



Olympic Special



Gregarious, honest and open-hearted, Olly the kookaburra is named after the Olympic Games and Olympic Movement. He is a fact-finder and communicator who represents the air.

Fredericks quits

SYDNEY, Sept 17: Four-time Olympic sprint silver medalist Frankie Fredericks of Namibia said Sunday that he was pulling out of the Sydney Games because of an Achilles tendon injury, reports AFP.

The 32-year-old, who also was crowned world 200m champion in 1993, described the decision to withdraw as "one of the most difficult of my life".

Grenade hoax

SYDNEY, Sept 17: A pair of hand grenades found in a parcel at Sydney Airport's mail centre Sunday sparked the first security scare of the Olympics before the weapons were found to be harmless souvenirs, reports AFP.

The mail centre was evacuated and police, bomb squad and army personnel were sent to the scene when workers discovered the grenades in an out-bound package during a routine check early Sunday.

But police said the World War II era grenades were inspected and found to be inert memorabilia.

Thorpe stamped

SYDNEY, Sept 17: Teenage swimming sensation Ian Thorpe stars on two stamps rushed off the presses Sunday by postal authorities to celebrate gold medals won by Australian Olympic athletes, reports AP.

Thorpe is featured alone on one stamp, to mark his 400-metre freestyle victory and with the other three members of the victorious 400-metre relay team on the second.

The first two went on sale at a handful of post offices open on Sunday in Sydney, including one store in the athletes' village.



SYDNEY, Sept 17 (AFP): The schedule for Day 3 Monday at the Sydney Olympics:

HOCKEY
State Hockey Centre
Men's Preliminaries (Netherlands v Malaysia)
Men's Preliminaries (Great Britain v Pakistan) (Germany v Canada)
Women's Preliminaries (Great Britain v Argentina) (China v New Zealand)

FOOTBALL: Rest Day
ARCHERY
ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS
BADMINTON
BASKETBALL
BASEBALL
BEACH VOLLEYBALL
BOXING
CANOE/KAYAK
TRACK CYCLING
EQUESTRIAN
FENCING
HANDBALL
JUDO
ROWING
SHOOTING
SOFTBALL
SWIMMING
TABLE TENNIS
VOLLEYBALL
WATER POLO
WEIGHTLIFTING

Brazil 'Bafanaed'

FOOTBALL

SYDNEY, Sept 17: Brazil, the favourites for the Olympic men's football gold, slumped to a shock defeat by South Africa Sunday on a night that saw Japan move impressively to the top of their first round group, reports AFP.

In the biggest shock of the tournament so far, the Brazilians suffered a 3-1 defeat in Brisbane while the Japanese sparked in Canberra on their way to a 2-1 victory over Slovakia.

Second half goals from Roma midfielder Hidetoshi Nakata and Junichi Inamoto secured the three points that en-

sured the Japanese will go into their final group game against Brazil needing only a draw to secure a place in the quarter finals.

In the night's other games in group B, Chile beat Spain 3-1 to go to the top of the group while South Korea edged out Morocco 1-0 to keep their hopes of qualification alive.

Morocco's second defeat means they have no chance of advancing.

JAPAN - 2; SLOVAKIA - 1

Japan were held goalless first-half but upped the tempo after the break as Philippe Troussier's squad underlined their credentials as serious medal contenders.



WE'VE DONE IT: South African captain Matthew Booth (L) and compatriot Aaron Booth are euphoric after shocking mighty Brazil in the men's football competition yesterday.

—Internet photo

So far so good

SYDNEY, Sept 17 (AFP): Glorious weather and a schedule of glamour sports drew huge crowds into Sydney over the weekend to soak up the atmosphere at buzzing "Olympic Live" sites set up around the city.

Tens of thousands of people blanketed lawns and forecourts in Sydney's parks and squares, where giant televisions screening the Olympic action drew tourists and locals like.

Many more gathered around the harbour foreshore to watch the triathletes sprint to thrilling finishes on a stunning course where the Opera House served as a finish line.

Sydney, scrubbed up and looking its best, was shown off to best advantage as the competitors cut through the sparkling harbour on the swim leg, accompanied by divers armed with electric shark repellents.

