

# Christie craves for the best

**STUTTGART, Aug 10:** For one golden moment Linford Christie stood supreme, master of all he surveyed.

Against the odds the Jamaican-born Briton had won the 1992 Olympic 100 metres title, achieving the dream he has harboured for a decade, writes Reuter.

Then it was back to reality for the oldest man to win an Olympic 100 title when he declined to give the customary news conference on the day after his triumph at the Barcelona Games.

Christie and fame co-habit uneasily.

Angered by some of the excesses of the British tabloid press, he mostly refuses to give even the blandest quote to reporters and still seethes at the lack of respect given by the Americans to his Barcelona gold.

The resentments go back a long way.

One of his early mentors recalls Christie's ambition at a time when he was unknown internationally. She also recalls his bitterness at the British athletics authorities' refusal to take him seriously in his formative years.

All was to change in 1986 when Christie, now 33, was the unexpected winner of the European indoor 200 metres title in Madrid.

In the same year he won the European 100 title and in 1987 he finished fourth in the world 100 metres final, eventually winning the bronze when Ben Johnson was retrospectively disqualified for admitting to drug use.

Christie went one better at the Seoul Olympics in the following year when he was awarded the silver medal behind Carl Lewis following Johnson's disqualification for a positive dope test.

Always, though, there has been the shadow of Lewis, the man who has beaten everyone at major championships apart from the drug-fueled Johnson.

In 1991, Christie made it clear that he wanted to be ranked as the world's number one sprinter, a goal that was greeted with some derision in the United States.



LINFORD CHRISTIE

The American response was swift and brutal.

In June of that year Leroy Burrell broke the world record, in August Lewis won the Tokyo World Championship title in world record time ahead of Burrell with another American, Dennis Mitchell, third.

Christie ran the fastest race of his life, clocking 9.92 seconds in the closing 100 metres stage, and still finished out of the medals in fourth place.

He was briefly inconsolable. "I'm retiring," he told re-

porters, a decision soon to be rescinded.

Instead of throwing in the towel, Christie resolved to come back stronger and faster than ever in Olympic year.

Winter training in Australia made him stronger, a careful regime of racing and training made him fitter.

His ability to peak for a major championship was unquestioned and probably the biggest break came when Lewis failed to qualify for the US team.

Burrell started favourite for the Olympic title and the early rounds in Barcelona did nothing to dispel the pre-Games impression that he would inherit Lewis's title.

But on the day of the final it was quickly clear that the occasion was too much for the young American.

Obviously nervous at the start, with the expression of a rabbit caught in a car's headlights, Burrell false-started and was never a factor in the restart.

By contrast, Christie was calm, collected and totally concentrated, running his best race when it mattered most.

A popular figure with the British team, Christie captained his country in the Havana World Cup and duly won the 100 metres although admitting he was sore and desperately weary at the end of a long season.

This year he appears again to be doing everything right, beating Lewis in their much-hyped contest in Gateshead, England, last month and losing only one of his 100 metres finals.

He starts deserved favourite for Sunday's world 100 metres final and finally the proud Londoner, who suffered cruel racial taunts at school and endured a series of real and imagined slights in later life, has achieved the respect he always craved.

# Morceli still not certain

**ALGIERS, Aug 10:** Nouredine Morceli, Algeria's world 1,500m champion and record holder, will definitely not be taking part in the World Championships at Stuttgart, his coach Amar Brahmia said on Monday, reports AFP.

Morceli, the most exciting athlete of his generation, has opted not to go to Stuttgart, where the championships get underway on Saturday, because of his objection to a world event every two years and his advocacy of prize money, which the IAAF has declined to put up.

"It is a question of principle, of fairness and justice," Brahmia said. Morceli's stance was backed on Sunday by the Algerian federation.

Morceli himself however hinted on Friday, after he nearly broke the world 3,000m record in Monaco, that he might change his mind at the last minute and run in Stuttgart.

