



PHOTO: AFP

World and Olympic record holder Vincent Hancock of the United States competes in the men's skeet shooting at the Royal Artillery Barracks in London yesterday.

Skeet crown remains Hancock's

AFP, London

American soldier Vincent Hancock retained his Olympic men's skeet crown on Tuesday after a flawless display of shooting in the final at London's Royal Artillery Barracks.

Denmark's Anders Guldin won silver while Nasser al-Attiah of Qatar took bronze after a shoot-off with Russia's Valery Shomin.

Hancock -- a US Army sergeant who trains soldiers in marksmanship at Fort Benning in Georgia -- became the first two-time winner of the event at the Olympics with an Olympic record of 148.

The 23-year-old topped qualifying, hitting 123 targets out of 125, one ahead of Guldin and never looked remotely in trouble of slipping from top spot during the final.

Skeet requires a competitor to hit a fast-moving clay target. In the men's competition there are 125 targets in qualifying, with the top six shooters progressing to the final, where they fire at a further 25 targets.

The score in the final is added to the qualification round score.

Hancock's gold means a US skeet double after Kim Rhode won the women's title, equalling the world record in the process.

China, who topped the Beijing shooting medals table with five golds, ahead of the United States, also have two shooting golds. South Korea and Romania have one gold apiece.

Dwyer destroys SA

AFP, London



Captain Jamie Dwyer scored a hat-trick as world champions Australia launched their Olympic Games men's hockey campaign with a thumping 6-0 victory over South Africa on Monday.

Dwyer's three strikes helped him equal the Australian record of 179 international goals held by Mark Hager, who is coach of the New Zealand team at these Olympics.

Dwyer was instrumental in earning both penalty strokes that he went on to convert and also scored on a penalty corner as Australia outplayed South Africa.

Australia fired four goals in the second session to outpace South Africa, while Asian Games winners South Korea earlier held off a late New Zealand charge to post a 2-0 win.

Meanwhile, India, who failed to qualify for the 2008 Games, endured a miserable return to the Olympics when they lost 3-2 to the Netherlands while rivals Pakistan were held 1-1 by Spain.

Dwyer opened the scoring in the 16th minute for Australia with a penalty stroke after he was brought down by a defender inside the circle.

Dwyer then set up the second Australian goal two minutes before half-time with a pass that Matthew Butturini deflected in.

Christopher Ciriello converted a penalty

corner in the 46th minute before Dwyer fired in a penalty corner in the 48th and then forced another penalty stroke that he converted in the 58th.

Glenn Turner rounded off the Australian scoring with a field goal in the 62nd minute.

You Hyo-Sik scored two field goals for South Korea against New Zealand.

"I'm excited about scoring twice as I've been waiting for a goal on the international stage for a long time," said You, who deflected diagonal crosses past New Zealand goalkeeper Kyle Pontifex.

New Zealander Simon Child wasted an early scoring opportunity by shooting wide before You put South Korea ahead in the 19th minute by capitalising on a diagonal ball from Kang Moon-Kyu.

You again found the target one minute before half-time on a pass from Jang Jong-Hyun.

It was not a very profitable day for the once formidable Asian giants, India and Pakistan.

Robert van der Horst and Rod Weusthof put the Dutch 2-0 ahead against India but Dharamvir clawed one back for India from a post rebound and Shivendra three minutes later.

But the Dutch, despite no longer including Taeke Taekama, converted two out of two penalty corners with Mink van der Weerden flicking a snorter for the decisive goal.

Pakistan led Spain with a fine 47th-minute shot by Rehan Butt but Pau Quamada took just 40 seconds to level the scores.

2m spectators for first three days

AFP, London

More than two million spectators watched the first three days of the Olympics, local organisers LOCOG said Tuesday.

Some 856,000 fans, including crowds for football and a "conservative" estimate of 500,000 for the men's cycling road race, watched on Saturday, with a further 900,000 turning out on Sunday, LOCOG said.

A further 370,000 spectators took in the action on Monday when no football matches took place.

Attendee rates for the three days were 86 per cent, 92 per cent and 88 per cent respectively.

The London organisers have been dogged by questions about empty seats at several venues despite overwhelming pre-Games demand from the British public.

LOCOG insist the problem lies with unoccupied accredited seating which is reserved for officials.

Around 3,800 tickets were retrieved from international sports federations and put on sale to the public on Monday, LOCOG said.

Swiss booter sent home

AFP, London



Switzerland footballer Michel Morganella has been sent home from the Olympics after racially abusing South Korea's players on Twitter, team officials confirmed on Monday.

Morganella had directed an offensive jibe at South Korea's players after Switzerland's 2-1 defeat to the Asian giants on Sunday.

"Michel Morganella has discriminated against, insulted and violated the dignity of the South Korean football team, as well as the South Korean people," said Switzerland Olympic team chef de mission Gian Gilli.

"While the committee felt that Michel had been provoked on his Twitter account and that he has publicly apologised, the Swiss Olympic Committee and Swiss Football Association condemn Morganella's actions to the fullest."

In a post on Twitter that was later deleted, Morganella wrote: "I am going to batter the Koreans, burn them all... bunch of 'trisos'."

'Trisos' is a French slang word for people born with Down's Syndrome.

Morganella, a 23-year-old defender who plays his club football in Italy with Palermo, made the remarks after Switzerland's defeat to Korea.

