

Star Sport

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The rebirth of the Games

The inauguration of the first Games of the modern era, opened by King George I at the foot of the Acropolis on April 5, 1896, was a huge relief for Baron Pierre de Coubertin. Greece's instability and economic stature, due to numerous conflicts, proved almost insurmountable obstacles. However, a rich Greek from Alexandria, George Averoff, donated a gift of one million drachma and in a matter of 18 months a superb white marble stadium, able to hold 60,000 people, was constructed. Baron de Coubertin's dream of reinventing the Games was one he had coveted since 1892 - two years later the official announcement was made and Athens chosen as the site. Almost 300 athletes, two-thirds of whom were Greek, from fourteen countries and three continents arrived in Athens, although the Games were not widely covered by the Press. Nine sports were included in the programme between April 6 - 15: athletics, cycling, fencing, gymnastics, wrestling, swimming, weightlifting, tennis and shooting. An American Harvard student, James Connolly, became the first Olympic champion of the modern era on the first day of the Games, winning the triple jump with a leap of 13.71 metres.



SO PREDICTABLE: US track queen Marion Jones crossing the finish-line of the women's 100 metres sprint final yesterday.



TODAY'S MENU

SYDNEY, Sept 23 (AFP): Schedule for Sunday, Day 9 at the Sydney Olympics:

ATHLETICS
Olympic Stadium
Men's 800m semifinals, Women's 5,000m final, Men's 400m semifinals, Women's 400m semifinals, Women's 800m Final, **FOOTBALL**
Bruce Stadium, Canberra
Women's semifinal: Sydney Football Stadium
Women's semifinal: HOCKEY
State Hockey Centre
Women's Medal Pool
Men's preliminaries (Great Britain v Canada) (Poland v South Korea)
TENNIS
Tennis centre
Men's Singles third round, women's singles quarterfinals, men's doubles quarterfinals, women's doubles second round
ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS
BASKETBALL
BEACH VOLLEYBALL
BOXING
MOUNTAIN BIKE
DIVING
FENCING
HANDBALL
ROWING
SAILING
SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING
TABLE TENNIS
VOLLEYBALL
WATER POLO
WEIGHTLIFTING

Redgrave braves the age barrier

SYDNEY, Sept 23: British rower Steve Redgrave pushed his ageing body to the limit Saturday, writing himself into the history books by winning a fifth consecutive Olympic gold, reports AFP.



"It has been four years of hard work. I had a good feeling all week and I knew it was going to go well," said Redgrave, who is bettered only by Hungarian fencer Aladar Gerevich, who won six gold medals between 1932 and 1960.

"It was close, but that does. See page 15

Magic-on Jones

ATHLETICS

SYDNEY, Sept 23: American sprint sensation Marion Jones won her first ever Olympic gold with a shattering display here in the women's 100 metres on a chilly Saturday evening, reports AFP.

Jones, going for a record-

busting five track and field titles here, broke into a huge smile as she swept across the line to the roars of the 100,000 strong crowd packed into Stadium Australia.

Seconds later her smile turned to tears of joy as she hugged friends in the crowd before starting a lap of honour with the American flag and for some of the way she also carried the flag of Belize — the land of some of her ancestors.

It was a brilliant Olympic debut for the former basketball star who turned down a chance to compete in the US 4x100 relay team at the Barcelona Games in 1992, claiming she was not ready.

Jones has not lost a 100m race since 1997 and she never looked like losing her record here as she ran her fastest 100m of the year.

So confident was Jones that she blew a kiss to the crowd during the pre-race introductions.

But her concentration was fully tested. Just before the starters gun was about to fire Debbie Ferguson of the Bahamas raised her hand to delay the start. Then Thanou had a false start. The race got underway at the third attempt.

"It's a dream come true," said Jones afterwards. "It's finally here. I have dreamed about this for 19 years. Now for the other four."

For veteran Merlene Ottey, making her sixth and final appearance in an Olympics in a career that started in Moscow in 1980, there was to be no final glory.

