



Rio 2016™



SWIMMING



RIO DE JANEIRO: Australia's gold medal winner Kyle Chalmers is flanked by Belgium's silver medal winner Pieter Timmers, left, and United States' bronze medal winner Nathan Adrian during the men's 100-meter freestyle medals ceremony during the swimming competitions at the 2016 Summer Olympics, yesterday. —AP

KING STICKS TO GUNS OVER DOPING REMARKS

RIO DE JANEIRO: American Lilly King on Wednesday refused to back down over slamming the decision to allow drug-tainted swimmers to compete at the Rio Olympics.

Earlier this week, King refused to shake hands with Russian Yulia Efimova after being presented with her gold for winning the 100m breaststroke. She savaged the two-time doping offender after the race. Efimova, the reigning world champion, was cleared to compete in Rio after the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) ruled athletes cannot be banned on the basis that they have been previously sanctioned. King admitted she had faced criticism of her stance after Efimova's case was decided in a tribunal but insisted most of the feedback she received has been positive. "I obviously have gotten some negative backlash, which I expected," she told reporters after the 200m breaststroke heats. "But for the most part all the support has been very positive and I'm really thankful for that. "My parents raised me to say what I wanted to say, even if it wasn't what people wanted to hear necessarily and I'm going to stick with my guns." The 100m clash was laced with hostility, Efimova wagging her finger to signal she was "number one" after her semi-final, to which King mockingly copied the gesture before beating her rival's time and calling her a "drug cheat."

Booed before the race, Efimova broke down in tears after winning silver and King tore her to shreds in the post-race press conference. "I have so many followers on social media now, it's really weird," said King, who has over 23,000 followers on Twitter. "Reggie Miller, Indiana Pacers, followed me yesterday—that was a pretty big deal for me," added the Indiana-born swimmer, referring to the former NBA basketball great.

"For the most part all the support has been very positive and I'm really thankful for that." It didn't help her in the pool however, as she failed to qualify for the final of the 200m breaststroke.

Efimova, who again heard jeers as she took the blocks for the semi-finals, shook it off to secure her finals berth with the sixth-fastest time, 83-hundredths of a second behind top qualifier Taylor McKeown of Australia. Efimova, who was banned for 16 months three years ago after testing positive for the steroid DHEA, has looked like a frightened rabbit walking through the bear pit of the media mixed zone after races, refusing to answer questions. But after the 100m race, the teary-eyed Russian said: "It's very upsetting when politics interfere with sport. I once made a mistake and served my ban. I thought the cold war was over long ago." — AFP



SWIMMING

RIO DE JANEIRO: Australia's new teenage swimming sensation Kyle Chalmers won the blue riband Olympic 100m freestyle gold, as golf headed for a controversial return to the Games after 112 years. Chalmers, only 18, became the first Australian in 48 years to win the prestigious race. The teenager hit the wall in 47.58 seconds, just 22 hundredths ahead of Belgium's Pieter Timmers and American Nathan Adrian, the 2012 champion, who took bronze.

Chalmers is the first Australian to win the 100m free since Mike Wenden in Mexico City in 1968. But he did not realize it had been so long. "I actually had no idea about that to be honest with you," he said. "I'm someone that probably doesn't follow swimming too much."

"I kind of stay away and follow basketball and soccer and football. I know that we've been beaten a few times." His victory came as American Katie Ledecky sealed her third gold medal of the Games, anchoring the United States team home in the 4x200m relay.

She already has the 200m and 400m freestyle titles in Rio. Elsewhere in the pool, Michael Phelps returned from his heroics in winning his record 20th and 21st gold medals, to safely reach the final of the 200m individual medley yesterday. There was also a rare gold medal for Kazakhstan in the 200m breaststroke, where Dmitriy Balandin won his country's first Olympic swimming title since the break-up of the Soviet Union. It was one of two golds for Kazakhstan on the fifth full day of Olympic action. Kazakh weightlifter Nijat Rahimov won the other in the men's 77kg category.

While swimming remains one of the powerhouse Olympic sports, golf returned yesterday for the first time since the 1904 Games in St Louis, Missouri when George Lyon of Canada won the men's title.

It is coming back now already facing doubts

about the future because top players—including the world's leading four, Jason Day, Dustin Johnson, Jordan Spieth and Rory McIlroy—have stayed away. They have cited the Zika virus and scheduling concerns. But some on the International Olympic Committee suspect indifference and IOC president Thomas Bach has said the absence of star names will be one criteria looked at when it comes to deciding which sports keep their Olympic places.

Gymnastics is assured of its place for Tokyo 2020 and Japanese star Kohei Uchimura underscored his gymnastics dominance as he clinched a second straight all-around gold medal on Wednesday.

Uchimura snatched victory by just 0.099 points with a daredevil routine on the horizontal bar. "I remained calm and controled. This calmness I think was the key to my success," Kohei said. The men's rugby sevens saw a day of upsets, with New Zealand losing to Japan in the groups before being eliminated in the quarter-finals by Fiji, who are chasing their country's first

Olympic medal. Japan scored a shock win over France to reach the last four.

In fencing, Tunisia's Ines Boubakri became the first African woman to win a medal in the sport with a bronze in the individual foil, dedicating her achievement to "the Arab woman... who has her place in society." Her French husband Erwann Le Pechoux could get a medal in the individual foil event.

In football, Gabriel Barbosa struck twice as hosts Brazil finally sparked into life with a 4-0 win over Denmark to secure a place in the quarter-finals against Colombia.

Veteran cyclists Fabian Cancellara and Kristin Armstrong hammered home their Olympic superiority with wins in the men's and women's time trial. It was Armstrong's third consecutive win in the race, a day before her 43rd birthday. "When you've already been two times at the pinnacle of the sport, why risk coming back for the gold medal? The best answer I can give is that I can," said Armstrong, who retired after each of her two previous Olympic wins. — AFP

GOLF TEES OFF AT OLYMPICS AFTER 112 YEARS

RIO DE JANEIRO: After 112 years golf made a quiet and subdued return to the Olympics yesterday with Brazil's Adilson Da Silva hitting the first shot in front of a handful of spectators.

Under overcast skies and in calm conditions ideal for scoring, Da Silva was welcomed to the first tee by a smattering of applause and the whirl from hundreds of cameras as media and officials greatly outnumbered fans sprinkled through a small nearly empty stand.

Da Silva was followed by Canada's Graham DeLaet, whose countryman George Lyon won the last Olympic golf

tournament in 1904, with South Korean An Byeong-hun completing the threesome. The tournament lost much of its prestige after the world's four top-ranked players, Australian Jason Day, Americans Dustin Johnson and Jordan Spieth and Northern Irishman Rory McIlroy, opted not to take part, citing concerns over the Zika virus. Four rounds over four days on the newly-constructed course on the Marapendi Nature Reserve will decide the medals with 60 players in the men's competition and the same number in the women's event which will follow next week. — Reuters