

European soccer scene

Inter ride on Ronaldo

UNDATED, Sept 21 (AFP/AP): Superstar Ronaldo was on target for Inter Milan in the Italian Serie A. Bayern Munich's rich vein of form continued in the Bundesliga while in the Spanish Premier League, Real Zaragoza missed the chance to go atop as Sunday's soccer fixtures ended in Europe.

ITALY
Ronaldo made a match-winning debut for Inter driving home a penalty for a 1-0 victory over Fiorentina.

Ronaldo, suspended for the season-opener against Cagliari, won himself an early birthday present and earned a respite for under-fire coach Gigi Simoni in a harsh-tackling match.

The turning point came when Inter's 19-year-old whizkid Andrea Pirlo was tripped by defender Stefano Sacchetti. Ronaldo drove his spot-kick in the right-hand corner, sending the goalkeeper the wrong way.

"It was my first match and my first goal," said the Brazilian, who turns 22 on Tuesday. "I hope it's a good omen, because I'm looking to be the Ronaldo I was last season or even better."

Looking ahead to the expected championship duel with Juventus, he said: "We're all hungry for victory and we're a real team. We're on the right road."

Juventus chalked up a 1-0 victory over Cagliari after being rifled into an eight-minute lead by Filippo "superpippo" Inzaghi.

But it was another disappointing day for Alessandro Del Piero, who hasn't scored in open play since last April despite a dozen games between club and international duty.

Coach Marcello Lippi said: "We know that we are not really sorted yet, but the important thing is to get results when the team aren't on top form."

Marcio Amoroso was Udinese's hero in a 3-1 win at Bologna after a heart-stopping finish. The Brazilian striker headed them into a 14th minute lead and then converted a 44th minute penalty after being tripped by goalkeeper Francesco Antonioli.

Bologna had Amedeo Mangone sent off just before the break but Igor Kokyvanov pulled one back by converting a 63rd penalty — only for his Russian teammate Igor Simunovic to miss another in the 83rd.

Two minutes later, Belgian midfielder Johan Walem volleyed in Udinese's third for the team's first win there since 1982.

Big-spending Lazio ground out their second draw, 0-0 with Bari.

And he warned: "Juventus — we'll catch you."

City rivals AS Roma could do no better at Empoli after international midfielder Luigi Di Biagio missed an 85th minute penalty — just as he did in Italy's shoot-out with France in the World Cup quarterfinal.

Sampdoria finished 1-1 with Perugia after they too missed a match-winning penalty.

Frenchman Pierre Laigle scored for Sampdoria, Perugia levelled in the 49th minute through Renato Olive and then watched Sampdoria striker Vincenzo Montella miss a 72nd minute spot-kick.

Parma meanwhile clocked up their second consecutive 0-0 draw at Venezia.

Ottmar Hitzfeld, built there lead in the table to five points with the home victory in front of 50,000 at Olympiastadion.

Munich, whose only setback this season was a loss to Breonby Copenhagen last week in the Champions League, has outscored opponents 17-5 while picking up five league wins in as many outings.

Dael struck twice in the 19th and 39th, but Hamburg's Anthony Yeboah provided a temporary equaliser in the 22nd with the fast-paced contest's most spectacular goal.

Yeboah, a former Bundesliga scoring king, froze German national team players Thomas Helmer and Lothar Matthaus before unloading his shot.

But Munich, who have jelled offensively under Hitzfeld, was never in jeopardy against Hamburg, whose lineup includes 19-

year-old Fabian Ernst, a defensive midfielder regarded by some as Germany's most talented newcomer in many years.

Effenberg added a goal in the 58th minute, converted a penalty in the 70th, while Brazilian teammate Giovane Elber capped the Munich scoring a minute before the whistle.

Hamburg keeper Hans-Joerg Butt converted a penalty for his team in the 69th minute before Martin Groth blasted a free kick under the cross bar five minutes later.

Stefan Emmerling also salvaged a 2-2 home draw or Duisburg with a last-minute equaliser against Moenchengladbach.

The loss means Real Madrid maintained their lead on goal difference over the First Division after drawing with arch-rivals FC Barcelona a day earlier.

The big chance for Alaves, from the northern city of Vitoria, came in the 70th when Manuel Canabal scored between the Zaragoza goalkeeper's legs.

