

Drubbed though not disheartened

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, Jan 28: West Indies 5-0 Test drubbing by South Africa is no reason to panic, selection committee chairman Mike Findlay said on Wednesday. But he acknowledged there had to be serious concern, reports Reuters.

"The batting is not what is expected to them," Findlay said. "In the bowling department, apart from (Courtney) Walsh and (Curtly) Ambrose, everyone else was way below expectation."

Even before the team left the problem of finding two quality openers had been recognised, Findlay said. There was also a weakness at number six after Jimmy Adams was forced out of the tour with a badly cut finger.

The bright spot had been the emergence of Ridley Jacobs as a solid middle-order batsman and competent wicketkeeper.

West Indies stopped the rot when they beat South Africa in the second one-day international on Sunday but they lost again on Wednesday to go 2-1 down in the series.

Christie to run on home turf

LONDON, July 28 (Reuters/Internet): Former Olympic 100 metres champion Linford Christie, who officially retired two years ago, plans to run over 60 metres at the British indoor championships this Saturday.

The 38-year-old Briton won the 1992 Olympic gold medal and the 1993 world title. He now coaches a group of sprinters including European 100 metres champion Darren Campbell.

Christie, who clocked an impressive 6.57 while finishing second in Karlsruhe, Germany, last Sunday, said he had been challenged by his group to run in the championships in Birmingham.

"I accept there will be people out there, especially from the ranks of the press, who feel that I should not be competing at this event," he said.

"But I have been challenged by my group and I am not the sort of person who can resist a challenge."

Real opt for the sound of silence

MADRID, Jan 28 (Reuters/Internet): Real Madrid players, stung by recent criticism, have decided not to talk to the Spanish media.

The players issued a press release saying they would stick to their vow of silence until further notice.

It followed the flak they received after Sunday's 4-0 defeat at Deportivo Coruna which left Real a disappointing sixth in the Spanish first division.

The idea for the silent treatment is believed to have come from defenders Christian Panucci and Fernando Hierro who were widely criticised after Sunday's game.

"The players have the right to guard their silence," Real Madrid vice-president Juan Onieva said on Thursday. "However, I think it is only a temporary thing."

Real Madrid president Lorenzo Sanz spent 15 minutes in the players' dressing room after training on Wednesday, urging the players to pull themselves together and stop making fools of themselves and the club after a series of public disagreements.

Midfielder Jose Maria Gutierrez said earlier this week: "This is a team that is not united."

2006 C'wealth Games Wellington will bid

WELLINGTON, Jan 28: After rejecting vote-for-favours demands from some delegates in return for support, the Wellington group bidding for the 2006 Commonwealth Games will proceed after a unanimous vote Thursday, reports Reuters.

The decision to pursue the staging rights came after rival bid city Melbourne tied up a television coverage contract which will benefit the coffers of the Commonwealth Games Federation.

