

News Digest

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Amy Van Dyken, left, Darra Torres, Courtney Shealy, and Jenny Thompson of the U.S. Women's 4x100 freestyle relay team celebrate their gold medal and a new world record at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games on Saturday in Australia.



Al Bello/Newsweek

Athletes set new goals, records for Olympics

American Olympians are ahead in the race for medals, with 23 under their belts.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SYDNEY, Australia - A game-winning grand slam homer. A dramatic, record-setting upset at the pool. A soccer star revisiting her World Cup heroics.

Some of the U.S. Olympians weren't just winning Wednesday, they were doing it in style.

Longshot Misty Hyman and relay team anchor Jenny Thompson captured gold medals in record times for the American swimmers to start the heroics.

Brandi Chastain later scored a goal to help boost the U.S. women's soccer team into the semifinals, while the American baseball team used a two-out, eighth-inning home run to defeat South Korea 4-0.

For Thompson, the 800-meter freestyle relay victory catapulted her into rarified Olympic company. With seven golds, she now has more than any woman swimmer, snapping a tie with Germany's Kristin Otto.

Thompson, 27, who also has a silver in her career, tied Czech Republic gymnast Vera Caslavaska for the second-most Olympic golds by a woman. With teammates Samantha Arsenault, Diana

Munz and Lindsay Benko, she established an Olympic record of 7 minutes, 57.80 seconds.

The 21-year-old Hyman shocked defending champion Susie O'Neill of Australia to win the 200 butterfly. Hyman shocked herself, too; upon seeing her Olympic record time, she repeatedly said, "Oh my God! Oh my God!"

Pieter van den Hoogenband of the Netherlands won gold in the 100 freestyle in 48.30 seconds. American Gary Hall Jr. took the bronze.

Van den Hoogenband became the first man to sweep the 100 and 200 freestyles since American Mark Spitz in 1972.

After five days of competition, the Americans topped the medal tables with 23 (10 gold, 7 silver, 6 bronze). Host Australia was second with 22 (7-8-7), while China had 17 (6-4-7).

On the baseball diamond, Doug Mientkiewicz's eighth-inning grand slam gave the United States a 4-0 victory over South Korea, the fourth straight victory for the Americans.

Mientkiewicz snapped a scoreless tie for manager Tom Lasorda's team by driving a two-out pitch deep over the wall in right field.

The American victory came on the heels of the Netherlands' stunning 4-2 victory over Cuba,

ending the Cubans' 21-game Olympic winning streak.

The next stop for the U.S. women's soccer team: the Olympic semifinals.

The Americans took step No. 1 toward defending their 1996 gold medal by defeating Nigeria 3-1 to finish first in their half of the draw.

World Cup heroine Brandi Chastain opened the U.S. scoring, with Kristine Lilly and Shannon MacMillan adding the other goals. On Sunday, the women will face Brazil in one game, while Norway and Germany will battle in the other semifinal.

China, the other finalist in the 1999 World Cup, was eliminated by a surprising 2-1 loss to Norway.

French journalists escape

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANILA, Philippines - The Philippine government on Wednesday portrayed the escape of two French journalists as vindication of its decision to use force against Muslim rebels holding hostages in the jungles.

The attack by thousands of elite troops on the Abu Sayyaf rebels had been strongly criticized by French President Jacques Chirac, who said it could endanger the 19 hostages.

The two television journalists, who had been taken captive July 9, headed home Wednesday. They credited their nighttime escape to the army assault on the guerrillas. Philippine President Joseph Estrada beamed as he presented the journalists at a news conference in Manila as a vindication of his decision to use force.

"As you can see for yourself, these two gentlemen are in good shape," Estrada said.

The journalists - Jean-Jacques Le Garrec and Roland Madura of France-2 television - were the first hostages recovered from Jolo, a remote southern island, since Estrada ordered the military assault Saturday.

The two men escaped Tuesday evening as the guerrillas fled the attack.

"We took the opportunity of the military pressure," Le Garrec said.

He said the two bolted as the rebels were crossing a road. After hiding overnight in the jungle, they flagged down a military truck at dawn and were taken to an army camp.

Philippine officials had said initially that

"As you can see for yourself, these two men are in good shape."

Joseph Estrada
Philippine president

the military rescued the two hostages after a clash with the rebels.

"It's been 2 1/2 long months for us, but we feel very good," Le Garrec said. "Of course we are very happy today and we are in good shape, as you may judge, for people who have not been sleeping for some nights."

The separatist group Abu Sayyaf have kidnapped scores of people since March. Estrada's decision to attack the rebels last weekend has been widely supported by Filipinos.

Estrada said Wednesday he would order a halt to the assault if the other hostages are freed.

Estrada also said an American hostage, Jeffrey Schilling, had been spotted and that troops hoped to rescue him.

The rebels also are holding three Malaysians, a Filipino kidnapped in April and 12 Filipino Christian evangelists.

Schilling, of Oakland, Calif., converted to Islam in 1994 and visited an Abu Sayyaf camp with his wife on Aug. 28. He was reportedly abducted because of an argument over religion with the rebels.

Cuban survivor questioned

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KEY WEST, Fla. - The FBI interviewed the hospitalized survivor of a Cuban plane crash, and the Coast Guard said Wednesday it plans to transfer the eight others rescued from the Gulf of Mexico onto a U.S. ship.

Authorities were trying to figure out whether Tuesday's crash, which killed one of the 10 Cubans on the plane, came at the end of a hijacking or whether the group left Cuba to flee the communist country.

The distinction could help determine whether they qualify for asylum in the United States.

The U.S. has returned some skyjacks to Cuba for prosecution and has prosecuted some in this country.

