

Sports

Give me the real Olympic music! Games just not the same on NBC



Cray Pixley
Sports viewpoint

What was there to do on a Saturday afternoon when the A&M football team was inexplicably idle?

There was to be no game — hurricane or heat wave — to occupy the time of Aggie fans that fine weekend.

But there was a small consolation to this tragedy — the Olympics. Yes, the summer games — or should I say, the Almost-Autumn Olympics — were finally upon us.

It had been a long wait since the thrills of Calgary, but the time had come. The time lapse between the winter and summer games was so long, it was easy to lose sight of the fact that there was even to be a Seoul sports excursion.

Yet, on the weekend when Aggies needed it most, the games arrived. While the Summer Olympics are a welcome respite from sports boredom with its wide range of events, I have been having some difficulty warming up to the games.

There are certain aspects of the Olympics that have become familiar through the history of its television broadcast.

The devices used by the network that covers the Olympics have become the games' signature. The past few Olympics, including the Winter Games in Calgary, were covered by ABC.

the years the ABC format of the games has become engrained and easily identifiable to viewers.

With NBC handling the South Korean venue, the Olympics just don't seem like the Olympics. Because of the unfamiliar format, the competition has seemed like an average afternoon of watching ESPN with its varied programming.

As I watched the Olympics this weekend, I found myself becoming more and more disgruntled with what I was viewing.

What was the problem? "This was the Olympics," I told myself. This is something the athletes dream of for years. This was the event that had me glued to my couch watching the tube during the Calgary competition.

But I was not quite glued to the set this time around. The games didn't seem quite so special. The answer to the problem, I soon realized, was the way the coverage was packaged.

Not that NBC was doing a less-than-spectacular job, but the Olympics were not on ABC.

What was it that ABC had that NBC was lacking, I pondered?

I know it sounds very simplistic and somewhat silly, but the first problem is theme music.

NBC was trying something new and innovative with its Olympic theme but falling flat.

I know when I think of the Olympics I think of the patriotic and stirring music ABC uses.

You know how it goes.

Where was the rolling, thundering drum, the triumphant trumpets?

Where was the Daaah, daaah, da-daaah, daaah daaah, daaah dada, da da da da da da daaah.

Where was the punch that gave the Olympics its mystique? It's a great event, but ABC presents it so much better. You may say the Olympics stand on its own, but that's not entirely true.

There must be a focus, a structure to the presentation of events, and this is missing. But back to business.

Q. Where was Jim McKay — Olympic announcer extraordinaire?

A. On the other network, HA HA.

He had been doing the Olympics since the child dreaming of Olga and Nadia. Without the games don't seem the same.

Where is the "Up Close And Personal" features on the athletes? I know, I know, we're really tired of these after a while but when they're gone we miss them.

Well, they're gone. NBC does this feature its way, but it is not the same.

Bryant Gumbel is more than competent as host, but the aura of ABC still haunts the tube and can be unsettling.

The competition will eventually win out on the network style good or bad. Still, NBC does have the style that the other network has. It's time to come, the ABC idea of what the Olympics are will overshadow NBC's telecast.

For now, I'm thankful for any broadcast of the Olympic Games.

But oh what about the music!



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Louganis recovers from dive accident

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Call him irresponsible. Call him a perfectionist. Call him reckless if you must.

But first, somebody call Greg Louganis an ambulance.

That sentiment, at least one hopes, followed the shock wave Monday night that rippled through the Chamshil Indoor Swimming Pool in Seoul as Louganis, arguably the finest diver ever, thunked the back of his head on the 3-meter springboard laying out of a reverse 2½-somersault.

So how is he? "Greg suffered a scalp laceration," Dr. James Puffer, head physician for the U.S. Olympic team said.

"After making sure he was neurologically intact and had not suffered a concussion, I temporarily sutured the laceration so he could complete his final two dives."

Five stitches. Yeah, but how is he really? How is he going to be Tuesday, defending the first of his two gold medals from Los Angeles?

"He's in very good condition. I fully anticipate he'll be able to compete ... without difficulty."

Believe it. Louganis did it once already. He was in first after eight rounds in Monday night's preliminaries when he struck disaster — horizontal, no less. Heroically, perhaps even

reflexively, he tried to finish the dive vertical, struggling to get his hands to break the plane of the water before his head.

The judges gave Louganis 6.3. He tumbled into fourth.

"It had to be a very unsettling experience. I mean, the one thing that you don't want to do in competitive diving is hit the board. Particularly with your head," said Vince Panzano, one of the team's two coaches.

"He's never done it before, to my knowledge. Not even in practice. ... You should ideally be 2½ to 3 feet from away from the board when you pass it. On that particular dive, Greg always seems to be closer to the board than he should be."

"There's no particular reason for it," Panzano added. "Judges don't give higher scores because a diver is closer to the board."

Louganis returned a half-hour later, his black hair slicked back (even the splash of gray at his temples) and grinned irrepressibly at those same judges through a short delay.

