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FLOOR FIASCO

CAS RULING COULD COST US GYMNAST CHILES FLOOR EXERCISE BRONZE

The Court of Arbitration for Sport ruled yesterday that the judging panel at the Paris Olympics women's floor exercise final improperly granted an inquiry that bumped up US gymnast Jordan Chiles's score, moving her into bronze medal position. In response to applications filed by the Romanian Gymnastics Federation and gymnasts Ana Maria Barbosu and Sabrina Maneca-Uoinea, CAS ruled that the appeal of Chiles's degree of difficulty was submitted past the one-minute deadline for such inquiries and should not have been granted. After the review, Chiles's score was upgraded to 13.766.

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SPORT

PARIS 2024

HIGH JUMP

Qatar's Barshim ends Olympic journey with bronze in Paris

Gold went to New Zealand's Kerr after he beat American McEwen in a jump-off

By Sports Reporter
Paris

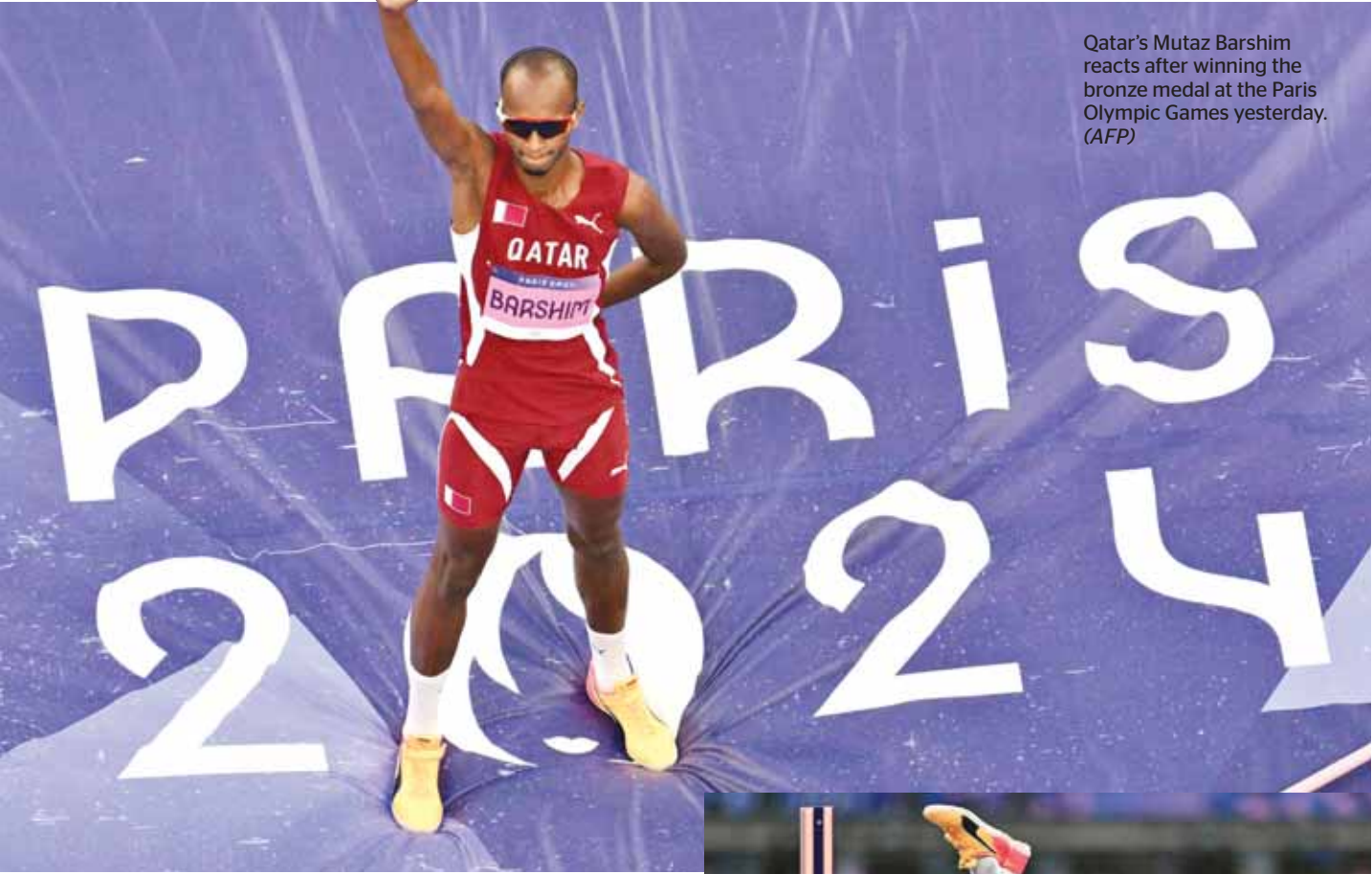
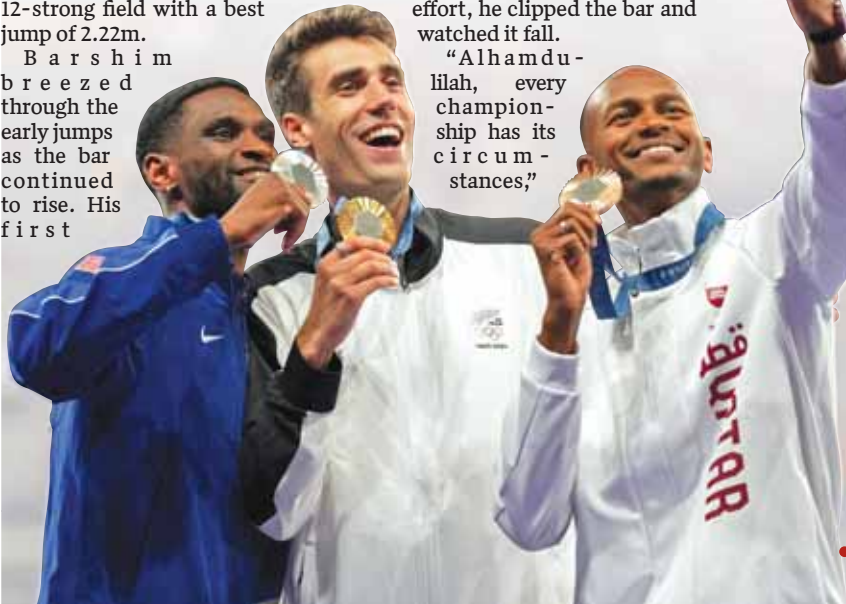
Qatar's high jump icon Mutaz Essa Barshim ended his stellar Olympic career with a bronze medal at the Paris Olympics yesterday.

