



EQUESTRIAN

GERMANY'S JUNG GOES FOR ANOTHER EVENTING GOLD

RIO DE JANEIRO: Often called the best eventing rider of all time, Germany's Michael Jung aims yesterday to repeat Olympic gold with Sam, the same horse he rode to team and individual wins in 2012.

Jung and Sam will start the final day of the multi-discipline sport in second behind Australia's Christopher Burton while Germany, the team winner in 2008 and 2012, is in fourth.

"It's not often that you get to do two Olympics on the same horse. Sam is in fantastic form," Jung, 34, told Reuters. A repeat was not always the plan, however, as Jung only turned to Sam, a 16-year-old German Sport Horse, a week before the animals were due to fly to Rio. His first and younger choice Takinou suffered an infection.

The eventing competition, one of three equestrian disciplines in the Olympics, tests riders on dressage, cross country and show jumping. In 2012 Jung became the first eventing rider to hold the Olympic, European championship and world championship titles at the same time. In May, he became the first German to win the Badminton Horse Trials in England. He also completed a consecutive triple of Burghley, Kentucky and Badminton that had been achieved previously only by Britain's Pippa Funnell in 2003. "I have a really good team around me, that makes the sport for me," he said in an interview, adding that he particularly enjoys training young horses. The last rider to repeat Olympic gold eventing medals on the same horse was New Zealand's Mark Todd with Charisma, in 1984 and 1988. Jung's horse swap was not the only change made late in the eventing competition by the defending champions.

The Germans substituted Andreas Ostholt with Julia Krajewski on the eve of competition after Ostholt's horse lost a shoe in training.

Krajewski was one of 18 riders on Monday who did not finish what was widely considered the most difficult Olympic cross-country course in recent history. Jung and Sam were one of only three pairs to escape penalties on Monday. The winner will be decided by the show jumping phase on Tuesday.

Jung told reporters Sam had been too worked up by the crowds and noise leaving the gate but settled towards the end with plenty of juice left for Tuesday's competition. "He understands every question and I'm very happy to say he is very healthy," he said at a news conference. — Reuters



RIO DE JANEIRO: Germany's Michael Jung competes during the Eventing's Individual Jumping of the Equestrian during the 2016 Rio Olympic Games at the Olympic Equestrian Centre in Rio yesterday. — AFP

SUMMER GAMES 2016 MEDAL TRACKER

Table with columns: Country, Gold, Silver, Bronze, Total. Lists medal counts for various countries including USA, China, Australia, Italy, Japan, Hungary, Russia, South Korea, Thailand, Great Britain, Brazil, Sweden, Chinese Taipei, Belgium, Argentina, Colombia, Croatia, Kosovo, Netherlands, Vietnam, Indonesia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Denmark, France, Mongolia, North Korea, Philippines, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Spain.



RIO DE JANEIRO: An overview shows USA's forward Carmelo Anthony (C) jumping for a basket during a Men's round Group A basketball match between USA and Venezuela at the Carioca Arena 1 in Rio de Janeiro yesterday during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. — AFP

US MEN'S BASKETBALL BLASTS VENEZUELA AFTER SLOW START



BASKETBALL

RIO DE JANEIRO: Red, white and blue for one quarter, the U.S. Olympic team woke up and won with ease. Shaking off a sluggish, sloppy start and maybe some Brazilian boredom, the Americans regrouped in the second quarter and romped over Venezuela 113-69 on Monday, taking another step toward a possible third straight gold medal.

Kevin Durant scored 16 points and Carmelo Anthony 14 for the US squad, which may have grown a touch overconfident following a 57-point blowout of China in its tournament opener. The Americans were tied after one quarter, but turned up their defensive intensity, outscored Venezuela 30-8 in the second period and improved to 82-1 under coach Mike Krzyzewski.

"I think once we settled down, made our adjustments to the way they were calling the

game, the way that Venezuela wanted to play the game, that second quarter we picked it up defensively and turned it around," Anthony said.

It was similar to the meeting between the teams in Chicago on July 29, when the US shot poorly and still won by 35 on their pre-Rio exhibition tour. Maybe this was a reminder that no team can be taken lightly - and there is little margin for error - once the Olympic flame is ignited. "The game of basketball, everything's not going to be easy," Durant said. "We know that, even with this great team."

The Americans continue pool play on Wednesday against unbeaten Australia. The Aussies, featuring five NBA players, four of them league champions, improved to 2-0 on Monday with an impressive 95-80 win over Serbia. Australia has never won an Olympic medal in men's basketball.

HEAVY UNDERDOGS

Anthony, the four-team Olympian and two-time gold medalist playing in his record

25th game for the United States, provided a much-needed spark in the second quarter. With the Americans leading just 28-22 and looking anything but golden, Anthony came across the lane and stripped the ball away from Venezuelan center Gregory Echenique and passed it to Kyrie Irving. Anthony then trailed Irving up the floor, accepted a feed on the wing and knocked down a 3-pointer that lifted some of the pressure - and fog - off Team USA. Anthony moved past Michael Jordan on the US career scoring list and now only trails LeBron James and David Robinson. Paul George scored 20 and Jimmy Butler 17 - most of them coming in extended garbage time - in the first Olympic matchup between the nations.

Venezuela's John Cox, a cousin of American superstar Kobe Bryant, scored 19 and Echenique 18. Although this may not be the best made-in-America team as James, Stephen Curry and others chose to skip the Rio Games, the US squad that came to Brazil appears to be in a class by itself. There will likely be tougher games ahead, but they

haven't had one yet. Venezuela, which doesn't have an NBA player on its roster, didn't figure to be a threat but the FIBA Americas champion wasn't intimidated by the US roster of household names. With their fans doing all they could to push the heavy underdogs, Venezuela's players outworked the Americans in the first quarter, which ended 18-all and the US with six turnovers.