Action in the swimming pool, beach volleyball court, gymnastics, basketball and cycling, as well as a mounting Australian medal tally, also grabbed attention over the weekend.

At Darling Harbour, the biggest of the open-air sites, pleasure craft, cruise boats and war ships bobbed around in the sunshine and outdoor cafes were packed to capacity.

And at Bondi Beach, a party atmosphere reigned at the vol-

leyball stadium which was constructed smack in the middle of the famous stretch of golden sand.

Local residents who objected to the 10,000-seat arena and who had threatened to protest during the Games were nowhere to be seen as the Olympic spirit overtook the city.

The nay-sayers and critics were also sidelined, at least for now, as the first weekend of the 27th Olympiad went off without a hitch.

Even the city's much-maligned transport system pulled through despite fears it would collapse under the strain of a packed Stadium Australia and central business district after Friday's opening ceremony.

"Things have gone really smoothly, we're really pleased," Olympic transport spokesman Michael Bland said the six Olympic Live sites had been packed with capacity crowds since Thursday when the

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"We are going to keep concentrating and try to win against Brazil," the Frenchman said after the match. "We want to get all nine points available and finish at the top of the group."

Japan are the only Asian team ever to have won an Olympic football medal, bagging bronze at the 1968 Mexico Games.

The lively Shunsuke Nakamura, Japan's outstanding player on the night, set up Nakata for his side's first by skipping away from his markers down the left flank in the 67th minute.

His pinpoint cross found Nakata unmarked eight yards out and the Roma midfielder met it with a powerful diving header that gave Slovak goalkeeper Martin Lipcak no chance.

Seven minutes later Naohiro Takahara broke from inside his own half and though his shot was saved by Lipcak, Inamoto was following up to poke the ball home.

Andrej Porazik pulled one back for the Slovaks to ensure a tense final seven minutes but the Japanese held on.

SAFRICA - 3; BRAZIL - 1

In Brisbane, a double strike late on gave South Africa a

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SYDNEY, Sept 17 (Reuters): Medals table at the end of the second day of Olympic competition on Sunday:

	G	S	B
USA	4	5	2
Australia	3	2	4
France	3	2	1
Japan	2	2	0
Turkey	2	0	0
Germany	1	3	1
GBritain	1	2	0
China	1	1	4
Italy	1	1	2
Russia	1	1	1
Switzerland	1	1	1
Bulgaria	1	1	1
Netherlands	1	1	0
Cuba	1	0	1
Canada	1	0	1
Ukraine	1	0	0
Hungary	1	0	0
Croatia	1	0	0
South Korea	0	2	1
Yugoslavia	0	1	0
Slovakia	0	1	0
Greece	0	1	0
Sweden	0	0	1
Romania	0	0	1
North Korea	0	0	1
Kyrgyzstan	0	0	1
Indonesia	0	0	1
Georgia	0	0	1
Czech Rep	0	0	1
Costa Rica	0	0	1
Brazil	0	0	1
Belarus	0	0	1
Belgium	0	0	1

Note: Two bronze medals awarded in Judo.



BACKSTROKING TO THE FINAL: Roxana Maracineanu of France during her 100-metre backstroke semifinal at the Sydney International Aquatic Centre yesterday. Maracineanu qualified for the final.

—AFP photo

It's Dutch duo and Dolan Ban-inflicting Romania

SWIMMING

SYDNEY, Sept 17: Inge de Bruijn, inspired by compatriot Pieter van den Hoogenband's world record semifinal swim, captured the 100m butterfly Olympic gold medal Sunday in a world record of her own, reports AFP.

The Dutch duo were joined in their record-setting exploits by American Tom Dolan, who broke his own six-year-old world mark to win his second straight Olympic 400m medley gold.

"I saw Pieter's race, and I went totally bananas," said de Bruijn, who lowered the 100m fly world record for the third time this year with her time of 56.61. "I had a lot of adrenalin flowing through my body. I need that when I race so I can be mentally strong."

