

# China proves critics wrong

**SAN SEBASTIAN, Spain, Nov 1** - China's outstanding group of women athletes gave another demonstration of their domination of world distance running with a clean sweep of the medals at the World Marathon Cup here on Sunday, reports AFP.

But the anticipated assault on Ingrid Kristiansen's eight-year old world record at the distance was doomed within the first 10km as Wang Yunxia, the world 10,000m champion and record holder, followed the slow early pace set by American Ann Boyd.

Wang finally broke away from the leading group of 10 athletes at the 30 km mark when the leading men - who had started 15 minutes later - caught the group and disturbed its rhythm.

She went on to win in 2:28.16, an impressive time but nearly three minutes slower than her marathon debut in April.

Her teammates Zhang Linli, Zhang Lirong and Ma Lijun followed her home in that order but world 1,500m record holder Qu Yunxia, the fifth member of coach Ma Junren's squad on display here, limped out of the race after only 7 km after straining a leg injury she was carrying.

Wang said afterwards she had felt the impact of the World Championships in Stuttgart and her record breaking exploits at the Chinese National Championships in September.

Most of us broke existing world records at the National Games and we were all very tired. We knew that so we just took it easy at the beginning and followed what the other athletes did.

She also admitted that she had been hurt by the widespread suspicion of doping that greeted her 3,000m and 10,000m records, after all the hard work we have done, why should some people take this attitude, she said.

"If other people break our records we will be pleased for them. So why are we the Chinese accused."

By bringing his prodigies to this event Ma will have gone a long way to boosting the credibility of his methods and breaking down cynicism in the West.

Sceptics claim the intensity of his training - his athletes all women, run the equivalent of a marathon a day at altitude - can only be borne with the aid of drugs.

But Ma insists traditional Chinese nutritional principles and herbal products are what enables a walk like 20 year old Wang to survive and even thrive in his regime.

He said this week his runners were ready to have blood tests which can detect signs of doping the traditional urine test does not expose.

Ma's dream is to prove to the world that his system can

produce an athlete capable of competing at the highest level from 1,500m through to the marathon.

Kristiansen's record survived on Sunday but there was nothing in Wang's performance

Nerurkar broke away from the leading pace four kilometres from the finish to win in a time of 2 hrs 10 mins 3 secs, shaving nearly a minute from the time he registered in winning his debut marathon in



Chinese Wang Yunxia crosses the finish line to win the women's World Marathon Cup in 2 hr 28 min 16 sec in San Sebastian, Spain on Oct 31. Her compatriots Zhang Linli won the silver and Zhang Lirong won the bronze. — AFP photo

to suggest it will not fall in the next year, possibly at the London Marathon next April.

Negotiations are already underway to bring them to London but the outcome will depend on the say-so of the Chinese Athletics Federation.

Sunday's clean sweep earned Ma's outfit nearly 120,000 dollars which is to be used to fund a new training centre at their base on the Yunnan plateau.

The extent to which the Chinese have broken down the initial scepticism about their performances was demonstrated by a glowing tribute from Britain's Richard Nerurkar, the winner of the men's race.

"They have set up an incredible training and set new standards in training and therefore performance," the 29 year old former teacher said.

"Those standards have revolutionised women's distance running and what we saw today was a reflection of that."

Hamburg in April.

As hefts a multi-lingual graduate of Oxford and Harvard universities, it was an astutely judged run.

Nobody in the group of nine to 12 that had led the race most of the way was able to live with him as he opened up a 50m gap in a two minute burst just as the route turned slightly uphill towards the finish.

Saverino Bernardini of Italy tried in vain to close the gap but had to be content with second nine seconds back.

Kebedu Gemechu anchored Ethiopia's victory in the team event by finishing third, four seconds behind Bernardini.

Four out of the first seven men to cross the line were Ethiopians - a demonstration of strength underlined by the fact that Gemechu was only included in the team as a last minute replacement.

It was a tough last four kilometres but I was pretty confident," said Nerurkar for whom the victory was vindication for his decision to miss the world champion

# Dope charge hurts us: Wang

**LONDON, Nov 1** Double world record-holder Wang Junda has angrily denied allegations of drug taking following her win in Sunday's World Cup marathon in the Basque City of San Sebastian, reports Reuter.

