GALLOP, TROT, TRIP AND TUMBLE

Most riders at the Singapore Turf Club yesterday were still getting used to their horses.

BY CANDICE NEO

Equestrians struggled to keep their mounts under rein yesterday at the Jumping Round One team event. Many competitors also incurred penalties as their horses knocked down the fences during the jump.

Kazakhstan’s Timur Patarov, 17, even fell off after his horse, Chatham Park Rosie, tripped over a fence. He was disqualified as a result.

There were 12 fences that each pair had to jump over. Knocking down one fence earned the rider a penalty of four points.

For the first time in Olympic history, riders competed on assigned horses as the Games’ Organising Committee felt that this would make the competition as fair as possible. Their horses were determined in a draw on August 14.

Athletes had just over three days to train with the Australian thoroughbreds, and many were still trying to keep them under control during the competition.

“It was a rather difficult horse,” said 17-year-old Nicola Philippaerts from Belgium. He chalked up a four-point penalty while riding on Gippsland Girl.

For others like Panamanian athlete Alejandra Ortiz, 17, the lack of chemistry between rider and steed was to be expected, given the short practice time.

“I think it was very good,” she said, adding that this could be one of her best performances. Alejandra received a total penalty of 8 points.

Two competitors also had to compete with horses that had been changed just 24 hours before the competition. Chilean Alberto Schwalm’s previous mount, Teddy Waffles, was injured while Italian Valentina Isoardi’s Noblewood Cinzano was too strong for her to handle.

During the timed competition, equestrians had to guide their horses over obstacles of up to 1.2 metres in height.

As jumps were attempted, the audience as though in unison, held their breaths. Unsuccessful jumps were met with groans of disappointment while triumphs received cheers and shouts of encouragement.

But the home crowd reserved their biggest cheers for local athlete, 18-year-old Caroline Chew. As she rode Gatineau into the arena, the stands erupted with support.

While the Asian team is eight points out of medal contention, Chew believes that the competition is still wide open. “It will be a true test of all the horses’ fitness as the competition wears on.”

Europe, Australasia and Africa are currently tied in the lead with four penalties.

The equestrians will have another practice session today before the second round of the team event on Friday. Individual competition begins next week.

“It will be a true test of all the horses’ fitness as the competition wears on.”

— Caroline Chew, Singaporean Equestrian
COLUMN
Remaking the Olympic spirit

BY BHAVAN JAIPRAGAS

It is hard to put a finger on what the true Olympic spirit is. For many, modern Olympics founder Pierre De Coubertin’s famous French saying underlines its essence: “L’important n’est pas de gagner, mais de participer” (The important thing is not to win, but to take part).

For some, the true Olympic spirit is found away from the podium and the medal winners. Instead, they look to athletes who showcase a great amount of selflessness and compassion for fellow athletes as shining examples.

One such athlete immortalised in Games folklore is the late Italian bobsledder Eugenio Monti, dubbed “The Flying Redhead” for his successes on the Alpine slopes. In the 1964 Winter Olympics, Monti famously lent British bobsledders a bolt from his sled after they broke theirs. The British team went on to clinch the gold medal while Monti’s team finished with a bronze.

When criticised for his act, Monti said: “Nash didn’t win because I gave him the bolt. He won because he had the fastest run”.

For his act of selflessness, Monti was awarded the first ever Pierre de Coubertin medal, a medal created to honour athletes who demonstrate the spirit of sportsmanship in Olympic events.

For our young athletes who have converged here in Singapore, there is no better time than now to walk in the footsteps of such Olympic heroes. Never mind his act of sacrifice, Young Olympians to walk in the footsteps of such Olympic heroes. Instead, they look to athletes who showcase a great amount of selflessness and compassion for fellow athletes as shining examples.

**NEWS IN NUMBERS**

4
The number of times the United States has hosted the Summer Olympic Games. No other country has hosted more Summer Olympic Games.

80
The maximum number of seconds a national anthem can be played at the Games, according to Olympic rules. This has caused some countries to create a shortened version of their national anthem.

