Haiti scores a spot in the boys' football finals, setting up a rematch against Bolivia

BY NG HOE GUAN AND SHAWN SEE

Haiti bounced back from a 9-0 thrashing by Bolivia to defeat host country and Games' favourite, Singapore.

Much to the dismay of the sell-out crowd, the Haitian boys' football team registered a hard-fought 2-0 win to book another date with the Bolivians to deck it out for the inaugural YOG football crown.

The first half of last night's match at Jalan Besar Stadium was a scrappy affair, with both teams trying to engineer a breakthrough.

Singapore's best chance in the opening half came when midfielder Hanafi Mohd Akbar cut in from the left flank to deliver a tantalising cross to right winger Brandon Koh who fluffed his header from six yards out.

The miss proved to be costly as Haiti drew first blood in the 38th minute when Singapore keeper Fashah Rosedin parried straight into the path of Haiti striker Jean Bonhomme who needed no second invitation to score his first goal of the tournament.

Buoyed by the voracious home crowd support, the Cubs came out strongly in the second half, dominating majority of the possession. But the Haiti defence stood strong to repel wave after wave of Singapore's attacks.

But the 6,000-strong crowd was silenced when defender Illyas Lee was red carded for hacking down Jean.

Haiti's Captain Daniel Gideon stepped up and scored a 78th minute penalty goal, effectively ending the contest in Haiti's favour.

Despite the loss to Haiti, Singapore captain Jeffery Lightfoot was bullish about his side's chances in the next match. The Cubs will once again face off against rivals Montenegro.

"If we stick together and play as a team, we can win in the next match," Jeffery said.

On the other hand, Haiti's coach Pierre Sonche has called this a joyous occasion for the nation that is still reeling from January's devastating earthquake.

"We can't give money to our people back in Haiti, but at least I know that they are very happy with this result and our campaign here in Singapore."

— Pierre Sonche, Haiti's coach on the team's win at yesterday's semi-final match
CORRECTIONS

In “Overcoming the odds” (22 August 2010), Cassidy Jackson-Carroll was wrongly identified as Leanne Murray’s coach. It should have been Frederick Evans. Ms Jackson-Carroll is Leanne’s teacher.

In the same article, it was stated that Ms Jackson-Carroll bought Leanne her first pair of running shoes. This is not true as Leanne bought her own spikes.

It was also implied in the same article that Leanne only got her first pair of running shoes in Singapore. This is untrue. We apologise for the errors.

In “World’s fastest boy” (22 August 2010), it was stated that Ms Jackson-Carroll bought Leanne her first pair of spikes. This is not true as Leanne bought her own spikes.

Because of an editing error, on page one of our 22 August 2010 edition, Singapore’s judo athlete was spelt Tang Jing Fang. It should have been Tang Jing Fang. We apologise for the error.

Because of an editing error, in “Gracious in defeat” (22 August 2010), it was stated that Juan Sebastian Gomez is from Colombia. It should have been Columbia. We apologise for the error.

In “World’s fastest boy” (22 August 2010), Odane Skeen won the 100m and 200m.We apologise for the error.

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FACTS OF THE WORLD

USA

The first USA athlete to win an Olympic Games medal during the 1968 games in Mexico City is Peggy Fleming.

ARGENTINA

The first Argentine to win an Olympic Games medal was Leopoldo Fierro in 1896.

BOLIVIA

The first Bolivian to win an Olympic Games medal was Jose Quiroz in 1948.

CROATIA

Croatia won their first ever Olympic title in handball in 1996 at the Atlanta Games.

CHINA

Lin Dan was the world’s number one in Badminton at the tender age of 20.

Young Olympian Daily

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Sports for Singapore

BY LAI JUNJIE

In Singapore, our sportswomen and sportswmen are both loathed and loved. Loathed, as they have qualities that allow them to lead the path less travelled as compared to the rest of us. In a pragmatic society that heralds academic achievement and one’s potential contribution to the economy, becoming a professional athlete seems like cheating in the rat race. If a youth tells his parents he wants to be an entrepreneur, he will probably get more support than the youth who aspires to be a professional athlete. Simply put, everyone knows a life in sport here is not economically feasible or sustainable.

