

WORLEY WINS SECOND STRAIGHT GIANT SLALOM



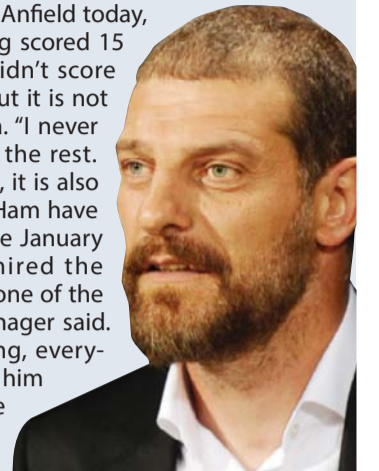
SESTRIERE: Tessa Worley won her second straight World Cup giant slalom yesterday after first-run leader Mikaela Shiffrin struggled in her second trip down the 2006 Turin Olympics course. With her 10th career giant slalom win, Worley matched the French record set by Carole Merle between 1988 and 1993. Worley finished 0.15 seconds ahead of rising Italian skier Sofia Goggia, while defending overall World Cup champion Lara Gut was third, 0.29 back. Worley also won a GS in Killington, Vermont, two weeks ago. Shiffrin, the American who won the slalom at the 2014 Sochi Olympics, lost a big chunk of time early in her second run after getting thrown off course and finished sixth. Shiffrin's lead over Gut in the overall standings was cut to eight points. — AP

ATLETICO NACIONAL TO HONOR CHAPECOENSE

OSAKA: Colombia's Atletico Nacional arrived in Japan for the Club World Cup yesterday, still dealing with the trauma of the recent airplane crash that caused the cancellation of the Copa Sudamericana final. Atletico was to play Chapecoense in the final but the plane carrying the Brazilian team to the game crashed on Nov. 28, killing almost all on board. Nacional qualified for the Club World Cup by winning the Copa Libertadores in July, and vowed to honor the memory of its rivals when it faces either South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns or Japanese champions Kashima Antlers on Wednesday. "The best tribute we can give them is to play a great tournament and reach the final," Nacional coach Reinaldo Rueda said at Kansai International Airport. The directors of Atletico asked the governing body of South American football to award Chapecoense the Copa Sudamericana championship. Atletico is hoping to advance to a final against Spanish giants Real Madrid on Dec. 18. "We know the responsibility we have to South America," Atletico captain Alexis Henriquez said. — AP

BILIC PRAISES STURRIDGE BEFORE LIVERPOOL TRIP

LONDON: West Ham United manager Slaven Bilic has admitted his team need to improve in front of goal and praised Liverpool striker Daniel Sturridge who has been linked with a move to the Premier League strugglers. West Ham, who travel to Anfield today, are 17th in the Premier League table, having scored 15 goals in 14 matches so far. "The strikers didn't score enough goals or as many as we expected but it is not only down to them," Bilic told British media. "I never want to divide the team into strikers and the rest. Although it is the strikers' job to score goals, it is also the responsibility of the whole team." West Ham have been linked with a move for Sturridge in the January transfer window, and Bilic said he admired the England international's natural ability. "He's one of the biggest talents, he's a great player," the manager said. "The talent is there, the touch, the finishing, everything is great. The only thing that's stopped him being regular for club and country are the injuries." — Reuters



DUBAI: Shanshan Feng of China holds the trophy after she won the Dubai Ladies Masters golf tournament in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, yesterday. — AP

RUSSIA FACES BAN CALLS AFTER DAMNING DOPING REVELATIONS

LONDON: There were growing calls yesterday for Russia to be banned from the Winter Olympics and other major international events after the latest startling revelations of state-sponsored doping across Russian sport.

Richard McLaren described on Friday how Russia "hijacked" sport by involving more than 1,000 athletes in an "institutional conspiracy" to win by mass doping at the Sochi 2014 Winter and London 2012 Olympics and other global competitions.

