

## C'ships lack spectators

SEVILLE, Spain, Aug 24 (AP): What would happen if they held a World Championships and nobody came?

It's not that bad but, like two years ago in Athens, Greece, getting southern Europeans interested in athletics at the height of the traditional August vacation season is proving impossible.

In the first three days, Seville's new Olympic Stadium has been half empty, even for the showcase 100-metre finals Sunday night.

Like in Athens, attendance is expected to pick up in the last six days — and particularly next weekend on the final two days.

But the empty seats are proving an embarrassment for a sport struggling with image problems and drug scandals.

"To be honest, Spain in August is not an ideal time to hold a meet," said Vicente Ano, the Spaniard who heads the local organizing committee.

"Southern Europe doesn't have the fan base like northern Europe. I'm a little disappointed, but I can't say it's all that bad for a place where there is no strong tradition in the sport."

Accurate attendance figures are difficult to come by.

For instance, attendance Monday was listed at 37,815. But Ano admitted the actual number of fans who entered with a ticket was about 25,000. The remaining approx that's for soccer. For athletics it has been reduced to 48,000, of which 42,000 seats are actually on sale in this city of 700,000. Tickets prices certainly aren't the problem.

"We tried to get both teams to play the first two weekends at visa newspaper. Another headline in El Mundo — 'A deserted city' — pointed out that Seville was dead.

## Court against multiple ownership

NYON, Switzerland, Aug 24: UEFA's ruling that clubs with common ownership may not participate in the same European competition was Monday backed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport here, reports AFP.

UEFA, football's European governing body, ruled in May last year that it would not allow two or more clubs under the same ownership to contest the same competition.

AEK Athens of Greece and Slavia Prague of the Czech Republic, two teams owned by the British-based company ENIC, had challenged the ruling in the arbitration court.

UEFA said the court's decision meant the ruling would come into force for the 2000-2001 season.

"We are very satisfied with this decision," said UEFA president Lennart Johansson. "The CAS ruling is logical and based on common sense. It will help to preserve the sporting integrity of our club competitions and it is also in accordance with the EU-stance on this matter."

The CAS said in its ruling against the clubs' appeal that: "The public might perceive such a situation as presenting a conflict of interest potentially affecting the authenticity of sporting results."

The effect of the contested rules is to discourage mergers and acquisitions between European professional football clubs, and thus to preserve the number of independent undertakings on the European football markets ... preserve and even enhance economic competition between club owners."

## Rapid complain against refereeing

BUCHAREST, Aug 24: Champions Rapid Bucharest submitted a protest yesterday against bad refereeing, becoming the third local club to take up the matter with the Romanian Soccer Federation (FRF), reports Reuters.

In a letter to the FRF, Rapid accused the referee of last weekend's match against Otelul Galati of taking "deliberately wrong decisions" which Rapid said had led to their 2-0 defeat. "It was for the second time in four matches that Rapid unfairly lost points because of referee's mistakes," Rapid president Gheorghe Dinu told Reuters. With only eight points from five games, Rapid fell to the middle of the standings.

## Botham slams

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South African tour but reaffirmed his pride in the side that lost so convincingly at The Oval.

The time has come with a new coach and a new season to make changes. We need a backbone of a side and more players like Michael Atherton to show us exactly how to go about being a Test player."

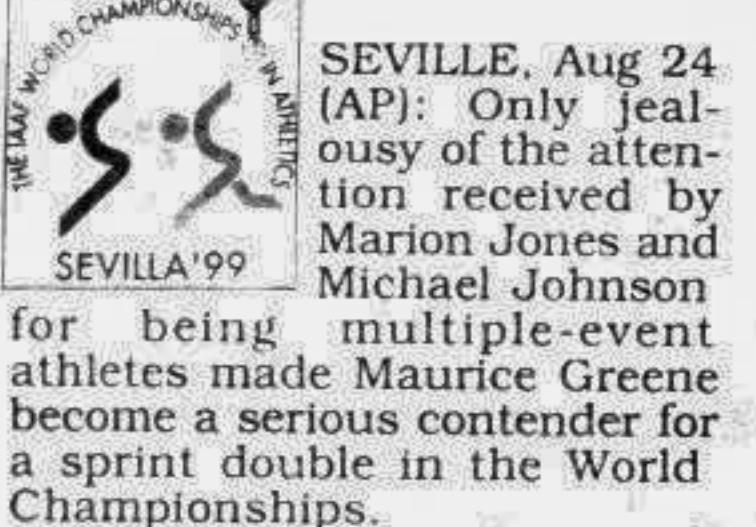
He urged a shake-up of the English county cricket system if they want to play on a par with other Test playing nations.

Speaking on BBC1's *Onside* last night, he said: "We have the cricketers but we need a system of selection and unity to get the best out of them."

