

OLYMPIC SPECIAL



BARCELONA BRIDES

Don't make noise

BARCELONA, Aug 2, (Reuter): The mayor of Barcelona's Olympic Village on Saturday called on athletes not to make a noise at night and to respect the right of others to peace and quiet.

Councillor Joaquim Nadal, who assumed the post of Village mayor on Friday, issued the edict after receiving complaints from some athletes.

He asked all 15,000 residents of the Village to treat the Village "as if it were your home" and to treat neighbours "as if they were your family."

Graceful host

BARCELONA is bearing up well under the strain of hosting the biggest sporting show on earth.

More than 120,000 people have poured into the city but the metro is still working, hotels are packed and booming, petty crime is down and mayor Pasqual Maragall is still smiling.

"Things are going very, very well," he said on Saturday, half-way into the 16-day Games. "The city is coping well."

More people than ever before were taking the metro, crime fell 33 per cent in the past two weeks compared to the same two weeks last year and political squabbles between nationalist Catalans and pro-centre Spaniards had faded away, he said.

"Socially and politically we've never had a moment of grace like this," he said.

Hell on the hill

A MERICAN marathon runner Janis Klecker survived "hell on the hill" with a few prayers from her friends yesterday.

The 32-year-old dentist, a devout Christian, had asked friends from the United States to pray hard when she hit the stamina-sapping Montjuic Hill to the Olympic Stadium.

"Where she is weak God is strong. That's what she's relying on," said Susie Lueck, who stood in sweltering humidity halfway up the tree-lined final four-km climb.

She and her sister Diane Waveda sign that read "run for him" as Klecker totted past them in the gloom. Several other friends were dotted along the route.

"She asked us to pray especially hard around 8.30 because that's when she knew she'd hit the hill," said Susie.

Klecker, from Minnesota, finished 22nd in two hours 47 minutes 17 seconds, nearly 15 minutes behind the winner, Valentina Yegorova of Russia.

It was pitch dark when Bakombo Kungu of Zaïre, followed up the hill by an ambulance, limped slowly home in 38th and last place almost an hour after Yegorova.

Nine women abandoned the race.

Lost identity

UP TO 100 Olympic identity cards are being lost every day at the Barcelona Games, officials said — posing a possible security threat from intruders who could slip into guarded venues.

The plasticised cards, carrying a photograph and a special computerised barcode, have to be worn everywhere by athletes, officials and journalists. About 120,000 have been issued to everyone from Spain's King Juan Carlos to office cleaners.

Security given a slip

OLYMPIC security is stringent, but 50 people were able to sneak into Montjuic Stadium without tickets to watch the first day of the athletics, witnesses said.

"We were in a crowd and we just followed," one gate-crasher said on Sunday. "All of a sudden we were inside."

An Australian television cameraman got in to cover the final day of Olympic swimming despite having no official accreditation — a large plastic card, with photograph and hologram, worn around the neck by athletes, officials and journalists.

Organising committee officials said security was being tightened and maintained that only 15 people at the most got into the stadium without tickets or accreditation.

Access to the venues is monitored by volunteer staff.

Unified Team with cracks all over

BARCELONA, Aug 2: In the huge 500 strong CIS squad, only one comes from the Muslim central Asian state of Turkmenistan — young weightlifter Altymurat Orazdurdyev, reports Reuter.

The CIS champion, he wanted to do his countrymen proud but was never even given the chance.

Favourite for Friday night's light-heavyweight final, he was pulled out of the contest by CIS trainer Vasily Alexeyev 15 minutes before the start in order not to get in the way of Russian teammate Ibragim Samadov, who won the bronze.

He pleaded in vain with the trainer, even promising to let Samadov beat him. "I said I'd lose, that second place was good enough for me. I trained a year for this," said the 23-year-old student, whose Olympic qualifying lifts would have won him the gold medal.

"He would have been the joy not only of our country, of Turkmenistan, but of all the spectators in the hall," personal coach Bruno Abramyan said.

"Wherever he performs, he delights audiences. He lifts so beautifully and with such ease that he always gets standing ovations."

