

BERCELONA BRIEFS

VIP welcome for them

BARCELONA, July 25: The US Olympic basketball Dream Team were given VIP treatment usually reserved for heads of state on arrival in Barcelona on Friday.

Four police cars and a helicopter escorted the team bus from the airport to the Olympic Village.

The motorcade drew puzzled looks from motorists en route to the city, but a big crowd formed when the 12 NBA superstars disembarked and headed into the Village to be accredited.

Magic Johnson, Michael Jordan and Larry Bird will lead the Dream Team, the first US Olympic squad to feature NBA players, against Angola in their opening game on Sunday.

Painful indeed

A painful boil that is refusing to heal has forced Indian freestyle wrestler Dharambir Singh out of the Olympic Games.

Yadav, who was to fight in the 62-kilogram category, will fly home on the first available flight, a spokesman for the Indian contingent said. Team doctors certified the 26-year-old unfit to compete, he said.

The wrestler had the boil on his thigh when he came here last week, but it grew bigger and more painful.

Hungary taxi drivers

Twelve leaders of the Spanish taxi drivers' union in Barcelona started a hunger strike on Friday to protest at a slump in custom because of the Olympic Games.

The 12, members of the auto union, are protesting because taxis have been excluded from Olympic zones. They are also angry that a huge fleet of official vehicles is being used to ferry around visiting delegations.

City authorities have offered to let taxis into restricted zones. But a union spokesman said they wanted the head of the municipal taxi department to resign before they start eating again.

Flame too late!

The 25th Olympic Games didn't wait for the Olympic flame Friday.

The torch, traditionally carried by runners, was brought to Barcelona from the island of Majorca aboard the yacht Rosalind.

The flame wasn't scheduled to arrive until about two hours after the Italian soccer team finished beating the United States 2-1 in a match that inaugurated the 1992 Summer Olympic Games a full day before official opening ceremony of the Games on Saturday.

The Games, first event drew only 18,000 people to the 120,000-seat stadium.

The inexperienced US team had hoped the memory of an Italian who sailed for Spain would inspire mercy when they met medal-favourite Italy.

"We remind them that Christopher Columbus discovered America, and now we want to discover Italian soccer on a very friendly basis," said US coach Lother Ostander before the game. "Hopefully, they won't crucify us."

Donald's daylight kayaked

AMERICAN super heavy weight boxer Larry Donald has been confined to a darkened room because doctors are worried the harsh Spanish sunlight might delay recovery from an eye injury.

Donald, 25, is suffering from a scratched cornea and has been forced to wear an eye patch.

But team doctor Jim Montgomery said on Tuesday, Donald was not in danger of missing his first Olympic competition.

"I think he should probably be able to work out tomorrow," he added.

The rest of the team have been given a clean bill of health.

Merguen avoids a brawl

OLYMPIC boxer Raul Merguen — known for his aggressive style — kept a cool head on a hot Barcelona beach and walked away from what could have been his first fight of the Games.

"I saw this really good-looking lady come out of the water. She looked like one of those Sports Illustrated girls. She was topless," said Merguen, who boxes for the United States in the 71-kilogram class.

IOC calls for a truce

THE International Olympic Committee appealed Thursday for all strife-torn parts of the world, especially the former Yugoslavia, to observe a truce during the Barcelona Games.

The IOC said the truce, which hopefully would last for at least seven days after the Aug 9 conclusion of the Games, should apply "in all the current areas of tension, particularly in Central Europe."

Mandela thrilled

BARCELONA, July 25: Black South African leader Nelson Mandela arrived in Barcelona on Friday and said he was thrilled to be witnessing his troubled country's return to the Olympic family after 32 years, reports Reuter.

to have young people given the opportunity to demonstrate what they can do is something important to any country," said Mandela, who kept himself fit during 27 years in jail.

For almost 18 years of his incarceration on Robben Island off Cape Town South Africa's white rulers forced Mandela to break rocks.



ANC leader Nelson Mandela is flanked by South African athletes during a press conference at the Olympic Village in Barcelona yesterday. — AFP photo

Mandela, speaking as he arrived at the International Olympic Committee's hotel in Barcelona, said he had visited the city last year to view the main stadium.

