Plaatjes pockets marathon gold



STUTTGART, Aug 15: South African born Mark Plaatjes won the men's world marathon title for the United States on Saturday with an astonishing late

burst, reports Reuter. Lucketz Swartboot looked set to win a first World Championship gold for Namibia when he led by more than a minute in

the latter part of the race. But Plaatjes surged through and passed his rival just before entering the Stuttgart Stadium.

Plaatjes clocked two hours 13 minutes 57 seconds in the hot conditions. Swartbooi finished 14 seconds behind and the bronze went to Dutchman

bert van Vlaanderen. Plaatjes, who became a naturalised American only last December, was the first US citizen to win a men's marathon at a global championships since Frank Shorter triumphed at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Asari, the first Asian to bag marathon gold

STUTTGART, Germany, Aug 15: Junko Asari of Japan staged a comeback late in the marathon Sunday to win the World Championship title ahead of Portuguese Manuela Machado, reports AP.

Another Japanese, Tomoe Abe, took the bronze.

Asari finished the 42.195 kilometre (26 miles 285-yard) race in 2 hours, 30.03 minutes, holding a lead of some 350 metres (yards) over Machado. Abe finished some 50 metres (yards) further back.

On Saturday, Mark Plaatjes of the United States won the men's marathon.

Asari, 24, bided her time while American Kim Jones and Machado set the pace for most of the race.

The economy of her stride matched the intelligence of her strategy as she slowly caught up with leader Machado by kilometre 36, and quickly overtook her. She was never threat ened again.

It was the second marathon gold medal for Japan in a world championship. In Tokyo two years ago, Hiromi Taniguchi won the men's event

It also was the second marathon win for Asari this year after she already equaled the Asian record in Osaka

Jones set the pace for the first 30 kilometres, thinning the pack of 33 to just eight, including all three Japanese runners and home favourite Katrin Dorre:

But on one of the many hills dotting the undulating circuit, Jones' effort collapsed in the heat. Dorre suffered the same fate a few hills later.

Sunday morning's conditions were almost as muggy as for the men late Saturday. At the start, humidity reached 68 per cent and the temperature stood at 22 C (72 F). Running in windless conditions, it only got worse.

Curiously, Shorter was also born outside the US, starting his life in Munich, the city where he was later to achieve

Physiotherapist Plaatjes, who moved to the US two years ago, won the Los Angeles marathon in 1991.

German Kurt Stenzel held the early lead but Swartbooi took over just before the 20-km mark and moved steadily away. He seemed to have the sit-

uation well in hand with less than 10 kms remaining, when he led by well over a minute. But Plaatjes began to make inroads into his lead and finally

spurted past just a few seconds before the athletes entered the Gottlieb-Damtler Stadium. It was the second gold medal of the opening day, the first go-

ing to Finn Sari Essayah in the women's 10-km walk. China, rapidly emerging as an athletics power, showed their strength in the women's

3,000 metres heats with two race victories. Zhang Linli won the first in 8:48.85 to beat European

champion Yvonne Murray of

Men's 5,000 metres title favourite Khalid Skah of Morocco came only fourth in his heat won by Briton Robert Denmark, but still qualified for Monday's final.

Denmark clocked 13:41.55 to edge out Kenyan Paul Bitok and Ethiopian Fita Bayesa, silver and bronze medalist respectively in last year's Barcelona Olympics. Skah managed 13:41.72.