Canabal's goal became the first scored by Alaves in the Premier Division in 42 years.

Zaragoza is now No. 3 in the league with 6 points, one behind Real Madrid.

Madrid was held at a 2-2 draw by defending champion FC Barcelona. Raul Gonzalez scored twice for Madrid while Barcelona's goals came from Brazilian ace Sonny Anderson and Dutchman Patrick Kluitv.

Salamanca beat Deportivo

La Caruna 3-1. Argentina Walter Silvani scored a goal in each half to lead Salamanca to their first victory in the league.

Ramos of Uruguay added another in the 61st. Salamanca's Sergio Corino helped the rivals with an own goal in the second half.

In San Sebastian, Mallorca's defender Marcelino Elena made it 1-0 in the 16th minute, giving the visiting team a needed victory against middle-ranked Real Sociedad.



FINDING HIS FEET: Ronaldo of Inter Milan going past Pietro Vierchowood, Piacenza's former Italy international defender, during their Serie A match at the San Siro Stadium on September 20. Inter prevailed 1-0.

Malaysian shuttlers shine

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 21: Malaysia's Wong Choon Han came from a game down to beat compatriot Yong Hock Kin and claim the gold medal in the men's singles badminton competition at the commonwealth Games on Monday, reports AP.

Wong, Malaysia's No 3 player who has been in strong form since the Thomas Cup in May, won 10-15, 15-12, 15-8 in a tense match lasting 76 minutes.

The victory was Wong's first against Yong in their three meetings. He started aggressively in the first set, taking a 9-5 lead with several strong crosscourt smashes. The more experienced Yong fought back to level at 10-10 and won the game in 27 minutes.

Wong, 21, outplayed Yong in the third with some deceptive shot and good work at the net. "I was really exhausted as I had to match Yong stroke for stroke," said Wong. "I was lucky I played Yong on his bad day."

In the men's doubles gold medal round, Malaysia's second pair of Chong Tan Fook and Lee Wan Wah scored an upset 15-7, 15-4 win over No 1-ranked compatriots Cheah Soon Kit and Yap Kim Hock.

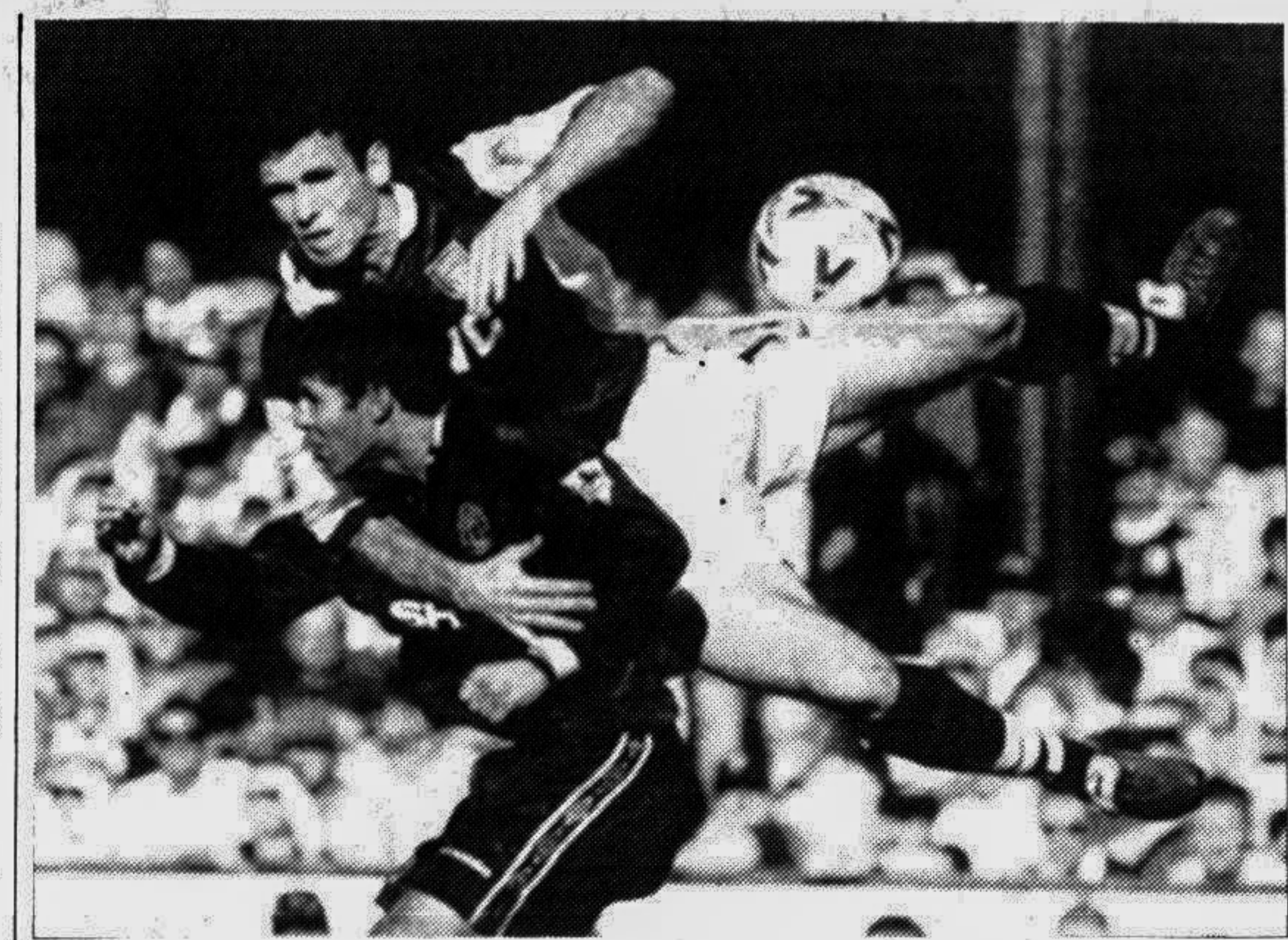
"We just went to the court and did our best. We felt no pressure at all," said Wan Wah. Tan Fook said the winning duo was inspired by its critics.

