



ATHLETICS

SAMBA AND SMILES AS BOLT WARMS UP FOR OLYMPIC SWANSONG

RIO DE JANEIRO: Shimmying amid a troupe of semi-naked samba dancers and wise-cracking with journalists, Usain Bolt is determined to bow out of the Olympics with a flourish.

And from the moment he strutted onto the stage at Rio's Cidade das Artes theater-instructing his audience to applaud-he was determined to entertain.

The setting of the largest theater in South America could not have been more appropriate for track and field's greatest showman.

"I try to entertain and make it different. That's my personality." And it works. A Norwegian stood up at the end of the press conference and said: "I don't really have a question I just want to say I really love you man."

It was a reminder of just what athletics will lose when Bolt walks away from the sport next year after the World Championships in London.

"This is the last one for sure," Bolt said when asked if he may yet extend his remarkable career.

'WEEDING OUT BAD ONES'

"We're weeding out the bad ones. I personally think we're on the right track. We have to go through the rough time to get to the good times.

Although the Russian doping scandal exposed the sophisticated lengths that drug cheats were prepared to go to avoid detection, Bolt said he was unconcerned about the possibility that he might be lining up against rivals in Rio who are not clean.

"In life nothing is guaranteed. But for me going out there, I never worry about it," he said.

"That's WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) and IAAF and IOC (International Olympic Committee) — these are the guys that worry about that stuff," Bolt said.

"I personally feel the sport is going in the right direction and in a few years it's going to be fine. I don't worry about that."

Gatlin, owner of the fastest time in the world this year (9.80 sec), could be the biggest threat to Bolt's hopes of defending all three of his crowns.

Bolt, who has long spoken of his desire to become the first man to break 19 seconds in the 200m, acknowledged that feat may prove to be beyond even him.

"I think it might be a little but hard," said Bolt, who has never bettered the world record of 19.19sec he set in 2009.

"As a young kid you grow up looking forward to the big Games," he said. "Championships are what matters. This is what I do, I enjoy doing it. —AFP



RIO DE JANEIRO: Usain Bolt gestures during a Jamaican Olympic Association and Puma press conference at the Cidade Das Artes in Rio de Janeiro on Monday. — AP



RIO DE JANEIRO: Gold medalist Sukanya Srisurat, of Thailand, competes in the women's 58kg weightlifting competition at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Monday. — AP

THAI DRUGS CHEAT GRABS WEIGHTLIFTING GOLD



WEIGHTLIFTING

RIO DE JANEIRO: Sukanya Srisurat said her Olympic gold Monday was redemption for serving a two-year-ban for doping offences as Thailand finished one-two in the women's 58kg to lead the weightlifting medals table.

The 21-year-old lifted an Olympic record 110kg in the snatch and 130kg in the clean and jerk for a total of 240kg, comfortably beating compatriot Pimsiri Sirikaew to first place.

ed positive as a 16-year-old for the prohibited substance methandienone, an anabolic steroid. She was one of seven young Thai weightlifters found to have violated anti-doping rules during youth and junior weightlifting championships five years ago.

"I felt so sad when I was banned but I never gave up to get back and now everything has been repaid," she told AFP following her triumph in Rio.

"I didn't make the decision to take it. Our association never made a decision. It was maybe some kind of mistake," she told reporters through a translator.

Twenty-six-year-old Pimsiri lifted 102kg

in the snatch and jerked 130 for her total of 232kg to add another silver medal to the one she won at London four years ago.

Pimsiri said Sukanya had paid her dues for the doping offence and insisted she was happy to finish second to the gold medalist, despite her competitor's previous drug use.

The kingdom has dominated the light categories so far grabbing two golds and a silver in the women's competition and a bronze in the men's.

with a bronze in the men's 56kg the following day. Kruiathong's joy was short-lived as his 84-year-old grandmother collapsed and died celebrating his success.

A viral video showed the jubilant scene of cheering fans in his rural hometown transform into tragedy when Subin Khongthap collapsed while watching the competition on a projector.

"We support and encourage each other to bring out the best in all of us," Sukanya said when asked about the reason for Thailand's success this week.

She hauled 102 in the snatch and 129 in the clean and jerk to comfortably make the podium, 8kg ahead of fourth placed Alexandra Escobar of Ecuador. — AFP



TENNIS

SERENA STRUGGLES, DEL POTRO BLASTS PUNCH-UP

RIO DE JANEIRO: Defending champion Serena Williams ended a three-match losing streak against France's Alize Cornet to keep her hopes of a fifth Olympic gold medal alive Monday.

Cornet defeated the American star three times in 2014, including at Wimbledon, and proved to be a thorn in her opponent's side again in Rio.

The 22-time major winner cut a frustrated figure, smashing her racket into the ground at one stage. Williams stepped on the gas in the second set to secure a third round clash with Ukraine's Elina Svitolina, securing victory on a third match point.

"She says she knows how to play me. Every time I have played her, I have never been in the best shape which is ironic, so I really wanted to do well," Juan Martin del Potro followed up his shock defeat of Novak Djokovic by downing Portugal's Joao Sousa in front of a legion of passionate, vocal Argentine fans.

PUNCH-UP

However, traditional bitterness between Brazil and Argentina boiled over when a group of fans engaged in a punch-up.

"I only had five hours' sleep but I'm very glad with my success," he said. Things got even better for Del Potro when French fifth seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, a potential quarter-final opponent, lost 6-4, 6-3 to Gilles Muller of Luxembourg. —AFP

CHINESE REELING AFTER LOSS OF 'PRECIOUS' GYMNASTICS TEAM CROWN



GYMNASTICS

RIO DE JANEIRO: Zhang Chenglong insisted China are not a spent force after Kohei Uchimura's Japan ended their eight-year Olympic men's team reign in Rio.

Uchimura, 27, helped Japan to their first team gold since 2004 in the Rio Olympic Arena ahead of Russia, who were back on the podium for the first time since 2000.

"In China team work is very important. "You can't just stay in your own corner and do your own thing. Everyone has to be excellent not just one person."

"Team gold represents the summit of Chinese gymnastics. It's not down to one person to be excellent, but everyone has to be excellent."

China paid for errors starting with a shaky start for Lin Chaopan, 20, and Deng Shudi, 24, on the floor as they competed alongside the United States.

The Chinese impressed on the parallel bars with You hitting 16.166, but they needed a strong final rotation on the high bar to keep in the title chase.

Deng, Lin, and Zhang failed to produce the necessary fireworks, finishing nearly three points behind Japan. It was also the end of the road for Zhang, a gold medal winner in the team event from London, and seven-time world medallist over four world championships.

The 27-year-old has failed to reach the finals of the all-around and apparatus events.

Deng and Lin qualified for Wednesday's all-around final, in fourth and tenth position.

In the apparatus events Chinese hopes lie with Liu Yang and You Hao on rings with Hao a medal prospect on parallel bars with Deng.

China took the men's team gold for the first time in Sydney 2000, only to lose to Japan in Athens four years later. But they recaptured it at their home Games in Beijing 2008 and successfully defended it in London. And they are already learning from their

rivals. "We were paying attention to the other athletes and their training and are learning new techniques, not just focusing on ourselves."

"We recognise that compared to the other teams there is a very small difference. "In this competition Japan has been performing very well. Japan have been improving in technique, compared to last year even they were better. —AFP



RIO DE JANEIRO: Japan's Kohei Uchimura performs on the floor during the artistic gymnastics men's team final at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Monday. — AP