The Canadian lawyer, who detailed in a previous report how Russian security services were involved in the nefarious scheme, said in a second report for the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) that at least 30 sports were implicated and that salt and instant coffee were used to manipulate Russian samples. Russia's sports ministry said to be central to the ruse to cheat its way to success over several years-again denied state backing for doping, saying that it "will continue the fight against doping with zero tolerance". Russia's track and field team was already banned from international competition for doping and was barred from the Rio Olympics in August, but there is now growing pressure-not to mention anger-for more sanctions. The United States, Britain and Germany all swiftly condemned Russia, while the International Paralympic Committee, which banned Russia completely from the Rio Paralympics in September, called the McLaren findings "astounding". Liz Nicholl, chief executive of UK Sport, which is tasked with helping Britain to Olympic success, said that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) should exclude all Russian competitors from the Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea in 2018.

"Absolutely. Until there's evidence that Russian athletes are competing clean," The Daily Telegraph quoted her as saying. "All the evidence that we've got is that they're not likely to be doing so. So, yes, I think the IOC should be taking a very strong stance and should be excluding Russia until such time as they've put their house in order." Clemens Prokop, president of the German athletics federation (DLV), called for a total ban on all Russian competitors. "Russian sport should be excluded from all international competitions, including the Olympic Games, until its credibility is restored," said Prokop. "This is a fundamental attack



LONDON: World Anti-Doping Agency investigator Richard McLaren speaks during a press conference in London on Friday. A new report into systematic Russian doping details a wide-ranging "institutional conspiracy" that involved more than 1,000 athletes across more than 30 sports, including evidence corroborating large-scale sample swapping at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. — AP

against the Olympic movement when the values of the movement are dragged through the mud by a country." The IOC responded to McLaren's latest damning report by announcing it would reanalyse all 254 urine samples taken from Russian athletes at Sochi. The report, the IOC declared, showed that there "was a fundamental attack on the integrity of the Olympic Games and on sport in general".

WORLD CUP QUESTIONED

Several major international sporting events are on the calendar in the coming months, including the IAAF (athletics) World Championships in London in August next year.

The Winter Olympics take place in Pyeongchang in February 2018 and Russia is due to hold the football World Cup that summer. McLaren identified doping as being rife in

Russian athletics and weightlifting, but his report found evidence of banned substances being used in football too.

"We didn't really have a chance to look at Russian soccer across the board, to look at different teams and what's going on," McLaren told AFP after presenting his report findings in London. "I think there are 33 footballers listed in the report. Not all of those are Russian by the way-some are foreigners." That led British MP Damian Collins to question whether Russia was fit to host the 2018 World Cup.

"FIFA now have to look very seriously at the way in which the World Cup is going to be staged," Collins, of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, told the BBC. "How can Russia give confidence to FIFA and to the world that there will be proper anti-doping measures in place during the World Cup?" — AFP

CLEAN OLYMPIANS DESERVE A PROPER MEDAL CEREMONY

ATLANTA: Adam Nelson received his Olympic gold medal in the food court at Atlanta's airport. Now, let's give him - and all other clean athletes - the recognition they deserve. As more startling revelations came out Friday in the Russian doping scandal and an almost daily lineup of cheating athletes are nabbed through improved testing methods, the International Olympic Committee needs to send a symbolic but powerful message that it will honor those who do things the right way.

No matter how long it takes. Starting with the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang and the 2020 Summer Games in Tokyo, the IOC should hold official medal ceremonies for those athletes who were cheated out of their glory because competitors were taking performance-enhancing drugs.

We're talking about actual ceremonies, in the arena or stadium where their sport is being held, complete with a podium and flowers and flags

and national anthems, with thousands of fans cheering them on and billions from around the world watching on television.

For Nelson, that would mean awarding him a gold medal in Tokyo that he actually won in the shot put 16 years earlier, on the fields of Ancient Olympia at the 2004 Athens Games. It won't begin to make up for what he lost. But it's a good start.