At the Stade de France, the 33-year-old Barshim, who has struggled with injury all season, did a celebratory backflip off the mat after his last jump. The bronze was his fourth medal in as many Olympic appearances, having won gold in Tokyo three years ago and a silver each at the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Games. He has said this Paris Games would be his last.

The gold went to New Zealand's Hamish Kerr after he beat American Shelby McEwen in a jump-off in contrast to the last Games when the gold was shared by Barshim and Gianmarco Tamberi in Tokyo.

After his qualifying on Wednesday was hampered by a calf injury, there were question marks over how fit Barshim would be for the final. But the track and field crowd quickly dismissed any concerns as he looked on course to defend his title even as Tamberi had a night to forget, finishing 11th in the 12-strong field with a best jump of 2.22m.

Barshim breezed through the early jumps as the bar continued to rise. His first



Qatar's Mutaz Barshim reacts after winning the bronze medal at the Paris Olympic Games yesterday. (AFP)

failure came at 2.36m, quickly followed by another. With Kerr and McEwen clearing their heights, Barshim opted to skip his third attempt and instead prepared for one final shot at glory.

With the bar set at 2.38m — just one centimetre higher than his winning mark from Tokyo but well below his personal best of 2.43m — Barshim energised the Paris crowd. Despite his best effort, he clipped the bar and watched it fall.

"Alhamdulillah, every championship has its circumstances,"

Barshim said later. "Continuity is the hardest thing for an athlete, especially after the injuries one succumbs during their career. We are talking about 12 years on the podium, it's not an easy task," he added.

The three-time world champion was proud of what he had achieved in the four Olympic Games he took part in. "Alhamdulillah, it was my dream to become an Olympian and now I am the Olympic athlete with the most high jump medals, this within itself is an achievement and what can I say? You guys have never disappointed with your support and cheering, this medal is for you, not for me, this medal is for all those who supported me, this medal is for all the fans of Mutaz Barshim," he said. Barshim said he will continue to play



his trade at other events, though ruling himself out of the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028. "I have announced that this was the last Olympics but not the last cham-

pionship. There is a world indoor championship in China as well as the World Championship in Japan and there is also the Asian Games," he noted.

Bronze medallist Mutaz Barshim takes selfie as he poses with gold medallist Hamish Kerr (centre) of New Zealand and silver medallist Shelby McEwen of US. (Reuters)

Barshim was keen to pass on his wisdom to youngsters. "It doesn't matter where I am, or about positions I finish, I have experience that I have acquired on the field and would love to transfer this experience to the coming generation through the best position and the best place. Let's see. I have not confirmed anything yet. There are plans, but I have not decided. I will share my experience in the right capacity, either as a coach, administrative, consultancy, whatever it may be," he signed off.

Meanwhile, Kerr said he was 'in shock' after winning the Olympic men's high jump. Kerr tasted glory after a dramatic jump-off with McEwen. Both men managed bests of 2.36m in regular competition, but could not be separated on countback of missed jumps.

They opted for a jump-off, Kerr clearing 2.34m when the American failed after the

bar was lowered from 2.38m to 2.36m. "I was just in shock. Both me and Shelby were getting a little bit tired after all the jumps we took," said Kerr. "I knew I had a good one in me, and I knew that if I could get it up sooner rather than later, then I could just finish the comp and start recovering."

The discussion Kerr and McEwen shared with officials was short and to the point: both athletes wanted to continue, there was to be no shared gold.

"We're good buddies, good opponents, and good jumpers when we jump together," McEwen said of Kerr. "He said he wanted to face off, and I was all for it. We faced off until the last battle and he came out on top, so salute, congratulations to him. I know I will be back, stronger and fit, better than ever. I'm just ready to celebrate this moment."

When McEwen missed his attempt at 2.34m in the jump-off, world indoor champion Kerr had his chance and took it with aplomb. "High jump's always a rollercoaster, there's always guys who will miss and then clear, and then miss," Kerr said. "The big thing that we've been working on personally, and me and my team, is it's not over until it's over."

McEwen said it felt "amazing" to have bagged silver. "It's just a blessing and honour to be able to be here completely healthy and get our first Olympic medal (in this event) in a long time," the American said. "I feed off the crowd, and I jumped my way to a personal best. No better than that."

BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Younousse, Tijan miss out on bronze medal

By Sports Reporter
Paris

Cherif Younousse and Ahmed Tijan's dream of second successive Olympic bronze medal ended in tatters after the Qatar beach volleyball duo lost yesterday.

Tokyo 2020 gold medallists Anders Berntsen Mol and Christian Sandlie Soerum of Norway won the bronze medal play off match in two short, straight sets against Younousse and Tijan. The Norwegian pair took just over half an hour, winning 21-13, 21-16.

The Qataris had won fans in Paris for their style of play and interaction with the crowd, but they didn't find their groove yes-

terday despite some brave play, including one valiant dive that left Younousse face down in the sand. They rallied in the second set to deny the winning match point twice, but not enough to stop Norway claiming their win.

