

Women's h'ball

Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University beat Kaliganj Sramik College 3-0 in the 5th Green Delta inter-college-hall women's handball tournament at the Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi yesterday, reports UNB.

Soma, Jolly and Chekim scored for the winners who led the first half 2-0.

In other fixtures, Vi-quarunissa Noon School & College, Lalmatia Women's College and Ishpani Girls' School & College won their respective matches at the same venue.

Viquarunissa overwhelmed BCIC College 18-4 after dominating the first session 9-2.

Sandhya scored four goals, Avi and Ratri three each, and Marufa and Shamima two each for the winners while Fahmida netted two and Nargis and Mak-suda one each for the losers.

Lalmatia defeated Dhaka Women's College 8-3 after leading the first half 4-1.

Ummie Kulsum netted four and Sabiha two for the winners while Sadia, Nipa and Nila scored one goal apiece for the losers.

Ishpani easily beat Home Economics College 4-0 after dominating the first session 3-0.

Sumi scored two goals while Shanta and Surovi netted one each for the winners.

Seven matches will be held today at the same venue.

Div II hockey

Dikusha Sporting Club came from behind to beat Raktim Sangha 2-1 in the Green Delta Metropolitan Second Division hockey league at the Moulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

The match was locked 1-1 in the first half.

Sohel put Raktim Sangha ahead in the 15th minute by a free kick while Khawja Shabbab neutralised the goal for Dikusha in the 22nd minute.

Shabbab scored the match-winning for Dikusha in the 56th minute from a penalty corner.

In another fixture, Uttara Hockey Club defeated East End Green Club 3-0 in a mockery of a match at the same venue.

East End Green took to the field with minimum required number of seven players, but as they were trailing 0-3 within 11 minutes one of their players withdrew with injury.

Kalam scored all the three goals for Uttara in the 5th, 7th and 6th minutes with a hat-trick.

Bowling crisis for England

LONDON, July 24 (Internet report): England are expected to be without spearhead Darren Gough and young understudy Alex Tudor for the remainder of this summer's Test series against New Zealand.

Yorkshire fast bowler Gough, who has missed the first two Tests with calf trouble, has been told to rest for the next month - which all but rules him out of the final two Tests.

He is likely to be joined on the sidelines by 21-year-old Tudor, whose trip to the specialist on Wednesday to investigate the left knee problem which has troubled him since before the opening Test at Edgbaston revealed greater problems than first anticipated.

Gough, who went for scan on his troublesome calf injury yesterday and was told to rest for a month, is to be re-examined about the problem to determine whether it is connected with the degenerative hamstring trouble which forced his withdrawal from the West Indies tour two winters ago.

England physiotherapist Wayne Morton, who has liaised with Yorkshire officials, explained, "Both parties feel it would be prudent to re-scan the previous surgery to make sure has not re-occurred in the hamstring and referred into the calf.

The area of pain is different but the scenario with recovery and then breakdown is similar. Darren will be resting until the area has been investigated and a future plan of rehabilitation established."

It means Gough will be unavailable for two key matches which could decide Yorkshire's season - next Wednesday's NatWest Trophy quarter-final with Roses rivals Lancashire at Old Trafford and the Benson and Hedges Super Cup final against Gloucestershire at Lord's on August 1.

Morton added, "Darren is obviously disappointed but wants as much chance as possible to be fit for England's winter tour to South Africa and Zimbabwe."

Fulham hire Hughes

LONDON, July 24: Arsenal midfielder Stephen Hughes joined first division Fulham on a three-month loan deal on Friday with a view to a permanent move, reports AFP.

It is the second high-profile loan signing at Craven Cottage this week after Aston Villa striker Stan Collymore agreed a similar move.

The 22-year-old Hughes, a former England Under-21 international, has struggled to maintain a first-team place at Highbury, with Ray Parlour, Marc Overmars and French stars Emmanuel Petit and Patrick Vieira always ahead of him in the queue.

A statement from Fulham read: "Fulham Football Club are delighted to announce that they have signed Stephen Hughes from Arsenal on a three-month loan deal with the possibility of a permanent move in the future."

