

# From gold to disgrace

## GYMNASTICS

SYDNEY, Sept 26: Romanian Olympic gymnastics champion Andreea Raducan was stripped of her gold medal for failing a drug test Tuesday as Olympic officials reaffirmed a strict zero-tolerance anti-doping policy, reports AFP.

Raducan was disqualified and lost her medal after testing positive for use of the banned stimulant pseudoephedrine. Olympic officials said.

But late Tuesday, the Court of Arbitration for Sport issued a statement saying Raducan planned to appeal against the decision. The sports tribunal will hold a special three-member hearing at its Sydney office Wednesday, the body said.

The IOC had confirmed the decision to strip Raducan of her medal earlier Tuesday.

Traces of pseudoephedrine exceeding permitted levels were found in her urine sample following the individual all-around competition on September 21, where Raducan won the gold medal.

She failed the test after Romania's team physician Ioachim Oana gave her two over-the-counter cold remedy tablets.

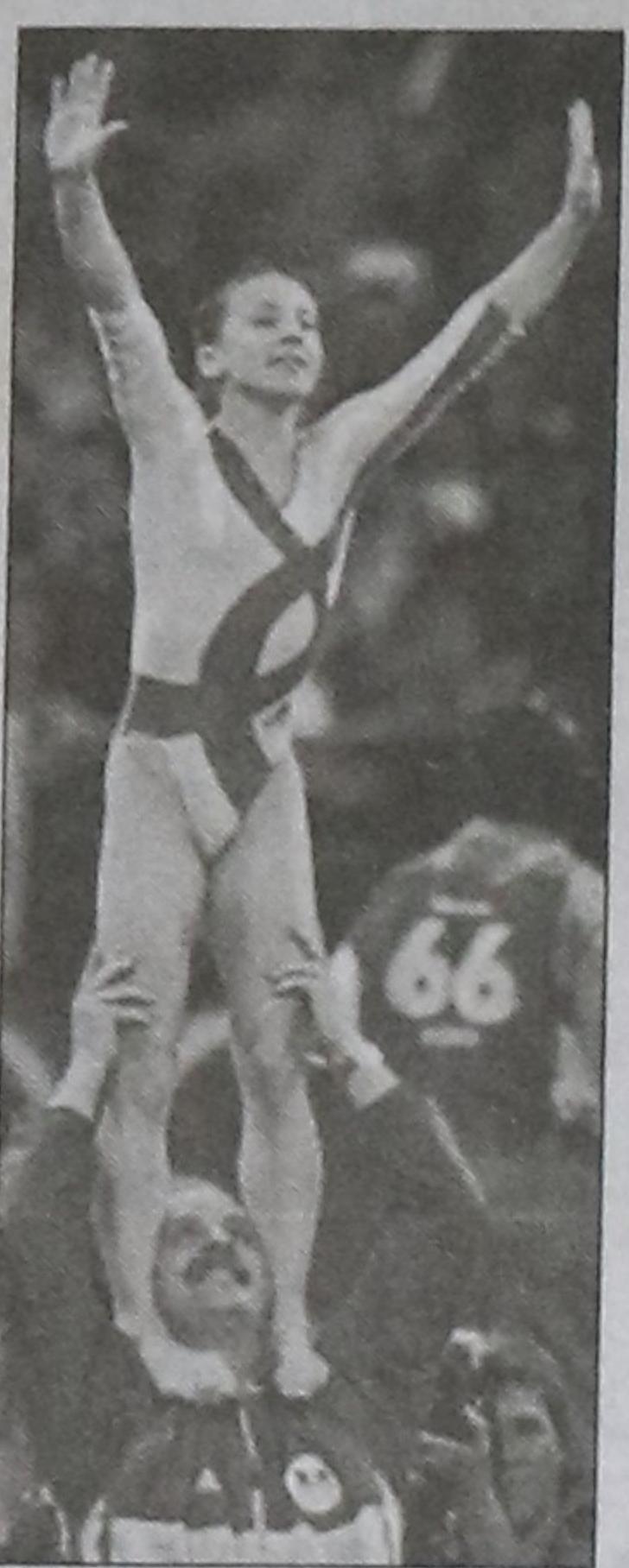
Oana has been banned from the Sydney Olympics and will also be excluded from the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City and the 2004 Summer Games in Athens.

International Olympic Committee officials accepted the Romanian team's explanation, but were adamant that Raducan's disqualification must still stand.

IOC media director Francois Carrard said the ruling was necessary to send a message drugs in sport would not be

tolerated.

"There is a specific provision which states at the mere presence of a prohibited substance in an athlete's body is a doping case," Carrard told a press conference.



tough and refrain from emotions and feelings," Carrard added.

Raducan was a member of the Romania squad which won team gold on September 19. Two days later she lifted the overall individual title and on September 24 she finished second in the vault.

She was not one of the two members of the Romanian team selected for a dope test after the team event, but a test on September 21 revealed the presence of pseudoephedrine.

Three days later after winning a silver medal in the vault competition she passed a mandatory dope test.

Stimulants act on the brain to boost the body both mentally and physically, increasing alertness and decreasing feelings of fatigue.

However there appeared to be confusion amongst Olympics officials over whether the level of pseudoephedrine detected in Raducan's sample would have given her an advantage.

"No, I don't think it would have given her a competitive advantage," Carrard told the press conference. "The point is that this is a prohibited substance, and the presence of it alone is enough," he said.

But Jacques Rogge, a member of the IOC Executive Committee and the World Anti-Doping Agency, later said the diminutive star could have gleaned an unfair advantage from the drug.

"We had to take her medal away because, even involuntarily, she broke a rule and was benefiting from an advantage. But all she did was make an error. Like an athlete who makes a false start," he said.

Raducan will keep her gold and silver medals from the other events. Her gold medal

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"We're not looking at the intent. It's the presence of a substance in the body of an athlete that constitutes doping," he said.

"It's tough but that's what it's all about. We have to be

normal for a while. We have to be</