

## Sports

# Caster Semenya vs the IAAF: A ground-breaking gender case

## 'This ruling is judging the identity of that person'

**PARIS:** Caster Semenya's battle with world athletics' governing body over testosterone-curling regulations for female athletes will likely have long-lasting ramifications for gender definition in sport as a whole. The South African, a two-time Olympic 800m gold medalist, is locked in a bitter dispute with the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), and both parties are awaiting a ruling from Switzerland's Supreme Court on Semenya's appeal against the regulations.

Semenya is classified a woman, was raised as a woman and races as a woman. But for the IAAF, women like Semenya, with certain masculine attributes due to differences of sexual development (DSD), are classified, biologically, as men. It is a position hotly contested by South African officials.

The IAAF, seeking "to ensure fair competition for all women", argues that DSD athletes, like Semenya, born with the "46 XY" chromosome rather than the XX chromosome most females have, would have an advantage in all events based on their levels of testosterone that are in the male range. "Does the IAAF have the legitimacy to define the sex of somebody, to question that person's civil state?" asks anthropologist Philippe Liotard, an expert in discrimination in sport. "This ruling is judging the identity of that person."

### 'Human guinea pig'

In the build-up to the 2009 world championships in Berlin, where Semenya went on to win gold in the 800m, the South African had to undergo gender verification testing to confirm her eligibility to compete in the women's category. She was subsequently put on medication to reduce her testosterone levels, spending six months sidelined by the IAAF.

"The IAAF used me in the past as a human guinea pig to experiment with how the medication they required me to take would affect my testosterone levels," Semenya said last month. Sociologist Beatrice Barbousse, a specialist in sexism in sport, added: "Sport has been built on

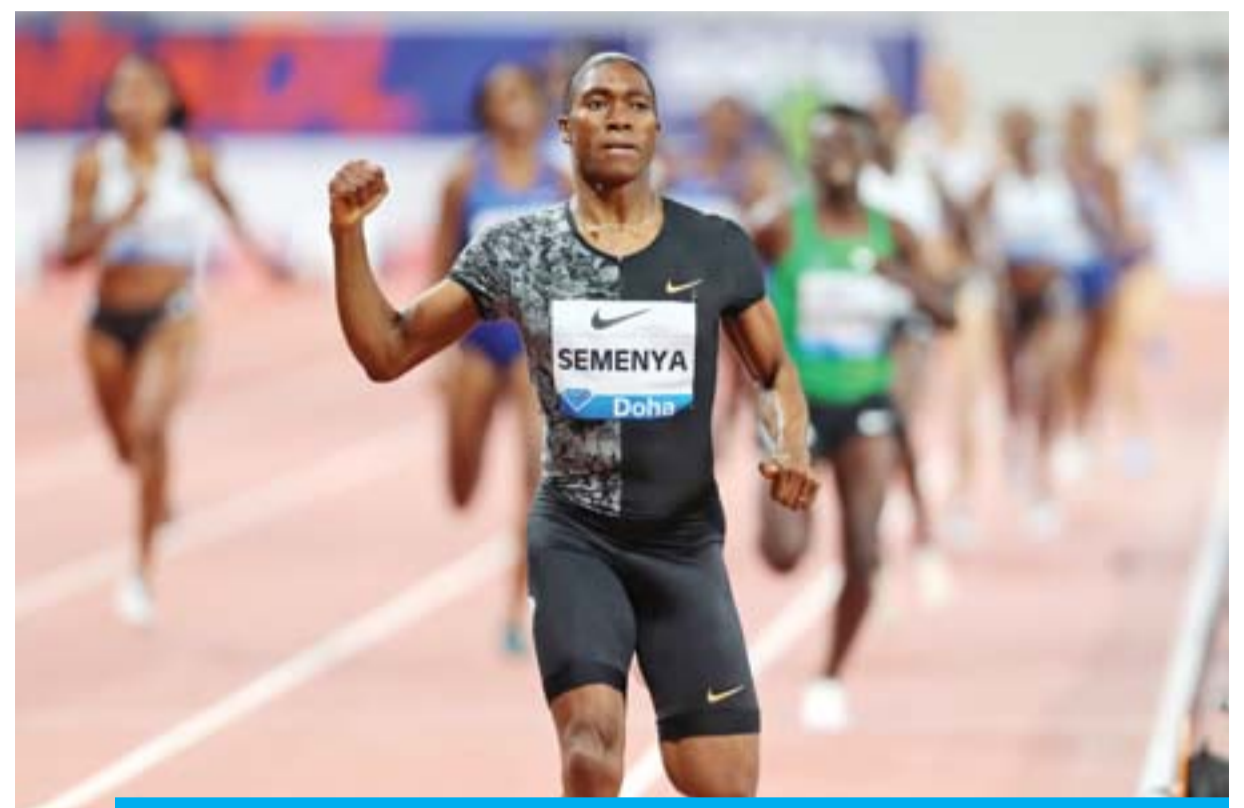
this dichotomy between men and women on a binary concept of sexes. "There's not a biological split between men and women but a continuity because there are people like Caster Semenya, who find themselves in neither camp. "You can only imagine in 50 years when we've reached a sufficiently raised societal level to accept that there's no longer a compulsory categorization of sex. "This affair could completely shake up the organization of sport in the future." World sport's highest court, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), found that the new regulations "were a necessary, reasonable and proportionate means of achieving the IAAF's legitimate objective of fair and meaningful competition in female athletics".