But in the last ten days, many of us are looking wistfully over our shoulders at these Young Olympians and reminding ourselves why we love them — they are the embodiment of an entire nation’s hopes. They remind us of the simple serenity and joy in playing a game. They remind us of dreams, cast aside for more practical concerns. They remind us that life is worth living after all.

The question for Singaporeans begs: Does our endless pursuit of wealth equate to our endless pursuit of happiness? After all, we cannot live our entire lives for purely functional ends.

Thus, it becomes all the more poignant to watch elementary school children at the Youth Olympic Games cheering on athletes from all over the world. It gives me hope that we will not eventually become a sleepwalking nation of salarymen. It gives me hope for the future, having witnessed the unconditional support these children have given to athletes everywhere.

I truly wonder how many of these children will be inspired and become athletes in the future. Perhaps, it is time for a change: To slow down from the breakneck pace of a materialist society and stop stigmatising the path of a professional athlete.

The intense fragility of the Singaporean sporting dream is very much at our mercy.
A CHAMPION CALLS HOME

BY CHUANG BING HAN

Draped in the red, black, and yellow of his country’s flag, Belgian Boris Vallee cried into the phone to his mother in a small town near Liege. He had just won the 48km junior men’s road race at The Float@Marina Bay yesterday. “For many years, I’ve been training very hard,” said the 17-year-old in French. “This victory is a present for my family, friends, and everybody in Belgium.”

Having come from a cycling family, he has been trained in racing and tactics since young. For the last hundred years, his parents and grandparents have been involved in cycling. “It’s a family story,” he said. Boris’ teammate Laurens Sweeck, 17, who came in 28th, said training very hard, “I want to make my family, friends, and everybody in Belgium proud.”

The win made up for the disappointment he faced last Tuesday. Laurens added. “We started the race with strong morale and, even with some little problems, we never gave up,” said Colombian time trial cyclist Brayan Ramirez. “We started the race with strong morale and, even with some little problems, we never gave up,” said Colombian time trial cyclist Brayan Ramirez.

An elated Boris Vallee makes a call home to his mother after the Belgian cyclist won the 48km Junior Men’s road race. PHOTO: CHUANG BING HAN

A Contest of Warriors

On the day of the mens’ Modern Pentathlon, photojournalist Lam Yarn was at the Singapore Sports School to witness the punishing full day routine these modern warriors put themselves through.

9.20am
Eager pentathletes arrive in their buses.

10.36am
During warm up, coaches dish out final words of advice whilst parrying their charges.

11.05am
Competition gets under way with bouts occurring simultaneously at six pistes.

11.50am
German pentathlete Eric Kruger faces some problems with his equipment not registering hits. He looks frustrated.

12.52pm
It is lunchtime, yet it is still a long afternoon ahead with the swimming and combined running and shooting events scheduled.

BRIEFS

Finally a gold

PHOTO: XINHUA/SYGOC-Pool/ CAI YANG

Great Britain’s star gymnast Sam Oldham finally delivered on the hype surrounding him yesterday, with a gold in the horizontal bar final. It was a fall from this very apparatus that cost him dearly in the all-around final. The European Junior Champion delivered a flawless routine to score 14.375.

Basketball’s overtime overkill

Ten minutes of normal time was not enough to determine the finalists for the men’s basketball finals yesterday. Both semifinals went into overtime with Serbia triumphing over crowd favourite USA 33-29 and Croatia beating Greece 33-30 as Croatian Stipe Krystanovich sunk a 3-pointer with four seconds into the third overtime period.

No horsing around

Nine riders were tied for first place with no penalty scores in Equestrian’s individual Jumping Round A at the Singapore Turf Club Riding Centre yesterday. Favourites like Belgium’s Nicola Philipperts, Switzerland’s Martin Fuchs and New Zealand’s Jake Lambert performed off the mark by hitting two or more rails throughout the whole course.

