

Peirsol's record double

AFP, Indianapolis

Aaron Peirsol completed a world record double at the US Swimming Championships with his 200m backstroke triumph on Saturday, but said the battle for supremacy in the event remains wide open.

Peirsol clocked 1min 53.08sec to win the 200m backstroke over Ryan Lochte, and eclipse the world record of 1:53.94 set by Lochte in winning Olympic gold in Beijing last August.

The performance, in which Peirsol had surged to a commanding advantage by the final turn and held on to the finish, came three days after Peirsol reclaimed the 100m backstroke world record with a time of 51.94sec.

Pleased as he was with the time, Peirsol was mindful of the fact that it wasn't, in fact, the fastest 200m backstroke ever.

Japan's Ryosuke Irie swam 1:52.86 at a Japan v Australia meeting in Canberra on May 10, slicing 1.08 seconds off Lochte's Beijing Games mark.

But FINA refused to ratify the time as a world record because Irie raced in a waist-to-ankle high-tech swimsuit from Japanese manufacturer Descente that didn't have the green-light from swimming's world governing body.

"I'm well aware that's probably not even the world record right now. There was a Japanese kid that went 1:52 in pretty much the same thing I'm wearing now," said Peirsol, who raced in a waist-to-ankle modified Arena X-Glide, another one of the new generation of super suits linked to a wave of world records that have thrown the swimming community into turmoil.

Irie's time was a topic of discussion between friends and teammates Lochte and Peirsol.

"We both think 1:52 is the world record," Lochte said. "So we'll be gunning for that."

But with Lochte in the mix, and rising American star Tyler Clary also challenging in this event here, Peirsol said he was pleased to earn a chance to take on Irie at the World Championships in Rome.

Gaibandha

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their innings to lose by 10 runs.

In the second match Motiur Rahman Smriti Sangsad batted first and scored 40 runs for the loss of eight wickets in ten over. In reply Adarsha Cricket Club managed 39 runs losing all their wickets.

Teletalk

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Sangha was bundled out for 95 runs in 22.1 over with only middle order batsman Abay Tripura managing the highest 27 runs. Among others Rupayon Chakma (21) and Sayed Mahmud (10) only managed to reach double figures.

Babla Das of Khabongpuria Samobai Samity damaged Ujjibito Jubo Sangha by picking up 4 wickets for 21 runs while Jibon Dewan picked up 3 wickets. Alaxy Chakma, Khichhong Chakma and Bibash Chakma contributed with a wicket each.

Elit Chakma of Khabongpuria Samobai Samity adjudged man of the match as he scored 62 runs.

The second semifinal will be held today at the same ground between Victoria Club and Masterpara Cricket Club.

Mash unlikely

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He also added: "The swelling has reduced overnight and if needed he would be able to bat with a runner. But his chances of bowling in the Test depends on how fast he is improving."

Mashrafe, who succeeded Mohammad Ashraful as Bangladesh captain, has a history of sustaining freakish injury. He had both his knees operated and has been in a fight against injury ever since he donned the national cap and earned fame as the Narail Express.

Zlatan

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chances, saying he was not a magician like Harry Potter or Merlin.

"We can win the Champions League, I don't want excuses," Moratti said. "Miracles aren't needed, like it wasn't a miracle winning the Italian championship last year."

"I don't think it will be difficult or miraculous to do better than last season in the Champions League."