Turkmenistan produces few top level sportsmen and his case exposed cracks in the supposed oneness of the United Team, a marriage of convenience between 12 former Soviet republics which are competing together for one last time before breaking up into separate national teams.

"Thank god we're breaking away," said Abramyan, who blamed the shambles on former Soviet mafia in the CIS sports hierarchy.

Samadov eventually took the bronze — and ignited a second controversy when he stepped down from the rostrum and walked off, leaving the medal behind him.

IOC officials are deciding whether to strip him of the medal and expel him from the Games.

CIS's Yegorova wins women's marathon

BARCELONA, Aug 2: Shoulder-to-shoulder, they duelled all the way up Montjuic hill, the winding, grueling finish to the women's marathon, reports AP.

Valentina Yegorova, a Russian, would pull a few feet ahead and Japan's Yuko Arimori would stay right with her.

Finally, just outside the gates of the Olympic Stadium, with the tunnel only yards away, the crowds inside cheering, Yegorova took off and Arimori couldn't keep pace.

"I did all I could to stay side by side with her," Arimori said. "I did not have the energy."

Yegorova, a 28-year-old mother of one running for the Unified Team, crossed the finish line in 2 hours, 32 minutes, 41 seconds — eight seconds ahead of Arimori. They collapsed into each other's

arms, then grabbed hands and saluted the crowd.

Lorraine Moller of New Zealand took the bronze in 2:33.59.

The high humidity, heat and a final three miles that rose 66 yards was predicted to be the undoing of many a marathoner. But all three of the medalists said the hill wasn't a problem.

Quite the opposite. "It was fairly easy," Yegorova said. "The weather was good. The course has turned out to be my favourite course, I think."

Moller, 37, found the hill to her liking as well. "It was just a matter of keeping going," she said. "I think the anticipation of it was worse than it actually was. By the time the hill was coming you knew you didn't have very far to go."

When the racers reached the center of Barcelona, Yegorova seemed to have the race well in hand, having pulled away from the pack just past the halfway point. As the competitors started to string out, the 25-year-old Arimori passed Yegorova's teammate, Madina Biktagirova, but Yegorova was out of sight.

Just after passing one of Barcelona's most famous landmarks, the statue of Christopher Columbus, Arimori got close to the leaders. Yegorova glanced over her shoulder several times, knowing she would have a challenger for the final stretch of the race. "I was always afraid someone might be catching me," Yegorova said. "I saw her coming and tried to put everything into it to try not to lose my placing."

Yegorova was second at the 1991 World Championships in Tokyo and finished fourth in the Los Angeles Marathon in March. She has a 5-year-old son.

Biktagirowa wound up fourth, followed by Japan's Sachiko Yamashita and Germany's Katrin Doerre. American Cathy O'Brien of Durham, NH, finished 11th in 2:39:42. Francie Larrieu-Smith of Dallas, a 39-year-old competing in her fourth Olympics, was 13th in 2:42:09.

"I'm happy with my place," O'Brien said. "In this kind of heat, the times are not important."

The heat took its toll on the field, with only 24 of the 47 starters finishing. Hungary's Karolina Szabo collapsed just after crossing the finish line, and was taken away on a stretcher. Portugal's Aurora Cunha, who didn't finish the race, was hospitalised with breathing problems.

Australia's Lisa Ondieki, a pre-race favourite, failed to finish, dropping out after 16 miles with leg problems and stomach cramps.

Ben will be back

BARCELONA, Aug 2: Ben Johnson's return to the Olympic 100 metres ended disastrously yesterday when he stumbled in his semifinal and trailed in last, reports Reuter.

The sprinter who once started like a bullet from a gun stuttered out of the blocks, lost his balance and never recovered to finish in 10.70 seconds. American Leroy Burrell won in 9.97.

It was an ignominious exit for the most famous drugs cheat in Olympic history. But the Canadian who went from "hero to zero" at the Seoul Games pledged: "I'll be back."

Reliving his nightmare race, Johnson said: "I felt alright. I just came out slow from the blocks. I lost my power."

"Well, I'll just come out next year, get it together next year."

