

Sport

World Championships end

Bubka as good as old

ATHENS, Aug 11: Six for six. And still counting. The amazing Sergei Bubka has won gold in the pole vault at all six World Championships, an unprecedented streak that dates back to 1983.

His sixth title, which came Sunday night on the final night of the 10-day championships, may have been the most dramatic of all, reports AP.

The 33-year-old Ukrainian star, written off by many people after a career-threatening injury kept him out of the Atlanta Olympics, produced a magical performance in a compelling duel with Russian rival Maxim Tarasov and US upstart Dean Starkey.

Bubka, who underwent surgery on his torn right Achilles tendon in December, had competed only twice this year and failed to go higher than 5.70 metres (18 feet, 4 3/4).

But on Sunday he clinched victory by clearing 6.01 metres (19 feet, 8 1/2 inches), a championship record and best performance in the world this year.

Bubka took only five jumps in the 3-hour, 18-minute competition, missing once and clearing each at 5.70 (18-8 1/2) and 5.91 (19-4 3/4), then soaring over the bar easily at his winning height.

Then, for good measure, Bubka raised the bar to 6.15 (20-2) for a bid to break his own world record of 6.14 (20-1 3/4).

That was too much to ask for from the man who has already set a total of 35 world records outdoors and indoors. Bubka gave up the attempt less than halfway down the runway, eliciting whistles and jeers from Greek fans hoping for yet another exploit.

There should be many more to come, Bubka said he plans to compete at the 1999 Worlds in Seville and the 2000 Olympics in Sydney before retiring.

Tarasov took the silver with a best jump of 5.96 (19-6 1/2), while Starkey cleared 5.91 (19-4 3/4) for the bronze, the first American to win medal at a major pole vault competition since the 1984 Olympics.

"It's quite amazing to see someone winning six titles in a row," Tarasov said. "His 6.01 (18-8 1/4) jump was one of the best I've ever seen."

"He's unbelievable," Starkey said. "He never ceases to amaze me. No one will ever be able to duplicate what he's done."

The closest is Lars Riedel of Germany, who won his fourth consecutive world title Sunday in the men's discus with a throw of 68.54 metres (224 feet 10 inches).

In the final event of the 10-day championships, the United States took its foul-up in the men's 400-metre relay by taking gold in the 1,600 relay.

Without injured stars Michael Johnson and Butch Reynolds, the patchwork quartet of Jerome Young, Antonio Pettigrew, Chris Jones and Tyree Washington beat rival Britain in a season's best time of 2 minutes, 56.47 seconds.

"Not bad for three young guys and one old man," said Pettigrew, the veteran of the group at 29. "These guys are the future. We've got three young guys running with us. There was so

Aussie cagers annex crown

MELBOURNE, Aug 11: Australia capped a magnificent recovery to win the World men's under-22 basketball championship gold Sunday with a 15-point victory to end Puerto Rico's unbeaten run, reports AFP.

The Australians took the final with an 88-73 victory after eliminating champions United States in the quarter-finals and Argentina in Saturday's semi-finals.

Australia made an uncertain start to their campaign with defeats to Turkey and Argentina in their opening four preliminary games last week, yet their form lifted during the business end of the tournament.

Yugoslavia earlier today claimed the bronze medal with a 84-72 victory over Argentina.

Australia's victory was built on brilliant defensive work by forward Simon Dwight and some accurate shooting from the free-throw line and solid defensive work on the guards by Aaron Trahair.



THE BEAMING QUARTET: The German 4x400m relay team of (L-R) Anka Feller, Uta Rohlander, Anja Rucker and Grit Breuer, who won gold at the World Athletics Championships acknowledging the crowds cheers in Athens on Sunday.— AFP/UNB photo

much pressure on them."

The relay victory gave the Americans seven golds for the championships and a total of 18 medals, both team-leading figures.

The championships finished without a world record for the first time since 1987, when the only record — Ben Johnson's in the 100 metres — later was annulled after his admitted drug hurdles in 12.50.

— Kenya's Daniel Komen, the world record-holder at two miles (3.2 kilometres) and 3,000 metres, won his first major title, taking the men's 5,000 in 13:07.38.

— Norway's Hanne Haugland took the women's high jump at 1.99 (6-4 1/4).

— Spaniards Abel Anton and defending champion Martin Fiz finished 1-2 in the men's marathon, with Anton winning in 2:13:16.

The final day of the championships was marred by two more doping cases.

Russia's Olimpiada Ivanova, the second-place finisher in the women's 10-kilometre walk, and countrywoman Liubov Tysoma, who failed to finish the 800 final, were banned for two years after testing positive for the steroid stanazolol.

Ivanova was stripped of her silver medal, just as Ukrainian shot putter Aleksandr Bagach earlier lost his gold medal after testing positive for the stimulant ephedrine.

The IAAF announced a total of five positive tests by Sunday night, with about 50 more controls still to be analysed.

The Germans were timed in a world-leading 3:20.92, with the Americans, winners of the previous two titles, second in 3:21.03.

In other finals Sunday:

— Olympic champion Ludmila Engquist of Sweden swept past Jamaica's Michelle Freeman over the final barrier to win the women's 100-metre hurdles in 12.50.

— Kenya's Daniel Komen, the world record-holder at two miles (3.2 kilometres) and 3,000 metres, won his first major title, taking the men's 5,000 in 13:07.38.

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FINAL TABLE

Following is the final medal table of the sixth World Athletics Championships which ended on Sunday:

Country	G	S	B
United States	7	3	8
Germany	5	1	4
Cuba	4	1	1
Kenya	3	2	2
Ukraine	2	4	1
Morocco	2	1	0
Norway	2	0	0
Russia	1	4	3
Spain	1	3	1
Portugal	1	2	1
Australia	1	1	2
Italy	1	1	1
Romania	1	1	0
Canada	1	1	0
S Africa	1	1	0
France	1	0	1
Japan	1	0	1
Mexico	1	0	1
Denmark	1	0	0
Ethiopia	1	0	0
New Zealand	1	0	0
Sweden	1	0	0
Trinidad	1	0	0
Britain	0	5	1
Jamaica	0	3	4
Belarus	0	2	2
Greece	0	1	1
Lithuania	0	1	0
Bulgaria	0	1	0
Finland	0	1	0
Namibia	0	1	0
Nigeria	0	1	0
Sri Lanka	0	1	0
Uganda	0	1	0
Bahamas	0	0	1
Brazil	0	0	1
Mozambique	0	0	1
Slovakia	0	0	1
Switzerland	0	0	1



THE SMILING MAPLE LEAFS: The Canadian quartet of (L-R) Bruno Surin, Donovan Bailey, Robert Esmie and Glenroy Gilbert, who won the men's 4x100m relay gold at the World Athletics Championships, celebrate with their national flag in Athens on Aug 10.— AFP/UNB photo

— AFP/UNB photo