Winning by a whisker

0.14 seconds was the difference between gold and silver for Hungary’s Sandor Totka and Germany’s Tom Liebscher in the men’s K1 head to head canoe sprint final at Marina Reservoir yesterday. After the announcement, a disheartened Liebscher said: “I worked very hard and was hoping to get the Gold medal. Unfortunately, it did not happen.”
Frank Fredericks
Athletics
Namibia

Profile

Julien Brice
Siona Huxley
Swimming
Saint Lucia

Small Island, Big Impact

Tiny Saint Lucia and its athletes make a splash, punching above their weight as far as their achievements are concerned. Photo by Eunice Chan

By Bhavan Jaipragas

Truth be told, not many would know that a tiny island like Saint Lucia existed if not for international sporting events like the Youth Olympic Games (YOG). For 17-year-olds Julien Brice and Siona Huxley, the Games are a perfect opportunity to put their island state on the world map.

Julien, a freestyle sprinter, and Siona, a 50m specialist for both the backstroke and freestyle, form the Saint Lucia swimming team. The island has only five athletes competing in the Games. Coming from an island surrounded by the Caribbean Sea, picking up swimming at a young age was a natural choice for both Siona and Julien. “I started swimming in the sea when I was very little and competitive swimming when I was about 10,” says Siona, who was the flag bearer for Saint Lucia at the opening ceremony of the Games.

Both swimmers have gone beyond expectations in the pool events despite coming from an island smaller than Singapore with a population of just under 180,000.

Siona is the only athlete from Saint Lucia to have met the qualifying standards for the YOG, registering a time of 29.88sec in the 50m backstroke in Trinidad and Tobago last year. A recipient of the Saint Lucia’s Junior Sportswoman of the year three years in a row, Siona is fast becoming a name to watch in the Caribbean swimming circles.

Julien, a community college student who has featured in three World Championships, attributes their success to coach Jamie Peterkin. “He is fairly younger than most swim coaches, but that’s good because he can relate to our issues and help us push ourselves harder,” says Julien of his 28-year-old coach, who competed in the 2000 Summer Olympics.

The YOG experience has been enriching for both Julien and Siona. Though both swimmers failed to make it to the finals of their respective events, they expressed their satisfaction at their performance in Singapore.

“I expected to make the finals of the 50m backstroke but I only made the semi-finals,” quips Siona before adding that she is generally happy with her performance otherwise.

Julien also notes that the cultural experience of living and interacting with thousands of other athletes from all around the world is one that he savours.

“It is a good feeling to speak to someone from Russia or some other big country and realise that he knows where your island is on the world map,” says Julien who seems slightly pleased that some mistake his island state for other Caribbean countries like Barbados.

For Siona, who is a 12th grade student in an international school, the best part of a global competition like the YOG is “being able to observe how different people do things differently” and to learn how other athletes compete under pressure.

With their Youth Olympic Games campaign over, these two budding athletes have their sights

Chat With a Champion

Born in Windhoek, Namibia, Frank Fredericks was the first and only Olympic medallist of his country. He has starred on the world—sometimes you lose, and ‘I’m going to kill myself.”

“I just believe that sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, and I’m not going to take the approach that if I lose I’m going to kill myself.”

Frank Fredericks on losing

Photos: Internet

The number of siblings Fredericks has. He is an only child, whose parents split up when he was an infant.

4

The total number of Olympic silver medals Fredericks has won.

2004

The year Fredericks retired from competitive running. In the same year, he became a member of the International Olympic Committee.
Training and winning as a team

BY DARREN TAN

The secret to success, the Belgium girls’ volleyball team shared, is training a lot — together.

It also helps that they play in the same club team. For instance, Elien Ruysschaert spent the last year playing in the same club as three others in the Belgian team. The chemistry they have is carried over into the national team. The 18-year-old says: “It becomes easier to organise the team in a match, and we know what each other is doing.”

As a result of spending so much time together, the camaraderie among the girls is obvious.