I didn't want to prove anything. I'm just happy to be here competing in the Games. I did my best. What can I say?" In three brief appearances in Barcelona, Johnson has proved a real crowd pleaser and will run for Canada in the men's 4x100 relay.

Crowds gave him the biggest cheer of the day when he returned to the Olympic arena on Friday. A banner reading "Corre Ben" (Run Ben) hung from the Olympic stadium terraces in welcome.

Johnson, 30, shamed the Seoul Games in 1988 when he tested positive for steroids after his victory in 9.79 seconds. He was stripped of his gold medal and banned for two years.

Ironically, Briton Linford Christie, the man who moved up to silver in Seoul after Johnson's disgrace, was in the same race yesterday and finished second behind Burrell.

Johnson shook Christie's hand afterwards to acknowledge his performance.

Faced with a barrage of cameras and jostling reporters, the taciturn Johnson gave little away.

Speaking in his distinctive mumble, he said: "I tried my best. That's all I can say. I wish everyone all the best in the final."

US spikers on course for a hat-trick

BARCELONA, Aug 2: The American men's volleyball team clinched a place in the quarterfinals with a 15-5, 15-12, 15-8 victory over France Saturday, posting their first straight-game win that improved their record to 3-1, reports AP.

The Americans, champions in 1984 and 1988, are seeking to become the first team to win three straight volleyball Olympic gold medals.

Their last preliminary group rival is world champion Italy, which beat Canada 15-11, 8-15, 15-12, 15-7 and raised their record to 4-0. In another Pool A match, Sappin (2-2) edged Japan (1-3) 15-8, 5-15, 15-17, 15-13.

In Pool B matches, Brazil beat Cuba 15-6, 15-8, 12-15, 15-6 in a battle of medal contenders. Both Brazil (4-0) and Cuba (3-1) have qualified for the quarterfinals.

The Unified Team beat South Korea (1-3) 15-9, 15-6, 15-11 to improve to 2-2 and stay in contention for place in the quarterfinals. The Netherlands (2-2) beat Algeria (0-4) 15-2, 15-5, 15-4.



British sprinter Linford Christie crosses the finish line followed by Frankie Fredericks of Namibia (silver, lane 3), Dennis Mitchell of the USA (bronze, lane 4) and Bruny Surin of Canada (4th, lane 1) in the men's 100m dash in Barcelona Saturday. Christie clocked 9.96 secs.

Sampras sent packing

BARCELONA, Aug 2: American Pete Sampras joined the procession of leading players out of the Olympic tennis tournament when he was beaten in five sets by Russian Andrei Cherkasov today, reports Reuter.

Sampras, world number three, tossed away a two set lead to lose 6-7, 1-6, 7-5, 6-0, 6-3 and joined Jim Courier, Stefan Edberg and Boris Becker on the sidelines.

Wimbledon finalist Goran Ivanisevic is now the only player among the world's top 24 men still in the tournament.

The combination of fierce heat and the Olympic tournament's proximity in the calendar to Wimbledon and the French and US Opens has affected most top players, with Sampras proving no exception.

Becker's departure was a case of an accident waiting to happen. His first two matches against opponents ranked over 300 places below him were both uncomfortable close and he has never hidden his dislike of slow clay courts.

Santoro, 19 and ranked 37

Biondi's 11th is a reserve gold

BARCELONA, Aug 2: American swimmer Matt Biondi won the 11th Olympic medal of his career as a reserve member of the team which won the 4x100 metres medley relay, a US Olympic official said on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Biondi won his third consecutive Olympic 4x100 metres freestyle relay gold and took the silver medal in the 50 metres freestyle earlier in the week.

The 26-year-old Californian won one gold in the 1984 Los Angeles Games. He was the outstanding male swimmer of the 1988 Seoul Olympics in which he won five golds, a silver and a bronze.

He lost both his 50 and 100 metres freestyle titles to Alexander Popov of the CIS.

