evidence TURIN, Jan 26: France's World Cup organiser and former captain Michel Platini testified before a Turin prosecutor on Monday as part of a continu-ing probe into alleged drug-tak-ing in Serie A, the Italian news agency ANSA said, reports Reuters.

The former Juventus midfielder and European-player-ofthe-year reached the northern city in the early afternoon and headed directly to the office of investigating a magistrate Raffaele Guarniello.

Guarniello has questioned a number of current and former Serie A players, including France's World Cup captain Didier Deschamps, midfielder Zinedine Zidane and former Argentina and Napoli player Diego Maradona.

Guarniello launched his investigation after AS Roma coach Zdenek Zeman said in a magazine interview in July he believed drug taking was rife in Serie A.

Zeman's allegations prompted a review of doping procedures and led to the closure of the Acqua Acetosa Laboratory, the main test centre of the powerful Italian Olympic Committee.

Villa to stand by Collymore

BIRMINGHAM, England, Jan 26: English Premier League club Aston Villa said on Monday they would try to help troubled striker Stan Collymore overcome his problems with stress, reports

Collymore's absence from Saturday's F A Cup tie against Fulham sparked speculation that manager John Gregory had run out of patience with the player and was prepared to

But the Midlands club issued a statement on Monday making it clear that they would stand behind the 28year-old.

"Stan Collymore has made it clear that pressure and stress have been building up for a long period of time which culminated in the decision by the club not to consider him fit to play on Saturday," the statement said.

"Following this Stan has declared that he wishes to seek further counselling to help him overcome his current difficulties."

It is a quick change of approach by Villa, at least by Gregory, who after seeing his team beaten 2-0 by second division Fulham in Saturday's cup, tie said: "A lot of players go off in a huff if they are not in the starting line-up, but some cope with it better than

Collymore, who joined Villa for seven million pounds (11.7 million dollars) in May 1997, last week expressed his frustration at starting only two of Villa's previous eight

He has had a troubled career, being shunned by teammates at Nottingham Forest after making it clear he wanted to leave, and failing to make any impact at Liverpool after arriving for a then British record fee of 8.5 million pounds (14.10 million dollars) in 1995

He has also had problems off the pitch, being involved in a much-publicised fight during the World Cup with his TV presenter girlfriend. He was due in court on

Monday on a speeding charge which was adjourned.

Mendy keeps his title

PARIS, Jan 26: French veteran Jean-Baptiste Mendy successfully defended his WBA lightweight title at a packed Palais des Sports here on Monday, beating Alberto Sicurella of Argentina on a points decision, reports AFP.

Sicurella gave a good account of himself and matched the 35year-old Mendy punch for punch in the early stages. despite the champions' greater reach, before taking a count in the sixth round

That was to cost him as Mendy swiftly gained in confidence and started to take the

fight to his opponent. He was rewarded with a unanimous points win, obtaining scores of 118-110, 116-111 and 117-112 from the three

fight judges. Mendy, at 35 old for a champion in the lower weight division, first won the belt from

unbeaten Orzubek Nazarov in Paris last May. Senegal-born Mendy's only the title had been a points vic-

previous fight since winning tory in a non-title bout against Russian Victor Baranov in Oc-

tober. The former WBC champion boosted his record to 53-6-2

with one no contest. Sicurella, 27, saw his record

slip to 47-2. Earlier, Russia's Anatoly Alexandrov retained his WBO super-featherweight title, stop-

ping Mexican Arnulfo Castillo in the eighth round. Alexandrov was by far the

more aggressive from the outset and the referee stopped the bout as he laid mercilessly into Castillo, who was reeling from a fifth-round blow which gashed his left eyebrow.

The South American southpaw never recovered from that and the referee moved swiftly to end the punishment three rounds later after he addition-

ally suffered a split lip. Former European champion Alexandrov, 31, who won the Vacant title by beating France's Julien Lorcy in Paris last May. took his record to 35-3 while 27-year-old Castillo suffered his first defeat with his record now 27-1-2.

Leboeuf Chelsea's saviour



draw, reports Reuters. Oxford, massively in debt and struggling in the first division relegation zone with just six wins in 28 league matches, had led through a Dean Windass header from a corner in the 52nd minute and looked to be

heading for a huge upset. The home team could even have made it 2-0 in the 74th minute as Chelsea's expensive and extravagantly talented team of foreigners and World Cup veterans were repeatedly exposed in defence while failing to find the net themselves.