### Regulations have contested basis

While the IAAF has been at the forefront at curbing the supposed advantage of DSD athletes, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has set up a group of experts to look into the matter. The IAAF has based its new regulations on a study which has since been highly contested. Published in July 2017 in the British Journal of Sport Medicine, the study of doctors Stephane Bermon and Pierre-Yves Garnier is based around data from testing female athletes between the 2011 and 2013 World Athletics Championships.

By comparing the results of female athletes with the highest concentrations of testosterone with those with the lowest level, the study concluded that the women with a high level of the hormone had a significant advantage in track events ranging from the 400m to the 800m, as well as the pole vault and hammer throw. The results were strongly contested in some quarters. The IAAF admitted some errors and in 2018 published a new peer-reviewed report which it said "confirms with a different statistical method the main findings of the 2017 paper".

To reduce overly high levels of testosterone, the IAAF suggest the female athletes concerned either take a daily oral contraceptive, hormone-reducing drugs or, more



**DOHA:** In this file photo taken on May 3, 2019 South Africa's Caster Semenya competes in the women's 800m during the IAAF Diamond League competition. — AFP

radically, a gonadectomy — an operation in which testes are removed. But is it possible to force people who are not ill to take medication which could cause secondary effects? No, according to the World Medical

Association (WMA), which called on doctors to shun the IAAF regulations which it said "would constrain the athletes concerned to take unjustified medication, not based on medical need". — AFP

## Kuwait Shooting Sport Club honors winners of tournament

By Abdellatif Sharara

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Shooting Sport Club recently held a ceremony to honor the winners of the Sheikh Saad Shooting academy tournament for 2019. The competition was held at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex as well as the club's Jahra and Sabahiya branches. The participants were beginners and juniors in the air pistol and rifle category in addition to Olympic archery. The ceremony was held under the patronage of President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi.

In the 10m air rifle juniors Usama Al-Zafiri won first place while Amer Al-Ajmi won second and



Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi



Nasser Al-Ajmi third respectively. In the 10m beginners rifle - Ahmad Al-Khames came first, Abdelaziz Al-Kandari second, and Mohammad Al-Subaie third. The 10m beginners pistol category saw Ali Suleiman take first place with Yousuf Al-Shaye second and Farhan Al-Roumi third. In archery - Ahmad Al-Enezi was first, followed by Mishal Al-Saudi second and Omar Al-Enezi third, all in the beginners categories.

Eng Al-Otaibi thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and the government as well as Director General of Public Authority for Sports Dr

Humoud Fulaiteh for their unlimited support for the sport of shooting.

He said this is the first batch that is graduated from Sheikh Saad Academy this year. KSSC remains keen on organizing several more tournaments for various age groups and recognize winners of top places, while training them for free at the club's facilities. He said the beginners and juniors tournament of Sheikh Saad Al-Aballah Academy are within the KSSC plans that comes as a completion of the "shooter 2000" project that started in 1997 which evolved to the shooting school and then later became the comprehensive academy.

