

THURSDAY'S OLYMPICS ROUNDUP



AP PHOTO

Sweden's Catherine Lindahl, left, and Anna Svaerd, right, move in to sweep after Anette Norberg releases the stone as they compete in the women's curling final at the Turin Winter Olympic Games on Thursday.

Swede women top curlers

The Swedish women's curling team rock 'n' rolled its way to a heavy medal, this one Olympic gold.

Stars of a head-banging, leather-and-chains music video back home, the Swedes played a conservative game to beat Switzerland 7-6 in 11 ends with a double-takeout on the last stone of an extra end. Earlier, Canada beat Norway 11-5 in eight ends to take the bronze.

Switzerland rallied from a 6-4 deficit in the 10th and final end of regulation to force the extra end, or inning.

American earns bronze

As they so often do in this Swiss-dominated era of parallel giant slalom, clanging cowbells announced the winner.

This time, the clanging was pleasing to American ears as well, as the bronze went to Rosey Fletcher, the first U.S. woman to climb on the podium in the Olympics' final snowboarding event.

Three-time defending world cup champion Daniela Meuli of Switzerland gave her country and its red-clad, raucous, flag-waving Alpine fans a second gold in as many days. Philipp Schoch won the men's event Wednesday, with brother Simon winning silver.

Russia wins biathlon relay

Russia upset two-time defending Olympic champion Germany in the women's 4x6km biathlon relay, and they did it without banished star Olga Pyleva.

Anna Bogaliy started in place of Pyleva, the only athlete caught so far in the tightest drug net in Winter Olympics history. Bogaliy gave her team a big lead at the first exchange and the Russians never trailed.

With target shooting so precise that the powerhouse Germans had

no real chance to close the gap, Bogaliy, Svetlana Ishmouratova, Olga Zaitseva and Albina Akhatova covered the San Suario course in 1 hour, 16 minutes, 12.5 seconds.

The Americans took 15th place, finishing more than 9 minutes off the pace.

Landing dooms 'Speedy'

As promised, American Jeret "Speedy" Peterson tried his trademark trick, the Hurricane, on the aerials course, but a bobble on the landing did him in.

He finished seventh on a night when the world's best simply weren't making mistakes.

Han Xiaopeng of China won gold, Dmitri Dashinski of Belarus took silver and Vladimir Lebedev of Russia won bronze after coming in as only the 30th-ranked aerialist in the world.

Thus ended a disappointing Olympics for the American freestyle team on the mountain. After winning three golds in 1998 and three silvers in 2002, the entire team leaves Italy with only one medal — the bronze won by Toby Dawson in men's moguls.

Sledder breaks back

American skeleton racer Kevin Ellis broke a vertebra in his back Thursday while competing against members of the U.S. luge team in a non-Olympic sliding event being filmed for television.

Ellis was being transported to a hospital in Turin for further evaluation and treatment, said U.S. Olympic Committee spokesman Darryl Seibel. There was no immediate word on Ellis' condition, but the first-time Olympian did have movement in his extremities, Seibel said.

Ellis, a 32-year-old accountant from Dallas, was 17th in the men's skeleton competition in Turin.

puts her in a full backbend while her toes point in opposite directions, the crowd gasped in delight.

Arakawa's face lit up when she finished. When she saw the marks that moved her into first place, she pumped her fists in a rare display of exuberance.

"Right now I'm just so surprised about all of this that I'm speechless," she said.

For Cohen, her silver is another reminder of potential squandered. Cohen has all the makings of a superstar, but she can't break through when the stakes are high.

Cohen brushed off questions of an injury, saying the nagging aches and pains had nothing to do with her disappointing performance. Looking nervous when she took the ice, she gave away her claim to gold in the first minute.

She fell hard on a triple lutz that ruined a planned three-jump combination, then put two hands on the ice on a triple flip. Her interpretation of "Romeo and Juliet" was so strong, though, it made up for technical errors.

dents. They'll work on tackling, ball security, throwing, catching and footwork.

Students will receive a registration form at school and in the mail next week. They can return it to the school office to sign up.

Intermediate school principal Kurt Saugstad liked the idea, especially because it gets students involved more in school.

"The opportunities it provides extracurricular-wise are good," he said. "It gets them to school and gets them excited about something related to school."

Fisher described the program as a bonus for students who are interested in the sport or want to learn how to play it.

"This is extra football," Fisher said. "We still want everybody to play Bantam League football in the fall. We want them to enjoy playing football and (to) come back and play football every year."



ALLEE CHECKEYE

Woodmen

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we're really right where we ought to be," said Hensley, whose team is bidding for its first sectional title since 2002. "I'm happy with how we've played, especially since the county tourney.

"We've taken a lot of steps in the right direction."

