Chain trouble costs

By Chuang Bing Han

Trouble with his bike cost Belgian cyclist Laurens Sweeck the first placing in the mountain bike race yesterday. Hotly favoured for the seven-lap event held at Tampines Bike Park, he led the pack for most of the race, being in pole position from the first lap.

In the last lap, he had problems with his bike chain, forcing him to spend about two minutes in the technical area. To make matters worse, his face contorted.

“I lost a cogwheel,” Laurens explained after the race. “It stuck and I had to stop.” Laurens’ misfortune allowed Colombian Jhonnatan Botero, who was hot on his heels, to nip past to take the prized placing.

As he got off his bike, Jhonnatan raised his index fingers to the skies, his face contorted. “I think my friends, teammates, family, will be very proud of me,” he said.

Laurens acknowledges that such incidents are part of the sport. “I am going to take revenge at the road race. I don’t think it’s possible but I am going to try,” said Laurens to reporters after the race.

The blazing weather stood out for many of the cyclists. “I made a mistake, which is why I fell back,” he said, without elaborating. “But these things happen in cycling.”

He is looking forward to his next race on Sunday, which he is better prepared for.

“My strategy for Sunday is to remain ahead of the rest of the pack because I’ll be competing against the best,” he said.

“I’ve been defeated but not totally annihilated.”

Column

Never lose that feeling

By Lai Junjie

The life of an athlete is never easy. But it is the surmounting of personal obstacles that were thought humanly impossible that makes it all the more gratifying.

An indefinite length of time is spent in the pains of backbreaking training. One’s entire youth could be spent on preparing for that one moment that brings either the glorious ecstasy of victory, or the heartbreaking anguish of defeat.

Flashback to six years ago — I was the 17-year-old captain of my junior college’s fencing team, with all the possibilities of life laid out before me. At that point of time, I felt like I could take on the world and win.

Then came an offer that draped a heavy cloak of responsibility upon my shoulders — I was offered a place in the national youth fencing squad.

I stood at a crossroad. I was torn between pursuing a path as an athlete in the national squad, or to focus on my studies and my relationships.

I chose the latter. And sometimes I still wonder if I made the right decision.

Being an athlete is like remaining a child into adulthood. Athleticism lets one retain the same fascination of being alive, without being resigned to the monotonous realities of life.

Just the other day, I fenced a bout at a local fencing club. Before the first five points were up, I was struggling to catch my breath — something that never fazed me as a youth. It came as a jarring realisation that my time as an athlete is over.

That path is closed to me now.

So it is with a sigh that I give my advice for all young athletes.

I chose the latter. And sometimes I still wonder if I made the right decision.

Being an athlete is like remaining a child into adolescence and adulthood. Athleticism lets one retain the same fascination of being alive, without
**YOV in numbers**

**COUNTRIES WHICH WON ONE BRONZE MEDAL**
- CANADA, GEORGIA, INDIA, NIGERIA, POLAND, SERBIA, SINGAPORE, SWEDEN, UKRAINE, UZBEKISTAN, ARMENIA

**NEWS**

**100 Points in a 1962 game scored by basketball legend Wilt Chamberlain (above), the only person in NBA history to do so.**

**11 The age of Norwegian Sonja Henie, II, who became the youngest participant in the Winter Olympic Games in 1924. She is said to have been the first to incorporate ballet moves into a skating routine.**

**1972 The Summer Games during which Belarus gymnast Olga Korbut completed a backward somersault on the beam as part of her gold-medal winning routine.**

**1540 The approximate age of the oldest discovered football. It was made of leather and pig’s bladder.**

**NEWS OF THE WORLD**

**AMSTERDAM**

The ninth Olympiad in Amsterdam featured many firsts. For the first time athletes competed under the Olympic flame, and paraded before the crowd at the opening ceremony. Women also got the chance to compete for medals in athletics and gymnastics.

**USA**

If gymnast Shawn Johnson could add any sport to the Olympic Games it would be dancing.