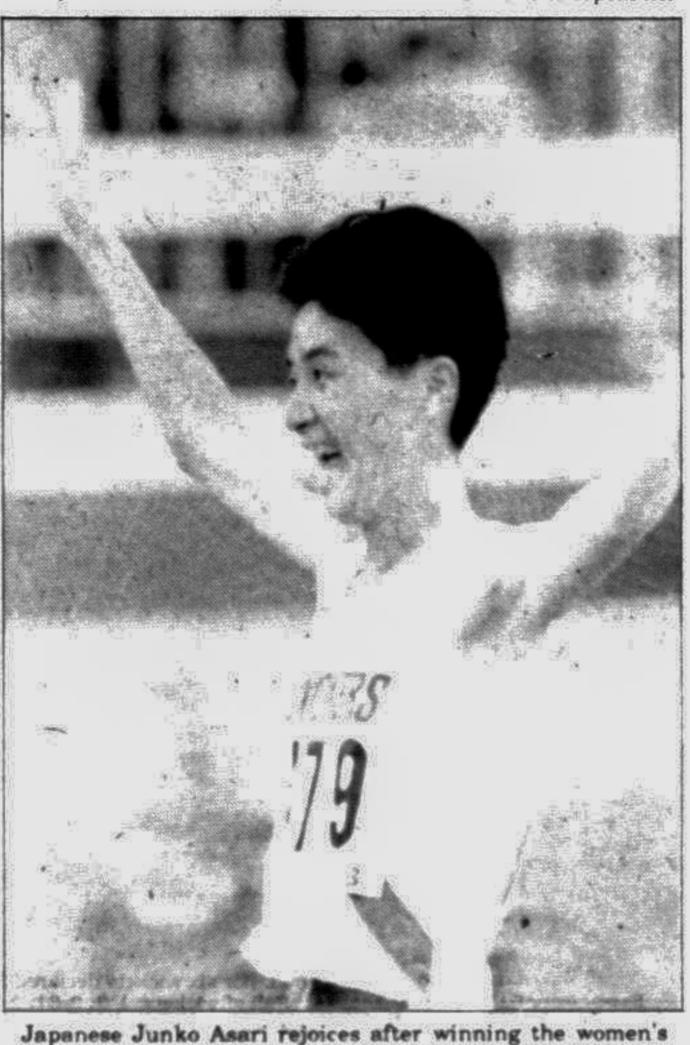
Skah's compatriot Brahim Boutayeb, 1988 Olympic f0,000 metres champion and 5,000 metres bronze medalist at the 1991 World Championships, was climinated.

Boutayeb came only sixth in the second heat won by Ethiopian Worku Bikila in 13:27.14.

Haile Gebrestlaste clinched the final heat with the fastest time of 13:25.27, to make it three Ethiopians in the final. Ukraine's Larissa Bere-

zhanaya led the women's long jump qualifiers with a leap of 6.87 metres but the favourite, German Heike Drechsler, also made the final with 6.70.

Drechsler aims to repeat her



marathon in the Stuttgart World Athletics Championships yesterday. Asari, who clocked two hours 30 minutes and three seconds, is the first Asian to win a World Championships marathon gold. - AFP photo

Britain and Olympic gold medalist Yelena Romanova of

Qu Yunxia took the second in 8:49.20.

The third Chinese entrant also reached Monday's final, Zhang Lirong finishing third in the final heat won by Ireland's Sonta O'Sulltvan in 8:50.62.

gold medal performance at the same stadium in 1986 at the European Championships.

The women's 800 metres first round heats were marred by a downpour but it did nothing to dampen the spirits of the favourites Who all reached the semifinals.

The fastest woman in the world this year, Mozambique's Maria Mutola, predictably won her race, moving past American Meredith Rainey in the final straight to finish in 1:59.81. Defending world champion

Lilia Nurutdinova was edged out of first place by Briton Diane Modahl but still went through.

The best time was set by China's Liu Li who clocked 1:59.60 in the opening heat as she beat Russian Lyubov Gurina.

MEDALS TABLE Medals table after the first day of the World Athletics Championships on Saturday:

Silver Bronze Finland United States Italy Netherlands

The first day at Stuttgart

STUTTGART, Aug 15 (AP): A brief look at what happened Saturday, the first day of competition at the World Championships:

PERFORMANCE OF THE DAY: Andre Cason of the United States, 9.96 seconds in a second-round heat of the 100-metre dash, the fastest of his career and the fastest in the world since April 1992.

WEATHER: Hot, with temperatures at 27 Celsius (82 F) and 57 percent humidity. Brief late shower.

QUOTE OF THE DAY: " couldn't have done a thing in my life if it wasn't for running... they were asking me to give that up and that was too much." -Mark Plaatjes, a native South African now an American citizen, after winning the men's marathon.

GOLD MEDALISTS: Mark Plaatjes, United States, men's marathon; Sari Essayah, Finland, women's 10-kilometre

Coggi firms his hold on WBA

crown

BUENOS AIRES, Aug 15 Argentina's Juan Martin Coggi made his third successful de fence of the World Boxing Association junior welterweight crown by Defeating Jose Bar boza of Venezuela on points in a 12-round bout on Friday reports Reuter.

The 31-year-old Argentine, who sent the 28-year-old chal lenger to the mat with a left cross in the first round to the glee of the 6,000 fans packed in a small suburban stadium, never found the knockout punch he sought all night.

Daring the heavier muscled Barboza like a bullfighter, the left-handed champion relied on counter punches to stun his opponent, whose performance improved as the match wore on.