At the beginning of the tournament, people said we can't beat England, can't even beat Northern Ireland. But today, we proved that we can do it," said Tan Fook.

And it could have been worse as Alex Ferguson's team, once the pride of England, appeared to lose their heads in the Highbury heat.

Roy Keane, who had already been booked, was fortunate to escape a red card for what looked like a stamping offence on Stephen Hughes that left the Arsenal midfielder clutching his chest. Keane also got away with a fierce tackle on Marc Overmars.

Not just that, David Beckham, trying to live down the disgrace of his World Cup dismissal against Argentina, showed he still trends a tightrope with a rash challenge on Hughes.



RUGBY TACKLE! Martin Kewon (top) of Arsenal jumps atop Manchester United's Ryan Giggs during the Premiership clash at Highbury, London on September 20. Arsenal won 3-0. — AP/UNB photo

Gunners give MU a real hiding

LONDON, Sept 21 (Internet): Manchester United were humiliated by champions Arsenal yesterday, losing 3-0 and having Nicky Butt sent off for the second time in five days.

And it could have been worse as Alex Ferguson's team, once the pride of England, appeared to lose their heads in the Highbury heat.

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Not just that, David Beckham, trying to live down the disgrace of his World Cup dismissal against Argentina, showed he still trends a tightrope with a rash challenge on Hughes.

Yet manager Ferguson was unhappy with United's commitment. He said: "Arsenal were prepared to give fouls away to win the match, but we were tiptoeing into tackles."

They were far more determined and won the game with their effort. We were second best in every challenge, particularly in the first 20 minutes.

"It was really disappointing and there are some games where you can find no excuses because there is no place for them. This was one of them."

The Arsenal tore the heart out of United with first-half goals from Tony Adams and Nicolas Anelka, and a late third from substitute Fredrik Ljungberg, their 3 million pounds new signing. It left Ferguson bitter and upset about the performance of a team which included 27 million pounds worth of new boys in Dwight Yorke, Jaap Stam and Jesper Blomqvist.

United are presently 10th in the league, six points behind leaders Aston Villa and two points behind fifth-placed Arsenal.

Butt, sent off for hand-ball in United's 3-3 draw with Barcelona in the Champions League last Wednesday, was perhaps unlucky to be dismissed for yesterday's challenge on Patrick Vieira.

Referee Graham Barber is prepared to review his decision should United ask the FA to study video evidence, and Ferguson said: "I've seen the sending-off and according to the official it was for a tackle from behind and because he was the last man."