1928
The idea of an Olympic flame burning from the start of the Games to the closing was first introduced at the 1928 Amsterdam Games.

1936
(Above) The Berlin Games in 1936 was the first Games to be televised.

FACTS OF THE WORLD

GREECE
Ilias Iliaidis won Greece’s first-ever gold medal in judo.

USA
Volleyball was invented by William George Morgan of Holyoke, Massachusetts in 1895.

JAPAN
A sport similar to football (also known as soccer in the United States and elsewhere) was played 3,000 years ago in Japan.

RUSSIA
The record for the most Olympic medals ever won is held by gymnast Larissa Latynina. She competed in three Games, between 1956 and 1964, and won 18 medals.

BANGLADESH
Bangladesh competed in the 1984 Summer Olympics for the first time ever.
Rain pelted down, turning the waters of Marina Reservoir dark grey and choppy. Just above, rowers’ fortunes were unfolding in a manner as capricious as the waves they stroked through.

Surprises were at every turn for yesterday’s rowing finals.

Lithuanian Rolandas Mascinskas produced the most major upset, upstaging two time junior world champion Felix Bach from Germany to claim the Junior Men’s Single Sculls gold. He maintained a strong lead from the start, finishing a good 2.41 seconds ahead of second-placed Felix to incredulous cheers from Lithuanian fans.

Head of Lithuania’s delegation Algirdas Raslanas said Rolandas was expected to win a medal due to his strong performance this season. However, he noted the challenge that Felix posed, saying it was “a very big fight”. Said Rolandas at a press conference later: “It feels good because I am the champion.”

The Pairs contest was no less of a surprise. Great Britain’s Georgia Howard-Merrill, one of the pair that boat favourites Australia, said staying focused on their performance and not the other teams’ was key.

“Because the race is so short, if we had our eyes on another boat we would fall behind. So we had our eyes in the boat the whole way and had a really good start,” she said.

“We focused on performance not result. Results come if you have the performance so it worked out really well.”

The standard Olympic rowing distance of 2,000m has been halved for the Youth Olympic Games.

About the overcast conditions, Georgia said in amusement: “The weather was what England’s like every day, it’s standard.”

Even junior women world champion Judith Sievers from Germany had a near scare in her Single Sculls race. The Ukrainian and French rowers pulled away from her for the majority of the race. The distance was only made up in the last stretch, with Ukrainian Natalia Kovalova coming in a mere 0.42 seconds behind her.

The spirits of the raucous crowd at the finals could not be dampened by the wet weather. Opening umbrellas and donning ponchos, they cheered on their favourites.

Physical Education teacher Chia Taiyu, 29, said his favourite race was the Women’s Single Sculls because of the close finish.

His young charges from Kent Ridge Secondary School were just as enthusiastic, saying the Men’s Single Sculls was their pick for race of the day.

**Stormy Day for Rowers**

Multiple upsets define rowing finals at Marina Reservoir

BY CASSANDRA YEAP

**T-30 MINUTES TO...**

The sport of ladies and gentlemen

In search of real prancing horses, photojournalist Lam Yarn went to the Singapore Turf Club Riding School to catch the elegant riders of the equestrian team jumping event.

8.57am
Heading out from Kranji MRT Station. I’m early!

9.08am
I am heading the wrong way! Making an about-turn towards the riding school in swirling heat.

9.18am
Lyo and Merly are at the entrance greeting spectators! What if I pull Lyo’s tail? Just kidding.

9.28am
The first rider, Mohammad Alanzaroot of Syria, rides Van Dieren into the arena. The bell rings for him to start and kicks off the jumping competition.

9.44am
Switzerland’s Martin Fuchs posts the first clean sheet of the competition! He breaks into a wide smile.

9.58am
The crowds gasps as Kazakhstan’s Timur Patarov falls from his steed!

10.56am
Last rider Marcelo Chirico of Uruguay also finishes his routine without penalties.