Hughes was initially unwilling to join Fulham, not wanting to step down from the Premiership, but Collymore's arrival plus the purchase of highly-rated Lee Clark from Sunderland has persuaded him the club mean business.



New Zealand's Daniel Vettori ducks a rising Dean Headley delivery on the third day of the second Test at Lord's yesterday. —AFP photo

White wins SA race

JOHANNESBURG, July 24 (Reuters/Internet): South Africa's cricket board formally adopted a more racially representative constitution at its annual meeting on Saturday but the move made little difference to elections for key positions.

At a special general meeting held behind closed doors at the Wanderers stadium in Johannesburg, the new constitution of the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA) was formally adopted.

But during the ensuing open elections only one of the top three key positions saw a new occupant.

In the most keenly awaited contest, Raymond White retained his position as president despite a challenge from Percy Sonn of Western Province. It was the first time that the presidency of the UCBSA had been challenged since the establishment of the unified body in 1991.

Media reports had suggested that Sonn, a coloured administrator from the formally black South African Cricket Board (SACB), was attempting to politicise the body and sweeping changes would be made if he was elected.

But Sonn denied this, saying that his decision to challenge White was taken simply to justify his nomination.

"I think if people ask you to make yourself available and you think you can make a point and have chance at winning then you should make yourself available," Sonn said. "But I'm satisfied with the result because we have exercised our democracy and Ray has my full support."

Sonn was re-elected as vice-president after two other nominations were withdrawn while, in the only change, John Blair, was voted in as treasurer ahead of incumbent Julian Thornton.

"I must congratulate both Raymond and Percy for the way in which they conducted themselves," UCBSA managing director Ali Bacher said. "It is the

first time since my involvement in cricket administration in 1976 that the presidency has been opposed but it was done in the right spirit."

As part of the board's new constitution, which aims to bring more black influence into its upper structures, three blacks were elected to sit on the general council along with the 12 provincial representatives.

In his address, White reiterated the UCB's commitment to transforming the sport into a game played by all races in accordance with the decisions made at a conference held in November last year that culminated in a "pledge to the nation" in June.

"I would hope that South African cricket has moved past the possibility of picking an all white team," he said.

White urged the International Cricket Council (ICC) to take a pro-active stance in wiping out rumours of gambling in the sport adding that the allegations were a "major threat" to the game.



Manchester United forward Dwight Yorke (R) is under pressure from a South China defender during their exhibition soccer match in Hong Kong on July 23. —AFP photo

Bosnich impresses Irwin

HONG KONG, July 24 (AFP): Manchester United veteran Denis Irwin is tipping new Aussie goalkeeper Mark Bosnich to fill great Dane Peter Schmeichel's boots.

Irwin - United's acting skipper on the English giants' tour of Australia and the Far East - said Bosnich's form on the tour had been the major plus.

"Mark's come in and done the job and we haven't had a goal scored against us. When he's played he's looked the part," Irwin said.

Asked what was different about playing in front of Bosnich, Irwin said he had learned at least one thing.

"He's quieter, that's for sure," he said with a grin, referring to Schmeichel's habit of barking orders at his defenders. "But I'm sure he'll get a bit louder."

"I spoke to Dwight Yorke before Mark came, and he said Mark was the best goalkeeper he's ever seen. It's a lot to ask coming in after Peter but I'm sure he's up to the job," he added.

"It will be different without Peter but that's football. In my time at the club I've seen magnificent players come and go. The club moves on," the ever-green 33-year-old fullback said.

United assistant manager Steve McLaren insisted the tour had been important for forging team spirit amongst the squad.

"It's been useful for us, no doubt about it. We've had four hard games, and it's good for the players to have a little bit of adversity hear and there," he said, in an apparent reference to the

stormy second match against Australia last week.

"Last season, the team spirit was the foundation of our success and we've had that again on this tour," he added.

Earlier Saturday the treble-winners maintained their 100 percent record for the tour with a routine 2-0 victory over Hong Kong club side South China.

