

# Johnson juggernaut proving unstoppable

**GOTHENBURG, Aug 11:** American Michael Johnson took a giant step towards a unique golden double on Wednesday when he retained his world 400 metres title with a dazzling burst of finishing speed as he set the second fastest one-lap time ever, reports Reuters.

The 27-year-old from Dallas clocked 43.39 seconds, leaving American world record holder Butch Reynolds six metres adrift in second place in 44.22 seconds.

Johnson's storming victory was the highlight of a day's athletics which saw Hassiba Boulmerka claim the women's 1,500 metres title for Algeria and Portugal's Fernanda Ribeiro capture the women's 10,000 metres gold medal.

The only slight disappointment for Johnson, one of the most awesome athletes on the planet, came when he realised he had failed to break Reynolds' seven-year old world record of 43.29 seconds by just a one-tenth of a second.

"I looked at the clock and I was a little disappointed at first to go so close to the world record and not break it," he said. "But that performance has filled me with confidence. I think I can break it later in the season."

"But there's no time to



MICHAEL JOHNSON 200 at half-past nine tomorrow morning.

celebrate. I'm going to have a massage, something to eat and go to bed because I have to run the first round of the

disappeared the instant he caught Reynolds with 175 metres to go.

"I saw him go past me and I just didn't have the speed or strength to catch him," admitted Reynolds, who repeated his silver from the 1993 World Championships in Stuttgart.

For Johnson, it was his fourth world gold medal and his 46th straight victory over 400 metres.

Greg Haughton, a 21-year-old from Jamaica, who won the American collegiate title two months ago, was third in 44.56 and seemed awestruck at the news conference afterwards.

"I am so happy with a personal best and a bronze medal and to be sitting next to the two best ever to have walked the earth at this distance," he said. This is their time and I hope I can match them in the future."

While Johnson lived up to all the pre-race hype to win his crown, Ribeiro repaid the quiet confidence instilled by her supporters when she captured Portugal's second gold medal of the championships, winning the 10,000 metres title in 31 minutes 4.99 seconds.

Ribeiro, who set a world 5,000 metres record last month in the Netherlands, never allowed Olympic champion Deraritu Tulu to dictate the pace.

# Agassi, Sampras in qtrs

**MASON, Ohio, Aug 11:** Top seed Andre Agassi and second seed Pete Sampras both needed three sets on Thursday to move into the quarter finals of the 1.8 million dollars ATP Championship but their matches were quite different, reports Reuters.

The top-ranked Agassi played a bizarre match that seemed dramatically before he finished with a 6-0, 0-6, 6-2 third round victory over 16th-seeded Alberto Berasategui of Spain.

Sampras barely withstood a long, close battle with fellow American and 15th-seeded Todd Martin for a 6-7 (2-7), 6-4, 7-6 (7-4) win.

In today's quarter-finals, Agassi faces unseeded Rocco Pietrangeli of Italy and Sampras plays eighth-seeded Michael Stich of Germany.

In other pairings, fourth-seeded and two-time defending champion Michael Chang faces 11th seed Jim Courier and sixth seed Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia plays



Russia's Svetlana Moskalets is suspended in animation during the long jump competition of the heptathlon event at the Athletics World Championships in Gothenburg on August 10. Moskalets leaped a distance of 6.70 metres to win the competition. — AFP/UNB photo

# Van Troost put on ice

**TAUNTON, England, Aug 11:** Pace bowler Andre van Troost was ordered out of the Somerset attack by the umpire for intimidatory bowling in the English County Championship match against Kent on Thursday, reports Reuters.

On the same ground a week ago, the Dutchman struck West Indies batsman Jimmy Adams with a short-pitched delivery that put him out of the current fifth Test against England with a cracked cheekbone.

Van Troost was twice non-balled against Kent for short-pitched deliveries at Nigel Long having already sent own one bouncer in the over.

In his next over Van Troost knocked the bat out of Graham Cowdrey's hands with a full toss and umpire

Barry Dudleston told Somerset skipper Andy Hayhurst to remove him immediately for the rest of the innings.

Hayhurst himself bowled the final two balls of the over.

"Long had the last laugh as he went on to hit a century in a Kent total of 271. Pakistani leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed took five for 106 for Somerset."

Another leading Pakistan Test bowler, paceman Wasim Akram, celebrated captaining Lancashire for the first time

with six for 72 as Leicestershire were bowled out for 235.

He took over from county captain Mike Watkinson and England skipper Michael Atherton, both playing in the fifth Test.

Former England skipper Graham Gooch claimed the 118th first-class century of his career and his fifth of the season as he shared a sparkling 189-run second wicket partnership with Nasser Hussain for Essex against Glamorgan at Swansea.

Gooch was out for 102 and Hussain for 103 as Essex reached 330 for seven.

Derbyshire captain Kim Barnett hit 169 in six-and-a-quarter hours against Worcestershire at Kidderminster, his 46th century for the county, who finished on 355 for four.

