

Canadian Oh-lympics

By Adam Gauthier

Sydney, Australia has been an incredible host to the twenty-seventh Olympic Summer Games. There have been more spectators for these Games than there was in Atlanta four years ago. Television ratings are down, but that has much to do with thirteen hour time difference (EST).

The big winners at the Olympics after nine days of competition have been the the the Australians and the Chinese with each country collecting over 40 medals thus far.

One of the big stories at the games has been domination of the Aussie's in the swimming events led by their 17 year-old national hero Ian Thorpe, who has won three gold and one silver medal.

The United States, who have collected over 50 medals after eight days, has reached the medal podium in virtually every competition they have entered thus far. The Canadian team has not been as successful.

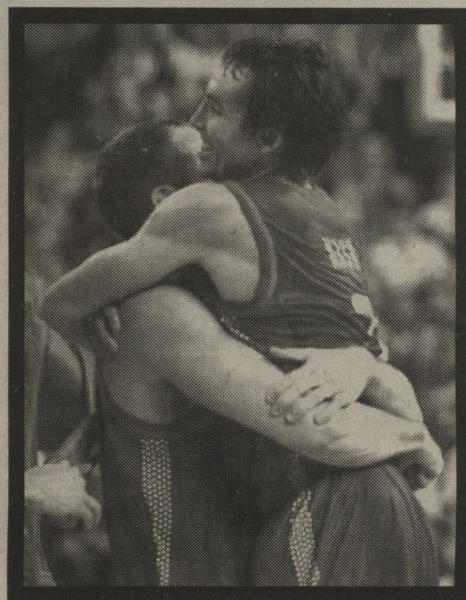
When competition began last week, Canada got off to a great start by winning its first gold medal on the second day of competition. Triathlete Simon Whitfield came from behind in the endurance race to capture the medal which was a huge surprise considering Whitfield had been as far back as 25th place at one point in the race.

On Monday, Canada won its second medal in swimming when Curtis Myden finished third to win bronze. On Thursday, Nicolas Gill lost in the 100kg judo final to China's Kosei Inoue but earned the silver medal.

On Friday, Karen Cockburn of Toronto won the bronze medal in the first women's trampoline competition at the Olympic Games

and Mathieu Turgeon won the bronze in the men's competition. Canada was able to earn two more bronze medals over the weekend in water related sports.

Anne Montminy won the first medal ever for Canada in the Olympic 10m Platform diving while the Women's 8 captured the first rowing medal of the games for Canada in nine events. At the Atlanta Games in 1996, Canada



The Men's Basketball Team

won six medals in rowing and 22 medals in overall competition. After the first week of competition Canada has a total of 7 medals with one gold, one silver, and five bronze.

Many Canadian athletes have put themselves and their teams in a good situation to win a medal. The Canadian men's basketball team has a 3-1 record and is second place in Pool B one point behind Yugoslavia. The men's team has not won an Olympic medal since a silver at the 1936 Games in Berlin.

In tennis, Canadian Daniel Nestor upset Australian Patrick Rafter to move into the second

round of the tennis competition but lost his Third Round match. In doubles play, Nestor and his partner Sebastien Lareau were able to advance to the Semi-Final.

Although Canada has had some success at these Olympic Games, their failures have been prominent stories at these Olympics.

It all began a few weeks ago when Canadian hammer-thrower Robin Lyons tested positive for an anabolic steroid and was banned from competing in Sydney. She never denied the doping infraction but said that it was taken unknowingly. Lyons tested positive for norandrosterone at the Canadian Olympic trials in Victoria in August. She is the national champion in her event. Equestrian Eric Lamaze tested positive for cocaine last month and was given a lifetime ban for his actions.

Last week the lifetime ban was lifted and Lamaze still had a chance to go to Sydney if he could get the approval of the Canadian Olympic Association. He did not get this approval meaning that Lamaze will miss his second straight Olympic games for the same infraction.

The athletes that did make it to Sydney have also had hard times and adversity to overcome. Canadian rower Marnie McBean had to withdraw from competition because of back problems. McBean was favored to win the gold in her event.

Fredericton's Marianne Limpert, who won silver in the 200m Individual Medley in Atlanta, placed 4th and Commonwealth Games gold medalist Joanne Malar of Hamilton

placed 5th.

Beach volleyball players and Atlanta bronze medalists Mark Heese and John Child, who were favored to win a medal, lost in the quarter final to Brazil 15-13.

In track and field, Bruny Surin and Donovan Bailey were unable to advance to the 100m final. Bailey, who was ill with the flu, finished last in his second heat while Surin pulled up in the Semi-final after running only 15m down the track with a pulled hamstring.

The two sprinters had to watch from the sideline as American Maurice Greene won the gold in a time of 9.87 seconds. Surin and Bailey have one more competition to run: the 4X100m. Surin says that it will take a miracle for him to run while Bailey has not commented. The final will be run next Saturday.

How will these Olympic Games be remembered by Canadians? The low medal count, the drug scandal, the end of Donovan Bailey and Bruny Surin's running careers, and the disappointment in water sports? Will they be remembered for the surprises of accomplishment such as a gold for Simon Whitfield in the triathlon or bronze medals for Canada in the new Olympic sport of trampoline?

However these games are remembered the question that will always linger is how can Canada compete with the rest of the world? Many believe it is a lack of federal funding toward amateur sport in the country that is hurting the progression of Canadian athletes. All of these questions will be answered hopefully sooner rather than later.