# Usha set for a comeback

**BANGALORE, Aug 10:** India's "Golden Girl" PT Usha who had blazed the tracks winning glory for the country at the Asian level, is all set to stage a comeback, reports PTI.

Suave and soft-spoken Usha told PTI in an interview here today that she was determined to make a comeback. The decision, taken seven months ago, she said, was hers but, of course, with the active support of her husband, Arinvasan.

Usha has been training rigorously at the regional south centre of the Sports Authority of India (SAI) here for the past ten days and her mentor, O M Nambiar, who catapulted the girl from "Payyoli" to glory, has been supervising her training schedules from yesterday.

Fondly called by her admirers as "Payyoli Express", Usha, who missed a medal by the fraction of a second in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, says her determination is such that she has reduced her weight from 79 kgs seven months ago to 62.5 now. The sprint queen says she prefers training here due to the salubrious climate and excellent facilities available.

For the time being, Usha says, she would concentrate on 400 metres event only and her immediate goal would be to sink her own Asian mark of 51.61 secs set some time ago. "I also feel that I have improved a lot within ten days of time and I feel I am 85 per cent fit now," she adds.

Usha has set an arduous schedule for herself, with physical exercise for about five to six hours a day to regain fitness. "Before marriage I never thought of a comeback but my husband wants me to return to the tracks again," she says.

Her immediate target is the next Asian track and field meet to be held in Manila in the Philippines from Nov 30.

Usha, however, has ruled out her participation in the forthcoming national games to be held in Maharashtra during October.

She said she had requested the regional director of the Sport Authority of India (SAI), M P Ganesh and the SAI director general, in Delhi, to provide accommodation for her and her family at the campus here and they readily agreed. She also is grateful to the SAI authorities for providing her all the facilities to train.

# Nideffer nips Maleeva

**MANHATTAN BEACH, California, Aug 10:** Rosalyn Nideffer of South Africa used an aggressive serve and volley game to dump ninth seed Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria in the first round of the dollars 375,000 Virginia Slims of Los Angeles on Monday, reports Reuter.

Nideffer refused to play Maleeva's baseline game and rallied for a 6-7 (5-7), 6-4, 6-4 win in two hours and 28 minutes.

Yayuk Basuki of Indonesia, the 13th seed, also fought back from a set down to beat American qualifier Louise Allen 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 while 14th seed Julie Halard of France scored a surprisingly easy 6-2, 6-2 win over American Robin White in other opening day play.

Top seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, second-seeded defending champion Martina Navratilova and third seed Gabriela Sabatini received first round byes along with the rest of the top eight seeds in the 96-player, hardcourt tournament.

Nideffer, ranked 68th in the world, scored the crucial service break of the match in the seventh game of the third set and went on to take her place in the second round.

She captured the 20th-ranked Maleeva's serve by charging net behind hard, flat approach shots that forced errors from the ninth seed on three key points.

Nideffer dropped the first set in an error-ridden tie-break. But the South African broke Maleeva to open the second set and maintained that advantage throughout to force a third set.

# Lewis on the march of time

**STUTTGART, Aug 10:** Millionaire sprinter, failed pop star and now, it seems, a Bill Clinton supporter.

Carl Lewis, an icon in the Reagan years when wealth and success were worshipped unashamedly, has changed with the times, reports Reuter.

In an unexpected preamble to a news conference last week Lewis launched into a fluent discourse on the American President's struggle to cut the federal budget deficit.

"I think right now the Democrats have a better concept of what the people want," Lewis said.

He (Clinton) is the first President I can remember who grew up poor and struggling and achieved the American dream.

Lewis, who began his sprinting career when another southern Democrat, Jimmy Carter, was still in the White House, is now 32 and acutely conscious of the march of time.

Outwardly he is upbeat about his prospects of retaining the world 100 metres title in Stuttgart this Sunday.

Inwardly he must be concerned that he has lost each of his six 100 metres races this year and has rarely looked like the glorious athlete who won 16 Olympic and world titles.

Lewis would be the last person to admit to worry or doubt.