Leboeuf had hit the post while Gianfranco Zola also came close to breaking the ice for Chelsea.

But player-manager Gian-luca Vialli went down in the box some two minutes into injury time and French World Cup player Leboeuf, a man known for never missing spot kicks, swiftly tucked away the

equaliser. It was cruel luck for Oxford, who came so close to beating the rich and glamorous London team and achieving what only one club has done in the Premier League all season.

"We should have won the game, I'm gutted for the club," said Windass.

Kevin Francis, the player who brought down Vialli, echoed the thoughts of many when he said the referee had made a harsh decision in awarding the penalty. "I played the ball," he said.

Oxford's squad of players for the game was valued before the match at around 1.2 million pounds (1.99 million dollars) Chelsea's at some 34 million pounds (56.41 million dollars). "This may be a sign, when

ager for apparently applauding the player who did it. "I know in Oxford you have many intelligent people but here was some stupid person. I am very sorry to have seen that, I am very sorry for football." he

you are so lucky, maybe we will

win something at the end of the

season," said Leboeuf, who

added that he thought Francis

seemed the chap behind Luca

kicked his foot instead of the

ball. I didn't think he did it on

purpose but from my point of view it was a penalty."

studs in his knee during the

match and the Frenchman later

slammed his opponents' man-

Leboeuf said he took some

"I was in front of Luca and it

had kicked Vialli's foot.

The replay will be at Stamford Bridge on February 3 which will at least give Oxford another much-needed pay day.

"Financially for us it's a massive, massive bonus," conceded Oxford manager Malcolm Shottom.

Injury scare for Vialli



26(Mail/Internet): Chelsea playermanager Gianluca could make him a doubt for Sunday's Premiership clash at

Vialli was hurt in the injurytime clash which led to the dramatic and controversial penalty in last night's fourth round FA Cup match at Oxford.

Frank Leboeuf scored from the spot to give Chelsea a 1-1 draw and leave First Division Oxford feeling cheated.

Vialli said today: "I thought straight away that it was a penalty. It was a clumsy challenge which definitely caught my left foot. Even though I had my back to goal and don't think I could have shot, it was a foul." Leboeuf set the scene for a stormy replay with an outspoken attack on Oxford manager

Malcolm Shotton. The World Cup defender claimed Shotton swore at him and branded him a cheat after a second-half tussle with Paul

The Frenchman had to leave

The Oxford manager was so

GLASGOW, Jan 26

(Reuters): A vear

ago, the name of

Marco Negri was

on the lips of ev-

eryone in Scottish

the field after Tait caught him with a late challenge and, while receiving treatment. Leboeuf and Shotton nearly came to

football but now only the sound

of silence surrounds the fallen

The 27-year-old striker's de-

parture for his native Italy on

Saturday, for a five-month loan

at Vicenza, raised hardly a

whisper among the Glasgow

season, was poised to win the

European Golden Boot as the

continent's most prolific league

goalscorer could not have had a

more spectacular fall from

teammates, his chairman and

two Rangers coaches, as he de-

stroyed with his moody be-

haviour the reputation his

cenza have taken a gamble on

Negri rediscovering his appetite

for the game to help them avoid

goals in 1996-97 for Perugia in

Italy's top flight - which

prompted Rangers to spend 3.7

million pounds (6.14 million

dollars) on him July 1997 — as

well as Negri's 32 league goals in

memory in Glasgow, because he

has not played at all this sea-

son, after telling Rangers coach

Dick Advocaat he would not go

"His mind is made up about

on a pre-season tour of Norway.

going from Rangers," said Ad-

vocaat, "so this (loan) is the best

Negri's goals are also a

Scotland last season.

Now Serie A strugglers Vi-

They remembered his 15

goals had built up.

relegation.

Negri managed to upset his

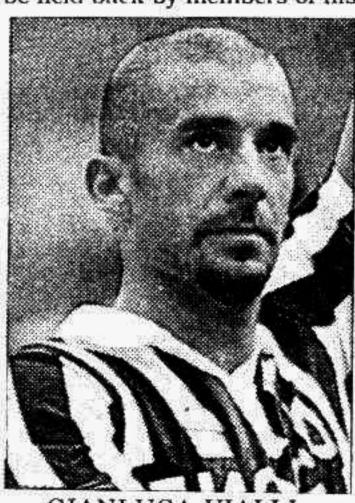
The man who, this time last

club's players or supporters.