"We're feeling really, really happy!" Mold said. "We are proud of the way we fought back after a tough loss in the semifinal. The dream was to play this next match and play for gold, but now we had to reset and refocus and just forget this semifinal loss. I'm proud of the way we kind of bounced back in the bronze medal match. Standing here with the bronze is really I am proud of."

Meanwhile, Swedish pair David Ahman and Jonatan Hellvig won

gold, storming to an easy victory against their German opponents. The world number one pair — who had lost to Younousse and Tijan in the group stage — took just 34 minutes to conquer third-ranked Nils Ehlers and Clemens Wickler, who were previously unbeaten before eventually denied the top accolade and will leave Paris with silver.

Ahman and Hellvig, both aged 22, looked like they were thoroughly enjoying themselves, spinning on the sand, high-fiving and being cheered on by fans dressed in bright yellow.

They kept the constant edge over the German pair to win the first set by an easy 21/10, and while Germany narrowed the gap in the second set it ended 21/13 after a

dramatic fumble over the net at the end.

Ehlers, who stands at 6 feet 11 inches (2.11 metres), used his height to make some superb blocks but was met by strong returns from the youthful Swedes, and the Germans gave away several points by sending the ball long.

The Swedes applauded and bowed to the crowd after the match as the illuminated Eiffel Tower twinkled behind them.

The top-ranked Swedish pair have become famous for their style of attacking play called the "Swedish jump-set", which adds an element of unpredictability to attacking play. Beach volleyball has become one of the most popular events at the Olympics since its inclusion in 1996.



Qatar's Cherif Younousse and Ahmed Tijan in action during their bronze medal match against Anders Mol and Christian Soerum of Norway. (AFP)

FOCUS

US beat France 98-87 to lift basketball gold

AFP
Paris

The United States won their fifth straight Olympic men's basketball crown yesterday, holding off a battling France 98-87 to take their tally of Olympic golds to 17.

In a rematch of the Tokyo Olympics final three years ago, LeBron James and the US team stacked with NBA stars once again proved too much for France's sensational NBA Rookie of the Year Victor Wembanyama and his teammates.

France sliced a 14-point deficit to three with 3min 04sec to play, but Golden State Warriors star Stephen Curry drilled a three-pointer and Phoenix Suns star Kevin Durant nailed two free throws and the United States re-



Lebron James of United States celebrates with teammates after they win the gold medal clash in the basketball final of the Paris 2024 Olympics at Bercy Arena, Paris, France, yesterday. (Reuters)

lentlessly powered to the finish.

Curry finished with eight three-pointers and led the US scoring

with 24 points. Durant and Devin Booker added 15 apiece and James scored 14 with six rebounds, 10

assists a steal and a block. For Durant it was a record fourth Olympic gold. James earned his third and



Stephen Curry of the US reaches for the ball yesterday. (Reuters)

Curry, a four-time NBA champion, claimed his first in his first Olympic appearance. The United States has dominated Olympic basketball, securing gold medals in eight of the past nine Games, with the sole exception being Athens in 2004. The US women's team, known for their even greater dominance, will aim to continue this

winning streak as they compete for gold in their final match today.

France secured its second consecutive silver medal at the Olympics. Victor Wembanyama delivered his standout performance of the tournament, contributing 26 points and seven rebounds. Meanwhile, Guerschon Yabusele tallied 20 points.

SPOTLIGHT

France hammer Poland 3-0 to win volleyball gold

JEAN PATRY LEADS THE WAY FOR THE HOSTS WITH 17 POINTS

Reuters
Paris

France beat the world number one ranked side Poland 3-0 to win the Olympic men's volleyball gold yesterday, defending their title from the Tokyo Games but this time on home soil inside a rocking South Paris Arena 1.

France are only the third country to win back-to-back golds in men's volleyball after the former Soviet Union and the United States.

The US had beaten world champions Italy in straight sets on Friday to take the bronze medal.

Jean Patry led the way for the hosts with 17 points and Trevor Clevénot had 11 while Antoine Brizard chipped in with crucial blocks at the net as France claimed a 15th gold medal at their home Games with a 25-19 25-20 25-23 victory.

"It's incredible. Right from the start we've been pushed by the fans. The crowd was crazy," Clevénot said.

"Everyone did well to beat a team like Poland. We will party tonight. We won't finish early!"

Poland, back in the final after 48 years, were left to rue a missed opportunity to claim their second gold.

Poland's biggest star Wilfredo Leon, who had 94 points in Paris, had a quiet game by his standards with just nine points.

The teams got off to a sizzling start with every spike and block drawing massive roars from a full house.

Poland fell behind in the opening set with several service errors before France wrapped it up when Patry made an excellent dig to set



Gold medalists France's players pose on the podium of the men's volleyball event at the South Paris Arena 1 in Paris during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games yesterday. (AFP)

himself up for a devastating kill.

Leon lifted Poland when he attacked with purpose until Brizard denied him a third straight point with the first block of the match, following it up with two more to give France the lead in the second.

Clevénot's clever shot selection for France had been instrumental and he scored three in a row, winning a key battle at the net before sealing a 2-0 lead with a superb spike.

Four monster blocks at the start of the third set the tone for France as things spun out of control for Poland. Sensing a famous win, the home crowd once again got involved in a loud and proud

rendition of La Marseillaise - the French anthem. Poland saved four match points but only delayed the inevitable when Leon's serve went long to spark wild celebrations on the floor and in the stands. Leon was disappointed with the silver but took pride in standing on the podium. "We're happy, for a really long time we didn't reach the podium at the Olympics," he said. "So I should be proud of the team."

Brazil's women end Turkey's dream of bronze

Brazil denied Turkey a first Olympic medal in women's volleyball when the South American side won the bronze medal match 3-1 at the Paris Games yesterday.