Van den Hoogenband trespassed on Australian swimming fans' sacred ground, snatching the 200m freestyle world record from Ian Thorpe in the first semi-final with a time of 1:45.35.

Thorpe, who had twice lowered the world mark — to 1:45.51 — at the Australian Trials here in May, was proved less than invincible for the first time in these Games when he failed by two-hundredths of a second to get the record back in the second semi.

"I was surprised, I didn't expect to swim so fast," said van den Hoogenband, who earlier in the day had despaired of challenging Thorpe for the gold medal in Monday's final. "I wanted to break 1:46."

His euphoria certainly didn't cause him to revise his evaluation of Thorpe, who lowered the world record in winning the 400m free gold on Saturday night and then anchored Australia's world record-setting 4x100m freestyle relay.

"It'll be a great final, but I don't think the world record will last that long," van den Hoogenband said. "Hopefully one day."

De Bruijn was more optimistic on his behalf.

"He went so smooth," she said. "If he can remain calm, I think he can do a good job against Thorpe tomorrow."

Dolan brought the world record tally for the first two days of Olympic swimming to eight with his 4:11.76 — more than two seconds ahead of silver medalist Erik Vendt of the United States. Canada's Curtis Myden who won bronze in both the 200m and 400m medleys four years ago in Atlanta came third.

"It's amazing, so much better than '96," said Dolan, who battled back from career-threatening knee surgery in May of 1999.

While Dolan was savouring Olympic success the second time around, de Bruijn was getting her first taste of Games gold.

She found it took away the sourness of the doping insinuations that have greeted her spree of eight world records this year leading up to the Games.

"Right now I'm above all those accusations," the beaming 27-year-old said. "It doesn't matter to me anymore because I've got the gold medal."

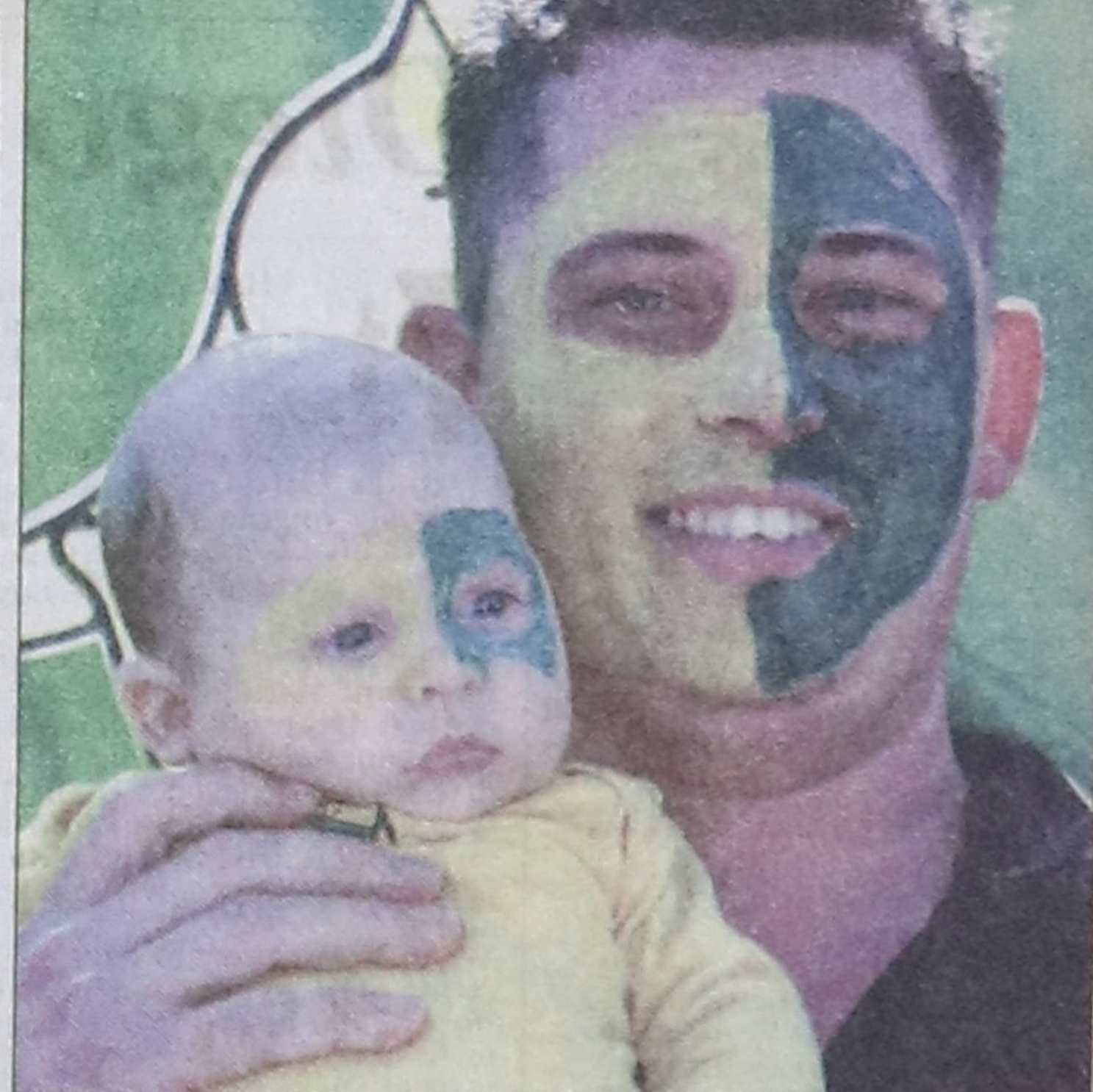
American champion Thompson couldn't say the same. The US great, whose six Olympic gold medals have all come in relays, failed in her first chance at these Games to close out her Olympic career with an individual gold.

