

Floodlights scam Asian punter found guilty

LONDON, Aug 21: A professional gambler was found guilty on Friday of plotting to sabotage an English Premiership match in a multi-million pound Far Eastern betting scam, reports AFP.

Hong Kong-born Wai Yuen Liu was the London-based fixer for a gang who plunged top English games into darkness by tampering with stadium floodlights.

A jury at Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court took six hours to find him guilty by a majority 10-2 verdict over a plot to sabotage a match between Charlton and Liverpool last season.

The overseas syndicate was also thought to be behind the abandonment of two other matches which netted Far Eastern organised crime gangs up to 60 million pounds (90 million dollars) when the lights went down unexpectedly during a match.

Liu, 38, of Kensington, West London, remained impassive after the nine-man, three-woman jury found him guilty at the end of a four-day trial.

The scam was uncovered only when two Malaysians and Liu were caught red-handed at the ground of Charlton Athletic on February 10 where they had planned to plant an electrical device to sabotage the flood lighting.

The "circuit-breaker" was to be triggered with a remote control unit when the score favoured the syndicate during a fixture at the Valley against Liverpool on February 13.

The huge profits meant they could promise to pay Charlton Athletic's security guard Roger Firth 20,000 pounds to let them into the ground to plant the device.

Malaysians Chee Kew Ong, 49, and Eng Hwa Lim, 35, and Firth, 49, all pleaded guilty to conspiracy to cause a public nuisance.

Liu had denied the charge. The four are due to be sentenced next Wednesday.

The syndicate was linked with a match at Upton Park in November 1997 where West Ham were playing at home to Crystal Palace which was abandoned when the lights went out with the score 2-2.

A month later, Selhurst Park was also plunged into darkness after only 13 seconds of the second half when Wimbledon were playing at home to Arsenal with the score at 0-0.

Greece too good for El Salvador

RAVALLA, Greece, Aug 21: Greece comfortably beat El Salvador in a friendly on Friday for the second time this week, once again scoring three goals against them, reports Reuters.

The 3-0 victory followed a 3-1 win over El Salvador two days ago. Altogether it was a third victory in a week for the Greeks who also defeated Mexico 3-2 on Monday.

Greece, warming up for their European Group Two qualifier against Norway on September 4, dominated the slow game, opening the score in the 40th minute through Angelos Basinas.

Young striker Nikos Lymberopoulos made it 2-0 with a penalty in the 50th minute and Apostolis Liolidis sealed victory with a header following up a corner by Giogios Karagounis in the 81st.

UN soccer tourney

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 21: Soccer teams representing dozens of countries will kick off an international tournament in New York on September 19 in honour of the UN Day of Peace, it was announced on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Participating in the tournament will be 64 teams drawn mainly from soccer-playing communities in the New York area. Grenada's UN envoy, Lamuel Stanislaus, and ambassador Emilia Castro de Barish of Costa Rica told a news conference at the United Nations.

"It is through the universal language of music and through the culture of sport that the world has the best opportunity to attain the universal goal of brotherhood," Stanislaus said.

Because the tournament starts on the eve of the opening of the annual UN General Assembly debate on September 20 attended by foreign ministers and other dignitaries, it is called the September Debate Friendship Cup. The Day of Peace is officially observed on the Assembly's opening day, September 14.

The teams will represent countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean.

The matches, also sponsored by the Eastern New York Soccer Association and a group of non-governmental organisations, will be played at Flushing Meadows Park, in the New York Borough of Queens. Admission will be free.

