

OLYMPIC SPECIAL



Banned Britons won't be let in

BARCELONA, Aug 1: Two British weightlifters suspended from the Olympics after failing drug tests will not be allowed to return to competition in Barcelona, the British Olympic Association said Saturday, reports AP.

BOA spokeswoman Caroline Searle told the British Broadcasting Corporation the International Olympic Committee executive board had decided not to reinstate the two athletes.

The athletes, Andrew Saxton and Andrew Davies, were sent home Wednesday after testing positive in random tests carried out in Britain before the Games.

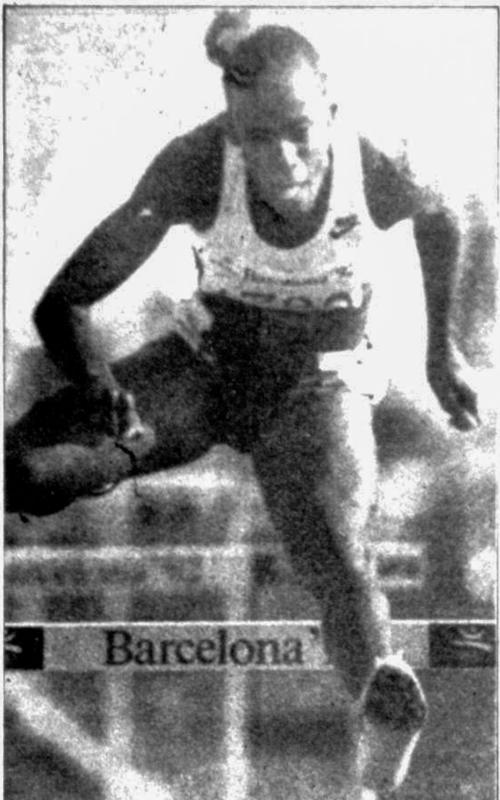
Searle had said the argument centered on whether Clenbuterol, the stimulant and anabolic agent taken by the two, is on the IOC's banned list.

"The basic confusion lies with the classification of the drug Clenbuterol in out-of-competition testing," she said. "There have been questions raised as to the classification of the drug. We are attempting to make sure the athletes were disqualified properly under the rules. We thought that was the case on Wednesday and still is the case unless these questions are resolved."

Michele Verdier, spokeswoman for the International Olympic Committee, said there should be no doubts.

"I can confirm Clenbuterol is a substance on the list of prohibited substances of the IOC," she said Saturday. "That's absolutely sure, absolutely confirmed. It is for the IOC medical commission a prohibited product."

Saxton failed a random test on July 10 while Davies tested positive on July 11.



Jackie Joyner-Kersey of the USA on way to winning heat 1 of the women's 100m hurdles heptathlon event in Barcelona yesterday. — AFP photo

Braun breathing down Joyner-Kersey's neck

BARCELONA, Aug 1: American Jackie Joyner-Kersey held first place by a narrow margin Saturday as she began the defence of her Olympic heptathlon title, reports AP.

Joyner-Kersey led 2,266 to 2,245 over Germany's Sabrina Braun after Braun defeated her in the high jump by clearing 1.95 metres (6 feet, 4 inches). Earlier, she won the hurdles portion of the competition.

Irina Bulova of the Unified Team was in third with 2,167. Later, Braun, Joyner-Kersey and 28 others were to compete in the shot put and 200-metre dash, with the long jump, javelin and 800 meters to be contested Sunday.

In the high jump, Joyner-Kersey cleared all previous heights, including 1.91 metres (6-3), before missing badly on all three attempts at the winning height.

After missing twice, Braun sailed over the bar with several centimetres to spare.

She was unable to take the lead, however, when she missed all three attempts at 1.97 metres (6-5).

Joyner-Kersey's 12.85 in the 100-metre hurdles was the best time of the day, just ahead of Romania's Liliana Nastase. Joyner-Kersey received 1,147 points in the hurdles, while Nastase earned 1,146 for the first event of the competition. The world record holder

showed no effects of the hamstring injury that ended her title hopes at the Tokyo World Championships last season and has slowed her so far this year. She was aiming for a personal best in the hurdles — her fastest time is 12.61 — but said she was satisfied with her performance.

"In the middle, I started going high instead of keeping it low, but I'll take it," Joyner-Kersey said. "I thought I could go 12.60 if I got out, but I'll take it."

SOTOMAYOR IN FINAL
Cuba's Javier Sotomayor, the only high jumper to jump 2.45 metres (8 feet), was among 14 men to clear at least 2.26 metres (7.5 feet) and reach the final on Friday.

