

Dhaka, Sunday, October 1, 2000, e-mail: dssports@bdonline.com



1988 Games in Seoul

It was exactly 03:53am on this particular Monday, September 26 in Seoul (Sunday 17:53 GMT), when a report from Agence France Presse (AFP) in Seoul had a bomb-like effect in editors' offices around the world and in the main press centre in Seoul where a few journalists were still copying for their respective agencies and newspapers.

According to the newsflash, which gave AFP a world exclusive on the story, the Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson, winner of the 100m on September 24 in a record time of 9.79 sec, had tested positive following a routine dope test. He was immediately disqualified from further competition.

In the same story, it was discovered, with good evidence, that in its report to the executive committee of the IOC, the only body able to sanction misdemeanours, the medical committee's official report stated that the sprinter's urine contained residue belonging to an anabolic steroid from the "stanazolol" family, one of the many to feature on the list of banned substances.

The news, which spread like wildfire around the globe, had a profound effect on the Games in Seoul and once more rocked the IOC to its foundations, doping one of its most pressing preoccupations.

Early in the morning in Seoul (9am, 11pm GMT), Carole Anne Letheren, head of the Canadian Olympic delegation, received a letter from the IOC stating that Johnson's first (A) urine test was positive.

An hour later, a Canadian delegation including the coach of the disgraced sprinter, Charlie Francis, attended the anti-doping centre near the University of Kiang for the result of Johnson's second urine sample. The result irrevocably showed that Johnson's urine contained a substantial amount of stanozolol, a synthetic male hormone made in the United States.

The Canadian delegation, shattered by what would quickly become the biggest scandal of the Games, offered a mealy defence of their disgraced athlete, saying that he could have been doped against his wishes. But this was in vain. The formal report showed the true extent of the damage: the traces of stanozolol found in Johnson's body indicated that systematic use of the drug was evident over a long period of time.

Taking the scandal by the scruff of the neck, the executive commission of the IOC did not wait long to unanimously announce his disqualification, resulting in Johnson returning his medal. The International Amateur Athletics Federation added its own punishment, banning Johnson from all competition for two years and erasing his record from the record books.

Disgraced and humiliated, Johnson left the Olympic Games. His glory from the time spent on the highest point of the podium, ascended shortly after crossing the finish line with his finger pointing skywards to indicate victory ahead of Carl Lewis, Linford Christie and Calvin Smith, turned out to be short-lived.

On Tuesday, Johnson departed for the airport at Kimpo surrounded by around twenty bodyguards.

He wore a black shirt with an "Africa" inscription written in red on the back. Photographers were kept at a distance. Johnson's face was hidden behind an attaché case held at arms-length. He made no statement and left the South Korean capital by the back door like an underworld criminal.

Waiting a riveting closing

GAMES. Sept 30 (Internet report): The Sydney Olympics are to go out with a bang - a low-flying fighter-bomber is to create a massive plume of flame and one million people will be treated to one of the world's

surprise stars whose identities haven't yet been revealed.

The fighter-bomber's dramatic flight will be the signal for an hour-long party at the stadium to begin before 24 "lighting shells" explode like giant

flashbulbs all the way down the Parramatta River to downtown Sydney where another F-111 will light up the sky over the Harbour Bridge.

It is being dubbed "the river of lightning".

Jones, in a dig at London's "river of fire" that proved a damp squib on millennium night in Britain, said: "It will be very different from the river of fire on the Thames in that it will work."

The night sky will then be ablaze with fireworks that have a truly international flavour - pyrotechnical experts from Spain, Japan, the United States and South Africa are all contributing to the explosion of light.

Jones has promised the display will be bigger and better than Sydney's millennium celebrations which ranked as one of the most breathtaking on the night that saw in the new century.

"It will dwarf anything we have done before," he said of the fireworks that will be set off from four giant barges, 10 smaller boats and the rooftops of city skyscrapers.

Sydney loves to party and organisers expect up to one million people will pack the best vantage points around the harbour to see the 23-minute show

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Watch BTV!

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Television will televise the Closing Ceremony of the Olympic Games live today. The ceremony will begin in Sydney at 2:45 (GST) in the afternoon.

Besides, BTV will provide its live coverage on the final day of the Games from 7:15 in the morning which will continue until 1:00pm. There will also be a one-hour highlights session starting from 1 to 2pm.

Live telecast resumes at 2pm and will continue till the closing ceremony winds up.

Television sources however said that viewers would not be able to watch live programme for 15 minutes (2:30 to 2:45pm) due to the temporary suspension of satellite connection.

Hearts Racing for the Kylie Experience

Golden goodbye

ATHLETICS

SYDNEY, Sept 30: Michael Johnson's sparkling Olympic career ended with a fitting gold medal when he anchored the American 4x400m team to victory here on Saturday night, reports AFP.