It was a different story in the second, when the Americans reeled off 13 straight points in one stretch to take control. Staying on a 196-cabin luxury cruise shot anchored off Rio's coast, the U.S. team has settled in following a few choppy early days in Brazil. Taking the floor in all-white warmups as Jay-Z's "Public Service Announcement" blared inside the Carioca Arena, the US team looked both relaxed and ready. DeAndre Jordan showed off some dance moves during layup drills as Brazilian fans, many of them wearing NBA jerseys, snapped photos of the American stars. Late in the game, after George crushed a dunk to put the US up by 43, Jordan boogied again on the sideline. — AP



VOLLEYBALL

US WOMEN HOLD OFF SCRAPPY NETHERLANDS TEAM IN 5 SETS

RIO DE JANEIRO: This past year in Istanbul, US assistant coach Jamie Morrison worked right alongside a man he considers among the best volleyball minds in the business.

And fired-up, Italian-born Netherlands coach Giovanni Guidetti is suddenly making quite a splash in Brazil with group of tenacious Dutch women determined to spoil the fun for the top teams in the tournament. Even if few might have expected them to contend while playing in their first Olympics in 20 years.

Morrison was an assistant on Guidetti's staff at club power Vakifbank in Turkey, coaching Olympians Lonneke Sloetjes, Anne Buijs and Robin de Kruijf and also US outside hitter Kim Hill, who through the net saw several familiar faces. So, when the top-ranked Americans received a real push from the Netherlands in a hard-fought, five-set victory Monday, Morrison and the rest of the US group were nowhere near surprised by the stellar display on the other side. The Dutch had already spoiled China's Olympic debut Saturday, then the Chinese bounced back with a straight-set win over Italy.

"They're not intimidated by anybody now, and they shouldn't be. They're good," said US coach Karch Kiraly, who figures the group winners won't go unscathed. "And that's great, because the Olympics are about being good."

Guidetti credits Morrison - someone he considers above an assistant - for helping him become a better coach. "I learned a lot from him and I hope I can keep learning a lot from him," Guidetti said after the match. "He's an amazing coach. He's an amazing man and he knows volleyball very well. "He's like a lead guy. I'm really trying to learn every time from the people that can teach me, and he's for sure one of the ones that can teach me."

The US rallied from one set down and again behind 2-1 to win 18-25, 25-18, 21-25, 25-20, 15-8 on a day Netherlands captain Maret Balkestein-Grothues had to be helped off midway through the fourth set with a right ankle injury and didn't return. Simple communications were made before the match.

Such close international connections are commonplace in a sport that has no professional league in the U.S. for men or women, meaning players move across the world for eight months of the year to play professionally. "I looked across the net and we were smiling before the match," Morrison said. "A head nod, nothing more than that, not a hug."

You bet the Americans envisioned this success for the Netherlands, a squad Morrison has seen make big strides in a matter of weeks ahead of the Olympics.

"Volleyball has come enormously far in the Netherlands in the past two years," he said. "The team is up and coming and the support in their country is as well." — AP



RIO DE JANEIRO: Britain's bronze medalists Tom Daley, left, and Daniel Goodfellow, right, wave to supporters from the podium after the men's synchronized 10-meter platform diving final in the Maria Lenk Aquatic Center at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Monday. — AP

DALEY EYES CHINA SHOWDOWN AFTER BRONZE DEBUT



DIVING

RIO DE JANEIRO: British star Tom Daley insisted China's ruthlessly efficient divers are "beatable" Monday as he looked ahead to an enticing new clash after getting just bronze in the Olympic 10m synchronised event.

Daley and his partner Daniel Goodfellow settled for third in the tandem event, behind gold medalists Chen Aisen and Lin Yue and second-place Americans David Boudia and Steele Johnson.

China is threatening to pull off a historic sweep of diving's eight gold-medal events in Rio. Wu Minxia and Shi Tingmao opened the competition Sunday with a decisive women's 3m synchronised springboard win. There

are six to go. Daley had come to Rio challenging his Chinese adversaries, saying "they have to beat me."

He offered praise for China's dominance on Monday but continued to stir the pot, saying he was eager to beat Chen and 2012 silver medallist Qiu Bo in the 10m individual.

Asked what makes China so strong, he sniffed: "1.3 billion as a population helps," before catching himself and praising their work ethic.

"These guys are so strong, they're so technically proficient in what they do," he said. "But going into an individual competition, as David will be able to tell you, they are beatable."

He was referring to Boudia's upset of Qiu in the thrilling platform final in London, one of only two golds won in 2012 by non-Chinese divers. Daley took the bronze.

Daley, Boudia, and the rest of the field will have their work cut out for

them in stopping the Chinese juggernaut in the 10m individual. Chen and Lin were coasting toward a dominating performance on Monday until a wobbly fourth dive-a back 3 1/2 somersault in pike position-opened the door a crack. "We had a little bit of hesitation during our jump, so we did not handle it very well," Lin said.

But they slammed the door shut on the next dive, nailing a front 4 1/2 somersault tuck that won 9.5s and 10s and set Rio's outdoor diving venue alight. Daley, still just 22 despite being in the spotlight for nearly a decade, is seeking to finally deliver the gold medal that has eluded him since emerging as a star in his mid-teens.

His Olympic debut came in Beijing 2008 when he was just 14. He finished seventh there in the 10m individual platform, before his London bronze.

The two-day men's 10m individual competition begins August 19. — AFP