

## Holm reaches new heights

REUTERS, Athens

Three-times world indoor champion Stefan Holm won the Olympic men's high jump title for Sweden on Sunday after he was the only competitor to clear 2.36 metres.

Holm, the world outdoor silver medallist in Paris last year, failed twice at 2.34 but then cleared the bar with his final attempt.

With his next jump he cleared 2.36 before facing an anxious wait while he waited for his opponents to attempt the mark.

None managed and Holm was confirmed as champion. American Matt Hemmingway was second and Jaroslav Baba of the Czech Republic took the bronze.

Holm, one of the world's smallest highjumpers, raced on to the track when Baba missed with his final attempt at 2.34 and embarked on jubilant victory celebrations with the Swedish spectators massed behind the highjump stand.

He is the only Swede to win the Olympic title with former world record holder Patrik Sjoberg finishing among the minor medals in three successive Games.

Hemingway, a distant relative of the author Ernest and who took two-and-a-half years out of the sport to pursue other interests, failed three times at 2.36, as did Baba.

## Khorkina sulks into retirement

REUTERS, Athens



Svetlana Khorkina was expected to soar into the record books at the Athens Olympics in a king a glorious exit from the international stage as the reigning queen of the asymmetric bars.

But the Russian diva has never liked following a script and her final performance in the Olympic arena was no exception as she stormed off into retirement in a huge sulk.

Khorkina was aiming to become the first gymnast to win the same apparatus title at three consecutive Games and had entered the asymmetric bars final as the favourite.

But only seconds into her complex display between the bars, the 25-year-old lost her grip.

Surprisingly, she was not even in the midst of performing one of her gravity-defying release and catch moves when she fell off.

Rotating on the high bar, the Russian simply failed to hang on and was left standing on the matting contemplating her next move.

For a few moments it looked as if she would storm off without comple-

ing her routine. Stone-faced, she returned to go through the motions before making a swift exit from the arena.

The woman who had arrived to make history had just finished last out of the eight competitors.

Sunday's dramatics capped a decade-long career in which Khorkina has made a name for herself as a trend-setting gymnast -- but also as a highly



SVETLANA KHORKINA

temperamental competitor.

Only three days after describing the winning of her first all-round Olympic medal -- a silver -- as the best day of her life, she was accusing the judges of bias towards American winner Carly Patterson.

"I'd like to work for the International Gymnastics Federation," said Khorkina, who raised eyebrows in 1997 when she posed topless for the Russian edition of Playboy magazine.

"These competitions have shown the sport needs a lot of changes. It should be judged primarily on grace, elegance and beauty rather than simply on mechanistic tumbling."

Despite being so often fed up with the way she has been treated by the sporting authorities, the part-time actress now intends to join their ranks.

"We have applied zero tolerance. We were trying to repeat the American experience," he said.

"We very much hoped that such a concentrated system of doping control would lay the ghost of Salt Lake City."

"Unfortunately we were mistaken in this hope."

## School b'ball postponed

UNB, Dhaka

The Aklot School (Boys and Girls) Basketball Tournament, scheduled to begin on Saturday at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium, has been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances.

A meeting of the representatives from all participating schools has been convened on August 2 at 6pm at the Basketball Federation office.

All representatives have been requested to attend the meeting.

## Sagar on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar kept his top spot intact in the Telegraph School's Chess Championship with his third consecutive win in Kolkata on Sunday.

He beat Vinay Raj Bhatt in the third round which gave him maximum three points.

Mohammad Imran Ali Elin and Mimi Arjuman followed the leader with 2.5 points each while Suwra Ghosh, Arifa Khatun Moni, Farjana Hossain and Abdulla Salfi were in the third place, all having two points apiece after the round.

Benaud named four Australians in his side, with two players from West Indies, two from India, two from

England and one from Pakistan.

Former Australia captain Richie Benaud named his World XI of the 20th century on Monday, with England's Jack Hobbs and India's Sunil Gavaskar opening the batting ahead of Don Bradman at number three.

India's Sachin Tendulkar and West Indies "Master Blaster" Viv Richards were named at numbers four and five followed by Pakistan's Imran Khan and West Indian Garfield Sobers as the two all-rounders.

Australia's hard-hitting wicket-keeper-batsman Adam Gilchrist was included at number eight with his Australia teammate Shane Warne filling the slowbowler's position.

Imran and Sobers would also be able to share the bowling behind the pace duo of Englishman Sydney Barnes and Australia's Dennis Lillee.

Benaud named four Australians in his side, with two players from West Indies, two from India, two from

their performance in Sri Lanka. The Australian coach has always emphasised on going for a win regardless of the opposition but he appeared to have started concentrating on individual improvement once again since the Asia Cup.

"We have never changed that philosophy. In my mind I have seen no reason to change it from the very beginning because what we all want is the right result. And that result is a win. We have experienced two of those in the last 14 months. To get more, what we need to do is improve individually," Whatmore explained at the media briefing.

"This tournament is very difficult for all the teams, not only Bangladesh because in a small group of three, you need to win the two matches. A slip-up on the day will cost any team a semi-final berth. So it will be difficult for Bangladesh and we understand that."

Coach Dav Whatmore is only too aware of the task ahead but did not entertain the notion that his charges have gone back to square one after

"But we won't go on the field thinking we are going to lose. We'll go out there thinking of doing our best. And if we continue to do that and if the players give their personal best performances, we are in a good shape to really push the opposition and take some wins," said Whatmore.

Bangladesh will play four warm-up matches against Ireland and Scotland before getting down to the serious business of taking on South Africa and the West Indies on September 12 and 15 in the tournament proper.

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