Among those joining him were 1988 Olympic silver medalist Hollis Conway and 1991 world champion Charles Austin, both of the United States.

FAILURES

Former world record-holder Igor Paklin of the Unified Team and 1984 Olympic champion Dietmar Moegenburg of Germany failed to qualify.

There also were two surprise failures in the women's 800, as three-time world indoor champion Christine Wachtel of Germany and 1990 US champion Meredith Rainey did not get through the first round.



Sabine Braun of Germany celebrates after clearing the bar at 1.94 metres to win the high jump event of the Olympic heptathlon competition on August 1 in Barcelona. Braun was second in the overall standings, behind Joyner-Kersey Saturday.

Greek grabs gold amidst acrimony

BARCELONA, Aug 1: Pyrrros Dimas of Greece won the lightweight (82.5 kg) weightlifting gold medal on Friday in one of the closest finishes in the sport's Olympic history, reports Reuters.

Dimas, Krzysztof Siemion of Poland and Ibragim Samadov of the CIS were tied on 370 kg each at the close of the clean and jerk contest.

Samadov, 50 grammes heavier than either of his opponents, had to settle for the bronze but the other two lifters had identical body-weights of 81.8 kg.

Dimas won because he achieved his total earlier in the competition, with his first clean and jerk, while Siemion needed two tries to lift the bar.

The contest was dogged by controversy, culminating when Russia's Samadov stalked off the rostrum after receiving his medal, without waiting for the Greek national anthem to be played.

He was jeered from the stage.

Earlier, a furious row broke out in the CIS team when chief trainer Vasily Alexeyev pulled top lifter Altyrmyrat Oradurdyev of Turkmenistan out of the team.

Oradurdyev said that Alexeyev, a Russian, told him he would "get in the way" of Samadov and withdrew him just 15 minutes before the start.

Oradurdyev's trainer called Alexeyev a "bandit" and blamed "former Soviet Mafia" for the treatment of his man.

Oradurdyev's qualifying total of 375 kg for the Olympics would have given him the gold medal if repeated here.

All three of the tied lifters had the chance to break the deadlock but failed with their final lifts.

Pressure is the key

BARCELONA, Aug 1: The moment was arrived. In the next few seconds the years of sacrifice, sweat and tears will bring Olympic glory or oblivion, reports Reuters.

Ask the stars in Barcelona what the Olympics mean to them and their replies centre around the word "pressure". Their reaction to winning a gold medal is often sheer relief, not joy.

Summer Sanders was written up before the Games as the woman to watch in the pool. One silver and a bronze early on was a fine effort but Sanders felt she had somehow let people down.

In the build-up to her last chance of gold in the 200 metres butterfly, it all began to fall apart for the young American.

"The pressure started to hit me and it was all getting a little too much," Sanders said after winning the 200 butterfly gold.

"Silver and bronze wasn't good enough for some people. I only swim for myself but you can only ignore the pressure for so long. I'm only a human being."

"My roommate said you can cry tonight but you can't cry tomorrow morning as the race isn't done. I told myself I just had to get through with it and get the whole thing over with. It's just a relief it's all over, it's one of the hardest things you can go through."

Kieren Perkins would agree with that. For a year before the Olympics he was seen as Australia's best medal hope. Holder of three world records, the 18-year-old was hounded by journalists and photographers from the moment he arrived in Barcelona.

"A lot of times I felt like going to hide in a corner," he said after breaking the 1,500 metre world record and winning the gold medal.

"In years to come I'll be able to look back on this but at the moment I'm just spun out."

"I'm very relieved, that's my biggest emotion. If I hadn't got a gold medal, I didn't want to go home."

Athletes can forgive pressure from their proud families but many find it hard to accept the attitude of the press. They accuse journalists of "stroking" them: when times are good but attacking them when they achieve anything but their best.

"The most pressure comes from the medal, it cats away at you," Sanders said. "I almost doubted myself that people still believed in me after I didn't win the gold. I sure went through a lot but no one realises how much pressure there is out there. I decided the will and desire to win comes from within. We all make it too complex for ourselves."

Ex-dopers dominate men's shot put

BARCELONA, Aug 1: Former doping offenders dominated the opening day of the Olympic athletics programme on Friday with all three men's shot put medals won by athletes who have served drug suspensions, reports agencies.

The day also marked the return of sport's most famous cheat, Ben Johnson, and a hugely popular triumph for Barcelona-born walker Daniel Plaza who won Spain's first Olympic athletics gold.

