Sport

Three-dayer
India A draw with Guyana

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, Nov 28: Azeemul Haniff added an unbeaten century to his first-innings 62 and Guyana played the touring India A side to a draw in a three-day match Saturday, reports AP.

After India declared at 324 for nine, Guyana piled up 193 for one to add to their first-innings total of 222.

Haniff hit an undefeated 102, reaching the century mark with a boundary off the last ball of the match despite the Indians manning every boundary.

Haniff's century, for Guyana, came in 119 balls in 162 minutes and was decorated with 13 fours and one six.

Guyanese batsman Ramnaresh Sarwan regained his form by scoring a rapid half-century to flay the Indian bowling attack. Sarwan finished unbeaten on 56, made in 105 minutes off 60 balls. His innings included seven boundaries and one six.

Earlier Saturday, India resumed at their 197 for the loss of four wickets and reached 270 for the loss of three more wickets by lunch.

Opener Arun Kumar became the first Indian on their one-month tour of the West Indies to score a century by smashing a six off leg-spinner Mahendra Nagamootoo to move from his unbeaten overnight score of 94 to three figures.

But, Nagamootoo had the final say by dismissing the Indian opener for 110. Kumar's innings came off 273 balls in 356 minutes with 14 boundaries and a six.

India A will play West Indies A in their second four-day "Test" in Guyana Tuesday and oppose Guyana in a one-day international match on December 5. India will play the West Indies A in another one-day international match on December 8.

India's and the West Indies' rain-affected first "Test" in Trinidad and Tobago last week was a draw.

Rookie quickie drafted
S Africa stay unchanged

JOHANNESBURG, Nov 28: South African fast bowler Mornantau Hayward, who was put on stand-by for the first Test against England, was named among 14 players today for the second Test in Port Elizabeth starting on December 9, reports Reuters.

Hayward was included in the squad immediately after South Africa won the first Test in the five-nation series by an innings and 21 runs on the fourth day.

Hayward had been brought to the Wanderers for the first Test as cover for Allan Donald, who had to prove his fitness, but will now officially join the squad for training to give South Africa more bowling options in Port Elizabeth.

"We have no idea what the pitch will look like so we're just covering ourselves," chairman of selectors Rushdi Magiet said. "Mornantau has been included because he will be considered."

Hayward has already taken 35 first-class wickets in just five matches during the South African season.

The rest of the squad remains the same, with Free State batsman Boeta Dippenaar again named as 12th man. Seamer David Terbrugge, who did not play in the first Test, was also retained.

SQUAD

Hansie Cronje (captain), Gary Kirsten, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Daryll Cullinan, Jonty Rhodes, Lance Klusener, Shaun Pollock, Mark Boucher, Allan Donald, Paul Adams, David Terbrugge, Mornantau Hayward, Boeta Dippenaar.

Akakios sets snatch world mark

PIRAEUS, Greece, Nov 28: Akakios Kakiashvilis of Greece set a world record in the snatch and won the men's 94-kilogram title Saturday at the World Weightlifting Championships, reports AP.

Kakiashvilis hoisted 188.0 kilos in the snatch to better the world mark by a half-kilo and clinched Greece's first overall title in the championships. More than 8,000 people at Piraeus' peace and Friendship Stadium erupted as the Georgian-born lifter received his medals. Greece's Leonidas Kokas added to the celebration, taking the bronze medal with 402.5 kilos, including the second-best lift in the snatch (185.0).

Polish 18-year-old Szymon Kolecki claimed the silver with a total lift of 405 kilos.

Greece's coach Christos Iakovou said he was happy Kakiashvilis and other Greek lifters overcame injury to win medals.

The women's competition ended Saturday with China's Ding Meiyuan setting two world records and winning the unlimited title. Ding hoisted 157.5 kilos to break the world record in the clean-and-jerk and the overall record with 285 kilos.

Her victory added to China's comfortable victory women's medals race, finishing with 18, including nine gold. Taiwan was second followed by Bulgaria. Thailand, Nigeria and the United States. The top six countries each earn four places in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

Japan, Russia, Hungary, Myanmar, Indonesia and Poland earned two Olympic places, while Spain, South Korea and Ukraine got two.

