

Star Sport

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Munich massacre

In the early morning of September 5, 1972, eight Arab commandos broke into the Olympic compound in Munich, West Germany. They shot and killed two Israelis outright, one a wrestling coach, the other a weight-lifting coach. The commandos then took nine others of the eighteen-member Israeli Olympic team hostage and settled into the compound for a siege.

Their demands included the release of two hundred Arab guerrillas being held in Israel and safe passage out of West Germany for themselves and their hostages. The Tunisian Ambassador and the representative of the Arab League from Bonn tried to help the West Germans negotiate with the commandos, but to no effect. The Israeli side also did not budge from its position; Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir repeatedly refused to release any guerrillas being held in Israel.

The West Germans negotiated until shortly after 9:00 p.m., at which point the Arab commandos agreed to leave the compound with their hostages for the Furstenfeldbruck military airport, some fifteen miles away from Munich. The West Germans then set up their sharpshooters along the path the Arab commandos had to walk with their hostages from two helicopters that had flown them from Munich to a waiting jet. It was the only opportunity left to prevent the Arabs from leaving the country. As the first group of Arabs and hostages walked to the jet, shots rang out. It is unclear whether West German sharpshooters or Arab commandos opened fire first. Whichever side opened fire first, when West German sharpshooters fired or fired back, the first group of commandos began shooting their hostages. The second commando group had barely left their helicopter. One commando fired into the helicopter, another threw a grenade into it, killing the second group of hostages.

When the shooting was over, all nine Israeli hostages were dead, five Arab commandos had been killed, and three had been wounded. The world was shocked by what had happened and the Olympics were tainted beyond recovery.



BEFORE TOUCHDOWN: Denise Lewis of Great Britain about to land during the long jump of the heptathlon yesterday. Lewis won the gold medal. —AFP photo

Tomorrow never dies

ATHLETICS

in the stands crying," Greene said.

SYDNEY, Sept 24 (AFP): Maurice Greene's four-year mission to put the United States back on top of the sprinting world at the Olympics ended as it began — in tears.

In 1996, the brash American wept tears of despair at the Atlanta Olympics as Canadian arch-rival Donovan Bailey swept to victory with America out of 100 metres medals for only the fourth time in history.

But after blasting to the Sydney Olympics 100m crown here Saturday in a blistering 9.87 seconds, the 26-year-old "Kansas Comet" was weeping tears of joy.

"It's the best rollercoaster ride I've ever been on," the new owner of the world's fastest man tag said at a press conference Sunday.

Greene, the reigning world champion and world record holder, said America's Atlanta flop had driven him to Olympic glory.

"When I was in Atlanta I was

where he thought he stood in the all-time rankings.

"I can't really say that's not up to me, that's up to y'all," he said, addressing his audience of journalists.

"So wherever y'all put me that's where it is. I hope it's somewhere near the top."

"I've always wanted to bring United States sprinting on my shoulders and take it to the top where I believe it should be. I put a lot of pressure on myself."

"Last night I was crying tears of joy for accomplishing such a hard task and accomplishing history," Greene said. "You work hard and wait for four years and then it's all over in nine seconds."

Greene becomes the first US sprinter to claim the Olympic 100m crown since Carl Lewis' title at the notorious Ben Johnson scandal-tainted Seoul Games in 1998.

He joins a long line of American sprinters who have struck 100m gold — but on Sunday the normally outspoken trash talker declined to state

Greene said he had been

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Lion Queen's last hurrah

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The 40-year-old, who looked as if she might have to run the relay on her own when half of the athletics team protested over her replacing national champion Peta-Gay Dowdle in the individual event, admitted that while she would run in a couple of meetings next year for her the championship stage was over.

"I realised here that I cannot take four rounds in two days there are limits to what you can put your body through," she said.

"I will race on the circuit occasionally next year but it is time for me to hand the baton of Jamaican sprinting over to Tanya Lawrence (bronze medalist in the 100)," she added.

The athlete, dubbed the Lion Queen because of her wonderfully arrogant prouls back to the start of the 1997 100 metres World Championship final after she had run 60 metres following a false start, said she felt proud of how she had performed at this her sixth Olympics — her first was at Moscow in 1980.

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Sotomayor gets silver

SYDNEY, Sept 24: Russia's Sergey Klugin upstaged his more-heralded compatriot Vyacheslav Voronin to win the Olympic men's high jump title Sunday as Cuba's world record holder Javier Sotomayor finished with a creditable silver medal in driving rain, reports AFP.

On a night when the competition disappointed because of difficult weather conditions, Klugin took gold as the only man able to clear 2.35 metres.

Sotomayor, Cuba's 1992 Olympic champion, runner-up at the 1996 Olympics and 1999 World Championships, broke through to win the pommel horse title with a 9.862 score. France's Eric Poujade was second at 9.825 with Nemov third at 9.800.

"I expected this medal," Urzica said. "Only this medal was missing in my career. I'm very happy because after a lot of second places, I have won the most important medal of my life."

"I have realised my dream. I'm very happy, not only about the points, but I proved to myself I can do it."

