

Machado, Kumbernuss grab gold

GOTHENBURG, Aug 6: Tiny Manuela Machado of Portugal and mighty Astrid Kumbernuss of Germany used their vastly different physical attributes to win the first gold medals of the World Championships on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The slender Portuguese runner, who is only 1.61 metres tall and weighs just 52 kgs, battled through the sweltering heat of central Gothenburg for two hours 25 minutes 39 seconds to secure the marathon gold.

Kumbernuss, who stands 1.86 metres tall and weighs 90 kgs, put the shot a personal best of 21.22 metres for her first major outdoor title since winning the European crown five years ago at the age of 20.

Kumbernuss' triumph was the first major title for the Neubrandenburg club since Krabbe won the 100 and 200 metres titles and Grit Breuer took silver in the 400 metres at the 1991 World Championships in Tokyo.

Neubrandenburg's two biggest stars have since been banned for cheating with drugs following two much-publicised scandals which have dominated the headlines for most of the last three years.

But the bad days were forgotten as Kumbernuss enjoyed victory over her fierce rival and friend from China. The German, who runs a sports shop in Neubrandenburg, was quick to distance herself from the doping scandals of the past.

"I am not connected with those things that happened. I go in another direction," she said. "I have been promoting clean sport for many years. I have had a lot of out-of-competition drugs tests. I'm very proud of this success with a personal best."

Kumbernuss and Huang have contrasting physiques. While the Chinese athlete is very heavily built, the blonde-haired German is tall and slim despite her obvious power.

Huang, who has spent a lot of time in the West and speaks good English, was clearly not upset by losing out on making history, laughing and joking with her German

Machado had to complete three 14-km circuits around the sun-baked streets, out-thinking and eventually out-running a determined challenger in Romanian Anuta Catuna, who ran shoulder-to-shoulder with her for more than an hour, before eventually conceding victory.

Catuna took the silver in 2:26.25 and Ornella Ferrara of Italy fought back to take the bronze after suffering in the middle of the gruelling 42.195 kms endurance test. She clocked 2:30.11.

Machado's victory not only went on for kilometre after kilometre, she had to choose exactly the right moment to break.

Eventually she made her move with seven kms to run, leaving the Romanian in her slipstream and digging deep into her reserves in the closing stages to clinch the title.

"That was a very, very hard race in hot conditions, and I am surprised I ran such a fast time," she said. "Anuta is a very tough athlete and it was good to run with her, but I had to be careful when to make my move. I felt strong and chose the right time to do it."

In the opening round of the men's 100 metres when American Dennis Mitchell, bronze medalist at the last two World Championships and 1992 Olympic Games, pulled up in his heat with a thigh cramp.

But there was no stopping Linford Christie of Britain, the hot favourite to retain his 100 crown in the final. He looked impressive as he coasted through the opening two rounds of competition, clocking a seemingly effortless 10.15 seconds in the second round in the afternoon.

Possible medalists Mike Marsh of the United States, who clocked the fastest qualifying time with a windy 10.03 seconds, Donovan Bailey of Canada plus Frankie Fredericks of Namibia all sailed through to today's semifinals.

Bailey, the fastest man in the world this year, said a hamstring strain at the top of his left thigh was affecting his lower back.

Gail Devers was another impressive performer, clocking 12.67 seconds in the high hurdles semifinals.

Michel Johnson of the United States and Marie-Jose Perec of France both opened their bids for two individual titles with comfortable wins in the opening round of their 400 metres races.

Johnson, going for a unique double in the 200 and 400, said on Saturday he would be ready to run in the 4x100 metres American relay team if Mitchell's injury was serious enough to keep him out.

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She lost out on a gold in the World Championship in Stuttgart two years ago after leading the race for six kms and as her duel with Catuna



European champion Manuela Machado of Portugal exults after winning the marathon in the fifth World Athletics Championships in Gothenburg on August 5. Machado clinched the first gold of the meet.

the silver with a heave of 20.04 metres.

While both women's victories brought them golds and a Mercedes Benz car worth 35,000 dollars, there is little doubt who endured longer and greater pain for her reward.

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America left in a lurch

GOTHENBURG, Aug 6: A leg muscle injury that knocked Olympic bronze medalist Dennis Mitchell out of the World Championships' 100 metres on Saturday could also end US dominance of the 4x100 metres relay, reports Reuter.