Morganella's early departure from the Olympics makes him the second athlete to pay the price for a Twitter-related offence.

Greek triple jumper Voula Papachristou was kicked out of the Olympics last week for a racist comment on the micro-blogging site which poked fun at Africans living in the country.

The 23-year-old Papachristou had written that "with so many Africans in Greece, at least the mosquitoes of West Nile will eat homemade food".

Although she subsequently deleted the message after a huge public backlash, the Hellenic Olympic Committee decided to drop her from the squad for London.

From silver spoon to silver medal

REUTERS, London

Some might say Queen Elizabeth's granddaughter Zara Phillips was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Now she can also boast a silver medal.

Phillips, daughter of two Olympians, has spent three days on what she called "an emotional rollercoaster" at the Games.

She has not had a moment spare, even to celebrate her first wedding anniversary on Monday with husband and former England rugby captain Mike Tindall.

The hopes of a nation were on her shoulders in this - her first - Olympics.

No pressure then.

Phillips has done well enough to make the cut for the individual eventing final later on Tuesday, but she is well behind the leaders and is unlikely to mount the podium again.

So is she ready to set her sights on Rio in 2016?

"Steady!" was the heartfelt reply after Britain took second place in the three-day team eventing.

Kate suffers broken jaw

AFP, London

Great Britain women's hockey captain Kate Walsh's Olympic Games future was in the balance after she underwent surgery on a broken jaw on Monday.

Walsh suffered the injury during the hosts' 4-0 opening win over Japan on Sunday when she was accidentally hit on the left side of her jaw by a stick while making a tackle four minutes from time on Akane Shibata.

She left the field and was immediately taken to hospital, where she remained overnight before her operation on Monday.

In a statement, the British Olympic Association, said Walsh "this (Monday) morning successfully underwent a surgical operation to stabilise the fracture with a plate".

The statement added: "Her recovery from the operation will be monitored and her ongoing participation in the Olympic Games will be reviewed following her return to the Athletes' Village."

But while the statement said that "the injury itself is not expected to prevent Walsh from playing hockey," it also stressed "her continued participation is dependent on her recovery from the surgery and this will be assessed on an ongoing basis over the coming days".

The 32-year-old defender is one of the most experienced players in Britain's squad, having won 288 caps since making her debut in 1999 and been captain for the past nine years.

China defend team gold

AFP, London



China bounced back to defend their Olympic men's team gymnastics title Monday as hosts Great Britain snatched a historic bronze medal -- but missed out on silver to Japan after a judges' inquiry.

Having ranked sixth in qualifying, China appeared to have lost the lustre that saw them dominate on home soil in Beijing four years ago, but they rediscovered their poise to claim a third Olympic team crown in four attempts.

A fall from superstar Kohei Uchimura on the pommel horse initially saw Japan finish fourth, but they successfully appealed against his score, dropping Britain down to third and leaving fuming Ukraine empty-handed.

It provided a chaotic end to proceedings at London's North Greenwich Arena, but Britain were nonetheless able to celebrate a first medal in the team event since their

bronze at Stockholm 1912.

With Princes William and Harry watching from the stands, Britain thought they had pipped Japan to silver, but although the Japanese appeal cut short their celebrations, the blow was far harder to take for Ukraine.

Supreme in qualifying, the United States never recovered from a poor start on the floor and the pommel horse and finished in fifth place, with Russia sixth, Germany seventh, and France eighth.

Backed by a superb 15.966 routine from Beijing bronze medallist Louis Smith, Britain made an assured start on the pommel horse and were in second place behind Ukraine after the first rotation.

China were sixth after the first rotation but they stormed back on the vault, with Zou Kai, Zhang Chenglong and Feng Zhe all registering scores above 15.900.

United States struggled on the pommel horse, Danell Leyer falling off and John Orozco miscuing his routine to leave last

year's world championship bronze medallists in sixth place.

Britain seized the initiative on the vault, as Kristian Thomas earned a massive score of 16.550 with a double piked Yurchenko that prompted a deafening roar from the crowd and left the hosts in third place.

A faultless showing on the parallel bars meant that China led from Japan at the halfway stage, while the USA, so impressive in qualifying, languished in last place.

China hammered home their advantage on the high bar, Zou top-scoring with 16.400 after a routine that wowed the crowd, while the USA's woes continued on the vault, as Orozco and Samuel Mikulak miscued.

Having fallen from the high bar in qualifying, Uchimura produced a supreme

routine that earned him a score of 15.733, but China led their Asian rivals by over two points after four rotations.

Britain's medal hopes took a hit when Sam Oldham fell from the high bar in the fifth rotation, allowing Ukraine to leapfrog them into third place.

Zou's 15.833 floor routine galvanised China's grip on gold and they avoided any mishaps on the pommel to complete victory.

Britain began their last rotation 0.248 points behind Ukraine, but nerveless from Purvis and (15.533) Thomas (15.433) saw them steal into third place and claim a first team medal in 100 years.



PHOTO: AFP

China's Chen Yibing performs on the pommel horse during the men's team final of the artistic gymnastics at the O2 North Greenwich Arena in London on Monday.

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

Which country will win the highest number of medals in the London Olympics?

Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote

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What to WATCH

ESPN & STAR Sports

London Olympic Games

Day Five

DAY'S EVENT

Premier Div Hockey Super League

Mohammedan v Abahani

Time: 3:00pm

Venue: Maulana Bhasani Hockey