**GREECE**

Amateur boxing became an Olympic sport in 1908.

**THAILAND**

The oldest and youngest YOG athletes competing in artistic gymnastics are both from Thailand. Chokpaoumpai, Women’s Birthday falls on 1 January 1993, while Muakthanan Rawirarn’s birthday is on 31 December 1995.

**SINGAPORE**

The YOG theme song “Everyone” is sung by singers representing five continents: Jody Williams representing Africa, Sean Kingston representing America, Tabitha Nauser representing Asia, Steve Appleton representing Europe, and Jessica Mauboy representing Oceania.

**YOVoice**

Shout-outs and dedications

**TO HIS OPPONENTS**

Just do your best and good luck in the race!
Blaze Steele, 10km Walk, Australia

**TO HER OPPONENTS**

I hope they all enjoy the Games and have a good competition. Have fun and enjoy the Games! Melina Brenner, High Jump, Germany

**TO EVERYONE**

Be brave. Have the will to compete even if your opponents are stronger than you! Mennaatalla Ahmed, Fencing, Egypt

**TO HIS OPPONENTS**

Just do your best, remember about fairplay.
Sergey Zeizman, Basketball, Israel

**TO SHOOTING TEAM**

Good luck to all my competitors, shooters and the Egyptian team.
Oma El Haroun, Shooting, Egypt

**Leave a message for someone on facebook.com/youngolympiandaily**

**IN NUMBERS**

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“I am satisfied and I’ve done my best.”
— Deng Wei, China
Gold medallist, Women’s 58kg Weightlifting

“I’m disappointed but I’ll try hard for the future… I want to be the world champion.”
— Iranian wrestler Mehran Sheikhi, in tears after his loss to eventual Gold medallist Alpar Balzhimiev from Team Russia.

---

1995.
Rawiwarn’s birthday falls on 1 January 1993, while Weena’s birthday is on 31 January 1995.
HIGH SPIRITS DESPITE LOW RANKINGS
Can-do attitude propels exuberant boys towards the match of their lives

BY BHAVAN JAI PRAGAS

A tight-knit team with an abundance of natural leaders. This could well be the decisive strength of the Singapore hockey boys in the Games. Speaking to the Young Olympian Daily on the eve of their Games campaign, the 16-man squad was quietly confident despite being up against hockey powerhouses like Pakistan and Australia. The team features five schools’ captains, and has been playing together for about a year in preparation for the Games.

When asked what the mood was like within the group with massive games looming, a beaming Muhammad Amirul Asyraf, 16, exclaimed “Great!”, with teammates nodding in agreement.

The build-up to the Games has been rigorous yet progressive, according to coach Gerard Danker. “Overseas training has been useful in getting our players used to playing against top-level senior players in Premier League, pitting their skills against hockey powerhouses in the local hockey circuit. With the massive games looming, a beaming Muhammad Amirul Asyraf, 16, exclaimed “Great!”,

The team learnt a lot from the pressure and aggression that is common in top-level hockey matches.

Nur Ashriq, along with 17-year-old Noor Shah Silas Abdul Razak, are two players who will be closely watched by local fans, having made their mark in last year’s Men’s Junior World Cup. Both players made the squad for that tournament, despite being considerably younger than their peers.

“Exposure, experience and knowledge,” was Nur Ashriq’s reply when asked what he brought to the YOG team having played in the Junior World Cup.

Apart from talented players, tactics will also play a large part in determining Singapore’s success in the Games. With good passing ability and a number of technically gifted players, the team will be employing a ‘soak and counter’ strategy, according to coach Danker. The team learnt a lot from the pressure and aggression that is common in top-level hockey matches.

“Exposure, experience and knowledge,” was Nur Ashriq’s reply when asked what he brought to the YOG team having played in the Junior World Cup.

Regardless of their fate in this Games, the team seems poised for a bright future. Having gelled together, it is the intention of hockey officials to keep this group together for some time yet. “Our long-term aim is to build a team that will compete in the 2013 Junior World Cup,” said coach Danker with conviction.