The 25-21 27-25 22-25 25-15 victory gave Brazil, runners-up at the Tokyo Games, their third bronze in Olympic women's volleyball, moving them up to joint-top of the all-time medals table with six.

Gabriela Guimarães led the way for Brazil with a game-high 28 points, while Thaisa de Menezes - a twice-Olympic champion who came out of retirement last year - had 17 with seven blocks.

Just as in the previous games in Paris, Turkey's attack flowed through tournament top scorer Melissa Vargas, who scored 26 points in the match, but that also underlined the lack of balance in their squad.

DIVER CAO WINS MEN'S 10M PLATFORM TO COMPLETE CHINA'S GOLDEN SWEEP

PARIS: Cao Yuan won the men's 10-metre platform event yesterday at the Paris Olympics to complete a golden sweep for China, the first time a country has won all the diving events at one Games. Rikuto Tamai of Japan took silver to land Japan's first ever Olympic diving medal, and Britain's Noah Williams finished in third place to claim the bronze. Four-time Olympian Cao, 29, successfully defended his title against 17-year-old Tamai, who delivered some of yesterday's best dives in an exhilarating final that had the crowd roaring over and again. Cao's win meant China took all eight diving golds up for grabs in Paris.

"I haven't thought about getting the eighth gold. I was more focused on my own competition," Cao told reporters after the event. "I won the event last time so I have some experience, even though I performed better last time than today," he said.

"I ran into some difficulties (since Tokyo) and persevered. When it came to the Olympics this time, I just believed I could absolutely do a good job. I was very confident."

Tamai had wowed fans with a superbly executed first dive, only to be overtaken by Cao, who scored 96.90 points with an average score of 9.5 from the judges to establish a strong lead.

The Japanese teenager came back with a stronger performance in the second round to overtake Cao and continued with a top-notch third dive.

Tamai, however, had a problematic fifth dive which ended with a massive splash. That mistake eventually cost him the gold, allowing Cao to widen his lead as the Chinese veteran dived with composure to finish off on 547.50 points.

"Japan's first medal is something I achieved today. I was conscious of that goal. I was nervous as well. I felt slightly wary of this challenge, a lot of tension, a lot of pressure that led to the failure of 307C (his fifth dive)," Tamai said. "The next goal is to reach for the gold medal because I believe I'm in that position to reach for the gold," he said.

Britain's Williams, who won a silver medal in the synchronised event with Tom Daley two weeks ago, rebounded well in his last two dives after slipping to ninth in the third round, to claim the third place on the podium.

"To be on the podium, even though I messed up one of my dives, I can't really ask for more," Williams said. "That's competition. Sometimes you mess up, but you can only compete with what everyone else does as well. And today third, so I'm so happy."

With his Paris title, Cao has now won gold medals at four consecutive Olympics. China's

Wu Minxia is the only other diver to achieve that feat.

As well as winning the event in Tokyo, he also won the synchronised 10-metre platform in the London Games in 2012 and individual 3-metre springboard in Rio four years later.

"I feel very proud," Cao said. "Every time I competed in the Olympics, I've won. I've actually worked really hard for it. To me, to be able to win it every time is such a great honour," Cao said. His medal tally also includes a silver in the synchronised 10-metre event in Tokyo and a bronze in the synchronised 3-metre event in Rio.

China's world champion Yang Hao, who came second in the semi-final, was completely off his game in the final with one messy dive after another to end up the last place.



FROM LEFT: Silver medalist Japan's Rikuto Tamai, gold medalist China's Cao Yuan and bronze medalist Britain's Noah Williams pose after the men's 10m platform diving final in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

QATAR STARS LEAGUE

Al Duhail crush Qatar SC 6-1 as Al Shamal stun Al Sadd 2-1 in opener



Kenyan striker Michael Olunga (left) celebrates one of his three goals for Al Duhail in their Qatar Stars League match against Qatar SC at Khalifa International Stadium in Doha yesterday.

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Al Duhail kick-started their 2024-2025 season Qatar Stars League (QSL) campaign in fine style by defeating Qatar SC 6-1 in their Week 1 match at the Khalifa International Stadium yesterday.

Also yesterday, Algerian striker Baghdad Bounedjah scored twice for new team Al Shamal against his old employers Al Sadd at Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium in a shock 2-1 win.

In the day's other match yesterday, Al Khor and Al Gharafa failed to score in a 0-0 draw at Al Bayt Stadium.

Al Duhail's Kenyan striker Michael Olunga scored a hat-trick in the 41st, 44th and 90+6 minutes, while Ismail Mohamed got a brace scoring in the 69th and 82nd minutes, and Abdullah al-Ahrak found the back of the net in the 85th minute.

Al Duhail captain Almoez Ali was involved in three of his team's goals by providing assists.

Qatar SC's consolation goal was fetched by their Congolese professional Ben Malango in the 64th minute.

While the match began on an even keel and Qatar SC showed good defence, Al Duhail were persistent with their charge despite failing to find a good finish for a better part of the opening half. Olunga was always on the lookout and one of his early attempts in the 18th minute saw his header go over.

A minute later, Olunga managed to score grabbing a pass from the midfield from Almoez, but he was clearly offside and the flag went up.

In the 37th minute, Al Duhail got a free-kick just outside the box, but Edmilson shot far and wide. Soon, Al Duhail managed to open the goal gates, with Almoez providing a perfect floating pass from the right for Olunga to head in the team's first goal. Three minutes later, Olunga was back to shock the rivals again as Al Duhail

broke through and Bassem al-Rawi sent in a cross for Olunga to do the needful (2-0).

After the half-time break, Qatar SC tried to make a comeback, but in the 53rd minute, Ben Malango's attempt at the goal from right of the box went wide past the left post.

Al Duhail then stepped up, but at on the hour mark, an Almoez strike from top of the box went wide of the left post.