The 40-year-old had caused a storm amongst her Jamaican teammates when she was selected for the Olympic team.

Ottey finished fourth in the trials but was given a place anyway.

She was determined to prove her critics wrong but in the end Ottey could only manage fourth as age finally caught up with her.

"It was good to get this far. A lot of people, including Jamaicans did not think I could," she said.

Samba silenced

FOOTBALL

SYDNEY, Sept 23: The United States and Cameroon reached the last four of the Olympic men's football tournament in dramatic fashion here Saturday, where they were joined by Spain and Chile, reports AFP.

The US defeated Japan 5-4 in a penalty shoot-out after a thrilling 2-2 draw, while Modeste Mboma's golden goal gave the Africans victory over tournament favourites Brazil.

The United States now meet Spain, who defeated European rivals Italy 1-0, while Cameroon face Chile, 4-1 victors over Nigeria.

"I told them we could still win the game with nine if we organised ourselves," said Cameroon coach Jean-Paul Akono.

"Cameroon is very aggressive and I think the best way to play is to attack."

CHILE - 4; NIGERIA - 1

BRISBANE: An extra-time golden goal from Modeste Mboma sealed victory for Cameroon, who were reduced to nine-men after the dismissals of Gereimi Njitat Fotso and Aaron Ngumibat.

Brazil had grabbed an equaliser through a Ronaldinho free-kick at the end of normal time.

Patrick Mboma had given the Indomitable Lions a 1-0 lead on 17 minutes which they defended successfully until Ronaldinho's last-gasp curling free-kick forced extra-time.

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MELBOURNE: Rodrigo Tello

played a starring-role as the South Americans wrapped up the game with a three-goal blitz before the interval to set up a date in the last four with Cameroon.

Tello set up two goals and grabbed the fourth for himself sending the huge Chilean contingent in the 44,425 crowd wild.

In the 17th minute his free-kick from the left-wing was met with a deft header by Pablo Contreras to make it 1-0.

Less than a minute later the lead was doubled and Tello was again the provider.

The 20-year-old crossed from the left and Ivan Zamorano took advantage of hesitation.

See page 15

Golden Greene

ATHLETICS

SYDNEY, Sept 23: World record holder Maurice Greene lived up to his promise when he powered across the line to take the Olympic 100 metre gold here on Saturday, reports AFP.

Despite the chilly conditions, the brash American who never doubted that the Blue Riband title was always going to be his, came home in 9.87 to head off Ato Boldon of Trinidad and Tobago and Obadele Thompson of Barbados.

Greene had to overcome a sluggish start, but his strength told over the final 20 metres and neither Boldon nor Thompson were close enough to threaten. Boldon clocked 9.99 and Thompson 10.04.

Greene's victory makes him only the third sprinter to hold the Olympic title, the world championship and the world record at the same time — only Carl Lewis and Donovan Bailey had previously managed the triple.

"Four years ago in Atlanta I sat in the stands and cried. Those were tears of misery. Those you see now are tears of joy," said an emotional Greene afterwards.

And he had nothing but praise for teammate Boldon.

"Ato pushed me all the way," he said.

The 26-year-old Greene's success spelt heartache for Boldon who is still trying to get out of the shadow of his training partner.

The Commonwealth Games' champion took bronze in Atlanta but remained convinced that he deserved more. But despite a blistering performance in the first round of the heats he again failed to deliver the killer blow when it mattered and had to settle for silver.

But the 26-year-old Boldon put a brave face on his performance.

You know what. There were eight guys at Atlanta. Guess who was the only one to make it back — me," he said.

