

Overseas issue on TCCB's plate

LONDON, Aug 15: England's Test and County Cricket Board meets with county clubs Tuesday to debate the issue of overseas players, reports AP.

The Lancashire club wants to phase overseas players out by 1996, and will suggest imports are not offered contracts extending beyond that season pending further discussions.

The club said its first concern is that with an ever-expanding international programme around the world, counties may not get their money's worth from players called up for Test duty.

Lancashire lost Wasim Akram halfway through this season and Somerset are doing without Mushtaq Ahmed because of Pakistan's tour to Sri Lanka.

The issue has also created argument that overseas players have a negative influence on the standard of England's game at an international level.

But most counties, particularly those such as Warwickshire, which has profited enormously from West Indian batsman Brian Lara, would consider the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

Lara has scored eight centuries, including a world record 501 not out, this season for Warwickshire. The club currently leads the county championship, won the first of the limited-over cups, is in the final of another and leads the Sunday limited-over league.

The home countries of the imported players, particularly the West Indies, are also becoming anxious that 12 months-a-year cricket is burning their players out.

West Indies captain Richie Richardson quit Yorkshire last month because of exhaustion and has been ruled out of cricket for up to a year.

The West Indies Cricket Board is to offer its players winter contracts to stay in their country and rest in the off-season. But its offer of 20,000 pounds (dhs 30,000) is not likely to sway the likes of Lara who can make up to 500,000 pounds (dhs 750,000) from his Warwickshire contract and sponsorships.

Lara's agent Jonathan Barnett said the West Indies board could not afford to compensate players like Lara, Courtney Walsh and Curtly Ambrose for the money they can make playing in England.

West Indies have a full team - Lara, Walsh, Ambrose, Phil Simmons, Jimmy Adams, Carl Hooper, Cameron Cuffey, Desmond Haynes, Winston Benjamin, Kenneth Benjamin - currently playing for English county clubs.

Terrific Thompson!

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana, Aug 15: World record holder Jenny Thompson, swimming with a broken arm held together with a titanium plate and seven screws, won the 100-metre freestyle on Sunday at the US National Swimming Championships, reports Reuter.

Thompson, 21, won in 55.50 seconds, capping a remarkable comeback since she broke her left arm in a freak water slide accident during a college fraternity party at Stanford University in May.

Thompson underwent surgery June 3. She had more than 100 stitches and a plate and seven screws put in her arm, and has a six-inch (15 cm) scar on her forearm. After missing 10 days of practice, she returned to a rigorous regimen of physical therapy and two-a-day pool workouts.

"The doctors told me before the surgery I always had next year and I told them I didn't, that I wanted this year," said Thompson.

"This win means more to me than breaking the world record. I felt myself digging in at 75 metres and knew I had the race won."

"I guess I have a bionic arm now," Thompson said. "The arm is still broken, but it's held together pretty well. It gets tight, but now the pain is muscular, not the bone."

Two years ago, Thompson was the first US woman in 59 years to break the world record in the 100-metre freestyle in 54.48. Her record still stands.

With her victory here, Thompson, who won two gold medals and a silver at the Barcelona Olympics and six gold medals at the Pan Pacific Championships last August, qualified for the US team at the World Championships in Rome September 1-11.

In the same race, Angel Martino and Nicole Haislett, both members of the 1992 Olympic team, tied for second in 55.84 and will have a swim-off to determine the second individual qualifier for Rome. The next four finishers qualified for the 400-metre freestyle relay.

In other races, Seth van Nuden, 26, tied Olympian Nelson Diebel's US record by winning the 100-metre breaststroke in 1:01.40, the world's fastest time this year.



DREAM RUN OF A DREAM TEAM... (from left to right) Shawn Kemp, Reggie Miller and Joe Dumars acknowledges the crowd's applause during the ceremonial after beating the Russians 137-91 in the World Basketball Championship final in Toronto on August 14.