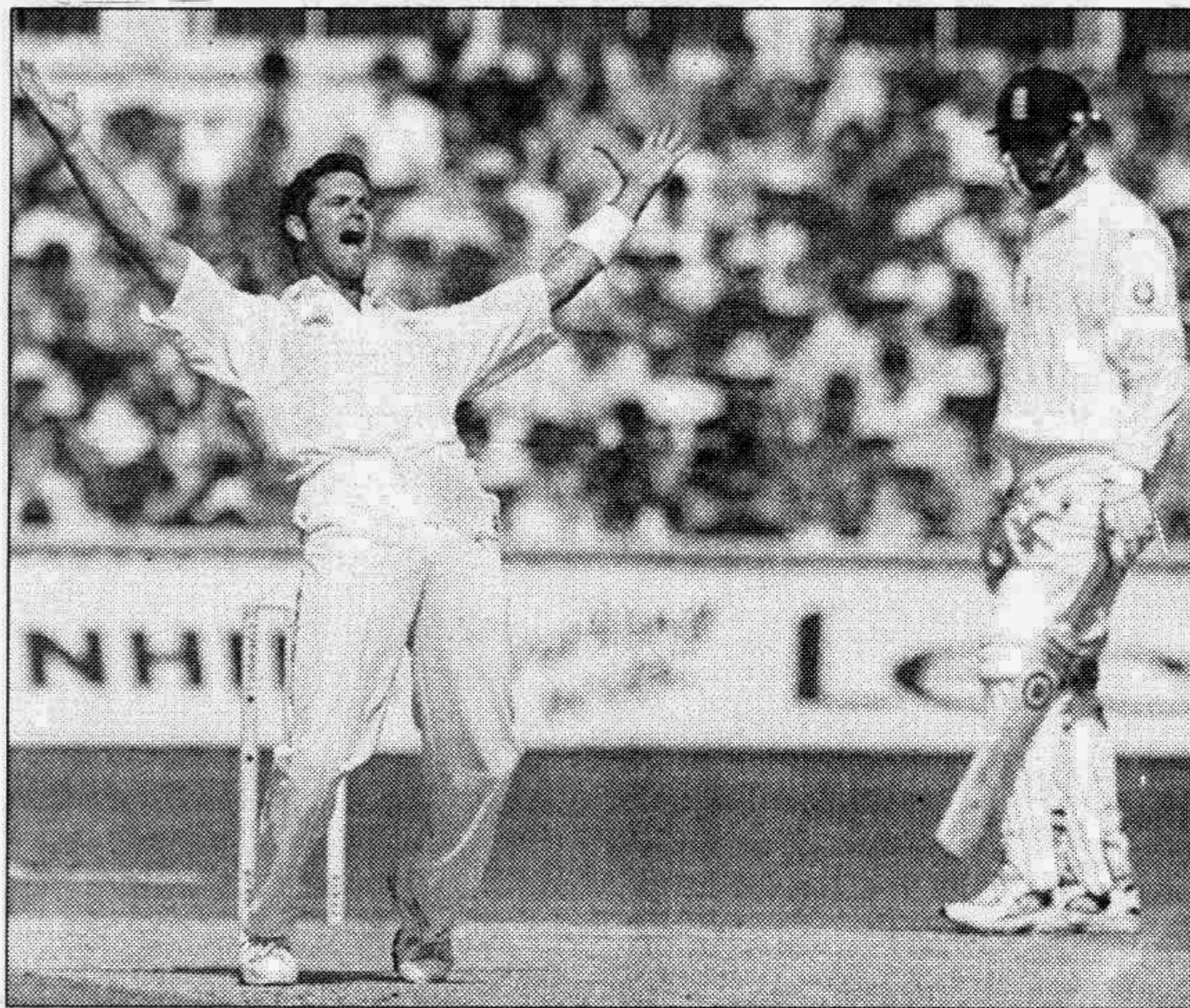
Kournikova skips US Open

McLEAN, Virginia, Aug 21: Anna Kournikova, the world's 13th-ranked women's player, withdrew from the US Open because of a minor stress fracture in her right foot, reports AP.

The Russian star's management company, Advantage International, said Friday that Kournikova sustained the injury while practicing last week.

Kournikova is expected to return to competition in September.

The US Open, the year's final Grand Slam tournament, begins Aug 30.



New Zealand all-rounder Chris Cairns, who took five wickets in England's first innings, is euphoric after having Ed Giddins leg before on the third day of the Oval Test yesterday. — AFP photo

Cairns does the damage

LONDON, Aug 21 (Agencies): Chris Cairns skittled the tailenders within 21 minutes Saturday as New Zealand took three wickets in eight balls to bowl England out for 153 on the third morning of the fourth Test at The Oval.

England trail New Zealand by 83 on the first innings, the 14th successive Test in which they have shown a first-innings deficit.

After resuming at 150 for seven the home team lost Alan Mullally in the fourth over, and three balls later frontline batsman Mark Ramprakash perished without adding to his overnight 30.

Mullally faced 11 balls before prodding New Zealand left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori off his pad and Mathew Bell took a fine, low one-handed catch.

Ramprakash was caught behind off the edge, playing his first aggressive stroke at Chris Cairns.

Cairns then hit last man Ed Giddins lbw for a duck.

Cairns, doubtful with a knee injury before the match, finished with five for 31 to follow his six for 77 at Lord's and now has 18 wickets in the series.

With the series level at 1-1, with England winning the first Test at Edgbaston and the Kiwis winning the second, Lord's before a rain-plagued draw at Old Trafford — New Zealand are in a prime position to clinch the series in this deciding Test.