In their victorious three straight sets match against Egypt, they huddled after every point scored. While waiting for the ball to be served, both sets of players on the court and sidelines cheered and clapped in unison. Throughout the post-match interview on Saturday, they are chatty and completed each other’s sentences. “We love each other!” one of them exclaims. They even have their nails painted in the colours of the Belgian flag.

They have trained together for almost three years, and this paid off when they earned their right to represent Europe in the YOG by winning the Youth European Championships in the Netherlands last year. It was the first time Belgium had won a European Championship at any level.

“The national senior team doesn’t win as they play at clubs all over the world, and cannot train together,” team captain Ilka van de Vyver says. “We are able to win because we train together more.”

They continued their winning form, snaring bronzes in the European Youth Olympic Festival in Finland and Youth World Championships in Thailand in July last year.

However, they do not see themselves as favourites here. Tara Lauwers says: “The USA, Japan and Peru are the main threats, but the rest of the teams are also strong.”

One of their goals is to participate in the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games. With the team being so united, it looks like they are already a step in the right direction.

“Training and winning as a team”

BY DARREN TAN

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“It is a good feeling to speak to someone from Russia or some other big country and realise that he knows where your island is on the world map.”

— Julien Brice, on how he savours the cultural experience of living and interacting with other athletes
From dining halls to competition venues, they are seen everywhere in their purple polo shirts and khaki pants. They are Singaporeans from all walks of life who have taken on another identity for the Youth Olympic Games – volunteers.

Leong Mei Lin, 21, is one of these volunteers. According to her, the Games are too significant to miss. Moreover, with it being held in Singapore, there was simply no reason not to be involved.

“Being a part of the Olympics has always been my dream,” she said, “and the next best thing besides competing at the Games would be volunteering.”

A national technical officer at the Modern Pentathlon, which is held at the Singapore Sports School, Ms Leong is as important as the athletes. To ensure a level of professionalism, she had to attend three seminars over the last 11 months and sat for both national and international level judge examinations.

As the modern pentathlon has multiple segments, her duties differ from round to round. For the fencing event, she records and tallies the scores after each round. During the swimming event, she ensures that the athletes have correctly completed their turns by having their feet touch the walls. In the final combined event, she checks that the athletes reload their laser pistols with the handle in contact with the table.

Her year-long preparations to be a volunteer has also been filled with unexpected twists and turns such as her failing her first attempt at the national judge exam.

Despite being exhausted at the end of the finals that lasted close to six hours, she still wears her signature smile, grateful that her dreams had come true.

“The journey was long and tiring but it was definitely worth it.”

BY CLARA CHAN

A TALE OF TWO PEOPLE: VOLUNTEER & PENTATHLETE

RIGHT: 10.45am – Outside the auditorium, Ms Leong and other officials prepare to enter.

FAR RIGHT: 3.40pm – Ms Leong conducts an animated briefing for her fellow volunteers just before the combined running/shooting event, the last stage of the modern pentathlon.

BELOW: 11.14am – Volunteer Ms Leong helps American modern pentathlete Nathan Schrimsher prepare for his first bout against Kazakhstan’s German Sobolev.

ABOVE: 2.46pm - With the help of another national technical officer, Ms Leong checks the order of the athletes’ turns against the electronic scoreboard.

RIGHT: 4.03pm – Ms Leong notes down the number of hits registered by the pentathletes.
Nathan Schrimsher has been in love with pentathlon since being introduced to it at the age of 13. But Schrimsher is more than just an athlete. He is a wildlife enthusiast who races pronghorns in his New Mexico ranch and a sophomore at Eastern New Mexico University. The soft-spoken American has an earnest demeanour about him as he psychs himself before the Youth Men’s Modern Pentathlon.

While everyone else seemed to be practicing intently with headphones plastered on their ears, the 18-year old takes it easy during warm-up. Sharing his experience of the Games thus far, he said, “Singapore has been really awesome, except when I tried the durian. I had 3 bites of it and couldn’t take it anymore.”