There was a huge irony in the shot put medals sweep by Americans Mike Stulce and James Doehring and Russian Vyacheslav Lykho.

Earlier, the crowd had given a huge cheer to Johnson, back on the Olympic scene he left in disgrace four years ago in Seoul when he was stripped of his 100 metres gold medal after a positive test for anabolic steroids.

Stulce, who recently came back after a two-year suspension, dominated the competition with four throws over 21 metres, the longest — his fifth effort — of 21.70 metres.

He said he did not think his ban would devalue the gold. "I've talked to several people who think I should be banned for life but I have the proof I'm innocent," he said.

Doehring, who had a two-year ban imposed for taking testosterone lifted after 18 months earlier this year, was second with 20.96, just two cms ahead of Lykho.

The Americans are currently on five years probation after being convicted in a San Diego court of illegal drug possession with intent to distribute.

Lykho won the European bronze medal in Split two years ago but had it taken away after he tested positive for stimulants. He served a three-month ban.

Shot putting has been plagued with doping cases in recent years. Norwegian Geirge Andersen lost the silver medal he won at the World Championships in Tokyo last year after a positive dope test.

World champion Werner Gunthor of Switzerland, the overwhelming favourite entering the Olympics, finished fourth in the shot put.

The gold-silver finish for Stulce and Doehring matched the 1-2 finish of Americans Randy Matson and George Woods at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics.

PROMINENT FAILURES
Several prominent champions failed to make the grade on the opening day. The 1984 Olympic men's high jump champion Dietmar Moegenburg of Germany failed to reach the final, as did former world record holder Igor Paklin of the CIS.

Chinese women's javelin world champion Xu Demei also flopped in the qualifiers.

In the women's 3,000 metres, Zola Pieterse finished 25th overall out of 34 competitors. Her return to the Olympics lasted just a little over nine minutes.

Pieterse finished in 9 minutes, 07.10 seconds. In 1984, she collided with Mary Slaney in the 3,000 metres, sending the American sprawling to the track.

Inna Yevseyeva of the Unified Team was the top qualifier in the women's 800 in 1:58.58. Also qualifying was Sigrun Grau of Germany, who as East German Sigrun Wodars won the Olympic 800 in Seoul. The silver medalist in that race, Christine Wachtel of Germany, failed to qualify Friday morning.

Second Swedish casualty

BARCELONA, Aug 1: Mickael Appelgren and Jan-Vove Waldner on Friday became Sweden's second major Olympic table tennis casualties in two days, reports AFP.

They were beaten in the men's doubles by Ilijic Lupulescu and Slobodan Gruljic, who have refused themselves to become casualties of the Civil War in their Yugoslav homeland.

Appelgren, a former world dubs champion, and current partner Waldner, a former world singles champion, missed three match points before being knocked out.

The Serbs, playing under the banner of independent Olympic participants, have only been playing together for just one season since the outbreak of the Civil War.

Lupulescu, who won the silver medal with Croatian Zoran Primorc in Seoul, and Gruljic, from Vojvodina province, beat the fifth seeded Swedes 10-12, 21-18, 22-20 in the first round tie.

"I am surprised," admitted coach Milvoj Karakasevic. "My players were very bad in the first game. Then we were lucky that the Swedes made some mistakes when we were 10-13 down in the second."

"But we played better in the third, and although we were lucky again at 17-20 it could easily have been 19-16 to us. I am very happy because only one more win will give us a medal."

The finish came on the Seres' first match when the left handed Lupulescu produced an accurately top return of serve, setting up the chance for Gruljic to fiercely loop the ball between the Swedes.

On Thursday, Jorgen Persson and Erik Lindh, the top seeds for the title, led by game and 17-11 and similarly lost their way against South Korean Kang Hee-Chan and Kim Chul-Seung.

Germans reap rich

BANYOLES, Spain, Aug 1: Thomas Lange won his second consecutive gold in the men's single sculls as Germany collected six medals in Olympic rowing Saturday, reports AP.

Lange was one of two Germans to win gold in the seven events on Lake Banyoles. Canada also won two golds. The United States won a silver and a bronze.

Lange, a 28-year-old medical student, is a three-time world champion in the single sculls and a two-time world champion in the double sculls as well as the 1988 Olympic single sculls champion. His time was 6 minutes, 51.40 seconds.

Vaclav Chalupa of Czechoslovakia won the silver in 6:52.93, and Kajetan Broniewski of Poland the bronze in 6:56.82.