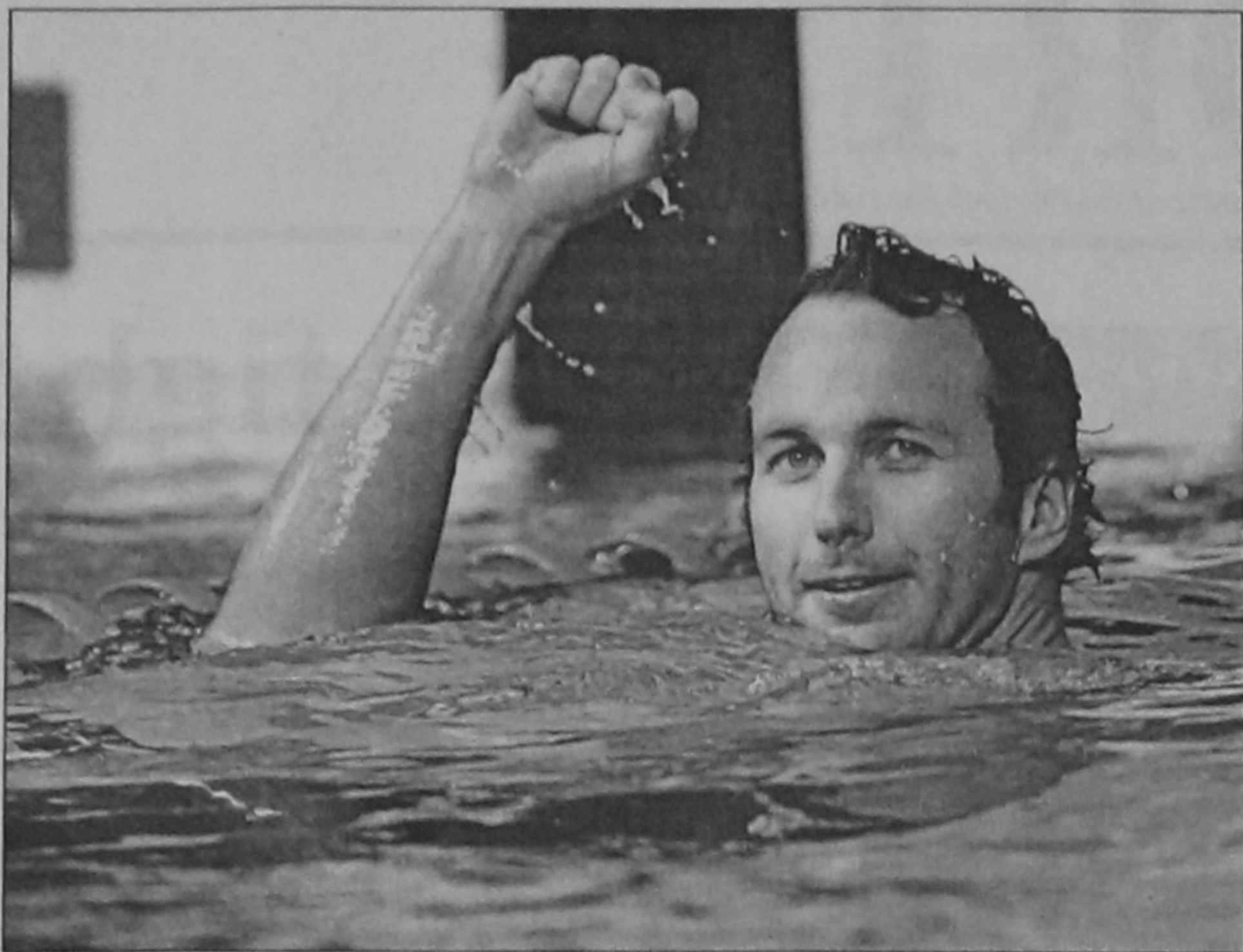
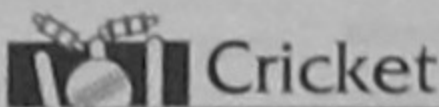


PHOTO: AFP

American Aaron Peirsol celebrates after setting a 200m backstroke new world record in the USA World Swimming Championships at the Indiana University Natatorium in Indianapolis on Saturday.

North looks ahead



AFP, Cardiff

Australia century-maker Marcus North said winning the Ashes opener here at Sophia Gardens would be especially sweet for the tourists after all the hype surrounding the ground's Test debut.

Before this match there had been plenty of comment about how England's spinners would pose problems on a Cardiff pitch renowned for taking turn.

Instead Australia piled up a massive 674 for six declared with North, who made 125 not out and Brad Haddin, last man out for 121, making hundreds in their debut Ashes innings.

The Ashes-holders' total featured four centuries in all, the first time they'd managed that in a Test innings against England, with Australia captain Ricky Ponting leading the way with 150 and opener Simon Katich scoring 122.

By contrast England spinners Monty Panesar and Graeme Swann took just one wicket for 246 runs between them.