"At that time already we were busy trying to normalise those sports that complied with conditions that were imposed and that possibility of competing in the Games was there," the African National Congress (ANC) president told Reuters.

"I must confess before that I didn't think I would ever see this day and I am very happy it has come."

The 125-member multi-racial squad is representing South Africa at the Games for the first time since 1960 after the lowering of an anti-apartheid ban.

A special-designed flag for the South African delegation was raised on Thursday. Now the sports can begin.

"It is very exciting because

South Africa's participation at the Games was temporarily thrown into doubt last month after an upsurge of violence in black townships and the collapse of talks between the ANC and government on a multi-racial constitution.

There was talk of a boycott, but Mandela said that was now history.

"We are here now," he said earlier at Barcelona airport.

An *unusually* aquabuble over US-born javelin thrower Tom Petranoff threatened to sour South Africa's return to the Olympic fold.

But Petranoff, a naturalised South African at the centre of a race-based row in the country's athletics federation, was left out of the team.

Asked whether the Petranoff affair had taken the shine off South Africa's Olympics return, Mandela smiled and said: "Well, I'd rather leave that one to the sportsmen."

O'Brien hasn't missed much

MOSCOW, Idaho, July 25: Appearing in commercials made decathlete Dan O'Brien a star. Though he failed in his Olympic bid this year, his hometown fans seem to think he's more of a hero than ever, reports AP.

during the second day of the Olympic trials in New Orleans last month. He finished the competition with a combined score of 7,856 — the highest ever by a decathlete who failed to score in one event.

His failure to make the US team was a letdown after a deluge of Reebok Int'l Ltd "Dan or Dave" commercials. The spots promised viewers the Barcelona Olympics would decide whether O'Brien or rival Dave Johnson is the word's greatest athlete.

While the 25-year-old won't be competing in the Olympics, O'Brien's popularity has not abated.

His speaking engagements remain steady, and no commercial sponsors have abandoned him.

"It's been surprising," O'Brien said last week during a fund-raiser at Latah Care Centre in Moscow. "You find out who your friends are real quick, that's for sure."

There seems to be no shortage of friends in Moscow. At the fund-raiser, he was introduced by Ivar Nelson, publisher of the Palouse Journal, a quarterly magazine of arts and culture.

"What we have seen by the way Dan handled the misfortune in New Orleans is that not only do we have the world's greatest athlete, but I think we have the world's greatest sportsman as well," Nelson said.

Rob Landek, a local attorney who handles O'Brien's commercial endorsements, said his client remains marketable.

"I don't think his popularity has waned at all," Landek said. "His story will be told many times over in the Olympics. Basically, one of the world's finest athletes got a raw deal."

While his 11th-place Olympic trials finish failed to qualify him for the competition, O'Brien will be in Barcelona after all. He will trade his shoes and sweats in for an NBC-TV blazer as a track and field commentator.

Reebok pulled the "Dan and Dave" commercials 10 minutes



DAN O'BRIEN
O'Brien lost his chance as Olympic glory when he missed three pole vault attempts at 15 feet, 9 inches (4.80 meters)

Barcelonans stay home

BARCELONA, July 25: Antonio Mata didn't have the time. Dolores Benet didn't have the money.

It's opening night before the world's largest audience, and most Barcelonans will be watching the Olympics just like people thousands of miles away — in their living rooms, reports AP.

Paquita Cuesta won't even be able to do that tonight. She's a waitress and has to work. But she will be watching her favourites play basketball on the US team.

Mata, a 55-year-old grocer, says he couldn't be bothered trying to find one of the 65,000 tickets. He'll watch the pageantry on television.

"With my work, it's really hard to get to the Games," he said, leaning on the counter of his store down the street from modernist architect Antonio Gaudi's landmark apartment building Casa Mila.

Benet, a middle-age woman who sells sewing equipment, says she'll watch on television, too, because she doesn't have the money for a ticket.

Olympic banners and red-and-yellow Catalonian flags drape balconies all over the city. Most locals beam with pride when asked about the Olympics.

But it has been a long struggle for the metropolitan area's 4 million people and, in interviews through a translator, some said they have paid a high price for being hosts to the world.

Salvador Fornons, 57, is closing his newspaper kiosk in August, when Barcelonans flee the heat for the mountains or islands. He doesn't think the Games will mean more newspaper sales.

