The hard times and new life of Josiah the gold

He overcame immense hardship to win Olympic Gold in Atlanta and become a world class marathon runner. But, as a Gemini News Service correspondent finds out, having a way with words is really Josiah Thugwane's crowning triumph.

Gavin Evans writes from Johannesburg

Josiah Thugwane's greatest achievement is not his Olympic gold medal or the string of other running records, but his new-found ability to read, write and speak English.

"They can steamy gold medal but now they can never take away my education," he says. "I'm happy now because Nelson Mandela has given me this

"He inspired me to achieve in sport. And it is because of him that I started school for the first time in my life last year. Thanks to him it is all paying

Born into poverty and raised in apartheid South Africa's equivalent of the "Deep South." Thugwane overcame immense hardship to become one of his country's best marathon run-

At an early age he was sent to live with his grandmother in a rural shack, immediately put to work on a farm owned by a vicious racist near the town of Bethal in Mpumulanga province. "My early life was very diffi-

cult," he says with considerable understatement. "I suffered a lot. I had to look after the cattle and work from morning to night as a child, so there was no chance of going to school.

"I was also too busy working to do anything else. If I didn't work the farmer would beat me. and said he would kick me off the farm and I'd have no place to sleep."

His only recreation was football with other farm boys, and harbouring dreams of one day playing professionally.

When he was 17, a television programme featuring South African half marathon stars Matthews Temane and Xolile Yawa made him change his am-

"Soccer was my game and I was very fast, but I had no time to practice because I had to look after the cattle," he says.

"So instead I entered this half marathon race in the town. I didn't even have any running shoes, but I won the race, and took home 50 rand. That was it: I knew I was a runner and this

was my way out.' With the help of a friend, Thugwane made his first step by escaping the servitude and abuse of the farmer and hiding out in a local township.

was really scared, and could not even visit my uncle on the farm, because I knew the baas would beat me again."

It is from the mines that most of South Africa's leading long distance runners emerge. because the management often gives promising prospects the time to train, and in some cases, financial assistance in return for free advertising.

Thugwane took advantage of this by taking a 1,200 rand a month job as a cleaner at a mine in Middleburg, where he remained until the Atlanta Olympics.

By 1996, Thugwane's combination of natural speed and stamina, as well as a fervent commitment to training, saw him emerge as one of his country's leading distance men.

His idiosyncratic and highly economical style - arms close to the body, hands swishing back and forth - earned him a place on the Olympic a team to-

West

South

Double

Pass

2 Spades

THE PLAY

AS X

₩ 19

♦ D 876X

◆ C 876XXX

Bidding: Both sides were vulnerable.

Artificial, showing 13-15 HCP.

contract. This was doubled by East.

West

Pass

Pass



gether with Lawrence Peu and Gert Thys.

The three were trained by Jacques Malan, who used a formula of monastic seclusion. high altitude training, and rest, to get his men ready.

Malan confidently predicted one would take a medal in Atlanta. He was only mildly surprised when it was Thugwane who entered the stadium to win the closest ever Olympic marathon, by three seconds, in a time of 2 hrs 12 min 36s.

He returned home a hero. Mandela met him at the airport, sponsors besieged him with endorsements. Two film companies approached him about making a movie of his

But Thugwane also caught the interest of local gangsters including one who made a

120,000 rand extort bid. He was the victim of a violent carjacking and two robberies. Death threats were common, as were the unwanted attentions of neighbours wanting a share of his wealth.

East (D)

S 7XX

♣ C None

VH AKQ76

◆ D Q J 10 9 X

East

Pass

1 Heart

Double

SIX NO TRUMPS

A K Sayeedul Huq

A VERY GOOD DEFENCE

(Hand # 102)

North

AS QJ9X

₩ H: 10 X X

♣ C Q J 10 9

▲S AK1086

North

Pass

With 12 HCP but a two-suiter hand East opened 1 Heart which was

doubled by South. West passed and North showed 13-15 HCP by an

artificial bidding. When South bid 2 Spades North jumped to the game

West was surprised to hear partner doubling 4 Spades in spite of the fact that on South's take-out double North showed at least 13 HCP and

strongly supported partner's Spades. Obviously, East's penalty double

was not based on HCP. He rightly thought that partner wanted an unusual

lead which he wanted to ruff. Since, West himself was holding 6 cards in Clubs, his partner was likely to be void in that suit. West therefore led 8

of Clubs which was ruffed by East who then led the Queen of Hearts on

which West played the 9. As the 10 was in the dummy, partner's 9

indicated singleton or Jack holding. East therefore led a small Heart;

partner took the Jack and gave another Club ruff. East then played the

King of Hearts which was ruffed by West who returned another Club for

partner to ruff. Thus, the defence, by good partnership understanding

collected six tricks in Hearts and Club ruffs for 800 down. Note that

West should not play the Jack of Hearts (high-low) to show doubleton

because he must ensure two entries in his hand to give partner Club ruffs.

