

Rajshahi cricket

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAH, Dec 21: Padma Garden Cricket School and Al Rashid Cricket Club (A) won their respective matches of the sixth Bir Sresthya Captain Shaheed Mohiuddin Jahangir Smriti Gold Cup cricket tournament today at the local AHM Qamruzzaman Divisional Stadium.

Padma defeated Brothers Union by a 62 runs in the first match of the day.

Padma made 172 for four in the stipulated 25 overs.

In reply, Brothers went all out collecting 110 runs in 21.3 overs.

In the second match, Al Rashid outplayed Naohata Bulbul Sangha by 10 wickets.

Naohata batted first and were shot out for 98 in 24.4 overs.

In reply, Al-Rashid reached the target of 101 runs in 11.3 overs without loss any wicket.

Meanwhile, Housing Estate Cricket Club and Ralsuddin Smriti Cricket Club recorded their wins of the Shaheed Zia Smriti Cricket tournament today at the Rajshahi Govt College playground.

Housing Estate defeated the Street Club by 139 runs in the first match.

Housing Estate batted first and scored 189 runs for five wickets in 22 overs.

In reply, the Street Club went all out making only 50 runs in 17.1 overs.

In the second match, Ralsuddin Smriti Club beat Mukti Sangha by 38 runs.

Ralsuddin made 159 run for six wickets in the stipulated 25 overs.

In reply, Mukti Sangha scored 121 runs for eight wickets in the stipulated 25 overs.

Marsh will be in action against Australia

NEW DELHI, Dec 21: Former Australian Test star Geoff Marsh will fine tune India's preparations for the upcoming home series against Steve Waugh's world-beating Australians, reports AFP.

Marsh, who has been roped in as consultant by India's cricket authorities, said on Wednesday he will assist national coach John Wright during the team's conditioning camp.

Australia are due to tour India for three Tests and five one-day internationals early next year, hoping to add the only remaining scalp during their record-breaking run.

Australia, who have not won in India since 1969, lost the Test series 2-1 when Mark Taylor's team toured here two years ago.

Don't take

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wanted to regain the Ashes for the first time since 1989.