The 33-year-old swept across the line to the roar of over 100,000 people packed into Stadium Australia to witness the last run by one of the greatest athletes ever to have competed in the Games.

Johnson paid them back by taking a leisurely jog around the edge of the track, exchanging high-fives with an adoring audience before disappearing into the bowels of the stadium.

"Now I am going to take time out and think about my future and if I should call it a day," said Johnson. "This was my last major meet. I will not be running at the World Championships. There is nothing to be gained."

"Tonight I was just happy to go out with gold. I sure as hell did not want to finish with silver or bronze," he added.

It was a perfect end to an amazing career for the Texan who was able to walk away with nothing to prove.

In Michael Johnson's race for history, his fiercest com-

petitors were only himself and time.

Johnson donned his golden spikes again on Monday and did what no man had done before, successfully defending his Olympic 400m crown.

In the chilly night air of Stadium Australia, the magical 43-second barrier remained impenetrable.

But Olympic gold was Johnson's first priority, and he drew

on all of his experience and will to achieve it. There was no one on the track who could 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 has said in the past. "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."

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 spikes again on Monday and did what no man had done before, successfully defending his Olympic 400m crown.

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

The second handover between Torri Edwards and Naiceen Perry spelled disaster for Jones, who had been aiming for five golds but can now hope for three at best. Perry set off

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BAHAMA BLITZ: Bahama's Debbie Ferguson (C) is ecstatic after crossing the finish line ahead of Christine Arron of France (R) and Marion Jones of the US to give her team the Olympic gold in the women's 4x100m relay final yesterday.

—AFP photo



THE WINNER TAKES IT ALL: A combo of AFP photos showing Cameroon's Lauren Eteme Mayer (L) celebrating after the Pierre Wome's winning kick in the penalty shoot-out and an inconsolable Spanish custodian Aranzubia (R) hiding his face after the defeat during the men's football final yesterday.

Lions have last laugh

FOOTBALL

SYDNEY, Sept 30: Cameroon staged one of the most astonishing comebacks in a major soccer final on Saturday beating a nine-man Spanish side 5-3 on penalties to win the Olympic title, reports Reuters.

Gabri, who had come on for injured Spanish skipper Toni Velamazan after 27 minutes.

Trailing 2-0 at halftime, they turned the match around with two goals in five minutes, an own goal by Amaya after 53 minutes and a close-range goal from Real Madrid's Samuel Eto's after 58 minutes.

They were only denied a fairytale winner in the last minute of extra time when Eto's, had the "winning" goal disallowed for being inches offside.

Instead the outcome of an outstanding 16-team tournament, which began two days before the official Olympic opening ceremony, was decided by penalties.

Spain must have fancied their chances with penalties against 16-year-old goalkeeper Carlos Idriss Kameni, but he kept his nerve. Spanish defender Amaya cracked his spot-kick against Kameni's bar leaving Cameroon 3-2 ahead with two penalties left.

Lauren scored his to make it 4-2. Albeda replied for Spain making it 4-3 before Patrick Wome lashed home Cameroon's fifth penalty to make it 5-3 and secure Cameroon's first Olympic medal since they won a silver and bronze in boxing in 1984.

The Cameroon players, some of whom had also lifted the African Nations Cup earlier this year, celebrated as the Spaniards collapsed on the pitch in tears.

An afternoon which started so well for them had ended in a defeat which seemed unlikely at halftime.

It took Spain only 75 seconds to open the scoring when Barcelona midfielder Xavi curled a freekick low into the net.

Gabri, who had come on for injured Spanish skipper Toni Velamazan after 27 minutes.

But Cameroon are not

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CLASSIC CONTEST: South Korea's Jong-Ho Seo (front) is under pressure from a Dutch player during their hockey match yesterday. South Korea lost the game 4-5 on penalties.

—AFP photo

Oranje occasion

HOCKEY

Song Seung-Tae broke free from a goalmouth melee and pushed the ball home.

The Dutch drew level with their second penalty corner in the 20th as Jeon Jong-Ha, standing on the goal line, took a scoop from Bram Lomans on the chest.

German umpire Christian Siebrecht awarded the Netherlands a penalty stroke which Veen converted easily to make it 1-1.

The Dutch, who ended the first half with two penalty corners that went wide, went ahead soon after the break when Veen dived to deflect in a

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AS FAST AS THEY GET: Maurice Greene finishes the 4x100 metres relay for the gold medal winning US quartet yesterday.

—AFP photo

Bubka becomes IOC official

SYDNEY, Sept 30: Ukrainian pole vaulter Sergei Bubka was Saturday elected to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) executive committee as a representative of the athletes at the 111th session of the IOC, reports AFP.

Italy's Ottavio Cinquanta was elected to the executive committee for winter sports federations, ensuring the 15-person panel is now complete.

Sergei Bubka defeated Canadian athlete Charmaine Crooks and Norwegian speed-skater Jan Olav Koss in the vote.