Eleven medals equals the aggregate tally of fellow swimmer Mark Spitz, seven-gold hero of the 1972 Munich Games, and shooting ace Carl Osburn as the most amassed by an American Olympic competitor.

in the world, gave the bearded five-limes Grand Slam champion due warning by breezing through the first set in 29 minutes against the stiffest opposition.

Becker roused himself slightly in the second set but seldom looked capable of raising his game above the ordinary.

Santoro's reward is a quarter-final against the fourth-seeded Ivanisevic, now a veteran of three successive five-set matches in scorching conditions.

"If I go on like this I will end up in hospital," the Croat said afterwards.

Spanish 12th seed Emilio Sanchez clinched a 6-4, 7-6, 6-7, 6-4 victory over Sweden's Magnus Larsson and will now meet Rosset.

"But the draw now has a low-key look."

Steffi Graf, Jennifer Capriati and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario all progressed, albeit with some alarms, and seeds will fill all eight quarter-final positions.

Spain are guaranteed at least a bronze medal as Sanchez-Vicario is now due to meet compatriot Conchita Martinez.

"I'll take a long break and think about education. I want to get a college degree," the American said.

"But the sport has given me a lot. I think if I miss it, you'll probably see me out there again."

"Maybe this is my last Olympics but maybe I'll be at the '94 World Championships. Matt came back. Who knows?"

Tamas Darnyi, who repeated the individual medley golden double he achieved in Seoul, said he had to work much harder now to remain at the top.

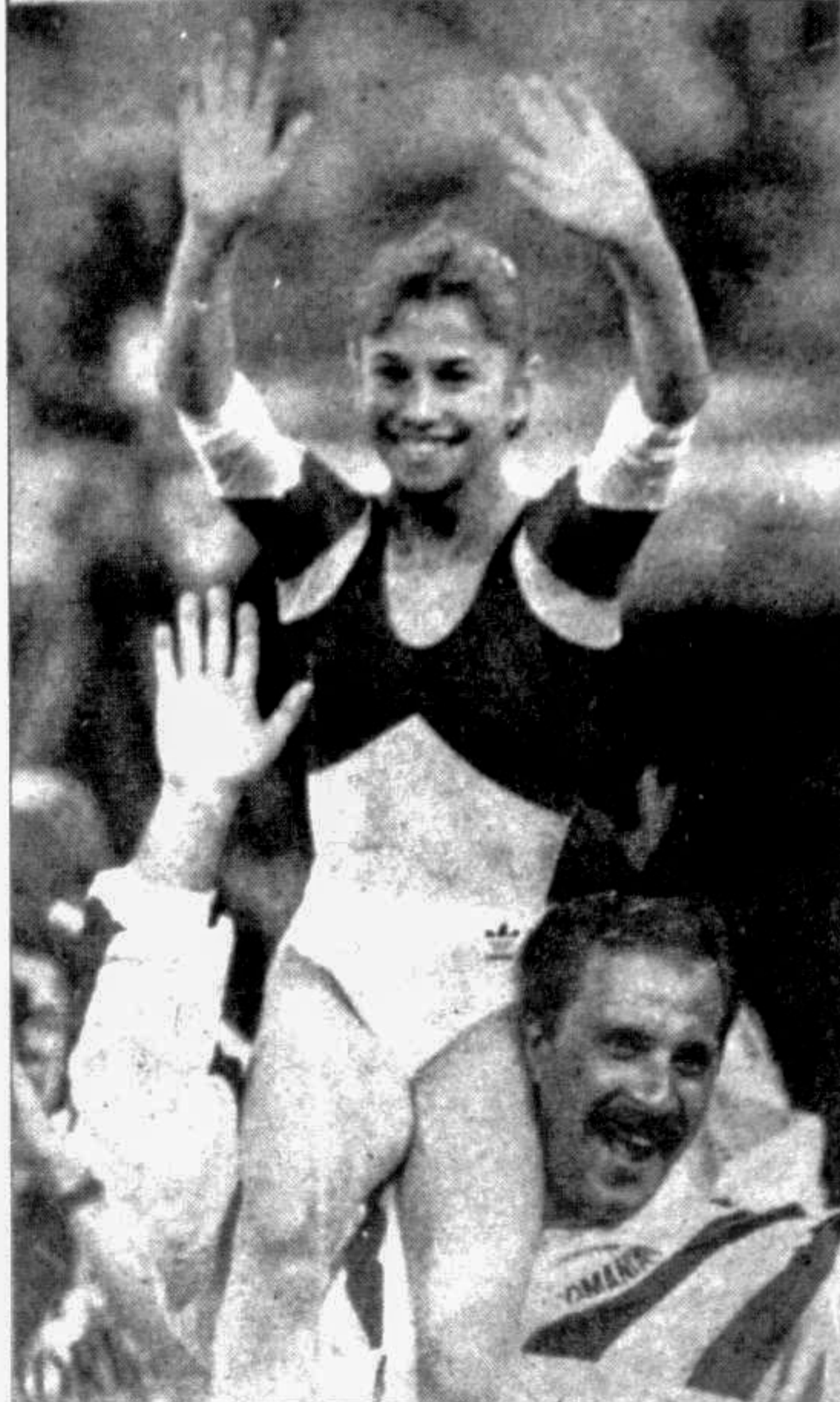
"It is quite hard to carry on but I have got used to it in the last four or five years," the 25-year-old Hungarian said.