Under-strength United, missing stars David Beckham, Ryan Giggs, Roy Keane, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Nicky Butt, were never threatened in a match which amounted to little more than a training exercise.

Even without their glamour boys, United were able to field a side valued roughly at something close to 60 million dollars.

Their opponents, used to playing in one of the weakest leagues in Asia in front of crowds of a two or three thousand, have an estimated value

of 500,000 dollars.

The disparity in class was evident throughout as United stroked the ball around at leisure, clearly deciding not to over exert themselves in fierce tropical heat and humidity.

After a slow start England international Teddy Sheringham fired the Red Devils into the lead, slamming home a low cross whipped in from the right flank by Andy Cole on 22 minutes.

Five minutes later Cole added his name to the score-sheet after a swift breakout from midfield by United.

Jordi Cruyff swept forward and passed to Sheringham who squared to Cole for the easiest of side-footed finishes.

United's keeper Bosnich had a quiet afternoon only being called upon nine minutes from the break, when he tipped over a dipping long-range shot from Chan Chi-hong.

In the second half United made four substitutions giving run outs to youngsters Michael Clegg, Jonathan Greening and Mark Wilson.

Yorke went close 13 minutes from time but United were unable to add to their tally, to the disappointment of a capacity 40,000 crowd at the Hong Kong Stadium.

The win was United's last match of their four match tour. They defeated Australia twice over two games in Melbourne and Sydney before moving on to beat Chinese league-leaders Shanghai Shenhua 2-0 last Wednesday.

They are due to return to England from Hong Kong Sunday night.



MARK BOSNICH

Saqlain strangles Warwicks

LONDON, July 24: Surrey strengthened their grip on the English county championship with a crushing innings and 123 runs victory over sixth-placed Warwickshire at Edgbaston on Friday, reports Reuters.

The unbeaten leaders wrapped up their eighth win of the season with more than a day to spare after skittling the hosts for just 133 in their second innings.

Following on 256 behind, Warwickshire reached 55 for one without undue alarm before capitulating against the combined spin attack of Saqlain Mushtaq (five for 32) and Ian Salisbury (4-46).

The Pakistani off-spinner has now taken 26 wickets in Surrey's last three games.

Sussex celebrated their first triumph at Derby for 44 years after Jason Levy took a career-best seven for 38 to clinch an 85-run success over Derbyshire.

Durham continued to climb the table with an emphatic innings and 127 runs triumph over Gloucestershire at Cheltenham.

Gloucestershire lost their last five first innings wickets for 54 to follow-on 350 runs behind before being dismissed second time around for 223.

Kent continued their winning streak with an 88-run victory over Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge.

Julian Thompson, a qualified doctor, took six for 63 to help dismiss Nottinghamshire for 237 after they had been reeling at 66 for six.

A magnificent rearguard action by fourth-placed Yorkshire averted a shock defeat against bottom of the table Northamptonshire at Scarborough.

Yorkshire resumed the final day on 141 for four in their second innings, still trailing by 87.

But Australian Test batsman Greg Blewett, 54 not out overnight, reached a match-saving 190 off 316 balls, which included two sixes and 27 fours.

Gavin Hamilton provided solid support with an unbeaten 84 before Yorkshire were finally dismissed for 467, giving them an unassailable lead of 239.

By the close, Northamptonshire were 61 for two and the game was drawn.

Somerset's top three batsmen all played second innings centuries against Middlesex at Taunton.

Jamie Cox (114) and Marcus Trescothick (190) put on 253 for the opening wicket. Piran Holford then weighed in with an unbeaten 101 as the home side reached a mammoth 486 for three, 428 ahead with one day remaining.

New Wembley without Twin Towers?

LONDON, July 24: Wembley stadium's famous twin towers are set to play no part in the new-look arena which is to be rebuilt after the 2000 FA Cup final, reports AFP.

Details of the revamped 90,000-seat stadium, the home of English football, are due to be unveiled next week and it appears the trademark structures will not be accommodated in the plans.

Architects fear the cost of moving or rebuilding the towers would push the budget way over its 320 million pound (480 million dollar) estimate.

