

Now you win, next you don't

BARCELONA, July 29: American swimmer Jon Olsen was an Olympic medal winner for about 10 minutes on Tuesday. He never got his hands on the bronze, reports Reuter.

Olsen, 23, was originally judged third in the 100 metres freestyle behind champion Alexander Popov from the CIS and France's Stephan Caron.

But before the medals were presented, judges changed the top three placings. They had discovered an error with the electronic timing which is set off when the swimmers touch the wall at the end of pool.

Brazilian Gustavo Borges was declared silver medalist, pushing Caron into third and Olsen down to fourth.

The biggest moment of Olsen's life suddenly turned to disaster.

"Nobody told me officially. I overheard it on an official's walkie-talkie," he said.

"It is a hard pill to swallow. To wind a medal and then have it taken away is of course a disappointment. But the judges have to make their decisions."

Organisers had to use the public address system to call 19-year-old Borges out of the nearby warm-up pool to take his place at the medals ceremony.

"I was in the warm-up pool almost crying," Borges said. "When I heard the news I ran all the way to the podium. About five people told me the news on the way. Even a cameraman shouted to me that I had got second."

But Caron said the error should not have allowed to happen at such a major event.

"I think it is terrible that something like this should happen at the Games," the Frenchman said. "It took away the joy from those who were about to receive the medals."

Magic ruled out

BARCELONA, July 29: 'Magic' Johnson will not play in Wednesday night's Olympic basketball game against Germany because of a leg injury, officials said, reports AP.

Johnson strained a muscle in the back of his right knee in the first half of Monday night's game against Croatia. He hopes to be ready for Friday night's game with Brazil, USA Basketball officials said.

Bottled water to cool Barcelona Olympians

BARCELONA, July 29: Sun-battered Olympic athletes appealed for more bottled water to combat dehydration as the heatwave continued at the Barcelona Games on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Most competitors have yet to see a cloud over the Catalan city since their arrival. The temperature has climbed steadily and stood at 34 degrees Celsius at one city centre venue on Tuesday, an official at the National Meteorological Institute said.

Spectators at the claycourt tennis stadium said the court-side thermometer showed 41 degrees in early afternoon.

A French bottled water company said it has already shipped 100 extra cases of water to quench the thirst of the US basketball Dream Team and 75 to the US volleyball team.

Humidity adds to the problem as rooms in the Athletes' Village do not have air conditioning.

Croat tennis player Goran Ivanisevic said it was like living in a sauna in his room and many athletes complain they cannot get to sleep until it cools down in the early hours of the morning.

Pollution is also increasing. From the hillside diving pool, which looks out over the city centre, it is now hard to pick out the famous Sagrada Familia cathedral, only 2.5 kms away, because of the veil of smog.

Temperatures are expected to fall gradually over the next few days.

Sanchez, Capriati win openers

BARCELONA, July 29: Second-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain defeated Irina Spirlea of Romania 6-1, 6-3 Wednesday in her opening tennis match at the Olympics in her native Barcelona, reports AP.

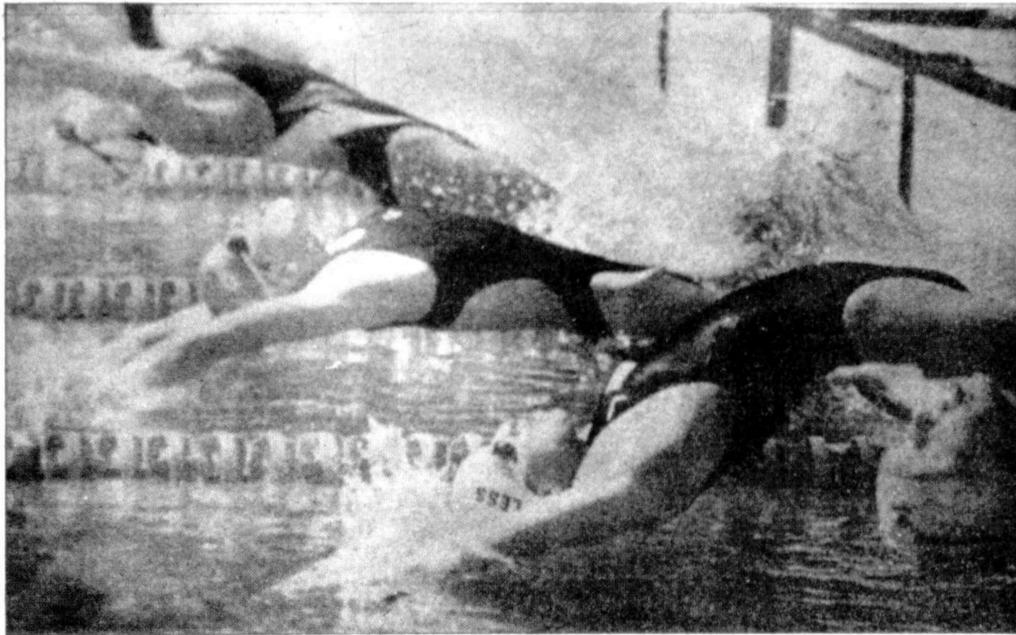
"It was easy. I felt very superior," she said. "I relaxed in the second set and lost a couple of games. It was just a question of concentrating a little more."

