



ROWING

TESTING THE WATER ON RIO'S LAGOON

RIO DE JANEIRO: Fernanda Lima is on the frontline of the campaign to ensure that the water of Rio's Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon, venue for the Olympic rowing regatta, is safe and clean.

Every morning at 6 a.m., she and a pilot jump into a motorboat and visit four different points on the lagoon. She uses the powers of her nose and eyes, as well as more technical gear, to test the water quality and report back for the World Rowing Federation's (FISA) daily assessment.

"It's important work," she said, sitting down with a coffee at the Lagoa Stadium after the morning run.

The water quality at the lagoon and at Guanabara Bay, site of the sailing events, has been a big worry since Rio was awarded the games.

The lagoon boasts a spectacular setting, lying north of the storied Ipanema beach area and overlooked by forested mountains, including Corcovado and the Christ the Redeemer statue.

But at certain times, sewage spills and other pollution has been bad. Heavy rains can wash all sorts of nasty things into the lagoon.

Last year, tonnes of dead fish were floating on the water and had to be removed. Residents complained of the stench.

A strain of E. coli that could cause gastrointestinal illness was also found. The water quality has thus been monitored intensely by FISA, working with local environmental authorities. Measures included removing illegal sewer connections, clearing weeds, and managing the gates to the canal which links the lagoon to the sea.

FISA declared it was satisfied there was no risk to athletes, but no one is now sitting back.

CHECKING THE PIPES

Born and bred in Rio de Janeiro, Lima has been making her daily checks since July 18 and has reported no problems. Every morning, she visits three rain-water pipes and a spot in the middle of the lagoon.

"First I look to see if there are problems, then I smell. Then we do a test sample. If it is yellow or brown, it is a problem, although if it's a little yellow it's OK," she said.

"I call in to the manager as I am doing it - 'Pipe 2 colour OK' - then go to the next pipe."

The information is fed into the daily report. Her section is officially called the Visual and Olfactory Investigation. The run takes about 30 minutes. "Then I have coffee and breakfast."

In the afternoon, Lima is back in the boat taking water samples. These will be sent to laboratories for testing for E. coli, found in fresh water, and enterococci, found in marine waters. Both sea and fresh water flow into the lagoon.

Her other duties include checking on a bird which is nesting on the shore in its own enclosure, and inspecting generators for oil spills. If there are any concerns, she might go back out again at night.

The daily reports have assessed the water quality so far as excellent and FISA executive director Matt Smith even declared on Saturday it was good enough to drink.

The main danger for rowers is if they fall in. High winds whipped up the waters in the early days of the regatta and so far two boats have capsized in competition and two in training. Rain fell yesterday morning but Fernanda said there was nothing to make her nostrils twitch. —Reuters



RIO DE JANEIRO: United States' David Lee, right, reaches for the ball hit by Canada's John Gordon Perrin, left, during a men's preliminary volleyball match at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Sunday. — AP

CANADA BEAT YOUNG US SQUAD IN STRAIGHT SETS



VOLLEYBALL

RIO DE JANEIRO: A towel draped over his left shoulder, Erik Shoji sat on the bench alongside big brother Kawika and pondered what might be going so wrong for the young United States team in its Olympic volleyball opener against hard-hitting Canada.

For a group of largely Olympic first-timers determined to show that youth and inexperience don't necessarily mean anything on the biggest stage, the fifth-ranked Americans looked at times sloppy and out of sorts in falling 25-23, 25-17, 25-23 to No. 12 Canada on Sunday in the first pool match for both countries.

"We knew we were the underdog in this pool and this match," Canada captain Frederic Winters said. "It's the Olympic Games and our team was highly motivated and it showed on the court today."

From serves into the net early and others that sailed long, to kill attempts that fell wide and missed blocks, the Americans were off from the start. And Canada capitalized. Later Sunday, defending champion Russia won in four sets against a Cuba team that had to revamp its roster in the past month because six players are being held in Helsinki on suspicion of aggravated rape, according to Finnish police.