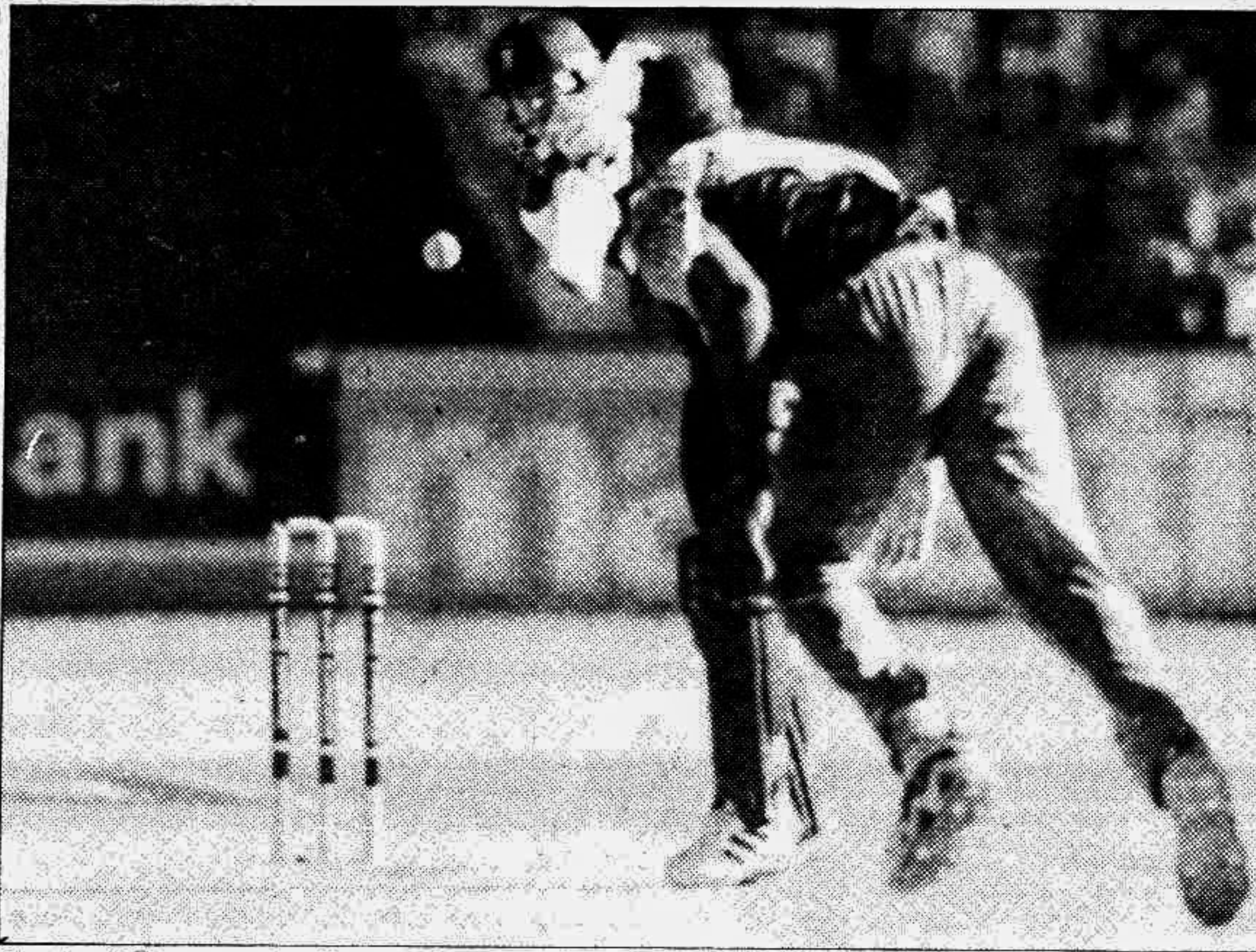
Wellington bid committee head Kerry Prendergast said she would send details of the vote-for-favours claims to Games Federation head Michael Fennell on Friday.

Prendergast said she would reveal the names of the six delegates who approached her for bribes only to Fennell in confidence.

The committee brushed aside concerns that a 48.4 million New Zealand dollars (25.6 million US dollars) contract between the Commonwealth Games Federation and Australia's Channel Nine could disadvantage Wellington's bid against that of rival Melbourne.

Prendergast said for cost reasons the group had decided not to host all of the 70 Commonwealth country delegates later in the year.

They will visit the Caribbean in mid to late February. There's 20 votes on offer there," she said.



South Africa captain Hansie Cronje, who was later adjudged man-of-the-match, drives West Indian quickie Nixon McLean on way to scoring a fluent 58 in the third one-dayer in Durban on January 27. —AP/UNB photo

Pace pays Hansie dividends Cullinan's hand in history

DURBAN, Jan 28 (AFP/Reuters): South African captain Hansie Cronje led his team to victory in a dramatic, highly-charged limited-overs international at Kingsmead on Wednesday.

South Africa won by 55 runs to take a 2-1 lead in the seven-match series.

Tension was high after South African batsman Daryll Cullinan became the second player in one-day internationals to be given out "handed the ball."