The Canadian team of Kirsten Barnes, Brenda Taylor, Jessica Monroe and Kay Worthington won the gold in the women's coxless fours in 6:30.85. All but Worthington were members of the world championship team last year.

The United States won the silver with the team of Shelagh Donohoe, Cindy Eckert, Amy Fuller and Carol Feeney. The US time was 6:31.88. Germany won the bronze.

Marnie Elizabeth McBean and Kathleen Heddie of Canada won the gold in the women's coxless pairs in 7 minutes, 6.22 seconds.

Pierson took the bronze medal at 7:08.11. The silver medal went to the German pair of Stefanie Werrmeier and Ingeburg Scherzmann.

Kerstin Koeppen and Kathrin Boron of Germany won the gold in the women's double sculls in 6:49.00. Romania won the silver and China the bronze.

Steven Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent of Britain won the gold in men's coxless pairs Olympic rowing in 6:27.72. Germany won the silver and Slovenia the bronze. Redgrave was part of the gold medal winning pairs four years ago.

In men's double sculls, Stephen Hawkins and Peter Antonie of Australia took the gold in 6:17.32. Austria won the silver and the Netherlands the bronze.

Romania won the gold in the men's four with coxswain in a time of 5:59.37. Germany won the silver and Poland the bronze.

World champion Elisabeth Micheler of Germany won the Olympic gold medal Saturday in women's singles kayak slalom with a time of 1:26.41 minutes. Danielle Woodward of Australia won the silver in 1:28.27, and Dana Chladek of the United States won the bronze in 1:31.75.

Lukas Pollert of Czechoslovakia won the gold medal in slalom single canoe Saturday with a score of 113.69 points.

Gareth Marriot of Britain won the silver with 116.48. The bronze went to Avril Jacky of France with 117.18.

Scherbo leads CIS 1-2-3

BARCELONA, Aug 1: Vitaly Scherbo of Belarus won the men's Olympic all-around gymnastics gold here on Friday night, as the all-star Unified Team again swept the medal board, reports AFP.

Scherbo earned his second gold of the Games from a thrilling duel with reigning all-around world champion Grigori Misutin of the Ukraine.

Early pacesetter Valeri Belenki of Azerbaijan finished with the bronze after fluffing his vault landing.

The trio embraced each other as they left the medal podium, and Scherbo was too moved afterwards to be able to explain his victory by 0.10-of a point.

"I'm happy," he said. "I don't know why, but when I compete I think beforehand that it's very hard. But afterwards, it all seems so simple."

With the top prize in men's gymnastics in his back pocket, the 20-year-old from Minsk is already considering a future abroad and lucrative sponsorship.

Union except that you have a greater number of them. At future events if the Ukraine or Azerbaijan or Russia win, I will still consider it as the whole of the Soviet Union that has won the day and not an individual republic.

"What's a pity is that we won't be training together."

As Misutin was keen to stress, the squad is used to competing against itself once the team competitions are over.

"We have always been vying with each other, although there's always been a warmth between us. There is a battle among us, but it's a friendly battle."

The stage for the interneine warfare had been set had narrowed among themselves to just 0.025.

Belenki deserved his narrow lead but immediately wrecked his gold medal chances on the vault. Scherbo's breakthrough came on the floor. The routine which had earned him the European floor crown just two months ago in France edged him into a slender lead with two apparatus to go.

Trailing by only 0.10 Misutin finished with the only apparatus on which he is the reigning world champion — the high bar. And he performed a stunner, drawing the first 9.90 of the night.

But only minutes later, Scherbo hit back with the second of the night on the rings to seal his gold.

right from the very first apparatus, with only 0.05 of a point and the badges on their chests between them. Belenki and Misutin had opted for their flags, while Scherbo stuck with the familiar Soviet hammer and sickle.

By the end of the second rotation, the die was well and truly cast. The gap between the former Soviets and the rest had widened to 0.225 but



VITALY SCHERBO... all-round champion

One-man team

BARCELONA, Aug 1: Frank Lescas was thrilled about his far-fetched journey from Philadelphia to Albania as the country's entire Olympic swimming team. Until he saw the practice pool, reports AP.

There was no water in it. "People sometimes don't have running water in the house," he said. "How can I expect them to put gallons and gallons of water in a 50-metre (164 foot) pool?"

Lescas, a sprint swimmer from the United States who never had been in Albania, will be a 21-year-old in his last year at La Salle University in September. He isn't good enough to make the US Olympic team.

He first thought about swimming for Albania last February after hearing on television, that Americans of Italian descent made up most of that country's Olympic ice hockey team at the Winter Games in Albertville, France.

