

Dutch demolition

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Italian Massimiliano Rosolino, silver medalist behind Thorpe in the 400m free, took the bronze in 1:46.65.

American Lenny Krayzelburg, who like Thorpe set the Olympic pool alight at the Pan Pacific championships in August of 1999, couldn't match his world record in the 100m backstroke.

But he emerged with the prize he came for: Olympic gold. "This is better than anything I've ever done," the world champion said. "In this sport you're judged by Olympic medals."

Krayzelburg, holder of all three backstroke world records, won in a Games record 53.72, fending off Aussie Matt Welsh who took the silver in 54.07, Germany's Stev Theloke took the bronze in 54.82.

"It's a big monkey off my back," Krayzelburg said of his first Olympic title. "I'm very relieved."

Although the Soviet-born Californian is normally the picture of calm, he admitted to nerves on an Olympic scale. "I thought three swims would be enough," he said. "But I was nervous. I had a hard time sleeping last night."

Penny Heyns, winner of both breaststroke gold medals in Atlanta, couldn't hang on to her 100m title.

Breaststroke babies Megan Quann of the United States and Liesel Jones of Australia relegated South Africa's world record-holder to bronze.

Quann, 16, won in 1:07.05, while Jones, who turned 15 on August 30, took the silver in 1:07.49 ahead of Heyns' 1:07.55.

Romania's Diana Mocanu, 16, won the women's 100m backstroke in an Olympic record 1:00.21. Japan's Mai Nakamura was second in 1:00.55, and Spain's Nina Zhivanevskaya was third in 1:00.89.

Popov after

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That means out of the hands of Holland's Pieter van den Hoogenband and American Gary Hall Jr.

While Hall has been itching for a victory over Popov after taking silver in both the 50m and 100m free in Atlanta, van den Hoogenband has done what no other swimmer could do in the past eight years: beat Popov in the 100m free at a major international competition.

Van den Hoogenband stunned the Russian in the 50m and 100m free at the 1999 European Championships in Istanbul.

The 28-year-old Popov seemed adrift, saying in April that his appetite for swimming and winning was gone.

"I have lost an interest in swimming fast, that feeling of racing and the hunger," he said. "This Olympics I am going to do with a smile on my face, to take it easy for once in my life and to enjoy it."

In characteristically contrary fashion, however, Popov found his motivation. At the European Championships in Helsinki in June he broke Tom Jager's 10-year-old world record in the 50m free and 100m free and van den Hoogenband in his wake.

"He's done an amazing thing this year coming back, the young Dutch swimmer said. "He's so amazingly strong."

Popov's physical and mental strength were tested to the limit shortly after the 1996 Olympics, when he was stabbed on a Moscow street.

Ten hours of emergency surgery repaired his lung and kidneys, and he returned to win the 100m free at the 1998 World Championships.

"He's got a belief in himself that he has this ability, and he has an ability probably like no swimmer that I've ever seen," Australian backstrokeer Nicole Stevenson, a former training partner, said of Popov. "He's just awesome."

Bribe for

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The 35 have been under scrutiny from the opening bout. Besides the spy cameras, a special AIBA commission was formed just to keep an eye out for any problems. Scoring is analysed daily, with commission members on the lookout for any discrepancies that might be suspicious.

The judges and referees are very aware of the problems and the fact their performance has to be exemplary," Baker said. "We have to prove the other people who criticise our sport wrong."

That doesn't mean, of course, that boxing is home free. Which is precisely why Baker made his bribe offer.

Premiership

Ranieri doesn't inspire Chelsea

LONDON, Sept 18: New Chelsea head coach Claudio Ranieri had an uncomfortable debut watching his side lose 2-0 to Leicester at Stamford Bridge on Sunday, reports AFP.

The Italian, who officially takes charge on Monday following the dismissal of Gianluca Vialli last Tuesday, saw former Chelsea midfielder Muzzy Izet give the visitors an early lead after eight minutes and then witnessed team-mates Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink and Christian Panucci involved in a furious row.

Stan Collymore heaped further misery on the London club by scoring Leicester's second eight minutes from time.

Leicester are now joint top of the Premiership, level on points with reigning champions Manchester United, who have a vastly superior goal difference.

Liverpool stay fourth in the table after securing a point in a 1-1 draw at West Ham.

England international midfielder Steven Gerrard gave the Merseysiders the lead after 12 minutes but Italian Paolo di Canio levelled from the penalty spot with 21 minutes to go.

Premiership newcomers Manchester City were held 1-1 by Middlesbrough at Maine Road. Italian Gianluca Festa opened the scoring for the visitors and Costa Rican international Paolo Wanchope hit the equaliser.

Chelsea were caught napping when Neil Lennon whipped in a cross from the right and Izet nipped between the static Winston Bogarde and Marcel Desailly to head past Carlo Cuccinelli.

The game also saw the amazing sight of Hasselbaink storming back down the pitch during a stoppage and furiously shouting at team-mate Panucci

before throwing the ball away.

Chelsea almost got the goal their efforts deserved after 64 minutes. Zola found Graeme Le Saux on the overlap and Hasselbaink met his cross at the far post only to see his header crash against the bar.

Leicester sear their victory with a second goal, this time converted by the unmarked Collymore after a pin-point cross by Steve Guppy.

Basement club West Ham are still searching for their first win of the season after sharing the points with Liverpool.

Gerard Houllier's men got off to the best possible start. Danny Murphy swung an early centre beyond the West Ham defence and Gerrard arrived at the back-post to score with a right foot shot in the 12th minute.



Chelsea's Norwegian striker Tore Andre Flo (R) fights for the ball with Phil Gilchrist of Leicester City during their Premiership clash at Stamford Bridge in London on September 17.

West Ham missed a hatful of chances and it looked as if they would be going home empty-handed until Di Canio came to the rescue after 69 minutes when Swiss defender Stephane Henchoz hauled down Frenchman Frederic Kanoute and Di Canio sent Liverpool keeper Sander Westerveld the wrong way from the spot.

Manchester City returned to their twin strike force of George Weah and Wanchope but Middlesbrough dealt comfortably with the attack and took the lead through Festa 10 minutes after half-time with a diving header.

But their joy lasted just 12 minutes when Wanchope produced the ball past Gary Walsh from Danny Tiatto's cross for the equaliser.

French First Div

Anderson wins it for Lyon

PARIS, Sept 18: A goal from Brazilian striker Sonny Anderson on the stroke of half-time was enough to give an emerging Lyon side a 1-0 victory at Nantes in a French league match on Sunday, reports AFP.

Following their impressive debut in the Champions League on Tuesday when they beat Dutch outfit Heerenveen 3-1 at home and a 3-0 pasting of former leaders Lens in their last league outing, coach Jacques Santini has his men firmly on the right track.

Sunday's victory continued Lyon's climb up the table and they now have 13 points, moving them up to fifth place, just two points behind surprise leaders Bastia.

Nantes slumped to their third home victory off the season and offered weak opposition as Lyon goalkeeper Gregory Coupet was rarely called into action, and some wayward second-half finishing made his job that much easier.

The goal came in the 45th minute when a free-kick from Steed Malbranque took an unlikely deflection off Nantes defender Matthieu Berson and fell to Anderson right in front of goal.

The Brazilian who finished last season as top scorer in France, made no mistake from close range to pick up his fourth goal off the season and maintain his side's improving form after a slow start to the season.

Lyon's next outing is a visit to Greece on Wednesday as they continue their Champions League campaign against Olympiakos who fine-tuned their preparations for the Group C match, with a 6-0 battering of rivals Etuloks in a Greek league match on Saturday.

Record-tech

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while the water is kept at 27 degrees, one above the world body FINA's standard and the air temperature at 29, so that swimmers don't use heat outside the water.

But the view that the superb pool is responsible for the records is not held by all.

Inge de Bruijn, who has broken nine world records in the past four months in Sheffield and Rio, and cut a further three hundreds of a second off her own mark in Sunday's 100m butterfly, disagrees.

"I think it's more the stadium with 17,000 people. The water is the same everywhere. I think the Australians respect other swimmers and give a big hand to all the athletes. You can tell swimming is the number one sport."

But her American coach Paul Bergen believes the suit was a factor in de Bruijn's spree of seven world records in three weeks earlier this year.

He said he had run more than 300 trials in practice with 20 different swimmers, and the suit was between four-tenths and six-tenths of a second faster over 25 meters.

That's two seconds in 100 yards," Bergen said. "So I think that suit is a piece of equipment. I don't see it as a costume," of the high-tech body-suits, one of which are designed of a fabric to mimic the way a shark's skin slices off water.

But Dolan's United States teammate Gary Hall, beaten into second place Saturday by the Australians in the freestyle relay, believes it's all psychological.

"A lot of it is psychological knowing a lot of records have been broken, it creates more," he added.

Match Day Three

Marauding M up against Kiev



PARIS, Sept 18: Higher-scoring United resume European Champions

League action at Dynamo Kiev on Tuesday with the confidence gained from the explosive start to their season.

United beat Belgium's Anderlecht 5-1 in their first game last week and then followed up with a 3-1 Premiership win at Everton on the weekend.

Their 11.7-million-dollar French keeper Fabien Barthez limped out of the Everton game with a back injury however and is a major doubt for the Kiev trip.

"He has a pulled muscle and is very doubtful for Kiev," United manager Sir Alex Ferguson said about Barthez. "There is not a long time for him to recover."

United's run of 20 matches without defeat and seventeen goals in six Premiership matches is a stark warning to Kiev's defence, as is Andy Cole's hat-trick in the Anderlecht win.

Kiev however slumped to a 2-1 defeat at Dutch champions PSV Eindhoven, in their opening Group G match while Eindhoven travel to Anderlecht on Tuesday, as the second round of matches kick off.

Relieved Juventus play Panathinaikos in group E and are out to consolidate on their fortune in the topsy-turvy display of their first match.

Leading 3-1 against Hamburg, Juventus found themselves 4-3 down and had Filippo Inzaghi to thank for a late penalty.

Juventus find themselves at home on Tuesday as they look to repeat their 1996 European Cup win, sandwiched within a run of four consecutive finals.

Underestimating Greek side Panathinaikos could put Juventus' hopes of reliving European success in peril.

The Greeks were on the verge of victory against Spanish champions Deportivo La Coruna until Moroccan Noureddine Naybet equalized for the Galicians with six minutes left.

The Spanish champions, al-

ready top of the Spanish league, and German side Hamburg, who meet on Tuesday, had contrasting fortunes at the weekend.

Deportivo's 3-0 win at Santander was as high as Hamburg's 3-2 loss to Borussia Dortmund was low.

Turkish outfit Besiktas and English club Leeds should be working on defensive strength in training in the run-up to their home group H matches with Euro giants Barcelona and AC Milan respectively.

Barcelona travel to Turkiye Besiktas and AC Milan play Leeds at Elland Road after both the Spanish and Italian clubs notched up four goals a piece in their competition curtain raisers.

Leeds had hoped Mark Viduka might return from Down Under after Australia were knocked out of the Olympics but Australia coach Raul Blanco refused the request.

In group F, Bayern Munich host Norway's Rosenborg and Paris St. Germain are at home to Sweden's Helsingborgs, who knocked out Inter Milan in the third qualifying round.

PSG's 34-year-old veteran, who injured his right ankle against Norway's Rosenborg last week, should be fit for the Helsingborgs fixture.

Anelka missed Saturday's 1-1 French league draw against Lens but had light training on Sunday.

Bayer Leverkusen will be without German international striker Ulf Kirsten for their group A match at home to Sporting Lisbon on Wednesday.

The 35-year-old veteran tore a calf muscle during the first half of Saturday's surprise defeat against Hansa Rostock which ended a 19-match unbeaten streak at home for last season's Bundesliga runners-up.

Defending champions Real Madrid host Spartak Moscow in the other pool game.

UEFA Cup champions Galatasaray will be without Romanian international Gheorghe Hagi at Austrian side Sturm Graz on Wednesday as he begins a five-match ban.

The 35-year-old veteran playmaker received two yellow

cards during Tuesday's Champions League clash against Monaco and was also sent off in Galatasaray's UEFA Cup final victory against Arsenal as well as when Romania met Italy at Euro 2000.

French champions Monaco host Scottish giants Glasgow Rangers who got off to a flyer in their opening match thrashing Sturm Graz of Austria 5-0 as the two teams meet at the Louis II stadium in the other group D match.

Other top clubs in action on Wednesday include Lazio, who meet Sparta Prague, Arsenal, who play Ukrainians Shakhtar Donetsk, and last season's runners-up Valencia, who travel to Holland's Heerenveen.

FIXTURES

Tuesday

Group E
Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) v SV Hamburg (Ger)

Juventus (Ita) v Panathinaikos (Gre)

Group F
Bayern Munich (Ger) v Rosenborg (Nor)

Paris St. Germain (Fra) v Helsingborgs (Swe)

Group G
Anderlecht (Bel) v PSV Eindhoven (Ned)

Dynamo Kiev (Ukr) v Manchester United (Eng)

Group H
Besiktas (Tur) v Barcelona (Spa)

Leeds (Eng) v AC Milan (Ita)

Wednesday

Group A

Real Madrid (Spa) v Spartak Moscow (Rus)

Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) v Sporting Lisbon (Por)

Group B
Lazio (Ita) v Sparta Prague (Cze)

Arsenal (Eng) v Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr)

Group C
Heerenveen (Ned) v Valencia (Spa)

Olympiakos (Gre) v Lyon (Fra)

Group D
Sturm Graz (Aut) v Galatasaray (Tur)

Monaco (Fra) v Glasgow Rangers (Sco)

Bates defends Vialli's sacking

LONDON, Sept 18: Chelsea chairman Ken Bates on Sunday defended his decision to sack coach Gianluca Vialli

claiming he had to act quickly to stop the club from slipping into decay," reports AFP.

Vialli's dismissal may have seemed a harsh considering that the affable Italian had won five trophies in his two-year tenure at Stamford Bridge.

But Bates, speaking to Britain's Sunday People newspaper claims Vialli, who has been replaced by former Atletico Madrid coach Claudio Ranieri in the Chelsea hot seat, had lost the respect of the players and had to go.

"It was very difficult, but when you are in a position of responsibility, you reach the stage when you have to say: 'Enough is enough, we are sliding here,' said Bates.

"Luca is the most successful manager we have ever had, but things weren't right - and we had to make a change."

"There is no easy way to do

it. "What are you supposed to do in the circumstances - sit back and let things disintegrate and decay?"

"Remember Arsenal got rid of Bruce Rioch and appointed a certain Frenchman (Arsene Wenger) in his first full season, they won the Double."

Bates felt that Vialli's rotation system, so successful in Europe, but suspect in the Premiership, was not working and that a change of ideas was needed.

He said: "It soon became clear we had to act and Luca accepted our point of view. Although he obviously wasn't happy, he said: 'You gave me the job, you can take it away'."

"I like the guy. He was a friend of mine, but you can't have favourites. Take Ruud Gullit. I didn't like his arrogance. In fact, I never liked him."

"But while he was delivering the goods there was no problem. When he lost the plot, he had to go."

The Chelsea supremo also maintained that new boss Ranieri, who will officially take charge of team affairs on Mon-

day morning, will be expected to mount a serious challenge for the Premiership title.

He said: "We required somebody who will be tough on discipline and who will handle millionaire players who all think they should be in the team."

"The direction of the club hasn't changed. The new man must play attractive football," he fans wouldn't tolerate anything else."