West Indies seemed to be racing towards victory when opening batsmen Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Junior Murray hammered 88 in 11.3 overs in reply to South Africa's 274 for nine. They were all out for 219 in 43.1 overs.

South Africa were without injured fast bowler Allan Donald and lost Shaun Pollock with an infection shortly before play.

With fellow paceman Lance Klusener, who had made a sparkling 64 earlier, off the field with a gashed leg after spiking himself while diving in the field in the first over of the West Indian innings, South Africa were in trouble.

Cronje called for a change of tactics astonishingly in a limited-overs game. It was short pitched bowling on a lively pitch which brought about victory.

Klusener, who needed six stitches in his right calf, returned to the field after 11 overs had been bowled and immediately came into the attack.

He had Chanderpaul caught hooking and ran out Junior Murray with a direct hit from backward square leg.

Klusener, Steve Elworthy and Jacques Kallis peppered the West Indians with short-pitched bowling, lifting into the rib cage and sometimes above the shoulder height allowed.

Murray was struck on the head by a ball from Elworthy but resumed after treatment for bleeding round the ear only to be run out later for 24.

Hooper went for one and when skipper Brian Lara was out for 32, brilliantly caught by wicketkeeper Mark Boucher off Cronje, the writing was on the wall.

For Courtois, the Games themselves are not a major headache.

"We know how to stage 31 games. But we also have to deal with hotels, transport, accreditation, cameras, broadcasting, commercial partners, hospitality, security, the media," he said.

Adding that co-hosting brought transport and visa problems for teams travelling through two countries.

"FIFA president Sepp Blatter said it was not a good decision to co-host. But because Mr Blatter said it, we are obliged to show that it's possible," Courtois said.

Belgium and the Netherlands are in the middle of the catchment area for Europe's most notorious and volatile fans — from Germany, Britain and the Dutch themselves.

Security will be high on the list of Courtois's priorities.

Asked about the security threat, Courtois made a diplomatic swerve, noting merely that the likes of England and Germany had yet to qualify for the finals.

But organisers, UEFA and the respective national governments have drafted a list of measures to prevent fighting inside the grounds and hope to quell confusion by allowing fans to buy just two tickets per game under strict identity checks.

"For us ticketing is very important after France," Courtois said, referring to the acrimonious dispute over how French authorities handled ticket sales for the 1998 World Cup.

"Everyone needs a transparent and fair ticketing strategy," he said, adding that 70 per cent of tickets would be reserved for the general public — double the total in France last summer.

UCB names squad for New Zealand

DURBAN, Jan 28: South Africa stuck to the tried and trusted today when naming their squad to tour New Zealand in February and March, reports Reuters.

Hansie Cronje will lead a team including Gary Kirsten, Jacques Kallis, Daryll Cullinan, Jonty Rhodes, Allan Donald and Shaun Pollock to play three Tests and six one-day internationals.

Fast bowler Makhaya Ntini, who is facing a charge of rape and is scheduled to appear in court during the tour, was not selected.

Selection convenor Peter Pollock said Ntini was left out solely because of his poor current form. "Ntini has been around for some time and he has to compete with the other front-runners for a place in the side," Pollock said.

Black fast bowler Victor Mpsang, an 18-year-old product of the United Cricket Board of South Africa's (UCB) development programme, will travel with the squad to "broaden his cricket experience and give him the benefit of touring with the national team," said UCB president Ray White.

Pollock said off-spinner Pat Symcox would return to South Africa after the first three one-day internationals to play in domestic matches while the Test series took place. Symcox could, if required, rejoin the squad for the remaining limited-over games.

TEAM

SOUTH AFRICA: Hansie Cronje (captain), Shaun Pollock (vice-captain), Gary Kirsten, Herschelle Gibbs, Daryll Cullinan, Jacques Kallis, Jonty Rhodes, Mark Boucher, Lance Klusener, Allan Donald, David Terbrugger, Paul Adams, Nicky Boje, Dale Benkenstein, Pat Symcox, Victor Mpsang.

