



Atlanta 1996

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Davenport comes of age



ATLANTA, Aug 3: Lindsay Davenport smashed her way to Olympic tennis glory on Friday to revive uncomfortable memories of Jennifer Capriati's finest hour and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario's recent record in major finals, report agencies.

The 20-year-old American, ranked 10th in the world, powered her way past the startled third seed to secure a deserved 7-6, 6-2 victory and succeed her former teammate Capriati as Women's singles gold medalist.

Less than three months younger than Capriati, whose career has nose-dived since her Barcelona triumph at the age of 16, Davenport's satisfaction was increased by the presence of her father, a former US Olympic volleyball team member.

"This means everything to me," she said. "No matter what happens to me I will always be a gold medalist. This is definitely the most proud I have ever been in my life."

Few except US coach Billie

Czech Republic, and Fernandez will meet again Saturday with a gold at stake. Fernandez and Gigi Fernandez face Novotna and Helena Sukova in the doubles final.

Andre Agassi will face Spaniard Sergi Bruguera in the men's single final Saturday.

WHIRLWIND 'WOODIES'

Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde added an Olympic gold to their long list of doubles triumphs.

The peerless Australians swept aside unseeded Neil Broad and Tim Henman of Britain 6-4, 6-4, 6-2 in the final.

"To do something for your country is fantastic," said Woodbridge. "It is an unbelievable feeling."

Woodforde, competing in his first Olympics, had been less than enthusiastic about the experience before coming to Atlanta.

But he soon warmed to the Olympic atmosphere. "Winning the gold certainly helps," he said.

Last month, the 'Woodies' as they are universally nicknamed, won a record-breaking fourth consecutive Wimbledon title.



Lindsay Davenport of the United States flashes her Olympic tennis gold on the winners podium at Atlanta's Stone Mountain Court on August 2. — AFP/UNB photo

Boulmerka speaks out

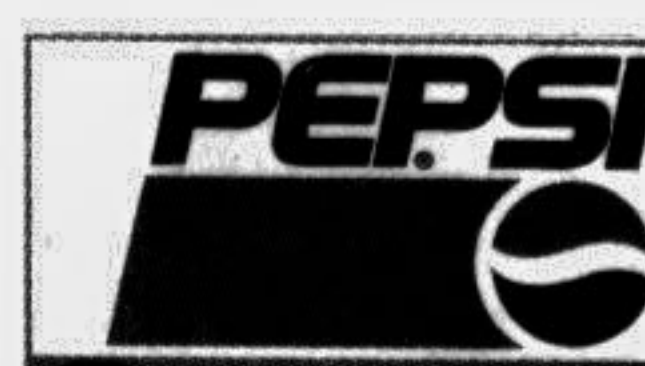
ATLANTA, Aug 3: Algerian Hassiba Boulmerka, who lost her Olympic 1,500 metres title when she was injured on Thursday, has criticised officials for the way the athletics timetable was arranged, reports Reuters.

Boulmerka said on Friday the scheduling was particularly tough on middle and long distance athletes — especially women — and her words echoed those of Ethiopian Haile Gebrselassie who has complained that the hard, fast track was built to help sprinters, not distance runners, get fast times.

Boulmerka told a news conference: "The scheduling of the women's 1,500 metres event was all wrong."

The first round was run at 10 o'clock on Wednesday morning which meant the runners had to wake up at around 6 o'clock. After running that race and because of the heat and the humidity they were still very tired when they ran the semifinal on Thursday.

"Because everyone was so tired, the pace was very slow and the race came down to the last 300 metres and that is one of the reasons I was injured. There was no reason to have three races in the event. It could have been organised so there was a semifinal round and final. I am very very sad and very disappointed. I had worked all year for this. As a distance runner I think the results have been a catastrophe. Look at runners like Sonia O'Sullivan — the climate and everything here is wrong for the longer runs."



