

RUSSIAN ATHLETE ALLOWED TO COMPETE IN RIO FACES CRITICISM

MOSCOW: Russian long jumper Daria Klishina is facing a barrage of criticism at home for agreeing to compete under a neutral flag. Because Russian track and field athletes were suspended globally following state-sponsored doping, the US-based Klishina was given permission by the IAAF over the weekend to compete as a neutral athlete because she met "exceptional eligibility criteria."

But that enraged some Russians, who called her a "traitor," and pointed out she

lives and trains abroad. One social media account published her picture in a leaflet that was reminiscent of Nazi propaganda that encouraged collaboration in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union. "Russian athletes, the only thing you have to do in order to compete in the Olympics is to give up the banner of your country," the leaflet said. "Do give up the shameful Russian flag!" Even the typically bland state-owned Rossiyskaya Gazeta published an opin-

ion piece lambasting Klishina.

"They've allowed only one Russian, the long jumper Daria Klishina, to compete at the Olympics only because she trains in the United States," veteran sports journalist Nikolai Dolgoplov wrote. "How silly is that?" Klishina dismissed the criticism in a piece published by the All-Russia Athletic Federation, and said she hopes other Russians will be cleared.

"It is not like I started training in the

United States with an American trainer a month ago," she said. "I have been there for three years now, that is why I think it is wrong to accuse me and call me a traitor of the motherland. I still hope that it won't be just me who gets to go to Rio."

More than 80 Russian athletes have applied for clearance from the IAAF, and only Klishina and doping whistleblower Yulia Stepanova have had their requests accepted.

The IOC has yet to allow them to compete in the Rio de Janeiro Games. Dmitry Peskov, the spokesman for Russian President Vladimir Putin, sought to lower the tensions on Monday. "It's not the right time for emotions, it's time for legal actions that we are undertaking," Peskov said. "Court decisions are pending. Russian athletes and those who represent them will use all legal means at their disposal and fight till the bitter end." —AP

IS RIO'S 2016 OLYMPIC 'TRANSFORMATION' FOR REAL?

RIO DE JANEIRO: Rio's mayor touts a "transformation" of the 2016 Olympic city but when Rosa, a cleaning lady, makes the difficult journey back to her crime-ridden slum each evening, she's grateful just to have made it home.

At the heart of Rio de Janeiro's so-called legacy projects-long-term improvements brought by the Olympics to a rundown city-is transport.

New roads and cycle paths have been built along the Atlantic coastline, a system of express bus lanes has been created and, biggest of all, a 10-mile (16-kilometer) extension to the metro will link the far-flung west of the city.

Add in the other urban goodies-new housing, schools, a revitalized city center, and the Museum of Tomorrow-and it adds up, Mayor Eduardo Paes says, to "a renewed and more integrated city."

But if you're like Rosa, who did not want to give her last name, this shiny new Rio remains a world away.

In the Mare favela, where she has lived for 18 years, shootouts between drug dealers and police with automatic weapons are a near-daily reality, while getting to and from home requires negotiating tortuous bus routes. "The working class isn't getting any benefits from these Games," said Rosa, who is 50.

ON THE MOVE

Paes admits the legacy projects may not meet everyone's expectations but he says the effect is nevertheless huge.

"People imagine the Games will solve Brazil's problems or even the causes of the problems, but it won't be one or the other. It was a chance to make a better city. Don't expect a Chicago or Tokyo. Compare Rio to Rio," he said.

Transport is the key. According to city hall, the new projects mean that in 2017, some 63 percent of the population will use public transport, compared to only 17 percent in 2009.

"Transport is the biggest legacy when measured by investments and numbers of people who benefit," Rafael Picciani, the deputy mayor, told AFP.

Currently, buses are used by 37 percent of people, compared to just four percent on the metro. The metro extension will change those numbers and the express bus system will reduce travel times for many.

However, the accompanying reduction, or what the mayor's office calls "rationalization," of previously existing bus lines, has resulted in hardship for people-like Rosa-not living near the new networks and now forced to take even longer bus journeys.

There are also worries over the quality of the construction work. Part of an ambitious

oceanside cycle path collapsed, killing two people, after it was hit by a large wave in April.

FUTURE OF POLICING?

Officials say that the Olympics will be safe thanks to a huge reinforcement by soldiers, elite national police units and others, totalling 85,000 officers.

