

# Armstrong accused of doping

Cycling

REUTERS, Paris

Seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong has denied ever taking performance-enhancing drugs following a report in French newspaper L'Equipe that he had used the blood-boosting drug EPO.

Tour de France executive director Jean-Marie Leblanc said he felt let down by Armstrong after L'Equipe alleged the American had taken the banned drug in 1999, the year he first won the world's greatest cycle race.

Armstrong, who recovered from testicular cancer to become the most successful rider in the Tour's history, has been forced to rebut several doping allegations during his career and he repeated on Tuesday that his sporting successes were 'clean'.

"I will simply restate what I have said many times: I have never taken performance-enhancing drugs," the 33-year-old, who retired in July, said in a statement on his personal website.

L'Equipe, saying it had access to laboratory documents, reported on Tuesday that six of Armstrong's urine samples collected on the 1999 Tour de France showed "indisputable" traces of EPO (erythropoietin).

L'Equipe published what it claimed to be a results sheet from the laboratory which appeared to show six figures revealing traces of EPO. The newspaper also published documents from the French cycling federation showing exactly the same figures under Armstrong's name.

The Chatenay-Malabry lab said in a statement that the samples they tested did not have names attached and they could not confirm if any of the samples were Armstrong's.

The lab said all test results had been sent to WADA, the agency in charge of the fight against doping in world sport, on the condition they did not use them to take disciplinary action.

Despite the lack of proof and Armstrong's denials, cycling officials expressed disappointment.

"I remain cautious and slightly circumspect but this is troubling and I feel disappointment inside me, like many sports lovers must do," Leblanc told French radio station RTL.

Asked if he felt let down by Armstrong, Leblanc said "Yes".

International Cycling Union (UCI) president Hein Verbruggen told Reuters: "We have to wait and see if this is true."

"Only then will we be able to ask ourselves whether there should be any legal action and whether this is a

further blow for cycling. "I have to say this is not pleasant but, for the moment, it only involves Lance Armstrong and France."

There were no tests to detect EPO, a drug that increases the level of red blood cells and endurance, in 1999.

However, samples from the 1999 Tour were kept and have been recently retested by the specialist anti-doping laboratory in Chatenay-Malabry outside Paris.

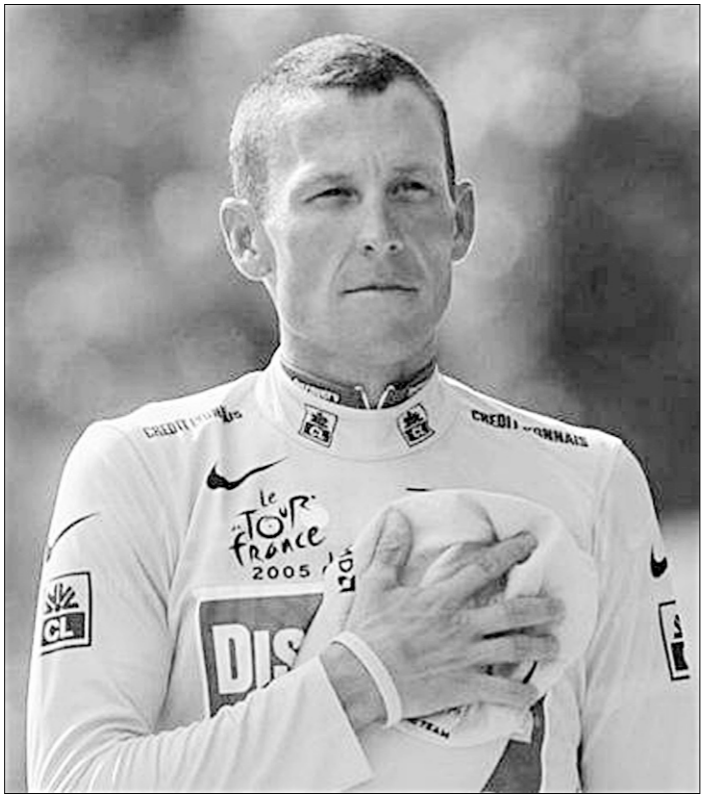
The World Anti-doping Agency

doping, was published on the eve of the 2004 Tour.

The leader of the US Postal team, which became the Discovery Channel team this year, he lost a Paris court case in 2004 when his request that the controversial book should include his denial of drug-taking was turned down.