MEDALS TABLE

ATLANTA, Aug 3 (Reuters): Medals table after the 14th day of competition at the Atlanta Olympics on Friday (tabulated under gold, silver, bronze):

Country	G	S	B	Total	Country	G	S	B	Total
United States	36	31	20	87	Jamaica	1	3	0	4
Russia	23	20	10	53	Czech Republic	1	2	4	7
China	16	21	12	49	Finland	1	2	0	3
France	15	6	14	35	Norway	1	1	3	5
Germany	14	15	23	52	Indonesia	1	1	2	4
Italy	11	7	11	29	Iran	1	1	1	3
Australia	9	9	19	37	Armenia	1	1	0	2
South Korea	7	12	5	24	Nigeria	1	0	2	3
Poland	7	5	4	16	Portugal	1	0	1	2
Ukraine	7	2	9	18	Slovakia	1	0	1	2
Cuba	4	5	8	17	Yugoslavia	1	0	1	2
Romania	4	5	6	15	Costa Rica	1	0	0	1
Hungary	4	3	6	13	Ecuador	1	0	0	1
Spain	4	3	3	10	Hong Kong	1	0	0	1
Greece	4	3	0	7	Syria	1	0	0	1
Switzerland	4	1	0	5	Namibia	0	2	0	2
Turkey	4	0	1	5	Slovenia	0	2	0	2
Japan	3	6	5	14	Austria	0	1	1	2
Netherlands	3	4	9	16	Malaysia	0	1	1	2
Brazil	3	2	6	11	Argentina	0	1	0	1
New Zealand	3	2	1	6	Azerbaijan	0	1	0	1
Denmark	3	1	1	5	Croatia	0	1	0	1
Ireland	3	0	1	4	Taiwan	0	1	0	1
Canada	2	9	7	18	Uzbekistan	0	1	0	1
Kazakhstan	2	3	2	7	Zambia	0	1	0	1
Belgium	2	2	2	6	Georgia	0	0	2	2
North Korea	2	1	2	5	Trinidad-Tobago	0	0	2	2
South Africa	2	1	1	4	Israel	0	0	1	1
Ethiopia	2	0	1	3	Mexico	0	0	1	1
Belarus	1	6	8	15	Moldova	0	0	1	1
Britain	1	6	6	13	Mongolia	0	0	1	1
Bulgaria	1	5	4	10	Morocco	0	0	1	1
Kenya	1	3	1	5	Mozambique	0	0	1	1
Sweden	1	3	1	5	Uganda	0	0	1	1

The champ

Ode to fantastic four



ATLANTA, Aug 3 (Reuters): Michael Johnson's pulsating sprint into the future at the Atlanta Games on Thursday has launched the men's 200 metres world record into a different orbit.

By knocking more than one-third of a second off his own record, the American has set a time which no-one else is likely to beat for a generation.

But Johnson is not alone. There are now four Olympic events, excluding the throwing disciplines, which have world record-holders who have set marks generally considered to be far out of range of any rivals until the next millennium.

Men's 200 metres - Michael Johnson (US) 19.32 seconds, Aug. 1, 1996, Atlanta.

Johnson knocked a staggering 0.34 of a second off his own world mark set 39 days earlier on the same track. Previously Italian Pietro Mennea's time of 19.72, set at altitude in Mexico, had lasted for 17 years. Before that American Tommie Smith's winning time of 19.83 at the Olympic final in Mexico had lasted 11 years. The only runner remotely capable of attacking the new record is Johnson himself — should he ever get the same perfect combination of fast track, full form and fitness, favourable weather conditions and strong competition.

Men's pole vault - Sergei Bubka (Ukraine) 6.15 metres, Feb 21, 1995, Donetsk.

Bubka has broken 35 world records, indoors and outdoors, in a sequence lasting since 1984. His Donetsk record was set indoors and his best outdoors is 6.14 in Sestriere in 1994. The Ukrainian is considered capable of taking the mark up as high as 6.30 metres but the competition is way behind. Only three other men have cleared six metres, the best being South African Okkert Brits whose 6.03 last year barely compares.

Women's 100 metres - Florence Griffith-Joyner (US) 10.49 seconds, July 16, 1988, Indianapolis.