Argentina beat Olympic first-timer Iran in three sets in the late match. The US will now look to regroup to face Italy today. "Hopefully we all fight back for the next match," Erik said. "There's always jitters in the first match." The Canadians also beat the U.S. in a five-setter for the Champions Cup title in May 2015 before the Americans won on the way to last year's World Cup crown in Japan. "It was an unfortunate way to start the tournament," said US captain and third-time Olympian David Lee. "We didn't find a level of consistency that we could sustain throughout the match."

US coach John Speraw committed to a youth movement, and that means most of

the Americans lack Olympic experience - though they receive plenty of insight from four-time Olympic teammate Reid Priddy, third-timer Lee and Matt Anderson in his second games.

Lee expects everybody to respond, learn from this and adjust in a hurry. "I hope so, and I believe so. These guys have proven themselves on the biggest stages," he said. "That's very uncharacteristic for some of the young players to make some of the errors they did at some of the moments they did. I expect them to be extremely motivated in the matches to come."

Despite the disappointing first result, the Shojis are enjoying their time together in Rio de Janeiro as first-time Olympians - with a supporting cast of about a dozen that came along to cheer their special accomplishment.

Including their decorated coaching dad, Dave, the longtime head of the University of Hawaii program. The Shojis, who played for Stanford, and setter Micah Christenson all are from Hawaii and they are three of eight US players making their Olympic

debut. With lights flashing from all angles, Erik offered a wave to a section of US supporters as the Americans entered for pregame warmups.

The brothers cherish the chance to be there for each other on the biggest stage. "We're basically best friends and it's just a really neat thing to go through the experience with him," Kawika said. "We're really close. We might be going through different things off the court but then when we come here we're going through it together. We can basically read each other's minds."

Earlier Sunday, Brazil's Bruno Rezende, Mauricio Souza and William Arjona were among the last to leave the court as many of the players thanked the fans with photos, handshakes, smiles and thumbs-up signs. The host Brazilians beat Mexico 23-25, 25-19, 25-14, 25-18 and Lucas Saatkamp's winning kill sent the crowd into a frenzy as players threw their arms up in celebration. Egypt's Ahmed El Kotb was carried off the court by teammates and athletic trainers worked on his right ankle on sideline during the first set of a loss to Poland. — AP

GOLDEN GIRL WU REWRITES DIVING RECORD BOOKS



DIVING

RIO DE JANEIRO: Wu Minxia ended her record-setting Olympic career the way it began: with a gold medal. Shi Tingmao and Wu totaled 345.60 points to win the women's 3-meter synchronized title Sunday in the first diving event of the Rio de Janeiro Games. They led throughout the five-round competition and won by a whopping 31.77 points on an overcast day at the Maria Lenk Aquatic Center, where light rain briefly fell.

"We have a very high standard," Wu said through a translator. Wu claimed her fourth consecutive gold in 3-meter synchro, becoming the first woman to win four golds in the same event at the Olympics. She also won in 2004, 2008 and 2012, and has had three different partners.

The 30-year-old Chinese also made history as the first diver to win five career golds, having won the 3-meter individual event four years ago in London. She won't defend that title in Rio. "When I first got into diving, I thought it was a very exciting sport," Wu said. "My personality, I always want to win." She also owns silver and bronze in individual 3-meter from the 2004 Athens Games and 2008 Beijing Games. Wu is the oldest female diver to win gold in the Olympics, a mark previously held by American Micki King, who won 3-meter springboard at 28 in the 1972 Munich Games. Shi and Wu routinely hit their dives for scores of 9.0 and higher, totaling 81.00 points on their final dive, a backward 21/2-somersault pike. They climbed out of the water and embraced, knowing the gold was secure with five other teams still to dive.

Italy's Tania Cagnotto and Francesca Dallape took silver at 313.83. Maddison Keeney and Anabelle Smith of Australia rallied from last to earn the bronze with 299.19, edging Canada by less than a point.

