Phelps, Thorpedo roll



Michael Phelps made a great start to his bid for a record eight Olympic gold medals when he qualified fastest for Saturday's 400

metres individual medley final. The Athens Games also began well for Australian Ian Thorpe who easily qualified for the 400 freestyle final while Ukraine's Yana Klochkova made an impressive start to the defence of

her 400 individual medley American teenager Phelps cruised through his opening heat in four minutes 13.29 seconds, almost five seconds off the world record he set at the United States trials last month, but still well clear of his nearest rivals.

"I'm just glad to finally be here," Phelps said.

"I felt comfortable and in control today. I'm not worried about the time, I just want to get my hand on the wall

Hungary's Laszio Cseh qualified second fastest in 4:14.26 with Italian Alessio Boggiatto third in 4:15.78 but both were well behind Phelps, who $slowed\,down\,noticeably\,in\,the\,final\,leg$ to conserve his energy.

There was no repeat of the embarrassing false start that almost cost

Thorpe the chance to defend his 400 freestyle title as he easily qualified for the eight-lap event.

Thorpe was disqualified at the Australian trials when he tumbled off the blocks before the gun had sounded and was allowed to swim the event in Athens only after his team mate Craig Stevens surrendered his spot.

The 21-year-old Thorpe made a cautious start, taking almost a second before he left the blocks, and won his heat in 3:46.55 to qualify second fastest for Saturday's final.

Thorpe's time was more than six seconds outside his world record but the Australian was unshaven and

swam well within himself. "I was trying to make sure I was last off the blocks this morning so I won't be last tonight," said Thorne.

Australia's Grant Hackett, runnerup to Thorpe at the past three world championships, posted the fastest qualifying time when he stopped the clock at 3:46.36 while improving American Larsen Jensen was third ahead of Italy's 200 medley champion Massimiliano Rosolino.

Klochkova, winner of the first swimming gold medal in Sydney for years ago, qualified fastest for the women's 400 individual medley.

Klochkova coasted to victory in 4:38.36, almost five seconds off her world record, with American Kaitlin Sandeno second in 4:40.21.

World Championships silver medallist Eva Risztov was fourth but the big surprise was the disappointing performance of Katie Hoff who failed to make the final.

The American teenager went into the race ranked number one in the world and was considered a strong chance to end Klochkova's four-vear domination of the event but could manage only 17th place.

'She went out real controlled and looked great but she just didn't quite have it at the end," Hoff's coach Paul

Australia qualified fastest for the women's 4x100 freestyle final, just ahead of the US, to boost their chances of winning the race for the first time

Australia's Petria Thomas missed the relay to swim the 100 butterfly heats where she qualified fastest for the semifinals in 57.47.

Poland's 200 butterfly world record holder Otylia Jedrzejczak was second in 57.84 with defending champion Inge de Bruiin third in 58.74.

Japanese world champion Kosuke Kitajima set the fifth fastest time in history to qualify quickest for the men's 100 breaststroke semifinals in 1:00.03 with American world record holder Brendan Hansen second in 1:00.81

Rumbewas finished fourth behind Udomporn at the world championships but has a better personal best.

Thailand for the title.

Thailand sports officials believe Udomporn can become the country's first female gold medallist heaping pressure on the 22-year-old student.

Dial 11 for Owen

Football

AFP, Madrid

SPORT

Mum's the word

It was reported that she ran away from her team's training centre in early August as sports officials pondered her

"I am disappointed. Mum was

promised she could go but apparently

is not going," said Rumbewas, who

Her mother added that Rumbewas

"She was disappointed because I

was not allowed to go to Athens with

her," Rumbewas' mother, Ida Korwa,

was quoted as saying by the Republika

Korwa added that her presence was

After a stand-off, sports authorities

needed by Rumbewas to lift her spirits.

agreed that Rumbewas' mum could

travel to Athens on a tourist visa and

the diminutive 24-year-old lifter will

Athens today," Linda Wahyudi, press

attache for the Indonesian delegation.

confirmed on Saturday

so she is travelling on a tourist visa.