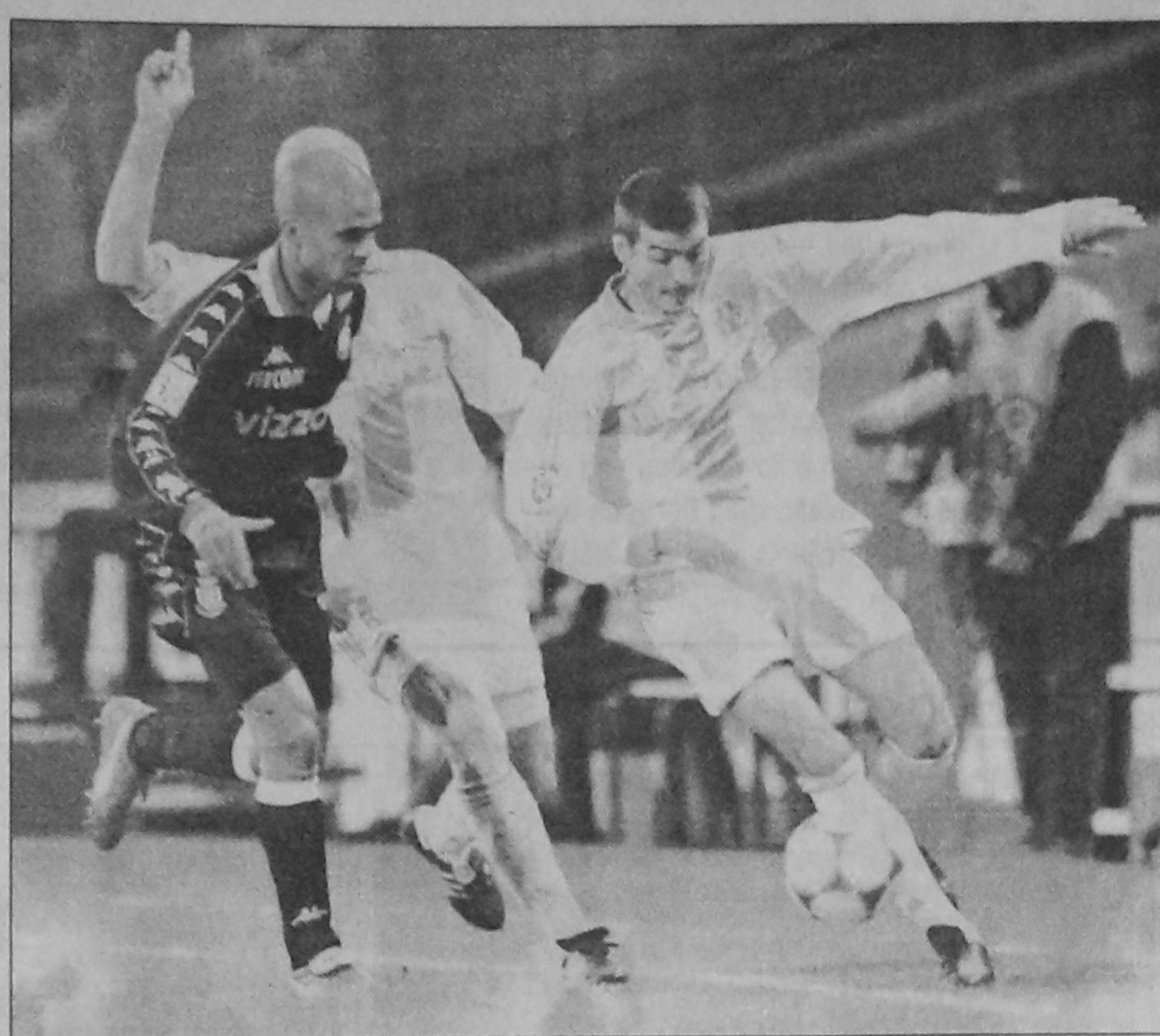
"The important thing for England won't just be the skill - they have to match Australia in their aggressive nature," Gooch said.

"They must go out there believing they can win and be aggressive towards Australia in the brand of cricket they play."

"You can see the way (Australian openers) Michael Slater and Matthew Hayden batted in Adelaide. There was a concerted plan to attack the West Indian bowling, trying to put pressure on the bowlers and it paid off."

"But that comes with the confidence of winning and having a strong team."

Australia head to India for a Test and one-day tour in February before their Ashes defence begins in July.



Marseille's Jerome Leroy (R) being followed by Monaco's Francisca Da Costa (L) during their French First Division fixture at Marseille on December 20.

- AFP photo

French First Division

Weah inspires Marseille



MAIRIEILLE.

France, Dec 21: Former FIFA world footballer of the year George Weah scored both goals in Mar-

seille's 2-1 victory over Monaco in the French football league here on Wednesday, reports AFP.

The Liberian international scored in both halves to give some cheer to the home side, moving them up two places to sixth from bottom, a 'place above Monaco'.

These two glamour sides, often in the race for the title, are in the bottom reaches of the table transforming this usually eagerly-awaited battle into a

more run-of-the-mill fixture.

In the 16th minute the Marseille fans fell strangely silent as Monaco opened their account.

A probing midfield ball from Frank Jurietti was lobbed on by Wagneau Eloi and via Ludovic Giuly, fell into the path of Italian Marco Simone.

The former PSG man cleverly dodged Marseille defender Sebastien Perez before spinning round and slamming the ball into the bottom right hand corner.

On 32 minutes the home crowd erupted when Weah was presented with the easiest of equalisers.

A long Perez ball from the right beat outstretched de-

fender Francisco Da Costa and Weah simply lifted the ball over the advancing keeper Andre Blumet.