Wang, who annihilated the 10,000 and 3,000 world records last month, said her performance this year had nothing to do with drugs.

"That hurt us a lot," she said. "We are all human beings living in the same world."

"Why do you accuse when ever we achieve anything. We work hard so why take that attitude? We would be happy for others if they did as well. As human beings we deserve equal rights."

Rumours of drug taking have been rife since the Chinese took three track golds at the Stuttgart World Championships and then went on to set three world records in the following month.

But the Chinese have successfully passed all dope tests and coach Ma Junren maintains their astonishing performances are a direct result of their arduous high-altitude training.

Ma was also upset at the allegations and said one reason for bringing his best runners to the World Cup was to give further opportunities for doping testing.

"I was very angry when I heard the allegations," Ma said. "So it pushes me to give my athletes more opportunity to take part in big events like this, to give more people the chance to know the Chinese athletes and to test the Chinese athletes."

World athletics chief Primo Nebiolo has said he has no doubts that the Chinese are clean and his International Amateur Athletic Federation ratified last week the three world records set by at the National Games in Beijing last month.

And Dapeng Lou, China's representative on the IAAF Council, said: "Only by competing regularly in international competition and making our selves available to the drug testers can we erase the world's suspicions."

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# Stich wins 'duel of the hitters'

**STOCKHOLM, Nov 1** Michael Stich played smart, near-flawless tennis to dethrone Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia in a blistering final of the 1.85 million dollar Stockholm Open tennis tournament on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Stich was steadier and clearly stronger on the pressure points as he prevailed 4-6, 7-6 (8-6), 7-6 (7-1), 6-2 in two hours 33 minutes.

Ivanisevic hammered home 30 aces in the duel between two of the hardest hitters on the tour, but his 25-year-old German proved to be the better tactician.

"I only put 80 per cent power behind my first serve and therefore didn't give him many chances to go for my second service," said Stich, who settled for 14 aces.

"Then it was just to stay cool and wait for my chances," he added.

After his match winning backhand, Stich scaled the stands to his coach Niki Pilic and girlfriend Jessica, where the hugs lasted longer than most of the points in the final on the lightning fast rubberised surface in Stockholm's Globe arena.

Such's fifth title this season moved him into the world top three for the first time in his career, ironically at the expense of German arch-rival Boris Becker.

Stich expressed hopes that next month's ATP finals and the Davis Cup final against Australia early in December, both at home, would lift him out of Becker's shadow.

"Clearly, both events are very important for me. I always want to do well in Germany," he said.

Becker has done a lot for German tennis, but I wish that the crowd there knew that several other Germans are coming up," he said.

Ivanisevic has won eight ATP tournaments but has never successfully defended a title.

"I get tense when I have something to defend," the 22-year-old said.

The hot-tempered Croat stated earlier in the week that a newly acquired mental toughness and calmer behaviour had

improved his tennis. There were no antics on court, but mentally the 10th-ranked Croat could not match Stich in the final.

Ivanisevic's tennis for three sets was almost perfect. He did

sets went with serve to tiebreakers, where Stich relentlessly outsmarted his frustrated opponent.

Ivanisevic was a broken man in the fourth set and lost his service twice.



Michael Stich of Germany holds aloft his trophy after winning the Stockholm Open title on Oct 31 by beating Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia 4-6, 7-6 (8-6), 7-6 (7-3), 6-2. — AFP photo

not lose his service yet he trailed two sets to one.

Stich sent two volleys wide in the fifth game of the first set to concede the crucial break to his opponents.

That was his only lapse in the match. The two following

In the doubles final Australians Mark Woodforde and Todd Woodbridge overcame South Africans Gary Muller and Danie Visser 6-1, 3-6, 6-2.

It was the 17th final for the Australian pair. They have won them all.

# Bush proves his tennis ability

**BOCA RATON, Florida, Nov 1** Former president George Bush teamed up with Chris Evert here Sunday to beat Billie Jean King and television personality Regis Philbin in a charity tennis set, reports AFP.

Bush's backhand volley was particularly effective, and King, for one, was impressed with the ex-president's abilities at the net.