"If things go well like this I would like to keep swimming until the next Olympics in Atlanta. Why should I stop?"

Moorhouse, at 28, knows why he should stop after finishing last in the 100m breaststroke final — a sad end for a man who has set a world record and won Olympic, European and Commonwealth titles.

The next Olympics are four years away and I have to be realistic. It's too much to expect me to come back in four years time and challenge for a medal. I can't go through it all again," he said.

"Not to worry," he said of his defeat. "I've got a whole life to live still."



Fifteen-year-old Romanian gymnast Lovina Corina Milosovici gets a ride on the shoulders of her coach after scoring a perfect 10 to win the floor exercise gold in Barcelona Saturday.

Milosovici's sang-froid pays off well

BARCELONA, Aug 2: Romanian Lovina Milosovici won two apparatus gold medals in the gymnastics yesterday and threw away the chance of a third when she fell from the beam, reports Reuter.

But, after her tumble, Milosovici pulled herself together with considerable cool to score a perfect 10 in winning the floor gold.

It was only the second full mark of the Olympics, after tiny Chinese newcomer Lu Li had been judged flawless on the asymmetric bars earlier in the evening.

Lu's gold was the first for a Chinese woman in a boycotted Olympics. Their only previous champion, also on the asymmetric bars, was Ma Yanhong in 1984 when the Soviet Union boycotted the Los Angeles Games.

Milosovici, 15, shared the vault title with Hungarian Henrietta Onodi, already world champion on the apparatus.

Tatyana Lysenko took the Commonwealth of Independent States' only gold of the night, on the beam.

The pony-tailed Milosovici, world champion on the asymmetric bars, had already helped Romania to win team silver and had taken the all-round bronze medal.

But it was her professionalism in picking herself up from the beam disappointment which won the hearts of the 15,000 strong crowd — among them American actor Jack Nicholson.

Milosovici finished last on the beam after running put of space to land a series of backflips and falling off, an error which carries a half-point penalty.

But, as she does before every apparatus, she rolled up the sleeves of her leotard and spat in the palms of her hands to take to the floor.

She finished a superb routine to jazz-rock music with a beaming smile and coach Octavian Bellu leapt several feet in the air when the 10 flashed

up on the scoreboard.

Lu, just 1.36 metres tall, was an equally popular winner and appeared on the medals podium again when she shared the beam silver with American Shannon Miller.

The 15-year-old Chinese rushed off after her win to telephone her parents, who had been watching the gymnastics on television back home.

"I haven't been home in six months," said Lu. "This makes the hard work and training worthwhile. It's the first time I've got gold or a 10."

There was disappointment for two old foes, world all-round champion Kim Zmeskal of the United States and a former holder of the honour, Svetlana Boguinskaya of the CIS.

Zmeskal, who has had a miserable Olympics, finished last in the vault after sitting down on her second jump.

