

## Egyptian leader saves handballer's Games

Though handball player Ahmed Abdelwahab was told to leave the Youth Olympic Games to finish his high school exams back home in Egypt, a phone call to the Egyptian prime minister saved him from missing the finals of the men's handball tournament.



"I talked with the president of our Olympic committee and he made a phone call to our prime minister (Ibrahim Mahlab). He made the order at once that the student shall stay with the team and we will organize his exams here in the consulate in Nanjing," confirmed Dr Khaled Hammouda, president of the Egyptian Handball Federation.

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## Brazilian, once cut due to diabetes, savors gold medal

As the Brazilian anthem played at the Games' swimming venue, Brazil's Matheus Santana cried, the gold medal draped around his neck, as he stood proudly on the podium. Behind his tears, thoughts were racing through his mind.



The 18-year-old swimmer remembered all the difficulties he had to hurdle to get to the highest place on the podium. He mainly thought back to last year, when he was cut from the Brazilian team for the Junior World Championships in Dubai because of diabetes.

"The most difficult thing on my way to the gold medal was being cut from the team. I thought I was prepared, but tests showed that my diabetes was out of control. It was really hard for me at first. It made me grow, made me more mature. It was an obstacle that I had to go through. If not for that I don't think my mind would be where it is now."

## Thoughtful trampolinist ready for life after sports

Spinning through the air, trampolinist Colin Duda focused completely on his routine. When he finally landed, his mind wandered to the ancient Greeks and to Charles Dickens.



The young American has already read the classics. Dickens, Ernest Hemingway and Socrates — you name them, Duda has read them.

For Duda, who finished eighth in the men's trampoline event, there is no wall between brains and brawn. "I really stress education.

Now I do not want to put all my eggs in one basket for the trampoline because one day I will not be able to jump anymore. I like to read because it gives you a larger scope of the world. I think they (intellect and sports) feed off each other. It shapes me as a person," he said.



Emily Fraser of New Zealand celebrates after winning the individual jumping event in the equestrian competition at the Nanjing Youth Olympic Games this week. PHOTO BY XINHUA

# Individual equestrian results an encouraging sign: FEI

By XINHUA

For European riders, the Youth Olympic Games individual competition ended on a disappointing note, but the Federation Equestre Internationale considers it an encouraging sign for the National Olympic Committees outside Europe.

The sport's international ruling body believes the trend in show-jumping is changing, which is certainly a big boost for the NOCs that have been lagging behind Europe.

"Although Europeans won the team jumping gold, we just saw a very different result in the individual competition as a lot of other NOCs have come up while Europe finished behind. There were jump-offs and it is a really encouraging sign for the national federations outside Europe," said FEI second vice-president, Dr Pablo Tomas Mayorga.

Usually, the official said, one does not see such results at other show-jumping events, but the Youth Olym-

pic Games have provided a unique opportunity for young riders to showcase their talent and prove their mettle.

"Normally we do not see such results at other events where there is no age restriction. But these Games are different and we see people from the same age group and it has yielded positive results. I must say to the young riders that these Games are like opening doors for dreams to come true."

Riders from various regions that are not considered powerhouses in the sport emerged as leaders in the first round on Aug 23 after clear rounds.

Among them were Emily Fraser (New Zealand), Michael Duffy (Ireland), Sabrina Rivera Meza (El Salvador), Martina Campi (Argentina), Jake Hunter (Australia), Li Yaofeng (China), Lennard Chiang (Hong Kong of China), Maria Gabriela Brugal (Dominican Republic) and Mohamed Hatab (Egypt).

In a cliff-hanger jump-off, Fraser snatched the gold, while Campi grabbed silver and Hunter the bronze, breaking European domination in the sport.

"If we see the team event results, even there the riders from South America and other regions were close to Europe as the team silver went to the South Americans. The riders performed well despite having a chal-

lenging course," Mayorga said.

Although Europe has been a traditional power in show-jumping, Mayorga believes traveling to Europe for competition and training is not the solution.

"The riders from Asia, Africa and other regions where show-jumping is not strong may go to Europe to get exposure. But why not bring the sport home. Going to Europe can benefit a few riders, not the sport in those regions. We need sustainable progress, not temporary solutions," said the FEI official.

Mayorga said the FEI will do whatever is possible to help NOCs and regions that are willing to promote.

"We run several development programs at the child and junior levels to help the NOCs, but those who do not have this sport have to come to us for help. We are more than willing to help them to establish the sport in their NOCs," said the official.

Captain John P. Roche, the FEI director at jumping, said the FEI has altogether 134 affiliates and the sport is progressing in Southeast Asia and Oceania.

"We have 11 international events in Australia, six in New Zealand every year. We also have events in China, Hong Kong of China, Malaysia, and we can see these NOCs progressing," said Roche.