"I said, 'Ma, why can't we do this?'" Lescas said. "All of my grandparents were born in Albania."

He sent a letter to the Albanian swimming federation. His mother sent faxes to the country's premier. The answer came back.

Yes. A weightlifter in 1972 was the only Albanian ever to compete in the Olympics. This year, the mysterious East European country has eight Olympic athletes.

Lescas continued his swim training at home, then arrived in Albania on July 10 in preparation for his trip to Barcelona. He was told there were two 50-metre (164 foot) pools, a 25-metre (82 foot) pool and a 15-metre (49 foot) diving well to practice in.

Czech triumph

SEU DURGELL, Spain, Aug 1: Lukas Pollert of Czechoslovakia picked the perfect moment to win his first major creaking competition when he clobbered the C1 Olympic gold today, reports AFP.

THE MULTIPLE MEDALISTS

Following is a list of multiple medalists at the XXV Olympic Games in Barcelona as of July 31:

MEN

- Four : Alexandre Popov, Unified Team, swimming; 2 gold, 2 silver.
Three : Evgueni Sadovyi, Unified team, swimming; 3 gold.
Jon Olsen, US, swimming; 2 gold, 1 bronze.
Anders Holmertz, Sweden, swimming 2 silver, 1 bronze.
Two : Matthew Ryan, Australia, equestrian; 2 gold.
Arkadiusz Skrzypaszek, Poland, modern pentathlon; 2 gold.
Vitali Scherbo, Unified Team, gymnastics; 2 gold.
Nelson Diebel, US, swimming; 2 gold.
Pablo Morales, US, swimming; 2 gold.
Tamas Darnyi, Hungary, swimming; 2 gold.
Wang Yifu, China, shooting; 1 gold, 1 silver.
Kieren Perkins, Australia, swimming; 1 gold, 1 silver.
Matt Blonid, US, swimming; 1 gold, 1 silver.
Jeff Rouse, US, swimming; 1 gold, 1 silver.
Grigori Misutin, Unified Team, gymnastics; 1 gold, 1 silver.
Jens Lehmann, Germany, cycling; 1 gold, 1 silver.
Joseph Hudspohl, US, swimming; 1 gold, 1 bronze.
Valeri Belenki, Unified Team, gymnastics; 1 gold, 1 bronze.
Mel Stewart, US, swimming; 1 gold, 1 bronze.
Mark Tewksbury, Canada, swimming; 1 gold, 1 bronze.
Tom Jager, US, swimming; 1 gold, 1 bronze.
Norbert Rozsa, Hungary, swimming; 2 silver.
Narbert Khnykine, Unified Team, swimming; 2 silver.
Vladimir Selkov, Unified Team, swimming; 2 silver.
Herbert Blocker, Germany, equestrian; 1 silver, 1 bronze.
Robert Tait, New Zealand, equestrian; 1 silver, 1 bronze.
Edouard Zenovka, Unified Team, modern pentathlon; 1 silver, 1 bronze.

WOMEN

- Four : Franziska Van Almsick, Germany, swimming; 2 silver, 2 bronze.
Three : Krisztina Egerszegi, Hungary, swimming; 3 gold.
Jenny Thompson, US, swimming; 2 gold, 1 silver.
Lin Li, China, swimming; 1 gold, 2 silver.
Dagmar Hase, Germany, swimming; 1 gold, 2 silver.
Zhuang Yong, China, swimming; 1 gold, 21 silver.
Antia Nall, US, swimming; 1 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze.
Summer Sanders, US, swimming; 1 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze.
Daniela Hunger, Germany, swimming; 1 silver, 2 bronze.
Two : Tatiana Goutsou, Unified Team, gymnastics; 2 gold.
Nicole Haislett, US, swimming; 2 gold.
Christine Ahmann-Leighton, US, swimming; 1 gold, 1 silver.
Janet Evans, US, swimming; 1 gold, 1 silver.
Kathryn Watt, Australia, cycling; 1 gold, 1 silver.
Lea Lovelace, US, swimming; 1 gold, 1 bronze.
Angel Martino, US, swimming; 1 gold, 1 bronze.
Elena Roudkovskaia, Unified Team, swimming; 1 silver, 1 bronze.
Hayley Lewis, Australia, swimming; 1 silver, 1 bronze.
Shannon Miller, US, gymnastics; 1 silver, 1 bronze.
Lavinia Corina Milosovic, Romania, gymnastics; 1 silver, 1 bronze.