Hungary's Szilveszter Csollany, a 1996 Olympic bronze medalist ad second at last years



ONLY SECOND BEST: Cuba's Javier Sotomayor clearing the bar during the final of the men's high jump yesterday. The world record holder however had to settle for silver in the event. —AFP photo



Olympic Special



Driven by history

ATHLETICS

SYDNEY, Sept 24: Michael Johnson is poised to rewrite the history books when he becomes the first athlete to successfully defend the 400m Olympic title here on Monday, reports AFP.

And it is the thought of creating history that drives the 33-year-old Texan who has no rivals.

"To make history, that is something that motivates me. Winning the Olympics is important. Making history is more important," he explains.

And over 100,000 people will pack the Stadium Australia on Monday, hoping to see him pull off a double dose of history making — retaining his title and becoming the first human to run the 400m under 43secs.

"It's just something that I know that I can do," he said.

"Whether or not it happens, who knows. I just go out there and do the best I can."

But Johnson will have to draw on all his experience to achieve both targets. There is no one on the track that can drive him.

"I can honestly say that since Carl Lewis left this sport, there's not an athlete that I get excited about running against," Johnson said.

"I get excited about achieving my own goals."

"Once I get to a final, there's seven other people there. I don't care who they are, I don't know who they are. They have no faces or names to me. They're just seven people standing in my way."

The two-world records — one set in the 200m final in Atlanta and the other in the 1999 World Championship final

— have earned Johnson the right to wear his trademark golden shoes. His sponsors have added extra gold for Sydney, convinced he will do his own private double.

Johnson has won six individual world titles (twice doing the 200/400 double) three 4x400m relay world titles two Olympic titles — the incredible double in 1996 — and one relay medal.

Disappointments have been few and far between save an embarrassing exit in the 200m 1992 Olympic semifinals and pulling up injured in his bitter duel with 100m Olympic champion Donovan Bailey, who accused him of being a chicken.

And come Monday night Johnson will be crowing about his history making exploits.



UNCATCHABLE: Under pouring rain, Michael Johnson (L) powers ahead of Saudi Arabia's Hamdan O Al-Bishi during semifinal 1 of the men's 400 metres yesterday. Johnson finished first with a timing of 44.65 sec. —AFP photo



Medals Stand

SYDNEY, Sept 24 (AFP): Final Updated Olympic Medals table Sunday:

C	G	S	B	T
USA	21	12	19	52
China	18	14	12	44
France	12	12	6	30
Russia	12	11	16	39
Italy	11	6	11	28
Australia	10	19	11	40
Romania	9	4	4	17
Netherlands	7	5	3	15
Germany	5	8	15	28
Great Britain	5	7	3	15
Japan	5	4	4	13
South Korea	4	5	7	16
Poland	4	4	0	8
Bulgaria	4	2	2	8
Ukraine	3	6	5	14
Sweden	3	2	1	6
Hungary	3	1	1	5
Greece	2	4	1	7
Cuba	2	3	2	7
Czech Rep	2	1	3	6
Spain	2	0	2	4
Austria	2	0	0	2
Slovenia	2	0	0	2
Turkey	2	0	0	2
Switzerland	1	5	2	8
Indonesia	1	3	2	6
Slovakia	1	3	1	5
Belarus	1	1	8	10
Canada	1	1	5	7
Finland	1	1	0	2
Mexico	1	1	0	2
New Zealand	1	0	3	4
Croatia	1	0	1	2
Latvia	1	0	1	2
Lithuania	1	0	1	2
Azerbaijan	1	0	0	1
Colombia	1	0	0	1
Belgium	0	2	2	4
Denmark	0	2	1	3
Chinese Taipei	0	1	2	3
North Korea	0	1	1	2
Norway	0	1	1	2
South Africa	0	1	1	2
Argentina	0	1	0	1
Moldova	0	1	0	1
Nigeria	0	1	0	1
Trinidad	0	1	0	1
Uruguay	0	1	0	1
Yugoslavia	0	1	0	1
Costa Rica	0	0	2	2
Estonia	0	0	2	2
Georgia	0	0	2	2
Algeria	0	0	1	1
Armenia	0	0	1	1
Barbados	0	0	1	1
India	0	0	1	1
Jamaica	0	0	1	1
Kenya	0	0	1	1
Kyrgyzstan	0	0	1	1
Kuwait	0	0	1	1
Portugal	0	0	1	1
Thailand	0	0	1	1

Redgrave undecided

SYDNEY, Sept 24: Britain's serial Olympic gold medalist Steven Redgrave was Sunday on whether he will quit rowing, refusing to commit himself to another Olympic campaign but also refusing to rule it out, reports AFP.

Britain's greatest Olympian completed a historic fifth successive Games triumph when he led the coxed four — also comprising Matthew Pinsent, Tim Foster and James Cracknell — to rowing glory in Sydney on Saturday.



AIR ALEXEI CRASHES: Russia's ace Alexei Nemov performing during his floor exercise routine in the men's apparatus final yesterday. Nemov was upset by Latvia's Igors Vihrovs, who won the gold in the event. —AFP photo