Rangers star.

grace.

incensed by Leboeuf's original challenge on Tait that he had to be held back by members of his



GIANLUCA VIALLI

coaching team. Although Shotton insisted afterwards that it was a case of "handbags at 20 paces" and that the two sides were "too professional to let anything spill over into the replay" next Wednesday's match is likely to be an ill-tempered affair. Shotton may even face censure by the Football Association for his behaviour.

Leboeuf said: "I wasn't unhappy about the tackle but the player waited and kicked me.

Negri: The unwanted hero

solution. But we have tried to

Advocaat grew frustrated at

his failure to get Negri to play.

Even his team mates tried, but

the moody striker simply ig-

nored the pleas, claiming he

was mentally and physically

getting treatment," Advocaat

said a few months ago of a

player whose failure to train.

let alone play, raised doubts as

to whether his problems were

Negri had become a recluse,

claiming he had not left his

home for two weeks, certainly

Negri's teammates were in the

wrong with Marco," said cap-

tain Lorenzo Amoruso. "Maybe

he got frustrated because he was

scoring so many goals, and then

was out of the team with in-

January - while playing

squash with another of

Porrini - that started Negri's

Scottish scene, scoring 30

league goals in his first four

months, including all five in a

to that tally after returning to

fitness, and withdrew into iso-

lation after falling out with

other players, particularly fel-

against me," said Amoruso, "But

I don't know why. I have not

spoken to him but it is not my

5-0 rout of Dundee United.

low Italian. Amoruso.

Rangers' Italian players, Sergio

Negri had burst onto the

But he added only twice more

"Marco has something

It was an eye injury last

"I don't know what went

dark about his problem.

jury.

decline.

One newspaper alleged that

more mental than physical.

"Marco is here every day ...

- convince him to play for us."

That happens in football and I can accept that.

What I can't accept is a manager gesturing to his player to say 'Well done'. This isn't American Football.

Their manager swore at me and called me a cheat but everyone saw what had happened. You can't do things like that when you're a manager.

Vialli played down the clash and expressed relief at the way his players battled to the end to secure what he admitted was a fortunate draw.

real Chelsea. We must get back to our usual kind of performances. It was a huge relief to get a draw.

club and the supporters to have lost. We believe we can go on and we want to at least reach the Final in this competition."

heading for a shock exit after Dean Windass had give the First Division strugglers a 52nd minute lead. But with only seconds of injury time to go Oxford striker Kevin Francis caught the Chelsea player-manager with a clumsy tackle to hand Chelsea a lifeline.

pointed to the penalty spot. television replays suggested Francis had played the ball.

Enqvist enters last four

MELBOURNE, Jan 26: Unseeded Swede Thomas Enqvist was in ominous form today as he confidently put away Marc Rosset of Switzerland 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 to be the first man through to the semifinals of the Australian Open, reports Reuters.

In a match graced with long rallies and deep baseline shots. Enqvist and Rosset mixed power with subtlety, drawing each other into the net or from side to side.

Enqvist is ranked 21st in the world and is in great form after winning Open warm-up events in Adelaide and Melbourne.

He dominated the first set against Rosset as the 1992 Olympic gold medalist repeatedly dumped shots into the net to give the Swede two breaks of

The pair held level up to 4-4 in both the second and third sets until Enqvist broke through against 31st-ranked Rosset and sealed each set on his own serve. "The guy was just better than

me," said 28-year-old Rosset, who achieved his best Grand Slam tournament performance since reaching the French Open semifinals in 1996. Enqvist, backed by noisy Swedish supporters dotted

around Melbourne Park's Centre-Court, blasted in 15 aces in the 100-minute battle.

Rosset also clocked serves at around 200 kilometres an hour (124 miles per hour).