**BRIEFS**

**Weightlifting heavyweight**

PHOTO: SPH/STOOGC/CHIA TI YAN

Winning the women’s over-69kg category yesterday was Russian Olga Zubova, one of the lightest weightlifters in the competition. She lifted a combined 262.5kg (125kg, 137.5kg) with a Thai weightlifter Chitchanok Pulabatsakul. The latter had to settle for silver as she is heavier.

Competitors of the heaviest women’s category ranged from 69-119kg. Olga weighs 71kg.

**China’s golden touch**

China now has seven swimming golds after winning two more golds yesterday. Tang Yi finished first in the women’s 200m freestyle category with a timing of 1:58.78. She was 2.21 seconds ahead of Boglarka Kapas from Hungary who finished second. Liu Lan won the women’s 50m fly with a timing of 26.5%, finishing just 0.09 seconds ahead of Elena di Liddos from Italy.

**Double win for South Korea**

South Korea added two gold medals to their medal tally in the women - 63kg and the men - 73kg Taekwondo events yesterday. Yesterday was also the first day that both gold medals in the Taekwondo events went to one single country.

**Singapore’s first silver medal**

18-year-old Rainer Ng won Singapore’s first swimming medal after finishing second in the Boys’ 50m backstroke final yesterday evening. His timing of 26.4% was slower than his qualifying time of 26.3%. This will be the host country’s third medal of the YOG.

**Second food-related incident**

Last Sunday, 21 YOG volunteers were struck with diarrhoea and abdominal pains. After investigation, the National Environment Agency has confirmed that hygiene standards and preparation of the cater to the venues are in order. The volunteers, who are based in East Coast Park and Singapore Indoor Stadium have since fully recovered.
Middleweight boxer Joe Ward has been hailed by international media as the name to look out for in amateur boxing.

Hailing from Ireland, Joe says: “I would say Damien Hooper is the best opponent I have ever met, but I believe I am better.”

He is the reigning Middleweight World Youth Champion, after triumphing over Damien, and is looking for his third major title at the Games.

“I want to win all the time. I have beaten many competitors before, including those who are here in YOV, so I am pretty confident in winning the Gold medal,” he says.

The 16-year-old claims that being the only child, his boxing family was what influenced him to start training when he was eight.

“All along I knew I wanted to be a boxer and even when I retire, I want to be a professional boxing coach,” he says. Besides being committed to boxing, Ward also enjoys watching tennis and hockey.

He trains seven days a week and visits the gym twice a day. He also studies his opponents on his laptop, analysing their moves and taking note of their strengths and weaknesses.

His motivation is to make Ireland proud. “I gain respect from people around me. The benefits of being an athlete is so great and so I always encourage my friends to get into sports so as to stay out from trouble like drinking and drugs,” he says.

BY YU SHASHA AND DAPHNE LIM
Despite losing the title of World Youth Middleweight Champion to Joe Ward of Ireland, Damien Hooper has high respect for his competitor.

Touted as Australia’s rising star in boxing, 18-year-old Damien is a strong contender for the Men’s Middleweight (75 kg) category.

Prepared to put up a good fight, he is confident of his chances of winning a medal.

Growing up in Queensland, he was first introduced to the sport by his uncle and older cousin — both boxers. Damien attributes his success to a second chance offered to him. “I was hanging around with some mischievous teenagers and met Chris, a policeman who took me under his wing.”

Chris Seng was a former national amateur boxing champion who now acts as Damien’s coach, role model and friend.

Within three years of competitive boxing, Damien managed secure several titles under his belt. He clinched the silver medal in the Middle Weight Category at the Youth World Championship 2010, the highest Australian achievement ever.

Beneath his cool demeanour, Damien displays a soft spot for his family through the tattoos on his body. Tattooed on his right arm and neck is a tribute to his grandmother and his aboriginal culture.

Through boxing, Damien hopes to be an inspiration to indigenous children in Australia. He believes it is important to give youths a chance to prove themselves and not give up on them.

