

### Lewis fails, Devers sails

LINZ, Austria, July 10: Olympic champion Carl Lewis electrified the audience at the Ziper Grand Prix IAAF track meet Wednesday but failed to propel his team to victory in the men's 400-metre relay, reports AP.

The 35-year-old Lewis and his Santa Monica Track Club were outstripped to the finish by the US squad led by Dennis Mitchell.

Mitchell was aided by 100 metres winner Vincent Henderson, Rohsann Griffin and Bruce Seddler.

The victory bodes well for the American relay squad which will again hope to match the line-up from California in the World Championship in Athens, Greece, next month.

The greatest upset, however, was the absence of the meet's most anticipated name, the fastest man across the globe, Canadian Donovan Bailey. The current Olympic and world champion pulled out a day shy of the event, citing a strained thigh muscle.

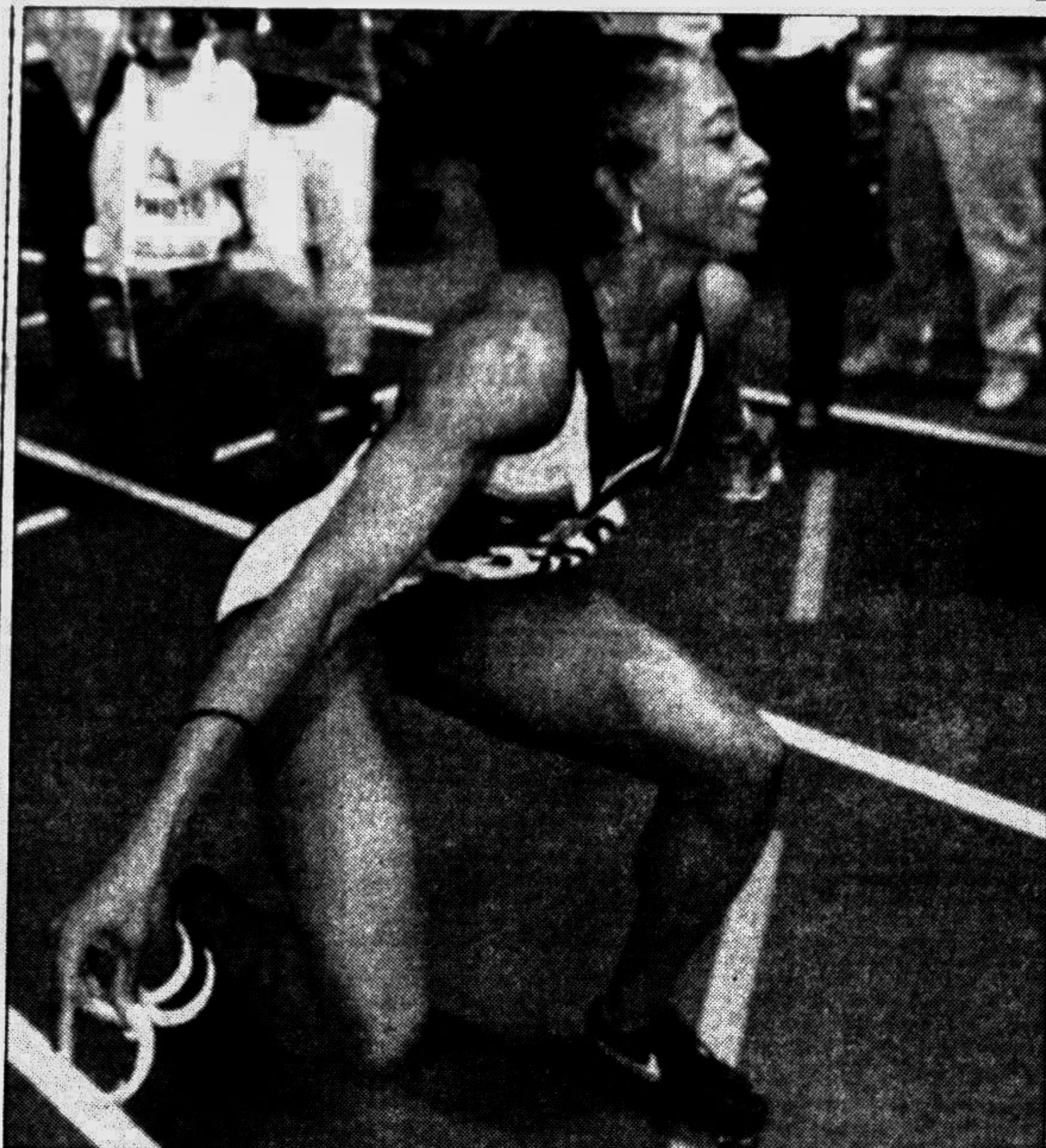
He was slated to run in the showcase 400-metre relay on behalf of the Canadian lineup. The entire Canadian team bowed out as a result.