Mitchell, who crashed out of the first round of the 100 with a cramp in his left leg, had been scheduled to anchor the sprint relay for the United States, who have won all four world titles in the event.

The 29-year-old American said it was unlikely he would compete.

"I want to give the United States the best opportunity," Mitchell said. "And the way I am feeling, I think me running on the relay is not possible."

Without Mitchell, who helped US 4x100 metre relay teams set world records in 1992 and 1993, American 100 champion Mike Marsh said the Americans were so inexperienced that after 200 metre runner Jeff Williams "probably our next best sprinter is Gwen Torrence." Torrence is the Olympic women's 200 metre champion.

Furthermore, Michael Johnson, already bidding for three gold medals, will not run in the US 4x100 metres relay team, coaches said today.

Johnson, who is seeking an historic double in the 200 and 400 metres and plans to run the 4x400 metres relay final, had offered to come to the rescue of the US squad after Dennis Mitchell crashed out of the 100 metres with a cramp on Saturday.

But relay coach Ron Bazil said: "We are not going to ask Michael Johnson to run in the relay because he has so many other races."

The Americans will also be denied the talents of Carl Lewis, a relay alternate, who pulled out of the championships on Thursday because of a hamstring injury.

Spokesman Mike Takaha said the US coaches wanted to wait a day to see if there was a chance Mitchell might still be able to run the relay next weekend.

Takaha said if Mitchell was unable to run, Tony McCall, a college student with no international experience, would be called up to replace him.

Mitchell's absence would ensure Canada, who have the year's two fastest sprinters in Donovan Bailey and Bruny Surin, would be favourites for the relay gold medal.

Even before Mitchell's injury, the Canadians were looking like strong challengers to the US team, who also include Maurice Greene, Jon Drummond and Marsh.

Mitchell said he hoped to return to the European circuit before the season ends "and kick some butt."

"One of those lanes (in the World Championships 100 metres final) belongs to me, and I'm going to get it back," Mitchell said.

Although he had suffered cramps about five days ago while training, Mitchell said he had felt fine on Saturday. "I felt excellent warming up," he said. "And I have been having world record workouts."

"But when you are running workouts at that level, you are on a very thin line. You could blow up or you could keep everything together. I didn't blow up but somebody lit the wick. I was on the verge of blowing up."

"You have to be willing to take these kind of chances. I took it, and it worked against me this time."

"But it's not going to stop me from fighting and it's not going to stop me from coming back."

Romario kicks up a row

RIO DE JANEIRO, Aug 6: Spain, Brazil, now Japan. No matter where he goes, Romario finds a new controversy.

The Rio daily O Globo reported Saturday the 1994 FIFA player-of-the-year struck 22-year-old rookie Flamengo teammate Savio during the club's 3-2 loss on Thursday to Japan's Kashiwa Reysol in an exhibition match on the Rio team's Asian tour, reports AP.

Savio's father, Mazinho, said his son called him from Japan twice to complain about being pushed around by Romario and Edmundo, who had created "a horrible atmosphere" surrounding the team.

Mazinho, however, would not confirm other reports that Savio was so upset with Romario that he wanted to be transferred.

O Globo also published in Saturday a news release by Flamengo directors in which Romario and Savio deny any incident took place.

But according to O Globo, Romario kicked and pushed Savio when Flamengo was losing 3-0. Savio was substituted at halftime.

Retired Brazilian national team and Flamengo star Zico told O Globo that "Savio's play has been way off the mark and it's a direct result of his relationship with Romario."

Zico expressed concern that the World Cup hero could endanger Savio's career.

"But Flamengo's team charisma is enough to calm down any dispute between players," Zico added.

Flamengo beat the Urawa Red Diamonds 3-1 Tuesday and routed Shimizu S-Pulse 5-0 early Saturday on its current tour, which will continue on to China and Spain.

The combining of Romario and Edmundo, at a cost of 5 million dollars, with the promising Savio, was billed as a "Dream Team". But some are starting to consider it, as O Globo called it, "Flamengo's big nightmare."

Before the trip, Romario was the centre of a power struggle that cost coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo his job. After his successful 1994 World Cup, Romario refused to return to Spanish club Barcelona.

With Luxemburgo sacked, new manager Edinho said before the team left Rio last week that he hoped the trip would sharpen the play of the famous trio for upcoming national championship.