Flo-Jo's run in a quarter-final heat at the US trials for the 1988 Olympics was almost as sensational as Johnson's. It knocked 0.27 of a second off fellow American Evelyn Ashford's 1984 record.

Men's 50km walk - Robert Korzeniowski (Poland) 3:34.30, Aug. 2, 1996, Atlanta.

Korzeniowski won the men's 50km walk at the Olympic Stadium on August 2. — AFP/UNB photo

ford's 1984 record. There was a question mark over the official wind gauge reading of zero as one analysis suggested there may have been a tailwind of 5.5 metres per second, almost three times the limit for record-setting. In eight years since then no other runner has even beaten Ashford's time.

Women's 200 metres - Florence Griffith-Joyner (US) 21.34 seconds, Sept 29, 1988, Seoul.

In one day at the Seoul Olympics, Flo-Jo took 0.37 of a second off East German Marita Koch's nine year-old record of 21.71, running 21.56 in the Olympic semifinals before blazing her way to the gold medal in the final in another record time less than two hours later. Jamaican Merlene

Ottey in the only sprinter to get under Koch's time since with 21.64 five years ago, which still leaves her 0.30 of a second off record pace.

Koch's 400 metres world record of 47.60, set in 1985, was also thought to be unbeatable but France's Marie-Jo Peres won Olympic gold in Atlanta in 48.25 and has said she now believed it could be done.

Random drug-testing out of competition has plainly had a salutary effect in the throwing events where there have been no world records for six years, apart from the men's javelin for which a new implement has been introduced.

Almost all the records set in the 1980s should last for many years.

Quips & quotes

ATLANTA, Aug 3 (AP): Notable quotes Friday at the Atlanta Olympics:

"We will not say these are the best Games ever — certainly not. The organisation was better in Seoul (in 1988) and Barcelona."

International Olympic Committee Vice-president Prince Alexandre de Merode of Belgium on how the Atlanta Games would be described.

"We came here to try for the gold, that was our objective. It is an honour to win a bronze medal, but it is not what we were here for."

Bebeto of Brazil on the 5-0 victory over Portugal in the bronze medal soccer match. Nigeria had upset Brazil in the semifinals.

"Everyone will be so happy back in Cuba. It will be a big party, I'm sure everyone will be happy with this gold medal we worked so hard for."

Jorge Fuentes, Cuban baseball manager, after the 13-9 gold medal victory over Japan.

"With Wimbledon you're really playing for yourselves, and you're not sure with the time change that a whole lot of people are staying up watching. With the Olympics you just know that everyone is watching because Australia wants to get as many golds as possible."

Mark Woodforde after he and Todd Woodbridge, four-time Wimbledon champions, won the Olympic tennis men's doubles gold medal.

"It's definitely the most proud I've been in my life. No matter what happens to me, I'll always be a gold medalist."

Lindsay Davenport, United States, on winning the women's tennis singles.

"I've wrestled longer at my level than probably any human being in history. When the time comes I don't enjoy the competition any more, I'll retire."

Bruce Baumgartner, United States, after wrestling back to win a bronze in superheavyweight freestyle for a record 13th world championship medal.

Men's v'ball final today

ATLANTA, Aug 3: Top-ranked Italy, which has won every major championship this decade except the Olympics, will play the Netherlands in Sunday's Olympic volleyball final, reports AP.

Italy struggled early before beating surprising Yugoslavia 15-12, 8-15, 15-6, 15-7 in Friday night's semifinals. No 2 Holland, a frustrated runner-up in the last three major championships — including the 1992 Games — beat Russia in three sets 15-6, 15-6, 15-10.

Russia and Yugoslavia will play for the bronze on Sunday. Italy was favoured to win the gold medal in 1992, but lost to the Netherlands in a five-set quarterfinal. The Dutch then lost in the final to Brazil.

The Italians have been the Netherlands' tormentors ever since, with wins in the finals of the 1994 World Championships, the 1995 World Cup and two European Championships.

The Dutch were relatively restrained after a stiff block by 6-foot-11 Bas van de Goor sealed the win.