With a balanced lineup that features no individual stars, the Woodmen have won 11 of their past 13 games dating to Jan. 7. They lost a 57-56 heartbreaker against Franklin in a county tournament semifinal on Jan. 13 and were beaten 50-42 by Perry Meridian on Jan. 24.

They haven't lost since. Greenwood's winning streak began with a 65-48 win against Mid-State Conference rival Plainfield on Jan. 27, followed by a 71-59 victory the following night against Roncalli.

The wins were significant because they were part of a three-game stretch in less than a week. Plainfield was previously unbeaten in the conference, and Roncalli is always an unpredictable opponent.

But the best was yet to come. Greenwood beat Beech Grove and arch-rival Center Grove on consecutive nights the following week. The next week, the Woodmen won outright possession of the conference championship with a win at Franklin.

"(Center Grove) was obviously a big win for us, but I really think the weekend before was kind of the weekend that proved to our players that we really could be a good basketball team," Hensley said. "I think that just gave our kids a lot of confidence that weekend."

Greenwood started the season confidently with five straight wins. But it absorbed four losses in its next seven games, raising concern that the season might take a turn in the wrong direction, especially after the Perry Meridian loss.

But the Woodmen quickly righted themselves and are motoring at peak efficiency as the postseason approaches.

"We've played really well," Newbold said. "We've improved a lot since the beginning of the season. We're able to finish games better."

"We've had a lot of close games going into the fourth quarter; and having seven seniors on the floor, it helps win games at the end in tight, pressure situations."

Balanced scoring helps, too. Greenwood's leading scorers are seniors Matt Allee and Evan Checkeye, who average 14.5 and 13.4 points, respectively. Senior A.J. Edds averages 9.4, Newbold averages 7.1, and senior Jeff Geoghegan averages 7.0.

In addition, senior Adrian Kellams averages 5.5, and senior John Pfifer averages 4.7. Pfifer also averages 4.9 assists.

But offense is only part of the story. Besides being tough to defend, the Woodmen are among the area's top defensive and rebounding teams. In short, their strength is that they are efficient in just about every aspect of the game.

"We're a team that doesn't have a lot of glaring weaknesses," Hensley said. "I don't know that we do a lot of things exceptionally well. I just think that we don't really have any glaring weaknesses, and I think we can hurt you in a lot of ways."

"Guys have learned their roles and know what they can do and, probably more importantly, know what they can't do."

Newbold knows what the Woodmen can do if they play the way they're capable: Make plenty of noise in a sectional field that also includes Center Grove, Franklin, Franklin Central, Perry Meridian, Southport and defending champion Decatur Central.

Greenwood begins sectional play Wednesday against Franklin Central (13-7).

"I feel confident about our chances to win," Newbold said. "Especially with all the senior leadership that we have, if we get in a tight situation, I'd take our team any time."

Experience should help CG boys in state finals

By JOHN GROTH

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Paul Brogan looks forward to the IHSAA Boys Swimming and Diving State Championships.

But the Center Grove senior also admits he's a little bit nervous heading into tonight's preliminaries.

"You never know what you're going to do," Brogan said. "You never know how you're going to feel on race day."

Ranked 11th in the state coaches' poll, the Trojans are hoping for a state-finals weekend similar to last year's.

Represented in nine events, they are hoping to match or better last year's fifth-place team finish.

Center Grove has six swimmers competing in individual events, along with two relay teams and a diver.

Although the Trojans lost several top swimmers to graduation, coach Jim Todd is confident of at least another top-10 finish.

"We don't have the kids that we had last time," Todd said. "(But) we have a shot at finishing in the top 10. We've got a lot of experience."

"I hope everyone reaps the benefits they put so much hard work into."

Nick Swift
Center Grove diver on state finals

As they did last year, the Trojans will once again rely on their senior leadership.

Seniors Chris Oleksiak, Pete Hewitt and Brogan will swim in two individual events each. Oleksiak, the defending 500-yard freestyle state champion, will swim in that event and the 200 freestyle.

Hewitt will swim in the 100 backstroke and the 100 butterfly. Brogan will swim the 200 individual medley and the 100 breaststroke. The three also will swim in both relays.

Senior Nick Swift will compete in diving.

Oleksiak, Hewitt and Swift are four-time state qualifiers.

"It boils down to experience," Hewitt said. "We're thinking top 10, but you always want to do better than the year before. It means more if you do better year

after year after year."

Center Grove should be well-rested. The Trojans tapered off their yardage totals the past four weeks, going from 12,000 yards per day to less than 3,000.

Brogan doesn't mind the reduced workload.

"We've taken it easy in practice," Brogan said. "We've swam a lot less yardage. I feel more rested and have more energy."

While the swimmers relaxed, Swift spent the week practicing by himself and working on dives.