"Anything they could do to recognize the athletes that were robbed of the moment would certainly go a long way toward repairing some of the damage that was done," Nelson said when reached by phone, not long after the release of a sickening report further detailing systematic doping in Russia that involved more than 1,000 athletes across more than 30 sports.

The IOC has taken baby steps to address this enormous stain on fair competition, most notably storing the doping samples it takes at each Olympics so they can be tested up to 10

years later using enhanced techniques that weren't available at the time.

Nelson is one of those who benefited, but he's hardly alone. So far, a total of 88 athletes from the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2012 London Games have turned up positive when further testing was conducted - more than half of them medalists, including five gold medalists. The IOC says ominously that many more positive tests are still expected from the retesting of those 4-year-old samples.

DESERVE EVEN MORE

All of this has led to a massive re-writing of the official results, and a redistribution of medals to athletes who were clean. They deserve even more. Think of those who initially finished outside the top three. They were denied a chance to step onto the podium, have a medal hung around their neck by a dignitary, watch proudly as their country's flag was raised above the arena. Those who received a belated gold lost out on the playing of their national anthem, a ritual that often brings tears to even the biggest stars.

All of this is easily rectified. Bring them to the next Olympics. The IOC has no firm rules governing exactly how athletes should be awarded their reassigned medals. It leaves that up to the national Olympic committees, recommending that they invite dignitaries and the media and play the Olympic anthem.

Four Belgium women who were bumped up to gold in a 2008 track and field relay after the Russian runner tested positive got a rousing ceremony and standing ovation from a 40,000-strong crowd during a meet in Brussels three months ago.

For others, the medal handover wasn't nearly so glamorous. Nelson settled for silver at the 2004 Athens Olympics, only to learn more than eight years later than the competitor who beat him, Yuriy Bilonog of the Ukraine, had been caught doping by a later round of testing.

The IOC asked Nelson to return his silver medal before he received the gold. Rightfully skeptical, he refused to give up what he had until he got what was rightfully his. Finally, in what sounds like a hostage exchange, an arrangement was made in July 2013 with the US Olympic Committee. — AP

FENG CLINCHES RECORD DUBAI LADIES MASTERS

DUBAI: Defending champion Feng Shanshan won a record fourth Dubai Ladies Masters title yesterday following a brilliant eight-under par final round 64.

The 27-year-old from China started the day five shots behind overnight leader Felicity Johnson of England. But she claimed back-to-back titles finishing on a 10-under par total of 206 as the leaders fell by the wayside on a windy day at the Majlis course of Emirates Golf Club.

Feng, the highest ranked player in the field at world No.4, was chased home by England's Charley Hull second at eight-under par following a 65. India's Aditi Ashok signed off a brilliant season tied for third place with England's Florentyna Parker at six-under par 210 in the tournament that was reduced to 54 holes following the death of caddie Maximilian Zechmann on the opening day Wednesday.

American Beth Allen won the LET Order of Merit crown, while Ashok was the Rookie of the Year. Feng made the most of the early holes playing downwind, making four birdies in a row from the second onwards, and then had another fantastic stretch from the difficult par-4 ninth onwards, as she added three more to her tally. "I'm really happy that I actually brought out my 'A game' today," said Feng. "I knew that it was going to be windy and I knew that playing in the wind is one of my strongest parts. So even though I was five behind, I always thought that maybe I would still have a chance to win this week and I tried my best.

Eight-under was a pretty good score."

Hull, who won her first LPGA Tour title three weeks ago at the CME Group Tour Championship, had a similar story to Feng. After two quiet days, the 21-year-old from Woburn caught fire and posted a bogey-free 65. "Today, I kind of woke up and got into my golf game. I've been a bit lazy all week on the golf course, but today I got in there and kind of concentrated," said the world No.18.