## Under fire Vettel gets support from Hamilton

**SILVERSTONE:** A beleaguered Sebastian Vettel received support from an unexpected source yesterday after another dismal outing for Ferrari in an action-packed British Grand Prix. Two weeks ahead of his home German Grand Prix, the under-pressure four-time world champion endured a race to forget as he slipped 100 points adrift of the victorious record-breaking Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes by finishing a distant 16th.

Another in his growing catalogue of errors, when he slammed into the rear of Max Verstappen's Red Bull and was forced to pit for a new nose, brought him a 10-second penalty and two points on his license. It was also the third consecutive race in which the 32-year-old German was beaten comprehensively by his team-mate Charles Leclerc, who came home third.

The 21-year-old Monegasque is now only three points behind him and many observers suggested that Ferrari will have to make him their main priority, instead of Vettel, in the title race. Those critics, however, do not include five-time champion and long-time rival Hamilton whose record sixth Silverstone win thrilled a sold-out crowd of 141,000.

"He's had a difficult race today, but he's a four-time world champion," said Hamilton. "He will recover. He will redeem himself, if he feels he needs to, and he will come back stronger in the next race — that's what great athletes do." Hamilton's opinion was not shared by many keen Ferrari-observers who have watched Vettel declining in the last year, notably



**SILVERSTONE:** Ferrari's German driver Sebastian Vettel prepares to drive during first practice at Silverstone motor racing circuit in Silverstone, central England, on July 12, 2019 ahead of the British Formula One Grand Prix. — AFP

since crashing out of the lead on home soil at Hockenheim, gifting Hamilton victory and the impetus in last year's championship. Recently married and a father of two girls, Vettel has lost his momentum at the same time that Leclerc — with four successive podiums — has gathered his to emerge alongside Verstappen, also 21, as a symbol of F1's future.

### Precocious talent

Ironically, Vettel's reputation was built on a precocious talent as a teenager before he became the youngest pole-sitter and race winner, aged 21, at the 2008 Italian Grand Prix, driving for the unfancied Toro Rosso team. The second of those two records was taken from him when Verstappen, on his debut with Red Bull after moving from Toro Rosso, won the 2016 Spanish Grand Prix.

This year, Vettel has struggled for consistency and experienced misfortunes with a run of stewards' decisions,

but he rejected claims that he has lost his passion for racing and is heading towards retirement. Ferrari team chief Mattia Binotto, a faithful Vettel supporter, has continued to back him as the team's number one driver.

Hamilton, who misses the threat of a rampant Ferrari team, said he has to imagine he has a competitor ahead, or on his tail, as he urges his former rival to bounce back. "I loved competing with Ferrari and I wish that our battle was with them — it's so different when you're racing within a team," he explained, after finishing 25 seconds ahead of Valtteri Bottas in another Mercedes one-two.

Hamilton now leads Bottas by 39 points after ten of this year's 21 races. "I don't feel necessarily that he (Bottas) is the only one chasing — I am still chasing! I try to put an imaginary individual ahead of myself ... It's my target to improve and beat my previous performances — I always give myself a goal to chase." — AFP

## China goes seven for seven at world diving

**GWANGJU:** Cao Yuan and Chen Aisen destroyed a quality field to win gold in the men's 10-metre synchro platform yesterday as China's peerless divers made it seven from seven at the world championships. Former Olympic champion Cao and Chen, the reigning Olympic king, racked up a winning total of 486.93 points in Gwangju, South Korea — swatting aside their nearest rivals by a whopping 42 points.

Russian pair Viktor Minibaev and Aleksandr Bondar took silver with Britain's Tom Daley and Matthew Lee settling for bronze after a botched fifth dive. Frighteningly for their rivals, Cao insisted there was still room for improvement ahead of next year's Tokyo Olympics after adding the 10m synchro gold to the three-meter synchro he bagged at the weekend.

"I didn't execute every dive the way I wanted tonight," said the 2012 London Olympic champion. "I made some mistakes in the entry. My goal is to dive every dive perfectly." Chen, who completed a 10m synchro and 10m individual platform double at the 2016 Olympics, warned: "We targeted breaking 500 points before the final and we're very close to that. That was probably my best performance of the year but we should set our goals higher still."