South Africa in New Zealand 1998-99 tour itinerary:
Feb 13: v New Zealand Academy, Molyneux Park, Alexandra
Feb 14: 1st ODI, Dunedin.
Feb 17: 2nd ODI, Christchurch.
Feb 20: 3rd ODI, Auckland.
Feb 22-24: v Northern Districts, Hamilton.
Feb 27-Mar 3: 1st Test, Auckland.
Mar 11-15: 2nd Test, Christchurch.
Mar 18-22: 3rd Test, Wellington.
Mar 25: 4th ODI, Napier.
Mar 27: 5th ODI, Auckland.
Mar 30: 6th ODI, Wellington.

WEST INDIES: Chanderpaul c Hall b Klusener 52
Murray run out (Klusener) 24
Lara c Boucher b Cronje 32
Archer c Boucher b Kallis 13
Arthurton c Cronje b Kallis 1
Semple c Kallis b Cronje 22
Jacobs c Boucher b Cronje 0
McLean c Boucher b Kallis 19
McGarrell c Rhodes b Elworthy 9
Ambrose run out (Gibbs) 9
King not out 7
Extras: (b-1, lb-4, w-11, nb-10) 36
Fall of wickets: 1-49; 2-119; 3-156; 4-183; 5-221; 6-251; 7-252; 8-261; 9-274.

Bowler O M R W
Ambrose 10 1 31 2
King 7 0 40 0
Hooper 10 0 52 4
Arthurton 10 0 43 1
McGarrell 5 0 41 0
McLean 8 0 59 0
Did not bat: S Elworthy.

Helping in tribal style

DURBAN, South Africa, Jan 28 (Reuters/Internet): Tribal justice has dealt with a man suspected of robbing the wife of South African off-spinner Pat Symcox.

Liz Symcox was mugged at knife-point on a beach at Hibberdene, 60 kilometres south of Durban, last week.

The matter was reported to the police but on Wednesday Zulu chief Bhekizizwe Ntuli told Symcox and his wife the man suspected of committing the crime had been apprehended and handed over to the authorities.

Luthuli said the police had requested assistance in the case from his tribal police, who traced the suspect a day after the robbery.

'Don't pursue Denilson'

SEVILLE, Spain, Jan 28: Real Betis president Manuel Ruiz de Lopera has issued a hands-off warning to clubs eyeing Brazilian ace Denilson, insisting: "You had to break the bank to get him," reports Reuters.

Speculation over the future of the unsettled striker has been rife as he has struggled to adjust to the demands of the Spanish game since his 35-million-dollar transfer over the summer.

A string of poor performances has seen him relegated to the substitutes' bench by Coach Javier Clemente. A move that sparked rumours of a possible cut-price move to England or Scotland.

But Lopera moved on Wednesday to dismiss talk of an early exit for the Brazilian, insisting that the 450-million-dollar buy-out clause inserted in the player's contract is not up for negotiation.

"They buy-out clause is 65,000 million pesetas (around 450 million dollars) ... and you'd have to close a bank in Brazil in order to get him," Lopera said.

"Denilson was signed to play for Betis — if he's fit and it's worth his place. Here, no one is guaranteed a place in the team, no matter how much they cost."

Denilson is a great man and a great footballer and his family is exactly the same. But they have to understand who it is who rules in the dressing room. I might be the president but it's the coach who has the power that's as clear as water."

Inter overcome Lazio

ROME, Jan 28 (Reuters/Internet): Inter Milan staged a dramatic and unlikely comeback against Italy's hottest team on Wednesday, defeating Lazio 5-2 in the San Siro to reach the semifinals of the Italian Cup 6-4 on aggregate.

In the semis Inter will play Parma, who earlier beat Udinese 4-0 (6-3 on aggregate) with goals from Argentines Hernan Crespo, Juan Veron and Abel Balbo.