A veteran of 66 professional fights who regained the junior welterweight title in December, Coggi saved energy by falling back on the ropes and letting the Venezuelan try to pierce his solid guard.

South African-born American Mark Plaatjes jubilates while crossing the finish line to win the marathon gold in the World Championships in Stuttgart on Saturday. Plaatjes — a running man



STUTTGART. Germany, Aug 15: Mark Plaaties owes the best

things in life to running. He had to run out of his country to hold onto them, reports AP.

The new US citizen gave his team a dream start to the World Championships Saturday with a spectacular come-from-behind win in the marathon.

It was sports imitating life for Plaatjes, who was born in South Africa.

In 1988, death was staring him in the face.

 "My family received threats all the time, that they were going to find me dead in the road or whatever," he said, the gold medal proudly resting on his

At the time, South Africa was under a state of emergency, apartheid laws were in force, Nelson Mandela was in prison on Robben Island and "people were being killed left, right and centre," Plaatjes said.

And Plaatjes, of mixed race, was running for the white, official track body.

"Black people did not like that," he said explaining he was seen as a traitor by some.

He said a close friend, also an excellent runner, was killed while training. A truck veered off the road and ran him over. Another friend was shot in the leg, also while running.

Those were two things that crystalized things," he said Plaatjes was left with a choice - stop running or run

I wouldn't have done a thing in my life if it was not running. he said. "And there was nothing else for me to compete in. The only reason why I had a very good life and got a good educa-

that up and it was too much." Plaatjes fled in 1988 and was granted asylum in the United States, where he attended the University of Georgia from 1981

tion was because I could run.

They were asking me to give

The American south is considered racist but it was wonderful for me, coming from South Africa," he said.

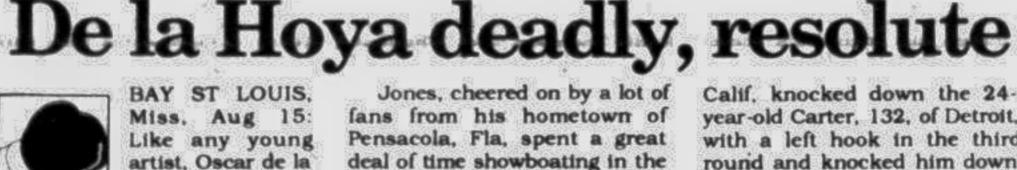
It took him five years to gain citizenship. Coupled with South Africa's exclusion from the world of sports, it took a lifetime to live out his real test of stamina.

When Plaaties could not compete in the Barcelona Olympics because he was still stateless, he was "emotionally devastated," he said.

He bore no grudge against the South Africans, who took part in their first Olympics in decades. "I was ecstatic" that South Africa could show what great runners they have, he

Plaatjes is thrilled to be an American.

"It will give me a sense of belonging, a sense of identification," he said. "You can never divorce yourself from the country you grew up in, but I've made a commitment to the United States."





Hoya tries to learn from a master,

reports AP "I watched videotapes of Julio Cesar Chavez (the great

triple champion from Mexico) and he wears out his opponents, and that's what I wanted to do," the unbeaten 20-yearold De La Hoya said after scoring his ninth victory Saturday De la Hoya, gunning for a

junior lightweight championship bid, wore down Renaldo "Little Red" Carter with relentless pressure, knocked him down three times and stopped him at 2:10 of the sixth round De La Hoya shared the spot-

light before a standing-roomonly crowd of 4,798 in a tent at Casino Magic with International Boxing Federation middleweight champion Roy Jones Jr.

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first five rounds of his over-theweight match against Sugar Boy Malinga of South Africa. Then suddenly in the sixth round Jones flashed home a right hand and left hook to the head that knocked Malinga flat on his back where he was counted out for the first time in his 44bout career. The time was 1:57.

De La Hoya had more trouble wrapping his hands then he had wrapping up his ninth victory and eighth by knockout. The state commission didn't like the way De La Hoya's hands were wrapped and made him rewrap them. "I didn't have the time

wanted to have to warm up, so used the first two rounds to warm up. I knew I had 10 rounds and I had lots of time."

De La Hoya, 132 1/4 pounds (60 kilograms), of Montibello,

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Calif, knocked down the 24year-old Carter, 132, of Detroit, with a left hook in the third round and knocked him down again with a hook and right to the head in the fifth. Then in the sixth. De La

Hoya dropped Carter with a hook and right to the head. After Carter got up, De La Hoya landed a flurry of punches and referee Chester Comeaux stopped the fight. De La Hoya landed 191 of

360 punches while Carter landed 62 of 293 punches as his record fell to 27-5-1.