"To all the cynics, I'm sorry for you," Armstrong said after his final Tour triumph in July.

"I'm sorry you can't believe in miracles. This is a great sporting



LANCE ARMSTRONG

(WADA)-accredited lab, which developed the test to detect EPO, started retesting last year samples that had been taken between 1998 and 1999 and frozen. The new tests were part of a scientific research programme.

A spokesman for WADA said the latest research results from the French laboratory had arrived at the Montreal-based organisation on Monday.

He said that like the lab, WADA had no means of matching names to the samples and this could be done only by the French cycling federation, the French sports ministry or the UCI. Despite being in a class of his own in recent years, Armstrong could never win over French fans or journalists. "LA Confidential", a book on his life containing accusations of

event and hard work wins it."

Armstrong said in his statement of denial on Tuesday: "Unfortunately, the witch hunt continues and (L'Equipe's) article is nothing short of tabloid journalism."

"The paper even admits in its own article that the science in question here is faulty and that I have no way to defend myself."

"They state: 'There will therefore be no counter-exam nor regulatory prosecutions, in a strict sense, since (the) defendant's rights cannot be respected.'"

The American retired after winning his record seventh Tour de France in July. Before winning his first Tour in 1999, Armstrong won a battle against testicular cancer, undergoing two operations and four bouts of chemotherapy.

## Owen snubs Everton

BBC ONLINE

Everton have failed with a bid to sign England striker Michael Owen. The Real Madrid forward, 25, looks likely to leave the Bernabeu and has been linked with a return to Liverpool as well as a move to Manchester United.

Boss David Moyes, who also said Everton had a £10m bid for Feyenoord's Dirk Kuyt rejected, stated: "We have been in contact with Michael and his advisers."

"Unfortunately he does not see Everton as a team he would choose at this present time."

Despite finishing fourth in the Premiership last season to earn a Champions League place, Moyes admitted he has found it hard to attract new players.

He added: "We offered £10m for Dirk Kuyt and that was rejected on 1 August by Feyenoord."

Making a bid for Owen is daft. He obviously wasn't going to come. It just makes the board look silly."

"I am trying to reassure fans I am in for most of the big names."

"We do have money to spend if the right players are available - but getting them in is the problem."

Owen spent much of his first season at Madrid coming off the bench.

And he has found himself even further down the pecking order at Real following the signings of Brazilian strike pair Robinho and Julio Baptista.

## The Hand of God strikes again!

BBC ONLINE

Argentine football hero Diego Maradona has said he is unrepentant about using his fist in a controversial goal against England in the 1986 World Cup.

Speaking on his TV show, Maradona said the intervention, which he nicknamed "The Hand of God", was justified.

"The truth is that I don't for a second regret scoring that goal with my hand," he said on the programme.

The footballer apparently defended his goal as his response to Britain's claim to the Falkland Islands.

He said he wanted to let Argentines and the whole world know the truth about a key moment in football history.

Maradona scored the goal by punching the ball into the net during a jump as goalkeeper Peter Shilton leapt into the air towards the ball.

From the referee's angle it looked as though Maradona had headed the ball into the back of the net.

After scoring during the quarter-final match, Maradona said the boys came over to celebrate.

"They were quite timid. They came over to embrace me but it was as if they were saying: 'We've robbed them'," he said.

"But I said to them: 'Whoever robs a thief gets a 100-year pardon.'"

The player was apparently referring to the Falklands War, fought unsuccessfully by Argentina against the UK to take control of the islands it claimed as its own.

Maradona's show is called La Noche del Diez (Number Ten Night) - a reference to the Number 10 shirt Maradona wore for the national side.

## South African

FROM PAGE 12

Combined prizemoney and match payments for the ODI series will be 1.254 million US dollars, while the total money available for the Super Test will be 1.39 million US dollars.

The ICC has accorded the matches official Test and ODI status.

### WORLD SQUADS

**TEST:** Shoaib Akhtar (PAK), Mark Boucher (RSA), Rahul Dravid (IND), Andrew Flintoff (ENG), Steve Harrison (ENG), Brian Lara (WIN), Jacques Kallis (RSA), Muttiah Muralitharan (SRI), Shaun Pollock (RSA), Virender Sehwag (IND) Graeme Smith (RSA, captain), Sachin Tendulkar (IND), Daniel Vettori (NZL).