Russians outclassed in World B'ball Championship

Dream Team Two rings true

TORONTO, Aug 15: Dominique Wilkins scored 20 points, leading eight US players in double figures as Dream Team II handily defeated Russia 137-91 to win the gold medal at the World Championship of basketball on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Shaquille O'Neal added 18 points and 10 rebounds in 16 minutes as the United States finished the tournament with a perfect 8-0 record and outscored their opponents by an average of 37.8 points.

The only failure the US team of National Basketball Association professionals experienced here was falling short of the original Dream Team's average marking of victory at the Barcelona Olympics, 43.8 points per game.

"We were on a mission today," said Indiana Pacers guard Reggie Miller, who had 11 points. "The gold was waiting for us for two weeks, and today we went after it."

Earlier, Dino Radja scored 22 points and Arjan Komazec added 21 as Croatia defeated Greece 78-60 to earn the bronze medal.

Sergei Babkov scored 22 points to lead Russia, which played without Andrei Fetisov, the team's fourth-leading scorer and second-leading rebounder. He missed the game with an injured right leg.

Fetisov suffered the injury in Russia's only tournament defeat, Friday's 111-94 quarter-final round loss to the United States. He played less than four minutes in Saturday's 66-64 victory against Croatia in the semifinal game.

Without him, Russia were outscored 47-27 by the United States.

Sunday's US victory was virtually assured by halftime when the Dream Team II led 73-40, showing the power, style and arrogance that turned opponents' games into nightmares.

The US team shot 62 per cent (53-of-86), including 28 of 39 first-half shots.

With two minutes left in the half, New Jersey Nets forward Derrick Coleman leaped off the bench to shout: "Hey, can we get our gold medals at halftime?"

The US team, which scored the game's first nine points, also produced runs of 10-0 and 13-2 in the decisive first half.

The early explosion was in stark contrast to Saturday's 97-58 semifinal victory against Greece in which the United States shot just 32 per cent from the floor in the first half.

The frivolity of the US players continued during a second-half time out, when Coleman and several teammates played an impromptu role in a sponsor's promotion, tossing socks and caps into the stands.

Coleman, who led the United States with 13 first-half points in 10 minutes, did not play in the second half.

When Steve Smith hit a 3-point shot with 7:30 to play, all 12 US players had broken into the scoring column, and the Russians sustained their biggest deficit at 114-65.

Behind Wilkins, newly acquired by the Boston Celtics, and O'Neal, the crowd-favourite centre from the Orlando Magic, Alonzo Mourning of the Charlotte Hornets scored 15 points, the Seattle Supersonics' Shawn Kemp had 14, veteran guard Joe Dumars of the Detroit Pistons scored 13 and the Cleveland Cavaliers' Mark Price added 12.

"As long as we send our best players and they agree to come," US coach Don Nelson said, "it will be a long time before the rest of the world catches up with us."

The Russians, who placed fourth at the 1992 Olympics won by the original Dream Team, found their foes here to be overpowering.

"Dream Team II were fabulous in virtually every aspect of play," Babkov said. "They were overwhelming."

"I was fascinated by their defence. I was always moving into a wall, and I just couldn't penetrate it."

Russian captain Sergei Bazarevich said his team also felt the effects of its semifinal victory.

"We were drained after our game with Croatia, not only physically, but also mentally," said Bazarevich, who scored 17 points. "I think it's a pity we could not even match our own

performance against Dream Team II in our first game here."

A crowd of 32,616 saw the game, the largest crowd, ever at a World Championship game.

CROATIA THIRD

Croatia, who lost to Russia 66-64 in Saturday night's semifinal 14 hours earlier, finished the tournament with a 7-1 record.

"It was really hard for us to stand up at 9.30 this morning, so we could play this game," Radja said afterwards.

Fanis Christodoulou and Apnagiotis Fasoulas each scored 12 points to lead Greece (4-4), which enjoyed two early four-point advantages but last led at 12-11.