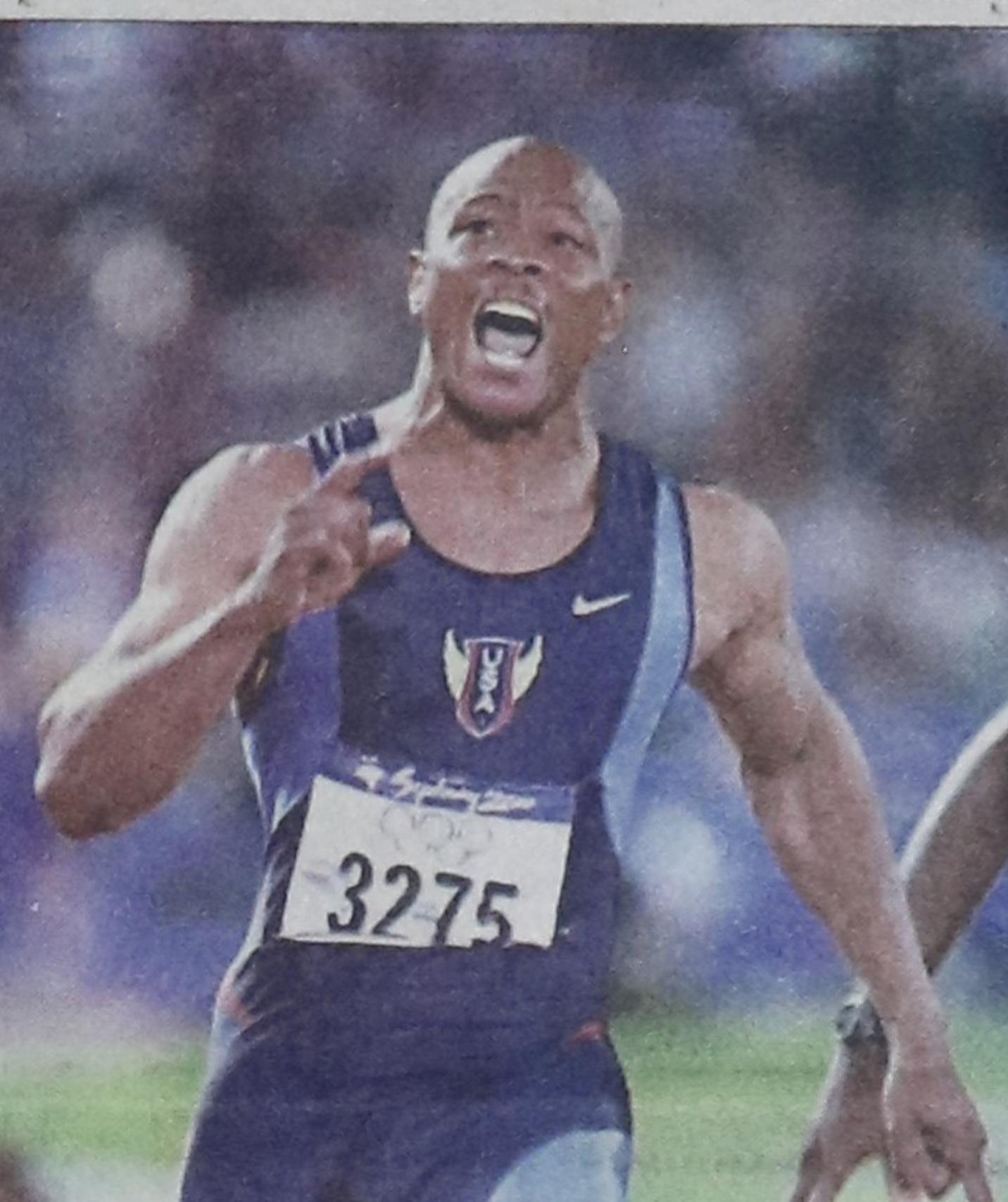
"I would have been a bit surprised to win gold but I wasn't going to give it away just because the experts said I had no chance. I guess I just don't know how to run the 100m — but I sure as hell know how to run the 200m," he added.

The two sprinters hugged seconds after the race before Greene broke away, tore off his shoes decorated with the stars and stripes, and threw them into the 100,000 strong crowd

packed into the Stadium Australia before going on his lap of honour.