"I never rally thought I could knock him out," the 24-year-old Jones said after scoring his 21st KO in boosting his record to 23-0. "He's never been knocked out."

Malinga was very much knocked out Saturday night. From the instant he hit the floor, it was obvious the fight was over.

Two charged with Jordan's murder FAYETTEVILLE, NC, Aug 15:

- AFP photo

Authorities have arrested two teenagers and charged them with the first-degree murder of basketball star Michael Jordan's father, James Jordan, reports AP. The senior Jordan appar

ently was killed by robbers when he pulled off the road to rest, said Capt. Art Binder, chief of detectives for the Cumberland County Shertff's Department.

Larry Martin Demery, 18, of Roland and Daniel Andre Green, 18, of Lumberton each were charged with one count of first-degree murder, one count of armed robbery and one count of conspiracy to commit armed robbery. They were being held without bond on Sunday

Binder said the murder oc curred on Interstate 95 near Lumberton, in southeast North Carolina. The suspects had planned to rob someone that night and were waiting at the exit when Jordan pulled off the road there to rest. Binder said.

After shooting Jordan, the suspects drove the body to McColl, SC, then dumped the car near Fayetteville, Binder

Binder said they took the body to South Carolina and tried to cover their tracks be cause they knew the victim was Michael Jordan's father

Cumberland County Sheriff Morris Bedsole said he does not expect any more arrests. He said four youngsters arrested earlier for stripping Jordan's car were not connected with the murder.

Jordan was last seen alive on July 22, after attending the funeral of a friend

Miguel retains WBC title

GUADALAJARA, Mexico, Aug 15: Mexico's Miguel Angel Gonzalez retained his World Boxing Council lightweight title on Friday with an unanimous points victory over challenger David Sample of the United States, reports Reuter.

'Nearly Man' races for top of podium

With the world track and field championships fast approaching, Kenya's Richard Chelimo has his sights set firmly on gold medals and new records. The 20-year-old middle and long-distance runner was a world-record holder for five days, before having that time beaten by another Kenyan. In a contentious incident at the Barcelona Olympics, Chelimo also knew, although again only briefly, what a gold medal felt like. Gemini News Service profiles this up and coming track star's successes and goals and those who will try to stand in his



if anything is giving Morocco's Khalid Skah sleepless nights during the ongoing world track and

the world record for the 10,000 metres has tumbled twice at the hands of the Kenyans. The record-breaking performance of first Richard Chelimo in Stockholm on July 5, and then Yobes Ondieki in Oslo five

Stuttgart, Germany, it is that

days later, is bad news for the long-distance star. After being found guilty of having been unfairly aided by team member Hommou Boutouayeb at the Barcelona Olympics race, Skah was stripped of his gold medal. It went to runner-up Chelimo. Then the decision was reversed and the gold returned to the

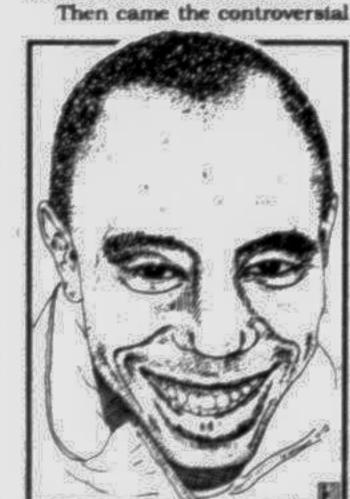
Moroccan. Chelimo had to be content with the silver in a decision that was as controversial as it was demoralising to the young Kenyan. Since that fateful race, the Kenya Amateur Athletics Association has been itching for a chance to get even with the

Moroccans. At Stockholm, Chelimo sliced 32 hundredths of a second off the old mark set by Mexican Arturo Barrios in 1989 in Berlin. The Kenyan clocked 27 minutes 07.91 seconds against

barrios' 27:08.23. in the Stockholm race, Barrios was a distant second with 27:34.27, making the 20year-old Kenyan a veritable world champton in place of the 'nearly man' he had hitherto

Chelimo's record lasted only five days. Ondieki shore a whole nine seconds off Chelimo's Renyan track observers be-

lieve that the rivalry between Chelimo and Ondieki may not last long. "Chelimo will soon upstage Ondieki,* they say. At 32, Ondiekt is nearing the end of his career while Chelimo has many years ahead of him. Chelimo has dislodged the 'nearly man' tag forever. The gold medal was his until the last centimetres of the race at the world championships in Tokyo in 1991 when he was eclipsed by fellow Kenyan Moses Tanui at the finish line.