The ovation was thunderous. "You got it Lugo," someone screamed.

Louganis proceeded to rip a reverse 1½-somersault with 3½ twists.

See Louganis, page 14

OSU's Jones: A&M helped by weeks off

STILLWATER, Okla. (AP) — Hurricane Gilbert caused Texas A&M to go three weeks without playing, but that means the Aggies will be fresh and healthy for Oklahoma State on Saturday.

Cowboy Coach Pat Jones said Monday.

"I don't see how the postponement with Alabama can have any real effect," Jones said at his weekly luncheon for sports writers and sportscasters. "If anything, it will allow them to be as healthy as they can be. And with our open date, we're as healthy as we can be."

No. 18 Oklahoma State, 1-0, opened its season two weeks ago with a 52-20 victory over Miami of Ohio. Texas A&M, 0-2, lost the Kickoff Classic to Nebraska, then lost 27-0 to Louisiana State one week later.

After an open date, the Aggies were scheduled to host Alabama Saturday in College Station, but Alabama Coach Bill Curry postponed the game because of uncertain weather conditions surrounding Hurricane Gilbert.

Although Texas A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill hinted that Alabama wanted to rest its injured quarterback, Jones said the Aggies likewise were able to restore

two key players to their lineup.

"With the cancellation of the ball game, now they are at full strength for the first time since midway through the Nebraska game," Jones said.

The Aggies lost kick return specialist and receiver Rod Harris with a shoulder injury and running back Darren Lewis, whom Jones called "their most talented back," against the Huskers.

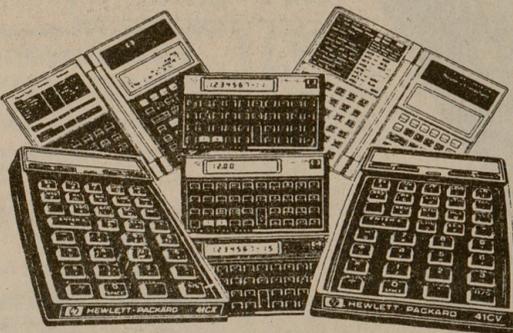
"They are two guys who are quality players," Jones said. "They will have an impact on them offensively. Personnel-wise, we see the best they've got."

But Jones said he'll probably have to wait until Saturday to see Jones said he was counting on spotting some trends in the Aggies' offense from the film of their Alabama game film.

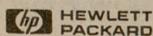
"The one thing that not playing the game down there did was leave us in the dark as far as what they might tend to do quarterback-wise, or whether they have made any shifts in their overall offensive thinking," Jones said.

Texas A&M has used three quarterbacks — Bucky Richardson, Lance Pavlas and Chris Good — in its two games this year.

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Biondi lowers sights; wins heat

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Matt Biondi, lowering his sights from seven gold to seven medals, won his qualifying heat Tuesday in the 100-meter butterfly one day after Janet Evans gave America its first victory at the Seoul Olympics.

While Evans won the 400-meter individual medley gold on Monday, Biondi had to settle for bronze in the 200-meter freestyle as his quest to equal Mark Spitz's seven gold medals in 1972 ended in his first race.

"The Mark Spitz days are over," Biondi said.

Another Olympic assault also was in jeopardy as Carl Lewis was close to losing his spot on U.S. relay team. That would cost him a chance to win four gold medals, as he did four

years ago in Los Angeles. Sprint-relay coach Russ Rogers said Monday that Lewis would be dropped from the team if he continued his disruptive behavior.

Lewis has argued loudly with his coaches over the role of his personal adviser, who has been banned from practices, and Rogers said:

"He's at the end of his rope. The only thing he can do now is hang himself."

A little Romanian gymnast, meanwhile, was evoking memories of a time 12 years ago, when a countrywoman no bigger than her captivated the world by becoming the original perfect 10. That was Nadia Comaneci; this was 4-foot-6 Daniela Silivas, who had 10s in the uneven

bars and floor exercise during women's team competition.

The American gymnasts, in fourth place after compulsories, were done in by their own mistakes and an East German protest. They still had a shot at bronze.

In diving, U.S. gold medal favorite Greg Louganis had a close brush with a board, but escaped serious injury. Leading the qualifying for the springboard and going for a second consecutive Olympic sweep, Louganis hit his head while attempting a reverse 2½-somersault in his ninth of 11 dives.

He got out of the water without help, rubbed the top of his head and smiled. He scored a 6.3.

He came back about a half-hour

later, five stitches in his head, mugged for the crowd before launching himself into a nearly perfect reverse 1½-somersault with 3½ twists. It earned 87.12, the highest score of the preliminary round, and he made Tuesday's final easily, where the scores start fresh.

After two days of medal events the Soviet Union led with six, then them gold. The United States of China, with one gold apiece, tied for second with four medals.

Evans captured the women's 100-meter individual medley swimming event by nearly two seconds over world champion Noemi Lang.

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