Toni Kukoc scored 12 of his 14 points in the first half, during which Croatia used just six players and got no scoring from its bench in building a 36-32 lead at the break.

Not until Danko Cvjetcanin's jumper with seven minutes to play did the fatigued Croatians get their only two points from a reserve player.

Croatia ran off eight of nine points to start the second half and maintained a double-figure lead for all but 30 seconds of the final 16 minutes.

"Today I would like to thank our big players," Croatian coach Giuseppe Giergie said. "They played the most and the hardest and they deserve to be recognised."

FINAL STANDINGS

Final standings at the 12th World Basketball Championship on Sunday:

- 1. United States
2. Russia
3. Croatia
4. Greece
5. Australia
6. Puerto Rico
7. Canada
8. China
9. Argentina
10. Spain
11. Brazil
12. Germany
13. South Korea
14. Egypt
15. Cuba
16. Angola

Brits brace for a swell time



Victoria 94

VICTORIA, British Columbia, Aug 15: If results at the Commonwealth Games simply mirrored the cultural way of life in a host city, England would romp away with the medals in Victoria, reports Reuter.

From the cucumber sandwiches in the tea-room at the Empress Hotel to the local theatre production - "No sex, please, we're British" - there could scarcely be a more accommodating venue for English competitors.

With Queen Elizabeth, not to mention Linford Christie and Sally Gunnell, in attendance, the only slight doubt is whether the supporting English cast can match the anticipated contribution of their major players.

England finished second behind Australia in the medals at the Auckland Games four years ago, having led the way in Edinburgh in 1986, and can point to a good record on past visits to Canada.

Of the three previous Games in North America, they have headed the final medals table twice, and are expecting another profitable game.

Apart from Christie and Gunnell, who reinforced their European domination in Helsinki last week, four other English athletes are scheduled to defend their Commonwealth titles at Centennial Stadium on the campus of the University of Victoria.

European javelin champion Steve Buckley, Eamonn Martin (shot) and Diane Madahl (800 metres) will all be chasing back-to-back gold medals, although the proximity of the Games to the European Championships has complicated some issues.

IOC, UNEP join forces

NAIROBI, Aug 15: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has signed a deal with environmental experts in a bid to build on the "green" success of the Lillehammer Olympics. It was revealed Monday, reports AFP.

The environmental protection agreement, concluded with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), covers future Olympic Games and other international sporting events.

Under the deal, signed at Lausanne in Switzerland last month, but made public for the first time here Monday, UNEP and the IOC will "jointly undertake specific international actions" to help make sports events environmentally friendly.

"This agreement is designed to follow up on the momentum of the success of the Lillehammer Olympics and we value UNEP's expertise on environmental issues to further the goals of sports and the environment," IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch said.

In fact, the Olympic Games in the year 2000 were awarded to Sydney, partly because of the consideration they gave to environmental matters, Samaranch added.

UNEP's executive director Elizabeth Dowdeswell said the impact of international sports events on the environment could not be underestimated.

"Arenas have to be built, roads widened, parking lots expanded, food consumed, people transported and information printed," she said.

There has to be a lingering injury doubt over sprinter John Regis who was unable to compete in Helsinki, but European silver medalist Steve Smith and compatriot Dalton Grant are both set to resume their rivalry in the high jump.

English officials this week-end reported no big name withdrawals from their squad and Christie and Gunnell, despite their heavy schedules this year, have made it clear they want to make the trip.

Neither faces much realistic opposition and for Gunnell it represents a rare opportunity to win her third successive Commonwealth gold.

She won the 100 metres hurdles in Edinburgh before moving up to the 400, but is determined not to take too much for granted.

"No one ever lets you have any gold medals anywhere just for the asking," she said. "You have to go out and earn them."

Colin Jackson is in a similar position, albeit in a Welsh vest, in the men's 110 hurdles.