After the break the fans soon began shouting for former injured forward Florian Maurice. Marseille coach Javier Clemente obliged and was duly repaid in the 58th minute.

Marseille's second goal was a stroke of genius for Weah, but was another blunder for Da Costa as he lazily ignored Weah after he had completed a one-two with Maurice.

Da Costa should have got a head to the ball to prevent Weah chasing down but Weah stuck his foot out to poke the ball past the advancing keeper and win the match.

Healy match
Cricketers
upstaged!

BRISBANE, Dec 21: Dual US Open tennis champion Patrick Rafter and former rugby league international Allan Langer stole the show from some of cricket's greats at last Healy's testimonial cricket match here on Thursday, reports AFP.

Despite the appearances of Sir Vivian Richards and Sir Richard Hadlee, it was Rafter and Langer who provided the best memories as Healy's XI cruised to victory at 280 for four in reply to the Rest of the World's 278 for five from 45 overs.

Former Australian top order batsman David Boon set up the victory with an unbeaten 100, backed up by current Test opener Michael Slater's crackling 75 (10 fours and two sixes) and an equally punishing 51 from Mark Waugh (four fours and two sixes).

The charity match allowed spin king Shane Warne to test out his injured finger before Australian selectors' chairman Trevor Hohns and Test skipper Steve Waugh, but not even his spinning artistry could match the duel staged by the only two men on the field not have played a cricket Test.

Rafter was superb in the field, saving boundaries with rolling dives and rifling returns back over the stumps like cricket was his main money earner.

When he bowled his allocated over to Langer, the former Brisbane, Queensland and Australian rugby league skipper and former Queensland junior cricket representative had great delight in thrashing him for 10 runs.

Langer, though, was forced to endure several embarrassing moments in front of an enthusiastic crowd of more than 15,000 when fielding and bowling as Rafter showed the hand-eye co-ordination which makes him such a great tennis player.

Langer dropped Mark Waugh twice, the second time a dolly catch.

Canterbury
185/4

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand, Dec 21: Canterbury were 185 for four after the first day of the three-day tour match against Zimbabwe in Christchurch today, reports Reuters.

ABC b'ball

From A Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Dec 21: South Korea defeated Chinese Taipei 82-72 in a Group B match of the ABC Basketball championship for junior women at the Talkatora Gymnasium today.

Asia Cup
tennis

NEW DELHI, Dec 21 (AFP): Results from the Asia Cup tennis tournament here on Thursday:

Men's round-robin
India beat Thailand 2-1
Syed Fazeluddin (Ind) bt Atapol Rittiwattanapong (Tha) 6-4 6-3.

Danai Udomchoke (Tha) bt Harsh Mankad (Ind) 6-1 6-3.
Mahesh Bhupathi/Syed Fazeluddin (Ind) bt Supparat Chukawan/Danai Udomchoke (Tha) 6-3 6-0.

Korea beat China 3-0
Lee Seung-Hun (Kor) bt Yu Wang (Chn) 6-2 6-3.

Yoon Yong-II (Kor) bt Yu Zhang (Chn) 6-3 7-5.
Lee Hyung-Taik/Lee Seung-Hun (Kor) bt Yu Wang/Yu Zhang (Chn) 6-1, 7-6 (7/5).

Tennis in transition

PARIS, Dec 21 (AFP): A seismic shift and the passing of a generational torch had been predicted in the men's game in Millennium Year and the young guns did not disappoint in an exciting 12 months which saw Gustavo Kuerten end up top of the pile.

The laid back 24-year-old Brazilian won a thrilling race to the wire with Russian Marat Safin, four years his junior, as both helped to drag the epicentre of the game away from its deep-seated anglophone origins.

The two men put Flaminopolis and Moscow firmly on the tennis map and told the world the sport extends well beyond Flushing Meadows and Melbourne.

But for one summer fortnight they both had to step aside as Pete Sampras laid claim to the title of best player ever by winning a record 13th Grand Slam singles title as he captured a seventh Wimbledon crown.