Ding fought off a fierce challenge from Poland's Agata Wrobel, who claimed the silver with 280 kilos and a world record in the snatch with 127.5 kilos. Ding later matched the 127.5, but finished second in the snatch on higher body weight.

Gabriel Batistuta (C), Fiorentina's Argentine superstar, trying to break free from Bologna defender Giulio Falcone (R) during their *Serie A* match at Bologna on November 27. — AFP photo

European soccer scene
Liverpool's run ends, Fiorentina jinx on

LONDON, Nov 28: A year ago, John Gregory's Aston Villa was in first place in the English Premier League. On Saturday, that frustration continued as Villa drew 0-0 at home with Everton, pushing Villa's winless stream to eight and putting Gregory's job in jeopardy, reports AP.

PREMIERSHIP

Villa is lodged in 13th-place in the 20-team league and on Dec 13 Gregory begins a 28-day ban from the dugout for verbally abusing match official.

It's an English soccer weekend without league leaders and European champions Manchester United, who play South American champions Palmeiras in Tuesday's Toyota Cup in Tokyo.

There was good news for Leicester City, who got a late goal from slump-ridden Emile Heskey to win 1-0 at Coventry City and move into fifth place behind leaders United with 33 and Leeds with 32.

On a low scoring day, five goals games Sunderland won 5-2 at lowly Watford when Gavin McCann got the winner in the 70th to move Sunderland land into third with 31 points followed by Arsenal and Leicester with 29 and Liverpool with 27.

West Ham ended Liverpool's seven-game unbeaten string with a 1-0 victory at east London. Trevor Sinclair scored late in the first half. Injury-prone England international Michael Owen limped off in the second half with another hamstring problem.

In the other Premier League match, Wimbledon drew 0-0 at Middlesbrough.

SERIE A

Fiorentina's roller-coaster season continued with a 0-0 draw at Bologna that left the clubs tied for eighth place. Fiorentina displayed little of the verve they showed in their 2-0 upset of defending titlist Manchester United in a second-round Champions League match on Tuesday.

The draw extended Fiorentina's winless drought on the road in *Serie A* to 12 matches dating to last season. The club has won once in their last seven league outings overall.

Only strong play by 'keeper Francesco Toldo — who made nice saves on Carlo Nervo twice, Giuseppe Signori and Swedish midfielder Klas Ingesson — prevented a Fiorentina defeat.

In the day's other match, Arturo Di Napoli's penalty kick late in the first half gave Piacenza a 1-0 win over Verona in a match between two of *Serie A's* weakest attacks.

PRIMERA LIGA

Sevilla and Malaga battled to a 0-0 draw in Saturday's tone 13th-round match, an ill-mannered traditional rivalry that saw four players ejected and another six yellow carded.

Sevilla, who finished with eight players, remained at the bottom of Spain's First-Division 20-team table with 10 points while Malaga moved into 10th place with 16, eight behind league leaders Deportivo La Coruna.

Saturday's intense match between the two teams from the southern region of Andalusia was littered with cards.

Malaga's Brazilian forward Catanha and Sevilla midfielder Carlos Marchena were both sent off in the 76th for a shoving match in front of the Malaga goal.

Sevilla's Jose Maria Quevedo was sent off for two yellows in the 87th minute, while teammate Francisco Lama also was ejected before the final whistle.

Danny Murphy of Liverpool (L) and West Ham's Joe Cole battle for possession during their Premiership outing at Upton Park on November 27. — AFP photo

French First Division
Monaco move atop in style

PARIS, Nov 28: Marco Simone scored two goals and made another to lead Monaco to a stylish 4-1 win at Le Havre and take them to the top of the French First Division on Saturday, reports Reuters.

Monaco extended their unbeaten league run to six games and moved two points ahead of Olympique Lyon, who can reclaim the lead when they visit Bastia today.

Simone gave Monaco the lead with a deflected free-kick in the 16th minute but struggling Le Havre equalised 10 minutes later when midfielder Mamar Mamouni headed home a corner from Cyrille Pouget.

Simone helped restore Monaco's lead just before the interval, providing a fine pass for captain Sabri Lamouchi to score, and then the Italian striker netted his 12th goal of the season, pushing the ball into an empty net with 15 minutes to go.