In other matches on Barcelona's sun-baked red clay, third-seeded Jennifer Capriati swept South African Elna Retnach, 6-1, 6-0, and No 10 Nathalie Tauziat of France beat Czechoslovakian Radka Zrubakova, 6-3, 6-2.

In men's play, sixth-seeded Michael Chang survived his tough opening draw against Argentine clay-court specialist Alberto Mancini, 6-1, 6-4, 3-6, 6-0. No 10 Thomas Muster of Austria lost to Frenchman Henri Leconte, 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (11-9), 6-4.



OLYMPIC SPECIAL



Start of the women's 100m backstroke heat 6 with from top Japan's Yoko Koikawa, Hungary's Krisztina Egerszegi, US Lea Loveless and Costa Rica's Sylvia Poll Ahrens in Barcelona Tuesday. —AFP photo

Super swimmers set pool afire

Sadovyi's terrific golden treble

BARCELONA, July 29: Evgeni Sadovyi became the first triple gold medallist of the Barcelona Olympics Wednesday, smashing the world record in the men's 400-metre freestyle, report agencies.

Sadovyi, winner of the 200 freestyle and a member of the Unified Team's championship 800-metre freestyle relay, took nearly one and a half seconds off the world mark. He surged in the final 50 metres to edge Kieren Perkins of Australia. 3 minutes, 45.00 seconds to 3:45.16. Perkins' world record was 3:46.47.

The bronze went to Anders Holmertz of Sweden in 3:46.77.

Earlier, American Mike Barrowman broke the Olympic record in the 200-metre breaststroke by more than two seconds to qualify for the final. He finished in 2:11.48, shattering the record of 2:13.34 set by Victor Davis of Canada in 1984. Hungary's Norbert Rozsa was second-fastest in 2:12.95, Nick Gillingham of Britain was third at 2:13.42.

Perkins, Australian pride of distance swimming, set the fastest qualifying time for the men's 400 metres freestyle

but faced a tremendous battle with European champion Evgeni Sadovyi of the CIS in the final. China's Wang Xiaohong and Qian Hong, silver and gold medallists at the 1991 World Championships, threatened to

LATEST: Barrowman betters world mark

BARCELONA, July 29: Mike Barrowman of the United States set a world record of 2:10.16 in capturing the gold in the 200-metre breaststroke Wednesday, reports AP.

Norbert Rozsa of Hungary won the silver in 2:11.23. Nick Gillingham of Britain won the bronze in 2:11.29. In winning the gold, Barrowman broke his own record of 2:10.60, set in 1991.

monopolise the women's 100 metres butterfly, "looking stronger in the heats than big American hope Crissy Ahmann-Leighton.

Janet Evans and Anita Nall sought to ease the painful memory of losing Barcelona Olympic finals embarking positively on their second shots at gold.

Evans, who lost her 400 freestyle title on Tuesday, qualified fastest in her 800 freestyle title defence, while Nall, bronze medallist in the 200 breaststroke, set the second fastest time behind European champion Elena Rudkovskaya of the CIS in the 100

breaststroke heats. Perkins, swimming from the front, won the final 400 freestyle heat in 3:49.24, but Sadovyi was barely slower at 3:49.37, coming through with a late surge to win his heat from perennial strong Swedish

ent in Sunday's 100 breaststroke final when he was hampered by a groin strain said: "The worries are not in the way now. The leg held out... Fingers crossed, I could get gold."