In a counter-attack, Qatar SC hit back with Malango grabbing on to a pass from Jassim Ahmad al-Jalabi, after a battle in the penalty area, to put the ball into the net with ease (1-2).

The joy for Qatar SC was, however, shortlived as five minutes later Almoez broke past three defenders to send in a through cross to an unmarked Ismail Mohamed to score (3-1).

More battle ensued, but Ismail was back to score his second goal of the match as Almoez latched on to a midfield lob to dash into the 'D' and provide a left-footed pass for Ismail to gleefully score.

FOOTBALL

Swanson strike hands US gold with 1-0 win over Brazil

‘I am very emotional. It has been a dream of mine to be in this position’

AFP
Paris

Mallory Swanson scored the winning goal as the United States edged Brazil 1-0 in yesterday's Olympic women's football final to claim the gold medal for a record-extending fifth time.

Brazil fought hard on a hot afternoon at the Parc des Princes, but the USA struck just before the hour mark when Swanson – on her 100th cap – ran through to finish past goalkeeper Lorena.

It is the first time the USA have taken the Olympic title in 12 years, their gold in Paris adding to those won in 1996, 2004, 2008 and 2012.

They have now beaten Brazil in three of those finals, with the South Americans again having to settle for silver just as they did in Athens in 2004 and in Beijing four years later. It was not quite the ending that their legendary captain Marta was hoping for, as she bowed out of her sixth and last Olympics aged 38 with a third silver medal.

Yet Brazil were never expected to get this far, while the USA's victory confirms their renaissance under new English coach Emma Hayes. She only arrived from Chelsea in late May but has worked wonders in a short space of time with a team that a year ago was sent packing from the World Cup in the last 16. “I am very emotional. It has been a dream of mine to be in this position,” Hayes told broadcaster *Eurosport*. She described her team as “tremendous people and players and role models, I love them.” That World Cup campaign in Australia and New Zealand was the international swansong for USWNT icon Meg-



US' gold medallists celebrate on the podium after the women's final football match against Brazil during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the Parc des Princes in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

an Rapinoe, who was among the crowd for yesterday's final, as was Tom Cruise. Much of the talk in the build-up to the final was about Marta, with the Brazil great free to return for a farewell Olympic appearance after serving a two-game ban for a red card in her team's last group outing. But the 38-year-old multiple winner of the FIFA world player of the year award was left on the bench at kick-off by coach Arthur Elias. Perhaps he was mindful of the energy-sapping conditions, and the need for his team to match up physically to the USA.

A younger Marta had played in Brazil's defeats in the 2004 and 2008 finals, both of which came in extra time. This was also the second clash between the nations in a final this year, after the

USA won 1-0 in the CONCACAF Gold Cup in San Diego in March. The USA subsequently welcomed Hayes as coach and she oversaw wins against Japan and Germany in the knockout rounds to get to the Olympic final. Brazil, meanwhile, scraped through their group as a best third-placed team, before surprise wins against hosts France in the quarter-finals and World Cup holders Spain in the last four, both achieved without Marta. Their direct approach posed problems to the USA defence in the first half, and they had the ball in the net just over a quarter of an hour into the game. Ludmila turned Naomi Girma inside out in the box before finishing, but the goal was disallowed for offside.

Swanson was denied at the oth-

er end by Lorena after flying down the left wing and bursting into the box, yet it was Brazil who had the best chance of the opening half.

Captain Adriana crossed from the right in stoppage time for Gabi Portilho to divert the ball towards goal, but Alyssa Naeher produced a fine save. The Americans boasted the more dangerous attack, though, and they went ahead on 57 minutes when Korbin Albert released Swanson to advance and finish expertly for her fourth goal of the tournament. Brazil sent on Marta for the final half hour, but they never seriously looked like equalising.

The veteran sent a late free-kick over the bar before Naeher kept out Adriana's header in stoppage time as the USA secured a third straight 1-0 win to take the title.

FOCUS

IOC chief Thomas Bach says he will not seek third term

AFP
Paris

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach said at the Paris Games yesterday he will not seek to remain in charge for a third term.

“New times are calling for new leaders,” the 70-year-old German lawyer, who has been in charge since 2013, told a session of IOC members in the French capital.

“Bach said he was asked to stay in his role but insisted he would not attempt to extend his mandate by changing the Olympic charter that limits the president to a maximum of 12 years in the role.

“I know with this decision I am disappointing many of you... But it is in the best interests of our beloved Olympic movement,” he said.

His successor will be elected during the IOC's 143rd session in Athens from March 18-21, 2025 and will take office the following June.

The jostling to succeed Bach will now begin, with some well-informed IOC watchers tipping Zimbabwean former swimmer Kirsty Coventry, 40, for the role.

Aruban Nicole Hoeverstz, a 60-year-old former synchro-

nised swimmer and IOC vice-president, has also been cited as a possible contender along with World Athletics chief Sebastian Coe, a British two-time Olympic gold medallist over 1,500m.

Bach, who won gold for West Germany in the foil fencing team event at the 1976 Olympics, was elected an IOC member at the age of 37 and went on to play a series of influential roles within the organisation, notably as a founding member of the IOC's Athletes' Commission, before taking over from Jacques Rogge.

When he was elected in 2013, the Bavarian claimed to embody the renewal of Olympism – in particular with less expensive and more environmentally friendly Games – with the slogan “change or be changed”.

“This mantra also applies to myself,” he said, before pausing for a few moments, with tears in his eyes. Bach has repeatedly voiced his opposition to sports boycotts, attempting to establish a watertight boundary between political conflicts and the Olympics.

The next president will be able to prepare for the future with peace of mind with the summer and winter Olympic Games awarded until 2034, with “significant” interest in the 2036 and 2040 editions, Bach said.