And when rain washed out the final session, England were 20 for two -- still needing 219 more runs to make Australia bat again -- and, more immediately, bat out Sunday to save the game.

Next week's second match of the series is at Lord's, where Australia have not lost a Test since 1934 and North, whose hundred was his second in only three matches at this level, told

reporters: "There was a lot of talk about the England spin on a wicket that takes spin, causing us a lot of problems so to combat that is pretty pleasing."

"To wrap it off with a win, to be 1-0 up at a venue where, at the start of a series, a lot of people fancied England's chances, would be a great confidence boost, especially leading into the history at Lord's."

North, 29, who made a hundred on his Test debut against South Africa in Johannesburg in February, said: "It was set up by great batting from Ricky and Kat to wear the England attack down."

"At the moment, there is only one winner. We've got a healthy lead on a wicket that is wearing."

North's career has also seen him appear for five English counties -- Derbyshire, Durham, Gloucestershire, Hampshire and Lancashire.

"Having that experience of county cricket has made sure that coming over here there have been no surprises in the conditions or the weather," he said. Reflecting on his storybook start to Ashes cricket, North, who made an unbeaten 191 in last week's final warm-up match against the England Lions, said: "It hasn't sunk in just yet. It's something I'll remember forever."

North shared a stand of exactly 200 with wicketkeeper Haddin, who added to England's agony with a quickfire century.

"Brad Haddin played like Brad Haddin. He did nothing

silly, got himself in and the situation allowed him to be free-spirited and play that attacking role, which I've seen him do a lot in domestic cricket," North said.

"It put us in a position where instead of having a lead of 120 or 150, we had a lead of 240."

England all-rounder Paul Collingwood admitted the home side had a difficult task on their hands.

"We've got to bat out three sessions. The batsmen have got to take responsibility and not leave it to anybody else."

All five of England's frontline bowlers conceded more than 100 runs each after the selectors left out Collingwood's Durham teammate Stephen Harmison, despite the fast bowler's six-wicket haul for the England Lions.

Harmison reinforced his case for a recall by taking five for 60 for county champions Durham against Yorkshire on Saturday and Collingwood said: "Of course he is going to be in the mix."

"But it's difficult to pick up wickets when the pitch is so slow."

"You've got to give credit to the Australian batsmen. They are not giving it away," Collingwood, one of three England players who failed to convert a first innings fifty into a century, said.

"I am sure there are a lot of (England) batsmen who realise they could have gone on and made that big total."

WICB issues warning to top players

CRICINFO, undated

The West Indies board (WICB) has upped the ante in its ongoing clash with its own players by issuing a media release stating its "unswerving commitment" to the current squad playing Bangladesh and all those who made themselves available for selection.

The board said the squad for September's Champions Trophy would be picked from among these players and that it would begin interviewing prospective captains. "This ensures that there will always be a solid pool of approximately 29 contracted players from which to draw for the Board's future tour commitments."

The move in effect is a warning to those players who did not make themselves eligible for selection for the Bangladesh Test that they will not be considered for future tournaments, and is widely seen as an attempt to put pressure on those who boycotted the game to reconsider their position.

However, former West Indies captain Jimmy Adams, now honorary secretary of the players' association (WIPA) told Cricinfo that the players had "got fed up with things going nowhere" and were prepared to "sit out and see what happens".

While the WICB is publicly prepared to go with the current squad, it also emerged that more than 13 players -- the number widely reported -- had turned down invitations to play against Bangladesh. Dinanath Ramnarine, the chief executive of WIPA, told Cricinfo the number was closer to 30 or 40.

The board referred to "strike action" by players, but Ramnarine was quick to point out that individuals without contracts could not go on strike. "They declined invitations to play, which is not the same thing," he said.

Harmison's reminder

AFP, London

Discarded England pace bowler Steve Harmison pushed his case for an Ashes call-up when he took five wickets for Durham against Yorkshire in the county championship on Saturday.

Harmison, who claimed 5-60, was left out of England's first Test squad despite twice dismissing Australia opener Phil Hughes in last week's Lions match at Worcester.