The show business gloss, the perceived arrogance and the glib public persona have served only to obscure the American's inner core of pure competitive steel.

If a person's personality is

best revealed under stress, then Lewis's dignity after failing to qualify for the US Olympic team in the 100 metres last year is one measure of the man.

Handicapped by a debilitating virus, Lewis finished only sixth in the American trials but refused to complain, whine or snarl.

"It wasn't my day," he said.



CARL LEWIS

"But I'm happy that we have still got sprinters qualifying for Barcelona who will do their best for America."

This was a noticeably different Lewis from the man who gracefully conceded defeat to Mike Powell in the 1991 World

Championships' long jump.

In his darkest hour, Lewis won the admirers he notably failed to attract in the glory year of 1984 when he emulated Jesse Owens with four gold medals at the Los Angeles Olympics.

And he ultimately triumphed in Barcelona when he won the long jump and anchored the US 4x100 relay team to a world record with an electrifying final leg.

A year later there are further challenges for an athlete whose restless energy has seen him embark on an abortive career as a singer, dabble in clothes designing and virtually invent the role of superstar runner.

"When you get older there are other things that are more important in life," Lewis reflected.

"I think it's more difficult to focus on some of the things that were important in the past."

"There's no question that I've always relished a major championship. Our goal all season long has been to be right in August."

Lewis refuses to concede that he must have lost speed with the years and, in fact, believes he is in better shape than 10 years ago when he won three golds at the first World Championships in Helsinki.

"There's no question that I'm in better shape than I was then. In terms of pure speed I'm faster."

Time, an increasingly favoured word in the Lewis vocabulary, will tell whether he can succeed in Stuttgart.

Whatever the outcome, the memories of the finest track athlete of the modern era will remain imperishable.

# The match-up of wunderkinds

**BOSTON, Aug 10:** It would be the match-up of chess wunderkinds, past and present, reports AP.

On one side of the board would be 17-year-old Hungarian Judit Polgar, the world's top-ranked female chess player and the youngest person to become a chess Grandmaster.

Across the 64 squares would be Bobby Fischer, the moody 50-year-old former chess champ whose record as the youngest Grandmaster Polgar had broken.

Reports from Hungary last week said that Fischer had visited Polgar's home to set up a match. Will it happen?

As the Polgars emerged at Logan Airport to participate at the Boston International Chess Exhibition, the answers weren't clear.

Polgar, squirming after 18-hours of flights, said no match is planned. She wouldn't say if Fischer had visited her.

"He's a great chess player," was all she said.

Her 24-year-old sister Zsuzsa Polgar — who ranks second behind Judit Polgar among female chess players — said the match will go ahead if sponsors can be found to pay about \$15 million.

But Dan Edelman, the organizer of the Boston event and a self-described spokesman for the Polgar family, said the Fischer match is a done deal.

He said it would be a 10-game blitz match — games in which each side must complete its moves within five minutes.

"Television doesn't want to show a 12-hour game," said Edelman, himself an International Master.

Last year, Fischer emerged from years out of the spotlight for a rematch in Yugoslavia against Russian Boris Spassky, whom he defeated in 1972 to win the international title.

Fischer won the rematch and has not returned to the United States, where he could face prosecution for violating sanctions imposed on Yugoslavia.

Polgar family members said they believe Fischer is being singled out for punishment, while Spassky and other chess players also played in Yugoslavia.

"It's an injustice that they're mixing politics with chess," said Zsuzsa Polgar.

At the Boston tournament, Judit Polgar will play a 10-game blitz match against US champion Patrick Wolff of Somerville. Other events include a simultaneous exhibition on Copley Square with Wolff and the Polgar sisters playing 200-300 competitors.

# Winners wind up losers

**LA PAZ, Bolivia, Aug 10:** Soccer fans in a Bolivian village were so excited with their team's triumph over Uruguay that they failed to notice their houses were on fire, reports Reuter.