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Mueller makes her mark

ZITTAU, Germany, Aug 6: Andrea Mueller broke the women's world pole vault record here on Saturday with a leap of 4.18m, reports AFP.

The 21-year-old German broke the old mark — of 4.17m by Czech Daniela Bartkova on July 15 — at the Zittau regional championships.

Didoni walks 20-km fastest

GOTHENBURG, Sweden, Aug 6: Italy's Michele Didoni captured the first men's gold medal of the World Championships when he won the 20-kilometre walk Sunday, reports AP.

Didoni, the 1993 European junior champion, was timed in 1 hour, 19 minutes, 58 seconds on a course that included 10 laps up and down the main street just outside the Ullevi stadium.

Defending champion Valentin Massana of Spain was second.

Giovanni De Benedictis of Italy came across the line in third place but was disqualified soon afterwards giving Yevgeny Misyulya of Belarus the bronze medal.

Mexican Daniel Garcia was also disqualified for running with about two kilometers (one mile) to go while battling Didoni for the lead.

It was the second consecutive time that Garcia was disqualified in the final stretch of this event in the 20-kilometre walk. Garcia appeared to have a medal in the 1993 World Championships but was disqualified in the final straightaway within sight of the finish line.

Blunder indeed!

GOTHENBURG, Aug 6: Athletes at the World Championships did not run a full women's marathon, organisers admitted today, reports Reuter.

A blunder by the local organisers at the start of Saturday afternoon's race meant that the runners only completed three laps of the Ullevi Stadium track before heading out into the streets of Gothenburg.

"They should have run an extra lap," said Carl-Gustav Tollemar, the competition director. "After studying video evidence, we realised a mistake had been made which we deeply regret."

The mistake was announced in early hours of Sunday morning, around seven hours after the end of race.

"The shorter distance will not change the final standings or medal placings. But the mistake will be a disappointment for many of the athletes."

The race was won by Portugal's Manuela Machado in what she thought was a personal best time of two hours, 25 minutes and 39 seconds for the 42.195 km race.

Instead she, and the 31 other women who completed the race only ran 41.795 kms.

Graf won't leave Germany

BONN, Aug 6: Steffi Graf has no plans to leave Germany despite the tax probe that targets her and father, reports Reuter.

"I had considered it, but when I thought about it, I realised I wanted to stay in Germany," the world number one told Germany's ARD Television in an interview broadcast in full on Saturday.

She said she was going to play in the US Open later this month but did not know when she would return to Germany.

Asked how she reacted to the news of her father Peter Graf's arrest on Wednesday, she said: "I was totally shocked. My first reaction was to fly home. But then I spoke to my mother and my lawyer and they said I should stay in America. I have not been allowed to speak to my father."

Ulihrach wins

PRAGUE, Czech Republic, Aug 6: Unseeded Bohdan Ulihrach of the Czech Republic beat Spain's Javier Sanchez 6-2, 6-2 Sunday, in the final of the 365,000 dollars skoda men's tennis championships at the Stvanice clay-court stadium, reports AP.

In the first set, Ulihrach, the more aggressive of the two, broke the seventh-seeded Sanchez in the third game and took a 2-1 lead. He again broke Sanchez's serve in the seventh game, winning the first set 6-2 in only 30 minutes.

Enqvist serves stunner again

LOS ANGELES, Aug 6: Sweden's Thomas Enqvist beat top-seeded Goran Ivanisevic at his own game Saturday, overpowering the Croatian for a 6-7 (3-7), 6-4, 6-4 victory to reach the final of the 328,000 US dollars Infinity Open, report agencies.

Torrence on to target

GOTHENBURG, Aug 6: Gwen Torrence led the way in to the second round of the women's 100 metres at the World Championships today then joined critics of a new electronic starting system, reports Reuter.

A day after a series of false starts disrupted the men's sprinters during the opening two rounds of their 100 metres, erratic starting instructions continued throughout the women's 100 first round and the men's 100 decathlon heats.

As well as the unusually high number of false starts, the recall gun was often not being fired until the athletes were some way out of their blocks.

American Torrence, the fastest qualifier for the second round of the 100 in 11.11 seconds, said after her race: "It's weird, you don't know what to expect. I have never been held that long before, especially at the 'on your marks' position."

"You know it's the gun but it sounds like a clap, it's hard to hear it."

Jamaican Merlene Ottey, who is aiming for a sprint double of 100 and 200, agreed with Torrence.

