

Sport



Four-time Olympic gold medalist Janet Evans of the United States in action during the trials for the 400 metre freestyle event at the National Swimming Championships in Indianapolis on August 16. Evans, who is also the world record holder in this event, has won 40th US titles. — AFP photo

Six-a-side at the Oval

LONDON, Aug 17: Bating legend Viv Richards will lead a team of former stars in a new international six-a-side tournament at The Oval next month, reports AFP.

The post-season event, on September 21 and 22, will provide the first floodlit cricket on a Test ground in England.

Richards has already recruited former West Indies teammates Gordon Greenidge, Malcolm Marshall and Alvin Kallicharran for his team, which will face opposition from the six major Test-playing countries.

World number one batsman Brina Lara came up with a good excuse for missing the tournament — he is due to meet South African President Nelson Mandela.

Other well-known names expected to appear include India's Sunil Gavaskar and Australia's Greg Chappell.

The nations will play in round-robin format to decide the finalists and the winners will take 15,000 pounds of the 50,000 pounds total prize money.

Each player will have one over, with bowlers limited to a 15-yard run up, ensuring long-retired stars like Chappell should survive against today's pacemen.

TCCB strikes it rich

LONDON, Aug 17: English cricket netted a 58.8 million pound jackpot on Tuesday with a new television deal, reports AFP.

The four year contract with the BBC and satellite network KSKYB incorporates a two million pound arrangement to broadcast matches in England to Asia.

The deal was unveiled at a meeting of the Test and County Cricket Board, which also deferred debate on a call to ban overseas players from the English game.

The TV accord — a substantial improvement on the 15 million yielded over the last three years — gives the two broadcasting companies rights to English Test and county matches.

The BBC will get live Test matches with KSKYB showing one-day internationals, coverage of county championships and knockout competitions will be shared under a more complex arrangement.

TCCB chief executive Alan Smith said: "We need the revenue both to improve our grounds and facilities and to improve our grass-roots programme.

Approximately half the difference between the old and new deals will go to the promotion of players for the future."

Counties can also expect a windfall. Last year each received "around 600,000 pounds. From 1995 the figure should be more than one million pounds.

Meanwhile, the TCCB has granted overseas players a stay of execution in the English county game.

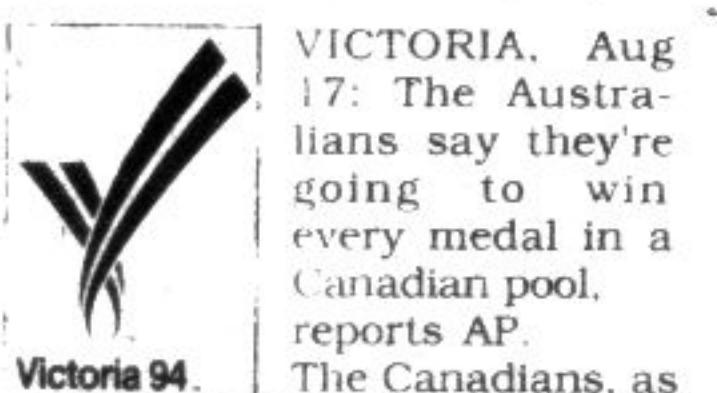
Although Lancashire had suggested overseas players be banned because of the difficulties thrown up by the increasing number of international tours, there was no formal proposal at the Lord's meeting.

Glory for Gloria

NEW YORK, Aug 17: A big one at that, is what Lou Gloria is hoping will him climb in the ATP rankings, reports AFP.

The 25-year-old American currently 204th in the world took a step forward Tuesday by beating fourth-seeded Leander Paes of India 6-3, 6-4 in the opening round of the USTA Bronx Pro Classic.

Canadians take up challenge



VICTORIA, Aug 17: The Australians say they're going to win every medal in a Canadian pool, reports AP.

The Canadians, as if trying to fight off a burglar stealing all their gold, are ready to make sure it doesn't happen.