"We could not obtain an ID for her

"She will meet up with her daughter

at the stadium before the competition.

Raema is pleased that her mother is

coming but it (the doubt) has not

affected her preparation. She has a

With no lifter from the powerful

Chinese squad in the 53kg weight class

and world championship runner-up Ri

Song-hui of North Korea deciding to lift

world champion Udomporn Polsak of

at 58kg, Rumbewas is tipped to battle

good chance of winning a gold."

"Raema's mother is coming to

spent a day away from the camp.

needed her support.

compete on Sunday.

FROM PAGE 13

England striker Michael Owen was handed the number 11 shirt for his new club by none other than Real Madrid legend Alfredo Di Stefano after being officially unveiled to the press at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium here

The 24-year-old Owen, who came through a medical late on Friday, will soon begin the first days of a five-year contract with the Spanish giants and nine-times European champions who signed him from Liverpool on Friday.

Owen joined Real for a fee believed to be in the region of eight million pounds (12 million euros) with 25-yearold Real midfielder Antonio Nunez moving to Anfield as a makeweight.

Although Owen will join up with England teammate David Beckham in the Spanish capital, it was Real's past stars -- Di Stefano, an honorary president, and Ferenc Puskas - who have whet his appetite for the world famous

"My dad has been telling me about the great Madrid team of the 1960's. He says Di Stefano and Puskas, two strikers who were just unbelievable," said Owen who opened and closed his conference saying hello and goodbye in Spanish.

"He also says, Gento was the quickest number 11 he has ever seen. And today I am so proud to be wearing this number 11 again.

"I'd like to thank everyone for making me so welcome here in Madrid. It's been a really nice couple of days. I'd like

to say a special thank you to 'Senor president (of Real Madrid, Florentino Perez) for giving me the opportunity to play for the most ... the best team in the vorld. Muchas 'Gracias'.'

Perez, who when he arrived at the club a few years ago said he would buy at least one world class player every season, said Owen's capture came down to his qualities both on and off the field.

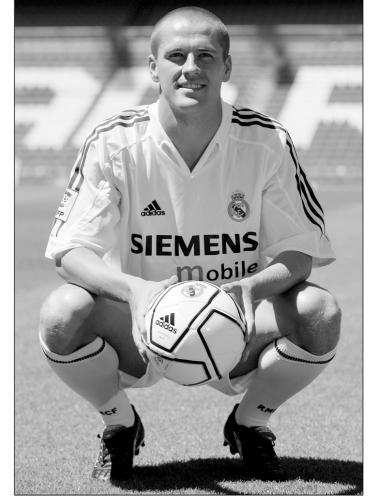
"We have signed Owen not just because he was one of the youngest ever winners of the European footballer of the year award but because he wanted to play for Real, and because he sets a good example both on and off the field," said

The number 11 belonged to reserve striker Javier Portillo last season but its most illustrious owner was another Real Madrid great Paco Gento, the fleetfooted Spanish winger who won six European Cups with the club in the 1950s and 60s

The shirt was once worn by Laurie Cunningham, one of the first English players to try their luck in Spain after moving from West Bromwich Albion for almost one million pounds in 1979.

Owen's departure from Liverpool, with whom he has spent his entire professional career, comes weeks after the arrival of manager Rafael Benitez. Benitez, the former Valencia boss

who replaced Gerard Houllier earlier this summer, said he had wanted Owen to stay but had been powerless to prevent the striker from leaving because he only had a year left on his contract.



Michael Owen poses in his new Real Madrid shirt at the Bernabeu stadium in Madrid yesterday. The former Liverpool striker was given the No 11 jersey by

Athens street talk

FROM PAGE 13

The cases of Kenteris, the Olympic 200 metres champion, and Thanou, runnerup in the Sydney Games 100 metres. were being discussed at a meeting of the Greek Olympic Committee.

The two are due to attend an International Olympic Committee (IOC) disciplinary hearing on Monday to explain why they missed a drugs test this week in Athens.