Lewis thrived in the lime-light. Posters and billboards of him were all over Linz, 170 kilometres (100 miles) west of the capital, Vienna.

Another crowd favourite, Olympic champion Gail Devers, took advantage of another absence, that of her compelling rival Marion Jones, also of the United States, to snatch the 100 metres dash comfortably in 11.06 seconds.

The men's 100 presented a clean sweep by American speedsters. Vincent Henderson outlanded Dennis Mitchell in the finish by a 100th of a second, timing 10.06. Mike Marsh seized third position with 10.14 seconds.

Reigning Olympic champion Allen Johnson of the United States continued his domination of the 110 hurdles this year, clocking a seasonal best time of 13.12.



Olympic gold medalist Gail Devers of the USA celebrates her victory in the 100 metres final at an IAAF track meet in Linz, Austria on July 9. Devers clocked 11.06 seconds. — AP/UNB photo

### Botafogo win 'battle devil'

RIO DE JANEIRO, July 10: The discredited and chaotic Rio de Janeiro championship finally came to an end with Botafogo beating Vasco da Gama 1-0 to take the title amid an atmosphere of total apathy Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Botafogo striker Dimba scored the only goal of the second game in the final play-off series, which was watched by a paltry crowd of 16,000 at the Maracana Stadium.

After losing 1-0 in Saturday's first match, watched by just 9,000 fans, Botafogo had needed a win to take the title. Rio finals usually attract crowds of 80,000 upwards.

Under the eccentric format, the first team to six points takes to the title but Botafogo were given a four-point head start because they won two of the three preliminary stages while Vasco won only one.

The end of the competition, which has become an embarrassment for Brazilian soccer, was met with a general air of relief.

The tournament had been devalued by brews on the field. Controversial refereeing, complete disorganisation of it and a format that bewildered players and supporters alike.

The final straw came in May when, with the tournament about to reach its climax, the Rio federation interrupted the action for one month at the request of Vasco, who had key players picked to play for Brazil in the Copa America.

As a result, two key games were postponed at just five days notice.

When play re-started last week, Flamengo were unable to play their matches because they were taking part in a tournament elsewhere and their two remaining games were awarded to their respective opponents by scores of 1-0.

### Injury lets Pioline down

GSTAAD, Switzerland, July 10: Wimbledon finalist Cedric Pioline dropped out of the Swiss Open today, retiring from his second round match against Alex Corretja because of a sore right arm, reports Reuter.

Pioline was trailing the second-seeded Spaniard 6-2, 3-2 when he quit.

"My arm just doesn't feel like holding a racket right now," said the Frenchman, who twice received treatment during changeovers. "It's just tired from too many serves, too much this and too much that."

"I've had the pain for several days. You try to take care of it but it just becomes bothersome. I don't think it will take long to get better. It's not that type of injury."

Pioline said he would take the next week off to rest the arm then return to action at the Canadian Open later this month.

The Open lost another former champion on Wednesday when three-time winner Sergi Bruguera was unexpectedly beaten by Spanish compatriot Javier Sanchez in the second round.

Bruguera, seeded third and ranked seventh in the world, was the third seed to fall after the first-round exits of number

one Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the 1995 winner, and number five Albert Costa, the defending champion.

Between them the three



CEDRIC PIOLINE

players had won the last five Swiss Open titles.

For Bruguera, playing his first event since losing in the final of the French Open to Gustavo Kuerten, it was his earliest exit in nine visits to the Swiss tournament.

Sanchez, beaten in the first

round in his only previous appearance here, won 7-6, 6-2.

It was a particularly disappointing loss for Bruguera, twice the French Open champion. He considers this clay-court tournament his favourite event, having reached the final for five consecutive years from 1990 to 1994.

"I'm disappointed, like anyone else who would lose in the second round," said Bruguera, who had won the last seven meetings with Sanchez and the last five without dropping a set.

"This is a special tournament for me, the one I like the most," he added.

Sanchez will now meet another fellow Spaniard in the quarter-finals, sixth seed Felix Mantilla, who lost in the final last year. Mantilla advanced with a 7-6, 6-2 win over compatriot Galo Blanco in a match that was delayed an hour when a violent thunderstorm extended on the Alpine resort.

Local favourite Marc Rosset of Switzerland, who beat Russian Kafelnikov on Tuesday, easily disposed of Slovakia's Dominik Hrbaty 7-6, 6-3 to book his place in the final eight where he will meet eighth seed Wayne Ferreira of South Africa.

