take home 12,500 dollars each for the team gold medal.

With an additional 1,000 dollars going to the best time in each event during the three dual meets, Thompson ultimately won 14,000 dollars and three gold medals.

Teuscher, of New Rochelle, New York, ineligible for prize money because she still attends Columbia University, won the 200 freestyle and the 200 individual medley against Germany.

Teuscher had a chance for five gold medals: the team gold, the 800 and 400 freestyles, the 200 IM and the freestyle relay. But the World All-Star team, in an 86-35 dual-meet victory over China, took away her golds in all but the 800 and the team event.

"It was a fairy tale week — an emotional roller-coaster, intense and exciting," Teuscher said. "I think this will make me stronger and more confident. I wanted to prove it to myself more than anything else."

Thompson won the 100 freestyle and swam a leg of the winning 400 medley relay against Germany.

Saturday night's US freestyle relay team was disqualified for an early start, and the World team surpassed an earlier United States time later Saturday.

Even with the relay disqualification, the United States won 10 of the 14 events against the Germans, including the first six to give it a 38-14 lead.

The US also had the best time in the 100 freestyle going into the final World Team-China match-up, but Martina Moravcova of Slovakia topped Thompson with a time of 55.46 seconds, .10 better than Thompson, who won the silver.

Maurer, with the best time in the 100 backstroke, won an additional 1,000 dollars. Penny Hens of South Africa, who won two gold medals, set a world record in the 50-metre breaststroke Saturday night, but because it is not an official event, she will not earn the 50,000 dollars offered to anyone setting a world record in swimming.

Heys was timed in 30.95 seconds on the first lap of the

100 breaststroke event. Because the 50 breaststroke is not an event in itself, Heys will not earn the 50,000 dollars, a ruling that Heys disputed after the race, saying, "there was no fine print."

Figure skating finished, and Michelle Kwan added a Goodwill Games gold medal to her two world and US titles.

The Olympic silver medalist easily beat the field, bouncing back from a rare fall to get solid 5.9s for presentation before a near-capacity crowd that included former President Jimmy Carter. Russia's Maria Butyrskaya and Victoria Volchkov were 2-3.

World champions Anjelika Krylova and Oleg Ovsiannikov won the ice dance gold with an energetic free dance, which earned two perfect scores. The silver medal went to another Russian couple, Irina Lobacheva and Ilia Averbukh, with Elena Grushina and Russian Goncharov of Ukraine taking the bronze.

The dream matchup in women's beach volleyball fell one match short.

Holly McPeak and Lisa Arce,

the No 2 team, were upset by Australia's Kerri Pottharst and Pauline Manser, 12-11, 11-12, 12-6, in the semifinals.

That deprived the Games of a final-day gold-medal meeting between the top two teams. The No 1 duo, Brazil's Shelda Bede and Adriana Behar, made it with a 12-5, 12-7 victory over Laura Bruschini and Annamaria Solazzi of Italy.

McPeak and Arce have won three international tournaments and finished second in last year's World Championship. After squandering two set points in the opener, they put together an impressive rally from 10-3 down to win the second set, but never were really in the decisive set, which was played under rally rules — a point on every serve.

The US team led 3-2 in the third set, but the Australians took the lead for good with the next three points, then closed out the match by scoring the last five points.

This was the first match of either the men's or women's competition to go to the deciding set.

Gymnastics competition

The Bangladesh Monitor gymnastics competition begins today at the National Sports Council, reports UNB.

Seventy gymnasts will compete in the two-day 15 events meet, organised by Bangladesh Gymnastics Federation.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain will be the chief guest on the opening day and distribute prizes.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader will be the chief guest on the closing day.

Transfer

MIDDLESBOROUGH, England, Aug 2 (Reuters/Internet): Northern Ireland winger Keith Gillespie joined Middlesbrough from Newcastle for 3.5 million pounds (\$5.76 million) on Sunday.

Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson moved in for the unsettled Gillespie after failing to sign Italian World Cup winger Francesco Moriero from Inter Milan.