"Here, everything is football — OUR team — not the Olympics," he said.

City officials expect 250,000 tourists. They say the Olympics have created 128,000 jobs. The region's unemployment is half of Spain's 14 per cent. About 2,400 additional housing units have been built in a heavily congested city.

"There's a lot of propaganda that everyone is going to work. There's no work," said Eloisa Sanchez, 49, standing outside her ground-floor flat in the working-class Barceloneta section.

"The prostitutes, the drugs have been moved out, but after the Games, they will come back," she said, gesturing at the iron bars on windows and doors on her street.

"They said business would go up," said Nuria Navas, 24. She sells lingerie and sewing material at a few blocks from Sanchez's house in the neighbourhood wedged between the port and the sparkling new Olympic Village.

"The tourists look at the stuff, they touch it, but they don't buy it," she said.

Police pressed to keep peace as flame arrives

BARCELONA, July 25: Police broke up groups of Spanish and Catalan nationalists to prevent clashes in Barcelona early today when the Olympic torch was carried through the teeming city before the start of the Olympic Games, reports Reuter.

City police said about 300 right-wing Spaniards with flags bearing symbols of late dictator Francisco Franco tried to block an intersection where the torch was to pass but were moved on.

Minor incidents also occurred between the Spaniards and rival groups of flag-waving Catalans seeking independence for their northern region of Spain, a spokesman said. No arrests were reported.

The build-up to the Olympics provoked bitter political controversy over the extent to which the Games, being staged in the Catalan capital, should be used to project what nationalists say is the separate identity of Catalonia.

The nationalists have said they will not disrupt today's glittering Olympic opening ceremony after organisers made the Catalan language and culture features of the show.

More than 500,000 people thronged the streets of Barcelona and ships sounded their sirens when the Olympic torch arrived by sea on the final leg of its journey from ancient Olympia.

Now or never for the Unified Team

BARCELONA, Spain: This is the eve of the 25th Summer Olympic Games. The buzz has been growing for weeks, intensifying in the last few days. In a multi-cultural city of 1.7 million and a metropolitan area of more than twice that number, so many people seem eager to start celebrating 16 days of athletic achievement and themselves, reports AP.

Yet, as always, the sharper reality of life beyond the moment intrudes. The leader of the Unified Team of the Commonwealth of Independent States on Friday painted a bleak picture for the future of sports in what was once the Soviet Union, the mightiest of Olympic powers.

Citing harsh economic times, ethnic conflicts, limited access to medical treatment and nourishing food for athletes and the steady emigration of leading coaches and trainers, Nikolai Rusak, the chief of the delegation, predicted that by the 1996 Games in Atlanta, his athletes will be unable to match the performances of the United States, Germany, China and other countries with more stable economic and political conditions.

In the nine summer Games that the Soviet Union competed in from 1952 through 1988, it was the leading medal winner in six and second in the other three.

Yet what made Rusak's outlook more alarming were remarks earlier in the day by Juan Antonio Samaranch, the president of the International Olympic Committee, who defended commercialism as a way of life for the Olympics, saying it had become essential for the Olympic movement to survive.

"Commercialism is not a danger," Samaranch said at a news conference. "Sponsorship in the world today is very common. There are sponsors

in museums, sponsors for big symphony orchestras. I remember one trip with the Pope had a special sponsor. This is a way inhabitants of a country do not have to pay more taxes, because of the organisation of important sports events like the Olympic Games."

Samaranch, who has been criticised for expediting the commercialism trade, touched a variety of issues as final preparations of Saturday's opening ceremonies continued.

The three-hour show, a tribute to Barcelona, the region of Catalonia, Spain and the Olympic ideal precedes 16 days of competition in which the Unified Team will likely emerge again, but for the last time, as the leading medal winner among a record 172 nations, followed by the United States and Germany.

But while Atlanta may match the bells and whistles of an opening ceremony and Americans, Germans and Chinese may pile up medals, the economic trends inside disadvantaged nations and the Olympic movement seem headed toward a collision in 1996.

Once the 1984 Los Angeles Games changed the nature of financing a sports extravaganza, by using private fund, the IOC moved rapidly into the corporate world, to the point that 12 multinational companies will pay at least \$20 million to sponsor the Barcelona Games and world television rights will generate another \$635 million.