"I holed a few putts today and I missed a lot of putts. I hit it pretty well and it was really windy today. So I'm quite happy with my score in them conditions."

Ashok, who shot a third consecutive round of 70 with four birdies and two bogeys, was happy with her finish, although disappointed that she could not make the most of the first four holes that played easy yesterday. "It was pretty solid. I actually didn't start very well today. I was one-over in the first four holes when all four were actually birdieable with the tailwind. So I didn't really make use of that," said the Olympian who also qualified for the LPGA Tour next year.

Allen, who won twice in the season before finishing tied 55th at six-over this week, topped the LET Money List with 313,079 euros (\$330,000), while Ashok was second in the standings at EUR206,665. The event was marred by the death of 56-year-old Zechmann who was caddying for France's Anne-Lise Caudal when he collapsed on the 13th fairway on the first day. — AFP

CABRERA BELLO SCENTS END TO LONG WIN DROUGHT

HONG KONG: Ryder Cup star Rafa Cabrera Bello recovered from a late stumble to retain a share of the Hong Kong Open lead and move within sight of his first victory in four years yesterday.

The Spaniard leads alongside Australia's Sam Brazel on 11-under-par 199 after surviving a double bogey on the par-four 14th by birdieing two of his last four holes for level-par 70.

England's Tommy Fleetwood fired three-under-par 67 to lie in sole second spot with an aggregate score of 201, one stroke better than America's David Lipsky who shot 66. Cabrera Bello, a bright spot in Europe's Ryder Cup defeat in October, is bidding to join fellow Spaniards Jose Maria Olazabal, Miguel Angel Jimenez and Jose Manuel Lara as a Hong Kong winner.

"I had a tough day," said Cabrera Bello, who has topped the leaderboard after all three rounds following his 64 and 65 on Thursday and Friday at Fanling.

"I didn't find my rhythm so well, I didn't find the serenity I had played with the first couple of days, so I struggled with bogeys and birdies."

But the 32-year-old, who has been waiting for his third European Tour win since the 2012 Dubai Desert Classic, said he would be calm heading into the last day.

"I've been joint leader or leading by myself many times, looking for that third win," he said. "So it's a very common position for me. I'm just confident."

Brazel, the world number 480, shot 67 to

become a challenger for what would be by far the biggest victory of his career. He said keeping his nerves in check would be key today.

ROSE WILTS

"I'm going to try and control the nerves better than I did... and just enjoy it, enjoy the atmosphere of it all and take it all in, it's been fun," he told reporters.

Brazel, whose partner died suddenly from bacterial meningitis in 2009, said winning the Hong Kong Open would "mean the world" to him.

Fleetwood said an eagle on the par-five 13th had got his "juices flowing" as he also aims to end a long win drought.

The 25-year-old Englishman has not won on the European Tour since clinching the 2013 Johnnie Walker Championship at Gleneagles. "I haven't won for a long time, I had a year out of the game really-I was playing dreadful from mid-2015 to mid-this year-so I've sort of being on a path since August getting my game back," he said.

Last year's winner Justin Rose admitted he had "no prospects" of victory as he shot 70 to lie one-under for the tournament, where he is struggling to recover from a back injury. Elsewhere, US Masters champion Danny Willett was six off the lead after a forgettable round of 71 marked by four bogeys on the back nine. Fellow Englishman David Howell equalled the course record of 63 to lie four shots back from the leaders in a tie for fifth place. — AFP



BRUSSELS: In this Sept. 9, 2016, file photo, Belgian runners Kim Gevaert, Elodie Ouedraogo, Olivia Borlee and Hanna Marien stand on the podium after receiving the gold medal for the Women's 4 x 100 meters relay at the 2008 Beijing Olympics during the Diamond League Memorial Van Damme athletics event at the King Baudouin stadium in Brussels. The Belgian team, initially winning silver, were moved up to gold after one runner on the Russian team tested positive for a banned substance. — AP