New Zealand openers Matt Horne and Matthew Bell commenced the second innings Saturday after a 10-minute break.

On Friday, England's players and management admitted that

had under-performed. "We're not playing to our capability", said acting coach Graham Gooch. "If we're going to win the game, we have to be more aggressive. If we can get up close to their score, it's going to be a one-innings match."

Skipper Stephen Fleming and the 20-year-old Vettori ensured that England would not enjoy a first-innings lead. The pair put on 78 for ninth wicket to lift the tourists after starting the day on 170 for eight.

The bulk of the runs came from Vettori after Fleming had on struck a painful blow on the shoulder by Andy Caddick in the opening over.

Vettori completed his second half-century of the series from only 47 balls before falling to opposing left-arm spinner Phil Tufnell for 51.

Fleming was left unbeaten on 66 and said afterwards he had used his bruised shoulder as extra motivation.

"We've had a bit of luck and grabbed the momentum. The wicket is quite difficult and we could have been all out for about 120. Now it's going to be a good end to the series."

"Showing no sign of his discomfort when England went in to bat, Fleming then held two good slip catches to dismiss Michael Atherton and Graham Thorpe, both for 10.

Vettori's left-arm spin ended Darren Maddy's first Test innings for 14 and he also bowled Alec Stewart for 11. His figures in a long, unchanged spell were two for 44 in 31 overs.

It was another miserable batting display by England.

Nasser Hussain made 40 before falling to a leg-side trap set

for him by Chris Cairns, who also sent back recalled all-rounder Ronnie Irani for a single.

When Caddick was bowled by Shayne O'Connor for 15, England were reduced to 141 for seven.

Stewart said it was good bowling rather than bad batting that had caused England's problems.

"People have been got out by good bowling. Cairns and Nash have bowled exceptionally well throughout the series and been backed up very well here by Vettori."

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the third day of the fourth Test between England and New Zealand at The Oval on Saturday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 236 (S Fleming 66 not out, D Vettori 51)

ENGLAND: First innings (scoreless 150-7)

Atherton c Fleming b Nash 10

Maddy b Vettori 14

Hussain c Bell b Cairns 40

Thorpe c Fleming b Cairns 10

Stewart b Vettori 11

Ramprakash c Parore b Cairns 30

Irani lbw b Cairns 1

Caddick b O'Connor 15

Mullally c Bell b Vettori 5

Tufnell not out 50

Giddins lbw b Cairns 0

Extras: (b-1, lb-5, w-5, nb-6) 17

Total: (All out) 153

Fall of wickets: 1-25; 2-29; 3-46; 4-87; 5-91; 6-94; 7-141; 8-153; 9-153.

Bowler:

Cairns 19 8 31 5

Nash 14 5 40 1

O'Connor 13 3 30 1

Vettori 33 12 46 3

Astle 1 1 0 0

(Incomplete)

England stand by Tufnell

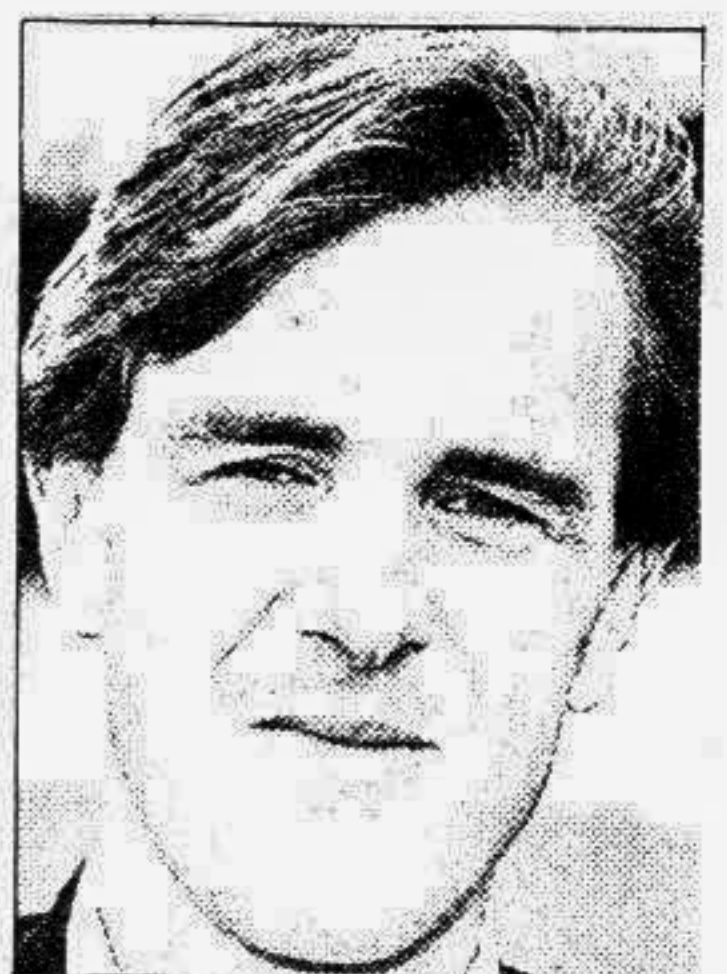
LONDON, Aug 21 (Internet report): Phil Tufnell has reiterated his denial about stories claiming he swore at two schoolchildren hunting an autograph on the first day of the deciding Test.