The women's game retained a strongly American flavour and for the most part orbited Venus Williams, that is.

The towering 20 year-old crushed almost everything in her path, winning Wimbledon and becoming the first woman to win Olympic singles and doubles golds since the legendary Helen Wills-Moody in Paris in 1924.

Williams rose above tendinitis in both wrists to dominate, aided, many would say, by the 1999 retirement of Steffi Graf.

But Martina Hingis retained number one spot, aided by her

season-end success in the WTA Championships over Monica Seles - though she will surely need to develop more power to hold off Venus in 2001.

French Open champion Kuerten completed a fantastic climax to the men's year he beat both Sampras and Agassi back to back to take the season-ending Masters Cup in Lisbon to snatch the top ranking from under Safin's nose.

It was the first time in a decade that a player had beaten defending champion Sampras and 1999 year-end champ Agassi one after the other.

Kuerten couldn't believe it. "I did it - I don't know how. If someone had told me at the beginning of the tournament 'to be number one you've got to beat Kafelnikov, then Sampras, then Agassi I would have said 'come on, no chance', he said after his final win."

The depth of the Masters Cup field was illustrated by the fact that for the first time at the season-ending event the four Grand Slam champions comprised the semi-finalists.

Kuerten thus the first South American and the first non-US player in a decade to end the year rankings in top spot since Swede Stefan Edberg in 1991.

"If he's number one it's just he's better than me. You have to accept it," was Safin's view.

But the big Russian had already made his indelible mark on the year, walloping Sampras in the US Open final to pick off his first Grand Slam title.

The ATP Tour had moved the goalposts, or rather the tramlines, in introducing a

Champions Race, a 12-month contest to designate the top player even while the old entry points system was retained.

Unheralded Frenchman Fabrice Santoro occupied top spot for a week in January before 1999 rankings king Andre Agassi, Aussie teen Lleyton Hewitt and former world number one Yevgeny Kafelnikov took over.

Then Safin and Kuerten moved clear - despite Sampras' Wimbledon efforts and Agassi's Australian Open triumph.

Sampras had his moment, the one that marked him out as surely the greatest of all time, at 1957 GMT precisely on a wet Sunday evening on July 9 in south-west London.