Wembley communications director Chris Palmer said: "We could move the twin towers to the moon if we spent enough money."

But the question is whether the money available should be better used on facilities for the fans and the stadium itself.

"Everyone who has seen the design is confident we are building the best stadium in the world."

"We are building a stadium that will very much be Wembley. We would be fools not to build on Wembley's legacy. We are looking to emulate its atmosphere, if not better it."

The development is seen as a key factor in England's bid to host the 2006 World Cup finals. FIFA are expected to announce that decision next July.

Parma happy with the draw

GENEVA, July 24: Reigning UEFA Cup champions Parma were hopeful Friday that a possible Champions' League third qualifying round meeting with Scottish champions Rangers, who they eliminated in last year's campaign, is a good omen, reports AP.

French club Olympique Lyonnais, meanwhile, thanked their lucky stars for simply avoiding unseeded Ukrainian champion Dnipro Kiev, a Champions' Cup semifinalist last season.

They instead drew the winners of the second-round qualifying tie between Genk of Belgium and NK Maribor of Slovenia for their opening matches in August.

Parma have a chance to re-play the Scottish champions if Rangers can get past Finnish champions Haka Valkeakoski in their second-round tie.

"May be this is a sign of destiny for us and we'll go on to win the Champions' Cup," said Parma sports director Michele Uva. "Last year we played the Rangers and beat them and then went on to win the UEFA Cup."

Despite having yet to reach the third round, Rangers were just as excited about the prospect of a rematch against the Italian club.



Manchester United's Andy Cole (R) tries to evade an unidentified South China player. —AFP photo

United's fourth out of four

HONG KONG, July 24 (AFP/Reuters): Treble-winning English giants Manchester United completed their tour of Australia and the Far East with a routine 2-0 victory over Hong Kong club side South China here Saturday.

Under-strength United, missing stars David Beckham, Ryan Giggs, Roy Keane, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Nicky Butt, were never threatened in a match which amounted to little more than a training exercise.

Even without their glamour boys, United were able to field a side valued roughly at something close to 60 million dollars.

Their opponents, used to playing in one of the weakest leagues in Asia in front of crowds of a two or three thousand, have an estimated value of 500,000 dollars.

United faced criticism from many Hong Kong fans for failing to parade their big-name players but they showed the

crowd that they wanted to play positive football by starting the match with three strikers - Teddy Sheringham, Andy Cole and Dwight Yorke.

The disparity in class was evident throughout as United stroked the ball around at leisure, clearly deciding not to over exert themselves in fierce tropical heat and humidity.

After a slow start England international Sheringham fired the Red Devils into the lead, slamming home a low cross whipped in from the right flank by Cole in the 22nd minute.

Five minutes later Cole and Sheringham reversed roles for their second goal. Jordi Cruyff made a penetrating run from inside his own half, fed Sheringham on the left and the England forward unselfishly passed across the ball to the unmarked Cole, who tapped in from eight metres.

Cruyff had a chance to make it 3-0 two minutes later but his point-blank shot was brilliantly saved by South China

custodian Mick Leonard.

United's new goalkeeper Mark Bosnich had a quiet afternoon only being called upon nine minutes from the break, when he tipped over a dipping 35-metre shot - South China's only chance in the first half - from defender Leung Chi-wing.

In the second half United made four substitutions giving run outs to youngsters Michael Clegg, Jonathan Greening and Mark Wilson.

Dwight Yorke went close 13 minutes from time but United were unable to add to their tally, to the disappointment of a capacity 40,000 crowd at the Hong Kong Stadium.

The win was United's fourth of their four match tour. They defeated Australia twice over two games in Melbourne and Sydney before moving on to beat Chinese league leaders Shanghai Shenhua 2-0 last Wednesday.

They are due to return to England from Hong Kong Sunday night.

Reds reaping in rich

HONG KONG, July 24 (AFP): For Manchester United's legions of fans, the club's tour of Australia and Far East is likely to represent little more than a globe-trotting prospect to their dazzling exploits of the past season.

For the Old Trafford monomaniacs who have helped make the club the richest in the world, however, the tour is a vital cog in a global business plan aimed at cashing in on their vast international fan base, estimated at millions worldwide.