In the other semifinal, Bologna, who overcame Juventus on Tuesday, will face the winner of Thursday's last quarterfinal between Serie A leaders Fiorentina and second division Atalanta Bergamo.

Inter, without an injured Ronaldo, trailed 2-1 from the first leg and fell further behind in the ninth minute when Italy striker Christian Vieri headed in a Giuseppe Favalli cross.

Inter made it 1-1 on the night four minutes later when Frenchmen Benoit Gouet lifted a sweet 25-metre job over goalkeeper Luca Marchegiani who had foolishly chased a loose ball out of his area.

Youri Djorkaeff volleyed Inter ahead in the 25th minute but Attilio Lombardo, making his Lazio debut after his move from England's Crystal Palace, made it 2-2 nine minutes later.

Lazio, who are second in the league after winning their last seven matches, came out furiously after the break and intruded Gianluca Pagliuca to thank for keeping them at bay.

After Djorkaeff made it 3-2 in the 69th with a blazing diagonal shot, Pagliuca made three saves in as many minutes from Giuseppe Pancaro, Ivan De La Pena and Guerinio Gottardi.

Then, seconds after coming on as a substitute seven minutes from time, Brazilian midfielder Ze Elias deflected a shot in off the referee to give Inter a 4-2 lead and 5-4 aggregate advantage.

Lazio protested vehemently, claiming offside, and captain Alessandro Nesta was sent off for dissent.

Inter made doubly sure of progress in the dying seconds with a blistering counter-attack, completed with a brilliant

Roberto Baggio cross to set-up Francesco Moriero for a simple finish.

Ronaldo yet to get over WC burnout

ROME, Jan 28: Brazilian Ronaldo has yet to recover from his World Cup trauma and is going through the worst slump of his career, according to the president of his Italian club Inter Milan, reports Reuters.

"The World Cup was bad for him," Massimo Moratti was quoted as telling Gazzetta Dello Sport daily on Wednesday. "He is still suffering from the consequences of that period."

Ronaldo, the world-footballer-of-the-year in 1998, suffered a convulsive fit just before the World Cup final against France last July. Brazil lost 3-0.

A nagging knee injury has limited his play and effectiveness for Inter this season.



Lazio defender Alessandro Nesta (L) makes an attempt to stop Inter Milan striker Roberto Baggio from taking a shot during their Italian Cup second-leg quarterfinal match in Milan on January 27. —AP/UNB photo

Still Mike means money

LAS VEGAS, Jan 28 (AP): Mike Tyson is still knocking them over at the box office.

The former heavyweight champion continues to be boxing's biggest attraction, despite a 19-month layoff from the ring.

If any evidence was needed, figures released Wednesday by Nevada boxing officials that showed Tyson's comeback fight against Francois Botha to be the sixth biggest live gate in state boxing history.

The Nevada Athletic Commission said 10,221 people paid full ticket prices to get into the fight at the MGM Grand hotel-casino. The fight grossed 7,051,800 dollars for the live gate, dashing predictions by many before the bout that ticket sales would be poor.

The live gate trailed only four other Tyson fights and the first Oscar De La Hoya-Julio Cesar Chavez fight for total money brought in at the gate.

The biggest grossing fight in Nevada history was Tyson's infamous biting of Evander Holyfield, which had a live gate of 14,277,200 dollars.

"When you compare him to anybody else, it's unbelievable," said commission executive director Marc Rattner.

Tyson's ability to draw fans to his fifth-round knock-out of Botha was even more impressive because the Jan 16 date was sandwiched in between two big Las Vegas weekends and the

fight promotion was hastily put together.

Another 750,000 people paid an average of 45 dollars to buy the pay-per-view of the fight on television.

With a live gate tax of 4 per cent and a television tax of 50,000 dollars, Nevada earned about 330,000 dollars in taxes on the fight.

"There's not a promoter or a fighter in the world that wouldn't love to have those type of numbers," promoter Dan Goossen said.

Much of the reason for Tyson's live gate success was due to high ticket prices, which

predicted when only a few thousand seats were sold the week before the fight. The announced attendance at the fight was 12,519, with the remainder getting in on reduced or complimentary tickets.