The Middlesex left-arm spinner is alleged to have verbally abused 11-year-olds James Holyfield and Bobby Thorpe, who had both taken part in the lunchtime Kwik Cricket display, while he was fielding during the opening day's play against New Zealand at The Oval. But, speaking on Channel 4 before England resumed 86 behind the tourists on 150 for seven, Tufnell insisted: "It was a bit disappointing to read that - I don't go round swearing at young people."

"It's difficult to sign every autograph, particularly when they are 20 yards away. When you're in the game you're always signing autographs, and we always do our best to help."

Asked what message he had for the boys making the allegations, Tufnell joked: "Don't tell lies boys or the boggymen will come and get you."

The England and Wales Cricket Board immediately



PHIL TUFNELL

pledged to launch an investigation into the incident following the allegations, and acting coach Graham Gooch has confirmed they fully support Tufnell's version of events.

"We've spoken to Tufnell, and as far as we're concerned there is no truth in the allegations," said Gooch.

"He denies what has been said, and we take his word on it."

Gooch's support follows an

ECB statement which claimed: "We would never condone the use of foul language by players. We will investigate the matter at the earliest opportunity and remind the players of their responsibilities."

The England players sign hundreds of autographs every day, and if this incident occurred we believe it to be the exception rather than the rule - we'll be making very effort to contact the boys and forward them autographs of the whole team."

This latest controversy occurred as England struggled to compete once again with New Zealand and they will resume 86 behind on 150 for seven with Mark Ramprakash, their only remaining recognised batsman, unbeaten on 30.

It followed an equally frustrating start to the second day after New Zealand, resuming on 170 for eight, added a priceless 66 runs before being dismissed for 236 with Stephen Fleming and Daniel Vettori forging a 78-run partnership off 98 balls.

"I'm stating the obvious but we're not playing to our full ability," stressed Gooch. "We're struggling with our batting form when we come under pressure."

For others, like Malar and Myden, it's more personal.

"Since the Commonwealth Games I've dropped five seconds in the 400 IM," Malar said. "I think a lot is to do with my mental frame of mind but I'm also working on a lot of new areas and it's all just come together."

Myden said a break from the sport, including the Commonwealth Games, "gave me a chance to come back with a fresher attitude."



Members of the Japanese swimming team gather for a photograph by the main pool of the Sydney International Aquatic Centre yesterday. The Pan Pacific Swimming Championships start today. — AFP photo

Close shave for Atherton

LONDON, Aug 21 (AFP): England opener Michael Atherton will escape formal punishment after reacting angrily to his dismissal on the second day of the deciding Test against New Zealand at The Oval on Friday.

Match referee Peter Van der Merwe said instead he would have a "quiet word" with the former England captain.

Atherton had battled for an hour at the crease as England replied to the tourists' first-innings total of 236 and appeared to have weathered early spells from Chris Cairns and Dion Nash.

But just three overs after tea, having failed to add to his interval score of 10, Atherton pushed forward to Nash and edged to Stephen Fleming at first slip, waving his right hand angrily at his dismissal and accidentally flicking off the ball.

It was the sort of reaction which has, in the past, invited censure from the International Cricket Council match referees, but South African Van der Merwe confirmed he would not be punishing Atherton.

"I won't be taking any action but it is not the done thing to do and I will be having a quiet word with him," confirmed Van der Merwe.

Atherton was fined 1,200 pounds (1,900 dollars) in 1994 for showing dissent - looking at his bat and shaking his head - following his lbw dismissal for a duck against South Africa at The Oval.

Elber, Scheidt get Brazil recall

RIO DE JANEIRO, Aug 21: Bayern Munich's Elber and Rafael Felipe Scheidt of Gremio were recalled by Brazilian coach Wanderley Luxemburgo into a 22-man squad for friendly matches against Argentina next month, reports AFP.