Defender Rafael Marquez put the issue beyond doubt with a volley from nearly 20 metres two minutes later.

Monaco have 33 points and Lyon 31 — both from 16 games — while Paris St Germain moved up to third with 30 points from 17 games after a 1-0 win at bottom-of-the-table Montpellier.

AJ Auxerre dropped to fourth, one point behind Paris St Germain, after losing 1-0 at Rennes, whose goal was scored by Cedric Bardon in the 11th minute.

Brazilian striker Christian scored the Paris St Germain goal which beat Montpellier with a fine lob on the hour. PSG nearly made it 2-0 when a 20-metre shot by defender Jimmy Algerino forced goalkeeper St. phane Cassard to make a dramatic save 12 minutes later.

Troubled Olympique Marseille, beaten 2-0 by Lazio in the Champions League at the Velodrome on Wednesday, had to settle for a 2-2 draw at Nancy.
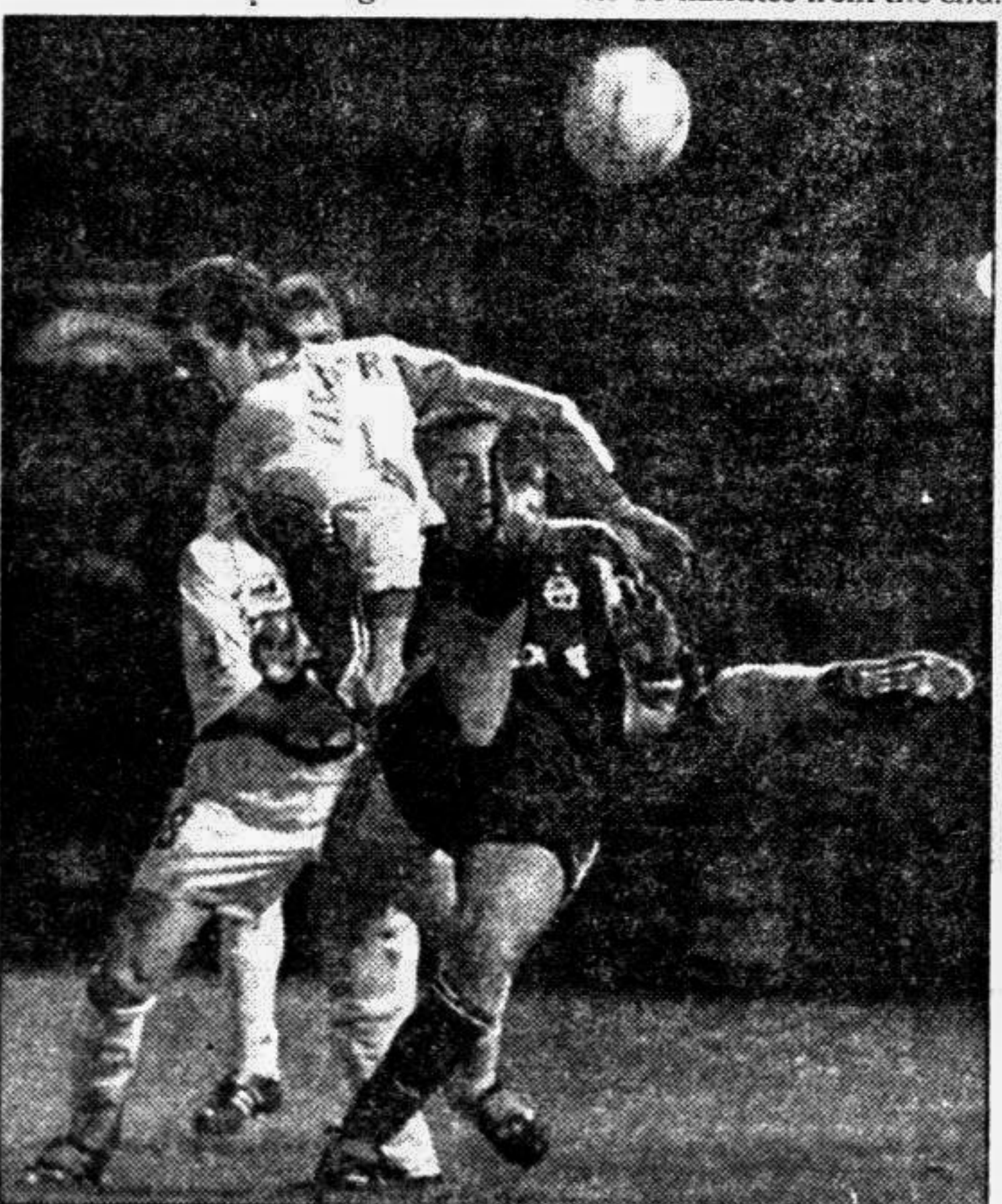
Florian Maurice scored twice in quick succession for Marseille in the 60th and 63rd minutes but was denied a hat-trick when he had a penalty stopped by goalkeeper Bertrand Lacquait in injury time.