Thompson finished a disappointing fifth and now has only the 100m freestyle — in which she'll also face world record-holder de Bruijn — to pursue her quest.

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SYDNEY, Sept 17: Anti-drug crusader Tamas Ajan said on Sunday that weightlifting's place in the Olympics was not in danger despite several doping scandals surrounding the sport at the Sydney Games.

Ajan, the general secretary of the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) and "a member of the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA), said that the IWF's decision to ban the entire Romanian weightlifting team from the Olympic competition after three of their



BABY'S DAY OUT: An Australian father and his baby, with the colours of their national flag painted on their faces, enjoying the proceedings at the trap event of the shooting competition yesterday.

—AFP photo

Tempers spill over

HOCKEY

SYDNEY, Sept 17: Defending champions and hot favourites Australia received a wake-up call from Britain before sweating their way to a narrow 2-1 win in the Olympic women's hockey here on Sunday, reports AFP.

Both camps then hit out at the umpires and the technical officials on the sidelines, saying inconsistency in supervision had ruined the game.

The British, who had a third penalty corner turned down after the final hooter went off, were livid, but said they will not protest.

There have been 250 complaints I know of over the years, and none of them have been upheld, Britain's manager Jon Royce said. "There's no point lodging a protest."

But it's said that such a good game had to end in controversy.

Australian coach Ric Charlesworth was equally critical of the officials.

"We scored a fair goal in the

first half that was disallowed," he said.

There were a few penalty corners given against us, but the same offence was not penalised at the other end.

"People have a right to know why this is being done. If the players and coaches don't know how the rules will be interpreted, how will the crowd know?"

"It's a pity the technical people were frozen," Charlesworth said. "I am really not happy at the way the game was conducted."

China, meanwhile, made an astonishing Olympic debut, scoring a 2-1 win over the Netherlands, one of the favourites for the women's title.

Yang Huiping converted a penalty corner in each half to give the Chinese their biggest win ever.

Margie Teenwen reduced the margin for the Dutch one minute before the end, but it came too late to prevent defeat in the group B game.

The Dutch women were fan-

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UNFORTUNATE: Miriam Kolber, a Norwegian, displaying a T-shirt that says 'We Want Tickets' at the Olympic Park in Sydney yesterday. Kolber had booked tickets for her country's handball competition matches a month ago from Norway. However the tickets failed to materialise at the place she had been directed to pick them up.

—AFP photo