Enqvist is now one of the favourites to lift the Open trophy after fifth seed Andre Agassi was eliminated on Monday, leaving just three seeded men in the tournament. The Swede will face either

seventh seed Karol Kucera of Slovakia or Nicolas Lepentti of Ecuador in the semifinals. American Todd Martin will

meet Russia's Kafelnikov in another quarterfinal on Wednes-With the lineup, the tourna-

ment could match the 1997 French Open for the record of the fewest number of seeded players to reach the semifinals of a grand slam.

"I feel like it's more oper now than it has ever been," En qvist told reporters.

Advantage pretty ones?

Jan 26(AFP/Internet): The leading official of the women's tennis tour on Tuesday decried the "sexploitation" of the game's

"It's OK in moderation, but clearly we would prefer it not to go too far," said WTA chief executive officer Bart McGuire, a 57-year-old American lawyer and academic.

what other people in other industries call sexploitation."

Most of the new drawcards in women's tennis are goodlooking teenagers whose exploits off court are a marketing manager's dream. Sponsors are knocking at their doors as the game regains the glamour not seen since the days of Chris Ev-

World No. 2 Martina Hingis has acknowledged that their sex appeal is a big selling point.

from us, and we're playing the game -- me and Anna (Kournikova) and Venus (Williams), we're the Spice Girls of tennis," she said at the Australian Open. But McGuire, while not apol-

cally attractive, believes they should be judged more by their achievements, not their looks. They should be prompted as

attractive, articulate, intelligent, talented people who are succeeding in almost any field

"To me attractive is a much broader word than just physically attractive," he told The Australian newspaper.

"I think Kournikova said two things last year which were kind of interesting.

"She said Why do I have to be ugly just because I am an athlete,' but then she said, and this is a very important counterpoint, 'If I couldn't play this game. I wouldn't be here'.

The point was, he said, that Kournikova was a star because she was a good athlete and good tennis player, not because she was good-looking.

WTA for just over a year. tled a huge legal battle between the top players and those further down the computer rank ings and doubled revenue from the game's television coverage.

Tuta claim sparks match-fixing probe

ROME, Jan 26 (Reuters/ Internet): The Italian football federation (FIGC) has opened a match-fixing inquiry into last Sunday's Serie A match between Venezia and Bari, local media reported on Tuesday.

Venezia won the match in

me that 1-1 was good," Tuta told the Gazzetta dello Sport daily newspaper. "He told me before the move (that led to the goal)." Tuta said he pretended not to

The federation's inquiry is

the second of its kind this season. The FIGC docked Empoli two points for attempting to influence the score of their league match against Sampdoria in October.



American world number one Lindsay Davenport in action against compatriot Venus Williams at the Australian Open yesterday. Davenport won 6-4, 6-0. - AP/UNB photo

Davenport downs Williams

26: Venus Williams saw her game, and her hair beads, fall apart on Tuesday as she

lost 6-4, 6-0 to world number one Lindsay Davenport in the Australian Open quarterfinals. The powerful American teenager stormed off court without shaking the umpire's hand after being docked a crucial point early in the second set be-

to court. "This has never happened to me before." Williams screamed at umpire Denis Overberg. "This is out of control.'

cause some of the beads fell on

Davenport's win set up a semifinal against unsung Frenchwoman Amelie Mauresmo, who defeated Belgium 11th seed Dominique Van Roost 6-3. 7-6.

Williams caused the most noise by far. The 18-year-old fifth seed had been unable to dent Davenport's powerful all2-0 down in the second set when some of her renowned multicoloured beads scattered. The umpire warned her that

round game and was serving at

if it happened again she would lose the point - just as players face a deduction if their hats fall off. At break point in the same game, a handful of beads did rattle on to court as she served and Davenport was handed the game.

"I didn't think it was a very fair call," complained Williams, who has worm beads in her hair for six years.

"It's not an incident that occurs frequently and I've never had any such treatment from any other umpire at any other match. But Williams conceded: "]

didn't lose that match because my beads fell off, I lost it because I didn't play very well." US Open champion Davenport showed little sympathy for

Williams and said the rattling

by," she said. "If I wore a hat and the same thing happened to me. I'd lose the point." Davenport has lot to Mauresmo on a clay-court encounter

in France and said she was

"They are the rules we live

looking forward to meeting the muscular 19-year-old Frenchwoman. Van Roost became Mauresmo's second seeded victim of the tournament after the 19-yearold eliminated eighth seed

in the second round. This time the powerfullybuilt Mauresmo muscled the Belgian into an uncharacteris-

Patty Schnyder of Switzerland

tically high 44 unforced errors. "I hit unforced errors because she made me hit unforced efforts," a stunned Van Roost told

"I don't know how fast she was serving, but it's definitely very fast and very powerful."