By the time the fire was noticed, it had spread to 40 houses, almost the entire village of Ixtimas, all of which burnt down, the regional prefect, Adolfo Soltz said.

The fire began when Bolivia scored its first goal of its 3-1 triumph on Sunday in a World Cup qualifying match.

The fans — following the game on radio — threw firecrackers, which fell onto the palm-leaf thatched roofs, setting fire to the houses.

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# Finns — new power in pool

**SHEFFIELD, England, Aug 10:** Finland, once a swimming backwater, announced themselves as a new power in the pool with three gold medals at the European Championships, reports Reuter.

Antti Kasvio, who captured the nation's first Olympic swimming medal at the 1992 Barcelona Games, twice defeated Olympic champion Evgeny Sadovyi to win the 200 and 400 metres free-style titles.

Jani Stevnen almost matched him with a storming win in the 200 metres individual medley and a silver behind world record holder Tamas Darnyi in the 400 event.

Both are only 19 and more of their contemporaries will be making ripples at the 1996 Olympics, according to Finnish delegation chief Rolf Mikkola.

He said the Finns had set their eyes on gold a decade ago and the four European medals reflected dedication despite a tight budget.

"Our goal was to get a medal by no later than 1996, and we've already done that," he told reporters on the last day of the championships on Sunday.

Stevnen said Finland, who finished fourth in the medals table, hoped to develop swimming like the successful Hungarians, just as neighbours Sweden had created a strong tennis team.

"We have kept putting our

goals higher and higher. We want to give our best," Stevnen said.

Mikkola said the team faced the challenge of finding funds to replace the 120,000 Finnish markka (21,000 dollars) they spent on competing in Sheffield.

About one-third of the team's three million markka (\$19,000 dollars) budget comes from state funding, with another third from private businesses and the rest from club fees.

Because of the tight budget, only one of Finland's dozen coaches works full-time. The rest coach part-time, five to six hours a day, in addition to their full-time professions.

The coaches' dedication stems partly from the fact that three of them are fathers of swimmers.

Stevnen said it was difficult at times having his father, Esa, as coach.

"Sometimes we have big fights, like all sons and fathers, but we fight only about swimming. We don't fight about other things," he said.

Mikkola said having parents as coaches had been a problem for Finland in the 1970s because many of them wanted to become involved in administration as well as coaching.

"But that's not a problem with the coaches we have now," he said. "They know when to be coaches and when to be fathers."

Mikkola said Finland's success story dated back to the

1980s, when the team sponsored US, Russian, and Swedish trainers to teach Finnish coaches about training and selecting top swimmers.

"Our coaches have found the right way to taper off before competitions and we also have very good technical analysis of our swimmers' strokes," he said.

He said Kasvio and Stevnen trained at least five hours a day, leaving just two hours for English lessons and little other schoolwork.

But Stevnen said he didn't mind missing school.

"I'm happy with swimming, and I want to do it as long as I love it. I'm not interested in school — I hate it," he said.

Mikkola said Finland's figure leading lights would include 19-year-old Petteri Lehtinen, who finished fifth behind Stevnen in the 200 individual medley.

"He will be at his best at the 1996 Olympics," Mikkola said, adding that he expected him to win a medal in Atlanta.

Vesa Hanski, who won the B-final in the 200 metres butterfly, was another possible Olympic finalist and the women's team were beginning to show potential, he added.

Mikkola hopes the team's showing here will garner more sponsorship back home.

But he added: "The economy in Finland at the moment is very poor. It's not going to be easy for us."

# Canada aim to mark Slater out

**SYDNEY, Aug 10:** Canada will aim to keep Australian danger man Robbie Slater under close control during Sunday's soccer World Cup second leg qualifying match at the Sydney Football Stadium, reports AP.

Canadian coach Bob Lenarduzzi said Slater, who plays for French club Lens, poses a serious threat to his team — which won the first leg 2-1 in Edmonton on July 31.

Slater was forced to play on defence for most of the Edmonton game when the Australians were forced into a reshuffle after goalkeeper Robert Zabica was sent off.