A far cry from his favourite pre-competition snack – poptarts.

Coached by former world champion Jan Oleinski, Schrimsher has been the American junior champion for three consecutive years. In fencing, he steadies and positions himself almost too gracefully as the competition often pounces and snarls. Calm and self-possessed, Schrimsher was the last to leave the warm-ups. “Just before a competition, I try to get away by myself.”

His religious upbringing amongst a family of athletes and animal lovers seems to be transposed onto the playing field. Despite eventually finishing 13th overall, he refused to blame it on the first ever implementation of the laser pistol or the recently recovered stress fracture on his right foot. “I will do better. Now I know what to work on more.”

Exhausted from his effort, he will be taking a week off training after he leaves Singapore on August 27. “It’s weird not to be training. After all, Pentathlon is a diverse sport, which challenges both body and mind.”
WHERE SPORTS AND MUSIC MIX

BY TAN SIHAN

If there is anything as universal as sports, it would be music.

In the midst of whistles, gunfire and national anthems, it is easy to believe that the Olympic Games is limited in its soundscape.

The ongoing Celebration @ Marina Bay offers 65 free bands from August 13 to 26 to inject a harmonious groove back into your sporting life.

With music genres ranging from rock, pop to alternative funk, there is something for everyone.

In addition, with each musical marathon lasting almost seven hours daily, you can always come down whenever convenient.

With the magnificent city backdrop and resplendent waterfront, the event has so far been an impressive success.

Buskers adorn the streets while booths with interactive sports-related games are open to all.

With international bands performing, such as England’s The Click Five and Korea’s Beast, reception has been splendid.

Volunteer Polly Ang has been helping out with the stage directions since day one.

“Let’s meet people and Olympians from all around the world and it has been great fun,” the 38-year-old said.

“The music is catered for the young but even I am enjoying myself immensely,” she added.

With the magnificent city backdrop and resplendent waterfront, the event has so far been an impressive success.

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30-year-old Swedish backpacker, Tobias Johnsson said: “This place is really pretty — absolutely perfect for an outdoor musical experience.”

Singer Dominic Wong was part of the opening act on the very first day of Celebrations.

“I play folk and pop and I really hope to reach out to the international crowd like most of the other bands do,” the 22-year-old said.

“Sample us Olympians! I’m sure you love it.”

The Celebration gala offers great exposure for modest local bands, looking to showcase their talent to the youths of the world.

As Olympic champion Frank Fredericks said: “Remember to share friendships together to take pleasure and to treasure every single moment to be here for two weeks and just enjoy.”

With the Games soon coming to a close, spend whatever time you have left of this unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience exploring what the Youth Olympic Games have in store for you at this musical extravaganza.

YOVoice Shout-outs and dedications

TO TEAM GHANA

Good luck in all your games and have a great time in Singapore.

Luke Damalie, Selorm Kemevor, Eugene Acheampong, Hockey, Ghana

Leave a message for someone on facebook.com/youngolympiandaily

PHOTOS: XUE JIANYUE

TO IBRAHIM SABBY

Congrats on your gold medal. But see you at the next Olympics, I will beat you.

Park Min BWm, Archery, Korea

TO TEAM AUSTRIA

Congratulations for the two medals and please cheer to me on Wednesday! You are the greatest team with a lot of fun!

Cornelia Emser, Shooting, Austria

TO TEAM DOMINICA

We did our best, but most importantly, we enjoyed the YOG. Thanks to the greatest chaperone, Jean and her team.

Smith Hypolite, Coach, Track and Field, Dominica

TO TEAMS SWITZERLAND, BELGIUM, LIECHTENSTEIN

You’re simply the best!

Martin Fuchs, Equestrian, Switzerland

Nicole Philippaerts, Equestrian, Belgium

Patrick Marxer, Judo, Liechtenstein

PHOTOS: GOPAL KUMAR

Northam Husaini (guitar and backing vocals) and Ronny Laily (drums) of local indie-pop-punk band Plainsunset rock out to an international audience. PHOTO: GOPAL KUMAR