Irish striker Tony Cascarino scored twice for Nancy either side of Maurice's goals, giving his team the lead in the 51st minute and netting the equaliser from the penalty 15 minutes from the end.

Nancy goalkeeper Lacquait said: "I have mixed feelings tonight. We could have taken three points and we could have lost everything. So one point is not so bad."

Lowly Racing Strasbourg claimed their first away win of the season when they beat St Etienne 1-0, thanks to a header by captain Teddy Bertin from a corner 10 minutes from the end.

Action from the French First Division encounter between Olympique Marseille and Nancy at Nancy on November 27. — AFP photo

Cautious Richards
Windies in Auckland

AUCKLAND, Nov 28 (AFP/Reuters): The West Indies cricket team arrived in New Zealand today for a two-Test and five one-dayer tour.

The highlight of the tour is set to be the quest of Courtney Walsh to become Test cricket's most successful bowler.

He currently has 423 wickets, third on the all-time list behind India's Kapil Dev and New Zealand's Richard Hadlee, who are both retired.

The West Indies open their tour with a warm up match in Christchurch on December 3.

The first Test starts on December 16 in Hamilton.

Before leaving former West Indies captain and newly-appointed coach, Vivian Richards, warned Caribbean fans not to expect miracles.

In an interview in the Barbados Nation newspaper Richards, who captained his country in 50 Tests between 1985 and 1991, said the current team was rebuilding and needed more time to bolster its confidence.

"There will be a lot of positive dialogue exchanged and patting on the back to build the confidence of the players," he said.

"A lot of people expect miracles from the team, but they have to understand that the team is going through a transition period.

In another interview for local ZDK Radio, Richards repeated the need for patience especially in the forthcoming tour.

"If we have a time process and work to it, we can build a good team," he said. "But we need to work with the conditions and players we do have and let their ability come through."

Inter lose Vieri

MILAN, Nov 28: Christina Vieri pulled his right thigh muscle during practice Saturday and will miss Internazionale of Milan's *Serie A* game at Reggina, reports AP.

The forward, who leads Inter with five goals, has been fighting a series of nagging leg injuries over the past month. He joins an illustrious group of players who will miss Sunday's match at Reggio Calabria.

The club (5-2-3) was already without their other top striker, Ronaldo, who tore a knee tendon last weekend and is expected to be out at least until February.

A decision on whether the Brazilian will have knee surgery is due Tuesday.

Coach Marcello Lippi is also without 1994 World Cup star Roberto Baggio, winger Francesco Moriero (who is suspended), and defenders Dario Simic of Croatia, Cyril Domoraud of France, and Francesco Colonnese.

WC men's v'ball
USA halt Cuba

NAGANO, Japan, Nov 28: Double Olympic champions the United States shattered Cuba's match-winning streak with a gruelling five-set victory in the World Cup men's volleyball tournament here today, reports AFP.

Coached by the Los Angeles and Seoul Olympics gold medallist Doug Beal, the Americans fought bravely against the high-jumping Cubans to score a 25-19, 20-25, 20-25, 25-20, 15-11 victory in Osaka.

"We had a good start and played successfully in blocking. We played with more energy and confidence than the match against the Spanish team on Saturday," Said Beal after the 115-minute battle.

"We know the Cuban team well, so it was easy to prepare for the match. My thoughts are already on the next match. We have still three more important days," he added.