# Privalova sidelined

**GOTHENBURG, Aug 11:** World 100 and 200 metres medalist Irina Privalova has been forced to pull out of the Russian women's 4X100 metres relay squad at the World Championships because of a leg muscle injury, reports Reuters.

The double European champion said today that she had strained a leg muscle in Thursday's 200 metres final where she won the silver medal. Privalova said she was also likely to miss next week's Golden Four meeting in Zurich, the richest event on the circuit.

"In the second part of the 200 metres I felt something wrong with my leg," Privalova said. "I finished the race but now, of course, it will be no to a start in the relay and no to Zurich."

Privalova said she would travel to Switzerland ahead of Wednesday's meeting to see a specialist since the Zurich organisers were keen for her to run.

But the Russian hopes to be fit enough to run at the end of the season at the final Golden Four meetings in Brussels and Berlin.

# Christie plays it down

**GOTHENBURG, Aug 11:** British sprinter Linford Christie denied manhandling a press photographer at Zurich Airport when he arrived back in Sweden for the World Championships after treatment to a hamstring injury, reports Reuters.

Asked about the incident before his flight from Switzerland to Gothenburg, Christie said: "That doesn't ring any bells with me, not at all. You know about Chinese whispers, the more they go around, the longer they get."

Christie's agent Sue Barrett, who travelled on the flight with him from Zurich interrupted: "I was there. I didn't see anything."

Christie added: "Would I do that? Would I abuse anybody?"

But Reuters photographer Rene Meier said he was chased and grabbed by Christie after taking his picture at the airport.

Watched by astonished passengers, Christie tried to grab the photographer's camera but was restrained by three airport security guards. The athlete stormed away through the airport departure lounge to take his flight to Sweden minutes before it was due to leave.

"He ran through the security gate and tried to grab my camera," said Meier, who also works as a part-time paramedic with an ambulance crew.

"He's a head higher than I am, he grabbed me, he tried to frighten me but the security men came forward and helped. All three pulled him off."

"I got the camera back and the security men said run and I got away. I didn't understand what he was saying but he sounded furious."

"It was not pretty. I thought top sportsmen were meant to set an example."

Christie had been in Switzerland receiving treatment for the hamstring injury that contributed to his defeat as he was defending his world 100 metres crown last Sunday.

Christie, who was speaking to the British media for the first time in several weeks when he arrived back in Sweden, said his injury was a lot worse than was first thought.

"There's a tear in the hamstring and to be honest with you I'm not running any more this week."

# An Arabian fairy-tale

**GOTHENBURG, Aug 11:** What will Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad buy Ghada Shouaa now?

That is the question people may be asking after heptathlete Shouaa won Syria's first ever gold medal at the World Athletics Championships on Thursday, reports Reuters.

After the 21-year-old won the Asian Games last year Hafez Al-Assad presented Shouaa with a villa and a car.

There is no need for a car this time since Shouaa won a Mercedes for winning the gold, the first medal for a Middle East country at World Championships.

According to Syrian athletics official Mowafak Jomaa, the first thing the country will organise is a cavalcade from Damascus to her home village of Maharda 120 kilometres away.

Like 1984 Olympic 400 metres hurdles champion Nawal-el-Moutawakil, the first Arab woman to win a major title, Shouaa will become a hero for Arab youngsters after her Gothenburg victory.

"It will encourage Arab girls to take up sport," said Shouaa who won the competition with 6,651 points, 76 points ahead of Russian Svetlana Moskalets.

Jomaa added: "I hope this will give athletics a big push and make it more popular than football in Syria."

Shouaa paid tribute to her Russian coach, Kim Bukhantsev, who has been guiding her for the last 12 months. "He has been worth 500 points to me," she said.

Bukhantsev, former coach to 1972 Olympic discus champion Pina Melnik, is Shouaa's second Russian coach under an exchange agreement between the national Olympic committees of Russia and Syria.

He specialises in the throwing events, and it was



Jamaican Merlene Ottey kisses the gold medal after winning the 200 metres event at the World Athletics Championships in Gothenburg, Sweden on August 10. — AFP/UNB photo

# Ottey steals Torrence's thunder

**GOTHENBURG, Aug 11:** American sprint star Gwen Torrence was sensationally stripped of her 200m title here on Thursday night, leaving Jamaican rival Merlene Ottey with the gold medal, reports AFP.

A seven-man jury — presided over by IAAF president Primo Nebiolo — ruled unanimously that Torrence had stepped out of her lane, and awarded the victory to the defending champion.

Russian pair Irina Privalova and Galina Malchugina got silver and bronze.

Ottey later accused Torrence, who had a commanding lead at the line, of cheating. However, the immensely popular Jamaican then tempered her allegations by saying she did not know if the move was deliberate.

"She cheated. She ran about two metres shorter than everybody else and she ran in somebody else's lane."

"I don't know if she did it on purpose, but sometimes an athlete wants to run as short as possible and runs too close to the kerb. I heard she did it in the semifinals and it was very close, but I wasn't looking."

Describing the race, Ottey said: "I thought I would catch her earlier, but she was running on the line or cheating so I spent a lot of energy."