Elber, who tore left knee ligaments against Hamburg in March, played his first competitive match since then just last Sunday.

Scheidt returns, for the September 4 match in Buenos Aires and the September fixture at Porto Alegre, having served his month's suspension for doping.

"I cannot punish a youngster who has made a small error," said Luxemburgo who also selected 19-year-old fullback Alessandro Fajolhe Amantino Mancini of Atletico MG.

SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS: Dida, Marcos

DEFENDERS: Cafu, Zago, Roberto Carlos, Silvinho, Scheidt, Mancini, Joao Carlos, Oliveira

MIDFIELDERS: Emerson, Ze Roberto, Flavio Conceicao, Rivaldo, Vampeta, Alex, Assuncao, Juninho

STRIKERS: Ronaldinho Gaucha, Roni, Ronaldo, Elber.

PanPacs swimming Canadians put to test

SYDNEY, Aug 21: Canada's head swimming coach Dave Johnson says his team has improved so much this year that the country is struggling to meet performance payments to its top stars, reports AP.

Canada suffered a crushing defeat in its previous clash with Australia at a major longcourse meet when the Aussies claimed 23 Commonwealth Games golds to Canada's four in Kuala Lumpur last year.

But Johnson said improved team harmony had helped spark a recovery at this month's Pan American Games, where his swimmers broke three Commonwealth and 10 national records. Now he wants the team to continue its form at the Pan Pacific championships starting Sunday.

The improved performances put an extra strain on a funding budget which is far inferior to the money pumped into the US and Australian programmes.

"It's a cart and horse equation," said Johnson. "You need the money to be successful and you need to be successful to get the money."

"We the swimmers would get what is owed to them, the swimmers would go what is owed to them, even if the budget needs to be rejigged."

"It's a nice problem to have so now we have to work out how to manage all this, but they'll get their money," Johnson said.

Johnson's team gets another crack at Australia, plus the top-ranked United States team and emerging Japan in the Pan Pacific Championships starting at the Olympic pool Sunday.

"We've just come off a very successful meet where we swam as well as we ever have in the history of Canadian swimming," Johnson said Saturday.

There were many excellent performances and the team dynamic within our programmes has improved dramatically."

Joane Malar's two Commonwealth records in medley events and another to Curtis Myden in the men's 400-metre medley led a strong team effort as the Canadians won the Pan Am meet.

"Healthy competitive rivalries in the team and a healthy team dynamic," is the key to Canada's resurgence, according to Johnson.

For others, like Malar and Myden, it's more personal.

"Since the Commonwealth Games I've dropped five seconds in the 400 IM," Malar said. "I think a lot is to do with my mental frame of mind but I'm also working on a lot of new areas and it's all just come together."

PSG stay atop the table



PARIS, Aug 21: Bruno Rodriguez's far post header kept Paris Saint Germain on top of the French league following their 1-1 draw with Auxerre at the Parc des Princes on Friday, reports AFP.

Auxerre captain Stephane Guivarch, who had a hapless time with previous clubs Newcastle and Glasgow Rangers, scored a superb goal in the first half to put the visitors ahead.

Guivarch, fed by Steve Marlet, cut in from the left and his scorching shot from the edge of

the box for his third goal of the season left keeper Bernard Lama no chance in the 36th minute.

With five minutes to go however, Rodriguez got on the end of Ali Benbarba's low cross from the left to keep up their superb start to the season.

PSG, who had won their first three matches after a poor 1998/99 season, are on top with 10 points from Bordeaux who lost 2-1 at Rennes.

Rennes had their first win of the season to put them in confident mood for their Interotto Cup match against Juventus next week.

French international Lilian Laslandes put the French champions ahead after just eight minutes from a Sylvain Wilford cross.

Three minutes before the break Elhadji Diouf equalised in a move started off by Christophe Le Roux.