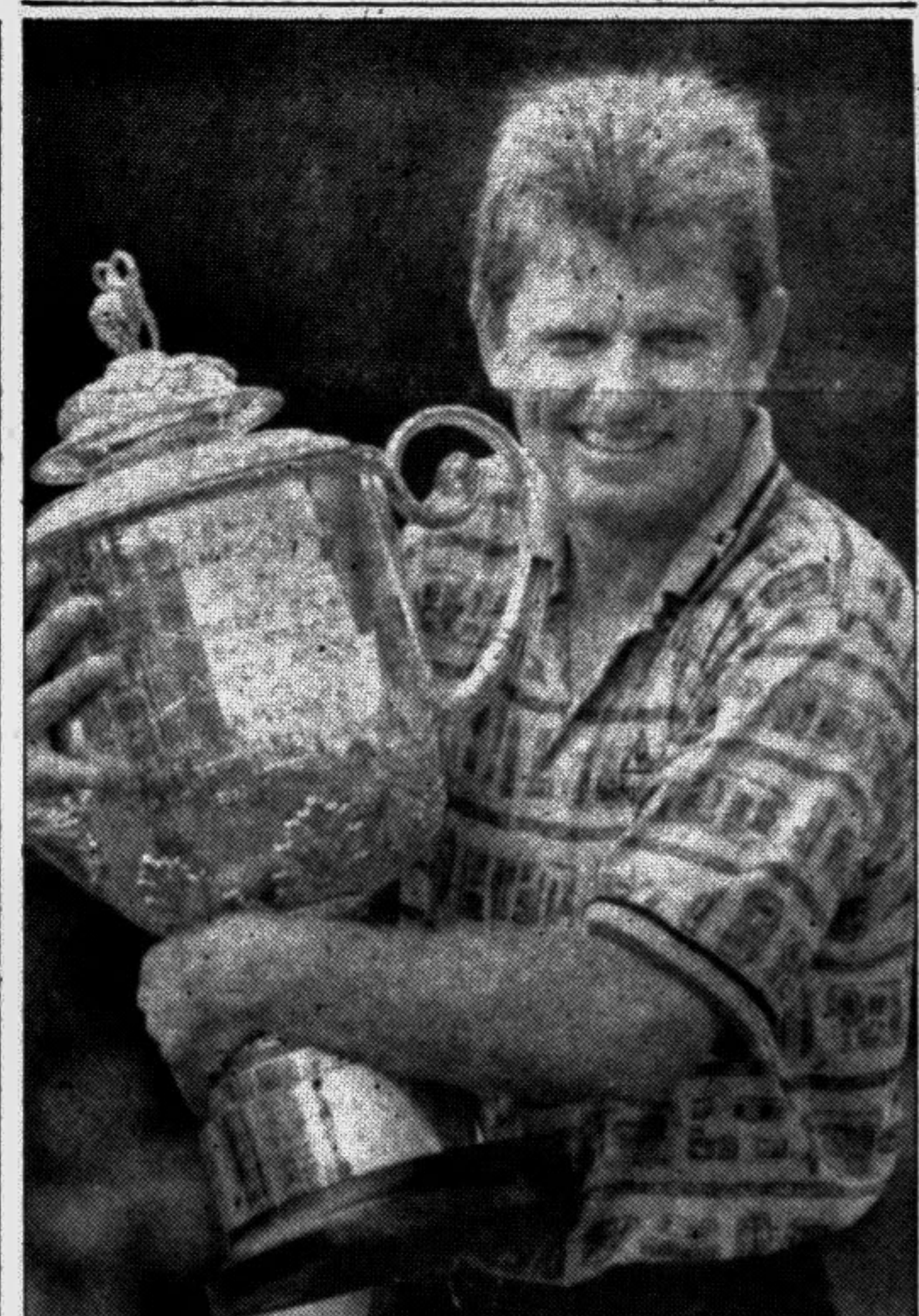
Gymnasts in for hard fall

VICTORIA, British Columbia, Aug 15: Gymnasts at the Commonwealth Games have failed to persuade organisers to switch to softer landing mats before competition starts on Friday, reports Reuter.

