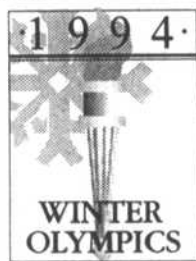


Harding issue cast aside

LILLEHAMMER, Norway — Tommy Moe succeeded Sunday where Olympic officials had failed: He brought everyone's attention back to the Games. The U.S. hockey team — somewhat shakily — kept it focused there.



Moe, an underdog American skier just hours after resolution of the Tonya Harding debacle, left thousands of Norwegians stunned when he won the men's downhill gold over local hero Kjetil Andre Aamodt.

The American hockey team, looking for its first gold medal in 14 years, made up a two-goal third period deficit to salvage a 4-4 tie with France.

Moe's victory, by .04 seconds, was the closest Alpine race in Olympic history. He collected the first U.S. men's Alpine gold in a decade and only the second ever.

"I didn't even have any thoughts in my mind that I was going to win," said

Moe, a free spirit from Palmer, Alaska, who's competing in his second Olympics. "I just figured, 'Hey, I'll ski the best I can.'"

He did, grabbing the gold just four days short of his 24th birthday. Canadian Ed Podivinsky took the bronze.

While Moe's upset win canceled the party on the slopes, Norwegians at the Viking Hall celebrated a world record-setting gold medal performance by one of their own, speedskater Johann Olav Koss. The Slovakian hockey team made its Olympic debut with a 4-4 tie against medal favorite Sweden. And at the luge, Duncan Kennedy kept hope alive for the first U.S. medal ever in the event.

Koss, one of many 1992 Olympians expected to excel in these Games with the one-time-only, two-year turnaround, smashed his own world record in the 5,000 meter. The silver went to teammate Kjell Storelid.

By day's end, Norway had three medals — more than any other nation.

The American hockey team parlayed a pair of miscues by French goalie Petri Ylonen into a 4-4 tie. Ylonen, who turned long shots by Peter Laviolette and Brian Rolston

into goals, slammed his stick to the ice in anger when the game ended.

The United States grabbed an early 2-1 lead, but three American miscues near the net allowed France to move ahead in the final period.

In other hockey action, Slovakia scored an impressive 4-4 tie with second-seeded Sweden in its first Olympic hockey game.

The country gained its independence just 13 months ago. Four of its players are from the 1992 bronze-medal Czechoslovakian team. The Canadian team, silver medal winners in 1992, whipped Italy 7-2 in its first game here.

The Moe medal and the Sunday debut of the U.S. hockey team provided a welcome break from the Harding-Nancy Kerrigan flap, which ended with American officials agreeing to let Harding skate.

"The matter has been resolved," Kerrigan said in a Sunday statement that pointedly omitted Harding's name.

"Regardless of my opinion on the ruling, the Olympics have begun and it's time to skate."

Palestinian gunmen fire at Israeli agents

BEITUNIYA, Occupied West Bank — Palestinian gunmen sprayed automatic gun fire at a car carrying Israeli security agents in the occupied West Bank Sunday, killing one and injuring two, officials said.

The ambush occurred as agents of the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service, drove by the village of Beituniya, six miles north of Jerusalem, said Maj. Gen. Shaul Mufaz, commander of the occupied West Bank forces.

Three agents were wounded but returned fire, Mufaz said, adding he did not know how many gunmen were involved.

One Israeli died en route to Hadassah hospital in Ein Kerem, spokeswoman Jennifer Basu told The Associated Press. She said all three were in civilian clothing.

The army clamped a curfew on Beituniya and nearby Ramallah, and cut off electricity in El Amari refugee camp. Soldiers reportedly

detained two suspects during searches for the gunmen.

The agents' white Mercedes car was wrapped in canvas and then towed away to conceal it from photographers. Security sources said more than 40 bullets were fired.

Army radio reported that the attack was claimed by Izzedine el Qassam, the military arm of Hamas, a radical Muslim group opposed to the Israel-PLO peace accord. Hamas has been blamed for most of the attacks on Israelis since the accord was signed Sept. 13.

Violence against the peace agreement has escalated since Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization agreed Wednesday on security arrangements for the proposed Palestinian autonomy.

Palestinian opponents to the Israel-PLO accord have said the autonomy is too limited, and have vowed to sabotage the peace process through anti-Israel violence.

Haitian fuel shortage not affected by explosion

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — A spectacular explosion that destroyed the capital's main center for contraband gasoline sales probably will not seriously worsen Haiti's fuel shortage from a U.N. embargo, diplomats said Sunday.

They said smuggling of fuel from the neighboring Dominican Republic has increased recently in defiance of the embargo imposed in an effort to force the army to let President Jean-Bertrand Aristide return to power.

As of late Saturday officials did not suspect sabotage in the explosion, which set off a fire that destroyed a half-block of buildings on Rue de Cesar in downtown Port-au-Prince.

No casualties were reported, but authorities said Sunday they could not be sure until the wreckage was searched.

A stretch of warehouses, stores and at least one hotel was destroyed by the blaze. Tens of thousands of gallons of contraband gasoline and diesel fuel were stored in the warehouses in 55-gallon drums, eight-gallon plastic

containers or one-gallon jugs.

Haiti's already impoverished economy has suffered from the fuel embargo imposed in October after military leaders reneged on an agreement to allow the return of Aristide. He was overthrown by a bloody coup in September 1991 after less than a year in power as the country's first freely elected president.

The army has stockpiled gasoline in underground depots around the capital, but the fuel at the burned warehouses was the main source of sales to ordinary and well-to-do Haitians.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a Western diplomat said gasoline and diesel fuel are being brought in through several routes from the Dominican Republic.

Despite an increased Dominican military presence on the border, fuel is getting to Haiti on skiffs along the north coast, rowboats across central Saumarte Lake and in some vehicles crossing the border, he said.

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