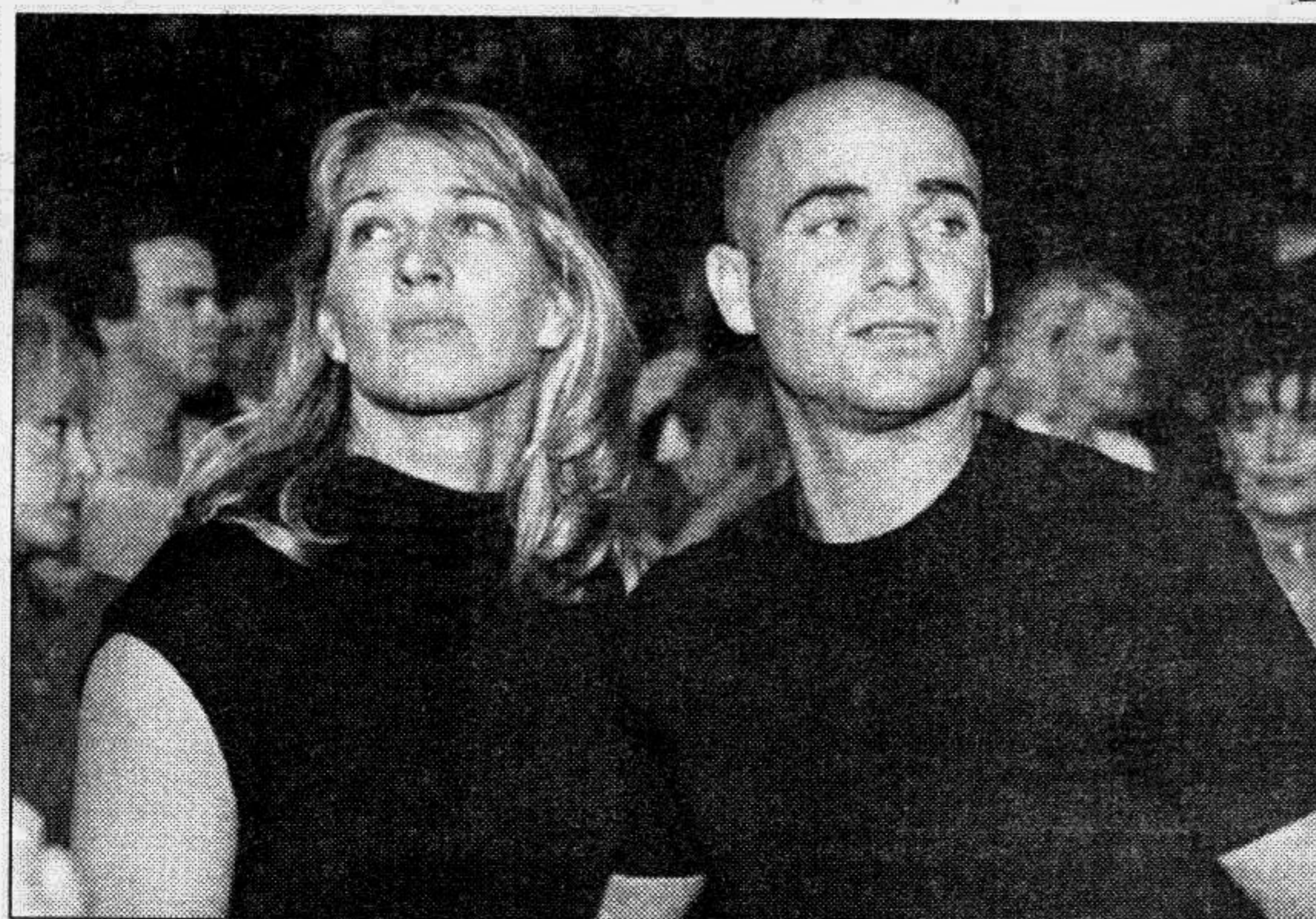


Villa might not like it

LONDON, Sept 19: Reformed alcohol and drug addict Paul Merson has admitted that his new autobiography, due to be serialised in a tabloid newspaper from Monday, could upset his English Premiership club Aston Villa, reports AFP.