They had both also missed a test in the United States scheduled for earlier in the week after leaving for Athens a day earlier than planned

The IOC decided on Friday to give the two athletes a 72-hour extension after they failed to show up for a disciplinary commission drugs tribunal after they were both hurt in a motorcycle



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It takes some time to read him. You've got to watch him all the time and the uneven bounce makes him difficult to

"The weather is not in our hands. We

Rain gives SA hope

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Rain gave South Africa a glimmer of hope as they looked to escape with a draw in the second and final Test against Sri Lanka at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground here on Saturday.

Just eight overs were possible on the penultimate day as South Africa were set a 493-run target by the home side, who declared at their overnight 211-4 after gaining a 281-run first innings lead. South Africa were 21-2 at close as the

Sri Lankan new-ball bowlers came up with incisive spells. But rain, which had washed out the first two sessions, came back to force an early closure. Umpires Steve Bucknor of the West Indies and Billy Bowden of New Zealand

had scheduled 38 overs for the day after overnight and early morning rain washed out the major part, but rain spoiled their calculations. Sri Lanka were left with their fingers

crossed as they looked to win their first Test series against South Africa after the first match ended in a draw in Galle last week.

Sri Lanka's coach John Dyson though tried to be positive.

"We have a minimum of 105 overs on the last day as per rules, which I think is Dyson, who took over as coach from Dav Whatmore last year

"We've played really well in this match to get into the position that we are in now, so it would be a shame if bad weather comes back to prevent us from winning," said Dyson, who had words of praise for his pacemen.

"They did a great job to get those wickets and we are happy to have them two-down after such a short session," he said about Lasith Malinga and Chaminda Vaas, who took a wicket each. South African captain Graeme Smith

too praised the pace duo while looking 'Malinga is not the orthodox kind of

bowler you learn playing in South Africa.

are just trying to focus on what we can,

to try and save this match," said Smith.

Malinga hurled a bouncer at opener Herschelle Gibbs (four) and the batsman was caught fending off as the ball went straight to Thilan Samaraweera at

Gibbs, who missed the first Test because of an ankle injury, could not ge off the mark in the first innings.

Martin van Jaarsveld (two), softened by a bouncer from Malinga that hit his viser, went a little later. He was bowled by an over-pitched delivery from Vaas as the ball hit his bat and then pad before making its way to the stumps.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play on the fourth day of the second and final Test between Sri Lanka and South Africa in Colombo

SRI LANKA: First innings 470 (Sangakkara 232, Jayawardene 82, Jayasuriya 43, Chandana 40; Pollock 4-

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 189 (Smith 65, Van Jaarsveld 51; Jayasuriya

5-34 Herath 3-60) SRI LANKA: Second innings 211 for 4

SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings Smith not out

Gibbs c S'weera b Malinga Van Jaarsveld b Vaas Kallis not out Extras: (b-2, nb-3) Total: (For 2 wkts in 8 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-18 To bat: Boje, Rudolph, Dippenaar, Boucher, Pollock, Ntini

0 13

Fine better FROM PAGE 13

tics. The nationality of Israel's opponents is unimportant and they will face anybody," he said.

CRYPTOOUIP

UJBS FLSITKY PLGGIE TBPGILS ZLVHGU Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ASTRONOMER'S WITTY REPLY TO HIS PAL'S STATEMENT:

'WELL, ISN'T THAT SPATIAL!" Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals L The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Best WI day so far

Cricket

AFP, Manchester

West Indies enjoyed their best day of the series so far as they reduced England to 86 for three at tea on the third day of the third Test at Old Trafford here Saturday.

That left England, an unbeatable 2-0 up in the four-Test series, 309 runs behind West Indies' first innings 395 for $nine\,declared\,and\,needing\,a\,further\,110$ runs to avoid the follow-on target of

Opener Andrew Strauss (37 not out) and fellow left-hander Graham Thorpe (17 not out) were fighting a rearguard action, putting on an unbroken 46 after England slumped to 40 for three.