Australian world champion Linley Frame failed to qualify for the women's 100 breaststroke final, trailing in sixth in Nall's heat, over two seconds off the pace.

IWASAKI FAILS Fourteen-year-old Kyoko Iwasaki of Japan, who surprisingly snatched the 200 gold Nall had expected for herself, showed herself less of a force at the 100 distance and also failed to qualify.

Wang (59.34) and Qian (59.37) were not on their own in women's 100 butterfly heats, with Ahmann-Lewis — fastest in the world this year — outswim in the final heat by Qian.

Hayley Lewis matched Evans for most of their 800 freestyle heat but fellow Australian Julie McDonald, Seoul Olympic bronze medallist, was never in the hunt for a place in Thursday's final.

Finals of the women's 800 and men's 1,500 are a day after heats, unlike all other swimming events in which both heats and finals are on the same day.

Americans at the receiving end

BARCELONA, July 29: Malt Biondi and Janet Evans, American stars of the Seoul Games, suffered the unfamiliar agony of defeat on Tuesday when they surrendered two titles in the Barcelona Olympic pool, reports Reuter.

But the United States gained consolation and revenge with a gold medal and a world record in the women's 4x100 metres freestyle relay. It saved their otherwise miserable evening.

Evans took her first beating in six years in the women's 400 metres freestyle. Biondi finished out of the medals in the men's 100 freestyle, overtaken by his rivals and the years in the blue riband event he dominated so long.

Former East German Dagmar Hase demolished Evans, while European champion Alexander Popov of the CIS deserved to inherit Biondi's kingdom with a majestic swim in which he subjugated all other pretenders to the throne.

Jenny Thompson, mortified by her defeat by China's Zhuang Yong in Sunday's 100 metres freestyle, superbly anchored the US quarter to their record.

Nicole Halslett, Dara Torres and Angel Martino and Jenny Thompson triumphed in 3:39.46, beating the 3:40.57 world mark set by an East German quartet at the 1986 World Championship in Madrid.

NEW GOLDEN GIRL Hungary's Krisztina Egerszegi assumed the mantle of golden girl of the Barcelona Games with her second title in three days and an Olympic record in the women's 100 metres backstroke.

Spain noisily celebrated their first Olympic swimming gold, delivered in the men's

200 metres backstroke by their American-born hero Martin Lopez-Zubero and watched by Queen Sofia.

But the drama came in the upsets of Evans and Biondi, who together won eight gold medals in Seoul.

LATEST: Nall loses yet again

BARCELONA, July 29: Elena Roudkovskaya of the Unified Team won the 100-metre breaststroke Wednesday in 1:08.00, edging out America's Anita Nall, who finished in 1:08.17, reports AP.

Samantha Raley of Australia won the bronze in 1:09.25.

Evans, who led from the start, could not withstand the challenge of Hase and was devastated by the experience, however much she tried to put a brave face on it.

The 20-year-old American said she had gone out too fast. Popov won the gold in a

ZUBERO'S LATE BURST

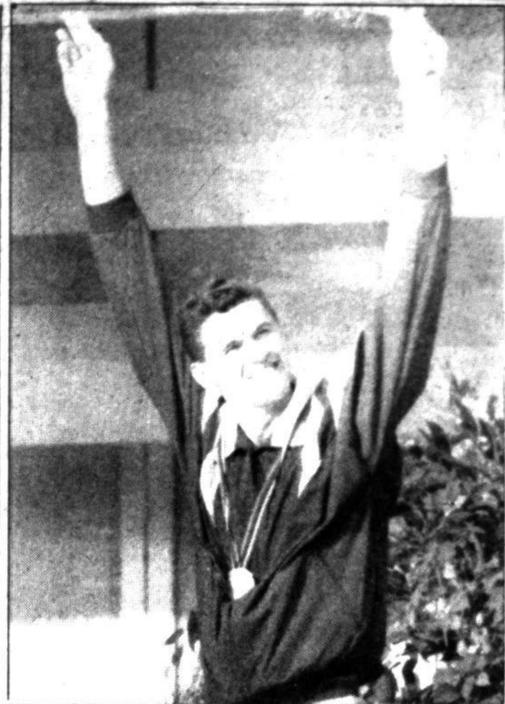
Lopez-Zubero banked everything on his extraordinarily strong second 100 in the 200 backstroke, trailing fifth at the halfway mark before powering past his rivals on the final length.