Swift finished 18th at last year's state meet. The opportunity allowed him extra one-on-one time to work with coaches and get mentally and physically ready for Saturday's diving preliminaries.

Swift's goal is to make the finals and finish higher than last year, along with helping the Trojans place well as a team.

"We're a lot more focused and real laid back," Swift said. "I hope everyone reaps the benefits they put so much hard work into."

Franklin, Greenwood and Whiteland are also well represented at the state finals. Franklin has competitors in four events. Greenwood has three, and Whiteland has two.

Repeat

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At the sectional, Oleksiak helped lead the 200 medley and 400 freestyle relays to first-place finishes. He swam his best time ever in the medley relay and outswam Perry Meridian's Chris Steindorff in the final leg of the 400-yard freestyle relay.

Last year, Oleksiak scorched the field in the 500 freestyle state final. He finished with a school-record time of 4:31.69 and became the first Center Grove boys individual state swimming champion.

Oleksiak traces his fierce competitive nature to his childhood, when he drew inspiration from athletes who raised their performances in championship or pressure situations.

He idolized former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Joe Montana and was fascinated by his ability to consistently deliver in the clutch.

THEY'RE IN THE FINALS

Local participants in the IHSAA Boys Swimming and Diving State Championships today and Saturday: **Franklin:** Josh Blackwell (diving); 200-yard medley relay (Steven Chambers, Paul Wilson, Brian Yount, Michael McElyea); 200 freestyle relay (McElyea, Jason Cheek, Wilson, Ben Shafer) and 400 freestyle relay (McElyea, Cheek, Wilson, Shafer) **Center Grove:** Chris Oleksiak (200 freestyle, 500 freestyle); Pete Hewitt (100 backstroke, 100 butterfly); Paul Brogan (100 breaststroke,

200 individual medley); Noah Pashley (500 freestyle); Paul Beauchamp (100 breaststroke); Nick Swift (diving); 200 medley relay (Pete Hewitt, Brogan, Beauchamp, Oleksiak) and 400 freestyle relay (Hewitt, Brogan, Oleksiak, Cody Adkins)

Greenwood: Sam Mynsberge (100 breaststroke, 200 individual medley) and 200 medley relay (Sam Mynsberge, Kiel Hauser, Stephen Madsen, Elliot Jennings),

Whiteland: Justin Shaw (100 freestyle) and Billy Pennington (diving)

And Oleksiak has tried to emulate his ability and "Joe Cool" persona throughout his swimming career.

"In the last seconds, there are people who quit and lose, and then there (are) Joe Montanas," Oleksiak said. "Ever since I was little, coaches would kid around that I had a killer instinct."

"Whenever I was up on the blocks, (coaches) could always tell in my eyes that I was out to win."

On the eve of the state meet, he's drawing inspiration from another famous athlete who wasn't too bad in pressure situations, even when ill.

"I've been thinking about when Michael Jordan had the flu against the Jazz (in the NBA Finals)," said Oleksiak, who will continue his career on scholarship at Indiana University. "That's my motivation right now. It's my last chance to win everything."

Gold

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change her coach, her costumes, her programs. It had to be drastic if she were to have any chance.

"Yes, of course I was surprised," Morozov said. "I thought she could medal. But I didn't think she would win gold."

But Arakawa has the determination that turns contenders into champions.

She landed five triple jumps, three in combination. But it was her beauty, elegance and unparalleled musicality that set her apart. She didn't show much emotion on her face, but she spoke it with every other part of her body, from her toes to the tips of her fingers.

Skating to Puccini's "Violin Fantasy of Turandot," her gracefulness was edged with power. Her spirals were breathtaking.

And when she did an Ina Bauer, a variation of a spread-eagle that

Football

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

Fisher and intermediate school student services coordinator Reneae Staley came up with the idea and presented a proposal to the school board.

The program will run from April 11 to May 11, with sessions from 3:30 to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at the intermediate school's athletic field.

There will be 15 skill-development sessions. Students will be provided with shoulder pads, helmets and a high school practice jersey. A \$50 fee covers equipment rental and the jersey, which the student can keep.

Five football coaches from the high school and two from the middle school will work with stu-

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2006 ROCKLANE JR. LEAGUE BASEBALL SIGN-UPS

There are several different divisions for boys & girls ages 4-16. Costs for T-Ball will be \$40 with all other divisions being \$55 (max being \$140 per family).

FINAL SIGN-UP DATES

Saturday, February 25th • 9:00 am to Noon
Rocklane Christian Church

Saturday, February 25th • 1:00 to 3:00 pm
Dick's Sporting Goods (Greenwood Park Mall)

For more information call:
Greg Harbert 281-3946 or Erica Copeland 889-0128

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