



All-round Patterson

AFP, Athens



Russian gymnastics diva Svetlana Khor-kina was furious with the judges who condemned her to a second-place finish behind 16-year-old American Carly Patterson in the battle for the Olympic all-around gold medal on Thursday.

Patterson concluded the event with the highest score on floor exercise, a 9.712, to finish at 38.387 points with Khor-kina, a three-time world all-around champion, second at 38.211 and China's Zhang Nan third at 37.948.

"I don't know what to say. I'm so excited and happy," Patterson said.

"You dream about this your whole life and you win the gold medal and it's amazing."

Khor-kina, who edged Patterson for the World Championships all-around crown last year, was denied a long-sought gold just two days before her planned retirement from the sport following the Olympic uneven bars

final.

Crowd-favorite Khor-kina, whose first words to the press were: "I'm still Olympic champion," expressed her unhappiness at the scoring several times.

"If the judges were Greek I would have no difficulty winning the gold medal," Khor-kina said.

"They are the ones who are going to have to live with their conscience."

Khor-kina, 25, was leading in the third rotation when she made a slip on the balance beam and received a 9.462.

"I believe it was a minor mistake. It was barely noticable," Khor-kina said.

"I don't think it was worth one point."

Khor-kina, who would have been the first non-teen to win the Olympic all-around crown since 1968, claimed her first Olympic medal in the event, a wide smile crossing her face as the medal was placed around her neck.

Patterson became only the second American woman to win an all-around Olympic title, joining Mary Lou Retton at the boycotted-diminished 1984 Olympics.

"I think this is even more precious a

result," said US team coordinator Martha Karolyi, who along with husband Bela coached Retton to gold.

"It just means a whole lot," Patterson said.

"I worked all my life to be an Olympic champion. All my hard work has finally paid off."

Patterson led Khor-kina by 0.026 of a point entering the final floor rotation. Patterson performed last but Khor-kina, who went four spots earlier based on qualifying scores, was the 2000 Olympic floor runner-up.

Khor-kina showed creative flair and solid tumbling moves in a conservative routine that had the crowd clapping the musical beat but only produced a 9.562 mark from judges, leaving her first at 38.211 but vulnerable to Patterson.

As the marks appeared, Khor-kina glanced up, then looked down, nodded her head and tightened her lips, a grim visage that seemed to fear the worst.

Patterson performed a near-flawless floor routine, scoring a 9.712 that brought tears of joy as she hugged coach Yevgeny Marchenko.

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Bashar stays positive

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar was keeping his fingers crossed (no pun intended!) as he waited for a favourable report from doctors in Australia regarding his fractured right thumb.

Bashar suffered a knock in the area while batting in the nets on Tuesday. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) then sent relevant medical documents to Australia to assess the extent of damage. The selectors also lined up a replacement for the country's premier batsman in case he failed to lead the side to England for next month's Champions Trophy in England.

But the 31-year-old said yesterday that he had started to feel better and there was no pain or further swelling. A second X-ray report had also been encouraging, according to the batsman.

"My doctor here is very optimistic about my recovery before the Champions Trophy. He informed me on Thursday night that the second X-ray had shown real improvement," said Bashar over phone yesterday.

"I am hopeful but we are still looking forward to the opinion from Australian experts which is due to reach the BCB within the next three days," added the Tigers skipper.

Bangladesh U-19s make 346

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Under 19 team took a 161-run first innings lead over England on the final day of the third and last Test at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff yesterday.

After rain had washed away more than half of the Test, the tourists finally completed their first innings at 346 after resuming on overnight 201 for five. England had made 185 in their first innings.

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PHOTO: AFP

NO, HER HEAD DEFINITELY DIDN'T HIT THE BEAM! Carly Patterson of the USA performing in the balance beam in the women's individual all-around gymnastics final at the Olympic Indoor Hall in Athens on August 19. Patterson won the gold.

Ctg MSC in super six, Muktijoddha held

CU CORRESPONDENT



Chittagong Mohammedan Sporting Club completed the super six line-up of the Fourth Nitol-Tata Football League when the locals eliminated Panchagarh Brothers Uni-on with a hard-fought 2-1 victory in their last encounter at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

On the other hand, Najirpara Krira Chakra of Chandpur held defending champions Muktijoddha Sangsad Krira Chakra to a goalless draw in a group A match but the surprise result did little to improve their chances to go into the

latter stages of the competition.

Muktijoddha with 11 points from four matches finished second behind Abahani, who have 13 points from five matches. While Chittagong Mohammedan qualify as the third team securing seven points.

Already Brothers Union, Mohammedan and Sheikh Russel have booked their super six places from Group B. But the today's last match of the 12-team final round between Dhaka premier league champions Brothers and Moham-medan will determine who finishes group champions.

A Brothers' victory will allow them to advance with maximum six

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AFP, Athens



Games debut on Sunday.

Women wrestlers are eager to show the sporting world that they are not 'toothless ogres' or busty Baywatch lookalikes.

Four medals will be up for grabs in the first Olympics for women grapplers but it is acceptance and an end to racy jokes that top the competitors' wish list.