Gillespie, who moved to St James Park from Manchester United in January 1995, had not been offered a new contract by Newcastle after initial talks broke down.

Gillespie's agent Ian Elliott said the player had parted company with Newcastle on good terms.

Gillespie, signed on a five-year contract, will make his Middlesbrough debut in a tournament in The Hague next weekend.

Booters bring home the beacon

Sports Reporter

The national football team returned home yesterday after a brief but significant visit to Qatar where Bangladesh drew both the friendly matches against their fancied opponents.

Bangladesh, who went to the desert kingdom on July 28 following an invitation from the Qatar Football Association (QFA), came from behind to hold the hosts Olympic team to a one-all draw.

Buoyed by the success of their first match against the Under-23 side of the country who are holding the 70th position in the FIFA world ranking, Bangladesh produced another spirited display to snatch a credible goalless draw against the Qatar national team on July 31.

The outcome of the second match, which was televised live in Qatar, caused a ripple among the locals with the press blasting QAF for failing to outclass minnows Bangladesh, who are ranked 147th by FIFA. The media however, lauded the performance of the visitors, who at last found some breathing space after some rather forgettable showings in recent times.

The commendable performance in Qatar comes at a time when sports lovers in the country are more inclined to talk about cricket than the otherwise success-starved football. This offers a sigh of relief for the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) who are struggling to find a sponsor to start the national league from this year.

"It's true that we didn't win a match there. But we are the moral victors in the clash of the two unequal opponents", said the manager of the Bangladesh team Khurshid Babul. The former national player also said that he was most impressed by the way Bangladesh played against their superior counterparts.

Credit must go to Abu Yousuf for bringing home the beacon in his first assignment as the coach of the national team.

"When I got the job a month ago, I set my target. Though Qatar is a strong side I told my boys that we were not going there to lose", said Yousuf. The former national defender said that his words of courage did the trick.

"We played a defensive game. But that was not erratic football. We have conceded only one yellow card in two matches, said Yousuf.

"I have to confess I had a feeling that the players might not give their total effort. But I can assure you that they did and are ready to give more than hundred percent. What you need is to motivate the players to achieve a target" said Yousuf, who started his coaching career with Jurain Janata three years back.

The gutsy defender also coached Mohammedan Sporting Club before switching to Abahani last season. But the irony of Yousuf is that despite being successful with both the titans he was never considered good enough for the national team and was forced to take the back seat on arrival of foreign coaches. Although it was not confirmed whether Yousuf will continue with this demanding job, his former teammate Babul said "I am going to submit his report regarding the performance of the team in Qatar within a week."

Musisi's merry comeback



JOHANNESBURG, Aug 2: Uganda's prodigal son Magidi Musisi returned to international football for the first time in more than two years to score a hat-trick in a 5-0 defeat of Rwanda in an African Nations' Cup qualifier on Saturday, reports Reuters.

Musisi, who plays his club soccer in Turkey and has been the only successful Ugandan export to European soccer, scored in the first minute and completed his hat-trick just two minutes into the second half of the preliminary round, first leg tie at the Nakivubo stadium.

Algeria, Kenya and Namibia also won at the start of the qualifying campaign for the 2000 finals in Zimbabwe.

Algeria made a strong recovery after their disastrous showing at the 1998 finals by beating Libya 2-0 in Tripoli on Friday.

Algeria won thanks to two goals from Abdelhafid Tassafout, who missed the finals tournament in February through injury. Libya were playing their first Nations' Cup game in 13 years after being allowed to return to African competition despite United Nations sanctions against the country.

Kenya won 3-0 over debutants Djibouti on Friday but Namibia could only scrape a 2-1 victory over Malawi at home on Saturday.

Rwanda, who were expected

to put up strong opposition, never recovered from Musisi's early goal, midfielder Philip Obwiny and Musisi scored two more goals just before half-time.

Hooijdonks has to stay

NOTTINGHAM, England, Aug 2 (Reuters/Internet): Nottingham Forest's Dutch World Cup striker Pierre van Hooijdonk has had a transfer request turned down.