Earlier the hosts collapsed to 13 for two in four overs after a bizarre sequence of events. England walked out after lunch

expecting to continue fielding with West Indies on 395 for nine. Fidel Edwards was four not out and

Pedro Collins, who had retired hurt on 19 after being hit on the chin following a missed hook against Andrew Flintoff, was set to resume his innings. But Collins, when he was about to leave the dressing room felt groggy, after having eight stitches inserted into

the wound. He did not go out to bat and remained off the field. England, who may not have mentally set themselves for batting, found themselves being called back into the dressing room almost as soon as they had walked out after West Indies captain Brian Lara declared.

The upshot of the confusion was that England lost their first wicket before they'd scored a run.

Marcus Trescothick's 100th Test innings lasted just two balls, the Somerset left-hander edging Edwards to Ramnaresh Sarwan at second slip after scoring hundreds in both innings of England's 256-run second Test win at

Number three Robert Key was then bowled for six by Corey Collymore after aiming legside and playing inside the

Michael Vaughan too went cheaply the England captain bowled of his pad for 12 by all-rounder Dwayne Bravo Earlier wicketkeeper Carlton

West Indies to a competitive score. Baugh, in for the injured Ridley Jacobs, faced 85 balls with 10 fours. He fell to the last ball before lunch, when a skied drive off James Anderson was well caught over his shoulder by Vaughan, running back from cover.

After Friday's second day total

washout, the tourists resumed under overcast skies on 275 for six with Baugh nine not out and wrist-spinner Dave Mohammed unbeaten on nought. Both batsmen were playing their

first Test in England and were two of the four changes West Indies made from the team at Edgbaston. Baugh, who made 150 not out in West Indies' final warm-up match

slips for four. Left-hander Mohammed perished on 23, when he was late on a pull off

After Collins retired, 22-year-old Jamaican Baugh remained defiant and his textbook cover-driven four off Harmison took him to fifty off 59 balls.

Yorkshire quick Hoggard led England's attack with four for 83.

SCOREBOARD

the third Test between England and West Indies at Old Trafford on Saturday:

Gayle c Strauss b Hoggard Joseph c Thorpe b Harmison Sarwan b Flintoff Lara b Flintoff C'paul c Iones b Hoggard 76 Bravo c Jones b Hoggard Baugh c Vaughan b Anderson $Mohammed\,c\,Strauss\,b\,Flintoff$ Collins not out Collymore b Hoggard Edwards not out Extras: (b-9, lb-14, w-6, nb-4) Total: (For 9 wkts decl in 94.3 overs) Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-85, 3-97, 4-108 5-265, 6-267, 7-308, 8-383, 9-395 0 M

3 22 83 26 5 94 Harmison 79 Flintoff 20 Anderson 11.3 49 15 0 ENGLAND: First innings Trescothick c Sarwan b Edwards Strauss not out 37 Key b Collymore Vaughan b Bravo 17 Thorpe not out Extras: (b-1, lb-1, w-8, nb-4) 14 Total: (For 3 wkts in 31 overs) Baugh's impressive Test-best 68 took Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-13, 3-40 To bat: Flintoff, Jones, Giles, Hoggard

21 21 Collymore 22 Bravo Joseph 8

But Defoe, left at home during Euro

Spurs spoil Cisse's day

FROM PAGE 13

interception from a Kewell cross dipped just over the bar after 36 minutes, but from Finnan's resulting corner, the top scorer in the French first division last season scored his first competitive goal for the Reds. The ball broke back out to Ireland

full-back Finnan, who crossed again and from Jamie Carragher's downward flick, Cisse swivelled and half-volleyed a low shot beyond Robinson. Iermain Defoe missed a good

chance to equalise ten minutes after the break when he jinked into the penalty box between Sami Hyypia and Josemi, but his flick with the outside of his right foot sailed wide.

against Derbyshire, then deliberately uppercut Matthew Hoggard over the

local hero Andrew Flintoff and sliced a $simple\,catch\,to\,Strauss\,at\,point.$

Scoreboard at tea on the third day of

WEST INDIES: First inning

A smiling Naybet was lucky when his 2004, did get his equaliser with a skilful

> Seconds after Gary Doherty and Cameroon's Atouba replaced Naybet and Jackson, the tiny forward latched onto a long ball into the penalty box and from a tight angle, swivelled to blast a low shot inside Dudek's near

> > Both sides went on the attack and Robinson tipped over a powerful header from Carragher five minutes later following a Finnan corner.