"The reports just weren't accurate leading up to the fight," Goossen said. "I'm not pointing fingers at the media, but they end up looking at the glass half empty rather than half full."

Tyson is scheduled to fight again April 24 at the MGM Grand against one of a handful of different opponents his promoters say they are still negotiating with.

Rogge to visit Sydney

SYDNEY, Jan 28: International Olympic Committee board member Jacques Rogge will head a four-person delegation to Sydney from February 26-28 to discuss with 2000 Games organisers the recent bribes controversy, reports AP.

Rogge, who heads the Coordination Commission overseeing Sydney's preparations for the 2000 Olympics, has officially informed SOCOG leaders that the IOC has instructed him to come to Australia to discuss the influence of the recent controversy on the Games.

Rogge will be accompanied by IOC Director-General Francis Carrard, sports director Gilbert Felli and probably marketing head Michael Payne.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Grinjer
6 Synchronized
12 Desert view
13 Rio Grande city
14 Hung in folds
15 Director Bergman
16 Lawless character
17 Engendered
19 Irving or Grant
20 Round figure?
22 Longing
24 Prevent
27 Owl's perch
29 Owl's school
32 Computer service
35 Kachina
36 Catnip
37 Cornfield
38 Good times
40 Apprehends
42 Priestly garment
44 Staff leader

DOWN
4 Improve, as cheese
5 School-house material
6 Ballet bend
7 Within reach
8 S.A. nation
9 Re words and their meanings
10 Dutch treat
11 Flat-bottomed boat
12 CCCIL quintupled
2 Algerian port
18 Type of lettuce
21 Actor
Bolivia
Solution time: 24 mins.

W J A R M A T M Q U I A D
O N O L I T I O N A N I O N
E D M O N T R I A N I N
V I P T I P L E I N K
R I D O U B E I C
T O S I A V B U N L A E
A N K I K R O E T O S S
M I L L I O W I D I E S
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J U D E W I N N I P I G E
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M O L D Y O I R E E R S
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CRYPTOQUIP
N X S K A P O S N T X S B O
M I P B B D X B K M P X D P K S F
K P W V A P S B I B I W T T F
V A X X B P W S P W S I M B
Yesterday's Cryptquip: THE OPTIMISTIC CAPTAIN ALWAYS SAYS, "MY SHIP WILL COME IN SCHOONER OR LATER."
Today's Cryptquip clue: S equals R
The Cryptquip 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.

Euro 2000 on right track

ROTTERDAM, Jan 28 (Reuters): With 500 days to go before the 2000 European Soccer Championship

kicks off, the tournament organiser said preparations were on schedule and stadiums would be ready a year in advance.

"Euro 2000 is on the right track," Belgian Alain Courtois said in an interview.

The three-week championship, the first major sporting event to be co-hosted by two countries — Belgium and the Netherlands — is due to open on June 10 next year.

Courtois, a former Belgian Soccer Union secretary-general, promised a fair and transparent ticketing policy and said tight security would prevent trouble.

But he admitted his job was far from problem-free.

Asked what kept him awake at night, he said his biggest fear was of the unexpected, like the bomb blast which marred the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games.

"But one of my biggest nightmares is that our two countries don't do well in the tournament," he added.

"Take the 1982 World Cup in Spain. The home team was quickly eliminated and local interest in the event just disappeared."

Euro 2000 plans 31 matches in eight cities — four venues in each country — with 1.2 million tickets on sale.

"For us ticketing is very important after France," Courtois said, referring to the acrimonious dispute over how French authorities handled ticket sales for the 1998 World Cup.

Rangers restart in style

DUNDEE, Scotland, Jan 27 (Reuters/Internet): Rangers thrashed Dundee 4-0 away on Wednesday in the first game after the Scottish premier league's winter break.

The easy success at Dens Park saw Dick Advocaat's side extend their lead over Kilmarnock to seven points.