Van Hooijdonk asked for a move after criticising Forest's decision to sell his strike partner Kevin Campbell to Turkish side Trabzonspor.

He also said Forest, promoted last season, were not good enough to survive in the English Premier league.

Forest manager Dave Bassett said: "Pierre signed a five-year contract when he joined us from Celtic and he's still got four of that to run. We're not making him available. We want him to stay."

and Musisi completed his hat-trick soon after the break.

There was a fifth goal from Joseph Mutyaba in the 83rd minute to leave the Ugandans perfectly placed for the return leg in Kigali on August 16.

Djibouti's first-ever Nations Cup game saw them on the backfoot after just four minutes with Maurice Sanguit scoring for Kenya.

An own goal and a third from Eric Omondi further spiced the occasion for the tiny Red Sea state, who joined FIFA's ranks four years ago.

Namibia, the surprise package of the last qualifying competition, have their backs to the wall in spite of a 2-1 win over Malawi on Saturday.

The away goal scored by Cedric Nakhumwa for Malawi could prove vital in the return match in Blantyre on August 15.

Today sees a further 10 preliminary round, first leg matches. The aggregate winners go into the group phase of the qualifiers which gets underway in October.

Owen opens his account

DUBLIN, Aug 2: England star Michael Owen grabbed his first goal since his World Cup heroics Liverpool beat English Premiership rivals Leeds to win the four-team Carlsberg Trophy here on Saturday, reports AFP.

It was Owen's first start in Liverpool's pre-season build-up and the club's vast Irish following in the 30,000 crowd erupted after 56 minutes when he collected a ball from Paul Ince, cut across a defender and smashed a 20-year drive inside the far post.

Owen could have had a hat-trick in the first half, was unlucky not to win a penalty, and troubled Leeds with his searing pace all afternoon.

A minute before Owen's goal, Czech star Patrik Berger had put Liverpool ahead with a 20-metre drive following good work from Steve McManaman.

In the third place play-off, Italian giants Lazio — who had 60 million pounds (100 million dollars) of talent on show beat the Irish part-timers of St Patrick's Athletic 4-1.