Boguinskaya, 19, placed fourth in the vault — the event she won at the 1988 Seoul Games — and fifth on the beam but was replaced without explanation by teammate Oksana Chusovitina in the floor final.

Apart from Lysenko's beam gold and vault bronze, the CIS, who won the team title earlier this week, took home an asymmetric bars silver and a floor bronze for all-round champion Tatyana Goutsou.

Bellu said Milosovici had been up by a visit to the cinema earlier in the day.

"She went to see 'Rocky 3' today and she said afterwards she was going to win two gold medals so you can see what a combative approach she has," he said.

The 18-year-old Onodi, who also took silver on the floor, said she might now consider retiring from a sport increasingly dominated by 15-year-olds.

"I am not sure about the future or whether I will go on until the 1993 World Championships," she said. "The first thing I am thinking about is my vacation."

Lauridsen rallies past Liu

BARCELONA, Aug 2: Liu Jun of China, the controversial winner of the world's most venerable badminton tournament, the All-England, failed to make the quarter-finals of the Olympic competition here on Saturday, reports AP.

Liu, the seventh seed whose win at Wembley in March sparked allegations that China had played as a team to enable him to qualify for the Games, fell to Denmark's unseeded Thomas Stuer-Lauridsen.

However, Liu certainly played well enough to have beaten one of the world's most dangerously improving men's singles players, and held two match points before going

down 10-15, 17-16, 15-9.

Earlier, another Chinese seed, fourth-rated former World Cup winner Wu Wenka, also lost a long lead and was beaten.

Wu was 13-8 up in the final game against the unseeded South Korean Kim Hak-Kyun before losing 10-15, 15-7, 18-13. Kim now plays Allan Budi Kusuma, Indonesia's world silver medalist.

The first women's surprise came when the 20-year-old Thai, Somharuthas Jaroensiri, saved a match point while recovering from 4-10 down in the final game to beat Denmark's sixth-seeded European champion Pernille Nedergaard. The score was 5-11, 11-6, 12-10.

Old guards of pool on the wane

BARCELONA, Aug 2: The old guards yielded to the new stars of the 90s in Barcelona and faced their farewell from Olympic swimming, reports Reuter.

Some, like Britain's 1988 Olympic 100 metres breaststroke champion Adrian Moorhouse, have already announced their retirement after a decade at the top.

Others want to think it over but the rampaging triumphs of the young brigade, such as Kieren Perkins and Evgeny Sadovyi, gave scant encouragement to swimming's elder statesmen.

Americans, Matt Biondi and Tom Jager were upstaged by 20-year-old Russian freestyle Alexander Popov and would need to be exceptionally dedicated and optimistic to contemplate fourth Olympic appearances in Atlanta in their 30s.

Biondi, who won seven medals in Seoul, hinted at retirement after trailing in fifth in his 100 metres freestyle title defence.

He "retired" once immediately after winning five golds, a silver and a bronze in Seoul — with the idea of concentrating on water polo but soon returned to swimming.

A 4x100 freestyle relay gold medalist at three successive Games, Mike Jager, the 26-

year-old Californian raised his aggregate Olympic medal tally to 10 with a silver in the 50m freestyle.

Fellow American Pablo Morales paid tribute to Biondi, who won the world championship 100m freestyle in 1986 and 1991 and still holds the world record.

"Matt Biondi has proved to be one of the greatest if not the greatest swimmer of recent Olympiads," he said.

