



# Anybody's gold

REUTERS, Athens



No Marion Jones, the Sydney Olympics 100 metres champion.

No Kelli White, the world champion in Paris last year. No Torri Edwards, who succeeded her fellow American as the world gold medallist when White was banned for doping.

In the absence of the three top Americans, Saturday's Olympic women's 100 metres final is the most open since the 1992 Barcelona Games.

Germany's Katrin Krabbe had been the early favourite in Barcelona but withdrew from the Games because of the controversy following her suspension for tampering with a drugs test.

Although Krabbe, the double 1991

world and European sprint champion, was cleared to compete on a technicality she withdrew, saying the emotional turmoil would not allow her to perform properly.

Sadly, doping still scars the central sport of the Olympic Games.

Jones, who failed to qualify for the Athens sprint, is being investigated by the United States Anti-Doping Agency.

Devers, 37, grabbed the last place on the American team after Edwards's ban. Ottey, 44, now runs for Slovenia.

Even after the bizarre events of the past year, it seems inconceivable that either will figure among the medallists on Saturday.

It remains anyone's guess, however, who out of the remaining Americans LaTasha Colander and Laury Williams or Frenchwoman Christine Arron, or any of the other likely finalists, will succeed Jones as Olympic champion.

Greece's Katerina Thanou, silver medallist behind Jones in Sydney, is also missing after withdrawing from the Games in a scandal over missed dope tests.

To everybody's surprise, Gail Devers, better known as a 100 metres



PHOTO: AFP

# Giants disappoint

CU CORRESPONDENT



A last minute goal by Brothers Union's substitute striker Alfaz Ahmed was ruled off-side as the second phase of the fourth Nitol-Tata National Football League ended amid controversy and violence in Chittagong yesterday.

Referee Mansoor Azad was assaulted immediately after blowing the final whistle of the last match of the port city-leg between Dhaka giants Brothers and Mohammedan Sporting Club ended in a goalless draw in front of nearly 17,000 spectators at the MA Aziz Stadium.

Some ill-tempered officials of Brothers entered the ground and

manhandled Azad before police could rescue him. Some angry fans also tried to break into the field, and police took care of them.

Alfaz fired home a lob from the right flank as Mohammedan midfielder Amin Rana's bid to clear it with a header failed. But Azad disqualified the strike.

Brothers manager Amer Khan over the offside decision.

"Everyone who is aware of the rules of the game knows that the decision was wrong. It was a clear goal," he said adding that even some of the rival booters admitted it after the match.

Brothers topped Group B with 13 points while Mohammedan finished behind them with 11. Sheikh Russell Krira Chakra are the other team from the group to qualify for the Super Six which starts in Dhaka from August 27.

Four minutes later, the black and whites threatened to score when

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PHOTO: STAR  
Mohammedan goalkeeper Tareq makes a save against Brothers Union during their Nitol-Tata Football League encounter at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

## ATHENS STREET TALK



AFP, Athens

Thousands of free condoms have been snapped up by athletes and officials staying in the Olympic Village. Greece's best-selling daily Ta Nea reported Saturday.

About 15,000 packets of condoms have been distributed for free by the village's health clinic since the camp opened in early August.

"The daily disposal rate is at about 1,000 (condoms) a day ... athletes take their little boxes with no inhibition, as part of a natural process," the report said.

The condom manufacturing company had donated around 130,000 packets to cover the athletes' needs.

"I don't believe athletes actually use them. They just take them because they're distributed for free from two automatic vending machines outside."

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said a pharmacy employee.

### MORE WOMEN TAKING PART

More than 40 per cent of the competitors at the Athens Olympics are women, a record level for a gender that was unrepresented the last time the Games were conducted here back in 1896.

The International Olympic Committee revealed that the participation level for women, bolstered by the addition of women's wrestling to the Games lineup, surpassed the former mark of 38 per cent from the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

There were no women in the Olympics until the 1900 Paris Games.

Now there are women in most events, although Olympic boxing -- for now -- remains strictly for men.

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REUTERS, Athens



Ethiopia's Kenenisa Bekele sealed his reputation as both the present and future of long-distance running when he won the Olympic men's 10,000 metres on Friday, leaving his compatriot Haile Gebrselassie to finish fifth.

The 22-year-old Bekele, who had already dethroned Gebrselassie as world champion last year, produced a withering burst on the final lap to win in 27 minutes 5.10 seconds and take his compatriot's Olympic crown as well.

Silver went to their team mate Sileshii Sihine, just over four seconds back, with Zersenay Tadesse of Eritrea taking bronze in 27:22.57.

Bekele, Gebrselassie and Sihine then celebrated the result of the first track final at the Olympic stadium with a joint lap of honour before being engulfed by their supporters.

Yet despite the smiles, the race was a sad Olympic farewell for Gebrselassie.

The 31-year-old won the event in 1996 and 2000 but any lingering hope of an unprecedented third title faded before the Games when he injured an Achilles tendon.

Still suffering but determined to help his younger teammates by taking

painkillers, he barely warmed up before the start.

Bekele led early then allowed the field to bunch again until Gebrselassie suddenly surged to the front with 18 laps to go.

The three Ethiopians exchanged the lead constantly, ratcheting up the pace so that the lead group was down to seven by halfway.

Bekele, eyes down as if in a trace, floated across the track. Gebrselassie, however, was suffering and looked increasingly ragged.

With 11 laps to go Bekele injected another burst, allowed the front bunch to merge back together, then exchanged words with Sihine.

The pair suddenly attacked and burst clear before Bekele made the gold his own.

As his younger team mates ran around the stadium to celebrate further, Gebrselassie was left alone in the centre of the stadium, limping.

### Pittman shines

REUTERS, Athens

A mere 13 days after undergoing knee surgery, Australia's Jana Pittman came through the first round of qualifying for the Olympic women's 400 metres hurdles unscathed on Saturday.

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### Shamsuddin sprints to personal best

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's Athlone Shamsuddin adventure ended yesterday with sprinter Mohammed Shamsuddin clocking his best ever timing in the 100-metre first round heats.

Shamsuddin, who had a poor start, finished last in heat number six in 11.13 seconds, which was better than ten other sprinters. Shamsuddin's position was 67th among 81 sprinters as four competitors either failed to start or were disqualified.

Shamsuddin's best timing at home was 10.70 recorded manually while by electronic timing it was 11.20 seconds at the Paris World Championship last year.

Like the sprinter, Bangladesh's

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# Razzaq, Moin power Pakistan

## Cricket

AFP, Amstelveen

An unbroken stand of 56 between Abdul Razzaq and Moin Khan took Pakistan to 192 for six in their Videocon Cup triangular series opener against India at the VRA Ground here Saturday.

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PHOTO: AFP  
GOT HIM: India's Mohammad Kaif takes the catch to dismiss Pakistan opener Shahid Afridi (not in picture) as Yuvraj Singh looks on during the opening match of the Videocon Cup in Amsterdam yesterday.