Bhupathi, Paes

on course

quarterfinal at the Australian

AUSSIE OPEN NOTEBOOK

beads had annoyed her.

MELBOURNE, Jan 26 (AP): Petr Korda, the 1998 Australian Open champion, will fall to around 75th in the rankings following his third-round loss

this year. Korda climbed to No. 2 after winning his first Grand Slam event here last year at age 30. But he slumped later in the year and, at No. 20, was not seeded for this year's Australian. He lost in the third round to 15th-

seeded Todd Martin. Although he stayed home. citing fatigue, Pete Sampras won't lose his No. 1 ranking as a result. All the players with a chance of overtaking him now have lost or withdrawn. No. 2 Marcelo Rios pulled out with a

back injury. Also safe is Lindsay Davenport's No. 1 ranking on the women's Tour. Even if she wins the Australian, No. 2 Martina Hingis cannot gain enough

points to overtake her. On the men's side, Alex Corretja, a second-round loser here, will replace Rios at No. 2, the highest raking for a Spaniard since Manuel Orantes

reached No. 2 in 1973. Tenth seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov can reach No. 3 by winning the title, or at least No. 5

by reaching the final. Todd Martin, who reached No. 5 in 1994 but is seeded 15th here, can return to the top 10 by reaching the final. Thomas Enqvist, who

climbed to No. 6 in 1996, already is assured of a top 15 ranking after reaching the quarterfinals here. He now is ranked 21st.

PREENING FOR PIERCE: If some of her male fans want to wear dresses exactly like here while cheering her on at the Australian Open, that's fine with Mary Pierce.

1 One of

9 Item in

12 Golfer

Aoki

-14 "-not

15 Former

17 Brooch

19 Human,

smarts!"

21 "That

13 Portrayal

choose to

the House

Baby's

5 Lip

"the three

"I like it when guys wear my dress," she said after beating

37 Alluring

38 Piquant

41 Coffee

40 Remark to

request

47 Khan title

48 it's a long

way off

52 — friendly

53 Low joint

54 Dict. entry

carrier?

18 Enervated 56 Timetable, 10 Garfield's

slangily

1 Morsels

DOWN

51 Ump

Speaker of 55 Express

43 Hard to find

the doctor

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

contents 2 Largest

of the

seven

Mae's

creator

4 Crested

bird

5 Repro-

duced

6 King, in

Calais

7 Below par

8 Nellie of

stealthily

location?

opera

fame

11 Cassius'

Solution time: 22 mins.

9 Walk

3 Daisy

another fan favorite, Anna Kournikova, in the fourth round Monday.

"It brings good atmosphere to the court, gets the crowd going. It's fun," Pierce said. Sometimes she gets just as much fan support in France,

she said, but "in France, guys don't wear dresses." TALE OF THE TAPE: Known for her involuntary facepulling and other on-court gestures. Pierce has been studying herself in action in an effort to iron out some of the idiosyncrasies, for which she has re-

"I watched some videos of myself playing, it was a big laugh," said Pierce. A photo in an Australian newspaper illustrated her problem. She looked like she was sucking a lemon. "I have made a big effort to eliminate them. At the begin-

ceived bad press in France.

easier the more you concentrate." SPORT FIRST: WTA chief executive officer Bart McGuire is worried that the marketing of some women players is more about looks than their perfor-

ning it was difficult but it gets

mance on the court. "We're not in the business of what people in other industries call sexploitation." McGuire

said. He said he made no apology for women tennis players being

broader word than just physically attractive," he said. It was important to promote women not just in the sports

attractive, but he agreed the style of support for players such as Russian teenager Anna Kournikova could at times be over the top. "To me, attractive is a much

pages to tennis fans, but also to

people are interested in attrac-

tive, articulate, intelligent, tal-

ented and successful people, he

16 Fresh

22 Drunk

23 Impetu-

24 Pickle

26 Court

27 Paint

layer

29 "La Cage

30 Take a

35 Perched

Side

Story"

37 "West

39 Relief

40 Expert

42 Writer

41 Garnish

one's feet

standing

language

45 Algon-

on

49 "Equi-"

50 Corral

quian

MAKING CLASS.