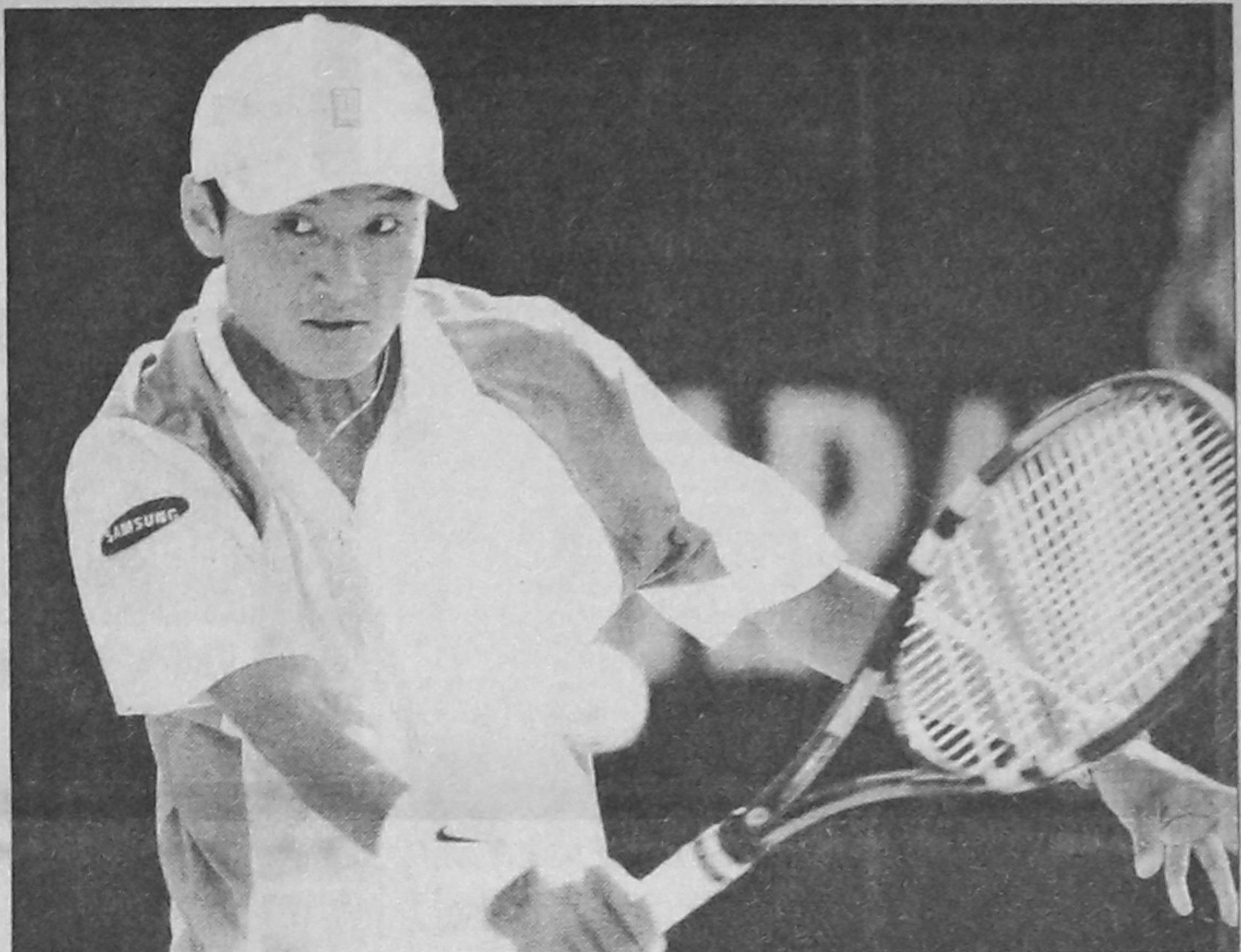
His seventh Wimbledon win was a joint record in the 114-year history of the All-England Club but more importantly it took him beyond Roy Emerson's 12 Slams to set a new mark.

It was all a long way from 1993, when the British tabloids unkindly accused Sampras, who got married in the autumn to actress Bridgette Wilson, of "putting Wimbledon to sleep."

The 28-year-old from Washington said he was proud of his achievements.

"The record means so much to me. Time will tell if it will be broken. I think in the modern game it could be difficult."

Sampras' long-time rival Agassi failed to match his brilliant 1999, and went down to Rafter in a classic Wimbledon semifinal.



Yoon Yong II of South Korea plays a backhand return during the Asia Cup tennis tournament in New Delhi yesterday.

- AFP photo

Bhaskaran speaks his mind

Indian hockey coach ousted

NEW DELHI, Dec 21: India's ousted hockey coach Vasudevan Bhaskaran lashed out at the game's administrators on Thursday, saying they deserved to be sacked too, reports AFP.

"Why me alone, what about the worthless officials holding high positions," Bhaskaran said after learning he had been sacked for India's poor performance at the Sydney Olympics.

"Is this some way of saying that I am the only one responsible for the defeat in the Olympics?"

"I think if I am removed then everybody from the federation should be removed."

"I feel very sorry for the players if they have to put up with this sort of administration," Bhaskaran, 50, said.

Eight-time Olympic champion India failed to make the semifinals at Sydney after unfancied Poland snatched a last-minute equaliser in the preliminary league.

In a major purge, hockey chiefs also sidelined 31-year-old captain Ramandeep Singh, and two other senior players Mukesh Kumar, 32, and Mohammad Riaz, 29, from the squad that finished seventh.

However, temperamental striker Dhanraj Pillay, 32, was among 43 players shortlisted for the World Cup qualifiers in Scotland next July.