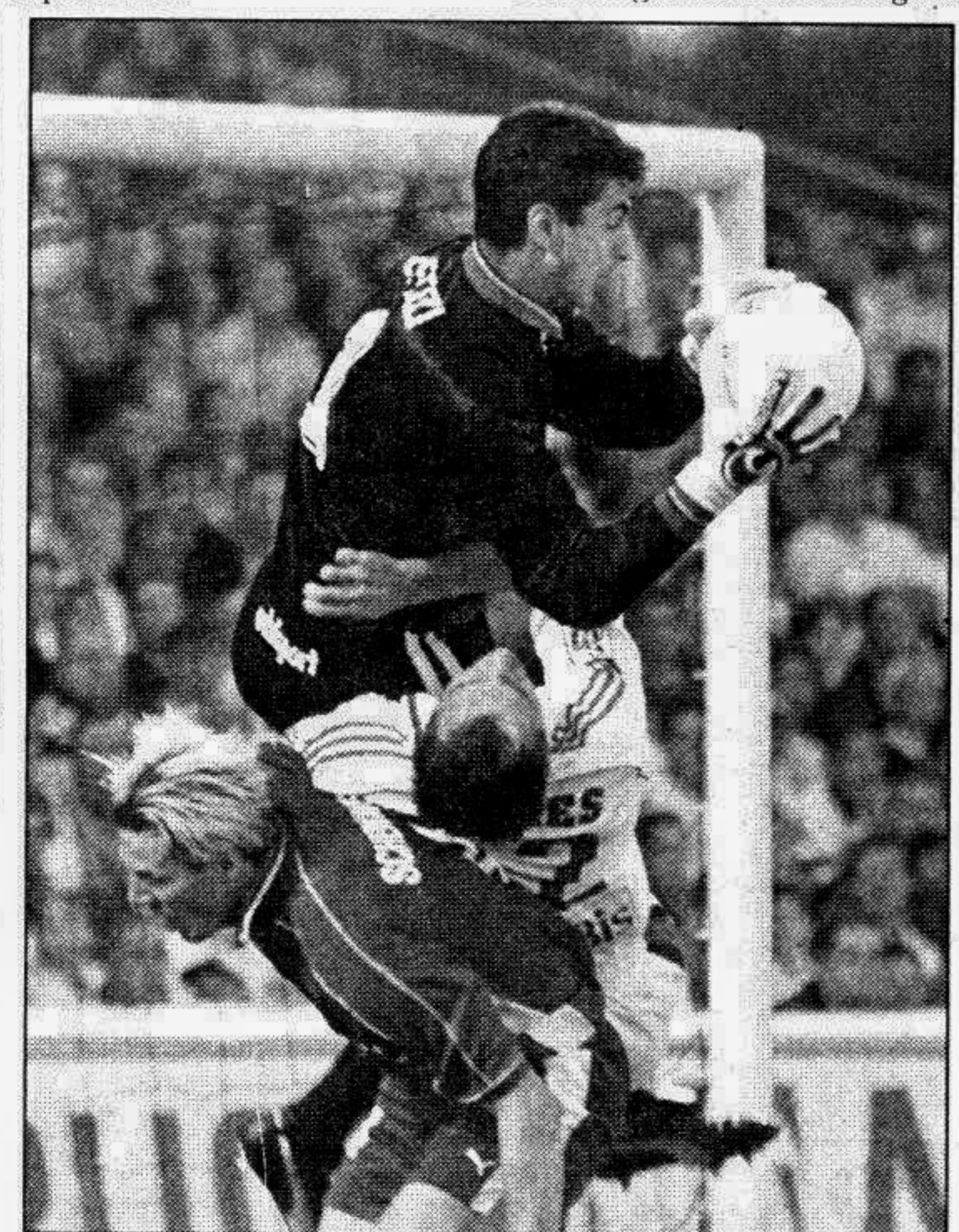
The Brittany team, boosted by their goal, started well in the second half and Shabani Nonda had two fabulous chances. Yugoslav Nisa Saveljic, forced into error by the home side's continued pressure, put the ball past Ulrich Rame for the second time.

Bordeaux's poor performance could be partly explained through tiredness as six of their players were involved with France in Wednesday night's friendly international in Northern Ireland.

Perhaps the best match of the night was Monaco's 3-2 victory at Montpellier's Mosson stadium.

Monaco's David Trezeguet scored his fifth goal of the season from a metre out and Italy's Marco Simone scored his first with a left-footed volley from six metres.

Metz goalkeeper Lionel Letizi beats off the challenge of Lyon's David Linares (C) during their French First Division encounter on August 20. — AFP photo



Metz goalkeeper Lionel Letizi beats off the challenge of Lyon's David Linares (C) during their French First Division encounter on August 20. — AFP photo

STANDINGS

French football league table after Friday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

PSG	4	3	1	0	7	3	10
Bordeaux	4	2	1	1	10	6	7
Monaco	4	2	1	1	9	5	7
Lyon	4	2	1	1	6	5	7
Auxerre	4	2	1	1	6	6	7
Nantes	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
Lens	3	2	0	1	2	1	6
Strasbourg	4	2	0	2	4	6	6
Marseille	3	1	2	0	6	3	5
St Etienne	4	1	2	1	7	8	5
Rennes	4	1	2	1	5	6	5
Metz	4	1	1	2	4	3	4
Montpellier	4	1	1	2	6	8	4
Le Havre	4	1	1	2	2	5	4
Nancy	4	1	0	3	6	7	3
Bastia	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Sedan	4	1	0	3	5	9	3
Troyes	4	1	0	3	3	8	3

Saqi spin sinks Sussex



LONDON, Aug 21 (Internet report): Surrey's Saqlain Mushtaq returned perhaps the best bowling performance of the summer as he spun Sussex out in an astonishing Friday morning at Hove.