But what happens once the tourists and extra police go home?

Just in the first five months of this year, 2,083 murders were committed in Rio state, up 14 percent on the same period last year. Street robberies and car thefts have gone through the roof.

In favelas like Rosa's home neighborhood in the Mare, shootings are a near daily event, often with powerful automatic weapons that increase the risk of deadly stray bullets.

Violence has gone down since 2008 when a bold new "pacification" strategy was introduced to insert police deep in the favelas and increase community policing, rather than rely on sporadic raids from the outside.

However the program has recently appeared to unravel in some favelas, with traffickers apparently regaining territory. Now, many favela dwellers question whether the embedded police will even stay on after the Olympics.

SPORTS FOR ALL?

Hosting the Olympics means building lots of new sports installations.

Officials say all this infrastructure-in contrast to the embarrassing fate of unused stadiums from the 2014 World Cup in Brazil-will benefit the population after the Games end.

"There'll be no white elephants," Picciani said, although that promise is likely to be severely tested by the fate of the newly built Olympic golf course, given that very few Brazilians play the sport.

City hall hopes to rent out the facilities for sporting events but says they will also be accessible to the public. These include the aquatic center in Deodoro, one of Rio's poorest areas.

However all the construction came with a high human cost: more than 22,000 families were forced to move out of their homes.

Resettlement packages and new homes were offered and Picciani says "all those who left are better off now than before."

But activists, like the Olympic Games Popular Committee, say the forced changes had a less charitable effect by clearing the poor out of neighborhoods that post-Olympics will be marketed as higher-end real estate. —AFP



EUGENE: Allyson Felix, fourth place, reacts after the Women's 200 Meter Final during the 2016 US Olympic Track & Field Team Trials at Hayward Field on Sunday in Eugene, Oregon. — AFP

DOUBLED UP FELIX FINISHES FOURTH, NO CHANCE FOR OLYMPIC DOUBLE

EUGENE: Allyson Felix had the star power to change the Olympic schedule. Now, it's her schedule that needs adjusting. Felix's run at the 200-400 Olympic double, made possible after Olympics officials honored her request for a chance to run both races, came to an earlier-than-expected end Sunday. She finished fourth in the 200-meter final, one spot away from Rio, in a .01-second loss to a sprawling Jenna Prandini at US Track and Field Trials.

"Honestly, disappointed," said Felix, who will not get a chance to defend her Olympic title in her signature event. "The whole year, that has been what I was working for. When I look back and see everything that happened, I still think it's quite amazing I was able to make the team."

She did make the 400-meter lineup, and that is, indeed, quite an accomplishment considering the injury she suffered this spring. After landing awkwardly on an exercise ball while doing core work, she rolled her right ankle.

The injury was so severe she avoided running around the track in the correct, counterclockwise direction until just before trials, for fear she would put too much outside pressure on her injured ankle.

In track parlance, a sprinter doesn't necessarily have to be "fast" to succeed in the 400 - a full lap around the track in which technique is more important than pure speed. But in the 200, it takes a more aggressive lean into the curve at the opening of the race - just the sort of "speed work" Felix didn't get enough of during her slow comeback.

"I could only do what I could with the ankle," she said. And so, she started slow, never made up ground against winner Tori Bowie or second-place Deajah Stevens and could not hold off Prandini, the former University of Oregon star who had to wait about 30 seconds to see the result for third place go up on the board. Afterward, she was scraped-up but

smiling.

"I don't know what happened," said Prandini, who finished in 22.53 seconds. "But it got the job done."

One of Felix's biggest fans made news earlier in the day: According to USA Track and Field, 16-year-old Sydney McLaughlin will be the youngest member to compete for the U.S. Olympic track team since 1972 after finishing third in the 400-meter hurdles.

Not bad for the junior out of Union Catholic High School in New Jersey, who turned on the Beijing Olympics eight years ago, saw Felix winning the 4x400 relay and thought, "I'd like to be like her, someday."

Asked what she liked most about Felix, McLaughlin said: "She wasn't afraid to lose." "Sometimes, I get so caught up in the fact that I hadn't lost a hurdles race, and I come here, and these girls are faster than me," said McLaughlin, who admitted to being so nervous earlier in the week she considered pulling out of the meet. "It's realizing that sometimes you have to lose to get better."