"They are over the hill, we don't think they can do much for Indian hockey now," Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) president Kunwar Gill said of the sacked players.

Former coach Cedric D'Souza, who was thrown out after the 1996 Atlanta Olympics when India finished eighth, was recalled in place of Bhaskaran.

D'Souza, 45, will coach the team till the World Cup in Malaysia in March, 2002, Gill said.

In an astonishing move, the IHF appointed former goalkeeper Ashish Ballal as assistant coach. Ballal was axed from the national squad last year after leading a players' revolt against Gill.

"We played brilliant hockey throughout the Olympics and were sure of going through to the semi-finals," Bhaskaran said.

"That one goal by Poland sealed our fate. If we had won that game, everything would have been fine."

Bhaskaran said he learnt about his sacking from a journalist.

"Gill told me in Sydney there will be no witch-hunting. Now they don't even have the courtesy to inform me that I am not required," he said.

Bhaskaran, who captained India when it won the last of its eight gold medals at the 1980 Moscow Olympics, said he was considering coaching offers from foreign clubs.

"I will go where I am wanted. Obviously I am not wanted here," he said.

Sydney was everything and more

PARIS, Dec 21 (AFP): Australia roared 'G'day' to the world as the Sydney Games put the smile back on the face of the scandal-plagued Olympic movement with a dazzling cocktail of high drama, heartbreak and heroic failure.

Australia's 400-metre queen Cathy Freeman got the Games off to an emotionally charged start, setting the seal on a stunning opening ceremony with the lighting of the Olympic flame.

From that point on the Sydney Games never looked back.

"I am proud and happy to proclaim that they have presented to the world the best Olympic Games ever," Olympic supreme Juan Antonio Samaranch said on closing the Games.

And for once Samaranch's 'best ever' epithet appeared to be more than empty rhetoric.

A stunning competition in the swimming pool, a sparkling athletics meet and a glut of remarkable individual performances set a daunting benchmark for Athens in four years' time.

The opening week was dominated by a spectacular battle for swimming supremacy, with Australia, led by golden boy Ian Thorpe, hoping to knock the United States off their perch.

But the Americans put the Aussies firmly in their place and although Thorpe bagged three golds in Sydney, Flying Dutchman Pieter van den Hoogenband, who won two individual golds to Thorpe's one, upstaged him.

Van den Hoogenband also

set or equalled three world records. His feats were emulated by female compatriot Inge De Bruijn, who set three world bests on her way to a trio of golds.

As in Atlanta four years previously though, doping innu-



CATHY FREEMAN

endo was never far away from the pool deck.

"I absolutely do not think this is a drug-free Olympics," Richard Quick, the US women's swim coach remarked.

While Van den Hoogenband and Inge de Bruijn were the undisputed swimming stars of the Games, the athletics competition saw Freeman finish as the darling of the track.

The 27-year-old's coronation went as smoothly as planned with 90,000 fans inside Sta-

dum Australia and an entire nation outside it willing her to victory in the 400m.

"It was just relief and I was totally overwhelmed because I could feel the crowd all around and all over me," Freeman said of her victory. "I just felt every-



MARION JONES

one's happiness and joy."

But the weight of a nation was too big a burden for Moroccan miler Hicham El Guerrouj, whose 1,500m bid finished in heartbreak for the second successive Olympics.

"I have lived this dream for four years and it lies in tatters at my feet," El Guerrouj sobbed after his defeat.

Elsewhere on the track US sprint queen Marion Jones' ambitious 'drive for five'

ended in failure. She had to content herself with a mere three golds - the 100m, 200m and women's 4x400m relay.

Her quest was not helped after it emerged that her husband CJ Hunter had tested positive for nandrolone at a meeting in Oslo in July.

Compatriot Michael Johnson, the finest 400m runner the world has ever seen, added two more golds to his collection with an effortless victory in the one-lap race and relay event.