- Folles'

whack at

25 important

numero

attendant

milieu

MELBOURNE, Jan 26: No. 1 doubles seed Mahesh Bhupathi and Leander Paes of India had their sights on a maiden Grand, Slam final after winning their

> Open on Tuesday, reports AP. The Indian pair were too strong for Americans Richey Renenberg and Jonathan Stark, wining their quarter 6-4, 7-6 6-

Bhupathi and Paes were too solid at the net for the Americans, and feel as the week goes on their form just gets better and better.

"We are playing very sharp and it has come from lots of hard work and match practice." Paes said. The pair has reached the semifinals of a grand Slam

three previous times, including last year's Australian Open, but feel they are ready to take the extra step. "I believe it's within us to win," Paes said. Standing in their way are Australian doubles legends Ma-

rk Woodforde and Tood Wood-

bridge, who also had an easy

straight set win against Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Czech Daniel Vacek. Bhupathi and Paes have

only beaten the Woodies once in live meetings. Bhupathi and Paes play the winner of Wednesday's quarterfinal between Ellis Ferriera and Rick Leach and Patrick Gal-

braith and Paul Haarhuis. In women's doubles news glamour pair Martina Hingis and Anna Kournikova kept their hordes of teenage male fans happy by winning their quarterfinal against Nicole Arendt and Manon Bollegraf 7-

6, 6-2. The self described Spice Girls of women's tennis play experienced pair Lisa Raymond and Rennae Stubbs for a place

Chilean Milovan Mirosevic (R) loses his balance while chasing the ball during their South American Sub-20 tournament clash against Peru in Argentina on Monday.

- AP/UNB photo

He said: "That was not the

'It would have been very disappointing for the players, the

Vialli's side looked to be

Although referee Mike Reed

He said things against me in

the newspaper and it was said

that I had gone to the chairman

(David Murray) and spoken

against him, but that is not

chairman, Walter Smith

(Rangers former coach) and

then other players... he fell out

"Marco talked about me, the

Smith lost patience with Ne-

gri long before the manager left

Ibrox for Everton during the

summer, refusing to even list

him among the substitutes for

the Scottish Cup final with

the Dutchman found Negri an

equally impenetrable charac-

club," said Amoruso, "he asked

Marco to come back, and the

players all agreed with the deci-

sion. But when Marco refused to

Various clubs, including

Now Vincenza are pinning

A 2.5 million pounds (4.15

their hopes on the man dubbed

million dollars) transfer fee

has been agreed between Vi-

cenza and Rangers, if Negri im-

presses enough during his loan.

Rangers on June 30, and that is

something neither party wants

If not, Negri will return to

play, that was the end of it."

pressed.

to see.

moody Marco.

When Advocaat took over,

"When Dick came to the

true.

with everyone.

MELBOURNE, Australia,

young female players.

"We're not in the business of

"It's business that wants this

ogizing for players being physi-

Real Betis, Anderlecht and Bologna all inquired about Neof life." gri, English Premier League side West Ham even took him to London on trial but were unim-

McGuire has been head of the During that time he has set-

Venice 2-1 but Brazilian striker Tuta, who scored the winner in the last minute, claimed he had been told by team mates not to try too hard and to play for a draw. "Yes, (Filippo) Maniero told

understand and did not reply. "I wasn't happy about it because I wanted to score," he said. "Afterwards I didn't talk to anyone."

22 Pruneface's foe 24 Burlap MUGWUMPS ABAD James ASSENT HUMBLE 43 Light on 27 Spy nove! A L E C E B B E S P Y Standing 28 Louis XIV's self-NOMAD COB TEE comparison 31 Blackbird TACOMA ALICIA 32 Harvest goddess SEZECROP 46 Kept tabs 33 "- Town" YEA HENS 34 Swabs Yesterday's answer 36 Tray



in the final.

KPHWLE PNHHL RWH KWRLIHN LITE: "IRTEH CTEZWHEE? Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE AWKWARD GIRL CAN'T ADMIT THAT SHE DID SEW-SEW IN DRESS-

Today's Cryptoquip clue: C equals B 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.