2 Diamonds*

4 Spades

WH BXX

O XX

♣ C AKX

D AK

South

"People wouldn't leave me alone. They came all the time. banging on the door, climbing over the fence, asking for money. They wouldn't let me sleep or run and they would

scare my wife," he says. Then early last year, while preparing for the London Marathon, a road-rage attack finally spurred him to move to one of Johannesburg's more secluded suburbs.

He found refuge in a mansion with a swimming pool, a six-

19. Thomas Enqvist (Sweden)

foot perimeter wall topped with razor wire and electronic gates. "It feels good to be safe," he says.

He also took three months off from training to improve his English - his fifth language, after Ndebele, Zulu, Sotho and Afrikaans.

Astonishing his friends, he emerged from this hiatus reading and writing proficiently and conducting fluent interviews in English.

However, it was not long before he was back into his intensive training routine. Before each major competition, Malan despatches Thugwane and Peu to a game farm near the Botswana border for a spartan 12 week eat-sleep-run routine broken only by swimming, television and a weekly drive to the nearest shop, 45 km away.

"After a major race he won't even put on his running shoes for around six weeks and then we start from scratch," says

"He and Lawrence will then be on the game farm until a week before the race, and they train 220 km a week — a couple of hours early in the morning and then speedwork in the afternoon, and they sleep 14 to 15 hours a day, broken into two or three sessions.

Thugwane's main problem is his desire to overdo it, says Malan: "He has immense selfdrive and discipline, so I never have to check up whether he's doing the work. Every weekend go out there for a 36 km run and often I have to practically grab him and hold him down because he wants to do more.

"He just wants to achieve all the time - you can't believe the determination. Although he's got all that success, he just wants more and more and

He leaves soon for Alberquerque, New Mexico, for high altitude training with speed coach Jean Verster. After that he will take a crack at winning the New York Marathon on November.

"There are still several more marathons I have to win and New York is certainly one of them," he says. "If I win there I want to go on to win in London, Boston and then the Olympics again - and to break the world record.

But, he adds: "I must also learn to read and write English properly. If I can do all this. then I will feel fine." — Gemini

About the Author: Gavin Evans is a writer and freelance journalist currently based in London and contributing to the Guardian newspaper and several sports magazines. He worked for many years in South Africa for newspapers including the Rand Daily Mail and the Mail and Guardian.

ATP Tour's top 20

MONACO, Sep 22(Reuters/Internet): Leading rankings issued by the ATP Tour on Tuesday (delayed because of the postponement to Monday of the Romanian Open final in Bucharest): Player

1. Pete Sampras (U.S.)	4.015
2. Patrick Rafter (Australia)	3,575
3. Marcelo Rios (Chile)	3,467
4. Petr Korda (Czech Republic)	2,908
5. Carlos Moya (Spain)	2,858
6. Karol Kucera (Slovakia)	2,732
7. Alex Corretja (Spain)	2,629
8. Andre Agassi (U.S.)	2,545
9. Richard Krajicek (Netherlands)	2,534
10. Yeygeny Kafelnikov (Russia)	2,508
11. Tim Henman (Britain)	2,366
12. Goran Ivanisevic (Croatia)	2,203
13. Jonas Bjorkman (Sweden)	2,115
14. Mark Philippoussis (Australia)	2,110
15. Greg Rusedski (Britain)	2,09
16. Albert Costa (Spain)	1,823
17. Alberto Berasategui (Spain)	1.814
18. Cedric Pioline (France)	1,766
	34957VB3227

20. Jan Siemerink (Netherlands) ATP Tour's leading prize-money winners

winners issued by the ATP Tour on Tuesday:	DE .	TIO della
Player		US dolla
1. Patrick Rafter (Australia)		2,085,80
2. Marcelo Rios (Chile)		1,681,07
3. Pete Sampras (U.S.)		1,541,53
4. Carlos Moya (Spain)		1,535,42
5. Alex Corretja (Spain)		1,167,83
6. Petr Korda (Czech Republic)	20	1,027,21
7. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Russia)		956,72
8. Albert Costa (Spain)		941,32
9. Goran Ivanisevic (Croatia)		882,92
10. Mark Philippoussis (Australia)		865.32



Action from the European Raimundo Saporta tournament encounter between Pamesa of - AFP photo | 34 - and Spain and ASK Broceni Riga of Latvia at Valencia on September 22.