For the 24-year-old Thompson, it was a dream come true. His best previous showing has been fourth in the world championships in Seville last year.

But he remained dis-



KEEPING HIS WORDS: Maurice Greene, who had promised to win the gold in the men's 100 metres sprint, keeps that vow at the Olympic Stadium in Sydney yesterday. The US ace won the event's final with a timing of 9.87 sec.

—AFP photo

US rule the waves

SWIMMING

SYDNEY, Sept 23: Inge de Bruin grabbed a third gold and Grant Hackett defeated a legend to earn his first, but America underscored their supremacy Saturday by closing the Olympic swimming with a brace of relay records, reports AFP.

"This symbolises the strength of the team throughout the meet, and it's a vindication of the first relay," Gary Hall said after he anchored the United States to victory in the 4x100m medley relay in a world record time of 3min 33.73sec.

The United States had conceded the 4x100m free relay title to Australia, their first end in the event in Olympic competition, on the first day.

But over the course of the eight-day meet they surged past Australia and the dazzling Dutch duo of de Bruin and

Pieter van den Hoogenband to finish with 33 medals, 14 of them gold.

Their relay records took the total of world records broken or equalled in the Olympic meet to 15.

Double backstroke gold medalist Lenny Krayzelburg, breaststroke silver medalist Ed Moses, Ian Crocker and 50m free co-champion Hall won in 3:33.73, slicing more than a second off the previous record of 3:34.84 set by the United States in Atlanta.

Australia's Matthew Welsh, Regan Harrison, Geoff Huegill and Michael Klim took silver in the relay. "The most fun I've had in my life."

"I just wanted to enjoy the last swim I'd have at the Olympics," she said. "It was pretty emotional."

Mai Nakamura, Masami Tanaka, Junko Onishi and Sunita Minamoto gave Japan the bronze in 4:04.16.

Thompson claimed her eighth Olympic gold medal — all from relays and three of those at these Games. She also owns an individual silver and this week won 100m freestyle bronze for a total of 10 Olympic

See page 15

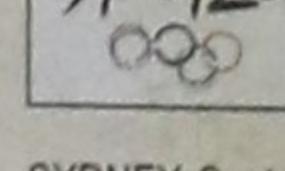


DIVING IN SPACE! Russians Dimitri Saoutine (L) and Igor Loukachaine performing a pike in tandem during the men's synchronized 10 metres platform diving final at the Sydney International Aquatic Centre yesterday. Russia won the gold.

—AFP photo



Medals Stand



SYDNEY, Sept 23 (AFP): Final updated Olympic medal table Saturday:

C	G	S	B
USA	20	12	18
China	17	11	39
Australia	10	16	11
France	10	10	5
Italy	9	4	11
Russia	8	8	12
Netherlands	7	3	3
Romania	6	2	4
Germany	4	6	12
South Korea	4	5	7
Japan	4	4	4
Ukraine	3	6	4
Great Britain	3	6	3
Sweden	3	2	1
Bulgaria	3	2	0
Poland	2	3	0
Cuba	2	2	6
Hungary	2	1	1
Spain	2	0	2
Slovenia	2	0	0
Turkey	2	0	0
Switzerland	1	5	1
Indonesia	1	3	2
Greece	1	3	1
Slovakia	1	3	1
Belarus	1	1	6
Canada	1	1	3
Finland	1	1	0
Mexico	1	1	0
Lithuania	1	0	1
New Zealand	1	0	1
Azerbaijan	1	0	0
Colombia	1	0	0
Croatia	1	0	0
Brazil	0	2	1
Denmark	0	2	0
Belgium	0	1	2
North Korea	0	1	1
Norway	0	1	1
South Africa	0	1	1
Chinese Taipei	0	1	1
Moldova	0	1	0
Nigeria	0	1	0
Trinidad	0	1	0
Uruguay	0	1	0
Yugoslavia	0		