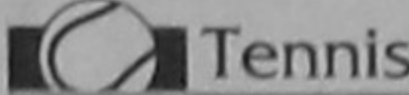
But the fast bowler, hoping for a recall to the England squad for the second Ashes Test at Lord's next week, took out his frustration on Yorkshire who stuttered from 64 for one to 313 all out at Leeds.

Harmison was watched by England selector James Whitaker.

"We all know what 'Harmy' is capable of doing given a fair wind," said Whitaker.

"I thought he bowled very well today, particularly in his first spell when he found his best length -- and his direction was also good."

Seles in Hall of Fame



AFP, Newport

Nine-time Grand Slam singles champion Monica Seles and three others were inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame on Saturday.

Joining the former women's world number one in the honor shrine were 1960s Spanish player Andres Gimeno, pioneer marketer Donald Dell and the late Robert Johnson, a junior player developer who helped launch the careers of black players Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe.

"What an amazing group," Seles said at the induction ceremony. "It's such a great honor. Standing here, I'm just a bundle of nerves."

"Growing up as a little girl, I could never dream I would be inducted into the Hall of Fame. I have a hard time believing it now."

Seles sat atop the WTA rankings for a total of 178 weeks and won the 1991 and 1992 US Opens, the 1990-1992 French Opens and the 1991-1993 and 1996 Australian Opens.

"I grew up on the WTA Tour. That was my home," Seles

said. "I grew up in the media spotlight. It can be challenging at times."

Her 15-year career was interrupted in dramatic circumstances when she was stabbed in the back by a fanatical supporter of rival Steffi Graf during a 1993 match at



MONICA SELES

Hamburg.

It would be 27 months before Seles would return to competitive tennis. She won her comeback event at the Canadian Open, reached the US Open final and then captured her final Slam crown at the 1996 Australian Open.

The Yugoslavian-born American won 53 singles titles

and more than 14 million dollars in prize money. She donated many of her trophies to the honor shrine.

"I hope it will inspire young children to pick up a racket, hit a few balls and fall in love with the sport the way I did," Seles said. "I look forward to watching the sport and seeing how much faster it can get."

Seles poked fun at her habit of grunting whenever she struck the ball, giving the crowd one final edgework.

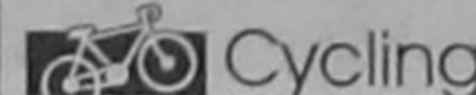
"For old times sake, here it is -- eeeunnh," Seles said with a smile. "I just had to do it."

Seles, the 2000 Olympic bronze medalist, was the youngest champion in French Open history at 16 1/2 years.

"When I won my first French Open at age 16, mom kept me from getting a big head by saying I had to be back downstairs for dinner," Seles said.

Gimeno became the oldest French Open men's winner by taking the 1972 title at age 34. He also reached the 1969 Australian Open final and the semi-finals of the 1968 French Open and 1970 Wimbledon tournaments. He won seven singles titles and reached a best ranking of ninth in the early days of the Open era.

Lance's challenge



AFP, Saint Gaudens

Lance Armstrong believes six days of hard climbing on the Tour de France will reveal whether he, or teammate Alberto Contador, will emerge as Astana's real yellow jersey contender.

Heading into the ninth stage of the race Sunday seven-time champion Armstrong was only two seconds behind 2007 winner Contador in the race's overall classification.

With another two teammates, Levi Leipheimer and Andreas Kloden, in the top ten Astana will be the team to beat when the race heads gradually towards the Vosges and Alps mountains next week.

While Armstrong was in second overall only 0.22secs away from pulling on the yellow jersey after last Tuesday's fourth stage time trial, Contador has kept his own teammate's plans on a tight rein.

As Frenchman Brice Feillu raced to victory at Arcalis ski station on Friday, Contador provided drama by attacking Armstrong's group to finish 19secs ahead of the American.

It put the Spaniard into second place overall, and back in the spotlight.

But on Sunday Armstrong declared that a "very difficult" six days ahead would show who deserved to be given the team's full support.

"We'll have more moments, we'll see who's really the strongest," said Armstrong after explaining why he had not countered Contador's attack.