On the sidelines of the matches played so far -- two in Australia and one in Shanghai -- the United entourage has found time to launch two new strips as well as finalise details for the opening of a network of Manchester United megastores across the Asia-Pacific region.

Stores in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Hong Kong and possibly China will stock everything from Manchester United replica kits, videos, bedspreads, and books to cups, plates and cuddly toys.

"We've looked into the Manchester United megastores carefully and there is clearly a demand for memorabilia from our fans across the world. We anticipate most of the shops will be open by the end of 2000," United commercial director Peter Kenyon said. But any suggestion that treble-winning United's all-conquering players are being exploited for commercial opportunities presented by

the tour were bluntly dismissed by chairman Martin Edwards.

"Our first priority is to have a successful football team and I think we do that rather well. On the back of that success we try and market the brand and capitalise on the team's success," Edwards told a press conference on the eve of their match against Hong Kong team South China.

"But without the team's success it's very difficult to enhance the brand. So the team always comes first -- always has done, always will do."

Edwards defended United's aggressive commercial tactics, saying it was necessary to be profitable off the pitch in order to meet escalating costs.

"In these days of expensive transfer fees, higher wages and everything else, you have to be successful commercially in order to be able to keep improving facilities, the stadium and players."

"So we do capitalise on the success of the team and we make no apologies for that. But we are first and foremost a football club and I'll say again, the team always comes first," Edwards added.

United, who were valued at 1.0 billion dollars by foiled suitor Rupert Murdoch last season, were said to be the richest club in the world earlier this year following an in-depth report by Deloitte and Touche accountants for a British football magazine.

The report showed United coined in a staggering 87.9 million pounds (144 million dol-

lars) in the 1996-97 financial year, nearly 50 percent more than its nearest rival, Spanish giants Barcelona.

A sizeable chunk of that financial success is derived from worldwide commercial activities. In Asia, the Manchester United "brand" is bigger than ever, according to Hong Kong businessman Paul Kam.

"We've been involved with Manchester United for four years and the fact is that they just keep getting more and more popular," said Kam, whose company Pro-Events is United's official marketing partner in Asia.