The Commonwealth Games are two days away and already a war of words is raging over the swimming competition.

"The Australians have been saying they're going to win every medal that there is to win," Canadian head coach Dave Johnson said Tuesday.

"That's a pretty brash statement to live up to. Not only Canada but the rest of the Commonwealth will go out to make sure that doesn't happen."

Australia, who have poured money into strengthening their swim team over the past five years, have brought all their stars to Victoria before going on to the World Championships in Rome next month.

They include Kieren Perkins, Olympic gold medalist at 1,500 metres freestyle and world record holder at 800 and 1,500 metres. During that time Canada

produced world record-breaking swimmers such as breaststroke Victor Davis and individual medley star Alex Baumann. Johnson believes more like that are on the way.

To motivate the whole team of 24 men and 17 women, Australian coaches said they were capable of winning every event, even at the home of their traditional rival, Canada.

Johnson, who admits his own team has been rebuilt after a shaky period that yielded little success, said it is getting stronger and is prepared to mount a challenge to the American and Australian swimming superpowers at the World Championships and next Olympics.

"These Commonwealth Games are part of a very successful rebuilding of the Canadian national team," Johnson said.

"I'm quite confident that Canada will win their fair share of medals and improve upon the medal total in Auckland, where we won 23 in 1990."

The last Commonwealth Games were staged at Edmonton in 1978, was a very successful games for Canada," Johnson said. It was a launching pad for many to international stardom and was part of the Canadian progress in the late 70s and early 80s."

During that time Canada

produced world record-breaking swimmers such as breaststroke Victor Davis and individual medley star Alex Baumann. Johnson believes more like that are on the way.

"It's a team of transition including a number of veterans who are looking at this competition as they swansong in international swimming but also 15 of the 42 swimmers who are first time international swimmers for Canada," he said.

The Australian programme has re-asserted itself. There has been a quite progressive buildup really since Auckland and they have put a tremendous amount of money into their sport.

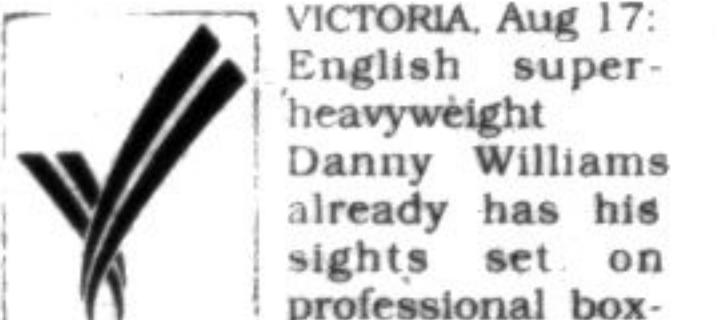
"At the time we were unhappy with our system. We felt that the programme was not what it should be and not what the administrators wanted it to be," Johnson said.

"There is now a new leadership above me and down the line."

"There's no question that the reason for even considering this job is that we believe we Canadian swimming can win," said Johnson, who has been head coach for eight months.

"We have proved that in the past."

Williams looks far forward



VICTORIA, Aug 17: English super-heavyweight Danny Williams already has his sights set on professional boxing's ultimate prize after what he insists is the formality of a Commonwealth Games gold medal, reports Reuter.

The big-punching Williams, forced to take up boxing as a child by his father, is now rated among the most explosive fighters in the amateur ranks and is tipped to prove it in Victoria.

But although he does not plan to turn professional until after the Atlanta Olympics in 1996, the Londoner has thrown down a long term challenge to future opponents in the increasingly fragmented heavyweight division.

"I see this as a stepping stone to Atlanta... I want to go to the Olympics. I've only had 25 fights and most of those have been in competitions. I'm still growing and I need a bit more experience."

Williams, who is 1.87 metres tall and weighs 101 kg, has won 21 of those 25 both, almost all inside the distance, and collected a bronze medal at the 1993 European Championships.