Defoe could have won it with ten minutes left following a slack clearance from Hyypia but his low drive from the edge of the box went just wide to leave honours even.

Premiership preview

Battle at the Bridge

Football

It is an indication of the depth of the injury crisis at Manchester United that Alex Ferguson admits Sunday's Premiership trip to Chelsea is an encounter he would rather have put off until later in the season.

The combative Scot rarely admits to anything other than total enthusiasm for the next scrap.

But with half his first team unavailable because of injury, suspension or Olympic commitments, he sounded positively squeamish about the prospect of a new-look Chelsea line-up whose members will be desperate to make an impression on new manager

Jose Mourinho. "It's a difficult one, no doubt about

that," Ferguson said. "We would prefer under the present situation regarding our player availability not to have played Chelsea at

Stamford Bridge. Typically though, the admission of weakness was qualified by a stress on the resilience of his squad under pressure, a characteristic borne out by Wednesday's battling performance in the 2-1 win over Dynamo Bucharest in a Champions League qualifier first leg.

"The players I've got are a great bunch and they did a great job on Wednesday," Ferguson said.

"We have the experience to handle all types of competition, that's the most important thing, to be able to handle pressure games as we did on

"A lot of people were expecting us to stumble, or maybe hoping we would stumble, but nonetheless they showed their experience and did not panic even

when we went a goal down." United's line-up is expected to feature only one change from the one that started in Bucharest. Midfielder Darren Fletcher is suspended but Ferguson has cover in the shape of Liam Miller, who made an immediate impact after replacing Fletcher midway

through the second half in midweek. "Liam Miller comes into the equation after his second-half performance in Bucharest," Ferguson said. "He did very, very well and impressed me greatly. I would have no hesitation in starting the lad."

United skipper Roy Keane is centre-back with John O'Shea continuing in midfield, a role in which Ferguson sees the Irish international developing

"It has always been a possibility that

O'Shea could become a midfield player but we couldn't do it last season because our back four was disrupted with injuries after February," he said. "On Wednesday night, he was a physical presence in midfield for us and

apart from that did very, very well on the

With both Ruud van Nistelrooy and Louis Saha both ruled out through injury, Paul Scholes is expected to be pushed forward once more in support of Alan Smith, who will be making his domestic competitive debut after opening his United account in the 3-1 defeat by Arsenal in last weekend's Community Shield match.

Ferguson's stress on the extent of the

problems facing United at the moment of course, has the advantage of increasing the pressure on Chelsea to deliver the convincing victory their fans will expect after another summer of lavish

Mourinho however was having none of it, stressing that Chelsea themselves are without a number of players, including Dutch winger Arjen Robben (ankle) and Portuguese midfielder Tiago, who is

on Olympic duty. "They have some injured players, like every team, and as a top team they

have to cope with it," Mourinho said. "The difference between top teams and others is they have top squads. I am not happy because I do not have Tiago and Robben, I can understand Alex does not like the situation with the national teams and I am completely on his side. But Man United always have 11 top players to play."

Enamul

FROM PAGE 13 complete tear-off of his Posterior Cruciate Ligament in the right knee. Coach Richard McInnes, how-

ever, informed that his real condition would be known after other examinations. The Australian coach did not ask for any replacement for the third Test beginning from August 17.

Meanwhile, right-arm pacer Talha Jubair will leave here for England on August 18 to join the team to play the three-match limited-overs series against England Under-19s.



French striker Djibril Cisse (R) celebrates after scoring his first Premiership goal for Liverpool against Spurs at White Hart Lane yesterday while teamates Harry Kewell (L) and Milan Baros join in the fun.