HUNGARIAN ONE-TWO

Double world champion Egerszegi twice lowered the Olympic record, clocking 1:00.68 in the final in which teammate Tunde Szabo, who finished 0.46 seconds behind, made it a Hungarian one-two.



HUNGARIAN ONE-TWO: Krisztina Egerszegi (R) and Tunde Szabo raise their hands after winning gold and silver respectively in the women's 100m backstroke in Barcelona yesterday. —AFP photo



The Unified Team's Alexandre Popov waves to the crowd on the podium after winning the men's 100m freestyle swimming gold last Tuesday.

Germans reminded of East-West divide

BARCELONA, July 29: East-West tension in the German team has exploded into the open at the Barcelona Games with an emotional attack on officials by new Olympic swimming champion Dagmar Hase, reports Reuter.

Hase, who dethroned US defending champion Janet Evans in the women's 400 metres freestyle on Tuesday, brought the issue bursting into the spotlight minutes after she was presented with her gold medal.

Speaking to German reporters, she attacked what she called the undignified treatment of Astrid Strauss, a fellow former East German left out of the Olympics over doping, and demanded top-level sackings in the German Swimming Association (DSV).

"The people in the association cover themselves in glory that doesn't belong to them," she said. "Heads must roll at the top of the association," she said.

She called specifically for the dismissal of the DSV's doping control officer, Harm Beyer.

Hase, 22, later appeared on German ZDF television and, in tears, accused a German swimming coach of butting up to swimmers from former West Germany at the expense of those from the East.

"He crawls up some of their arses," she said.

Germany has sent its first united team to a Summer Olympics in 28 years following the collapse in 1989 of the Berlin Wall and German unification.

But the build up to the Games was dogged by doping

scandals and east west tensions.

Several trainers and officials from the former east have accused the west of picking on their stars after admissions that communist east Germany used doping to fuel its medal winning machine.

German Olympic delegation chief Ulrich Feldhoff played down Hase's outburst.

He said he would speak to Hase and DSV officials later today. "Then we'll see what happens," Feldhoff said.

Strauss, a former world champion swimmer and Olympic silver medallist at the 1988 Seoul Games, has dragged swimming officials through the civil German courts in a bitter attempt to force her selection for Barcelona.

She was allowed to enter the German national championships in Munich despite the ban after testing positive for steroids. She was booed and jeered by spectators.

"Astrid was treated like an animal in Munich," Hase said. She dedicated her victory to Strauss, her trainer and clubmates in Magdeburg, Eastern Germany.

The Strauss case is one of a string of doping scandals involving athletes from former East Germany.

Double world athletics sprint champion Katrin Krabbe was originally banned for four years in February with fellow East Germans Grit Breuer and Silke Moeller after they were alleged to have doctored urine samples.

The ban was lifted last month because of a legal technicality but Krabbe pulled out of the Games, citing the pressure of the scandal.

A star is born

BONN, July 29: Fourteen-year-old German swimmer Franziska van Almsick, who won three Olympic medals this week, has been bombarded with lucrative offers of a career as a photo-model, German newspapers reported today, reports Reuter.

Van Almsick is being feted as Germany's latest sports star after she won a silver medal in the 200 metres freestyle and bronzes in the 100 metres freestyle and the 4x100 metre freestyle relay in Barcelona.

"She won't get rich from swimming but she will as a photo-model," Parks Britton, who represents tennis star Steffi Graf and other top athletes, told Bild newspaper.

Van Almsick's father Bernd said Hamburg-based Master Media Sport had been chosen to act as the young swimmer's agent.

"My telephone answering machine is full. Many people want to congratulate her, many are offering us contracts," he told Express newspaper.

"I am certain that Franziska van Almsick can earn a six-figure sum every year until the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta," Werner Koester of Master Media Sport told the newspaper.

"She is made for advertising healthy food, cosmetics and fashion," one advertising agent told Bild.

CIS cagers win

BARCELONA, July 29: Sergei Bazarevich contributed 18 points and six assists Wednesday as the Unified Team downed China 100-84, remaining unbeaten in men's Olympic basketball, reports AP.