**ONE-DAY:** Shahid Afridi (PAK), Shoaib Akhtar (PAK), Herschelle Gibbs (RSA), Andrew Flintoff (ENG), Jacques Kallis (RSA), Brian Lara (WIN), Muttiah Muralitharan (SRI), Makhaya Ntini (RSA), Kevin Pietersen (ENG), Shaun Pollock (RSA, captain), Kumar Sangakkara (SRI), Virender Sehwag (IND), Sachin Tendulkar (IND), Daniel Vettori (NZL).

## BOA chief calls on Rahman

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Newly appointed president of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) and Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed called on State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman at the secretariat yesterday. They discussed the participation and preparation of Bangladesh in upcoming tenth South Asian Games to be held in Colombo in April next year.

Football

LONDON

For over a century now, the FA Cup has boasted of being the most open football tournament in the world, with the previously-unheard of minnows allowed to rub shoulders, and even tick off the big guns. Now 125, the world's oldest football tournament will live up to its democratic billing, when on Saturday it will welcome Sporting Bengal United and London APSA, first all-Asian outfits, in its annals.

A semi-professional outfit from the East End borough of London -- with West Ham as its onecillustrious neighbours -- Sporting Bengal are gearing up to meet Hertfordshire-based Ware in the first of their six qualifiers before they can hope to play the FA Cup proper.

"The amount of attention and publicity we have received in the past one week since the draw was made, has been staggering," Suroth Miah, secretary of the club that plays in the Kent Senior League, told TOI from London. APSA figures in the Essex

Senior League.

"That is the reason we think that if we are able to pull off at least two or three wins, it should do well to justify all the hype," he added.

But Miah, admitted it won't be easy. "As a semi-professional side, we know what we are up against, but the boys are confident. Playing for an idea like Bengal, gives it a unique dimension altogether."

Sponsored by a local Balti restaurant 'Mirch Masala', and made up of civil servants, IT personnel, medical trainees, restaurant owners and full-time students -- mostly Bangladeshi (and two Indians, Ketan Patel and Bindi Singh) -- the 30-man strong Sporting Bengal, formed nearly a decade back in 1996, has come a long way in keeping the basic ideal intact.

"We do not play the boys anything," Miah explains. "They play for that pride that comes from turning out for a club that represents their community is huge for them."

Miah's policy is simple. "We can, with some trouble, get an experienced player from outside the area but then that would be defeating the whole idea. There is a great deal of talent in the East End area and for

these boys to have a chance to play at the highest level is huge. Even if it takes five to six seasons of struggle, we are willing to go through it," he said.

But success has come swifter for Sporting than Miah may have envisaged. Amongst its first players, Miah (32) is now the secretary of the club and has witnessed the wheel turn rapidly at the tiny club.

"We are like the de facto Bangladesh National team," explains Miah. "Teams from our local league which are about 30 in number are ready to provide their best players when we are to play. It is almost like the national team of a country."

It shows. The cream of the area has helped Sporting Bengal push itself to one of the two top south Asian clubs in the UK. After winning the title for tow seasons consecutively, this season they were runners up to Bradford Albion -- a club made up of predominantly British Indians - - at the hard-fought UK Asian Championships in Glasgow. The extent of Sporting's mettle can be gauged from the fact that they are the only team to walk into the eight-team tournament as automatic qualifiers while other Asian teams

have to endure a gruelling qualifying campaign.

The reason for this is the Senior Status the English Football Association granted Sporting Bengal in 2003. "We turned semi-professional and the FA granted us this status," informs Miah, adding, "I can't understand why Bradford Albion doesn't turn semi-pro too. They are probably as good, if not better than us."

Playing in the Senior League paved the path for FA Cup entry for this proud club. One year in the League makes you eligible to play in the FA Vase, which they played last season. Playing there meant that the next season you qualify to play the FA Cup qualifiers.

"We have six games to go. And given our status and size we'll be happy making any sort of impact," says Miah.

For now, Miah and his men have their sights set on Saturday. And a little piece of footballing history.

Internet Source

# Nawaz wishes Eng well

Cricket

AFP, Islamabad

England's mastery of reverse swing can help them win the Ashes, former Pakistani fast bowler Sarfraz Nawaz, regarded as a pioneer of the batsman-bamboozling technique, said Tuesday.

