

Witty drops out of women's 1,500, ponders retirement

Rodriguez leads remaining U.S. skaters, finishes eighth

By PAUL NEWBERRY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TURIN, Italy

Chris Witty has no regrets about coming back for another Olympics.

She just didn't want it to end this way.

Stopping short of announcing her retirement but sounding very much like this was it, the American speed-skating star skipped her final Olympic race Wednesday and started looking ahead to what she's going to do next in life.

Witty, a three-time medalist competing in her fifth Olympics, decided not to skate the 1,500 after two disappointing races in Turin.

"It's been a good run," said Witty, who competed in four Winter Games and the 2000 Sydney Olympics as a cyclist. "I'm proud of everything I accomplished."

Witty finished 28th in the 500, last among skaters who completed the race without falling or getting disqualified, and was 27th in Sunday's 1,000.

"In both races, I was like, 'Where's my speed? Where's my endurance?'" she said in a telephone interview Wednesday eve-



WITTY



AP PHOTO

Jennifer Rodriguez of the United States races during the women's 1,500-meter speedskating competition in Turin, Italy, on Wednesday.

ning. "In the 1,500, you need a combination of both. It was really not there for me. That's when I decided not to go."

Witty's withdrawal left the U.S. team with only three skaters: Jennifer Rodriguez finished eighth, Catherine Raney 18th and Maria Lamb 24th. The Americans could have substituted a fourth skater, but no one was prepared to race on such short notice.

Not that anyone was blaming Witty for backing out.

"She's been to five Olympics,"

Lamb said. "There's definitely not a lot of people who can say that."

Witty's training was hampered after she injured her groin in December at a World Cup meet, in Turin of all places. She also had bursitis in her hip for several years, an increasingly painful condition that cut into her off-the-ice work and made it difficult to skate like she did in her prime.

The 30-year-old Witty wouldn't completely rule out a return to skating, but she's ready to do other things. She wants to resume her college studies and already is pondering career options, which she hopes will allow her to stay involved in speedskating.

"I'll never say never" to competing again, she said. "I don't want to be a person who keeps coming back. I don't know. I think this could be it. I'm not announcing my retirement right now, but this could be it as far as the Olympics."

Witty could have retired at the top of her game after winning a gold medal in the 1,000 at Salt Lake City four years ago, setting a world record that still stands. But she wasn't ready to quit.

"I don't regret skating four more years," she said. "I wish things could have been different. I wish I could have come here as a contender. I would like to have gone away with another medal. But that's the way it goes. You have to accept it."

U.S. men ousted from hockey finals

By IRA PODELL

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TURIN, Italy

Mike Modano took no shots in the loss that bounced the U.S. men's hockey team from the Olympics.

He saved his best one for afterward.

The three-time Olympian was benched for most of the third period in the Americans' 4-3 loss Wednesday night to Finland in the quarterfinals. Then he took aim at the people who put the disappointing squad together.

"You'd think USA Hockey would be a well-oiled machine, but it's not," he said. "Basically we were on our own for hotels, tickets, flights, stuff like that."

"Normally we wouldn't have to worry about stuff like that."

The Americans came out flat in the opening period Wednesday, allowing Sami Salo's short-handed goal that gave Finland a 2-0 lead.

"We came here with higher expectations, and it's disappointing. But you have to move on."

Don Waddell

U.S. men's hockey general manager on team's loss to Finland

Modano scored two goals in the tournament yet was a non-factor in the finale, when he didn't so much as put a puck on the net.

"It's very disappointing, because the people at USA Hockey do a tremendous job," general manager Don Waddell said of Modano's comments. "There is a lot of pressure on people. The top people at USA Hockey are volunteers."

U.S. coach Peter Laviolette didn't think enough of Modano's performance to have him on the ice during crunch time.

He certainly was less pleased

with the forward's Olympic exit interview.

"We were down looking for goals and looking for offense, and it wasn't about Mike Modano," he said. "The third period was clearly our best. ... I think some players didn't seem to have the jump, and you do your best to get the players out there that have the jump."

Waddell choked back tears as he tried to explain why the team he built was bounced out of the games with just one win and no medals.

"We came here with higher expectations, and it's disappointing. But you have to move on," the Atlanta Thrashers general manager said.

The loss made this the latest Olympic disappointment for the United States. The women's hockey team seemed a lock for at least a silver medal but had to settle for bronze after falling to Sweden in the semis.

Gold medalist among those suing Chicago

The Associated Press

CHICAGO

Olympic gold medal speedskater Shani Davis is one of four plaintiffs suing the city of Chicago and former police superintendent Terry Hillard, claiming they were stopped and searched for illegal weapons because of their skin color.

Davis, Quincy Joyner and Damien Joyner filed a lawsuit on March 24, 2003. A fourth plaintiff, Damane Grier, was added to the lawsuit a few months later. All four

are from Chicago and are black.

Harvey Grossman, director of American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois, said an inordinate number of blacks and Latinos are stopped on the street and searched for illegal weapons, and the organization wants police to document stops.

"We've been receiving com-



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plaints about this for years and years," he said. "We also want that data to be stored, so you can see what an officer is doing over time."

Monique Bond, Chicago police director of news affairs, would not comment on the pending case, but said, "As far as racial profiling, the Chicago Police Department has a zero tolerance for that."

Davis became the first black athlete to capture an individual gold medal in Winter Olympics history when he won the 1,000 meters Saturday.

WEDNESDAY'S ROUNDUP

Swedish skier defeats rival to win first gold

Anja Paerson finally won her Olympic gold medal and beat her longtime rival in the process with a pair of dominant runs through floodlit fog in the women's slalom.