"Our system at County level is not the best but at Under-19's we are the best in the world."

"Unfortunately some players get lost in the mediocrities of County cricket. An example would be Andrew Flintoff, the more he plays he in county cricket, the more he gets dragged down."

# Growing in confidence



SEVILLE, Aug 24 (AP): Only jealousy of the attention received by Marion Jones and Michael Johnson for being multiple-event athletes made Maurice Greene become a serious contender for a sprint double in the World Championships.

"I'm not doing this," Greene said.

However, when told that Johnson would be running the 200 instead of the 400, Greene's interest was piqued.

"We told him the way the public perceives you doesn't count unless you cross categories — like Johnson," Hudson said. "We told him he was the world champion in the 100. We said you're dominating in the 100. Now, you've got to get the 200."

"Michael's been the man in the 400 for 10 years. When he did both winning the 200 and 400 at the 1996 Olympics, boom!"

"Now, they're talking about Marion Jones and how she's going for four gold medals (in the 100, 200, long jump and relay at the World Championships)"

As it turned out, Johnson, the world record-holder, withdrew from the 200 because of an

injury.

Greene looks at the 200 as another challenge, something he thrives on.

"He's a real competitor — with everything," Hudson said, adding that his group, including Greene, Boldon, Jon Drummond, Larry Wade and Inger Miller, all have a need to get the competitive edge. "It can be swimming across a pool, video games, dominoes, cards..."

"If there's a challenge, they're competitive. There's no fun for him (Greene) unless he can be challenged."

The male sprinters — Greene, Boldon and Drummond — also challenge each other on things like who has the fastest 100-200 double for a career, for the year, for a meet and on the same day.

Greene's competitiveness will work in his favour in the 200. He won't let the emotional high of winning his second straight world title Sunday night in 9.80, only 0.01 seconds off his world record, affect his bid for his first major international championship in March.

The only other seed to see opening day action was seventh-seeded Swede Thomas Enqvist. The Australian Open runner-up dominated the third set to escape with a 4-6, 7-6, 6-1 victory over compatriot Magnus Larsson.

Australian Open champion

and two-time Hamlet winner

Yevgeny Kafelnikov is the tourna-

ment's top seed.

The third-ranked Russian, runner-up to Andre Agassi Sunday in Washington, is looking to build on his impressive 1999 21-6 hardcourt record in his final tune-up for the US Open, where he will be among the top contenders.

Smith is not taking any chances.

"When you win a race like this (the 100), there's the chance you can have an emotional let-down," he said. "We have to make sure he's ready to run the first and second rounds."

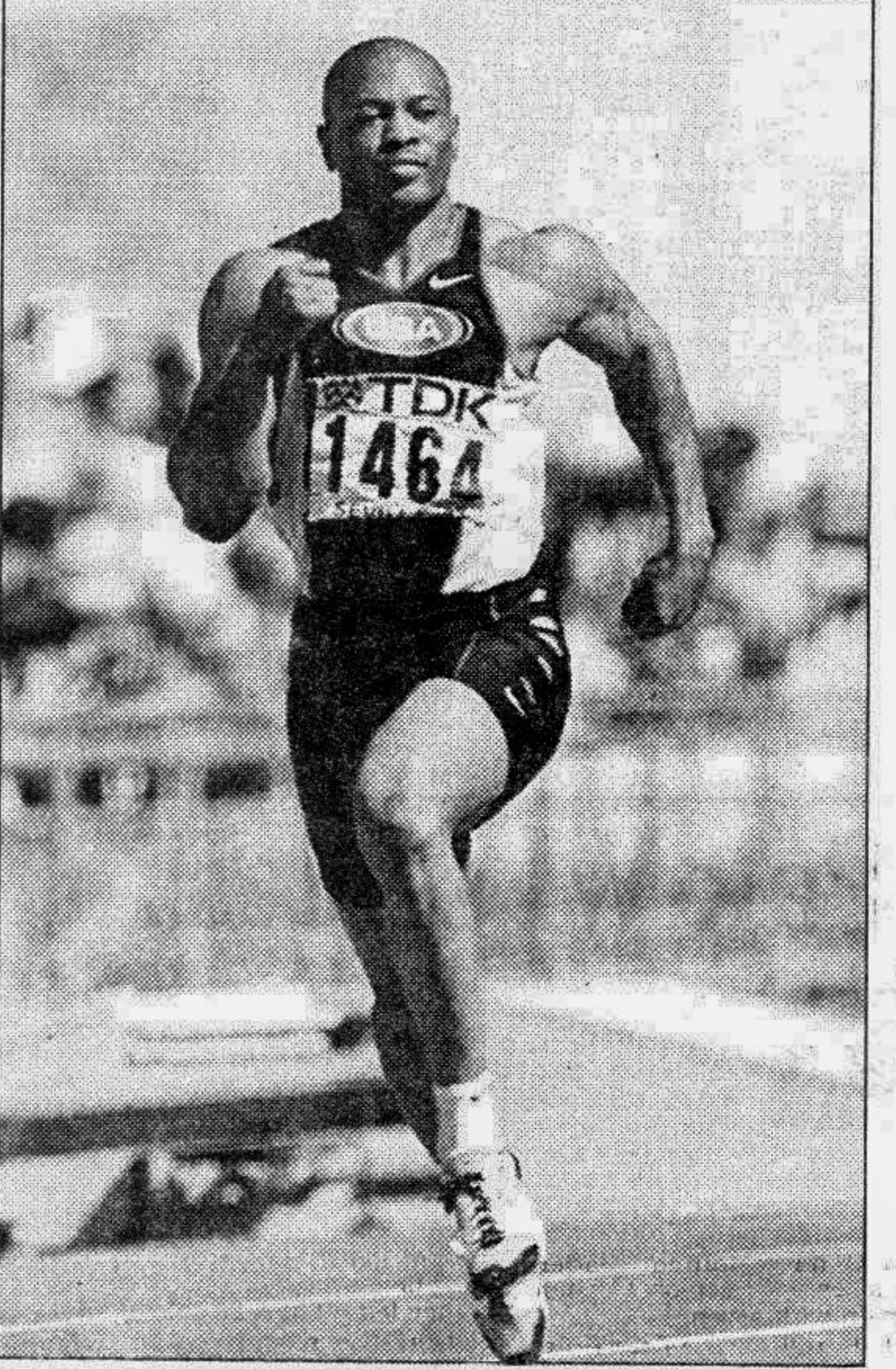
Greene, enjoying the best year ever by a male 100-metre runner, with the world record and nine legal sub-10.00 clockings, probably would have broken the 100 record again if he hadn't stumbled out of the blocks.