Damien will be competing at the October 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, and has also set his sights on the 2012 Olympic Games in London.
THE ART OF SPORTS

BY CANDICE NEO

Throughout centuries, there has been a close correlation between sports and the arts. Like the arts, sports bring people together in a universal appreciation; both bind the heartstrings of people from all over the world, as they cheer for a common goal despite cultural differences.

Sports-related arts not only brings out the emotions behind sporting moments, but is also symbolic of the unifying sporting spirit. Now at the heart of the Youth Olympic Village, the arts is the platform that highlights the values of YOG.

At the Olympic Gallery, electronic screens feature photographs of athletes at their trainings, competitions and around the village. “This can be shown as memories for athletes,” said Mah Rui Qin, 17, a Photoscope Archiving Assistant. “Arts paint out this picture of sports, and both need enthusiasm,” she added.

The Cultural Education Programme (CEP) is a range of different forms and aspects of the arts, involving cultural performances, evenng festivals, exhibits and games at the World Culture Village, exhibits of the Olympics history at the Gallery and many others.

The YOG sculptures at Marina Bay Promenade also promote the universality of sports. ‘A World United’ depicts sportsmen engaging in the 26 sports of YOG in a circular shape, symbolising the unifying spirit of peace and sports.

Another sculpture, ‘Breathe’, is a kinetic artwork that captures wind by day, converting this energy to tiny lights at night. It serves as a reminder of the importance of protecting our environment and keeping ‘green’.

The performing arts too highlight the YOG spirit. The Chinese dance troupe from Bedok South Secondary expresses the importance of unity through its dance performed at various YOG events. It fuses together Indian, Malay, Chinese and contemporary elements, underlining Singapore’s multicultural community. Team leader Abigail Iwan, 16, also feels dance and sports are similar in some ways.

“They are both physically demanding and require a lot of teamwork,” she said.

It’s time for Africa

BY SHARIFAH FADHLAH ALSHAHAB AND NUR ASYIQIN

Step into the World Culture Village and a traditional African cheer greets you. “Jambo! Hakuna matata!” students chant, as they thump on drums, shake their maracas and clack their tambourines. Jambo is a greeting in the Swahili language, a loud “Hello!” to welcome visitors to the Kenyan booth.

The Village Square has been buzzing with music, dance and art — the lifeblood of African culture. Everywhere, children in ethnic costumes add colour to the already vibrant culture.

Bedok West Primary School students wrapped in tribal clothes attracted crowds as they danced to “Waka Waka”, the South African FIFA World Cup anthem. They waved cardboard spears and did cartwheels, drawing loud whooshtes from the audience. Across the square, a group of Boon Lay Secondary School girls entertained the crowd in an energetic traditional dance from Zambia. These Malay dancers learnt the dance from Miss World Africa and have been training for nearly a month.

“It’s very different because you use a lot of energy. The movements are very sharp,” said Nadiah, who is used to the gentle swaying motions of Malay dance.

Research combined with actual experiences related by their African friends provided volunteers with a better understanding of the country they were twinned with.

In the Togo booth not too far away, Togoan official Kokou Nagbla conducted an impromptu lesson on Ewe, one of the languages spoken in his country. The student volunteers attempted to mimic him, stumbling over the pronunciation.

Mr Nagbla speaks five languages: German, English, French, Kabiyé and Ewe. While Kabiyé is primarily spoken in the North of Togo, he explained that Ewe is largely used in the South.

Other African representatives also dropped by their country’s booths to share about their culture with the Singaporean students.

Traditional pieces of art such as sand paintings and sculptures donated by the Angolan embassy were on display in the Angolan booth.

Angolans were happy to share more about their experiences and customs with all visitors coming to their booth.

“Most of the artefacts are of women. In Angola, men respect women a lot and portray that in the form of art,” said 15-year-old Lucretia Lucias Jeralde.

These artefacts will be displayed in the school after the exhibition.

Although the Africa theme of the World Culture Village will end today, Africa’s lively culture will continue to beat in our minds, like the lingering sound of traditional drums.