Nawaz said English pacemen Andrew Flintoff and Simon Jones had caused Australia problems in the first three Tests and would continue to do so in the fourth starting on Thursday in Nottingham.

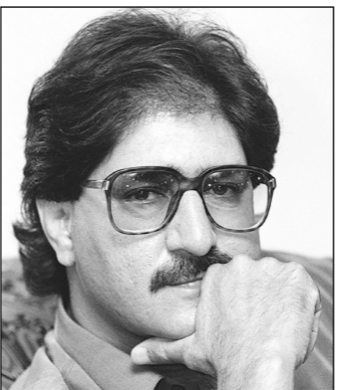
"I am amazed at the England bowlers' ability with reverse swing. It can win them the elusive Ashes," Nawaz told this news agency.

Nawaz, who took 177 wickets in 55 Tests for Pakistan, is widely regarded as pioneer of reverse swing, the rare skill of gaining vicious aerial movement with a roughed-up ball.

He passed the art to legendary all-rounder and compatriot Imran Khan and it was perfected by Pakistan pair Wasim Akram and

Waqar Younis in the early 1990s, helping Pakistan lift the World Cup in 1992.

"Flintoff and Jones are very



SARFRAZ NAWAZ

impressive in reverse swing and since the second half of the English season is drier it will get better and better," said Nawaz.

He said Darren Gough was the first English bowler able to reverse swing.

"Before Gough, the English used to search for any lame excuse and

accuse Pakistani bowlers of cheating when they reverse swung the ball," said Nawaz, attributing Pakistan's 1987, 1992 and 1996 wins in England to the technique.

Now England are using it too, and have a chance to turn around their unenviable record of having lost the last eight Ashes series.

"If England bowlers bowl as they did in the second and third Test, they have a real chance to win back the Ashes," said Nawaz.

England staged a remarkable comeback after losing the first Test at Lord's by 239 runs. They beat Australia by two runs in the second Test at Edgbaston while the Aussies struggled to clinch a draw in the third Test at Old Trafford.

Australia's opening batsman Justin Langer said last week that coach John Buchanan and skipper Ricky Ponting were putting their heads together to figure out how to deal with England's reverse swing.

Nawaz advised Australian batsmen not to play shots in haste.

"You need to play late against swing and take singles and twos," he added.

# England pacers please Hadlee

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Cricketing great Richard Hadlee is revelling in watching English bowlers giving Australian batsmen a torrid time in the gripping Ashes cricket series.

The New Zealand all-rounder, who tormented Australian batting line-ups during the 1980s, said Tuesday it was "absolutely magnificent" to see England's fast bowlers dictating terms in the 1-1 series, which resumes with this week's fourth Test at Trent Bridge.

Hadlee is impressed with the way Andrew Flintoff and Steve Harmison have put the Australian batsmen under sustained physical pressure.

"Australian bowlers have done it to the opposition so often, but for Australian batsmen now to be subject

to it -- I've never seen so many Australian batsmen be hit in the upper body and the head, on the glove, guys jumping around the crease," Hadlee said.

"From a spectacle point of view it's ... absolutely magnificent to see that, not because it's Australia, but to see any quality fast bowlers put pressure on quality batsmen with proven records, it's a fascinating thing to watch."

"That, to me, is the true battle of what the game of cricket is about."

"It's obviously one country ... playing another, but the one-on-one battles and duels that go on (with) no quarter given and none asked -- who comes out on top?"

"Those subtleties are what make the game for me."

Hadlee, one of six selectors who chose the ICC world Test and ODI teams to play Australia in the Super Series here in October, believes the

Ashes series could go down to the last day of the fifth and final Test.

"They're in uncharted territory, really ... it could go down to the last Test, last day, last ball," he said.

"All it (will be) is a major mistake by one or other teams, let alone individuals in the side, that will determine the series."

Hadlee expects Australia to pick Michael Kasprovicz over youngster Shaun Tait as the replacement for Jason Gillespie, who is likely to be axed for the Fourth Test.

"When it's as tight as it is, you go with the experience and Kasper has the leg-cutout, he can move the ball around a bit and at Trent Bridge, it does swing around," Hadlee said. "So for me, Kasper would be the man."

# Aussies must up intensity

Cricket

AFP, Northampton

Justin Langer has said Australia must raise their game if they want to retain the Ashes during the upcoming fourth Test against England.