The Americans showed greater fighting spirit at crucial moments with Mike Lambert — top scorer with 16 winners and four blocking points — sending a disguised softtouch shot on match point for the victory.

Cuban coach Juan Diaz said: "The Americans were eager to win and ready to fight because it was important for them to finish in the top three and make a berth in the Olympics.

"We started very slowly but got better in the third set and regained concentration, but in the fourth set we were too relaxed and allowed them to come back into the game." Diaz added. "The Americans now have six wins and two defeats, the same record as Spain. Both teams trail front runners Cuba and Russia who both have a 7-1 win-loss record in the 12-team round robin.

Spain needed one hour and 59 minutes to beat Asian champions China 25-22, 21-25, 25-21, 22-25, 19-17, leaving their Argentine coach Raul Lozano in a great relief to say: "Now I am very satisfied with the result."

In Nagano, European silver medallists Russia outgunned Canada 25-19, 30-28, 25-21, while Barcelona Olympic champions Brazil downed Argentina 23-25, 25-17, 25-15, 25-19.

"We always have extra motivation when we play Argentina not only in volleyball, but also in all the sports, especially football. When we go onto the court, it's open war," said Brazilian captain Antonio Gouveia.

"The tension flares up and the game gets really intense. We couldn't receive well in the first set and we had some problems in attacks, but we were able to play better in the last three sets," Gouveia added.
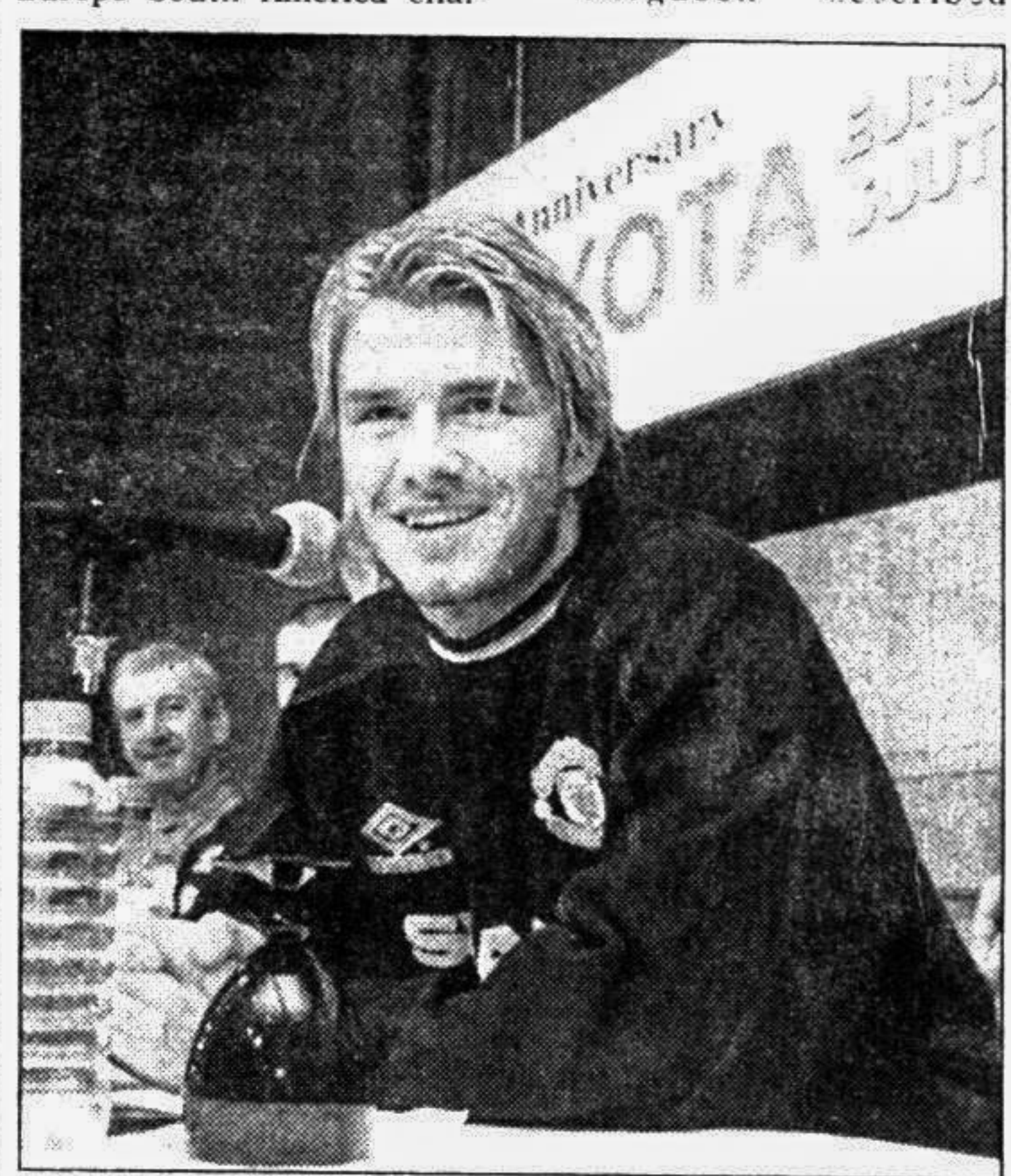
Euro champs being serious