He's wrong on both counts. You can talk about professional referees, but how can it improve a decision like that? What difference will it make if we do appeal? It won't alter the result. The mistake is made and the referee can't change his mind.

What chance have you got? He should know when he sees the video.

Ferguson's dark mood was in stark contrast to that of his Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger, who said: "We are back. We got our game back in Lens in midweek and built on that. Now we have our confidence again."

"I said this game would shape the course of our season, and it would have been a big blow to lose. But this pushes us up with the contenders."

It was the champions' first victory in six games but the diplomatic Wenger tried to play down Arsenal's anger for the Beckham tackle on Hughes, and the challenges from Keane.

Wenger said: "Beckham is not a dirty player, there was no intent. Keane is aggressive but if you take that out of his game, he is not Roy Keane."

Similarly Hughes, booked for a challenge that left Beckham clutching his face, tried to play down the clashes, saying: "It's always going to be tough. You have to look after yourself. Beckham and Keane are not dirty players. You give a knock and you have to take one and get on with it."

Hughes, deputising for the injured Emmanuel Petit, added: "I'm not complaining. We played well and got the three points. That's all that's important."

Wenger was pleased with the debut of Ljungberg, the 21-year-old Swedish striker who has taken over the No 8 shirt previously worn by Ian Wright.

Wenger said: "To score in his first game, against Manchester United, was a really good start. You can imagine how he felt to make his debut against United after coming from Sweden but he showed a great reaction to stay inside when the ball came through and he finished very well."

Pak shooter disqualified

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 21: A Pakistani shooter was disqualified at the Commonwealth Games for using a drug that helps to lower the heart rate, officials said Monday, reports AP.

The shooter was found to have used beta-blockers, Michael Fennell, chairman of the Commonwealth Games Federation, told reporters. Beta-blockers are banned because they can help shooters by lessening shaking by their hands.

Fennell did not identify the shooter or give any other details. Pakistani officials were not immediately available for comment.

The disqualification was the only doping incident reported at the 16th Commonwealth Games, which were ending last Monday.

Fennell said the federation was not looking at the possibility of introducing biometrics. Urine tests now are used to check for use of banned drugs.

Di Biagio can't take it anymore

MILAN, Sept 21: Italy's Luigi Di Biagio has vowed not to take any more penalties after his blunders cost his country a place in the World Cup semifinals and his club three points at the weekend, reports AFP.

The AS Roma midfielder hit the crossbar with his spot-kick against France in the quarter-finals at St Denis, and then watched the goalkeeper save his effort in a 0-0 draw at Empoli on Sunday.

Brazilians in goal-fest

RIO DE JANEIRO, Sept 21 (Reuters/Internet): The Brazilian championship produced a feast of goals at the weekend, with 51 in 11 games. In Argentina, Boca Juniors won again to stay top of the table while the country's other big club River Plate continued to slide downwards.

Brazil championship leaders Corinthians won 5-4 away to Ponte Preta, who fought back from 5-1 behind to give their opponents a late scare, while fourth-placed Portuguesa hammered Sao Paulo 7-2, four of their goals coming in an eight-minute spell in the first half.

After the fourth Portuguese goal, a whole section of the Sao Paulo supporters turned their backs to the pitch in protest.

Flamengo striker Romario scored an early goal for his team, only to be upstaged by rival Viola who grabbed a hat-trick as Santos fought back to win 4-1 and stay second.

Another high-scoring game saw third-placed Sport Recife hammer 1996 champions Gremio 5-0 as the qualifying

stage of the competition reached its halfway mark.

The 24 teams play each other once with the top eight going into the quarter-finals.

ARGENTINA
Boca Juniors, who have not won a title since 1992, stayed top of the Argentine championship with a 2-1 win at home to previously unbeaten Newell's Old Boys, striker Martin Palermo scoring both of their goals.

MEXICO
Guadalajara, who proudly maintain a policy of fielding only Mexican players in a championship dominated by foreigners, overcame America 1-0 in the clash between the country's two biggest rivals at the Jalisco stadium.

Substitute Hector de Angel scored the winner one minute before halftime after going on for the injured Mexican international Luis Garcia.

The 18 teams play each other once but are divided into four groups with eight sides going into the knockout stage.

Guadalajara lead group one with Morelia, Necaxa and Atlas, 4-0 winners over Atlante, heading the others.