Janica Kostelic of Croatia, whose six medals in two Olympics are the most by any women's Alpine skier, failed to win a medal for the first time in her past seven events. She was fourth.

Austrians Nicole Hosp and Marlies Schild were second and third, the country's unprecedented 100th and 101st Olympic Alpine medals. That's nearly double the next-biggest total, Switzerland's 53.

Paerson came into the slalom with four Olympic medals, two at these games, but only one silver, three bronzes and no gold. And the 24-year-old Swede was an awful 12th in the super-G.

Canadian women finish 1-2 in 1,500

Canada's Cindy Klassen added a gold medal to the bronze and two silvers she's already earned at the Olympics, winning the women's 1,500-meter speedskating with a dominant performance ahead of teammate Kristina Groves.

Ireen Wust of the Netherlands, gold medalist in the 3,000 meters, took bronze, knocking favorite Anni Friesinger out of the medals.

Canada gets first cross-country gold

Chandra Crawford upstaged two of her better-known countrywomen and pulled off an upset in the women's 1.1km sprint Wednesday, skating across the finish for Canada's first cross-country gold medal of the Turin Games.

Crawford, with tiny pigtailed peeking out of her hat and a huge smile on her face, is hardly her country's biggest star, previously staying out of the spotlight behind Beckie Scott and Sara Renner, silver medalists in the team sprint last Tuesday.

The 22-year-old Crawford edged silver medalist Claudia Kuenzel of Germany, while Russia's Alena Sidko took the bronze. Scott was fourth in the four-skier final.

Swede takes gold in men's sprint race

Bjoern Lind of Sweden easily skied to an Olympic gold medal in the men's 1.3km cross-country sprint race, taking advantage of rival Tor Arne Hetland's fall in the semifinals.

Lind finished in 2 minutes, 26.5 seconds to beat silver medalist Roddy Darragon of France, who was six-tenths of a second behind. Lind's countryman, Tobias Fredriksson, took the bronze.

U.S. men's curlers have chance for bronze

Pete Fenson couldn't lead the United States to the Olympic gold medal game, losing to Canada 11-5 in the curling semifinals.

Canada clinched at least a silver medal and forced the Americans to play in Friday's consolation game for third place. That would be the first Olympic curling medal, men's

or women's, for the United States.

But a loss on Friday and Fenson, who owns a pair of pizza restaurants in northern Minnesota, is going home empty-handed. The United States already saw its highly touted women's team fail to qualify for the medal round.

Canada will play for the gold Friday night against Finland.

Swiss, Swedes to face off for curling gold

Anette Norberg's takeout on the final shot of the game lifted Sweden past Norway 5-4 in the semifinals of the Olympic curling tournament. The Swedes advanced to the gold medal match against Switzerland, who defeated Canada 7-5.

Canada (6-4) will play Norway (6-4) for the bronze today, the same day as the gold medal game.

Sweden (8-2) beat Switzerland 9-7 in the preliminaries.

Stellar performance lands gold for Swiss star

Evelyne Leu of Switzerland beat her Chinese rival to win the gold medal in Olympic aerials, adding the final missing piece to an already stellar career.

She landed a triple backflip with three twists on her second of two jumps and earned a score of 107.93 that put her in the lead with four jumpers left.

The rest of the field couldn't catch her. Not defending Olympic champion Alisa Camplin of Australia, who finished third. Not Leu's rival, Li Nina of China, who finished second. And not Guo Xinxin of China, who led after the first jump, but finished with a face-plant and fell to sixth.

There were no Americans in the finals. Neither Emily Cook nor Jana Lindsey made the top 12 in qualifying.

Brothers battle for snowboarding medals

The first family of snowboarding's parallel giant slalom wrapped up a second consecutive Olympic gold medal before the final head-to-head duel had even begun.

It was only a matter of which Schoch would take the title this time, and defending Olympic champion Philipp Schoch pulled it out, defeating older brother Simon.

Simon Schoch, 27, has been the stronger racer this season but slid wide on a gate in the first run against his 26-year-old brother, leaving him with a .88-second deficit.

This was the first Olympic medal for Simon, who did not make the podium in 2002. Meanwhile, Philipp became the first ever two-time gold medal winner in Olympic snowboarding, now in its third Winter Games.

South Korea gets fourth short-track gold

South Korea took another gold at the short track, capturing the women's 3,000-meter relay Wednesday night.

The team of Byun Chun-sa, Choi Eun-kyung, Jeon Da-hye and Jin Sun-yu won their country's fourth short track gold medal of the Turin Games. Canada took the silver.

China, which crossed the line third, was disqualified for an illegal move, giving the bronze to Italy.

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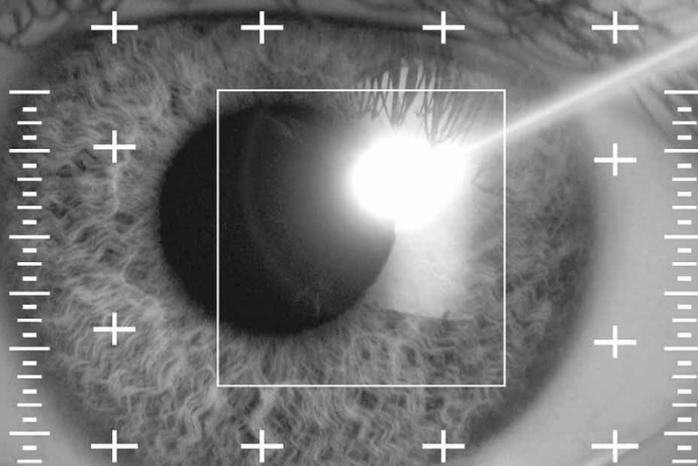
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