



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 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 noticeable," 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 boycott-diminished 1984 Olympics.

"I think this is even more precious a

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

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. 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 incase 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.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

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 incase he failed to lead the side to England for next month's Champions Trophy in England.

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SEE PAGE 14 COL 5



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-round gymnastics final at the Olympic Indoor Hall in Athens on August 19. Patterson won the gold.

Dolly records best timing

SPORTS REPORTER

Dolly Akhter put her Sydney Games memory behind when she successfully jumped into the pool in the women's 50m freestyle heat in the Athens Olympic yesterday.

With a bitter memory of disqualification in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Dolly did not falter at the start this time around and achieved her best timing. But her 30.72 seconds were far too slow compared with the qualifying mark of 25.68, by Italian Christina Chiuso.

The diminutive Bangladeshi finished 61st among 73 participants although she topped her group in the heats, beating Congo's Monika Bakale (31.61) and Libyan Amira Edrahi (34.67).

World record holder Inge De Brujin of Holland was the top finisher in the heat with 24.66 sec. She won the gold medal in the Sydney Olympics with a better timing of 24.14.

Dolly was the third Bangladeshi athlete to appear in this Olympics after Asif Hossain, who took part in the men's 100m air rifle and Jewel Ahmed, who took part in the 50m freestyle swimming. Sprinter Shamsuddin will be the last Bangladeshi to take part in the Games when he appears in the 100m sprint today.

'Harder, deeper, longer'

AFP, Athens

The organisers of the Athens Olympics have vainly tried to remove the Greek edition of Playboy from the newspaper stands for offending the Games with a section on the Olympian traditions of sex, the magazine said Friday.

"The court turned down ATHOC's (the Athens organisers') request for a restraining order against the circulation of the issue," said Greek Playboy's legal counsellor Stelios Michalopoulos.

"Harder, deeper, longer," was

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Ctg MSC in super six, Muktiyoddha held

CU CORRESPONDENT

NITOL-TATA NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Chittagong Mohammadi Sporting Club completed the super six line-up of the Fourth Nitol-Tata Football League when the locals eliminated Panchagarh Brothers Union with a hard-fought 2-1 victory in their last encounter at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

On the other hand, Najarpara Krira Chakra of Chandpur held defending champions Muktiyoddha Sangsada 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.

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

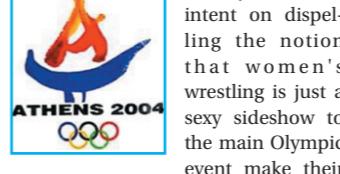
ALREADY BROTHERS UNION, Mohammadi and Sheikh Russel have booked their super six places from Group B. But the today's last match of the 12-team final round between Dhaka premier league champions Brothers and Moha-mimedan will determine who finishes group champions.

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

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2

Grappling for status

AFP, Athens



Feisty females intent on dispelling the notion that women's wrestling is just a sexy sideshow to the main Olympic event make their 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 raucous 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 medallist 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 Srichaphan 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

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5



PHOTO: AFP

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

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

ATHENS STREET TALK

BTW

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

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

CU CORRESPONDENT

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

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

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 unscorched 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 he 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

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