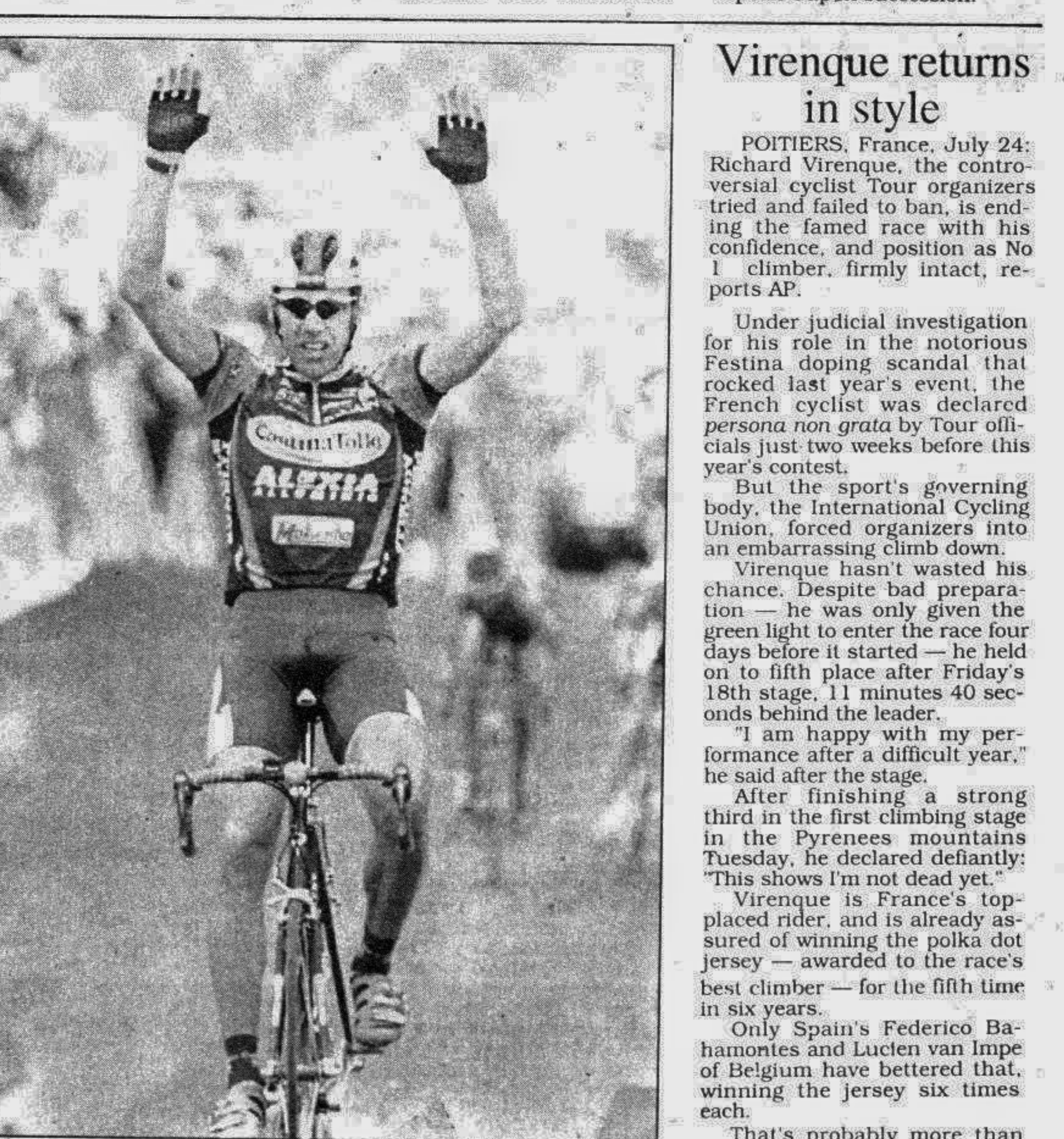
Even the fact that United will play in Hong Kong without the backbone of their side -- David Beckham, Roy Keane, Gary Neville, Paul Scholes, Ryan Giggs and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer are all absentees -- has failed to deter fans here, who camped out overnight to buy tickets for the exhibition clash when they went on sale in May.

Kam, who is also secretary of the Hong Kong branch of the Manchester United Supporters Club, believes part of the Red Devils' appeal lies in the team's history.

"They are a team with glamour and a team with history, and these are things which I think Asian people respond to and admire," he said.

"And of course, it also helps that they win trophies a lot."

United have had a stunning year, pulling off the "treble" by winning the English premier league title, the FA Cup and European Cup in succession.



Gianpaolo Mondini of Italy is exultant after winning the 18th stage of the Tour de France on July 23. —AFP photo

Virenque returns in style

POITIERS, France, July 24: Richard Virenque, the controversial cyclist Tour organizers tried and failed to ban, is ending the famed race with his confidence, and position as No 1 climber, firmly intact, reports AP.

Under judicial investigation for his role in the notorious Festina doping scandal that rocked last year's event, the French cyclist was declared persona non grata by Tour officials just two weeks before this year's contest.

But the sport's governing body, the International Cycling Union, forced organizers into an embarrassing climb down.

Virenque hasn't wasted his chance. Despite bad preparation -- he was only given the green light to enter the race four days before it started -- he held on to fifth place after Friday's 18th stage, 11 minutes 40 seconds behind the leader.

"I am happy with my performance after a difficult year," he said after the stage.

After finishing a strong third in the first climbing stage in the Pyrenees mountains Tuesday, he declared defiantly: "This shows I'm not dead yet."

Virenque is France's top-placed rider, and is already assured of winning the polka dot jersey -- awarded to the race's best climber -- for the fifth time in six years.

Only Spain's Federico Bahamontes and Lucien van Impe of Belgium have bettered that, winning the jersey six times each.

That's probably more than the 29-year-old could have dreamed of after what he has called the worst year of his life.