"We did not celebrate our victory in an outrageous way," said van de Goor. "It seems like we want to play another great match."

Croatia cruise to h'ball final

ATLANTA, Aug 3: Patrik Cavar gave Croatia the lead for good with just over 13 minutes remaining Friday and it went on to average its loss in last year's world championship final, according to a survey released on Friday.

The survey showed that, despite a huge rise in female participation in sport, professional women were earning just half of what men can with — at best.

"We hope that bringing attention to the earnings gap, combined with the visibility of the Olympics, will literally pay off for female athletes," said Donna Lopiano, executive director of the Women's Sports Foundation, which commissioned the research.

"This is an ideal time to galvanise corporations and individuals to help close the gap," said the American-based foundation.

'House of Satan'

TEHRAN, Aug 3: Iran's President on Saturday praised an Iranian wrestler who won a gold medal at the Atlanta Olympics, saying he had rubbed "the nose of America in the dirt" and hoisted his country's flag in "The House of Satan," reports AP.

Rasul Khadem won the Olympic gold medal Friday in the 90-kilogram (198-pound) class of freestyle wrestling.

The flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran was raised in the house of Satan through the resolve of a pious youth, Rasul Khadem, despite all the mischief by the Americans to prevent this historic event in Atlanta, President Hashemi Rafsanjani said.

Rafsanjani did not elaborate on the alleged American efforts to block Iranian victory, which he described as "a divine will."

Addressing the athlete, who defeated Makhbarbek Khadartsev of Russia 3-0, Rafsanjani said: "I congratulate your excellence and our nation for rubbing the nose of America in the dirt and for beating the nine-medalled Russian champion."

Rafsanjani called the event "a victory against two superpowers in a single exhibition."

CALL TO CLOSE THE GAP

ATLANTA, Aug 3 (Agencies): Women athletes are getting a raw financial deal from the commercial sponsors of sport, although the female stars are slowly closing the earnings gap, according to a survey released on Friday.

The survey showed that, despite a huge rise in female participation in sport, professional women were earning just half of what men can with — at best.

"We hope that bringing attention to the earnings gap, combined with the visibility of the Olympics, will literally pay off for female athletes," said Donna Lopiano, executive director of the Women's Sports Foundation, which commissioned the research.

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NEUTRALITY AT STAKE

Controversy erupted in Olympic boxing Friday night when an American judge quit in protest over what he called "totally incompetent" judging after boxer Floyd Mayweather dropped a disputed decision to a Bulgarian.

The US team also filed a protest over the bout, claiming the judges were intimidated by Bulgaria's Emil Jetchev, head of the boxing officials, into favouring Serafim Todorov by a 10-9 decision in the 57-kilogram (125-pound) semifinal bout.

Judge Bill Waeckerle, one of four US judges working the Games for the International Amateur Boxing Federation, quit both as an Olympic judge and as an AIBA judge after Mayweather lost a decision loudly booed by the crowd at the Alexander Memorial Coliseum.

"I refuse to be part of an organisation that continues to conduct its officiating in this manner," Waeckerle wrote in a letter of resignation to AIBA President Anwar Chowdhury.

CENTENNIAL GAMES CHIPS

US boxing coach Al Mitchell joined the fray, calling the international officials who run the sport mobsters.

"They are a bunch of mobsters," Mitchell said. "They need to get rid of the whole group."

The controversy was touched off by Mayweather's loss to Todorov in a bout he

Olympics: What's on today

ATLANTA, Aug 3 (Reuters): Timetable for the 16th and final day of Olympics competition on Sunday (all times BST):

Athletics

5:05 pm: Men's marathon.

Basketball

2:00 am: (Mon) Women's bronze medal match.

4:35 am: (Mon) Women's gold medal match.

Boxing

11:30 pm: Flyweight, featherweight, light-welterweight, light-middleweight, light-heavyweight and super-heavyweight finals.

Canoe/kayak

7:00 pm: Men's kayak singles final.

7:20 pm: Men's canoe singles final.

7:40 pm: Women's kayak singles final.