The American said he felt strong enough to be able to follow the Spaniard near the end of the climb to Arcalis, but he admitted it would not have

been right to chase down his own teammate.

"I wouldn't say that I could have easily followed [Contador] because it was an impressive attack, but I probably could have gone. But it wouldn't have been correct for me to go across," added Armstrong.

"I waited for the other guys [rivals], I expected them to pull it back and they didn't but ... that's life, that's cycling. I had to do the right thing."

After Monday's rest day the race resumes with an undulating 10th stage from Limoges to Issoudun, in which teams and riders will have to race without the advantage of radios.

The second stage to be held without race radios is on the 13th stage, a hilly 200km ride through the Vosges from Vittel to Colmar.

After another two hilly stages, the difficult 159km ride from Martigny, Switzerland to Bourg Saint Maurice on July 21 should provide plenty of drama.

Another huge day of climbing on stage 17 precedes a 40.5km time trial and two days later the penultimate stage features the potential race-decider with the 21.1km climb to the summit of Mont Ventoux.

Armstrong said so far Astana's race had "gone to plan", and that he did not expect much to change in the overall classification until the hilly ride from Pontarlier to Verbier in Switzerland on stage 15.

But he still believes Mont Ventoux could be the decider.

"There's not going to be a lot of change until Verbier," added Armstrong.

"That's [Alps] where the race is going to be decided. The combination of those days, from Colmar all the way to the top of Mont Ventoux -- it's a very difficult six days."

"We'll wait, the hardest mountain in France [Mont Ventoux] is on the last day basically so you can't forget that."

Aussies

FROM PAGE 17

bounce away from the left-hander and Strauss, trying to repeat his cut shot, edged behind and was well caught by wicketkeeper Brad Haddin for 17.

England, already in trouble on their overnight score of 20 for two, were now, at 46 for four in dire straits.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the fifth day of the first Ashes Test between England and Australia at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff on Sunday:

ENGLAND: First innings 435 (Pietersen 69, Collingwood 64, Prior 56; Johnson 3-87, Hauritz 3-95)

AUSTRALIA: First innings 674-6 dec (Ponting 150, North 125 n o, Katich 122, Haddin 121)

ENGLAND: Second innings (overnight 20-2)

Strauss c Haddin b Hauritz 17

Cook lbw b Johnson 6

Bopara lbw b Hilfenhaus 1

Pietersen b Hilfenhaus 8

Collingwood not out 55

Prior c Clarke b Hauritz 14

Flintoff c Ponting b Johnson 26

Broad lbw b Hauritz 14

Swann not out 4

Extras: (b-4, lb-7, w-2, nb-11) 24

Total: (For 7 wts in 71 overs) 169

To bat: Anderson, Panesar

Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-17, 3-31, 4-46, 5-70, 6-127, 7-159.

Bowler O M R W

Johnson 16 4 27 2

Hilfenhaus 11 2 36 2

Siddle 12 1 33 0

Hauritz 24 7 45 3

Clarke 3 0 8 0

North 5 3 9 0

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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1 Bushy hairdo	40 Ex, —, zee	DOWN	16 Imperfection
5 "CSI" setting	41 Mongol tent	1 Curved lines	20 Edge
8 Paraphernalia	43 Chic no more	2 Decree	23 That girl
12 Laugh-a-minute	45 Undeveloped state	3 Got up	24 Charged bit
13 Altar affirmation	47 Boil of the above	4 "None of the above"	25 Damaging hit
14 "The Amazing —"	51 Sandwich shop	5 Frog's perch	27 Trinity member
15 Solvency source	52 Movie about 1950s	6 Hubbub	29 Chap
17 Sicilian spouter	53 Acknowledged to applause	7 Acknowledged to applause	30 Prior to
18 Hard and cold	54 Cupid's alias	8 Lubricated	32 Sight-seer
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CRYPTOQUIP

QTFU S QBMZOU'D VZZBQ IX
YSWZ DB QVZJ HTVJSZX
XBM ISYTD HVX S OSOU'D
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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SINCE THIS MAN IS
TELLING ME MANY VERY FUNNY JOKES, I
RECKON HE'S GOING FOR MY JOCLAR VEIN.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals W