

Star Sport

Dhaka, Thursday, September 21, 2000, e-mail: dssports@bdonline.com



Rings and oath

Just when the routine of the four-year cycle for Games had been established - in Stockholm in 1912 more than one million spectators witnessed a very well-run tournament - World War I crushed any hopes of a 1916 Olympics.

With Belgium still recovering from the devastation of the invasion, Antwerp's selection in 1920 came as a surprise. Antwerp gave the Games the Olympic flag, the inter-linked five rings. For the first time, too, the ceremony included the oath pledged by the athletes.

"In the name of all the competitors I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sports and honour of our teams."



SYDNEY, Sept 20 (AFP): Schedule for Day 6 of the Sydney Olympics on Thursday:

FOOTBALL: Rest Day

HOCKEY

State Hockey Centre
Men's Preliminaries (Korea v India) (Argentina v Poland) (Spain v Australia) (Germany v Pakistan)
Women's Preliminaries (New Zealand v South Africa) (Argentina v Spain)

ARCHERY
ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS
BASKETBALL
BEACH VOLLEYBALL
BOXING
TRACK CYCLING
EQUESTRIAN
HANDBALL
JUDO
ROWING
SAILING
SHOOTING
SOFTBALL
SWIMMING
TABLE TENNIS
TENNIS
VOLLEYBALL



SYDNEY, Sept 20: (Reuters): Final medals table on the fifth day of the Sydney Games on Wednesday:

| C | G | S | B |
|--------------|----|---|---|
| US | 10 | 7 | 6 |
| Australia | 7 | 8 | 7 |
| France | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| China | 6 | 4 | 7 |
| Netherlands | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| Italy | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Russia | 3 | 7 | 6 |
| Germany | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Japan | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Bulgaria | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Britain | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| South Korea | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Ukraine | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Cuba | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Romania | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Spain | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Turkey | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Slovakia | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Switzerland | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Poland | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Hungary | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Czech Rep | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Sweden | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Canada | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Mexico | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Lithuania | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Croatia | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Colombia | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Brazil | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Belarus | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| South Africa | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Taiwan | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| North Korea | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Greece | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Yugoslavia | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Uruguay | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Nigeria | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Indonesia | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Costa Rica | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Belgium | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Thailand | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Portugal | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Latvia | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Kuwait | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| India | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Georgia | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Estonia | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Samba ill at ease

FOOTBALL

SYDNEY, Sept 20: Japan and Chile reached the quarter-finals of the Olympic men's football tournament Wednesday alongside Brazil and Spain despite both sides losing their matches, reports AFP.

Japan's 19 match winning streak came to an abrupt halt as they were beaten 1-0 by Brazil but South Africa's defeat at the hands of Slovakia means Philippe Troussier's side qualify for the last eight as group D runners-up.

Chile were shocked 1-0 by South Korea but finished top of group C on goal difference with Spain second after their 2-0 victory over Morocco as the unlucky Koreans missed out despite also garnering six points.

BRAZIL - 1; JAPAN - 0

Brazilian skipper Alex scored the decisive goal after just six minutes, ghosting in unmarked at the far post to head home Fabio Aurelio's deep cross.

Geovanni and Fabiano then went close as the South Ameri-

cans dominated the first-half. Japan stepped up the tempo after the break and in the 56th minute Naohiro Takahara rose highest at a corner to glance his header against the post.

Concerted Japanese pressure followed and Shunsuke Nakamura curled another free-kick just inches wide before Yui Nakazawa flashed a header from another corner wide with five minutes remaining.

The Brazilian defence stood firm though and Japan's proud run came to an end but they live to fight another day.

"We played the best team at the moment, which is Brazil," Troussier said.

"It was great performance from them and we know what we have to do to beat them in the future."

SLOVAKIA - 2; SOUTH AFRICA - 1

South Africa crashed to a 2-1 loss against Slovakia ending their hopes of progressing to the knock-out stage.

Juraj Cizeg and Jan Slahor put the Slovaks two goals up and Benny McCarthy's reply turned out to be nothing more than a consolation.

South African coach Mashaba Ephraim was left to rue missed opportunities.

"We played well but unfortunately we couldn't convert the chances we had in the second-half," he said.

SOUTH KOREA - 1; CHILE - 0

In Group B, Lee Dong-Gook's tenth minute strike was enough to give South Korea victory over a weakened Chile side, who were missing star striker Igor Zamorano through injury.

"We won the Group But this is not the way we wanted to win. We wanted to finish top, with three victories," said Chilean coach Tello Rodrigo, who confirmed Zamorano would be fit for the quarter-final.

SPAIN - 2; MOROCCO - 0

AC Milan striker Jose Mari put Spain ahead in the 34th minute against Morocco when he hammered home a header by defender Capdevila from close range.

Gabri added a second in the last minute before Moroccan defender Fouzi Elbrazi was sent-off in injury time.

Brazil will face Cameroon for a place in the semi-finals, while Japan - whose bronze in 1968 is the only Olympic soccer medal won by an Asian country - meet the United States.

Chile play Nigeria, the defending champions, and the two remaining European sides Spain and Italy go head to head.

All the games take place on Saturday.



A CLOSE ENCOUNTER: Brazil's hot property Ronaldinho (L) being tightly marked by Japan's Yui Nakazawa during their crucial Group D encounter at the Gabba in Brisbane yesterday. Brazil scraped through following a hard-fought 1-0 win. - AFP photo

All-around Nemov

GYMNASTICS

SYDNEY, Sept 20 (AFP): Destiny was finally on Alexei Nemov's side.

The 24-year-old Russian who settled for Olympic all-around silver in 1996 led after every performance here Wednesday, holding off China's fast-closing Yang Wei to capture the Olympic men's gymnastics all-around title.

"I'm extremely happy," Nemov said. "I don't believe this has happened. I was expecting it, but I didn't believe it."

Nemov finished with 58.474 points with Yang second at 58.361 and Ukraine's Oleksandr Beresh third at 58.212, edging Ivan Ivankov of Belarus by .188 for bronze.

"Nemov is the best," Russian team manager Leonid Arkaev said. "The thing he showed was he's the best of these Olympics. He

deserved to win."

The champion, however, was much harsher on himself than his mentor.

"I was performing like an automation," Nemov said. "I could have fallen at any moment. That's how I feel about it. Destiny was on my side and I ended up with the gold. I have no idea how. I just do my best from beginning to end."

Nemov's victory came two days after Russia's disappointing third-place team finals finish behind China and Ukraine.

Also providing inspiration was the memory of his 1996 near miss. Despite an injured left shoulder, Nemov lost the Atlanta all-around title to China's Li Xiaoshuang by only .049, the closest all-around fight since 1984.

Named one of the 50 "Most Beautiful Guys in the World" by Young and Modern magazine in

1997, Nemov now has a son and admits he lives a somewhat tamer lifestyle than four years ago.

"Sometimes you go to bed at two in the morning," he said. "Sometimes you want to have a beer. That's part of my lifestyle."

Nemov won six medals at the 1996 Olympics, the most of any athlete at the Atlanta Games, and he has a chance to win seven medals here, having qualified for five apparatus finals that will be contested Sunday and Monday.

The reigning Olympic vault champion and world floor exercise and pommel horse champion began with a 9.787 on the high bar, followed with a 9.80 on the floor and added a 9.775 on horse.

Most rivals faded, but Yang kept on the pressure. When

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FLYING ABOVE THE REST: Alexei Nemov, the Russian gymnast going through his rings routine during the men's all-around final at the Super Dome yesterday. Nemov won the gold with a score of 58.474 points. - AFP photo



LIU FOR BALANCE: China's Liu Xuan performing her balance beam routine during the women's team event finals yesterday. - Internet photo

Games go Dutch X-Olympics

SWIMMING

SYDNEY, Sept 20: Holland's Pieter van den Hoogenband ended Alexander Popov's eight-year reign as Olympic 100m freestyle champion on Wednesday following his world record-setting semi with a triumph in the final, reports AFP.

In a day that also saw van den Hoogenband's compatriot Inge de Bruijn set a new world record of 53.77sec in the women's 100m free semifinals, another once-mighty swimmer was toppled when American Misty Hyman pulled the wings off of Australia's Madam Butterfly, Susie O'Neill, in the 200m fly.

Hyman's previous personal best of 2:07.87 - set in the heats here - seemed to offer little threat to world record-holder O'Neill, who had already won the 200m freestyle gold.

But van den Hoogenband forcefully served notice of his intentions to do Popov out of an unprecedented third straight 100m freestyle title when he crashed through the 48-second barrier with a world record of 47.84 secs in the semi-finals. He broke the four-day-old mark of 48.18 secs, set by Australian Michael Klim.

His 100m freestyle exploits followed his world record-setting demolition of Australian Ian Thorpe in the 200m free.

"I'm still dreaming," van den Hoogenband said. "I don't know what I'm doing right now."

As in the semifinals, van den Hoogenband was happy to let others set the early pace. He was third at the turn, when Klim led, American Gary Hall briefly edged into the lead, but van den Hoogenband inexorably took over in the final 15 meters.

"After 75 meters, I knew I would bring it home," van den Hoogenband said. "I was in such good shape."

"The last two meters was the hardest," said Klim, who finished out of the medals in fourth place, just one-hundredth of a second behind bronze medalist Hall. "I was forcing myself."

"It was a tough, and it's getting tougher all the time," said Popov, 28, who gets another chance in the 50m free to become the first man to win the same event at three consecutive Games.

The cherubic van den Hoogenband, who claimed his second career 100m free victory over Popov, almost reluctantly agreed that he had assumed the mantle of the world's top freestyler.

"I won two golds, yes, and I broke the world records, at this moment I'm the best," he said. "But what Alex has achieved in the past, he's the greatest, he's a legend. He'll win the 50."

O'Neill was approaching legend status, too, thanks to her improvement in May on Mary T.

Meagher's 19-year-old world record.

Undefeated in the 200m fly since her triumph in Atlanta, the 27-year-old was the overwhelming favourite to cap her Olympic career in front of her home fans with a gold in her signature event.

But Hyman, who nearly retired as she struggled to convert her technique when her trademark long submerged start was batted, had other ideas.

She led from start to finish to win in an Olympic record 2min 05.88sec, the second fastest of all time.

"I never imagined it would be like this," said Hyman, 21. "When I turned, I said to myself, 'I can do this. I can finish this.'"

O'Neill, whose world record stands at 2:05.81, was second in 2:06.58 and Australian Petria Thomas took the bronze in 2:07.12.

"I went as fast as I could tonight," O'Neill said.

O'Neill and Thomas then joined in Australia's valiant but futile effort to narrow the gold medal gap to the United States in the 4x200m free relay.

"We have definitely had a lot

of Olympics-related business," "Dee", the brothel's owner, told AFP on Wednesday.

"In some way or another they (customers) are all related to the Olympics, whether its volunteers or journalists or drivers."

Has she had any athletes looking for a post-competition celebration or a pre-game warm-up dropping in?

"No," she said. "But we are quite discreet too. We wouldn't give out that information."

She has managed to identify one distinguishing characteristic of her Olympic visitors so far.

"They're wonderful," she said. "They're very big tipsters."

Not all of the visitors to the Olympic city have greeted sex workers with open arms though.

Security officials launched an investigation last week after three prostitutes slipped into the Olympic media village, touting their business for 500 Australian (275 US) dollars an hour to visiting journalists.

"We have definitely had a lot

Malleswari brings joy to India

NEW DELHI, Sept 20: India was gripped by a wave of euphoria on Tuesday as weightlifter Karnam Malleswari became the first ever Indian woman to win a medal in Olympics, reports DPA.

Malleswari, the third Indian to win an individual medal in any Olympic event bagged the bronze in the women's 69 kilogram category at Sydney on Tuesday.

The only other Indians to win medals in individual events at Olympics are wrestler Keshava Jadhav in 1952 Helsinki Olympics and tennis player Leander Paes at Atlanta in 1996. Both of them won the bronze.

"She lifts 240 kilograms and hopes of a billion" the Indian Express newspaper said referring to the one billion-strong Indian population.

"Her success is a tribute to Indian womanhood," Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said. He said it would be a morale booster to the Indian contingent at Sydney.

Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister of the southern state of Andhra Pradesh from where Malleswari hails said her achievement was a matter of pride for India and her native state.

The state government also announced a reward of one million rupees (22,000 dollars) to Malleswari. Federal Minister of State for Sports Shunawaz Hussain said his ministry would give her 600,000 rupees.



PUT MY NAME AT THE TOP! Dutch sensation Pieter van den Hoogenband is delighted after winning the men's 100 metres freestyle yesterday. - AFP photo