Johnson's regal display, on and off the track, was a welcome contrast to the trash-talking tedium of archrival Maurice Greene the 100m winner.

Greene and his victorious American teammates in the 4x100m left a sour taste with their charming podium posturing after victory in the relay.

Away from the pool and the track, Sydney saw a string of memorable milestones passed.

British rower Steve Redgrave cemented his place as one of the greatest Olympians of all time by clinching his fifth consecutive gold medal with victory in the coxless fours.

Cuban boxer Felix Savon snared his third consecutive heavyweight gold medal with a silky display of ringcraft, and German canoeist Birgit Fischer won her seventh gold medal in a remarkable Olympic career that dates back to 1980.

American wrestler Rulon Gardner, who sent shockwaves through the sport by ending Russian bear Alexander Karelin's 14-year unbeaten streak to

claim gold, scored the biggest upset of the Games.

But despite the feel-good factor that smothered the Sydney Games, the curse of the modern Olympics - drugs - was never far away.

An unprecedented testing programme saw more than 60 athletes from 20 countries and 10 sports scooped up in the anti-doping net.

Most of the athletes caught - Bulgaria's weightlifters for example - can be placed firmly in the cheat bracket. The IOC's hardline 'zero tolerance' policy came under fire though when elfin Romanian gymnast Andreea Raducanu became a victim.

She was stripped of her all-round individual gold medal for taking a banned cold tablet - even though the IOC admitted the remedy had given her no competitive advantage and that she had taken the medicine innocently.

"It didn't help me, on the contrary, it made me dizzy. I just don't understand why everything has turned out this way," a heartbroken Raducanu said.

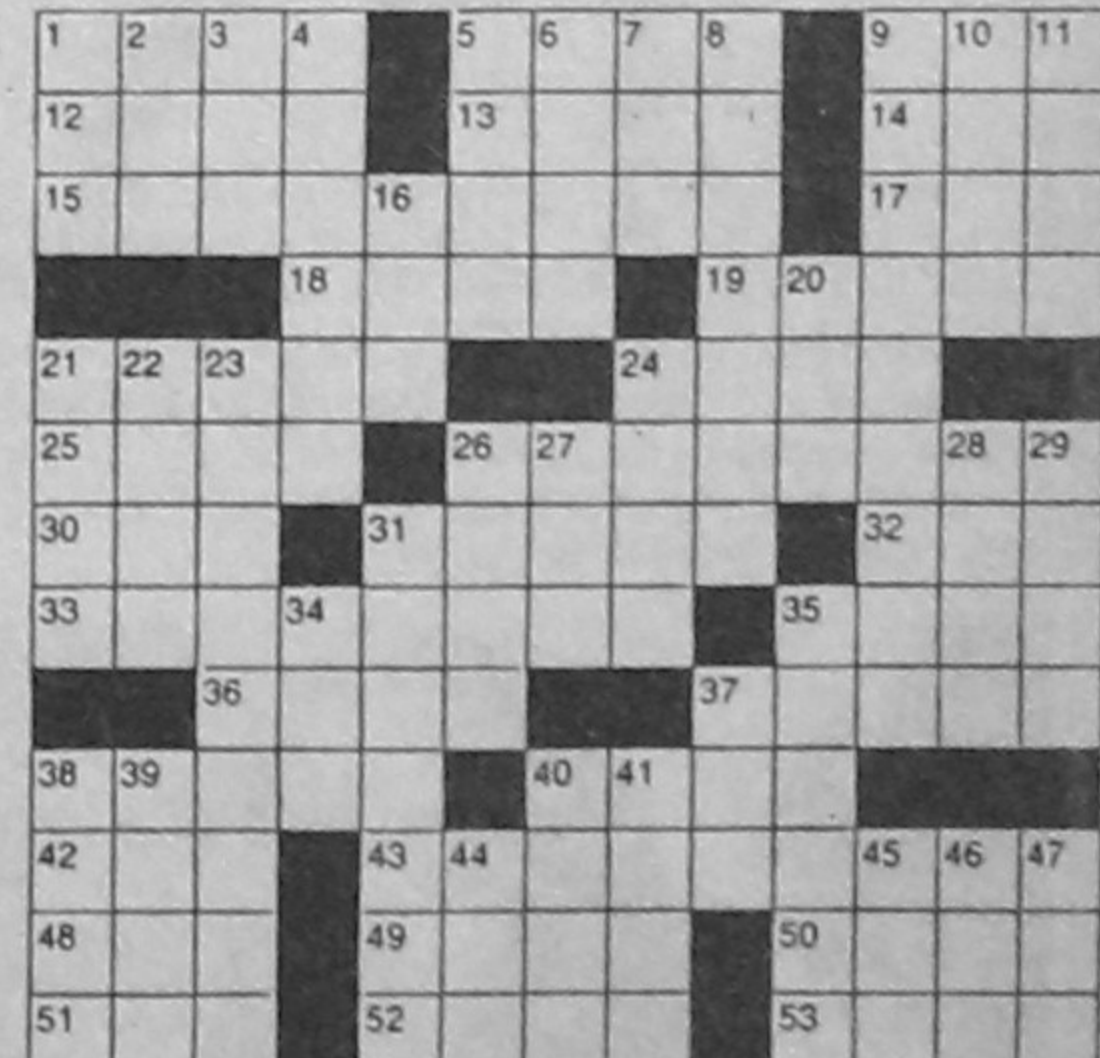
But although drugs scandals threatened to overwhelm the Games at times, the sporting action was never completely kicked off centre stage.