The most seriously injured, Rodolfo Fuentes, 36, was in a Key West hospital, making him eligible for possible asylum, U.S. immigration officials said.

Fuentes was questioned Wednesday, FBI agent Al Alonso said.

"At this point, it doesn't appear to be a hijacking, but until we interview them we can't be sure," said Judy Orihuela, an FBI spokeswoman in Miami.

Doctors said Wednesday, Fuentes' prognosis was good.

"He has a concussion, a big cut on the back of his head and a sore neck," said Dr. David Bannon. "He's really doing quite well considering the drama he suffered."

The eight other survivors, including three children, remained aboard the Panamanian freighter Chios Dream, whose

captain rescued them Tuesday.

The seas were too rough to transfer them to the Coast Guard cutter Courageous, but another attempt would be made Wednesday evening, Petty Officer Danielle DeMarino said.

U.S. law lets Cubans apply for residency if they reach U.S. soil.

Ordinarily, those captured at sea are returned to Cuba, but authorities said it was too early to say what would be done with the survivors.

Once the survivors were transferred to the cutter, they will be interviewed by the Immigration and Naturalization Services and the FBI, federal officials said.

"If they pass the 'credible fear' test they will be taken to Guantanamo Bay," said Maria Cardona, an INS spokeswoman in Washington. "If they do not, they will be repatriated to Cuba."

To pass that test, Cardona said, migrants must demonstrate a fear of persecution if returned to their home country, "based on nationality, race, religion, political opinion or membership in a particular social group."

When asked about the Fuentes' status, Cardona noted he was now on U.S. soil.

"Essentially if a person makes it to U.S. soil and they are eligible, and they want to stay, then they would be eligible to apply for residency," she said.

Cuban officials said the pilot reported to the control tower the government-owned plane was being hijacked and that it was headed to Florida with a group of adults and children.

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DAILY NEBRASKAN

Whitewater investigation ends

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Four months before President Clinton leaves the White House, prosecutors brought the six-year Whitewater investigation to an end, concluding there is "insufficient" evidence that the president or the first lady committed a crime.

Robert Ray's six-page statement dissi-

pated a cloud that bedeviled the Clintons since the 1992 election campaign and that made Clinton the most investigated president since Richard M. Nixon, who resigned rather than confront impeachment.

"I'm just glad that this is finally over," Hillary Clinton said.

The president ignored a question about Whitewater.

Ray has one major piece of unfinished business - a decision whether to indict the president after he leaves office for his conduct in the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

Ray said his office investigated at least seven separate criminal allegations involving the president or his wife in Whitewater.

"This office determined that the evidence was insufficient to prove to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt that either President Clinton or Hillary Clinton knowingly participated in any criminal conduct," Ray said.

World/Nation

The Associated Press

Wisconsin

University brochure photo altered to show diversity

MADISON - Seeking an image of diversity, the University of Wisconsin at Madison says it doctored a photo on a brochure cover by inserting a black student in a crowd of white football fans.

"We did it in this one instance, and it really was an error in judgment," university publications director Al Friedman said Tuesday.

The university's undergraduate admissions director, Rob Seltzer, said his office spent the summer looking for pictures that would show the school had a diverse enrollment, but had no luck. As of fall 1999, less than 10 percent of the school's more than 40,000 students were non-white, and only 2.15 percent were black.

The staff settled on a 1993 photo of white Badger fans at a football game. Friedman said his office altered the photo to add an image taken in 1994 of senior Diallo Shabazz.

The university won't discipline those involved because they admitted their mistake and apologized to Shabazz, said Patrick Strickler, a university spokesman.

Washington, D.C.

Imports hit record level as world oil prices rise

The U.S. trade deficit climbed to an all-time high of \$31.9 billion in July as rising world oil prices pushed imports to a record level.

The Commerce Department said Wednesday that America's deficit with China soared to the highest level ever recorded with a single country. The United States also set new records in its deficits with Japan, Western Europe and Canada.

The July deficit was up 6.9 percent from a revised \$29.8 billion June trade gap. So far this year, America's trade deficit is running at an annual rate of \$353.7 billion, far above last year's record of \$265 billion, as trade remains the one blot on an otherwise sterling economic performance.

The Clinton administration said that nearly half of this year's deterioration in the trade balance has come from a surge in world oil prices but pointed to hopeful signs of a rebound in U.S. export sales over the first seven months of this year.

California

Iraqi citizens detained after trying to cross boarder

SAN DIEGO - American authorities detained 25 Iraqi citizens Wednesday after they tried to walk across the Mexican border and into the United States.

The 21 adults and four children arrived at the San Ysidro Port of Entry, which links San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico, in three groups without visas to enter the country, said Lauren Mack, a spokeswoman for the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

All were being held at the border crossing while the INS awaited translators to determine whether the Iraqis are seeking asylum, Mack said.

"They are very well, very calm, very quiet," she said.

Both the INS and the U.S. Customs Service called out extra agents after receiving reports that more Iraqis were in Tijuana and planning to come to the border.

Washington, D.C.

U.S. warns of repercussions if Milosevic claims win

Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic will lose Sunday's presidential election but declare victory anyway, a senior State Department official predicted Wednesday.

James O'Brien, special presidential adviser on the Balkans, said the United States would "make it clear to Milosevic that he does not have a free hand" if he declares himself the winner of a fraudulent election.

He warned not to underestimate U.S. "willingness to stand up for the stability of the region."

O'Brien stopped short of threatening military action, but did not detail what the U.S. response would be.

Joint U.S. military exercises with Croatia beginning Monday have nothing to do with the election, he said.

Weather

TODAY
Windy
high 68, low 61
TOMORROW
Showers
high 66, low 49