He will resume his attacking midfield role on Sunday.

Slater combines in attack for the Australians with Frank Farina, who also plays in France with Strasbourg.

Canada will recall Randy Samuel to the centre of their defence and also may make a midfield switch. Samuel will fly in on Wednesday from the Netherlands, where he plays for Fortuna Sittard.

Forward Grant Ncedham also will link with the squad as a replacement for Paul Peachesoldo, who is suffering from a pelvic injury.

Canada need only a draw to advance to a play-off against the runners-up in South American Group A. Australia need to win 1-0 or by two clear goals.

Australian coach Eddie Thomson said Tuesday that his team planned to attack throughout the 90 minutes.



Austrian Thomas Muster holds aloft the championship trophy after winning the Phillips Head Cup tennis tournament beating Javier Sanchez of Spain 6-3, 7-5, 6-4 in the final at Kitzbuehel, Austria on August 9. Muster is the first Austrian to have won a tournament at Kitzbuehel. — AFP photo

# Krabbe's absence matters

**STUTTGART, Germany, Aug 10:** Even though she will be on a caravan holiday in Scandinavia when the World Athletics Championships open this weekend, banned sprinter Kairin Krabbe will still be the talk of the town in the run-up to the event, reports Reuter.

The German's much-publicised battles with authorities over two drugs bans imposed on her since she won the 100 and 200 metres at the last championships in 1991 have sparked calls for radical changes in the sport's anti-doping laws.

When the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) Congress starts a two-day meeting on Wednesday, it will be urged by the German Athletics Federation (DLV) to slash its mandatory minimum four-year ban because it is impractical.

Krabbe, who has raced just once outdoors in the last 20 months, is still suspended after admitting to taking the drug Clenbuterol and has decided to leave Germany during the Stuttgart event.

But it is the former East German's use of shrewd lawyers in the last 20 months that has led to the drastic proposals.

The DLV has been confronted with major legal problems in Krabbe's doping cases and has come to the conclusion that the present four-year bans for a first offence, agreed by the congress in 1991, are too tough for civil law.

Fearing athletes may win future cases in the courts, the Germans will propose a softer, more flexible approach under which athletes will be banned from between one and four

years for a first doping offence.

A second offence would result in a minimum suspension of two years up to life. A third offence would mean an automatic life ban, which is presently imposed for a second offence.

"Under German civil law, four years is too much to stop someone carrying out their

profession," DLV general secretary Jan Kern said. "It is possible that athletes will take cases to court again and again."

"Sports rules need to match normal laws. When athletes only have perhaps 10 years in the sport, a four-year ban is vir-

tually a lifetime sentence. The problem is under the present rules, it's four years or nothing."

The threat of civil court action by Krabbe has always been in the background to her cases. The German federation came across the problems with four-year bans when they took legal advice on how to defend themselves against the sprinter.

Last year the former East German side-stepped the first ban for allegedly manipulating doping samples during a training test on the legal technicality that the DLV had no clause in its regulations allowing for out-of-competition tests.

Krabbe used the same loophole in March to get a German arbitration panel to reduce her second ban for taking Clenbuterol from four years to 12 months although the clause has since been amended.

The IAAF has not accepted the German panel's ruling and has suspended Krabbe and teammates Grit Breuer and Manuela Derr, who also admitted taking the drug, while its legal experts look into the case.

But Krabbe's manager Thorsten Heuser has said he would be prepared to go to court and win an injunction to get the trio back on the track if the IAAF tried to enforce a four-year ban.

ATLANTA, Georgia, Aug 10: All nine American Olympic track and field Champions, including Carl Lewis and Jackie Joyner-Kersey, have confirmed they will compete in the 1994 Goodwill Games in St Petersburg, organisers said on Monday, reports Reuter.

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# CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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**Solution time: 26 mins.**

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ZOLA SON JAYA  
ZEALOT GLOWER  
APE ABA  
BANG RAMPARTS  
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