Gavaskar to get 'Maharashtra Bhushan'

MUMBAI, Sept 23: Cricket legend Sunil Manohar Gavaksar is to be crowned with the coveted "Maharashtra Bhushan", the highest award instituted by the state government, reports PTI.

The nomination of the former Indian cricket captain for the award, comprising rupee five lakh in cash, citation and a plaque, was announced yester-day by Chief Minister Manohar Joshi at a press conference after the weekly cabinet meeting here.

The award for 1997-98 would be presented to the little maestro at the Wankhede Stadium here on a date to be fixed later. Joshi who is also the Mumbai Cricket Association president, told reporters, the previous recipient of the award was melody queen Lata Mangeshkar.

The award, the highest of its kind given by the state government in the field of arts, science, sports and literature, was instituted in 1995 soon after the Shiv Sena-BJP government came to power in the state, Joshi said.

Gavaskar has also received the Arjuna award (1975) and Padmabhushan award (1980) of the central government, he has 34 Test centuries to his credit and has played in 125 Tests, he has scored 10,122 runs in Test cricket, with an average of

Kirsten shouldn't have played'

BONN, Sept 23 (Reuters/ Internet): Bayer Leverkusen coach Christoph Daum said striker Ulf Kirsten, who missed two penalties as his club bowed out to Hertha Berlin in the German Cup on Tuesday, was weakened by an injury and should not have insisted on

"Ulf had a foot injury and should not have made himself available," Daum said after Leverkusen lost on penalties to the Berlin club in a second

round tie on Tuesday. Kirsten, a German international and the league's top scorer for the last two seasons, missed a penalty in normal time and another one in the shootout, which Hertha won 4-3. The teams were tied 1-1 after 90 minutes and extra time.

There's still hope for them

LONDON, Sept 23: Graeme Hick, the only batsman still playing first-class cricket to have scored 100 centuries, has been put on stand-by for England's Ashes tour of Australia later this year, reports Reuters.

Hick was left out of the party announced earlier this month but the England selectors said today that he would be a nontravelling reserve with paceman Andy Caddick and leftarm spinner Phil Tufnell.

The three players we have placed on stand-by are proven Test cricketers who are very much part of our current plans. chairman of selectors David Graveney said.

All three will be expected to stay fit and be ready to fly to Australia at short notice.

England officials said that Graham Thorpe and Alex Tudor had passed fitness tests on back and foot injuries respectively and would leave for Australia with the rest of the England party on October 21.