The series resumes at Trent Bridge on Thursday with the teams locked at 1-1. But an Australia victory in Nottingham would leave them one-up with just one match in the five-Test series to play and so ensure they retain the Ashes, which have been in their possession since 1989.

But with England having won the second Test at Edgbaston and then only been denied a 2-1 lead at Old Trafford earlier this month by a last-wicket stand, Langer knows plenty of hard work lies in front of Australia who, he readily admitted, were facing their biggest challenge in years.

"We want to win the Ashes or, at least, we don't want to lose the Ashes."

"Unfortunately whoever wins or loses the Ashes is a long way down the track. Maybe we've just got a bit distracted by what could happen in a few weeks' time," said Langer, who

stood-in as skipper in place of Ricky Ponting during the drawn two-day game against Northamptonshire.

Asked about a lapse in Australia's intensity, he replied: "I would suggest it hasn't been at the cut-throat edge that we're used to playing at."

"We've played periods of very good cricket, but in Test match cricket, particularly when you play good teams like England, you can't afford to be just playing it in periods."

"We've talked about that a lot. We know that we have to increase the intensity throughout the whole, from the day of the last (third) Test ... through to the last ball of the series."

Australia now seem ready to drop experienced fast bowler Jason Gillespie, whose three wickets in the series so far have cost an expensive 100 runs apiece.

The battle to be his replacement is between the Shaun Tait, an out-and-out fast bowler who has the backing of Australia great Dennis Lillee, and the greater control of Michael Kasprovicz.

Langer, a gutsy left-handed opening batsman, said that with express paceman Brett Lee already in the team, Australia needed to think

carefully about whether they also wanted Tait in the side, amidst concerns his wickets might prove expensive.

"It's really important, you always talk about balance. You've got someone like Brett Lee in your side, who's an out and out strike bowler, and he's got the pace -- you've got to be careful you get the balance right."

"We've been lucky we've got two of the best ever at the other end (Glenn McGrath and leg-spinner Shane Warne), but no doubt the big question will come down to balance rather than talent in the next few days."

"I've always said Michael Kasprovicz is in domestic cricket in Australia is the hardest bloke for me to face. He always tends to go across the left-hander. I've always found him a handful in first-class cricket, as I do in the nets."

But Langer added he'd also been impressed by Tait. "He's a bit like Shoaib Akhtar or in a way, Brett Lee."

"You need the courage to stand still facing him, he's a different sort of bowler. When he's bowling that fast and he's bowling yorkers like he can, he's obviously a real strike bowler and a great prospect."