"I want the Premiership, the Champions League, the very best for Chelsea."

"Tell me a chairman who doesn't. We'll support the new man where we can - and let him manage. The manager must be able to manage. The board are there to direct."

"Luca's gone now. We have new, exciting challenges ahead for this club. All clubs go through a rise and a decay. Just look at Liverpool and how long it's taken them to recover. It took Gerard Houllier to sort them out."

"The art is stopping it before it is too late, nipping it in the bud. Hopefully, that's what we've done at Chelsea."

Scottish Premiership

De Boer makes Rangers' day

GLASGOW, Sept 18: Dutch international Ronald de Boer came to the rescue for Rangers

on Sunday as they beat Celtic 2-0 in a day when the reigning Scottish champions made it difficult for themselves against dogged Premier League rivals Hearts, reports AFP.

Recent signing De Boer scored a simple tap-in after 58 minutes to help Rangers keep pace with leaders Hibernian and second-placed Celtic.

In a dire match De Boer said his side's wastefulness in front of goal was more responsible for the lack of excitement at Ibrox rather than Hearts' defensive tactics.

The Edinburgh side packed men behind the ball in an attempt to keep the game scoreless - but were finally undone by the Dutchman.

He said: "I think everything was much easier when you score a quick goal and we had the opportunities to do that."

"Billy (Dodds) had a few good chances and if you take them then the game becomes easier -

you get more space. We didn't do that - but we have three points and that's the main thing."

The visitors' resistance was finally broken just before the hour mark when substitute Neil McCann, a former Hearts favourite, sent Dodds through.

Former Rangers goalkeeper Antti Niemi blocked his shot but De Boer was there to convert the rebound.

He said: "It was very easy. I kept the ball at my feet and I could choose where I could put it."

De Boer has now played against three Scottish teams - Aberdeen and Dundee are the other two - and reckoned the standard of Scottish football.

Mihajlovic out

ROME, Sept 13: Sinisa Mihajlovic, Lazio's Yugoslav international centre defender, will be out for a month after collecting a nasty facial injury in his side's 3-0 Champions League victory over Donetsk, reports AFP.

while obviously not the best in Europe, was not as poor as its detractors make out.

He said: "It's really not bad. I think in Spain and maybe Italy you always have strikers who are very dangerous. Even the sides at the bottom have international players."

"I think that is different here but still it's not an easy game. This is more physical, or they use physical strength more."

"It's not easy to play here. Hearts had a strong defence. But if you can run at them they are not the quickest."

"I am enjoying it in Scotland a lot. I'm feeling great and it's always nice to score the winning goal."

And De Boer pointed out that having played with European aristocrats Ajax and Barcelona he was used to playing against opposition whose ambitions were merely to spoil.

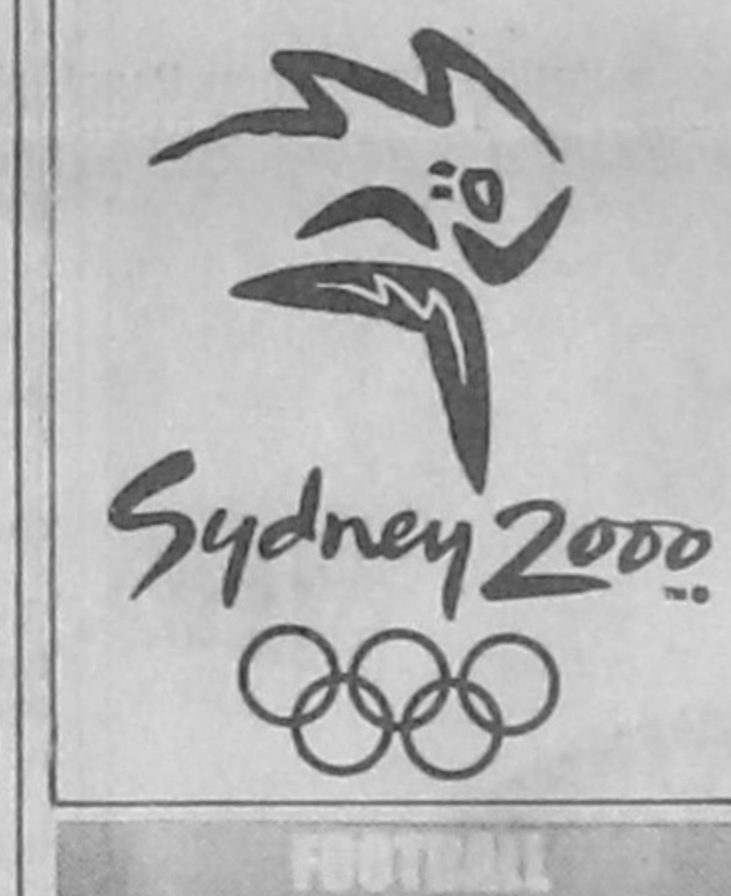
He said: "I always play with the strong team and there's only one rule - three points for the team that wins, home or away."