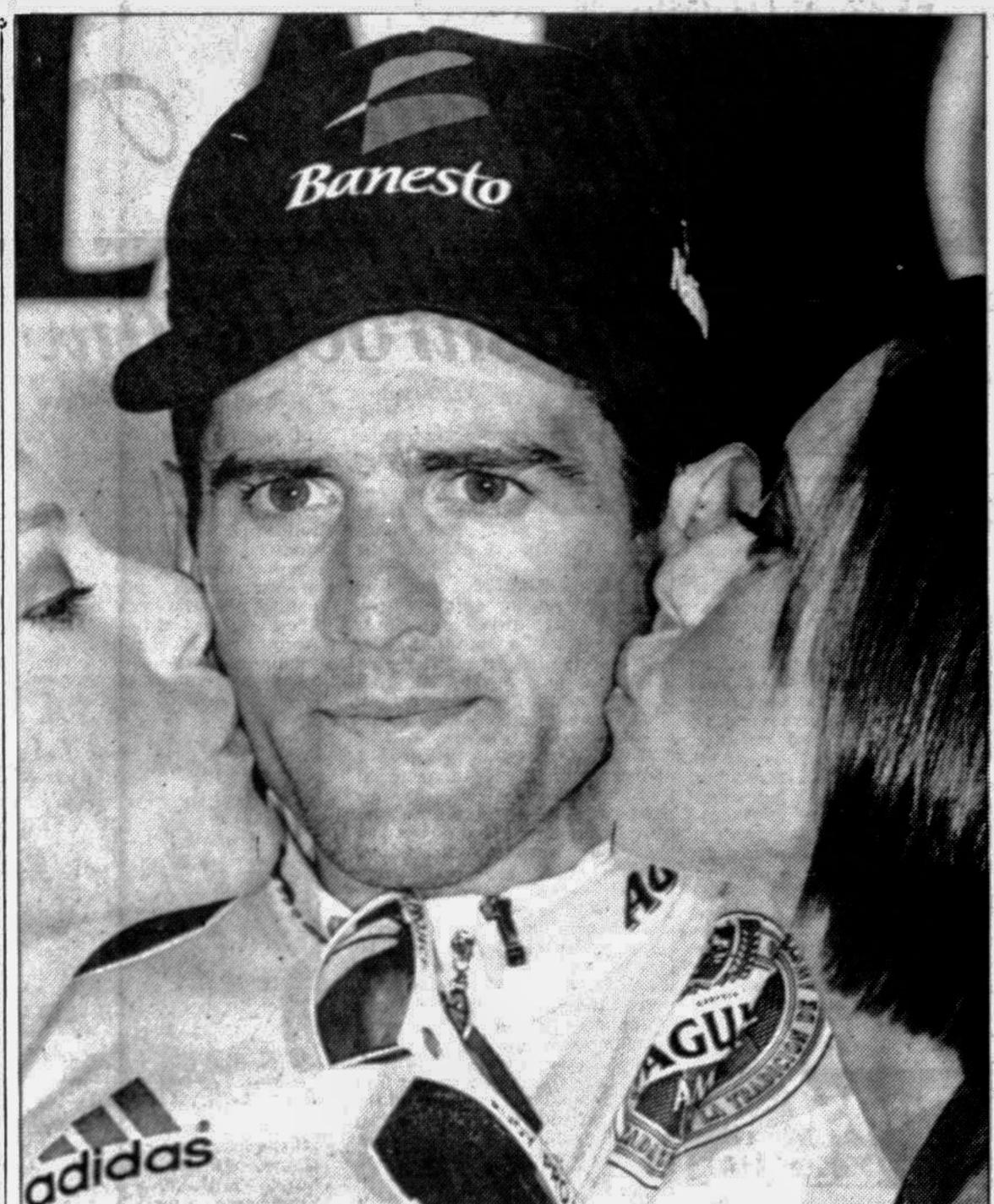
Moratti won't settle for second best

MILAN, Sept 23: Inter Milan are being offered win bonuses estimated at 400,000 dollars a man this season — but not a cent for coming second, reports

Club president Massimo Moratti, who owns an oil-refining empire, had a meeting on Monday with team skipper Guiseppe Bergomi and defender Francesco Colonnese to discuss the cash prizes.

Moratti's offer is believed to be 300 million lira (170,000 dollars) each for winning the league title after finishing second last season, and the same amount again for winning the European Champions League.

About a further 50 million lira (30,000 dollars) is on offer for winning the little-valued Italian Cup, and there will be a special extra bonus on top if Inter Milan defy the odds and win all three trophies.



Cyclist Abraham Olano gets congratulatory kisses from attendants on completion of the 17th stage of the Tour of Spain in Leon on September 22. Olano, a member of the Banesto - AFP photo team, is leading the tour.

Barca put million dollars price tag on 15-year-old not just for his prodigious play-



Sept 23(Reuters/ Internet): Barcelona issued a hands-off warning to clubs eve-

ing their 15-year-old Nigerian striker Hauruna Babangida by slapping an 800 million pesetas (5 3 million dollars), price tag on him on Wednesday.

Haurana, the younger brother of Ajax Amsterdam and Nigerian international striker Tijani Babangida, became the youngest person in Spanish league history to have a buy-out clause inserted into his con-

The youngster is currently playing for the Barcelona reserve team in the Spanish second division but after impressing during pre-season, many observers expect him to be incorporated into the first team squad during the December "transfer window"

lronically the man whose place he could be taking is his compatriot Emmanuel Ammunike, who has a long term knee injury and is likely to miss the rest of the season. Babangida, who celebrates

his 16th birthday on October 1.