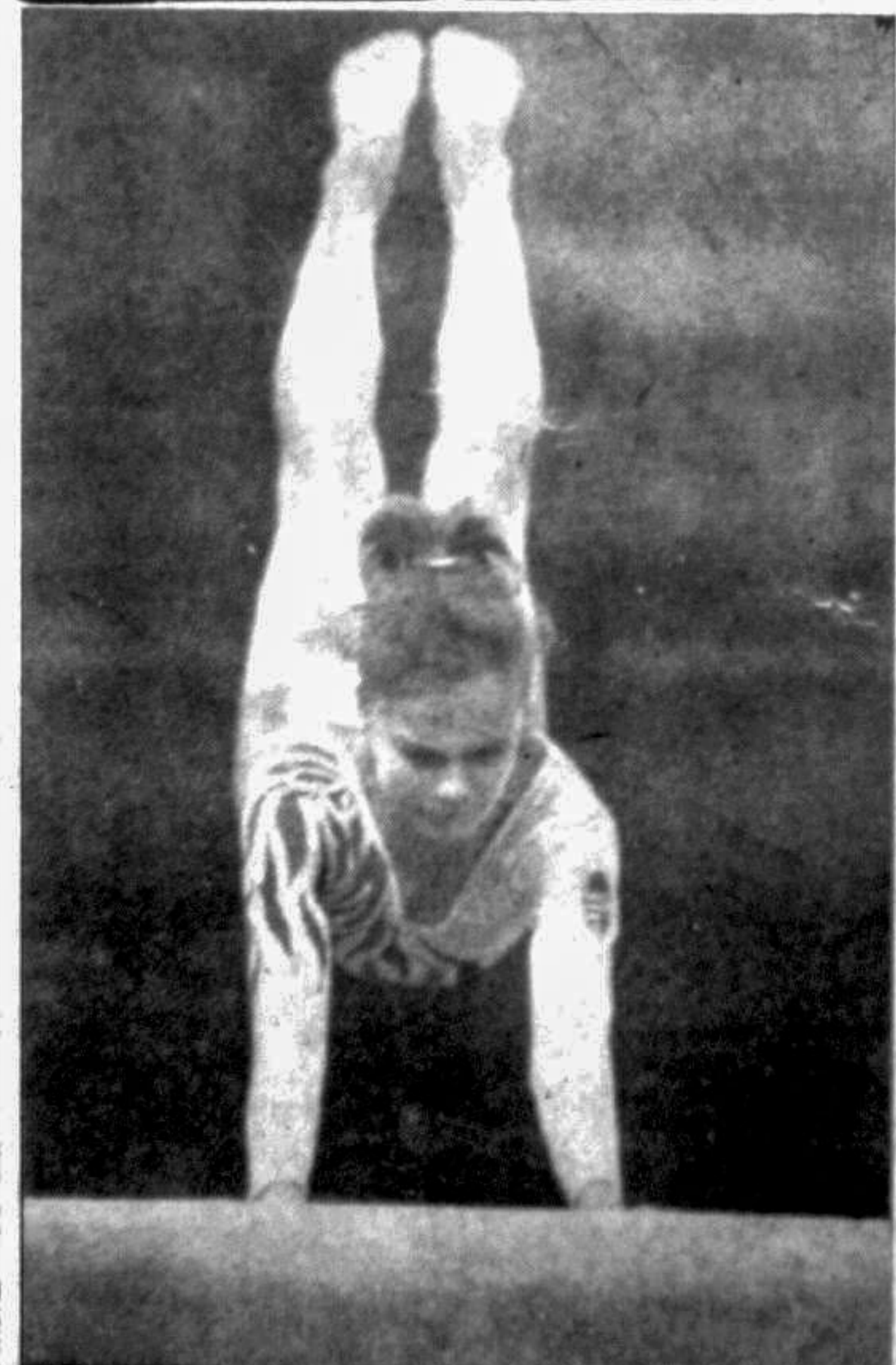
Morales goes out on the highest note after winning the 100 metres butterfly at 27, eight years after taking the silver in Los Angeles.

Morales quit swimming after failing to make the 1988 Olympic team but returned last year and now has two more golds to add to the gold and two silvers he won in Los Angeles.

Surinam's Anthony Nesty, 1988 Olympic and 1991 world champion in the 100m butterfly in the absence of Morales, had to settle for bronze this time and decided to call a halt at 24.

"I've worked real hard for 14 years and it is time to move on. Not many people can say they took part in consecutive Games and won gold and then bronze," he said.

Janet Evans, triple champion in Seoul at 16, is in two minds about retirement after retaining her 800 metres freestyle crown.



Henrietta Onodi of Hungary performs on the vault in the individual competition in Barcelona Saturday. Onodi won the gold.