Some competitors complained of hard, jarring landings during training but an international delegation ruled over the weekend that the mats were not a safety hazard.

"We've been groping with the problem all week," said venue chief Hardy Fink on Sunday. "The injuries have come when people come down heels first and make an imperfect landing. The mats are the same as the ones used in other major championships - it seems some of the gymnasts were not prepared for this level of competition."

Nigel Kelly, a member of the Isle of Man shooting team, won the first unofficial competition of the Games when he landed a four-kg salmon on a dawn fishing trip.



Golfer Nick Price of Zimbabwe poses with the trophy after clinching the 76th PGA Championship at the Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa Oklahoma on August 14.

Leave the lad alone

VICTORIA, British Columbia, Aug 15: British promoters and managers are seeing a successor to bankable stars like Lennox Lewis and Barry McGuigan have been named to keep their hands off one of England's most promising amateur boxers, reports Reuter.

Super-heavyweight Danny Williams is among the outstanding medal hopes in the ring at the Commonwealth Games, a stage which has propelled numerous young fighters towards fame and fortune in the professional ranks.

But England team coach Ian Irwin claimed on Sunday many agents and managers were "selfish" and only interested in creaming off the best of the amateur talent as quickly as possible.

"I feel the pro circuit are very selfish, they just go in by the back door and I'm probably the last person to find out if someone has turned pro," said Irwin.

"Danny celebrated his 21st birthday during a recent training camp and there wasn't a day when there wasn't a phone call from an agent or manager. It's rude and insincere, they wouldn't leave the lad alone."

The English team hope Williams, a bronze medalist at the 1993 European Championships in Turkey, will not turn professional until after the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, assuming he resists the overtures which are already coming his way.

"He's so explosive in his punching and has very fast hands," said Irwin. "He can certainly produce the goods." It's just a question of how he goes against fighters who are bigger than him. What he's got to do is use his speed. If he hits them, they'll go down.

"I think he genuinely wants to stay with us, but lads are unemployed and money talks. Big lads tend to mature in their mid-20s not their early-20s, but it's money in the bank for the pro people.

"Maybe what boxing needs in future is a plan to stop lads going over too early. They can very easily get disillusioned after a short period of time."

Current WBC World Heavyweight champion Lewis won gold at the 1986 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, while McGuigan won the bantamweight title for Northern Ireland in Edmonton in 1978.

On the same night, Ghana's Azumah Nelson, who was to become McGuigan's arch-rival in the professional ranks, took the featherweight crown.

Colak's run ends

ANKARA, Turkey, Aug 15: The Macedonian High Court Monday ordered the extradition of Turkish soccer star Tanju Colak, reports AP.

Colak, the leading scorer in European soccer in the 1987-88 season, fled Turkey 24 hours before a warrant was issued for his arrest last month. He was arrested last Tuesday at a friend's house in Macedonia.

The Anatolian news agency reported that Colak's extradition will come into effect after the court makes a ruling on Tuesday, but legal procedures will delay his return to Turkey by at least a week.

He faces 22 months in prison and a fine of 772 million lire (dhs 24,500) for knowingly buying a smuggled car.

Africans to miss the stars



Victoria 94

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 15: Africa's medal hopes for the Commonwealth Games will be dented by the absence of many of the continent's top runners, including Davidson Ezinwa, William Sigei and Samuel Mateje, reports Reuter.

Ezinwa, the joint second-fastest man over 100 metres this year with an African record of 9.94 seconds, has not been included in the 81-strong Nigerian team after missing the trials in Lagos.

Sigei, who crushed the 10,000 metres world record of compatriot Yobes Ondieki last month, is among several leading Kenyan runners who have been left out of their team in a continuing dispute with athletes' agents.

Zambian Mateje, who won the 400 metres hurdles at the World Championships in Tokyo in 1991, says he does not intend to compete after years of allegedly being cold-shouldered by his home federation.