The Pakistan Test off-spinner took a hat-trick - Nick Wilton caught at slip, James Kirtley and Jason Lewry both bowled - in his haul of seven for 19 off 14 overs.

Saqi had taken two wickets Thursday, and followed that up with five more off six overs at the cost of just six runs.

Sussex started the morning on 99 for two in reply to Surrey's first innings 224, but less than 60 minutes later every batsman was back in the pavilion with only 16 runs added to the scoreboard.

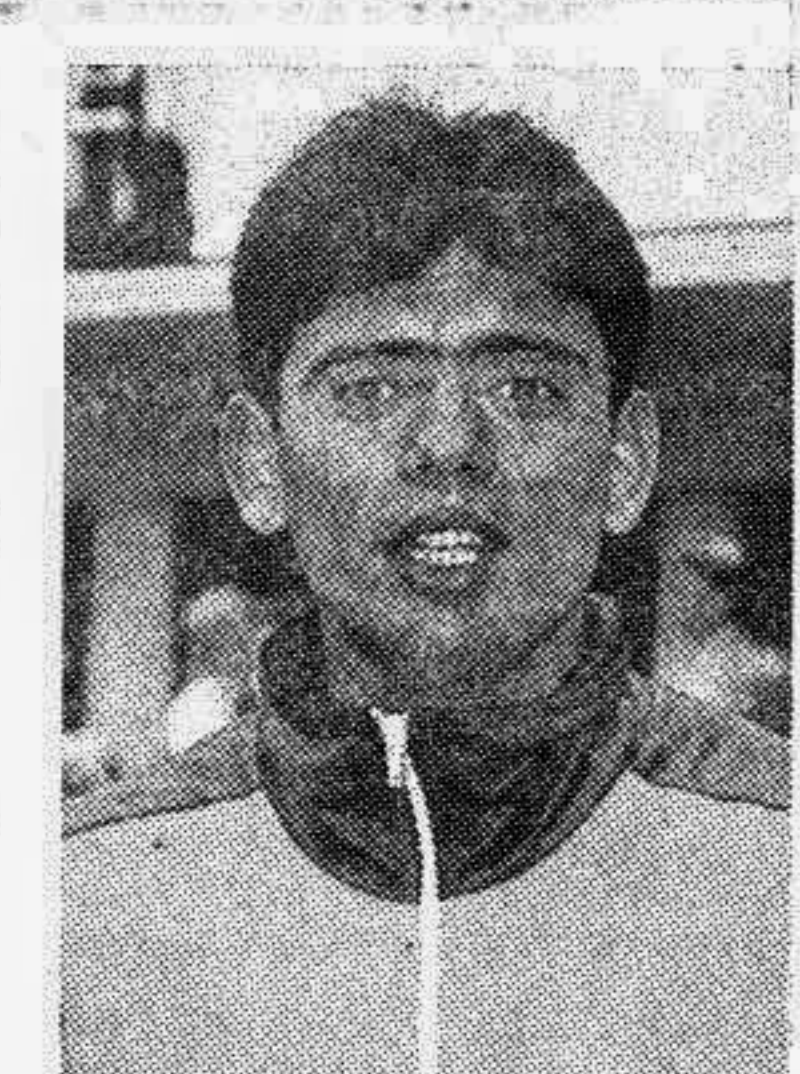
Martin Bicknell accounted for the other three wickets, including the important ones of Toby Pearce (51) and Chris Adams (14).

Mark Robinson then took the scalp of Mark Butcher, bowling the Surrey skipper for 24, but the visitors were sitting pretty at 59 for two at lunch.

Steve James reached his double century as Glamorgan went past the 600-mark against Nottinghamshire at Colwyn Bay.

James, 172 overnight, reached 233 not out with Michael Powell making 164.