Daley expressed his delight at qualifying for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics after reaching the world championship just eight months after teaming up with Lee. "We're massively happy to be world medalists and grab a spot for the Olympic Games," he told AFP. "That was the main thing. At this point in the Olympic cycle bronze is as good as gold in my eyes — to get to the Olympics in the first place, because that's often the hardest thing."

Daley will look to retain his individual 10m platform world title this weekend. Earlier yesterday, favorites Shi Tingmao and Wang Han won synchro gold in the women's three-meter springboard to continue China's dominance. Olympic champion Shi and reigning 3m mixed synchro world champion Wang produced another performance of unerring precision, scoring a total of 342.00 points — more than 30 points clear of the field.

Canada's Jennifer Abel and Melissa Citrini Beaulieu took silver while Mexican pair Paola Espinosa Sanchez and Melany Hernandez Torres the bronze. China scooped a remarkable seven of eight gold medals at the 2016 Rio Olympics and enjoyed a stranglehold again at the last world championships in Budapest two years ago, scooping eight of the 13 titles on offer. — AFP

## Frittelli claims Open berth with John Deere win

**LOS ANGELES:** South Africa's Dylan Frittelli claimed the first PGA Tour title of his career with victory at the John Deere Classic on Sunday to book his place at next week's British Open. The 29-year-old from Johannesburg played immaculately over the final rounds to card a bogey-free seven-under-par 64, ensuring he will join the world's elite at Royal Portrush in Northern Ireland next week.

It will be only Frittelli's third appearance in the Open after playing in 2017 and 2018, where he failed to make the cut on both occasions. However, Frittelli will head to the final major of 2019 in good heart after Sunday's win at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, Illinois. The South African journeyman said the memory of victories on the European and Asian Tours, and the influence of a sports psychologist, had helped him make his PGA breakthrough.

"I just called on experience," Frittelli said. "Winning around the world, winning on The Challenge Tour as an amateur." "My biggest help was my sports psychologist in San Diego who has helped me my whole career. I chatted to him and I was able to stay calm and worked well today." Frittelli, who had shot a 65 on Saturday to be two off the lead heading into the final round, finished two clear of Russell Henley, who produced an electrifying 10-under-par 61 which took him to 19 under. Frittelli had made a flying start with birdies on his opening three holes.

His first of the day came after a sublime shot from the bunker on the 1st left with him with a tap-in for birdie. A delicate flop shot on the second to a few feet set up a second birdie before he rolled in an 18-foot birdie putt on the third. A fourth birdie followed on the eighth after another superb approach shot, before back-to-back birdies on the 10th and 11th. With Henley already in the clubhouse on 19 under, the closing stages boiled down to a question of whether Frittelli could hold onto his lead. The South African was in no mood to let his maiden victory go begging however, reeling off five pars before a birdie on 17 took him two clear with one hole remaining. — AFP

## P&G gives bonus to US women soccer stars

**NEW YORK:** US multinational Procter & Gamble gave its backing to the United States' women's soccer stars in their fight for equal pay on Sunday, handing the team a \$529,000 bonus following their World Cup win. In a full-page advertisement placed in The New York Times, P&G said the company, one of the team's sponsors through its Secret Deodorant brand, urged the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) to be "on the right side of history."

P&G said it was donating \$23,000 to each of the 23 players who helped the US win a record-extending fourth World Cup title in France on July 7. "After all the toasts, cheers, parades and awards subside, the issue remains. Inequality is about more than pay and players, it's about values," the P&G advert read. "Let's take this moment of celebration to propel women's sports forward. We urge the US Soccer Federation to be a beacon of strength and end gender pay inequality once and for all, for all players."

The advert urged all "fellow fans, friends, supporters, organizations and brands" to fight for gender pay parity. The P&G move comes with the US women in the midst of a legal case lodged against the USSF in March alleging discrimination. The women players lawsuit highlighted the differences in pay with their male counterparts, despite being vastly more successful.

"The USSF discriminates against Plaintiffs, and the class that they seek to represent, by paying them less than members of the MNT (Men's National Team) for substantially equal work," the lawsuit read. Chants of "equal pay" greeted the US women as they received the World Cup trophy in Lyon after their victory over the Netherlands in the final. Fans also adopted the chant when the team were given a ticker-tape parade through New York on Wednesday. — AFP