But the Games in Victoria will still have Namibian Frankie Fredericks, the world champion at 200 metres, and a host of new Kenyan names to challenge for medals for Africa.

Nigeria, who won five golds at the Auckland Games four years ago, have entered nine sports but their real strength lies in the sprints on the athletics track.

Oalapade Adeniken and Daniel Efiogbo should be strong challengers to Fredericks and Britain's Linford Christie in the 100- and 200 metres.

Kenya are taking 80 athletes in nine sports to Canada

Seedings enrage Scots

VICTORIA, British Columbia, Aug 15: Scotland have forced Commonwealth Games badminton officials to delay the individual tournament draw after a row over seedings on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The Scottish team were angry that none of their players had been seeded even though they occupy higher places in the world rankings than several of their rivals.

Team spokesman Ian Turner confirmed that appeals had been lodged with local organisers and the International Badminton Federations. As a result the draw has been delayed 24 hours until Monday.

"Scotland weren't happy to have the draw delayed but we are seeking fair redress," said Turner.

Scotland were also unhappy not to be seeded in the team competition but decided not to appeal after being placed in the same group as Australia, the country they felt had deprived them of a seeded place.

"We are looking forward to proving a point," admitted Turner. "There'll be a bit of needle when we meet."

and will be entering cycling and swimming for the first time.

As well as Sigei, their world 3,000 metres steeplechase champion Moses Kiptanui will also be missing but the East Africans are still expected to sweep all the middle- and long-distance events - and, at the same time, introduce some new stars to international athletics.

"We will be giving a change to our young, budding athletes to prove themselves," said Isaiah Kiplagat, chairman of the Kenyan Amateur Athletics Association.

Kenyan boxers have dominated the Games since 1970 but this time a question mark hangs over their ability after they lost a recent regional tournament to neighbours Uganda.

Ghana's medal hopes rest with their boxers, despite a recent crisis over selection, while financial problems have cut Tanzania's team down to just six, including the three boxing Matumla brothers.

Mateje's dispute with the Zambian authorities over outstanding appearance money have left the central African country without any real hopes of gold.

"I have been treated very badly despite what I have won for Zambia and I have no intention of going to the Games," Mateje said in a recent radio interview.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Clues include: 1 Away from work, 4 Rooster's adornment, 8 Dispatch filling, 12 Football, 13 Adhem's son, 14 Now me down, 15 1975 hit song, 17 Author Andre, 18 Guidonian note, 19 Intellectual, 21 Music for the 11th day of Christmas, 24 Nosh, 25 Plata's partner, 26 Intent, 28 Crusoe's creator, 32 O.K., 34 Boy, 36 Low cart, 37 Gold or silver, 39 Fabulous bird, 41 Earlier than, 42 Erstwhile, 3 Bahamas resort city, 4 Poolside structure, 5 Kyoto sash, 6 Oliver Twist's request, 7 Move slightly, 8 - sub-, 9 Writer Wiesel, 10 Nothing in Navarra, 11 Turned blue?, 16 Yalie, 20 Peregrinate, 21 The, 22 "Dies -", 23 Hodges of baseball lore, 27 Ruin the veneer, 29 FDR quartet, 30 Scull equipment, 31 Peacock-tail spots, 33 Showed off, 35 Elmer, to Bugs, 38 Felonious flight, 40 Sway, 43 Santa's sackful, 45 Kinspers-son: abbr., 46 Baby carriage, 47 Boo-Boo's buddy, 48 Julia of moviedom, 49 Tie, 53 Anti-pollution org., 54 Have a bug, 55 From sun to sun.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters R S F O K A J H K N P W N C F N Q D and F S K O V S C M J P Q W K H P U M M U P H V S M K J M H M H V U F U P A V R C U M M.

YESTERDAY'S CRYPTOQUIP: SAID ONE LION TAMER TO THE OTHER, RUNNING AMOK: "LET'S GET ROARING DRUNK." Today's Cryptoquip clue: W equals F. 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.