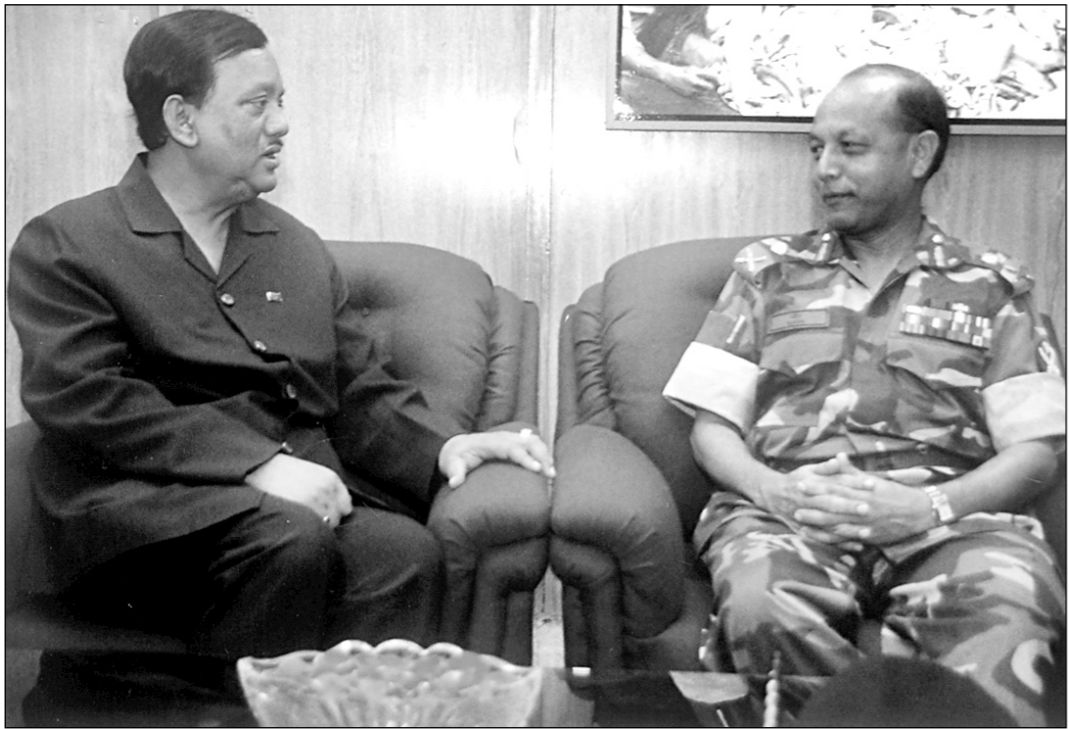
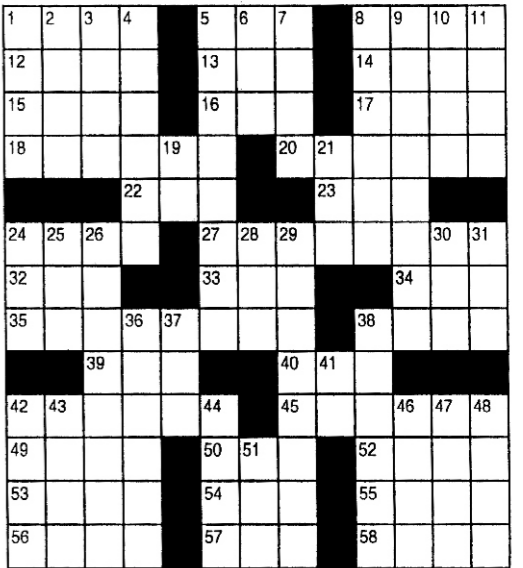


PHOTO: COURTESY

Bangladesh Olympic Association president and Army chief Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed called on State Minister for Youth and Sports and patron of BOA Fazlur Rahman at the latter's Secretariat office on Tuesday.



CRYPTOQUIP

O H I N P Y D O N H K X H C Y D F  
F O N S N R M Y S X Y S - C H Z N X  
H X I J Q N Q Y M D T S J Z F S H T N X

R N Z F T J S Z F N K H C C P ?  
Yesterday's Cryptokuip: SENTIMENTAL POP TUNE THAT I'D GUESS ANY VAMPIRE SHOULD LOVE: "FANGS FOR THE MEMORY!"

Today's Cryptokuip Clue: C equals B

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

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

<b>ACROSS</b>															
1	Moolah	38	Venomous	55	Kid in	8	Discernment								
5	Singer	39	vipers		Dagwood's	9	Ease								
	Tillis				neighborhood	10	Sea eagle								
8	Doglight		creed		hood	11	Burn								
12	Ontario	40	Conclusion		Hardy		some								
	neighbor				57	Bond,	squared								
13	Lamb's	42	Ahab's		e.g.	21	Blond shade								
	dam		vessel		58	Geographical									
14	Give a	45	Brain		septet	24	Trot								
	hoot	49	Aussie			25	Blunder								
15	Describe		flock			26	Relaxing								
16	Hirt and	50	"What			28	Mamie's								
	Gore		Kind		<b>DOWN</b>										
17	Arm		of		1	Solidifies	man								
	bone		Fool		2	Clapton	29	Peace							
18	Panoramic		—?"			or	30	Spigot							
						Sevareid									
20	Tool	52	Picnic		3	Rickey	36	—-café							
22	"— Got a Secret"	53	Author		flavor	37	Country club								
			Kingsley		4	Court proceedings		VIP							
23	D.C. VIP	54	35-		5	Placid	38	Puts on a pedestal							
			Across		6	Puncturing tool	41	"Fuhgeddaboutit!"							
24	"West Side Story" gang		surface, maybe		7	Interlock	42	Pinnacle							
							43	Madame Bovary							
27	Trawler gear						44	Water holders							
32	Bobby of hockey						46	Valley							
33	Guitar's kin						47	Ohio city							
							48	Nephew of Cain and Abel							
34	— Paulo						51	"The Amazing Race" aid							
35	Hand-to-hand combatant														