BOATS A-HOY!

Hoping to catch some sun, sand and sailing action, photojournalist Ivan Tan was roaming East Coast Park to watch the second Women’s Techno 293 race of the day.

10.57am
Athletes hang around a resting area chatting over lunch.

11.21am
Athletes hang around a resting area chatting over lunch.

11.32am
The starting horn sounds and athletes move their boats into the water.

1.00pm
The emcee provides live race updates at the media booth as boat correspondents update on Twitter. The first windsurfing and sailing races are taken by Great Britain and Israel respectively.

2.13pm
Singapore’s Audrey Yong drops her sail and is tailed by Israel’s Naomi Cohen.

2.16pm
The crowd is ecstatic when Audrey Yong comes in first in the day’s final windsurfing race.

Weightlifter collapses

Egyptian weightlifter Amal Mohamed collapsed on stage during the Girls’ 38kg Weightlifting finals last night. This came after her attempts at the Clean & Jerk had all been declared no-lifts due to incorrect technique.

As the 16-year-old lay on the platform sobbing, volunteers moved to the front of the stage to block her off from the crowd. The crowd then clapped and cheered for her in a show of reassurance.

Australian hockey team wins

The Australian boys’ hockey team signalled their gold medal intentions last night, beating hosts Singapore 8-1 in the first match of their YOG campaign.

Decked in their traditional gold and olive green, the Australians were ruthless in executing set-pieces. 4 out of their 8 goals were scored from penalty corners.

First time in a pool

Liberian swimmers Sima Weah and Mika-Jah Yeah competed for the first time in a swimming pool when they contested in heat one of the youth men’s 50m freestyle event at Singapore Sports School on Tuesday. “We swim in the open river,” said Mika-Jah.

“It was hell! I’m happy, but I’m dead.”

-BMX rider Teagan O’Keefe (RSA) after finishing the gruelling junior women’s cross country final at Tampines Bike Park.
Chat with a Champion

Profile

Andreas Trajkovski
Long Jump
Denmark

Faith Motivates Him To Compete

Danish long jumper Andreas Trajkovski Sorensen shares how he prepares for each long jump event and looks forward to the competition at the Games. Photos by Ivan Tan

By Yu Shasha

For Danish long jumper, 17-year-old Andreas Trajkovski Sorensen, his belief in God is what gives him the ability to go through each competition.

Before he competes, the devout Christian makes it a practice to say a prayer to alleviate the stress of competing and to help him focus on his objectives. He explained: “Believe in yourself and believe in God’s power.”

Sporting a gold cross necklace, Andreas shared that he has never removed it from his neck ever since his mother gave it to him two years ago. His faith has also been instrumental in helping him get back on his feet after a foot injury that lasted four months.

Today, Andreas is back in good shape and is ready to take home the Gold medal at the Games. At the 2009 Danish championship in Odense, Andreas achieved a record of 7.41m (with a wind speed of +0.9). He is also the reigning Youth Olympic Festival Gold Medallist.

Andreas will be back in school after the YOG where he will resume his study curriculum. Like many other athletes, he is currently studying sports but his favourite subjects are Danish and Mathematics.

On a final and lighter note, he declared cheekily: “I might tattoo the word ‘Olympics’ on my breast if I win a medal!”

The boys long jump qualifications begins today.

Interview with Sergey Bubka

Previously a 100m sprinter and long jumper, Sergey Bubka burst into the pole vaulting scene in 1983. To date, he has won six consecutive world championships and one Olympic gold medal.

He was the first athlete to break the height of 20 feet in pole vault.

Number of times he has broken the world record.

The year he broke his first world record.

“If you never lose, you will never win. The question is what do you need to do after you lose.”

—Sergey Bubka on how he handles defeat

PHOTOS: INTERNET
“Being able to be part of the YOG is a great stepping stone for even bigger International Games.”