Those are lofty numbers and concepts for officials like Rusak, who once helped manage a state-run system that provided everything the athlete needed.

Now, the former Soviet system is neither state-funded nor functional. This "farewell appearance" of the 648-member team, as Rusak called it, features athletes from 12

former republics that will gain individual recognition for their Olympic committees by the 1994 Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway.

"Once everybody is dispersed, it will be very difficult."



SERGEI BUBKA



TATYANA DOROVSKIKH

come tomorrow's rivals.

"Without well-known athletes, sponsors may not give as much to individual athletes. We are aware of the value of our methods, but they must be transmitted to the different states. We must try to convince the sports leaders there, ask them to keep up a system of competition and joint training."

For now, the Unified Team is sustaining itself through modest sponsorship arrangements and an IOC programme called Olympic Solidarity, which supports developing or impoverished countries.

State support ended three years ago, and one could only imagine his reaction to walking around the Olympic Village, which houses athletes and officials.

"I've seen 17 coaches from the Soviet Union, who are now from other states: Italy, India, Mexico, Spain," Rusak said. "It will take eight to 10 years for Russia or Ukraine to be on the same level as the United States, Germany and China."

The process could be hastened, paradoxical, only if the IOC's revenue streams are slowed by economic downturns.

Samaranch noted that in some countries, including the United States, the IOC might have reached a financial ceiling with current television partners and, thus, needs to seek new income sources.

The only areas restricted from commercial sponsorship, he said, would be stadium interiors and athletes' uniforms, which in non-Olympic competitions are generally major billboards for advertisers. Otherwise, anything goes.

"It is quite important that sport is organised by this type of funding," Samaranch said, a pronouncement that could hardly have cheered Rusak.

When these Games are over, so is an era.

the less fortunate.

"I don't think you can see 12 of these cruisers together at any one time, except may be in Miami on a Saturday afternoon," said Lennart Hakanson, senior vice president of Cunard.

The biggest cruiser is the US-owned "Crystal harmony," jointly chartered by Coca-Cola, Mars and Visa. The 960 passengers will be looked after by 480 crew.

Still higher on the luxury ladder is Cunard's "Sea Goddess II," chartered by Australia's Channel 7 television. The 92 crew will attempt to satisfy every whim of their 116 guests.

The Swedish delegation will be less spoilt on their cruiser "Sally Albatros" which will be the home for 1,400 guests and a mere 200 crew.

The crew are enjoying their time here as normally they spend just one day in each port. Musicians and Flamenco dancers are much in demand but due to international regulations, casinos have to remain closed in port.

From France with love

VICHY, France, July 25: French firm Prophyltex, which is based in the suburbs of this central French city, is to help reassure stressed athletes at the Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona — by supplying the various Olympic sites with condoms, a company official said Friday, reports AP.

Prophyltex will install 60 dispensers of the precious equipment, supplying about 85,000 boxes with three items in each, company managing director Gilles Mallet said.

The price will be 200 pesetas (two dollars) per box.

The company won the contract for the Winter Olympic Games in Albertville, France, in February, putting in 20 distributors and supplying 25,000 boxes.

It also has the French Army as a customer.

Floating oases of luxury

BARCELONA, July 25: Just a few minutes' walk south of the Olympic Village, where athletes sweat it out in often cramped apartments, there are floating oases of air-conditioned comfort filled with the guests of Olympic sponsors, reports Reuter.

Coca-Cola, IMB, Kodak and others have chartered 12 of the world's most luxurious cruise ships to serve as floating hotels during the Games, starting Saturday.

Not for them beds that are too short or blinds that fail to block out the morning sun.

As guests arrived on the liners on Friday they were greeted with baskets of fresh fruit, orchids and bottles of chilled champagne in their cabins.

Barcelona's port has taken on a festive, holiday atmosphere with the arrival of the pleasure steamers of the rich which shimmer white under the Mediterranean sun, attracting the envious looks of

Graf, Courier top seeds

BARCELONA, July 25: Jim Courier will play Stefan Edberg in the first round of the Olympics — not in singles, but in doubles, reports AP.

Courier and American teammate Pete Sampras were paired against the veteran Swedish tandem of Edberg and Anders Jarryd in Friday's draw. Both doubles teams are unseeded.