International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach delivers a speech during the 142nd session of the IOC in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

SPOTLIGHT

Portugal claim track cycling gold

AFP
Paris

Portugal won its first-ever Olympic track cycling gold yesterday after Iuri Leitao and Rui Oliveira surged from nowhere to win a chaotic men's madison littered with crashes.

The duo seized control in the final stages of the gruelling 200-lap race at Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines velodrome to finish eight points ahead of Italy, with Denmark taking the bronze. Avoiding a series of accidents, they won all four of the last sprints in a sensational finish to overtake the Italians at the death.

“This all seems a dream,” said Oliveira.

“I've never won a single race in my life. There have been so many disappointments through the years. If someone had said you'd win your first race at the Olympics in Paris, I'd say ‘you're kidding me!’

“We're not even close to being the favourites but we ride our hearts out,” he added.

Not only was it Portugal's first track title, but their maiden gold of the Paris Olympics. Notoriously chaotic and unpredictable, the madison is a two-person tactical relay event, featuring a mass start.

Points are accumulated from sprints every 10 laps – with the top four teams rewarded – while the final lap offers double points. Crucially, an additional 20 points can be earned if a team laps the field. Austria made its tactics clear at the start, going out hard to take the first sprint, catch the peloton and earn an extra 20 points. But the exertion took its toll and they were later lapped themselves.

Italy and Denmark both gambled with the same move mid-way through the race, hauling in the field with sustained speed.

At the halfway mark, the Italians were eight points clear of the Danes, with Spain and New Zealand joint third. But no-one had banked on Portugal, who made their move late as others tired, winning three sprints, banking an extra 20 points, the storming



Gold medallists Iuri Leitao of Portugal and Rui Oliveira celebrate on the podium of men's madison yesterday. (Reuters)

home to win the final lap. “It's incredible, it's such a long race. I cannot lie I was really fatigued after the omnium,” said Leitao, who powered to silver in that race on Thursday. “With 160 (laps) to go, I felt really empty and I told Rui we need to wait because I wasn't sure I could recover.

“But in the end I knew we could do it. We trained to do the last 20 laps or so full gas. We were really focused on doing that.”

In other track action, British world champion Emma Finucane and New Zealand's keirin gold medallist Ellesse Andrews both sped into the women's sprint semi-finals. Germany's Lea Friedrich, who set a new world record in qualifying, also made the grade along with the Netherlands' Hetty van de Wouw. But Canadian de-

fending champion Kelsey Mitchell crashed out. Powerhouse Dutchman Harrie Lavreysen was in sizzling form to easily win his men's keirin heat as he zeroes in on a third gold of the Games.

The 27-year-old, who dominated the sprint and team sprint, is gunning to better his bronze from Tokyo. Australia's Matthew Richardson, who came second to Lavreysen in the sprint final, also progressed, as did Colombian world champion Kevin Quintero.

But popular Malaysian speedster Azizulhasni Awang suffered a disappointing end to his fifth and final Olympics when he was disqualified.

Known as the “Pocket Rocketman” due to his small stature, the 36-year-old won bronze in Rio then silver at Tokyo.

BOXING

Lin wins featherweight gold

Reuters
Paris

Lin Yu-ting, one of two boxers at the heart of a gender dispute at the Paris Games, made light work of Polish opponent Julia Sz-eremeta to claim the women's featherweight title yesterday.

Lin and Algeria's Imane Khelif, who won gold in the welterweight category on Friday, have been in the spotlight as part of a gender dispute that has dominated headlines and been the subject of much discussion on social media platforms, triggering a legal complaint from the Algerian. The 28-year-old Lin became Taiwan's first gold medallist in boxing, with the island having previously won only three bronze medals in the sport – two of which came at the Paris Olympics.

“I find it truly incredible,” Lin told reporters. “I want to thank everyone who supported and believed in me; it's what has kept me going until now. I've also written history for Taiwan to let the world know about it.

“Every match is challenging. Even though it might look like a 5-0 win, each match is a big test of whether my training foundation is solid.”



Gold medallist Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting celebrates on the podium during the medal ceremony for the women's 57kg category yesterday. (AFP)

Motoki adds to Japan's gold rush in Paris

Sakura Motoki won Japan's sixth wrestling gold of the Paris Olympics yesterday, underlining her country's domination of the mat at the Champ de Mars Arena. Her victory against Ukrainian Iryna Koliadenko in the 62kg final extended Japan's big lead in the wrestling medal table and improved on the five golds the Japanese won at their home Olympics three years ago. Koliadenko scored an activity clock point but Motoki hit a low single followed by a two-point leg lace to lead 4-1 at the break.

In the second period, Motoki picked up a second turn for an 8-1 lead and followed it with another takedown and a leg lace to go 12-1 up and seal her victory by technical superiority. Aisuluu Tynybekova of Kyrgyzstan and Grace Bullen of Norway took bronze.

Uzbekistan's Razambek Jamalov won the men's 74kg, two years after contemplating retirement following a slew of surgeries that left him with a battered body. Jamalov got an early takedown against Daichi Takatani and pinned the Japanese with 48 seconds left in the period to clinch the contest.

“I had some six or seven surgeries, including some major ones, throughout my career,” said the 26-year-old with bruises on his forehead and cuts on his nose and ear.

“About two years ago, I thought of finishing my career but here I am.

“Inside the operation theatre, I was thinking ‘Can I continue?’ I was not sure. But my coach motivated me and my family supported me.”

“I will soon undergo another operation for my shoulder. Maybe I will stop training for a while

and come back, as I have always done.”

Chermen Valiev's bronze was Albania's first Olympic medal. Kyle Dake of the United States claimed the other bronze. Geno Petriashvili of Georgia staved off a late comeback by Iran's Amir Hossein Zare to win the men's 125kg gold to go with his silver in Tokyo and bronze in Rio.