— Andreas on being a Young Olympian

Dynamic rowing duo

Anastasia and Elizaveta Tikhanova, the twin rowers representing Russia in this YOG, turned 17 on August 16. Like two peas in a pod, both have brown hair and, at 1.9m, tower over their peers. Not only do the sisters share a room at home, they are also sharing a room at the Village. Working together on the same team, they appear to be peaking in performance, emerging third in the first rowing heats, defeating India and Thailand and qualifying directly for the semi-finals. Crews which do not progress directly to the semi-finals competed in the Junior Women’s Pair repechage on the previous day for a chance to compete in the semi-finals.

In the boat, pairs need to work together seamlessly to maximise speed as the course has been halved from the 2,000m in World Rowing Junior Championships to 1,000m.

When asked about how they will be spending their birthday, Elizaveta replied: “Training, training…”, with Anastasia quipping: “… and more training.”

This year, the sisters will be celebrating their birthday only after the rowing finals end next Wednesday. “It is very tough competition here,” Anastasia observed. “We are up against strong contenders.” Russia finished one position behind Hungary in the Czech Republic’s World Rowing Junior Championships final last weekend.

The sisters are not willing to back down without a fight. On competing against their rivals from Germany, Great Britain and Australia, Elizaveta said: “We give it our best shot and that is what is important.” “This is our most memorable competition so far — to compete on the world stage in the first Youth Olympics,” added Anastasia, who is the younger twin by 15 minutes.

The girls started rowing when their parents, who are professional rowers, introduced them to the sport when they were 14. When asked what it is like coaching a pair of twins, Coach Andrey Klimovskikh said it was easy to communicate with the twins as they understand each other very well. He added that winning a medal would be their best birthday present to themselves.

BY CHLOE TANG

DNA

TAYLA FORD

WRESTLING
NEW ZEALAND

The first thing I do when I wake up is go for a run.

If I were not an athlete I would be___wrestling___now.

My best friend is___Coach___.

Describe your best friend in 3 words: Beautiful, Fierce, Winning.

I knew I wanted to be an athlete when I was___10 years old; I was dragged into my first wrestling match years ago.

The weirdest thing I do when I train is___work on circles.

Circles

Natasha, Hi! =)
**CHASING DREAMS, NOT GRADES**

**BY CANDICE NEO**

Sports versus school. This is the choice some of the Young Olympians are facing. Many athletes who are competing this August at the Games are due to take important exams this year; be it the GCE ‘O’ Levels, ‘A’ Levels, or the equivalent Graduating Exams. Some, such as Singapore’s Stefanie Tan and Rainer Ng, have taken the major step of putting aside their studies altogether while they pursue their sports dreams.

Tennis player Stefanie, 18, took a year off her studies to participate in numerous international competitions to improve her ranking in time for the Games. Similarly swimmer Rainer has stopped studying for a year with the blessing of his school principal. He has been preparing non-stop for a year with the hope of winning a medal at the Games. The half-day tour was well-received by Canadian athletic team head coach Thelma Wright. The 16-year-old’s creation was eventually named one of the two most creatively designed terrariums.

Wang Xiaodong tries his hand at terrariums with China canoeist Liu Jiao’s note in Mandarin. “Studies are important, but for me, I can’t live without swimming. I need to swim... So I need to have a balance between both.”

For now, they will be giving their studies two or three months later. Joelle is taking her GCE ‘O’ levels exams after the Games. Singapore swimmer Adeline Winata, 16, is taking her GCE ‘O’ levels at the end of this year. “Studies are important, but for me, I can’t live without swimming. I need to swim... So I need to have a balance between both.”

**Make your own take-home garden**

**BY CLARA LOCK**

In between training and competition, athletes get the chance to create and take home a little slice of Singapore. They experience abundant greenery and put together their very own terrariums, or mini gardens enclosed in a glass jar, as part of the Hort Park exploration journey.

The Hort Park exploration is one of three tours under the Culture and Education Programme. The other two take athletes to Marina Barrage and Pulau Ubin, where they will learn about water conservation and teamwork respectively. The athletes were visibly excited about making the terrariums with China canoeist Wang Xiaodong eager to volunteer in the demonstration for his peers. Athletes were given soil and small plants to start off, and encouraged to adorn their terrariums with decorative materials provided.