After winning her heat in 11.15 seconds, she said: "It is a very, very long hold and I am surprised there have not been more false starts. It's the longest I have ever been held in any meet. All these false starts could mean the scheduled being delayed."

The delays did not prevent any of the favourites making it through the opening round with European

champion Irina Privalova of Russia (11.28), double Olympic silver medalist Juliet Cuthbert of Jamaica (11.26) and Zhanna Pintusevich of Ukraine (11.34) all winning their heats with ease.

Torrence also complained that the athletes were being kept too long in the call room before their races.

"We were in there for 25 minutes which is far, too long," said the Olympic 200 champion. "I was beginning to tighten up."

The athletes' criticisms came the day after the championships' competition director Carl-Gustav Tollemar admitted Saturday's women's marathon had been 400 metres short.

The runners ran only three laps of the Ullevi Stadium track before leaving the stadium for the streets of Gothenburg.

Chris Huffins was the first to make an impression in the decathlon, leading the two-day 10-discipline event after

the opening 100 metres and long jump.

The 25-year-old American won the 100 in 10.34 seconds and cleared 7.85 metres in the long jump to lead the standings with 2,035 points, 92 ahead of Estonia's Erik Nool with 1,943 and 129 clear of defending champion and favourite, American Dan O'Brien who has collected 1,906.

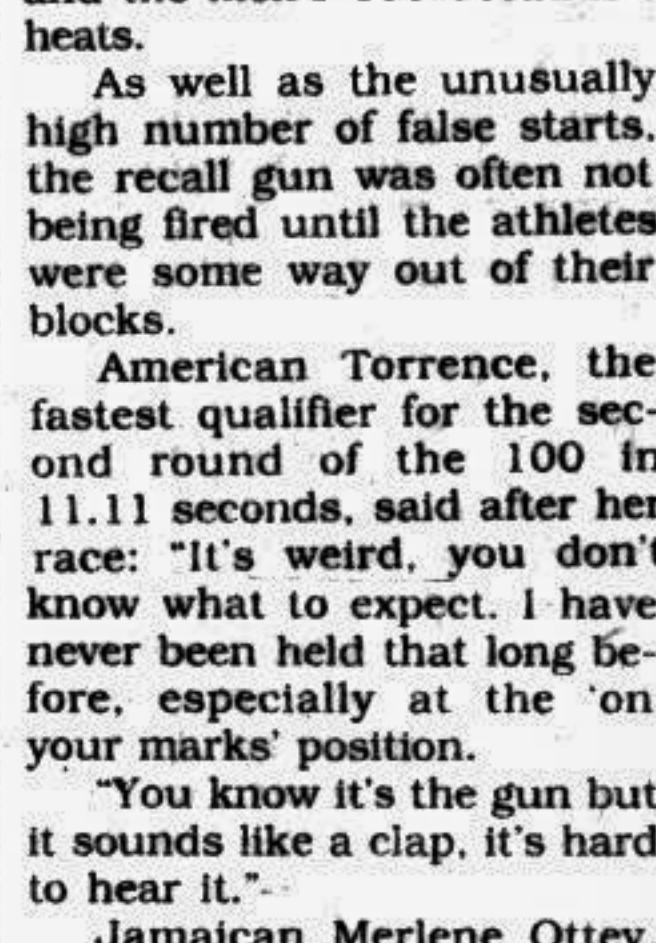
Huffins is an outstanding first day competitor and usually takes an early lead over O'Brien, whose 100 time of 10.57 seconds and long jump of 7.55 metres were a long way short of his personal bests of 10.23 and 7.90 respectively.

The one upset was the elimination of European champion Alain Blondel of France who failed with all three of his long jump attempts.

There were no surprises in the two women's 10,000 qualifying heats with all the likely contenders successfully negotiating their way into Wednesday's final.

Olympic champion Derartu Tulu of Ethiopia won the opening heat in 32 minutes 16.71 seconds, leading a posse of qualifiers including Britain's Yvonne Murray, Kenyan Tecla Lrupe and South African Elana Meyer, the Olympic silver medalist over the line.

Fernanda Ribeiro of Portugal, the new 5,000 world record holder, headed home a similar group of contenders in the second heat. Ribeiro clocked 32:33.87, with Liz McColgan of Britain, the 1991 world champion, and American Lynn Jennings, the Olympic bronze medalist, right behind her.