CHILE
Colo Colo increased their lead to three points by beating bottom-of-the-table Wanderers while second-placed Concepcion's hopes of an unlikely title took a dive with a 1-0 defeat at Puerto Montt.

SIX NO TRUMPS

A K Sayeedul Huq

GOOD BIDDING BY EAST AND WEST (Hand # 100)

| | | | |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|
| North | South | West | East |
| ♠ K J 10 9 6 | ♠ S 4 3 | ♠ S 4 3 | ♠ S A Q 8 2 |
| ♥ J 10 8 3 2 | ♥ H 4 | ♥ H 4 | ♥ H K 5 |
| ♦ D 4 | ♦ D A K 10 9 3 2 | ♦ D A K 10 9 3 2 | ♦ D Q J 5 |
| ♣ C 9 4 | ♣ C J 8 3 2 | ♣ C J 8 3 2 | ♣ C A K Q 8 |

Bidding: East-West were vulnerable.

| | | | |
|----------|------------|----------|------------|
| South | West | North | East |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | 1 Club* |
| Pass | 1 Heart** | Pass | 1 No Trump |
| 3 Hearts | 2 Diamonds | 2 Spades | Double |
| Pass | 4 Diamonds | 4 Hearts | 4 Spades |
| Pass | 6 Diamonds | Pass | Pass |

* Artificial, 18 or more HCP.
** Artificial, showing 7-9 HCP.

In response to East's 1 Club, partner showed 7-9 HCP. According to partnership understanding East bid 1 No Trump as he did not have a 5-card suit. West bid his 6-card Diamond. With a singleton in the opponent's suit North came out with his Spade suit which was doubled by East. This was rescued by South with 3 Hearts. West rebid his Diamond at 1000 level and North competed in Hearts. At this stage, East made an aggressive response by a cue bid of Spades which indicated control in Spades, support in Diamonds and interest in a Diamond slam provided partner was stopping Hearts. With a singleton Heart West bid 6 Diamonds.

THE PLAY
North opened the Jack of Hearts, the declarer played low from the dummy and North continued with Hearts. After ruffing the second Heart, the declarer cleared trumps, took the successful Spade finesse to make 6 Diamonds. A very good contract was reached by an imaginative bid by East and perfect understanding between partners.

Da Costa the unsung hero

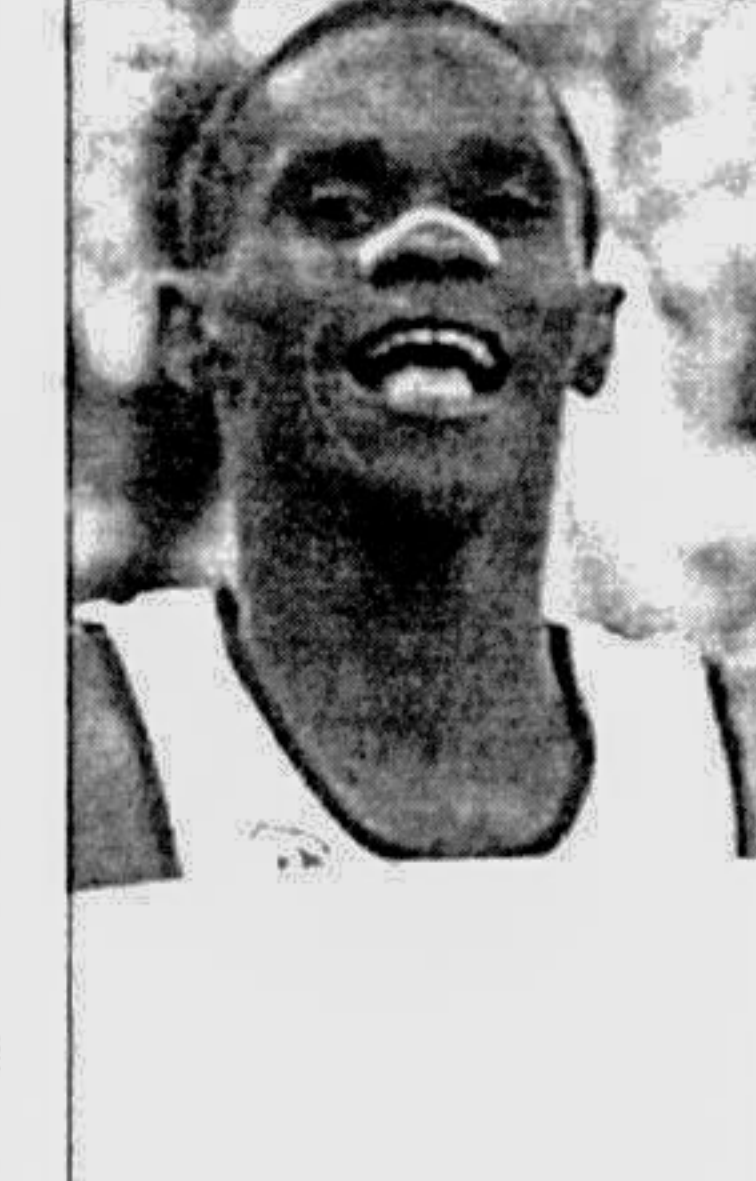
RIO DE JANEIRO, Sept 21 (Reuters/Internet): Brazilian media grudgingly granted some space to world-breaking marathon runner Ronaldo da Costa on Monday but the 28-year-old's historic run still played second fiddle to the weekend's domestic soccer.