Petriashvili led 10-1 at the break, but Zare refused to throw in the towel and cut down the lead to 10-9 even though it was not enough in the end.

“It was very tense and in the final seconds, I was telling myself ‘Geno, please don't give up, please don't give up,’” Petriashvili said. Rio champion Taha Akgul of Turkey goes into retirement after winning a bronze medal. Giorgi Meshvildishvili of Azerbaijan took the other bronze.

(Reuters)

WEIGHTLIFTING

Fares’ second gold medal bid ends in disappointment

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Qatar’s Fares Ibrahim faced a disappointing end to his Olympic campaign in the newly introduced 102kg weight class at the Paris Games yesterday. The 26-year-old, a key contender for Qatar’s medal hopes, was unable to lift 178kg in the snatch category, resulting in three failed attempts that disqualified him from progressing to the clean and jerk round.

Fares, who had previously made history by securing Qatar’s first-ever Olympic gold in the 96kg category at the Tokyo Games three years ago — an category not included at Paris Games — blamed his performance on a sudden elbow injury.

He apologised for the unexpected outcome, mentioning that this was the first time he had experienced such an injury.

Despite this setback, Fares is committed to returning stronger at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics. “I apologise for the unexpected performance due to an elbow injury. This is the first time I felt this injury,” Fares told *beIN Sports*. “But this is not the end. I will return to achieve something in Los Angeles.”

His journey to Paris was marked by adversity, including a hip injury that hampered his training and forced him to miss the International Weightlifting Federation’s World Cup in April.

Meanwhile, China’s world champion Liu Huanhua put in a superb performance to win the gold with a total of 406kg. Liu lifted an impressive 186kg in the snatch to put himself in a good position, but Armenia’s Garik Karapetyan matched that on his third attempt to put pressure on the Chinese lifter.

However, the 22-year-old Liu came out

strongly with a clean and jerk of 220kg on his first attempt. He later lifted an extra eight kgs but it was invalid due to an incorrect arm extension.

Liu then tried to break his world record total of 413kg set at the World Cup in Phuket, Thailand in April, to the rapturous applause of the crowd at the Paris Expo arena. But despite stretching every sinew, he could not secure the bar above his head for the jerk and dropped it to the mat.

Akbar Djuraev of Uzbekistan took silver with a total 404kg after only registering on his first clean & jerk with 219kg. Belarusian Yauheni Tsikhantsou, who was competing as a neutral athlete, won bronze with 402kg.

The men’s over 102kg weightlifting gold was won by Lasha Talakhadze of Georgia. Varazdat Lalayan of Armenia took silver and Gor Minasyan of Bahrain claimed the bronze.



ATHLETICS

Kipyegon makes history as US underline track and field dominance

Two-time defending champion sets a new Olympic record of 3min 51.29 seconds

AFP
Paris

History-making Faith Kipyegon became the first woman to win three consecutive Olympic 1,500m titles in Paris yesterday as the United States bagged three more golds to confirm their track and field dominance.

The final Olympic session at a packed 69,000-capacity Stade de France offered up another startling night of dramatic action. There was redemption for Jakob Ingebrigtsen in the 5,000m, New Zealander Hamish Kerr won a jump-off for high jump gold and Japan’s Haruka Kitaguchi won the women’s javelin.

Kipyegon made history in spectacular style, the 30-year-old 2016 and 2020 champion producing a tactical masterpiece to take gold in a new Olympic record of 3min 51.29sec. It was another remarkable performance by Kipyegon, the reigning world champion and world record holder who can now arguably lay claim to being the greatest women’s middle-distance runner in history.

“It has been a week with a lot of emotions,” said Kipyegon in reference to winning the 5,000m silver earlier in the week. “Tonight it is happiness and I am proud to win my third consecutive Olympic gold medal in the 1500m.”

Kipyegon’s teammate Emmanuel Wanyonyi made it two Kenyan golds on the night after he held off world champion Marco Arop of Canada for victory in the men’s 800m. Wanyonyi clocked a personal best of 1:41.19 for victory in a sensational two laps that saw four men in the same race break the 1:42 mark for the first time. “I came to Paris, I told myself this race is not easy because it’s the Olympics, so I need to run my personal best to win this,” he said.

Algerian Djamel Sedjati took bronze, news then breaking that French anti-doping officers had carried out searches at the Paris Olympic Village on Thursday in a probe focusing on his coach Amar Benida. “Nothing (important) happened. These are things that athletes can face,” Sedjati said.

Two-time defending world champion Ingebrigtsen made up for his fourth place in the 1500m with a dominant victory in the 5,000m. The Norwegian timed 13min 13.66sec for gold, Kenya’s Ronald Kwemoi taking silver in 13:15.04. American Grant Fisher will return home with two bronzes



Faith Kipyegon of Kenya celebrates after winning the women’s 1,500m gold ahead of silver medalist Jessica Hull of Australia and bronze medalist Georgia Bell of Britain during the Paris Olympic Games at the Stade de France yesterday. (Reuters)

after rounding out the podium (13:15.13) as he had also done in the 10,000m race. “With the level being so high, people are running so fast this year, I knew I had to be at my very best to be able to fight for medals,” said Ingebrigtsen.

Fisher’s bronze added another to the incredible US medal haul, boosted by three more golds yesterday. Masai Russell clocked 12.33sec for victory in the 100m hurdles, edging out by one-hundredth Cyrena Samba-Mayela, who clinched the host nation’s first athletics medal of the Games.

Individual 200m champion Gabby Thomas and 400m hurdles winners Rai Benjamin and Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone then helped steer the women and men’s 4x400m relay teams to victory. Benjamin guided the US men’s quartet also featuring Christopher Bailey, Vernon Norwood and Bryce Deadmon to an Olympic record of 2min 54.43sec.