Ferreira, making his first appearance at the Swiss Open, needed three sets to get past Spanish qualifier Fernando Vicente 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

### Iraqis set for an invasion?

BAGHDAD, July 10: Iraq has decided to send its athletes to Lebanon to take part in the Pan

Arab Games despite a Lebanese decision excluding Iraq from the Games, the official Iraqi news agency INA said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The Iraqi National Olympic Committee has issued a statement declaring that an Iraqi delegation will leave Baghdad during the next few hours to participate in the eighth Pan Arab Games, INA said.

The committee, headed by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday, said it had obtained permission from Syria to allow the Iraqi athletes to pass through its territory to the Lebanese borders.

It said the athletes would wait at Lebanon's borders for permission from the Lebanese authorities to allow them to enter.

that the Lebanese side will grant visas (to Iraqi athletes) to enter its territory," it added.

"Iraqi media has assailed the Lebanese decision, saying it was 'unjust'.

"Taking such an unjust decision against an Arab country does not represent the will of Arab people," newspaper of the ruling Baath Party Al-Thawara said.

Earlier, Lebanon came under pressure from Gulf Arab states to exclude Iraq from the Games, and sought to agree only a symbolic Iraqi presence.

"After a phone call from Es-mat Abdel-Meguid, the Secretary-General of the Arab

League, Foreign Minister Faris Bouez started diplomatic contacts with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to get their approval for at least symbolic Iraqi participation in the Games," a Lebanese Foreign Ministry official said.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other oil-rich Gulf Arab states had threatened to boycott the Games if Iraq participated.

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### Maradona makes fifth return

ROSARIO, Argentina, July 10: Diego Maradona returned to the soccer field Wednesday after an 11-month hiatus, scoring a goal to carry Boca Juniors to a 2-0 win over Newell's in an exhibition match, reports AP.

Maradona's profession return is scheduled for Sunday in a league match against Racing.

The 36-year-old Maradona is attempting his fifth comeback in a career that includes that reached a highpoint in 1986 as he led his Argentine squad to a World Cup title in Mexico.

Aside from the goal, Maradona had little chance to show his prowess as coach Hector Veira took him out of the game five minutes into the second half.

"I felt fine, but Veira was right to substitute me," Maradona said. "I have to rest for Sunday's game."

Maradona was suspended by FIFA for 15 months in 1991 after testing positive for cocaine use following an Italian league game with Napoli. He also was thrown out of the 1994 World Cup and suspended for using banned stimulants.

In April, Maradona signed a deal reportedly worth 50,000 dollars per match to rejoin Boca. He said at the time he would need a month to return to fitness to play.

He trained first in southern Argentina and then went to Canada in mid-June to train with sprinter Ben Johnson.

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### 'Big Ben' on his life-ban

BUENOS AIRES, July 10: Suspended Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson has accused world athletics bodies of making him a scapegoat when they banned him from the sport for doping, reports Reuter.

Johnson, nicknamed 'Big Ben', said the use of drugs was widespread in athletics.

"Everyone runs fast but they grab hold of some of them and they pay the price for the rest," Johnson said in an interview published on Wednesday in La Nacion daily newspaper in Buenos Aires, where he is working as personal trainer to soccer star Diego Maradona.

Johnson, who is awaiting an International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) ruling this month on his appeal against a life ban for doping, said the big cash sums offered to those breaking world records at athletics meetings encouraged drug-taking.

"This all has to do with money and power," the Canadian said.

"I know I am the fastest athlete in the world," he said. "My only crime was to run very fast. Drugs aren't tough for a world record but they can help you



BEN JOHNSON

The 35-year-old Johnson said he was confident he could still win if he were allowed back on the track.

"I know I am the fastest athlete in the world," he said. "My only crime was to run very fast. Drugs aren't tough for a world record but they can help you

with 25 per cent of a good time." Nonetheless, Johnson agreed that drugs were a problem.

"I think that everyone should follow a single rule: don't use drugs. Why doesn't the IAAF, if it wants to get to the bottom of the problem, grant an amnesty, and let each athlete confess without any penalty so that we could start again with clean athletics?"

Johnson was stripped of his Olympic gold medal at the 1988 Seoul Games for testing positive for steroids after winning the 100 metres in a world record 9.79 seconds. He made a comeback three years later but was banned for life after failing a dope test in Toronto in 1993.

Johnson's new charge Maradona, who is on his fifth comeback, has also had problems with drugs and was thrown out of the 1994 World Cup finals in the United States after failing a dope test.

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