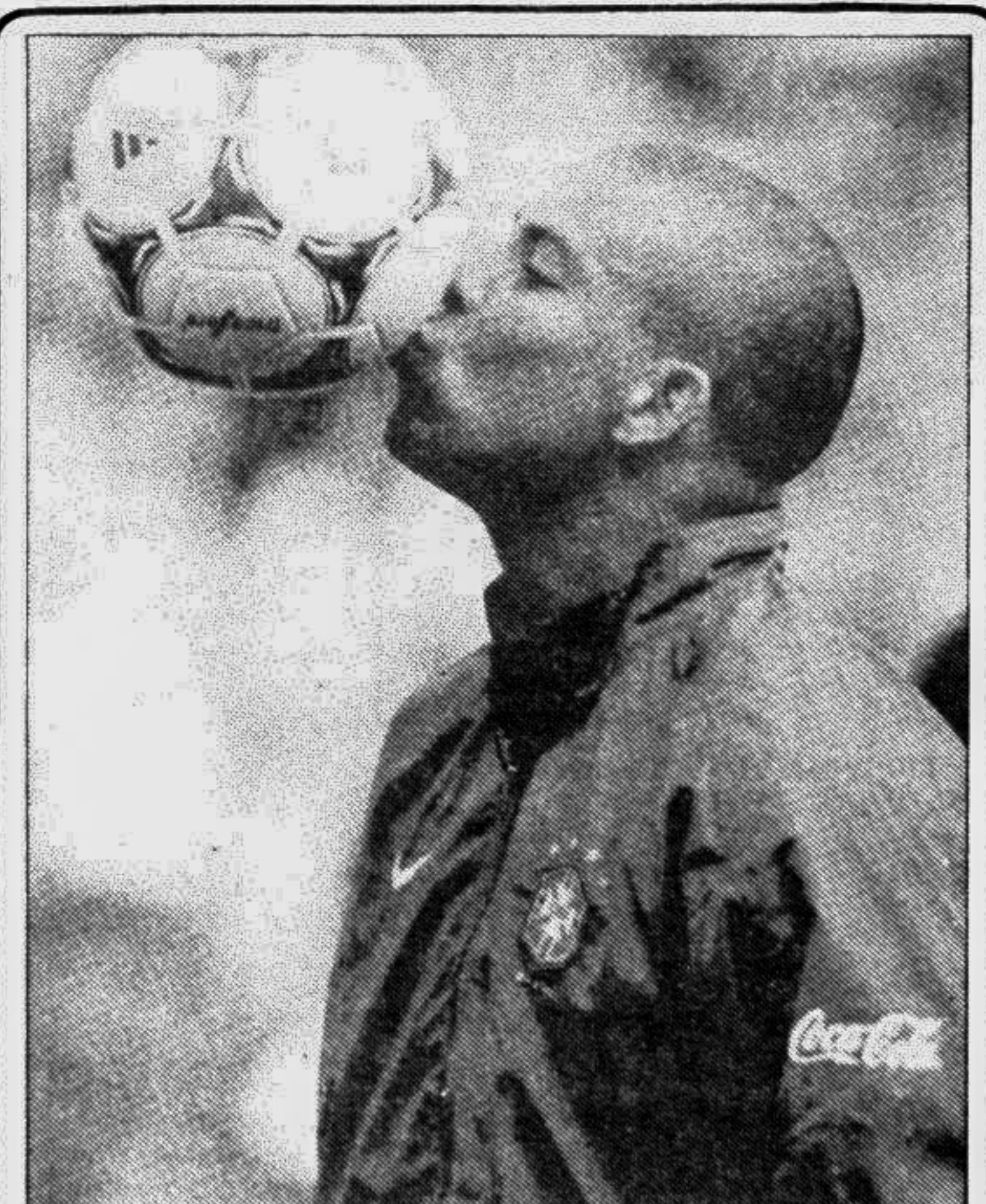
Premier kabadi

Bangladesh Rifles (Sr) maintained their all-win record in the 5th KM Mainuddin Smriti Premier kabadi league outplaying Fire Service B by 56-11 points at the kabadi court of Oute Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

The Rifles (Sr) earned five creditable lonas and dominated the first half by a clear margin of 38-2 points in the day's first match.

In the day's other match, Rifles (Jr) registered their second victory in third appearance beating Bangladesh Ansar VDP by 36-19 points at the same venue.

The winners bagged two lonas and were leading the first session by 10-5 points.



Ronaldo FIFA's choice

ZURICH, Aug 2: Brazil's Ronaldo has been voted as the best player of the 1998 FIFA World Cup.

Ronaldo came out top in the traditional poll organised by Adidas, one of the official sponsors of the World Cup, among the media accredited to cover the 64-match finals. He received 21.3% of the votes cast.

He was followed by Davor Suker of Croatia (10.8%) and Lillian Thuram of France (8.8%). The three players receive the Golden, Silver and Bronze Ball trophies respectively.