"You can tell he grew up playing on grass with that underdog volley," she said.

Evert was the hostess of the event, the Chris Evert Pro-Celebrity Tennis Classic, which raised 800,000 dollars to fight drug abuse and child abuse in south Florida.

# Medvedeva wins Essen final

**ESSEN, Germany, Nov 1** Unseeded Natalia Medvedeva of Ukraine outlasted sixth-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain 6-7 (4-7), 7-5, 6-4 to win the 375,000 dollars Essen Grand Prix women's tennis title on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Medvedeva, who delighted the audience with her display in a semifinal victory over top seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain on Saturday, needed nearly three hours to beat Martinez.

She wore down her opponent with a steady baseline game and clinched the verdict on her third match point.

Medvedeva, 21, who lives in Hamburg and has a German coach, improved her world ranking from 40th to 28th.

# Frana clinches Hellmann Cup

**SANTIAGO, Chile, Nov 1** Javier Frana of Argentina beat Emilio Sanchez of Spain 7-5, 3-6, 6-3 in the final of the Hellmann Cup Tennis tournament Sunday, reports AP.

It was a long final day for Frana in the 200,000 dollar ATP Tour event. Before meeting Sanchez, he had to resume play in his semifinal match against Marcelo Filippini of Uruguay that match was suspended the day before because of heavy rain.

Frana led 6-4, 1-3 when the match was suspended. He finally beat Filippini 6-4, 3-6, 6-3.

# ROK wins first cycling gold

**KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 1** South Korea's Cho Hing-sung won the first gold medal in the 16th Asian Cycling Championship in Ipoh Monday, sprinting to victory in the last lap of a 5,000 metre men's elimination race, reports AP.

Cho, a 20-year-old student at Chung Ang University won three gold medals in the last Asian junior championships in Beijing in 1991.

Second finisher M Kumaresan of Malaysia said, "I didn't make my sprint earlier and before I knew it Hing-sung was already ahead of me."

Lavnenko Sergei of Kazakhstan finished third, the national news agency Bernama reported from Ipoh, 200 kilometre (125 miles) north of Kuala Lumpur.

In the elimination race, 20 laps on a 250-metre circuit, the last place rider is eliminated after every two laps until only two riders are left on the track.

The 11 day tournament had riders from 22 countries.

# Fit Holyfield ready for Bowe

**FAIRBURN, Ga, Nov 1** Former heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield says he is in top form as he completes training for next Saturday's fight against Riddick Bowe, reports AP.

Holyfield has been training with champion bodybuilder Lee Haney in a barn shaped gym behind his Fairburn home, about 15 miles (25 kms) south of Atlanta.

Holyfield says his work with Haney has put him in the best shape he's been in since his 1990 fight with Seamus McDonagh.

"I feel a big difference," said Holyfield. "I've been in boxing for a long time so I know things I can feel my hand speed is better. I'm getting more snap in my punches."

Holyfield hopes to regain the championship he lost to Bowe in a unanimous decision last year in Las Vegas.

Haney had previously served as Holyfield's fitness trainer until the fighter became upset that Haney missed much of the training before a fight against Buster Douglas. Holyfield hired Haney's former assistant to take over but he felt he lost power in his punches.

Holyfield's fitness routine has focused on plyometrics, a training method developed in the former Soviet Union and Bulgaria to increase speed and strength simultaneously.

The drills allow him to use the strength gained in weight training more effectively because there's increased speed, said Haney. "The thing is to programme the mind along with the body so that he becomes physically and mentally more explosive. He understands

now about why he's doing certain drills. Unlike the last fight this time he'll go in with more stamina, endurance and power."

While Haney has been working to increase Holyfield's speed and power, trainer Emanuel Steward has been trying to improve his hitting technique.

"Evander tends to be off balance when he throws punches, leaning over his leg," Steward said. "As a result, it neutralizes his power and leaves him open. We've spent a lot of time on balance and footwork."

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# Brazilian wins Chicago Marathon

**CHICAGO, Illinois, Nov 1** Brazilian Luis Dos Santos overcame freezing temperatures butler wind and even snow here Sunday to win the Chicago Marathon, reports AFP.