And there was plenty of heart-warming evidence that the time-honoured Olympic creed that 'it is the taking part that counts' is alive and well heading into a new century.

Eric 'the eel' Moussambani and Paula 'the porpoise' Barila Bobbi, two swimmers from tiny Equatorial Guinea, typified the ethos outclassed and out of their depth - but quite at home on the Olympic stage.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	40 Below (Fr.)	3 Farm animal	23 Visitor's quarters
1 Regimen	42 AFL merge	4 Coated in pitch	24 Propagated
5 Lather	43 Raid	5 Quick	26 Group of quail
9 Peregrinate	44 Partic-pant	6 Topping	27 Undivided
12 Waterloo is there	48 Without further	7 Judging	28 Canal zone
13 Mater	49 Austen heroine	8 Filtritious	29 "Monop-oly" card
14 Put to work	50 Roulette bet	9 Pure con-jecture	31 Patrons of Hus-bandy
15 Tan-and-white dairy cattle	51 Male of 3-Dow	10 were (so to speak)	34 Geologic period
17 "Ich bin - Berliner"	52 Fence part	11 Just say no	35 Mooring areas
18 Sunday noon	53 Gazpacho, o.g.	16 Affirmalvo action	37 Canoe coal
19 Precipitate	DOWN	20 Past	38 "Lion King" villain
21 Stormed	1 Excavation site	21 San - Italy	39 Elton John-Tim Rice musical
24 Pleads	2 Debtor's letters	22 Moby's pursuer	40 Tractor-trailer
25 Barak of Israel			41 Ph.D. hurdle
26 Used temporarily			44 Ms. Thurman
30 West of Hollywood			45 Old card game
31 Heredit factors			46 Lucy of "McBeal"
32 Valuable rock			47 Dadaism pioneer
33 Saw			
35 Cheese choice			
36 Cafeteria carrier			
37 Pretended			
38 Plastic wrap			



CRYPTOQUIP

GYKIOGA O GVQEOKEAR
RNKXYQ AYNRI PEZIR
V L R Y X L Y U R I O R

AVPYRIEXZ'A OLVVR
Yesterday's Cryptquip: A PERSON SITTING THROUGH ENOUGH RERUNS CAN TURN INTO A GROUND POTATO.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: Y equals E

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals Q, it will equal Q throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words with an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.