Many plastered their glass jars with messages of encouragement to their teammates. “Give your best for the competitions!” read China diver Liu Jiao’s note in Mandarin. The 16-year-old’s creation was eventually named one of the two most creatively designed terrariums.

A walking tour of Hort Park demonstrated some of Singapore’s recycling efforts, and involved the athletes in simple games that taught them more about the environment. A team relay game had them tossing beanbags into boxes and scrambling to identify local vegetation, familiarising athletes with Singapore’s plant life.

Venue manager of Hort Park, Mr Andy Chua, hoped athletes would be impacted by the exploration journey: “Every action we do has an effect on the environment and all of us can do our part to protect this fragile environment.”

The half-day tour was well-received by Canadian athletic team head coach Thelma Wright. Said the sprightly 59-year-old: “We are the generation we need to educate so I hope that from today’s activities, the athletes will understand the importance of conservation.”
“Little Teddy” is not your ordinary teddy bear.

Everytime German long jumper Lena Malkus puts in a good performance during competitions, all the credit will go to her cuddly bear.

“I will place him at the start-off point before the match even starts,” the 17-year-old said.

She has faith in “Little Teddy” and brings him along for all her competitions. In fact, she secured a Top Five position in the Long Jump Qualification among 15 athletes yesterday.

Lena’s pre-match ritual might seem childish to some, however it means a great deal to this budding athlete who believes in her pre-match charm.

And she is not alone, many other athletes interviewed in the Village believe strongly in pre-match rituals to win their sport.

Israeli basketball player Tom Maayan wears a piece of special garment for every competition he plays.

The 17-year-old flashed a grin as he readily revealed his lucky charm—a pair of beige-coloured boxers. He has had the pair of boxers ever since he started playing competitive basketball a few years back.

Accessories, especially necklaces are popular items that athletes carry as charms.

16-year-old Khaleef Sasi Abdullah wears a peace sign necklace to every match. The Singaporean hockey player got it during his team’s most recent training trip.

For French handball player Theo Derot, he prays while clutching his lucky cross necklace before every competition. The athlete believes that a little “external help” might up his chances of winning the match.

Meanwhile, his teammate Hugo Descat is not afraid to share that he kisses his favourite yellow t-shirt before every match. Smiling shyly, he said: “The t-shirt is given to me by my sister, so I treasure it a lot.”

In fact, there are many other famous Olympians with famous pre-match rituals. For instance, sailing maestro Sarah Ayton always wears her lucky red socks during the Games — she won gold in the 2004 Olympic Games.

Though there is no exact scientific explanation to explain the effectiveness of pre-game rituals, these methods help to calm athletes and help them mentally prepare for matches.

In an article titled “Pregame rituals prep athletes for performance” by the University Daily Kansan, it explains how such rituals make the best out of their performance under stress.

Another common pre-match ritual is listening to music — as seen by swimmer Michael Phelps before he enters the pool.

For Sergey Zelikman, he enjoys listening to Hebrew, Russian and English songs from his favourite headphones. “I have to do it from the moment I leave the village until I begin my warm-up,” the Israeli basketballer said.

Hopefully all rituals performed by athletes during the Youth Olympic Games will prove their worth by helping these athletes achieve their personal targets.

One thing is for sure, Lena will not too far away from “Little Teddy” when competing in the Games anytime now.

“I have to do it from the moment I leave the village until I begin my warm-up.”

— Israeli basketballer, Sergey Zelikman on listening to music before competitive matches.
If your body parts are larger than these life-sized images, contact us at youngolympiandaily@gmail.com to get your reward.

The tallest dude stands at 2.11m. He is Jordan Bonilauri, 18, a handball player from France.

The biggest palm and foot belong to 18-year-old Egyptian handball player Mohamed Maher. His foot size is 52 (33cm).

PHOTOS: WANG SIMIN