MOSES KIPTANUI

silver at the Barcelona Games. His performance at the Stockholm meet has convinced the world he belongs in the exclusive club of record-break-

He is not yet a match for such other Kenyans as the legendary Henry Rono, who broke compatriot Samson Kimombwa's and two other records in the 3,000m steeplechase and in the 5,000m in 1978, and Moses Kiptanui, the current steeplechase world record holder. But at 20 Chelimo is the

youngest Kenyan to join the club, and the youngest ever 10,000m record holder.

Like most of Kenya's top athletes, Chelimo was born and raised in the ragged highlands of the Great Rift Valley. He is of the track-famed Kalentin tribe Like most of his track-mates, he did not go past high school opting instead to join the army in 1990. The army is famed for identifying and nurturing track talent. The five-foot-five Chelimo is not the only start in the family. His younger brother Ishmael Kirui is an up-andcoming 5,000m athlete, and sister Catherine Kirui, a high school student, is another

The Stockholm success notwithstanding, Chelimo is not resting on his laurels. He said after the great race: "I have not got the pace I have always wanted in the first part of the race. But I also hope to run under the 27-minute mark. I think it's possible."

middle-distance runner.

Now that Ondieki has beaten him to it, will the young Kenyan aim for the sub 26 minute mark? Affable, down-toearth Chelimo has been improving his skills ever since he ventured into the competitive middle and long-distance Kenyan athletics.

Having graduated from the guidance of Samson Obwocha in the army in 1990, he moved over to the stable of John Bicourt, a renowned athletics agent in London, to train alongside Kenyans John Ngugi, then world cross-country champion, and Susan Sirma, the 5,000m champion in Tokyo

Later that year, Chelimo won two road races. Despite coming third behind Kenyan Ondoro Osoro and Ethiopian Fita

Biyessa at the International Amateur Athletics Federation cross-country challenge during the 1990-91 season, nobody took him seriously until the Kenya Armed Forces pre-Tokyo championships in 1991.

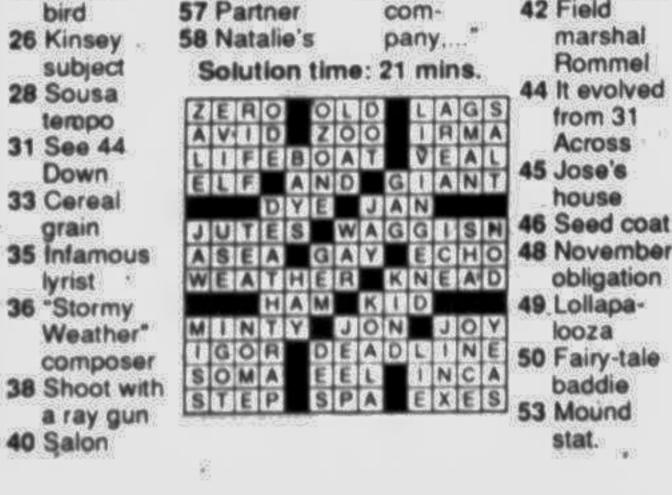
There he beat such big names as Ngugi and Tanui in the 5,000m and 10,000m respectively. Having tested his might against the 'big brothers," Chelimo returned to Europe. The world began to notice his potential. At the Hengelo Grand Prix in June 1991 he clocked a time in the 10,000m only three seconds off barrios' world mark and the second fastest ever.

Then he recorded three faster times in quick succession in the 5,000m in July 1991. In the process he relegated Addis Adebe of Ethiopia, the then world junior record holder, to fourth place in the junior all time best. To date, only Tanzania's Andy Sambu and Biyessa have come any closer to Chelimo's mark.

Chelimo's track successes have given him economic security. His earnings from the Grand Prix and other overseas meets, appearance fees and prize money will hit a five-digit mark. But despite his wealth Chelimo remains a modest

Off track and back home near Eldoret, about 400 km west of Nairobi, he runs a real estate business and, instead of the BMWs, Volvos and Porches that his fellow Kenyan stars drive, he prefers to go in a not very presentable Peugeot pickup truck. - GEMINI NEWS

About the Author: ROBERT OTANI is on the staff of Kenya's Daily Mail in



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CRYPTOQUIP

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EGQ GMSD. AIQB Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THOSE PUT IN PRISON ON BIG ASSAULT AND BATTERY CHARGES END UP IN DRY CELLS.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: P equals Y

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.