Matthew Maynard then hammered a quick-fire 79 not



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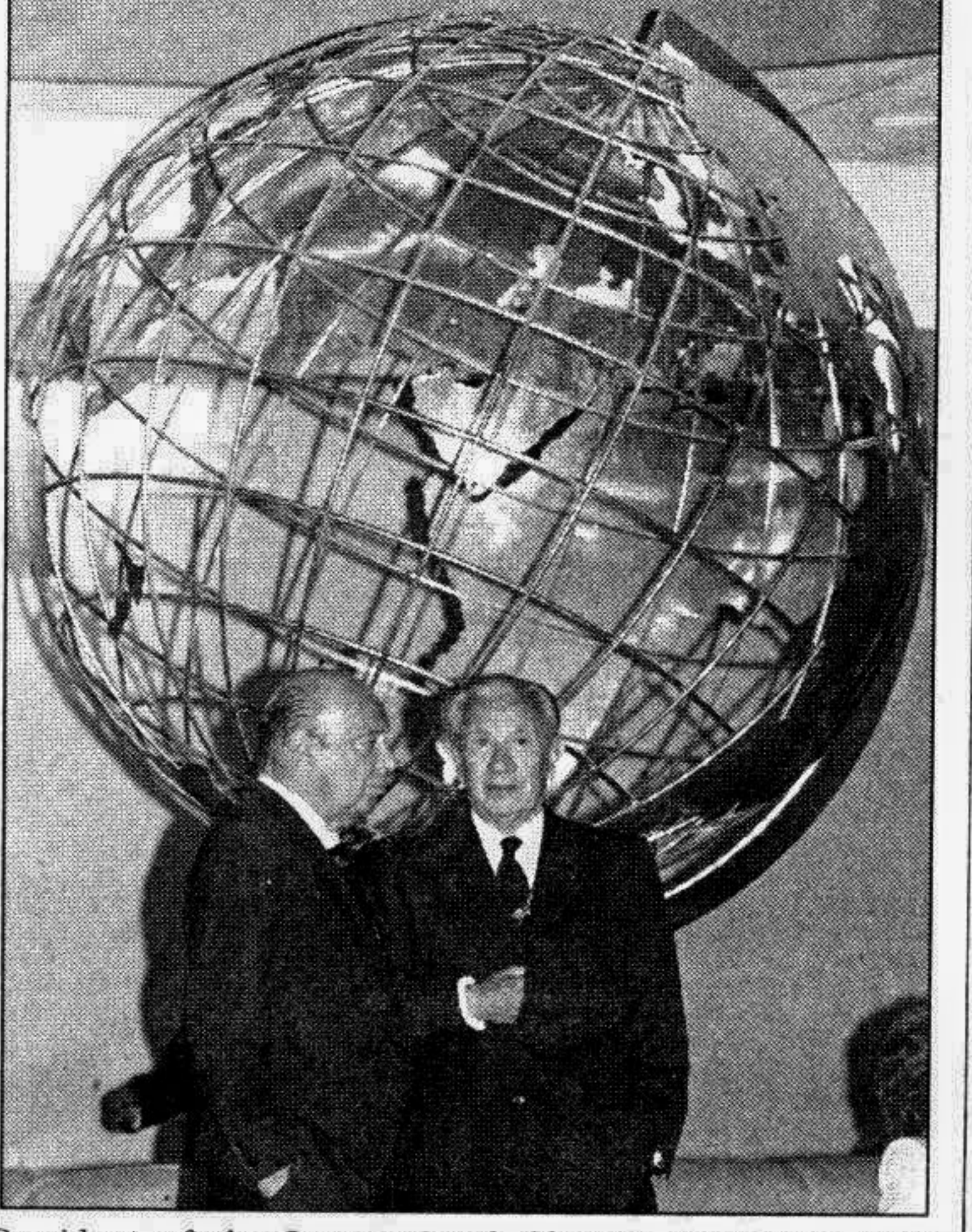
out to take Glamorgan to 602 for three in reply to Notts' first innings 228.

Lancashire all-rounder Andy Flintoff piled on the agony for Yorkshire at Old Trafford.

Flintoff was unbeaten on 156 - he smashed 111 in the morning session - as Lancashire reached 252 for six in reply to the Tykes' lowly 67 all out.

The England all-rounder, not required for the Test at The Oval, started the morning on 45 and defied the efforts of Paul Hitchison, who claimed the wickets of Graham Lloyd (31) and Warren Hegg for a duck.

Aussie paceman Michael



President of the International Olympic committee Juan Antonio Samaranch (R) talks to International Amateur Athletics Federation chief Primo Nebiolo during the opening ceremony. — AFP photo