The top-ranked Courier fared better in singles, where his first opponent will be Ramesh Krishnan of India, ranked 200th. Courier could have a quarterfinal match against Spaniard Emilio Sanchez, who is certain to receive boisterous support from the crowd.

Edberg, seeded second, drew a tough opening opponent in 30th-ranked Andrei Chesnokov of the Unified Team.

Sampras, seeded third, could meet countryman Michael Chang, seeded sixth, in their quarterfinals bracket.

The competition on red clay begins Tuesday and concludes Aug 8.

Steffi Graf, a gold medalist in 1988, was seeded No 1 in women's singles and will face Helen Kelesi of Canada in the opening round.

Barcelona Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario was seeded second, just ahead of Americans Jennifer Capriati and Mary Joe Fernandez.

Absent will be three of the world's four top-ranked women—Yugoslav Monica Seles, American Martina Navratilova and Argentinean Gabriela Sabatini. They skipped the Federation Cup last year, making them ineligible for Olympic competition.

Sanchez-Vicario and Conchita Martinez were seeded No 1 in women's doubles, with Americans Gigi Fernandez and Mary Joe Fernandez seeded second. John Fitzgerald and Todd Woodbridge of Australia were seeded No 1 in men's doubles.

The singles draws are comprised of 64 players each in men's and women's play. Each doubles draw is made up of 32 pairs.

Legacy leaves Lewis in the shadows

BARCELONA, July 25 (AP): Carl Lewis surveyed the scene: a hundred or so angry, sweating reporters jammed into an airless, oven-hot room.

They had waited half an hour, yelling and jostling for position as they awaited the American track star who may become a mere footnote in the 1992 Summer Games because he was ill during the US team Olympic trials.

A hundred or so red and blue hand fans flickered in anticipation.

"It looks like a Baptist church in here," Lewis said, seeming cool and calm.

But the questions quickly heated up.

Would he push to join the 400-metre relay even though he failed to qualify? When was he going to retire? Was it fair that Lewis gets the endorsements and attention over younger competitors?

"Let me give you this lecture really quick," Lewis snapped. "I've been in this sport for as long if not longer than anybody else. I've had to endure as much if not more than anybody else. I think I've paid my dues."

He paused, then added: "The attention I get, I guess I think I've earned a lot of it over the years."

A poor showing at last month's Olympic trials in New Orleans may limit Lewis' participation to the long jump at the 1992 Games.

Lewis' illness before the trials was much worse than previously disclosed, the star and his coach, Tom Tellez, revealed Friday.

Tellez said doctors discovered a severe sinus infection after the trials. Speculation

that the 31-year-old Lewis' time is nearly past started anyway, despite a 9.86 world record in the 100 he set in Japan last year.

Few can dispute that Carl Lewis has earned a place in Olympic history from past Games. But he has never seemed to have earned the accompanying respect, at least in America.

His four gold medals in the sprints, relay and long jump during the 1984 Games matched Jesse Owens, who did the same in 1936. But Lewis — sometimes labeled



CARL LEWIS

Tellez suggested that Lewis missed out on the praise because Americans expect him to be another Jesse Owens: humble, unpolished and poor.

Instead Lewis, already considered abrasive by some, became rich, partly due to his popularity in Europe and Japan. A huge picture of Lewis hawking Japanese video products greets new arrivals at Barcelona's airport.

Tellez thinks it is unfair that Lewis is criticised for making money.

"Now other people are making money. It's helped the sport and it's helped a lot of athletes," Tellez said.

Lewis himself seems willing to accept such a legacy.

"How would I like to be remembered? Just for trying to be a leader," he said Friday. "That I helped bring more money into it for everyone. That I helped give the sport a voice. That means things I found important will continue to move forward."

cocky and aloof — failed to match the legend of low-key Owens.

Lendl-Agassi final

TORONTO, July 25: Former number one Ivan Lendl raced to a 6-1, 6-2 win over Wally Masur of Australia here on Friday to qualify for a final clash with Wimbledon champion Andre Agassi, reports AP.

Masur, who beat number one seed Petr Korda in the quarter-finals, was no match for the Czechoslovak turned American.

Agassi worked a little harder in the other semi-final to beat compatriot Mihalv Washington, who took the first set 6-2.