US Open champion Andre Agassi and former tennis star Steffi Graf at the Oscar de la Hoya and Felix Trinidad bout in Las Vegas on Sept 18.

Venus, Lindsay coast

STANFORD, California, Sept 19: Lindsay Davenport and Venus Williams put US Open disappointments behind them Saturday and won their opening singles to give the United States a 2-0 lead over Russia in the Fed Cup final, reports AFP.

life, I'm actually pretty good at it, but I don't do it a lot. But at the point I'm 30-love, 30-15, when I'm comfortable, I can get in and make some nice shots, and then do it at different points like 30-all, 30-40.

to the 1994 World Group final against Spain. Dementieva, making her FedCup singles debut, displayed the same power that took her to two match victories and saw her take a set off Spanish veteran Conchita Martinez before losing in the third round of the US Open.

The last thing Gregory will want is another bust-up with wayward genius Merson, particularly as it is so soon after the Villa chief's recent public row with club chairman Doug Ellis.

Merson said: "Some people might be upset by the book but it's not meant to be directed at them. It's about me."

"If I am okay with myself then everybody is okay. If I am not then everybody is a bit of a pain."

"The book will give an account of how unbalanced I was last season and let people know what was going on in my head and my life."

"I could have changed the book around and have everyone love me but this is an honest account - maybe too honest."

"Sometimes I am right, sometimes I am badly wrong. I know if I am pointing the finger then there are three fingers waiting to be pointed back at me."

"It's about the day-to-day life of a professional footballer who is struggling. The book will give you everything."

"Just because we earn a lot of money doesn't mean we are all robots. It's a story of a professional footballer who had it all and could have easily thrown it all away."

Bundesliga

Tough win for Bayern

COLOGNE, Germany, Sept 19: European Cup runners-up Bayern Munich stayed within a point of Bundesliga leaders Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday after beating Eintracht Frankfurt 2-1 - despite playing the last half hour without a regular goalkeeper.

Bayern, who put Michael Tarnat in goal after losing first choice keeper Oliver Kahn with a head injury in the 53rd minute and his replacement Bernd Dreher six minutes later with a knee injury, made light of their misfortune to score twice in the final 25 minutes through Brazilian Giovane Elber and Ghanaian Samuel Kuffour to take the three points.

Kahn, who had just returned from a long absence with a knee injury, had prevented Eintracht from going two goals up when he saved an Alexander Kutschera penalty a minute before his unfortunate exit - Togolesse striker Bachirou Salou had put the newly promoted side ahead in the 20th minute.

Earlier injury-depleted Hertha Berlin put in a solid display to hold Bayer Leverkusen to a 0-0 draw at home, while VfB Stuttgart got off the bottom of the table with a 4-2 win over Duisburg.

Leverkusen, who lost Brazilian Ze Roberto for several weeks when he injured knee ligaments, move to the top on 11 points, one clear of Hamburg who travel to Kaiserslautern on Sunday, Borussia Dortmund and Bayern Munich.

But coach Christophe Daum was angry at the dropped points.

"Despite our high degree of possession and shots on goal we still failed to score and therefore open the game up," Daum complained, lamenting the draw as more of a defeat.

"As long as it was 0-0 Hertha could close things up, which they did very well, and we just kept pounding our heads against a brick wall. It wasn't attractive, game, especially for us when you look at the result."

Both teams played in the Champions League mid-week. Whilst both emerged with draws, Hertha emerged psychologically and physically battered from their game at Galatasaray in Turkey.

As a result Dariusz Wozniak, Thomas Helmer and Michael Hartmann were all missing on Saturday because of injuries picked up in Istanbul adding to an already lengthy list of walking wounded which has almost wiped out Hertha's defence.

Serena Williams on the singles sidelines, her elder sister Venus opened the first of five matches with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Russian number one Elena Likhovtseva.

Davenport, who relinquished her US Open title last week as she lost to Serena Williams in the semifinals, then defeated 17-year-old Russian Elena Dementieva 6-4, 6-0.

"There's so much emphasis on the Grand Slams, it's good to come back the next week and go on," said Davenport, the reigning Wimbledon champion.

"Tennis is a sport that we play 11 months out of the year. You have to move on after every event. It's a little difficult, but with this team we've done a great job about getting everybody up."

Venus Williams, whose world number three ranking insured her singles selection ahead of her sister, was given no time to brood over her Open semifinal loss to Martina Hingis.

"I think her serve is a lot better than it was at the US open," said US FedCup captain Billie Jean King, who took Williams in hand as soon as she arrived in Stanford.

"I think it's much more connected," King said. "Percentage is definitely up compared to then. They didn't get there until Wednesday night because of the hurricane (on the east coast)."

"We've only had two days to work on the serve. She wants to be a serve-and-volleyer. At least she's trying."

Williams didn't exactly look assured at the net, but she said she was glad to get the chance to try out her serve-and-volley technique in the support of a team environment.

"It's not that easy just to all of a sudden do something that you're not accustomed to," Williams said. "Because it's a different ballgame, things look a little different at the net."

"I have to get in there and get experience."

King leapt up from her court-side seat and cheered every time Williams won a point at the net, but Williams said her captain didn't pressure her to attack too much.

"She wanted to make sure I would serve-and-volley at the point I was comfortable," Williams said. "I haven't done a lot of serve-and-volley in my

more and play a little more aggressive in the second set."

Today the US team will try to claim the FedCup, the women's equivalent of the Davis Cup nations trophy, for the 16th time. Davenport will play Likhovtseva in the day's opener, followed by Venus Williams v Dementieva.

The closing doubles match pits the Williams sisters - the US Open women's doubles champions - against Dementieva and Elena Makarova.

Davenport extended her FedCup singles winning streak to 11 matches, stretching back

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Afro-Asian Nations Cup Hosts edge Saudis

CAPE TOWN, Sept 19: South Africa survived a late scare to defeat Saudi Arabia 1-0 at Newlands Stadium here on Saturday in the first leg of the Afro-Asian Nations Cup, reports AFP.

Goalkeeper John Tale produced a brilliant reflex save after 88 minutes and prevented substitute Obied al-Dossary earning the Saudis a draw they did not deserve.

Al-Dossary had come on early in the second half for Marzouk al-Otaibi, a highly-rated striker who made little impression on the Mark Fish-led South African defence.

"After an even first half in which the Saudis forced six consecutive corners, Bafana Bafana (The Boys) took control and man-of-the-match Pollen Ndlanga headed them into the lead after 47 minutes.

Benni McCarthy set up Quinton Fortune, a half-time substitute for injured debutant Ivan McKinley, and Ndlanga powered his cross past Saudi goalkeeper and captain Mohammed al-Deayea.

McCarthy hit the base of a post and had the ball in the net only to be ruled offside as South Africa sought the assurance of a second goal before the return match on September 30 in Riyadh.

The Saudis, who spent two weeks in Zimbabwe preparing for the match, fought back in the closing stages and Tale did well to push away a long-range drive from impressive defender Hussein Sulimani.

Careroun, South Korea, Algeria, Japan and Nigeria won previous editions of the biennial clash between the champions of Africa and Asia.

All Africa marathon result

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 19: Ethiopia and South Africa dominated the men's and women's marathons run over a tough, hilly course at the All Africa Games in Johannesburg today, filling five of the six medal positions, reports Reuters.

In the women's event, 20-year-old Hiwot Gizaw led a clean sweep for Ethiopia with the North African country also filling second and third, while South Africa's Joshua Petersen won the men's event with compatriot Frank Poe taking third.

Gizaw's victory came after she sensationally moved up from a distant third position inside the last two kilometres passing long-time leader Meseret Kotu with less than a kilometre to go.

The police officer, who is part of the Ethiopian national squad headed by Olympic champion Fatuma Robi, clocked 2 hours 45.36. Meseret was second in 2:46.27 and Kore Elenu third in 2:48.25.

In the men's race, Petersen broke clear after 27km and was only chased by Tanzania's Focus Wilbrood over the final five kilometres. Petersen finished a respectable altitude time of 2:19.05, with Wilbrood second in 2:20.44 and Poe third in 2:23.35.

Nigeria supports SA's bid for 2006 WC

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 19: Nigerian sports minister Danishi Sango repeated his support for South Africa's 2006 World Cup bid here yesterday following the organisers' performance at the All Africa Games (AAG), reports AFP.

Sango said although there were teething problems he believed neutral observers would praise the organisation of the AAG.

"On the strength of their performance at organising these Games, I wish to re-state Nigeria's unflinching support for the South Africa bid for the 2006 World Cup," Sango said.

Felix stages late flurry

LAS VEGAS, Sept 19: Felix Trinidad of Puerto Rico, with a burst of activity in the last three rounds,

squeezed out a majority decision over Mexican-American Oscar De La Hoya to add the World Boxing Council welterweight title to his International Boxing Federation crown on Saturday, reports Reuters.

The decision stunned many ringsiders, who said they thought De La Hoya had built a substantial lead with hard jabs that appeared to keep Trinidad from getting inside for most of the 12-round battle of 26-year-old, 147-pound (66.6 kg) fighters.

Trinidad won the last three rounds on two of the three judges' scorecards to gain the decision. And all three judges surprisingly gave Trinidad the second round, although he landed only a handful of

Trinidad suffered a bloody nose in the second round. But it didn't bother him. Neither did the swelling under his left eye that appeared in the sixth round.

The fight was one of the most eagerly anticipated bouts in recent years and is expected to be a huge financial success.

De La Hoya was guaranteed 15 million dollars and Trinidad and his father 10.5 million dollars. De La Hoya's promoter, Bob Arum, said this week that his fighter was certain to earn about 21 million dollars after his cut of pay-per-view sales was collected.

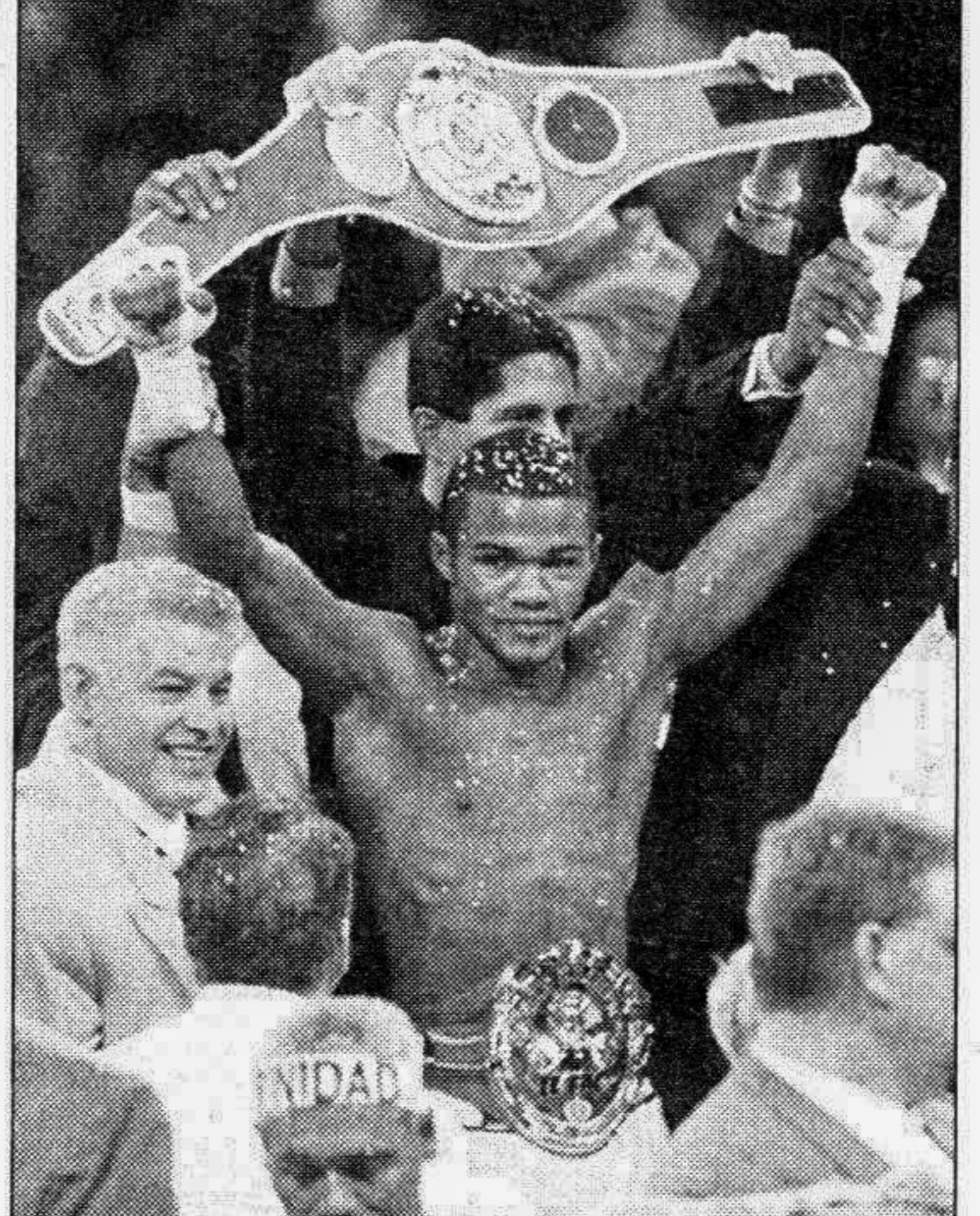
Immediately after the decision was announced, Trinidad's promoter, Don King, shouted down to reporters, "One down, one to go, referring to a rematch for which he and his fighter will receive more money."

"Oscar deserves a rematch but we need to talk about that," said Trinidad, whose expres-

sion immediately after the fight had not appeared to reflect confidence that he had won.

De La Hoya, on the other hand, was grinning with confidence before the decision was announced.

"I always said from the very beginning that I was the number one welterweight," Trinidad



Felix Trinidad of Puerto Rico holds up the WBC welterweight belt after defeating Oscar De La Hoya.

punches. Judge Jerry Roth scored the fight 115-113 for Trinidad and fellow-American Glen Hamada had it 114-114. Bob Logg of Belgium scored it 115-114 for Trinidad.

There were no knockdowns in the fight and neither fighter was injured seriously, although

By the fifth round De La Hoya appeared brimming with confidence, almost daring Trinidad to come inside. At the end of the round, De La Hoya landed several solid jabs and a hard left-right combination near the end of the round.

In the seventh round there were scattered boos from fans who wanted more action from the hugely ballyhooed fight in the 12,000-seat arena at the new Mandalay Bay.

Trinidad landed a solid right hand to the head after the bell, prompting De La Hoya to wave his glove as in "naughty, naughty." Trinidad stepped toward De La Hoya, but referee Mitch Halpern stepped between the two men.

The 10th round was punctuated with a furious flurry of punches as both men battled toe-to-toe. Trinidad got the best of the round, opening up the round with a solid but rare combination that sent De La Hoya peddling backward.

Trinidad also was throwing more jabs and combinations. Trinidad continued throwing and landing jabs in the 11th round and De La Hoya appeared to be tiring when he did not want to break a clinch.

Trinidad also seemed to be landing power punches in the 12th round, but it still appeared to many ringsiders that De La Hoya had built up enough of a lead to win the fight.

Scalpers were asking \$7,000 for tickets to the sold-out fight. The top price for a ticket had been set at \$1,500.

The start of the bout was delayed for several minutes while Trinidad's corner retrieved his mouthpiece from the dressing room.

S Africa kings of Africa

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 19: South Africa proved themselves the best sporting nation in Africa as they easily topped the medals table from Egypt and Nigeria in the seventh All Africa Games (AAG), reports AFP.

The hosts were never really threatened in their supremacy during the 19-sport event, which began on September 9 and concluded today.

There were no world records broken, possibly because the track and field athletes have had an exhausting season and high altitude is of no help to swimmers. One world record was equalled by a Nigerian woman in a weightlifting event.

South Africa, who beat Egypt into second place in the medals race in Harare four years ago, did the same this time. Nigeria won seven gold medals on the last night of athletics but it was not enough to push them up from third spot, the same as in Harare.