Gwen Torrence

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World champion Lee Kyung-Chul of South Korea in action during the final of the men's team event of the 38th World Archery Championships in Indonesia on Aug 6. Lee led his country to beat Indonesia.

ROK archers' fine feat

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Aug 6: South Korean archers dominated Sunday's last day of the World Archery Championships by winning both the Olympic division men's and women's gold medals, reports AP.

The United States, however, led the medal tally with three golds, two silvers and two bronzes after taking the women's team title Sunday in the compound division.

Michelle Ragsdale led the Americans in their 242-241, defeat of Sweden in the finals. Angela Moscarelly, 13, and fellow American Gary Broadhead earlier had won the women's and men's individual titles.

The Koreans, who collected three golds and two bronzes, overpowered Italy 255-243 and outclassed Turkey 247-222 respectively in the men's and women's team finals.

The United States lost 232-237 in the semifinals but took the bronze medal by defeating Sweden 246-244.

In the women's team competition, host Indonesia was defeated 245-214 by South Korea, but won its only medal, a bronze, in the event by beating Germany 219-215.

The other gold medal winner in the six-day event was Moldova, whose Natalia Valeeva won the women's individual in the Olympic division.

Martinez puzzles Pierce

CARLSBAD, California, Aug 6: Second seed Conchita Martinez and ninth-seeded American Lisa Raymond both defeated French foes Saturday to set up a meeting in the final of the 430,000 dollars Toshiba Tennis Classic.

Martinez of Spain picked apart Mary Pierce 6-1, 6-3, while Raymond dismissed Sandrine Testud 6-4, 6-3 in the semifinals.

Though the score indicated a romp, the 23-year-old Spaniard hardly agreed in her appraisal of the one-hour 17-minute sweep against world number three Pierce.

"It wasn't easy at all," said Martinez, the 1994 Wimbledon champion. "I had to fight my way until I could win the match. I fight for every ball, make her play another shot, and may be she makes some errors because she's very impatient."

Martinez's heavy top spin forehands and sliced backhands frustrated the hard-hitting Pierce into 29 unforced errors.

"She's very impatient all the time," said Martinez. "You have to be very patient and aggressive at the same time. All you need to pick the right ball, and go for it."

Martinez claimed the first set after surviving two break points in each of her first two service games before getting on track.

Pierce offered a stiffer challenge in the second set by rushing the net more. But

she blew her chance to force a third set by double-faulting the seventh game away, giving the Spaniard a 4-3 edge.

"I made too many mistakes," said Pierce, who has dropped two of three career meetings against the Spaniard.

Muster survives a toughie

KITZBUEHEL, Austria, Aug 6: Top-seeded Thomas Muster came from behind to overcome fellow-Austrian Gilbert Schaller 6-2, 6-7, 6-3 in the semifinals of the 435,000 dollars Austrian Open men's tennis tournament on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The world's top clay player trailed 2-1 in the final set having dropped his opening service game after a series of unforced errors.

Schaller, who defeated Pete Sampras in the first round of this year's French Open, was far from overawed by his opponent and responded to Muster's powerful ground strokes with some searing two-handed backhands and deft drop shots.

Schaller took the second set confidently 7-1 in the tie-break as French Open champion Muster looked tentative at times missing many first serves.

But he found his rhythm at the crucial moment and took four games on the trot in the final set.

"Today I was completely off," Pierce said. "I wouldn't say I felt helpless, but it was just like I playing against a pusher, somebody who's just bringing it back really high and really deep."

"Normally, I love to play with those people. But Conchita was playing really deep, and I think I was going for my shots too big, too soon."

"It's disappointing when you know you can beat somebody, when you feel you better than them and you should win, but you messed it and lose the match."

It was a bad day for the Frenches. Raymond employed her aggressive serve and ground game to get past Testud.

"There's nothing to say," said Testud, ranked 62nd. "She served very good and I didn't until the last few games. She played better."

Raymond is eager to claim her first career title after losing her previous two finals, including a title match defeat to Magdalena Maleeva in Chicago this year.

"It's fun being in a final, I'd like to do it more often," said Raymond, ranked 22. "Hopefully the third time will be a charm."

Raymond has pushed Martinez to three sets in her two previous losses to the Spaniard. "I'm definitely the underdog, so I'm going to be a lot more relaxed out there," said the third-year pro. "She knows I'm going to give her a good match and she's going to have to play well to beat me."