"Most of my losses have been due to fitness but we've trained so hard for this, I've never been so fit in my life."

"Bronze and silver I'm not interested in, I'm positive I'll win the gold. The only one is the Canadian, Shane Hinton, who I've beaten before in the rounds. I've seen some of the others shadow-boxing and I reckon I'll stuff all of them."

"One of four children, Williams' parents appear to have disagreed over their son's sporting development after his father Gussie, who worked for

a car construction company, decided there was a special talent in the household.

"My dad forced me into it when I was 11 but I didn't like it at all," recalled Williams. "He wasn't a boxer but since I was a little baby he just kept saying I was going to be a champion."

"Mum didn't like it but since I started bringing gold medals home she's started to boast about it a bit."

Apart from a missing front tooth — "Some guy knocked it out with a right hand when I was about 14. It was in the ring, I don't street fight" — the only problem for Williams is the lack of a job or a sponsor.

He has earned some money by doing a deodorant commercial but training demands cost him his former employer in a clothes shop.

"Every time there's an international you've got to go away for a week and they didn't want to know," he said.

His unemployed status has at least given Williams more time away from the ring to indulge his hobbies of studying the Bible and, more unusually, the Quran.

"I'm more into the Bible but I like to have debates with the Muslims," he explained.



A member of the Brunei badminton team video tapes Prince Sufri Bolkiah making his entrance at the team's welcoming ceremonies for the 15th Commonwealth Games on August 16. — AFP photo

Evans' 40th

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana, Aug 17: Janet Evans, the greatest woman distance freestyle swimmer in the history of the sport, won her 40th US national title on Tuesday at the US Swimming Championships, reports Reuter.

Evans, 22, led from start to finish to win the 400-metre freestyle in 4:08.78. The world record-holder in the event for the past six years, Evans tied 200-metre butterfly world record holder Melvin Stewart for most national titles with 40.

It was also her 11th national title in the 400 freestyle. Evans has won 24 of 25 major national and international titles in this event since the 1986 Goodwill Games.

The seven-day US nationals are the selection meet for the World Championships in Rome and part of the selection process for the March 11-26 Pan American Games in Mar del Plata, Argentina.

The dual expected between Evans and 16-year-old schoolgirl Cristina Teuscher, winner of Monday night's 200-metre freestyle event, never materialised. Teuscher finished a distant second in 4:11.20.

"I heard so much about this race I was going to have and I got to the 200 and no one was there," Evans said. "I just swam to get through the race. I think the swimmers are lying in wait for the World Championships. In three weeks I swim against the world."

Said Teuscher: "I was just so nervous trying to live up to other people's expectations instead of my own. I was really nervous swimming against Janet."

Evans, four-time Olympic gold medalist, said she will determine whether she remains in the sport through the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta after she competes in the World Championships.

"It would be great to win a fifth Olympic gold medal and be a little part of history," Evans said.

A fifth Olympic gold medal would tie Evans with speed-skater Bonnie Blair for the most in US women's Olympic history.

"I've accomplished everything I can in this sport," Evans said. "I think right now everything I do is icing on the cake. I'm trying to take things with a lighter attitude. I just want to have fun with it now. That's what's keeping me in it."

Other winners Tuesday night were — Lea Loveless in the 100-metre backstroke in 1:01.73, Brad Bridgewater in the 200-metre backstroke in 1:59.21 and Gary Hall in the 100-metre freestyle in 49.31.

A maximum of 26 men and 26 women will be selected for the US World Championships team.

sprinter Linford Christie will arrive fit and well on Saturday as anticipated.

Christie is the single biggest draw on the track, followed by his fellow British European champions Sally Gunnell, Steve Barclay, Colin Jackson and Du'Aine Laodej who all have the chance to endorse their Helsinki achievements.

The 100 metres final next Tuesday should see the 34 year old Christie successfully defend his Commonwealth title and the English team have also asked him to double up in the 200 metres.

But for those who prefer to place the Games in a wider political context the most significant

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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