Photos of Da Costa finishing Sunday's Berlin marathon featured on the front pages of most newspapers but, in a country where athletics has never been taken seriously, soccer continued to hog the limelight.

Da Costa broke the 10-year-old record by 45 seconds as he finished the Berlin marathon in two hours six minutes five seconds.

one of few newspapers to give full prominence to Da Costa, who, like most of his fellow athletes, is reasonably well-known in Brazil but does not enjoy the fame of even club soccer players.

Athletics has always struggled for recognition in Latin America's most populous country.



try, lagging behind soccer, volleyball, motor racing and basketball in the popularity stakes.

Harmony thru football

SEOUL, Sept 21: South Korea is hoping to hold a soccer festival with its arch-rival North Korea, China and Japan aimed at promoting ties between the four countries, soccer officials said today, reports AFP.

An official at the Korean Football Association (KFA) said China and Japan had expressed support for the festival, and they were now trying to persuade the North Koreans to join.

"A proposal was sent to North Korea, but we have not yet had a reply," the official said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS
- 1 Resorts
 - 5 George
 - 8 Cry loudly
 - 12 Welles role
 - 13 "Lazy River"
 - 14 Olive
 - 15 Basra is there
 - 16 Pavement
 - 18 Locate
 - 20 Hammar
 - 21 Freudian
 - 22 Mailing abbr.
 - 23 Evangelist's need
 - 26 Cut corners?
 - 30 Dream
 - 31 Conditions
 - 32 Sundial notation
 - 33 Models' place
 - 36 Occupation
 - 38 Squid squirt
 - 39 Tenor
 - 40 Haven on a
- DOWN
- 2 sunny day
 - 3 Double-B
 - 4 "Jaws 2"
 - 6 Sure thing
 - 7 Mayberry
 - 9 name
 - 10 NEK
 - 11 Catch
 - 12 Catch
 - 13 "This recording"
 - 14 NYC airport
 - 15 Barker
 - 16 Wings
 - 17 Tuesday
 - 18 Michigan
 - 19 Eve's
 - 20 grandson
 - 21 Killy's equipment of your life
 - 22 mutual 22 Ballroom fill
 - 23 Tampa Bay athlete
 - 24 "This recording"
 - 25 Airborne
 - 26 NYC airport
 - 27 Chopper
 - 28 Abner's adjective
 - 29 Tease
 - 30 SRT
 - 31 EOE
 - 32 among shoes
 - 33 From square one
 - 34 Sneeze
 - 35 Sneeze
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 - 37 Sneeze
 - 38 Sneeze
 - 39 Nicholson role
 - 40 Fitzgerald specialty
 - 41 Possess
 - 42 Related
 - 43 Despondent
 - 44 Tennis situation
 - 45 U.S. Attorney General
 - 46 Emulates Simon
 - 48 Bat wood

CRYPTOQUIP!

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U D W K D Y K Z L Y D N
O Q D C E Q O Q K W Z U Z Y E
I Z Y L N G U G U O D I K Y
U G C U G E K

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: DO YOU THINK A BANK ROBBER'S GUY THAT GETS ALARMED MIGHTY EASILY?

Today's Cryptoquip clue: W equals M
The Cryptoquip 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.