"When you tell guys that you wrestle they expect you to be bigger, with just two-teeth, an ogre with a hunch-

back," said American Sara McMann, a silver medalist at the 2003 World Championships. "We can help change that."

Patricia Miranda, who delayed entry to Yale Law School for a year to prepare for the Athens Games, added that the Olympics was an opportunity to silence the doubters and inspire a new generation of women wrestlers.

"This is our stage - we can show that women's wrestling is not a side joke or something that makes people think about mud wrestling," she said.

"They will see our sweat, tears and triumphs and that it is as intense as any male sport."

"If men think it is sexy to watch girls wrestling, fine. I do not hold that against them. We realise there is a long way to go, even within the sport, for us to gain respect."

Women's wrestling is a popular TV

sport in Japan and the country has won 41 world titles in 16 years.

Four Japanese world champions are ready to rumble on the Athens mats to add to the golds collected in swimming and judo.

Five-time world heavyweight champion Kyoko Hamaguchi is hoping that the curse which has hit flag carriers in Athens does not strike again.

The 26-year-old led the Japanese team into the Olympic Stadium last Friday the 13th, a date which proved unlucky for fellow flag bearers Roger Federer of Switzerland and Thailand's Paradorn Srichapan who both bowed out of the tennis in the early rounds.

"My father has taught me that something good awaits you if you keep on trying hard," said Hamaguchi, who ruled the world

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PHOTO: AFP
A WINNER'S KISS! Benoit Peschier of France is being kissed by his girlfriend after he had won the Kayak single event gold in Athens yesterday.

ATHENS STREET TALK

AFP, Athens

Newly-crowned women's Olympic 100m freestyle champion Jodie Henry, 20, admitted that she had been a slow starter when it came to her swimming career.

"When I first started out I made up excuses not to race. I hated it. I think it came with experience knowing I was good enough to be out there," said the Australian, who also set a new world record on her way to Olympic gold.

CHINESE GYMNASTS

LOOK TO BEIJING

Zhang Nan's women's all-around bronze medal brought a measure of dignity to Chinese gymnasts after a woeful Olympic showing. The men's team fell from Sydney gold to fifth here. The women's team tumbled from third to seventh.

"I think the results will be better in 2008. I hope to build a Dream Team by

2008. We will make some changes by then," China women's coach Lu Shunzhen said.

Zhang hopes to be a part of that rebuilding process, saying, "I will persist in my hard work and hope I will be competitive in Beijing."

US SOFTBALL SQUAD'S PERFECT RUN

The United States softball team, playing after the shocking death of their coach's wife, completed an unbeaten and unscored upon run through the Olympic preliminary round here Friday with a 3-0 shutout of Taiwan.

US coach Mike Candrea's wife Sue died July 18 at age 49 from complications caused by a brain aneurysm.

But she stayed on to guide the US women, who have outscored round-robin foes 41-0 entering their Sunday semi-final with hopes of winning a third consecutive Olympic gold in

Monday's final.

"Concentrating on softball has helped me," the US coach said. "It's therapy for me."

ICELAND H'BALL

GOALIE'S 400TH

Iceland handball goalkeeper Gudmundur Hrafnkelsson made his 400th appearance for the national team here Friday in a 34-30 loss to South Korea.

"My first appearance was in 1986 and since then I have always been here," he said.

"It's a lifetime with good and bad memories."

"It seems I have played all the time -400 games are too many to remember something special. The only thing I can remember is playing and playing."

And Hrafnkelsson is not planning on stopping anytime soon.

"I do not know if I will stop," he said. "Maybe I can go for 500 games."



PHOTO: AFP

SWIFT KLUFFT! Sweden's Carolina Klufft clearing the bar during women's heptathlon high jump at the Olympic Stadium in Athens yesterday. Klufft is the favourite in heptathlon.

THE TALLY				
Country	G	S	B	Total
China	17	11	11	39
USA	15	11	10	36
Japan	11	4	2	17
Australia	8	5	8	21
Italy	5	6	3	14
France	5	3	5	13
Ukraine	5	1	1	7
Russia	4	9	11	24
Germany	4	4	7	15
South Korea	3	9	3	15
Turkey	3	0	1	4
Netherlands	2	5	5	12
Hungary	2	3	1	6
Slovakia	2	2	1	5
Romania	2	0	2	4
Greece	2	0	1	3
Poland	1	2	1	4
Belarus	1	1	3	5
Georgia	1	1	0	2
South Africa	1	1	0	2
Bulgaria	1	0	2	3
Thailand	1	0	2	3
Switzerland	1	0	1	2
UAE	1	0	0	1
(As of 9:30 pm BST)				

What to WATCH

BTV
Nitol-Tata National Football League
MSC Dhaka vs BU Dhaka
Live at 4:00 pm
Athens Olympic Games
Highlights at 8:30 pm

SET Max
India vs Pakistan
Videocon Cup
Live at 2:00 pm

ESPN
English Premier Football League
Southampton vs Blackburn Rovers
Live at 5:40 pm
Liverpool vs Man City
Live at 7:55 pm

STAR Sports
England vs West Indies
Fourth Test, Day Three

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