8:00 pm: Men's Kayak doubles final.

8:20 pm: Men's canoe doubles final.

8:40 pm Women's kayak doubles final.

Equestrian

8:00 pm: Open individual jumping semifinals.

12:00 am (Mon): Open individual jumping final.

Gymnastics-rhythmic

11:00 pm: Individual all-around finals.

Handball

9:00 pm: Men's bronze medal match.

11:00 pm: Men's gold medal match.

Volleyball

10:00 pm: Men's bronze medal match.

12:30 am (Mon): Men's gold medal match.

appeared to be in control of everywhere but on the official scoring by the five ringside judges.

SURFER RAKING IN MONEY

Moreover Michael Johnson, step aside Shaq O'Neal, for the Pushy News Media from Hong Kong there's only one star at these Games — windsurfer Lee Lai Shan.

Lee, who's Hong Kong's first ever Olympic gold medalist, and what will be their last under British rule, and she has done the impossible by relegating stock market movements and handover happenings to inside page news.

Immediately after her victory on Sunday, the 25-year-old gave a 20-minute live television interview to an early morning audience in Hong Kong.

Since then acres of news print and hours of television time have been devoted to the girl who learned the sport off the tiny island of Cheung Chau south of Hong Kong.

Reporters have taken windsurfing lessons to tell readers what the fuss is about. Lee's mother has been interviewed at length on the golden girl's upbringing. Media have camped outside the athlete's Village in Savannah in south Georgia for a 'bon mot' or two from Hong Kong's heroine and Lee has decided to appoint an agent to deal with the flood of offers from sponsors.

The media onslaught has been so intense that Lee, her boyfriend and fellow Olympic surfer Sam Wong and coach Rene Appel have stopped giving interviews.

Gritty Gooch going great

LONDON, Aug 3: Sussex seamer Ed Giddins, who faces a drugs charge, and Northamptonshire century-maker Kevin Curran jolted English county championship title-chasers Yorkshire and Leicestershire on Friday, reports Reuters.

Giddins inspired a Sussex fightback with his career-best six for 47 as third-placed Yorkshire were shot out for 133 in their second innings at Eastbourne.

Former England captain and current selector Graham Gooch set an Essex record in his 92 on the second day against Middlesex at Lord's.

Opener Gooch overtook the county's all-time record aggregate of 29,434 runs held by Keith Fletcher, another ex-England skipper. His innings, containing two sixes and 13 fours helped Essex to 385 for five at the close — a lead of 121.

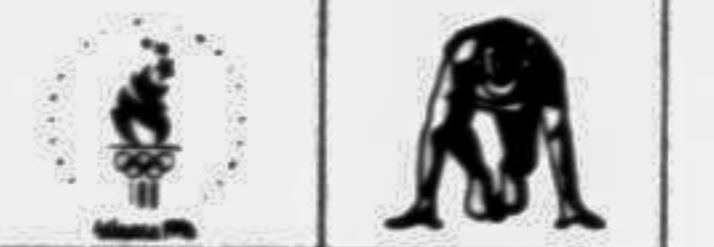
Sussex, who trailed by 92 on first innings, were seven without loss at the close on the second day in pursuit of a victory target of 226.

West Indian paceman Vashbert Drakes started Yorkshire's problems by removing Michael Vaughan and Australian Michael Bevan as they stumbled to 29 for three.

England A team paceman Giddins then did the major damage in a devastating spell of six for 34 in 10 overs.

Leicestershire, joint leaders with Surrey going into the current round of games, ran into resistance from Curran at Leicester where he hit an unbeaten 110, his first championship century of the season.

Johnson assesses Johnson



ATLANTA, Aug 3 (AFP): Just hours after destroying his own world 200m record with one of the greatest sprint displays of all time, Michael Johnson was analysing what went wrong.

The double Olympic champion, who won the 400m title on Monday, sliced a staggering 0.34 secs off the 19.66 he set on the same Atlanta track at the US trials a month earlier.

But the self-effacing Texan perfectionist was still not happy with his new mark of 19.32.