Thomas and McLaughlin-Levrone were instrumental, along with Shamier Little and Alexis Holmes, as the women won in 3:15.27. They narrowly missed out on break-



FROM LEFT: United States’ Alexis Holmes, Gabrielle Thomas, Shamier Little and Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone celebrate after winning the women’s 4x400m relay gold.

ing one of the oldest world records in athletics – the 3:15.17 set by the former Soviet Union in 1988.

With just the women’s marathon to be

raced today, the US now sit atop the athletics medals table with 14 golds, 11 silvers and nine bronzes. Kenya are second with four golds, two silvers and four bronzes.

MEDALS TALLY

TEAMS	G	S	B	T
1. China	39	27	24	90
2. United States	38	42	42	122
3. Australia	18	18	14	50
4. Japan	18	12	13	43
5. France	16	24	22	62
6. Great Britain	14	22	27	63
7. South Korea	13	8	9	30
8. Netherlands	13	7	12	32
9. Germany	12	11	8	31
10. Italy	11	13	15	39
11. Canada	9	7	11	27
12. New Zealand	9	7	2	18
13. Uzbekistan	7	2	3	12
14. Hungary	5	7	6	18
15. Spain	5	3	8	16
16. Sweden	4	4	3	11
17. Kenya	4	2	4	10
18. Norway	4	1	3	8
19. Ireland	4	0	3	7
20. Brazil	3	7	10	20
21. Ukraine	3	5	4	12
22. Iran	3	5	2	10
23. Romania	3	4	1	8
24. Georgia	3	2	1	6
25. Belgium	3	1	6	10
26. Bulgaria	3	1	3	7
27. Czech Republic	3	0	2	5
28. Azerbaijan	2	2	2	6
29. Cuba	2	1	5	8
30. Croatia	2	1	3	6
31. Serbia	2	1	1	4
32. Slovenia	2	1	0	3
33. Chinese Taipei	2	0	5	7
34. Austria	2	0	3	5
35. Hong Kong	2	0	2	4
35. Philippines	2	0	2	4
37. Algeria	2	0	1	3
37. Indonesia	2	0	1	3
39. Israel	1	5	1	7
40. Poland	1	3	5	9
41. Kazakhstan	1	3	3	7
42. Jamaica	1	3	2	6
42. South Africa	1	3	2	6
42. Thailand	1	3	2	6
45. Denmark	1	2	5	8
45. Switzerland	1	2	5	8
47. Ecuador	1	2	2	5
48. Portugal	1	2	1	4
49. Ethiopia	1	2	0	3
50. Greece	1	1	6	8
51. Argentina	1	1	1	3
51. Bahrain	1	1	1	3
51. Egypt	1	1	1	3
51. Tunisia	1	1	1	3
55. Botswana	1	1	0	2
55. Chile	1	1	0	2
55. Saint Lucia	1	1	0	2
55. Uganda	1	1	0	2
59. Dominican Rep1	0	2	3	
60. Guatemala	1	0	1	2
60. Morocco	1	0	1	2
62. Dominica	1	0	0	1
62. Pakistan	1	0	0	1
64. Türkiye	0	3	5	8
65. Mexico	0	3	2	5
66. Armenia	0	3	1	4
67. Colombia	0	3	0	3
68. Kyrgyzstan	0	2	4	6
68. North Korea	0	2	4	6
70. Lithuania	0	2	2	4
71. India	0	1	5	6
72. Moldova	0	1	3	4
73. Kosovo	0	1	1	2
74. Cyprus	0	1	0	1
74. Fiji	0	1	0	1
74. Jordan	0	1	0	1
74. Mongolia	0	1	0	1
74. Panama	0	1	0	1
79. Tajikistan	0	0	3	3
80. Grenada	0	0	2	2
80. Malaysia	0	0	2	2
82. Albania	0	0	1	1
82. Cape Verde	0	0	1	1
82. Ivory Coast	0	0	1	1
82. Peru	0	0	1	1
82. Puerto Rico	0	0	1	1
82. Qatar	0	0	1	1
82. Refugee Team	0	0	1	1
82. Singapore	0	0	1	1
82. Slovakia	0	0	1	1
82. Zambia	0	0	1	1

Read as: G- Gold, S- Silver, B- Bronze, T- Total

GOLF

New Zealand’s Ko completes Olympic medal set with gold



AFP
Paris

New Zealander **Lydia Ko** completed the set of Olympic golf medals yesterday after battling to a two-shot victory at Le Golf National during a tense final round to seal gold.

Ko was the only player in the last three groups to not collapse out of contention, carding a one-under-par 71 to edge German Esther Henseleit into second, with China’s Lin Xiyi taking bronze.

“Going into this week, everyone was saying, ‘Oh, what if you finish and collect the gold on top of the silver and bronze you

have,” Ko said. “Of course I wanted to do that, complete it, too, but it’s much easier said than done.”

The former world number one was cruising to the title, leading by five shots with six holes to spare before hitting an iron shot on the par-four 13th into the water and making a double-bogey. Henseleit took advantage, finishing with back-to-back birdies to sign for a closing six-under-par 66 and post an eight-under total in the clubhouse.

But Ko held her nerve, reeling off four successive pars before securing gold in style with a birdie on the par-five 18th hole, ending the tournament on 10-under overall. The 27-year-old was already the first

golfer to win multiple individual Olympic medals and now has more in total than any other player in history.

Americans Chandler Egan, Burt McKinnie and Francis Newton took individual and men’s team medals in the 1904 Olympics in St Louis. Ko was runner-up behind Park In-bee when golf returned to the Olympics from a 112-year absence in Rio in 2016, before finishing third in Tokyo three years ago. She kept her rivals at arm’s length once she first reached 10-under with a 45-foot birdie putt on the seventh. Reigning champion Nelly Korda was in medal contention But the world number one hit a dreadful approach shot into the 15th green.