Algeria came fourth in the table, like in Harare four years ago.

The Games confirmed established stars such as South African swimmers Penny Hevas, who won the 100m and 200m breaststroke, and six-gold-medal-winner Mandly Louts, plus Mozambique's 800m runner Maria Mutola. Okkert

Brits, one of the few men to have cleared 6m in the pole vault, successfully defended his title.

Ethiopia's Gete Wami won the women's 10,000m to add to the world title she won last month in Seville.

The men's 100m and 800m, however, saw the favourites not able to live up to their billing.

World silver medalist Hezekiel Sepeng of South Africa, hampered by a left hamstring strain, could only claim bronze, in the two-lap event.

Kenya's Japhet Kimutai, who was fifth at the World Championships in Seville, took gold ahead of world bronze medalist Djibir Said Guerni of Algeria.

There was doubt that Sepeng would make the final after collapsing in pain and clutching his left hamstring when he won his semifinal.

Namibia's Olympic 100m and 200m silver medalist Fredericks, believed to be still suffering from a lower back problem, could only win bronze in the 100m.

Ghana's Leonard Myles-Mills took the gold with 9.99sec, and Francis Obikwelu of Nigeria, the world 200m bronze medalist, earned silver with 10.01.

Fredericks said afterwards: "I'm very happy. Considering my injuries I did well to get away with a medal. I was up against a lot of good athletes and I had a bad lane draw (lane 8), but I hung in there."

Obikwelu finally earned his individual gold in the 200m, winning in 20.06.

South African gymnast Tamaryn Schultz won six medals, but only two of those were gold.

On the security front, hundreds of soldiers and private security guards were drafted in to protect the athletes although any trouble was little publicised.

Gunfire rang out near a bus carrying athletes back to the village and there was a carjacking of an official vehicle, but no one was hurt.

Lyon gain slender lead

PARIS, Sept 19: Big spending Lyon went top of the French League on Saturday after comprehensively beating champions Bordeaux 3-1 - they lead Auxerre, who beat St Etienne 2-1 also on Saturday, on goal difference, reports AFP.

Paris Saint Germain, who trail by a point, can replace them at the top if they beat Strasbourg on Sunday.

Lyon, who were knocked out of the Champions League in the preliminary round by unheralded Slovenian outfit Maribor, took control of the match in the first-half as Patrice Carteron and Brazilian star Sonny Anderson gave them a two goal lead by half-time.

Carteron headed home from a corner with Bordeaux keeper Ulrich Rame stranded while Anderson won the ball in mid-field played a one-two with fel-

low summer signing Tony Vairelles and slotted home from the edge of the area.

Anderson, signed from Barcelona in the summer, added a second in the second-half, his fourth of the season, after another Bordeaux defensive blunder gave him the ball on the edge of the area and he scored with a shot that went between Rame's legs.

Auxerre, who only stayed up last season with a win in their last match, were fortunate to take the three points against a plucky and skillful St Etienne outfit.

The newly promoted side took the lead through Brazilian Alex, who headed home after his point blank shot had been blocked on the line, but a penalty, for a foul which appeared to happen outside the area, by World Cup winning striker Stephane Guivarch brought the sides level.

Former Monaco midfielder

Stephane Carnot grabbed the ill deserved win for the 1997 league and Cup winners in the 76th minute.



Francoise Mbong Etone of, Cameroon leaps into the sand pit to set a new African long jump record on September 18.

STANDINGS

Table with 4 columns: Team, Played, Won, Drawn, Lost, Goals For, Goals Against, Points. Lists teams like Lyon, Auxerre, Paris SG, Monaco, Strasbourg, Nantes, Sedan, Bordeaux, Bastia, Rennes, Marseille, Nancy, Montpellier, Lens, Metz, St-Etienne, Troyes, Le Havre.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 25 mins and a 'Yesterday's answer' section.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with a key: Z D O E G M K M B E B Z T Q S . O U I. Includes the text 'Yesterday's Cryptquip: WOULDN'T YOU THINK THAT STYLISH ATTORNEYS LIKED TO WEAR LAW SUITS?' and 'Today's Cryptquip Clue: B equals I'.