

SPORTS

MONDAY
July 22, 1996

ATLANTA '96

Olympic GLANCE

ATLANTA (AP)

SOFTBALL DEBUT

The U.S. softball team, in first Olympic game for the sport, beat Puerto Rico 10-0.

GYMNASTS SHINE

U.S. women, led by Shannon Miller, were second to Russia in compulsories.

SWIMMING BREAKTHROUGH

Tom Dolan gave United States its first gold, in 400 IM. Men's 800-meter freestyle relay team also won. Penny Heyns of South Africa broke her world record in 100-meter breaststroke prelims, then won gold later.

WEIGHTLIFTING RECORD

Chinese weightlifter Tang Ning-sheng broke world record in 180-pound class (677 3/4 pounds).

AIM AND FIRE

Josh Lakatos and Lance Bade won silver and bronze in trap shooting, matching total won by United States in 1992.

NOT AGAIN

For second time in two days, judo athlete — this time Walid Al Awazen of Jordan — disqualified for reporting to wrong place for weigh-in.

MEDALS

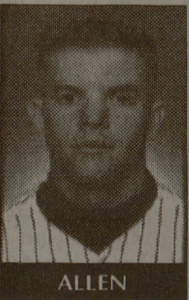
United States took medals lead with 10 (2-6-2), followed by Germany with nine (0-4-5) and France with eight (3-2-3).

QUOTEBOOK

"I've had dreams of that moment for so long." 34-year-old Dot Richardson, on hitting a home run in softball.

"It was a little more pressure trying to get the first U.S. gold. It's one of the great thrills of my life," Tom Dolan, said on winning a gold medal in the 400 IM.

AGGIE SPOTLIGHT



In USA Baseball's 4-1 victory over Nicaragua, Saturday, right-fielder Chad Allen went 2-for-4 with a run, a double and a triple.
USA will face South Korea tonight at 7 p.m.

The Line on Allen:

ab	r	h	rbi
4	1	2	0

Centennial Games underway

U.S. swimming team leads American medal charge

ATLANTA (AP) — One day after the Dream Team's sleepy first game victory, the U.S. women's teams — basketball, softball and soccer — demonstrated how to dominate in their debuts. But it was the men's swimmers who provided the Americans with their first gold medals of the Atlanta Games.

Tom Dolan edged out teammate Eric Namesnik to win the 400-meter individual medley before four of their teammates swept the 800-meter freestyle relay Sunday night. First daughter Chelsea Clinton cheered them all on to victory.

"It was a little more pressure trying to get the first U.S. gold," admitted the 20-year-old Dolan, who clutched a small American flag in his right hand during the national anthem. "It's one of the great thrills of my life."

The men were joined on the medal stand by 14-year-old Amanda Beard, the pet-loving California teen who stood barefoot to accept her silver in the 100-meter breaststroke. The swim team, through eight races, had a surprisingly strong seven medals — two gold, four silver and one bronze.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL/SOFTBALL

How good was the softball team Sunday? Their Olympic opener was so one-sided, officials stopped it early. How good was the U.S. women's basketball team? