



## NOT-SO-GENTLY DOWN THE STREAM

PHOTO BY DAMIEN MEYER / ASSOCIATED PRESS

South Africa rowers (from rear, unseen) James Thompson, Matthew Brittain, John Smith and Sizwe Ndlovu (front) celebrate victory in the men's lightweight four rowing final at the London Olympics in Eton Dorney, near Windsor, England, on Thursday. It was the first-ever Olympic rowing gold medal for South Africa.

# Tong ready to start over again

## Judoka hopes to put drug controversy behind her with gold medal on Friday

By CHEN XIANGFENG  
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It doesn't matter that the beds are terrible in the Athletes' Village.

Tong Wen is sleeping just fine at night.

China's world champion judoka has left her doping ban behind and has her sights set on defending her Olympic gold medal on Friday in the +78kg event.

It's been a stuttering Olympic cycle for the nation's top judoka.

She tested positive for the fat-burning drug clenbuterol at the 2009 World Championships in Rotterdam, where she won the +78kg category title. She was banned for two years, and was scheduled to be eligible to be reinstated in September 2011.

But in February 2011, her bid to overturn the ban was successful, and she was reinstated as world champ. The Court of Arbitration for Sport overturned the suspension imposed by the International Judo Federation, citing a "procedural failure" in the laboratory tests.

Tong returned to international competition in May 2011, winning

gold at the Moscow Grand Slam, then the world championship in August.

All that winning couldn't shut out the criticism from those who questioned whether the ban should have been overturned.

Tong knows the best response is to win another gold medal.

"As a professional, what you should do is be focused on the preparations and competitions," she said. "I had a long and tough training before the Games, and I think it worked very well."

She's so well-prepared that she even managed to get control of that bedding situation.

"We thought it through and added something to make the bed longer and wider," the 29-year-old said. "It's not totally suitable, but it's OK for me. I'm used to the beds in Europe. I sleep well and am in great shape right now."

Tong opens her defense against Vanessa Zambotti of Mexico. Her top rival and most likely opponent in the final is Japan's Miika Sugimoto. Sugimoto won the World Championship, Asian Championship and Asian Games in Tong's absence in 2010.

Tong's coach, Wu Weifeng, said Tong is ready to go.

"She is in good shape. Our tactic



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TONG WEN  
CHINA'S JUDO WORLD AND OLYMPIC CHAMPION

is to go forward and keep aggressive. Winning judo gold is not walking over there and taking it," Wu said. "We will not use conservative or defensive tactics."

"Lots of world champions have been eliminated in other categories. In the 52kg, none of the world's top

six women made it. New faces rose and are competitive.

"We have to prepare for every round to be difficult, but we must have confidence that Tong is able to beat everyone."

Wu said Tong feels pressure but not fear.

"People have their eyes on her because she is a strong opponent and a favorite in the event. We have the confidence necessary to deal with that pressure."

Tong broke out when she was 17, winning the Asian Championship in 2000.

She made a name for herself on the international stage three years later, winning the World Open Championships title in 2003 in Osaka.

She defeated reigning champion Maki Tsukada with eight seconds to go in the heavyweight judo final at the Beijing Games, making her the first grand slam champion.

China has dominated women's judo in the +78kg category and open levels for a long time. Three Chinese judokas — Zhuang Xiaoyan in 1992, Sun Fuming in 1996 and Yuan Hua in 2000 — took gold in the Olympics.

Chinese women's judokas work with male training partners, so they are competitive in both strength and technique, combining traditional Chinese wrestling with judo.

In 2004, China had to settle for bronze, but Tong emerged to reclaim China's place atop the category.

# With Ennis, athletics gets off to fast start

By ASSOCIATED PRESS  
in London

It won't take long for the British crowd to warm up when the London Games track and field competition opens on Friday at the Olympic stadium.

Five minutes into the program, Jessica Ennis and other heptathletes will line up for the 100m hurdles, the first of seven disciplines in the event.

Ennis, born in Sheffield and one of Britain's best chance for an athletics gold, will have to shoot out of the blocks fastest since the sprint hurdles is one of her best events in the two-day competition. She will hope to build an early lead over her rivals, world champion Tatyana Chernova of Russia and defending champion Natalia Dobrynska of Ukraine.

Add the crowds and the nation's expectations, and it could all become a bit much for Ennis.

"I'm trying not to think about it too much, because that again adds more

pressure," Ennis said.

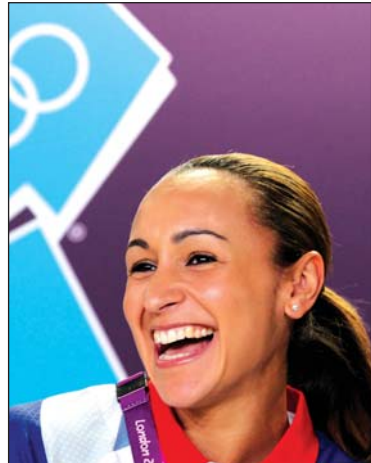
The heptathlon will also provide a fitting entree for the Bolt-Blake sprint mania over the weekend.

The opening day will also have the finals of the men's shot put and the women's 10,000. On top of that, the US-Jamaica sprint rivalry will kick off with the heats in the women's 100. As in Beijing four years ago, it is expected to be the defining story of the Games.

It was a wipeout four years ago, with Jamaicans Usain Bolt and Veronica Campbell-Brown in starring roles. Now, the Americans are bent on restoring their dominance.

"The Americans and Jamaicans have been going back and forth for several years, especially in the sprints. We do enjoy racing against each other because we are very competitive," Campbell-Brown said.

Campbell-Brown will be going for her third 200 Olympic title in a row next week, but lines up with defending champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce to face Americans Carmelita Jeter and Allyson Felix in the 100 heats Friday evening.



OLIVIA HARRIS / REUTERS

British athlete Jessica Ennis will start her push for a medal in the heptathlon on Friday.

That should be a real US-Jamaica battle come Saturday's final, while everyone expects Sunday's men's final to be a showdown between Bolt and fellow Jamaican Yohan Blake.

Tyson Gay and 2004 Olympic champion Justin Gatlin hope they will be in it for more than just a scramble for bronze.

# offtrack ...

## DRESSED FOR SUCCESS

China's female gymnasts will wear specially made outfits when they compete in the individual gymnastics events on Sunday.

Chinese sports brand Li-Ning sponsored outfits for five Chinese national teams — gymnastics, shooting, diving, table tennis and badminton — at the London Olympics. The company also custom-made different outfits for all the female gymnasts to help them distinguish their personalities in individual competitions.

"To connect the product's appearance with athletes' personalities more closely, we communicated with every Olympic gymnast on the women's team during the designing process to acquire their different preferences," said Li-Ning's designer Han Rouxue.

He Kexin also drafted a design that expressed her preference for dark colors and butterfly elements. The 20-year-old will compete in the uneven bars event with the special design on Monday.

## A SILVER FOR FLOOD VICTIMS

Women's 25m pistol silver winner Chen Ying kissed her fingers and said the medal was dedicated to Beijing, which was hit by torrential rains on July 21.

"It was not an easy job. Thanks, my fingers!" the defending Olympic shooter said.

Chen, who set an Olympic record four years ago in Beijing, was beaten by South Korean Kim Jang-mi, who finished with 792.4 points in the final.

"Athletes have different understandings of sports," she said.

"My hometown, Beijing, was hard hit by floods triggered by torrential rains after I arrived in London. The flood had a special meaning for me.

"I am not only fighting for the beloved sport and the country, but also for people in Beijing, including my coaches and family. I hope my hometown will be rebuilt and become better."

The rainstorm, reportedly the city's biggest in 60 years, killed 77 people.



## BUS DRIVER ARRESTED

The driver of an Olympics media shuttle bus was arrested by police on Thursday following a fatal collision with a cyclist just outside London's Olympic Park.

The driver, in his mid-60s, was arrested at the scene on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving, following the incident late Wednesday. An AFP reporter saw a man's legs protruding from under the double-decker bus on a Games lane slip road leading from the park. The man's mangled racing bicycle lay nearby.

The cyclist, a man aged 28, was pronounced dead at the scene.

The incident happened just outside the perimeter of the Olympic Park behind the Riverbank Arena, where a men's hockey match between Pakistan and Argentina was taking place.

## AUSSIE ROWER DETAINED

Australian rower Joshua Booth was detained by British police early on Thursday after he allegedly damaged a shop window following a night out drinking, the Australian team said.

Booth, 21, who was in the Australian men's eight that finished sixth in its final on Wednesday, also suffered minor injuries when he fainted while in police custody, Australian team chef de mission Nick Green said.

AFP-CHINA DAILY

## REPORTER'S LOG | ZHANG CHUNYAN

# Times are changing, and so are the media

It's not only Olympic athletes who try to scale new heights — so do China's media.

In the social media age, Chinese journalists pursue the Olympic spirit of "higher, faster and stronger".

Every day, I read Sina Weibo, China's popular Twitter-like micro-blogging service, and find Chinese media — news agencies, national and regional newspapers, radio and websites — are very timely in updating news and information about the Games.

Amid fierce competition, powerful Chinese portals like Sina and Tencent strive to coax famous sportspeople and those overseeing the event to use social networks to communicate with legions of netizens.

I noticed swimmer Sun Yang has 9 million Sina Weibo followers.

As Chinese media swarm into London to cover the Olympic Games, journalists work hard to grab every opportunity and keep up with the pace of the world's largest sports extravaganza.

Every time I attend the Olympic news conferences in London, I can see Chinese journalists posting short stories or pictures on *weibo* using smart phones, and there's a real undercurrent of excitement.

At a company's PR event near central London's Trafalgar Square, Chinese sports legend Lang Ping, known as the "Iron Hammer", appeared for a while as an honored guest, who represents the Chinese National Women's Volleyball Team.

I met many Chinese reporters there. When Lang appeared, two young women Chinese journalists beside me snapped photos and very quickly posted a few words like "Lang Ping has attracted much attention" on their *weibo*.

"Let's see who's fastest," they joked.

I'm also impressed to see many Chinese media are paying greater attention to the Olympic spirit and humanity of the London Games.

China's national news agency Xinhua published some strongly worded comments on Wednesday, condemning the nation's badminton players after they appeared to try to lose their match at Wembley Arena.

"This behavior seriously violated the Olympic spirit regarding fair play ... Even if they finally win the gold medal ... maybe the audience won't give them any applause," one of Xinhua's comments said.

"In sports, morality should come before anything else. Whoever violated the rules should be criticized and looked down upon."

My British friend Eleanor asked me, with a bit of surprise: "Your State media fiercely criticized your badminton match-throwing scandal? Really?"

I replied: "Yes. The gold medal isn't what's most important."

Chinese media are changing and maturing as the country develops.

Years ago, they focused more on gold medals and success. But this time, I feel media expressed more sympathy and support for losers.

Both in print and online, many media are discussing the pressure the nation's athletes are facing after some publicly apologized for losing at the London Olympics.

Weightlifter Wu Jingbiao apologized in tears for "letting down his fans and his country" in a TV interview after winning silver in the men's 56kg weightlifting event.

Many media commented: "Competing for success is encouraged. Failure is also met with more sympathy and acceptance."