

Sport

Christie alert

SYDNEY, Sept 23: Security in Stadium Australia is to be tightened after disgraced former Olympic champion Linford Christie slipped into a restricted area without an official pass, a stadium official said Saturday, reports AFP.

The 1992 Olympic 100m champion, banned from competition for two years for taking steroids, is in Sydney without official accreditation but was seen in the stadium seating area reserved for athletes and coaches.

"He was seen in the stadium in the athletes seating," stadium press manager Jayne Pearce told AFP. "There have been a few instances of the public finding them in the stadium."

"It is not a major security breach but it was not being policed as stringently as possible."

"We assume he (Christie) had a ticket for the public seating area but moved into the athletes area."

Pearce said the matter had been brought up at a daily briefing and "we will tighten security and spectator services".

Steve Redgrave

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isn't matter. Second best is not good enough, it's who crosses the line first. A lot of people wanted us to win but we still had to go out there and do the job."

The 38-year-old veteran teamed with Matthew Pinsent, Tim Foster and James Cracknell to take the top honours in a nerve-jangling duel over Italy in the men's coxless four.

And it was sweet revenge over Italy's Valter Molea, Riccardo Deiro, Lorenzo Carboncini and Carlo Mornati who beat them at the world championships in July.

That Lucerne defeat hurt and Redgrave said it wouldn't happen again at the Olympics. Organisers giving Britain world champions in 1997, 1998 and 1999, a fourth seeding in Sydney only added to the insult.

In a thrilling race, the British led from the front, opening up a 0.88s lead in the first 500m before the Italian four stormed back into contention.

At 1,000m the British crew's lead was slashed to 0.46s setting up a nail-biting finish.

The Italians pressed hard in the final 500m but Redgrave's cox head helped the British team home in 5m56.24s — by less than half a second after they upped their strike rate to a phenomenal 40 strokes a minute.

On crossing the line an exhausted Redgrave, 38, slumped forward in his seat while Pinsent, who partnered him to gold medals in 1992 and 1996, clambered from his position to embrace him before plunging into the water.

In the heady euphoria which followed the British hugged and kissed each other.

While admitting the Italians had made it hard going, Redgrave said he knew it was won after 250m.

"We raced out ahead into a comfortable lead and no-one was going to catch us," he said.

To cap his illustrious career, Redgrave was presented with a commemorative gold pin by International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch, also at his last Games, during the medal ceremony.

His previous golds were in the coxed four in Los Angeles, and the coxless pairs in Seoul, Barcelona and Atlanta.

Victory also handed Pinsent his third consecutive gold — only the fourth Briton to win gold at three successive Games.

"It's just a relief," said Pinsent. "It's been a very tough last couple of days but we had confidence and knew we could win."

There wasn't any stage in the race that I didn't think we could win. I'm emotional now, especially for Steve. I know what he's gone through."

For Foster it was metal to go with the bronze he won at Atlanta and sheer relief after two years of torment during which he has battled courageously and successfully against a career-threatening back condition and a debilitating hand injury.

And for Cracknell, the vibrant and youthful force, it was a vast improvement from his 17th in the double sculls four years ago.

Australia's James Stewart, Ben Dodwell, Geoff Stewart and Bo Hanson won bronze.

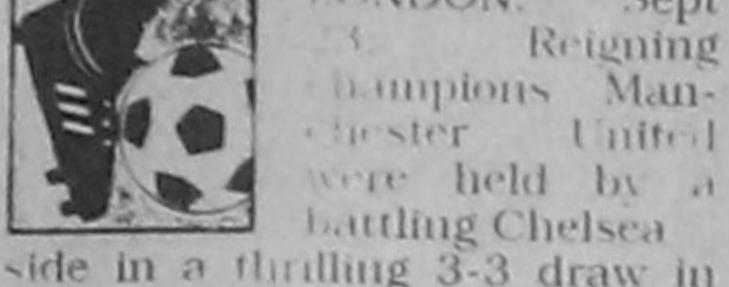


Yours Chelsea players Gianfranco Zola (L), Jody Morris (2nd from L) and Tore Andre Flo (R) congratulate scorer Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (between Morris and Flo) during their Premiership clash against Manchester United at Old Trafford yesterday.

—AFP photo

Premiership

Chelsea's brave fightback



LONDON, Sept 23: Reigning champions Manchester United were held by a battling Chelsea side in a thrilling 3-3 draw in the early match at Old Trafford on Saturday in front of a record Premiership crowd of 67,568, reports AFP.

Norwegian international Tore Andre Flo scored twice for Claudio Ranieri's side to earn a point - a diving header just before half time and then with a close range effort in the second period after United had stormed into a 3-1 lead.

West Ham secured their first win in the league with a 3-0 win at Coventry despite losing Rio Ferdinand to injury.

Flamboyant Italian Paolo di Canio scored after 38 minutes following a dreadful blunder from Richard Shaw and then supplied the cross two minutes later for Joe Cole to put the visitors 2-0.

Frank Lampard scored the third to round off a solid performance by Harry Redknapp's men.

United remain top of the table with 15 points after seven matches but they could be overtaken by second-placed Leicester - a point behind the leaders - who entertain Everton on Sunday.

Elsewhere Arsenal stay third with a late Dennis Bergkamp goal salvaging a point for the Gunners after Marcus Stewart had given the Premiership newcomers the lead four minutes after the interval.

Fourth-placed Liverpool remain behind Arsenal on goal difference after a 1-1 draw at home to Sunderland.

The battle of the England strikers produced two cracking goals for Michael Owen and Kevin Phillips in the first half at Anfield.

Phillips scored with a fine 25-yarder after just 14 minutes to silence the home crowd.

But Owen wasn't to be outdone and bulleted home a sum-

mer header after 33 minutes for the equaliser.

Ten-man Derby fought back bravely to earn a 1-1 draw against Leeds at Pride Park with Georgian international Georgi Kinkladze grabbing the equaliser 15 minutes from time.

The hosts went a goal down when Ian Harte struck a brilliant 30-yard free kick home and then had Horacio Carbonari sent off for the second successive game when he was shown the red card for a foul on Michael Bridges.

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