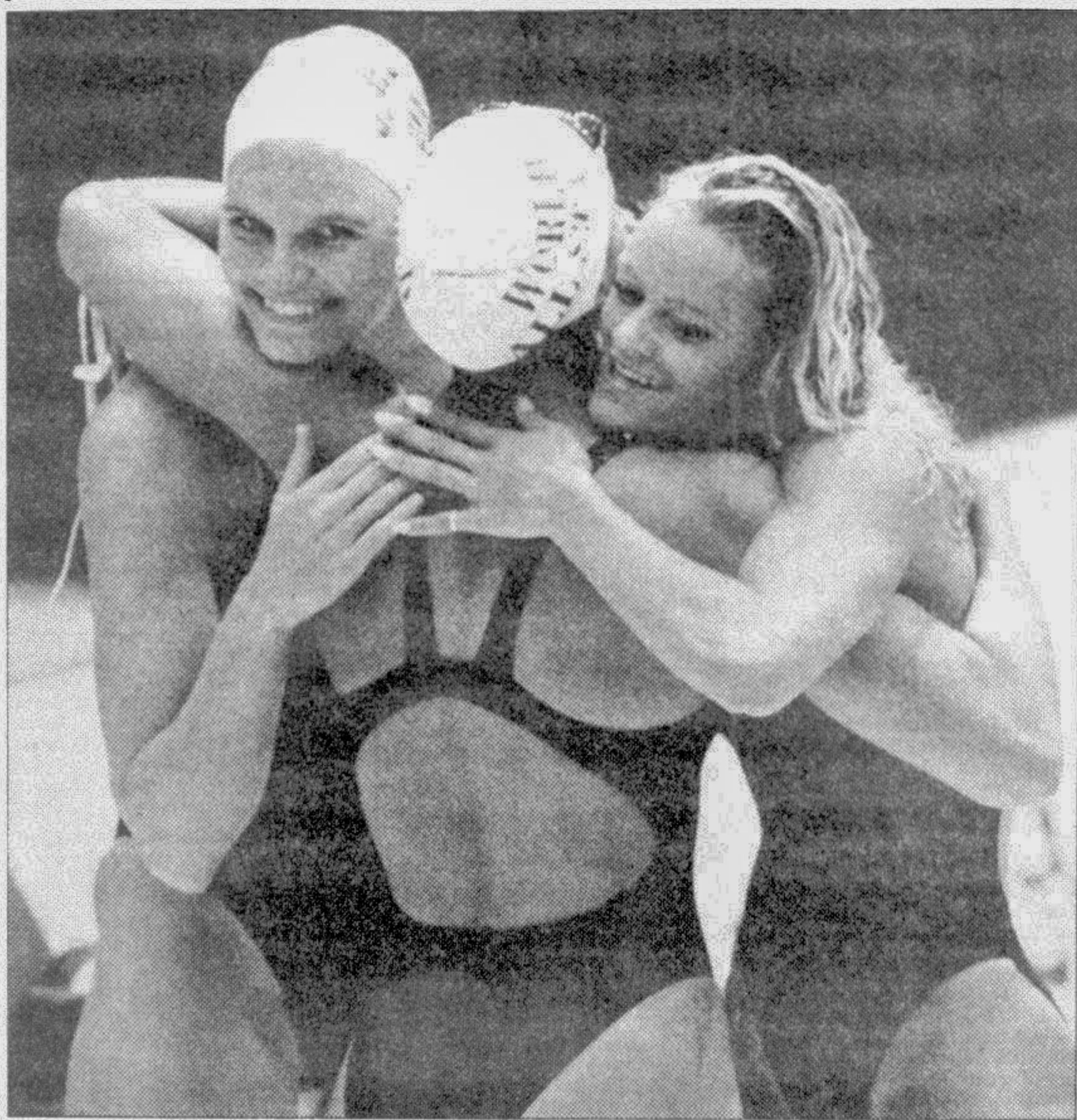
TOP TEN PLAYERS
1. Ronaldo (BRA), 2. Davor Suker (CRO), 3. Lillian Thuram (FRA), 4. Marcel Desailly (FRA), 5. Rivaldo (BRA), 6. Zinedine Zidane (FRA), 7. Michael Owen (ENG), 8. Edgar Davids (HOL), 9. Dunga (BRA), 10. Dennis Bergkamp (HOL).

Previous winners of the Golden Ball have been Romario (1994), Lothar Matthaus (1990), Diego Maradona (1986), and Paolo Rossi (1982).

The winners of the Adidas Golden and Silver Shoe trophies for the top goalscorers are:
1. Davor Suker (Croatia), 6 goals.
2. Gabriel Batistuta (Argentina), 5 goals + 3 assists.

Christian Vieri (Italy), 5 goals + 3 assists
The awards will be presented on the occasion of the FIFA World Player-of-the-Year gala evening in Barcelona in January 1999.

Source: Internet



Costa Rican Claudia Poll (L), Egyptian Ronia Elwani (C) and Dutch Inge de Bruijn of the World All-Star team, are over the moon after winning the 4x100 metres relay at the Goodwill Games on August 1. — AFP photo