At the World Culture Village in the YOV, athletes have fun at the booths, where they learn about cultures from around the world. At the Moldova booth, Lucky Nelela and Mncendisi Gumede from Zimbabwe’s football team feel being at the village is an interesting experience.

“We have never seen some of these games before,” Lucky said.

Booth volunteers Nigel Kan and Darren Low, both 14, feel arts and sports highlight the equality of people from all over the world. “It is also important for the athletes to know more about one another’s culture and beliefs,” Darren said.

“The athletes will also respect the different cultures as they learn about them,” added Melissa Iype, a volunteer at the Slovakia booth.
**“THE CORROSIVE EVIL OF SPORT”**

South African weightlifter Ramela Phello John having a go at the “Play True Challenge” game at the WADA Play True Generation Center. **PHOTO: SHAWN SEE**

Doping centre in Village Square to educate young Olympians on the perils of doping in sport today

**BY SHAWN SEE**

To educate budding athletes on the perils of doping, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has set up a centre in the Village Square at the heart of the Youth Olympic Village.

The agency is advocating its Play True Generation Programme, an initiative that provides young athletes with a platform to demonstrate their commitment to the ideals of fair play and to learn more about doping-free sport.

“The Play True Generation Programme will be a unique experience for WADA and the young athletes attending these Games,” said WADA Director General, David Howman.

WADA hopes to reach out to and educate the youths through this interactive and fun game. It is a computer simulation where participants have to alternate between a sport based video game and make life decisions that affects the ability of their character in the video game.

“The game was really interesting and educational,” said Turkish swimmer Bertug Coskun, who coincidentally was the first athlete to undergo a doping test after his 400m freestyle heats at the Singapore Sports School.

Doping is strictly prohibited during the course of the Youth Olympic games and measures have been undertaken by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to ensure that all athletes are clean.

“The fight against doping has always been my number one priority and we have shown that we mean business in the traditional Olympic Games, both winter and summer,” said President of the IOC Jacques Rogge, who labelled doping as a “corrosive evil of sport”.

Many doping officers have been recruited by the IOC, and Jasper Blades is one of several international officers who was specially flown to Singapore to perform the doping tests. Along with a band of locally trained officers, they form the backbone to ensure the clean status of the athletes. “It is imperative that there are anti-doping measures in place and it is a requirement that the athletes are to be tested,” said Mr Blades, who hails from Barbados.

Echoing the importance of anti-doping and fair play, French boxer Tony Yoka, 18, said: “Doping is a very bad thing for sports. I'm concerned because I lost in the finals at the recent AIBA Youth World Championships 2010 to (Croatia's Filip Hrgovic) who was alleged to have taken performance enhancing drugs.”

Australian hurdler Nicholas Hough felt that it is very important to say no to doping. “It is good to keep sports clean. If doping was allowed, it will only be a matter of who has the best chemist available,” he said.

**MARION JONES**

Once the female darling of American athletes, Marion Jones was a talented sprinter and long jumper who won 3 gold and 2 bronze medals at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. After she confessed to taking performance enhancing drugs in October 2008, the medals were stripped from her and she faced charges.

**BEN JOHNSON**

Canadian sprinting sensation Ben Johnson's reputation took a huge nose dive in 1988 despite beating his own world record en route to his Olympic Gold in the 100m sprint. He was caught doping and subsequently admitted to have taken steroids. In the end, he was disqualified and his world record was revoked.

**MICHELLE SMITH**

Triple Olympic gold medalist Irish swimmer Michelle Smith's success in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics in which she also won a bronze medal was shrouded in controversy as she was accused of doping. Although she was not officially charged, Smith received a four-year ban in 1998 after being found guilty of tampering with her urine sample.
A NATION OF CHEERS

For millions, the Olympic Games is a television programme. Beyond the glass of the camera lens lies the eyes of men and women, waiting for that moment of victory. Yet in many ways, the critical player is that man amidst the rows of spectator stands. A dose of patriotism is an energy boost; a chorus of it becomes a force to behold. Some days, win or loss matters little when you know, behind you, a nation of cheers await.