"It was the same with Ajax and the same with Barcelona."



Glasgow Rangers' Dutch star Ronald de Boer (R) trying to keep possession against Steven Presley of Hearts during their Scottish Premier Division match at the Ibrox Stadium in Glasgow on September 17.

Platini for rookies



SYDNEY, Sept 18: French football legend Michel Platini believes that only under-21 players or amateurs should compete in the Olympic football tournament, reports AFP.

Platini, a special adviser to FIFA president Sepp Blatter, made it clear that he was speaking only in a personal capacity but his remarks directly contradicted the claims by International Olympic Commit-

tee (IOC) president Juan Antonio Samaranch on Thursday that the great names of the world's most popular sport would play at future Olympiads.

"We should think of finding another formula for football at the Olympics," said Platini whose misgivings on the current system are centred on the reluctance of clubs to release their players for the Olympics.

"If we had under-21s or amateurs playing it would pose less problems. The professionals are here and they continue to be paid by their clubs," said the former Juventus midfielder who pointed out Italy had postponed the start of the Serie A season to accommodate the Olympics.

Platini himself competed in the 1976 Olympics in Montreal before his rise to fame and said: "Competing in the Games for a young footballer or a star is good as a one-off."

But the former midfielder maestro was unimpressed by the atmosphere at the Olympic village where he claims the big names will not rub shoulders with the less heralded names in sport.

"You don't see any of the big athletics stars (at the village) with the others," said Platini. "People do not speak the same language."

Platini, who has been joined at Sydney by his son Laurent who is working for Radio France, was visiting the fencing and judo competitions on Monday.

The Frenchman's criticisms of the presence of leading players at the Olympics contradict Samaranch's boast that Blatter was preparing to open up the World Cup to the legends of the sport - until now FIFA has been keen to ensure that the Olympics event does not detract from the supremacy of the World Cup.

"Football is very eager to protect its World Cup but I have spoken to Mr Blatter and his executive committee is ready to improve the quality of Olympic football," said Samaranch on Thursday.

"If the Olympics are held in July, Blatter told me that all the great players will compete," he added.

Greece-Turkey joint bid for Euro 2008?

ATHENS, Sept 18: Foreign affairs ministers Georges Papandreu of Greece and Ismail Cem of Turkey met in New York on Saturday, to discuss a proposed joint application to host the 2008 European football championships, Greek news agency ANA reported Sunday, reports AFP.

"We have discussed the idea for a joint application for the organisation of the European championships and our respective federations will move forward towards this goal," said Papandreu.

Holland and Belgium co-hosted Euro 2000 won by France, and Portugal are set to host the 2004 event.

TV Guide

Tuesday 19th September

(All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme)

BTV

3:00 Opening Announcement, Recitation From The Holy Quran And Programme Outline 3:15 Patriotic Song 3:20 Open University 4:00 Bangla News 4:05 Pushi Throat 4