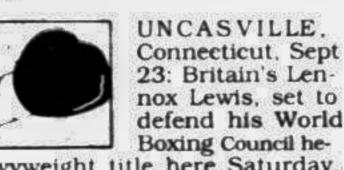
has hit the headlines in Spain

date claimed by the Catalan Barcelona club doctors

ing ability.

shrugged off the controversy by saying Babangida was. "well developed for his age."

ennox reckons himself



defend his World Boxing Council heavvweight title here Saturday, calls rival champion Evander Holyfield an over-the-hill coward, reports AFP.

Lewis also ripped promoter Don King as a manipulator protecting Holyfield from a possible unification fight to line his own pockets and keep control of boxing major titles. denying fans the fight they "If Evander loses all the

belts, there is no more Don," Lewis said." People are realising why King is trying to keep the belts within his own fighters. realising Evander is on his last Holyfield, who turns 36 next

month struggled last Saturday in Atlanta against American rival Vaughn Bean, winning an unimpressive 12-round unanimous decision. "After his performance,

people will say to him. Why are you ducking Lennox Lewis and why don't you fight him?" Lewis said Tuesday." He just looked beatable. Now they realise why he is ducking me. "He looks like he is gaining

ACROSS

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Yesterday's answer

beatable. My mouth was watering a bit." Lewis, who turned 33 three

some age on him. He looks very

weeks ago, carries a 33-1 record with 27 knockouts into his defence against unbeaten European champion Zeljko Mavrovic, a 29-year-old Croatian who is 33-1 with 27 knockcuts. "I don't plan on this fight go-

ing the distance," said Lewis, who only went 12 rounds in 1993 against Tony Tucker. Holyfield turned down 20

million dollars for a unification bout with Lewis to fight Bean in his hometown for five million dollars. He next plans to face Henry Akinwande — a Brit who lost to Lewis last year.

"Now they know the frustration my team is going through trying to make the fight," Lewis said. "Hopefully Holyfield's people come to the table and realise they don't need to fight Akinwande, that it might be a bit dangerous to them."

Reminded that Akinwande is the WBA mandatory challenger, Lewis said, "King and Holyfield could do it if they want. That's just blowing up smokescreens. Using the Bean fight as an

indicator, Lewis said his superior size and weight would be

Last season he scored 37

goals in 21 games for Barcelon-

a's youth side -- which also led

to some controversy. Injured in

one match he was sent to hospi-

tal for X-rays which some crit-

ics said showed that bone scans

taken indicated he was at least;

three years older than the

too much for Holyfield. "Bean was a smaller guy and pushing him back. He didn't look like his old self. He's lagging," Lewis said.

"The way Vaughn Bean was throwing right hands and they were bouncing off Holyfield's head, I was a little concerned Bean might win and Deny Lewis a career-defining fight with Holyfield.

"It's evident what will happen. He's definitely open for my right hands. The usual thing with Holyfield where he swings away and comes back with an uppercut, I don't think that will work on me."

Lewis is counting on an impressive victory over Mavrovic here to shame Holyfield into a showdown.

"Knowing Evander's tremendous pride and ego, that will force him into it. There is going to have to be tremendous public pressure," Steward said. "Lennox can take advantage with a devastating performance."

Regarding Mike Tyson's possible return. Lewis said he expects Tyson to be reinstated when a Navada panel reconvenes in two weeks, and that Tyson will soon after begin his challenge to reclaim the heavyweight crown.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer 11 Crimson Bill" ('31 55 Lead DOWN 19 Spring movie) 5 Spy novel 35 Pair month 1 Hobin Cook book 21 Noshed 36 Fools 23 Skewered 2 Fusses 37 Court proceedings? 24 Unrivaled 12 Pepe Le 40 Lively party Lovers" 26 27 28 4 River City 25 Flock females prediction president 5 Ice bucket 26 Door-45 Touch frame part 47 Sphere contents 27 Director 49 Zilch 6 "- Little Kazan 50 Heart Spanish 51 Kanga's 28 "Murder Town" 7 Harsh Wrote" star alternative 52 Shore sight 8 Bugs 32 Poe and Bunny's 53 Playroom Pope 17 On in years spokescollection 33 Easter 54 Round man? 9 Slowpokes 10 Guitar's kin Christmas address Solution time: 23 mins. 36 Brewery CRYPTOQUIP product 38 Smith and COTLNS KQRNT AXLNF

42 Toe woe

44 -- -do-

43 Christie or

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: DON'T YOU IMAGINE REFUSING A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL IS SIMPLY **SLIGHT OF HAND?** Today's Cryptoquip clue: T equals N

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one 46 Greet th letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short , 48 Calais words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.