"In the last 30m, she was so much stronger than everybody else."

Torrence also changed her tune, after initially hitting out at both the decision and the victor.

"I'm not going to worry," she said. "I know I was clearly victorious."

"I clearly beat them, I lane I didn't realise it. I can't let it ruin my 100m gold medal."

The 30-year-old then promised to win in next year's Atlanta Olympics, stormed out of the stadium and returned to the Athletes' Village.

But US officials later gave a statement from her husband, made before the jury's decision, which said: "If it doesn't go the way we want it to, it's okay with Gwen."

Not only did Ottey believe she deserved her victory, she also recalled the controversy which dominated the last World Championships, when she was denied the 100m gold by American Gail Devers.

Devers got the verdict at Stuttgart in 1993 after a jury considered the photo-finish, awarding victory by 1,000th of a second, but Ottey has always maintained she won.

In Gothenburg, Ottey admitted: "I thought not again, not again."

"I tried to stay calm because the United States is so strong, so powerful and things usually go their way — you know, remember Stuttgart."

"I'm very happy that it worked in my favour this time. I hope it doesn't happen a third time, because I don't know if I'll be lucky a third time."

Privalova, who said her performance had been affected by a muscle spasm after around 50m, was not in the mood to commiserate either. She said: "It's a rule for everybody. If it didn't exist, everybody would do it."

Ottey, however, stressed she still thought Torrence — who will be on home ground next year when the Olympics are staged in Atlanta — was a "great athlete."

The American looked to have emulated Katrin Krabbe of Germany in 1991 and East German Silke Gladisch in 1987 after storming home in 21.77 sec to complete the 100/200m double.

Torrence completed a lap of honour and then threw her spikes into the crowd in delight.

But that delight lasted barely a few minutes before the Ullevi scoreboard suddenly revealed that the 30-year-old, who won the 100m after an identical 1-2-3 on Monday, had been disqualified.

The controversial finish to the night meant that former drugs cheat Inessa Kravets of the Ukraine, who obliterated the world record to win gold in the women's triple jump, was completely overshadowed.

Kravets took her lead from Jonathan Edwards, who set two world records in the men's competition — then revealed she had a picture of the British athlete with her to inspire her.

The 28-year-old only managed two legal jumps during the competition but her third-round effort of 15.50m was never challenged.

Derrick Adkins continued the United States' glorious 400m hurdles tradition, starting fast and managing to hang on in a thrilling finish to hold off 1991 world champion Samuel Matete of Zambia's traditional late charge and Stephane Diagana of France.

Ghada Shouaa became the first Syrian ever to win a gold medal at a major international event when she took the heptathlon title, ahead of Russian Svetlana Moskalets and Rita Inancsi of Hungary.

This confirmed many experts opinion that the 21-year-old from Syria would inherit Jackie Joyner-Kersey's domination of the event.

Valentin Kononen of Finland won the men's 50km walk, ahead of Giovanni Perricelli of Italy and Robert Korzeniowski of Poland.



GWEN TORRENCE know it in my heart. The person who will win now can't enjoy that."

# An Arabian fairy-tale

appropriate that Shouaa should dramatically overturn Moskalets' 220-points lead in the javelin, the sixth event.

With a decisive 54.92 metres in the final round, compared with the Russian's 41.08 she turned the deficit into a 48-point lead ahead of the final event, the 800 metres.

Moskalets needed to beat Shouaa by three seconds to capture the gold and with 250 metres remaining the Russian swept into the lead.

But Shouaa tracked her into the home straight before unleashing a kick to win the race in two minutes 14.33 seconds.

Four years ago Shouaa was unknown in world terms. At the 1991 World Champion-

# Medals table

MEDALS TABLE		
Medals table after the sixth day of competition at the World Athletics Championships on Thursday (tabulated under gold, silver, bronze):		
United States	6	1 2
Italy	2	2 1
Portugal	2	0 1
Russia	1	2 6
Belarus	1	2 1
Jamaica	1	1 1
Finland	1	1 1
Canada	1	1 1
Britain	1	1 0
Ethiopia	1	1 0
Bahamas	1	1 0
France	1	0 1
Ukraine	1	0 0
Tajikistan	1	0 0
Syria	1	0 0
Germany	1	0 0
Denmark	1	0 0
Algeria	1	0 0
Romania	0	2 0
Cuba	0	2 0
Bulgaria	0	1 1
Zambia	0	1 0
Morocco	0	1 0
Kazakhstan	0	1 0
Spain	0	1 0
China	0	1 0
Burundi	0	1 0
Bermuda	0	1 0
Poland	0	0 2
Kenya	0	0 2
Hungary	0	0 2
Trinidad and Tobago	0	0 1
Norway	0	0 1
Dominica	0	0 1



A MOMENT TO CHERISH: Ghada Shouaa bows with a Syrian flag after winning the heptathlon gold (first ever for Syria) at the World Athletics Championships in Gothenburg on August 10. — AFP/UNB photo