French boxers progress

BARCELONA, July 29: Two French fighters advanced Wednesday to second round fights in the Olympic boxing competition, reports AP.

Patrice Aoussi stopped Manuel Rios of Mexico in the third round of an 81 kilogram (178 pound) fight, while Djamel Lifa took a 20-12 decision over Charlie Balena of the Philippines at 57 kilogram (125 pound).

Aoussi scored early and often against Rios, opening up a 10-2 lead after the first round.

In the second round, he forced the Mexican to take a standing eight count late in the round after landing a right hand to the head. He forced him to take another eight count midway through the final round with another right and another combination prompted the referee to stop the fight with 1:43 left.

Lifa led from the opening round and moved into a second round fight against Hocine Solmani of Algeria.

Germany's Andreas Tews upset 57 kilogram (125 pound) world champion Kirkor Kirkorov of Bulgaria Wednesday to advance past the first round of the Olympic boxing competition.

Tews, an Olympic silver medalist at 51 kilograms (112 pounds) in 1988, opened a quick lead over Kirkorov and never trailed in the three-round fight.

The win gave the German team eight victories in nine Olympic fights.

In another 57 kilogram bout, Steven Chungu of Zambia used some big punches to stop Ireland's Paul Griffin in the second round.

Chungu knocked Griffin down twice and ringside doctors stopped the bout, prompting the Irish boxer to kick his mouthpiece angrily into the arena balcony.

Olympic boxing: So far so good

BARCELONA, July 29: Nobody has rioted. Nobody has staged a sit-in. Nobody has even missed a bus.

So far, the only thing going on at the Olympic boxing competition has been boxing, reports AP.

The controversy that dogged the Seoul Olympics almost from day one seems another world away through the opening sessions of a remarkably trouble-free competition.

And amateur boxing officials in the Games after South Korea, are praying it stays that way.

"We're all aware that if there is another Roy Jones-like incident here, amateur boxing is in a very, very serious situation," said Jerry Dusenberry, vice President of USA Boxing.

The turmoil in Seoul began when American boxer Anthony Hembrick was disqualified after missing a bus and culminated on the final day in the blatant gold medal robbery of Roy Jones Jr.

In between, Korean team officials rioted after one decision, a losing Korean boxer staged a nearly hour-long sit-in, and American Todd Foster had to beat one opponent twice in one night after confusion over the sounding of a bell to end the round.

Things were so bad that IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch threatened after the Games to ban boxing from future Olympics.

International amateur boxing officials took the threat seriously enough that they implemented a computer scoring system designed to prevent collusion among judges by making them accountable for the scoring of each punch thrown.

Judges at ringside punch buttons when they think a punch has landed, and a computer programme keeps track of how each judge views each punch in relation to other judges.

"This forces you to document what you see," Dusenberry said.

Through the first 100 fights of these Olympics, at least, it appears to be working.

Although the scores recorded by the computer system seem to be on the low side, only a few of the decisions awarded so far have appeared questionable.

"After the incidents in Seoul, our judges have been instructed to only score clean blows," said Karl-Heinz Wehr, a German who is general secretary of the International Amateur Boxing Federation. "What we want to see is technical, correct boxing."

posted after each round, making protests difficult. Three of the five judges must push a button within one second of each other for a scoring blow to count.

The closest thing to a controversy through four days of boxing came Wednesday when an Iranian light heavyweight was disqualified after showing up in the ring late and without gloves on.

All Kazemi frantically motioned his coach to bring the gloves, but when he was not ready within the three-minute time limit, he was declared the loser to Pakistan's Asghar Muhammad.

The only official protest filed so far came from Tunisia over a Tuesday night fight in which middleweight Lotfi Missouli lost 6-4 to Gilberto Brown of the Virgin Islands. The protest was rejected by AIBA officials.

"So far, very good," said Wehr.

Also helping is some weeding out of judges. Conspicuous by their absence at this competition are the judges from Uganda, Uruguay and Morocco who voted against Jones in his 1988 gold medal 71-kilogram bout with South Korea's Park Si-Hun.

Olympic boxing, at least for now, is on its best behaviour. "We can't afford any repeats of Seoul," Dusenberry said.