TOKYO, Nov 28: European champions Manchester United will rely on a "skeleton squad" to win the Intercontinental Cup in Tokyo on Tuesday against Brazil's Palmeiras, manager Sir Alex Ferguson said, reports Reuters.

England striker Andy Cole had been left behind with a back injury, but Ferguson added his 18-strong squad was strong and quite a few of them can play in several positions, so this covers me for anything I need to do.

"I've brought a skeleton squad because I didn't think it was wise to subject a lot of the players to the journey," Ferguson told a news conference at a Tokyo hotel late on Saturday.

"I've left Andy Cole behind with a back injury, but the players I've brought are flexible and quite a few of them can play in several positions, so this covers me for anything I need to do."

Ferguson described

challenge since it was first held in 1960.

"I've brought a skeleton squad because I didn't think it was wise to subject a lot of the players to the journey," Ferguson told a news conference at a Tokyo hotel late on Saturday.

Tuesday's match against the Libertadores Cup holders as Palmeiras's "biggest game of the year" but said it was also of significance to United.

"We are serious about winning this because it will go down in the record books at the end of the day as a world championship match," said Ferguson.

"When these situations present themselves at Manchester United it is the strength of the club to always try and win."

Ferguson was joined at the news conference by captain Roy Keane, Ryan Giggs and David Beckham.

Beckham, whose image has adorned the covers of sports magazines in Japan for several weeks in the build-up to the Toyota Cup, was mobbed by screaming Japanese fans on the team's arrival at the airport on Saturday morning.

The England midfielder said that by kick-off United would be acclimatised to their new surroundings.

"We have not come all this way over here just to go through the game and not win it," said Beckham. "We are up for the game and have a few days to prepare, so we'll be ready for it."

Asked if he would be displaying any special skills to the Japanese fans on Tuesday night, Beckham replied: "It doesn't matter whether it's Sunday league game or a European Cup final, I want to win every game and play my best. This one will be no different."

SQUAD

Massimo Taibi, Mark Bosnich; Denis Irwin, Jaap Stam, Gary Neville, Phil Neville, Mickael Silvestre, Ronnie Wallwork, Danny Higginbotham; Roy Keane, Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt, David Beckham, Quinton Fortune; Teddy Sheringham, Dwight Yorke, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Ryan Giggs.

Manchester United superstar David Beckham speaking at a media conference in Tokyo on November 27. — AFP photo

Sino natants dominate Day 1

RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 28: Chinese women swimmers won two events and came second in another on the first day of the Brazilian leg of the World Cup short-course series yesterday, reports Reuters.

World short-course champion Chen Hua won the 800 metres freestyle from Britain's Stacey Holdsworth at the two-day meeting, the third on the 12-venue World Cup circuit.

Qi Hui, 14, easily won the 100 metres breaststroke from Australia's Katie Clewett, while Chen Yan, a double world champion, had to settle for second in the 200 individual medley, fully two seconds behind Romania's European long-course silver medallist Beatrice Caslaru.

Caslaru had also won the second in this month's first two World Cup meets in College Park, Maryland, and the Canadian city of Edmonton.