It happened to Felix plenty over the years, none more heartbreakingly than in Athens and Beijing, where she settled for back-to-back silvers in an event she had dominated.

But she won gold in 2012. And with track and field - and possibly NBC, as well - desperate for some star power in a sport now headlined by Usain Bolt and a worldwide doping crisis, a scheduling change that would double the track time for one of America's most popular runners was a no-brainer.

But US trials don't guarantee anything, and on Sunday, a few more potential medal contenders - including 400-meter hurdlers Johnny Dutch and Bershawn Jackson - also saw some dreams end early.

Felix is still going to Rio de Janeiro. But with more free time on her hands than originally planned. "I'm pretty sure everyone expected to see her on the (200) team," Bowie

said. "I'm pretty sure it won't be the same without her." Other happenings on the final day of track trials:

DIVING FOR RIO: Prandini wasn't the only one who left her feet trying to get that last spot. Last weekend, Brenda Martinez was devastated when she got tripped in the 800-meter final and left behind at the finish. On Sunday, she wasn't going to miss her chance. She leaned, and then barreled over the finish line of the 1,500-meter final to take the third and final spot. Ricky Babineaux had a dive that didn't work out as well; he still came up .06 short of third in the 400 hurdles. "I think it was worth the dive, if I would've made it," he said.

THE SUHR THING: Jenn Suhr is about as close to a sure thing as there is in track and field. Still, the defending Olympic pole vault champion was in tears after she won to make her third Olympics. "It doesn't get any easier when you get older," she said in an on-track interview. "I'm just happy that all the work was worth it."

IF THE SHOE FITS: Kim Conley saw her first attempt at making the Olympics spoiled when her shoe came off in the 10,000 meters. No wardrobe malfunction this time. She finished third in the 5,000. "I had my heart set on the 10 this year. That was disappointing. I feel like I turned the page really well," she said.

OTHER WINNERS: Matt Centrowitz won, as expected, in the men's 1,500. He'll be joined by Robby Andrews and Ben Blankenship. Barbara Nwaba took the heptathlon title. Kerron Clement won 400-meter hurdles to make his third Olympics. He won silver in Beijing and finished eighth in London. Erik Kynard was the men's high jump champion, with a leap of 7 feet, 6 inches.

QUOTABLE: "When I give all I have and run 22.5, it's just not there." -Felix, on her time (22.54 seconds) that landed her fourth in the 200. — AP



Usain Bolt

BOLT AIMS FOR MORE OLYMPIC GLORY IN RIO

KINGSTON: Usain Bolt will get a chance to hone his Olympic track and field legacy, as he was named to the 59 member Jamaican team that will compete at the Olympic Games in Rio next month. Bolt, who withdrew from the 100m final and sought a medical exemption from the 200m at the Jamaican Olympic Trials two weekends ago, was named on the provisional list submitted to the IOC to contest the 100m/200m/4x100m relays in Rio.

He seeks to become the first man to win three straight triple-triples after wins in Beijing in 2008 and London in 2012.

The announcement was made Monday afternoon at a news conference held by the Jamaica Olympic Association in Kingston where all members of the Olympic team were announced.

The Jamaica Athletics Administrative Association's (JAAA) selection rules allow for athletes ranked in the top three in the world to submit medical exemptions and miss the trials but they must be able to prove their fitness at a later date to be

named to the Olympic team.

Bolt suffered a grade one hamstring tear on the first day of the four day national championships. He then ran the semi-final of the 100m before withdrawing an hour before the final. He submitted a medical exemption for the rest of the championships, including the 200m.

He then travelled to Europe to see a specialist, world renowned sports doctor Hans-Wilhelm Muller-Wohlfahrt and posted a photograph of himself training over the weekend. Bolt ran a season's best 9.88 seconds in the 100m but has yet to run a 200m race in competition. He is scheduled to run at the London Anniversary Games later this month.

Bolt is one of several Jamaican athletes who used the medical exemption at the trials including Elaine Thompson, who won the women's 100m in a world leading 10.70 seconds, Olympic bronze medalist Hansle Parchment in the men's 110m hurdles and 400m hurdler Janieve Russell, all of who were included on Monday's list. — AFP



BUENOS AIRES: Argentine professional basketball player Luis Scola takes a photo with athletes of the Argentina Rio 2016 Olympic Games delegation along with Argentine President Mauricio Macri, center, during the farewell ceremony in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Monday. — AP