"The weather affected me a lot because I am not used to these kinds of temperatures," he said after winning in two hours 13 minutes and 14 seconds.

Dos Santos said he felt strong in the final three miles, despite the fact that he was cold and felt snow falling in his face.

Eddy Hellebuyck of Belgium was second in 2:14.39. Poland's Marcial Bartoszak won the men's 5 kilometre race in 13:53.

Ritva Lementinen of Finland won the women's race in a personal best of 2:33.00. American Linda Somers was second in 2:34.25 and Canadian Angela Chalmers won the 5 km in 16:00.

Both winners received 20,000 dollars, and Dos Santos collected a 500 dollar bonus for breaking 2:14.

# Cairo expects hard fight for 2004 Olympics

**CAIRO, Nov 1** Egypt is already anticipating a tough battle with South Africa in the race to become the first African state to host the Olympic Games, Egypt's top sports official said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

"Egypt plans to bid to host the 2004 Olympic Games but competition from South Africa will not be easy," said Abdul Monem Emara, chairman of the Higher Council for Youth and Sports.

Emara was commenting on weekend remarks from IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch that the African continent would make a strong representative bid to stage the 2004 Summer Games.

"My sentiment is to have the Games in Africa in the near future," Samaranch told reporters in New York. "Three South African cities are interested, and also Cairo in Egypt."

Only one city per country may make a formal bid for a single Olympic Games until 1995 to announce their intentions.

Emara recalled that Samaranch praised Egypt's administration of the African Games held in Cairo in 1991 and attended by the Olympic chief.

"African Sports Ministers who attended the Games at the time agreed Egypt is best qualified to become the first African state to host an Olympic Games," he added.

Samaranch hinted that Beijing a narrow loser to Sydney in its bid to host the 2000 Olympics may not seek to host the 2004 Games if an African city bids to stage the Olympiad.

# Security worries USOC

**NEW YORK, Nov 1** Security concerns could keep the US Olympic team away from a World Cup meet in January at Oberhof, Germany, where a team member was beaten in a racial attack by right-wing skinheads, reports AP.

As concern over the weekend attacks in a German bar grew, US Olympic officials sought assurances that security for Americans competing in Europe was sufficient, while athletes warned against taking too many precautions.

"You can't just roll up in a hall and let the world run over you," said Ronny Warner, a former Olympic luger and a member of the US Olympic Committee's Athletes Advisory Council. She said she had competed and trained 20-30 times in Oberhof without incident.

USOC president LeRoy T Walker said he ordered a security report on the incident and added that Olympic officials needed to take a closer look at where they send athletes to train.

Officials of the US Luge Association said Sunday they were certain German authorities

would handle the situation and provide a safe environment for all athletes in the area. They planned to send formal communication on the matter to the German luge federation and the German Olympic Committee Monday.

But if the American athletes feel unsafe returning to the mountain resort town of 3,000 in the southwestern corner of

what used to be East Germany, the officials said, they would give up the World Cup meet.

"If our athletes are so upset that they don't feel secure, we would skip the meet," said Dwight Bell, luge association president.

The Oberhof meet comes in the final month of preparations for the Winter Olympics, where the United States luge team is expected to do well. That timing would not have any effect on the decision, said Ron Rossi, USLA executive director.

Officials and athletes, interviewed at the USOC board of directors meeting, stressed that the attacks on the athletes were isolated incidents.

But Rossi also said that the luge team - which moved from training in Oberhof to Igls, Austria, a day ahead of scheduled after Friday night's incident - had been told to cover up the American identification on its van and generally keep a lower profile.

Oberhof's mayor and other German officials, fearful the incident would scare away foreigners and blight Germany's image, apologized effusively and sought to assure international athletes they would be safe in Germany.

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# BAF athletics

**JESSORE, Nov 1** The annual inter-bank athletics championship of the Bangladesh Air Force will start at the BAF Base Matar Rahman here from tomorrow. An ISPR press release said here today, reports BBS.

Darius Malloy of the US, 16, holds a bouquet of roses high as she celebrates her victory after beating Heather Poyner in the first sanctioned female boxing match held in Washington on Oct 30. Malloy won the three-round fight in a unanimous decision. — AFP photo.