"We are used to diving against the Chinese," Cagnotto said. "We don't even think about the gold. Gold is for China." Cagnotto finally won her first medal in her fifth

Olympics. She just missed in London, finishing fourth in both 3-meter synchro and the individual springboard event. Her father and coach Giorgio Cagnotto owns four Olympic diving medals of his own. Cagnotto and Dallape held onto second through each round. "We were still remembering when we lost the medal by less than two points," Cagnotto said. "We just hope it would be destiny that today we get this medal." The Aussies were last after two rounds before coming up big on their last dive to hold off the Canadian duo of Jennifer Abel and Pamela Ware. Keeney and Smith scored 71.10 points in the final round, while Abel and Ware only managed 67.50. Abel and Ware anxiously waited in the water for their scores. When they saw the numbers, they were crushed. One of them sunk her head underwater.

"You know when you missed a dive," Abel said. "You know when it's pretty much going to decide the score. I kind of knew." Wu's teammate, Chen Ruolin, could match her with a fifth gold in Rio. Chen is entered in 10-meter synchro, an event she has won at the last two Olympics. — AP



RIO DE JANEIRO: China's Shi Tingmao and Wu Minxia celebrate after winning the women's synchronized 3-meter springboard diving final in the Maria Lenk Aquatic Center at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Sunday. — AP



RIO DE JANEIRO: Australia's Casey Sablowski, center, fights for the ball with United States' Rachel Dawson, left, and Julia Reinprecht during a women's field hockey match at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, yesterday. — AP

US KNOCKS OFF AUSTRALIA IN WOMEN'S FIELD HOCKEY



HOCKEY

RIO DE JANEIRO: The United States claimed its second straight win against a top-three team in women's field hockey, beating No. 3 Australia 2-1 yesterday.

Michelle Vittese and Caitlin van Sickle scored for the Americans, who defeated No. 2 Argentina 2-1 in their Olympic opener on Saturday. United States goalie Jackie Briggs had six saves and had four saves on the four penalty corners she faced. The crowd chanted, "Jackie! Jackie!" after the match.

The fifth-ranked Americans, who lead Pool B with six points, moved closer to qualifying for the quarterfinals. The top four teams in each six-team pool advance. The Americans dealt a major blow to Australia. The Hockeyroos dropped their

opener to Britain 2-1 on Saturday and now have no points with three pool play matches remaining.

The United States spent the early part of the match defending its goal as the aggressive Australian attack put the Americans on their heels. Briggs stopped four shots in the first period, and the match remained scoreless. Much like in their opener against Argentina, the Americans retained their composure. Vittese scored on a penalty corner to put the United States up 1-0 in the second period. The Americans went up 2-0 in the third period when van Sickle scored on a penalty corner. There was a video referral because the pass near the goal was high, but it was not considered and the goal was upheld.

Australia came back fewer than two minutes later with a goal by Kathryn Slattery. The Hockeyroos got another penalty corner with two minutes remaining in the fourth period, but Briggs deflected a shot high. — AP

SUMMER GAMES 2016 MEDAL TRACKER

RIO DE JANEIRO: Rio Olympics medals table yesterday (gold, silver, bronze, total):

United States	3	5	4	12
China	3	2	3	8
Australia	3	0	3	6
Italy	2	3	2	7
South Korea	2	2	1	5
Hungary	2	0	0	2
Russia	1	2	2	5
Britain	1	1	0	2
Sweden	1	1	0	2
Japan	1	0	6	7
Thailand	1	0	1	2
Taiwan	1	0	1	2
Argentina	1	0	0	1
Belgium	1	0	0	1
Kosovo	1	0	0	1
Netherlands	1	0	0	1
Vietnam	1	0	0	1
Canada	0	1	1	2
Kazakhstan	0	1	1	2
Brazil	0	1	0	1
Denmark	0	1	0	1
France	0	1	0	1
Indonesia	0	1	0	1
New Zealand	0	1	0	1
Philippines	0	1	0	1
North Korea	0	1	0	1
South Africa	0	1	0	1
Uzbekistan	0	0	2	2
Spain	0	0	1	1
Greece	0	0	1	1
Poland	0	0	1	1