"I had a goal of 9.76," he said. "The start wasn't as good as I wanted. The little problem I had at the beginning was the world record."

"I haven't run the perfect race. If I do, then we'll see what happens."

Greene is not putting limits on his potential.

"I'm not going to say I'm only going to run one (particular) time, because if I run it, they'll think that's as fast as I can run," he said.



American Maurice Greene in action during the 200m heats yesterday. —AFP photo

## Another Thorpe record



SYDNEY, Aug 24: Australian swimming wonder Ian Thorpe captured his third world record in as many days and was joined by American backstroker Lenny Krayzelburg on another trailblazing night at the Pan Pacific Swimming Championships here Tuesday, reports AFP.

Krayzelburg swam within 14-10ths of a second of the record at this year's US National 100m backstroke.

He glided through the first 50m in under world record pace in 25.97 seconds and held a commanding full body length from Australians Matt Welsh (55.13) and Josh Watson (55.18) as he powered into the wall.

"Thorpe" bettered his own world record set the previous night in claiming the 200 metres freestyle final -- his third gold medal of an overpowering meet.

Thorpe's exploits shaded, but only just, Krayzelburg's world record in the 100m backstroke, the sixth world mark to topple in three days of competition at the super-fast Sydney Olympic pool.

The 16-year-old Thorpe shattered his own world record of 1:46.34 seconds set in the semi-final with a winning time of 1:46.00.

On Sunday Thorpe hacked into Kieren Perkins' 400m freestyle world record which had stood since 1994.

"It's pretty unbelievable being able to do that and trying to do my best for my team," said Thorpe.

"I didn't expect to do everything I've done here in this meet and it's pretty exciting."

The 23-year-old Ukrainian-born Krayzelburg, who confi-

dently predicted a world record here, swam 53.60 seconds to better compatriot Jeff Rouse's record of 53.86sec set at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

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He will swim in the 100m

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relay in his quest for more gold at the Pan Pacific Swimming Championships here Tuesday, reports AFP.

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"I'm really excited about this world record, but my goal is the Olympic gold medal," said Krayzelburg. "I feel I won't be fully satisfied, I'd like to think that this time makes a statement."

Wednesday's will be a hectic

day for him. There are heats of

the 100m freestyle and will also

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team, which has strong hopes of

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**MEDALS TABLE**

Medal table after the third

night of competition at the Pan

Pacific Swimming Cham-

pionships here Tuesday (under

gold, silver, bronze, total):

Australia 6 61 13

USA 4 34 11

Canada 1 13 5

Japan 1 11 3

S Africa 1 0 23

Costa Rica 0 0 11

(deadheat for gold Aus/Jpn)

day and I didn't have a very good race either. I wasn't able to challenge him at the turns."

It has been an extraordinary few days for Thorpe, who said he was hurting in the last 50m of Tuesday's final.

It was Thorpe's third gold medal of the meet after sharing Australia's 100m medley relay win on Sunday night.

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