Chen is world long-course champion in the 400 individual medley and 400 freestyle and silver medallist in the 200 individual medly.

Russian-born Spaniard Nina Zhivanevskaya claimed two victories, winning the women's 50 and 200 metres backstroke.

Hungarian Olympic champion Norbert Rozsa took the men's 200 metres breaststroke on a rare appearance on the short-course circuit, narrowly beating Marcelo Tomazini of Brazil.

Hosts Brazil, whose swimmers outnumbered those from other countries, claimed five victories, four from their men led by Gustavo Borges who won the 50 metres freestyle to claim his 19th win in World Cup meetings.

Manchester United's Australian international custodian Mark Bosnich practicing during a training session at Tokyo yesterday. — AFP photo

Andre, Pete showdown

HANOVER, Germany, Nov 28: Top-ranked Andre Agassi and his predecessor Pete Sampras set up an all-American final at the ATP Tour World Championship on Sunday by winning their semifinals in straight sets Saturday, reports AP.

In a showdown between the two top-ranked players in the world, Agassi rallied from a slump in the second set to beat No. 2 Yevgeny Kafelnikov 6-4.

Sampras had finished as No. 1 for a record straight years.

Agassi's battle against Kafelnikov, the Australian Open champion, failed to electrify the crowd, although the match involved officially the two best players in the world.

"I didn't think the quality of the match was good in the first set," Agassi said. "I thought there was a lot of unforced errors on his part, then on my part too. It wasn't like we were having great points."

The second set began in the same fashion, but Agassi double-faulted in the fourth game to allow Kafelnikov to even the score.

Another Agassi double-fault allowed Kafelnikov to take a 4-2 lead. At 5-2 in Kafelnikov's favour, Agassi came within two points of losing the set. But he recovered, broke Kafelnikov's serve when the Russian double-faulted in the ninth game and forced a tiebreaker.

With the score at 5-5, Kafelnikov netted a simple drop shot, with Agassi far behind the baseline. "I was really hoping to make the drop shot but I was unable to do that and lost the match," he said.

On match point, Kafelnikov's backhand passing shot

ANDRE AGASSI
7-6 (7-5).

"It's not good me just to get to the finals. I want to be the best," Agassi said.

Sampras ousted the home crowd favourite, Nicolas Kiefer, 6-3, 6-3.

Agassi was trailing 5-2 and was two points away from dropping the second set when he raised his game to 5-5. The match ended with two straight Kafelnikov errors in the tiebreaker.

"I felt the chances of winning the second set had dropped considerably," Agassi said.

was staged in Germany.

Of active players, only Sampras (656) and Thomas Muster (622) have more singles match wins.

Agassi can also become the last winner in Germany. The event will be played in Lisbon, Portugal next year as it starts moving around the world.

With the French Open and US Open titles this year, Agassi is already assured of finishing the year as No. 1, no matter what happens in this tournament.

With girlfriend Steffi Graf, the retired German star, watching from the players' box, Agassi broke Kafelnikov's serve in the opening game. He retained the advantage to win the first set.

With a victory Sunday, Agassi celebrated the 600th singles win of his career to reach his second final at the season-ending tournament that brings together the top eight players in the world. He won the event in 1990, the first year it

attempt also ended in the net and Agassi had the victory after one hour, 24 minutes.

"I didn't think he was playing his best tennis today by any means and I could tell that early," Agassi said.

Kafelnikov said he allowed Agassi to get back into the match.

"I played a very poor game at 5-3 and that was good enough for Andre to get back into the match," he said.

"Andre was very strong from the baseline. He had an answer

PETE SAMPRAS

to every shot I was coming up with," Kafelnikov said.

Sampras, who has dropped to No. 5, is coming off a three-month layoff because of hip and back injuries.

He is in his 10th straight appearance in the season-ending tournament, and has reached his sixth final. He has won the dlrs 3.6 million event four times.

He finished with 13 aces against Kiefer, the No. 6 in the world, who had the partisan support of 13,500 fans. Kiefer comes from near Hanover.

The crowd support was not enough to carry Kiefer against Sampras, who played a much better match than his last round-robin encounter, when he struggled to overcome Nicolas Lapentti.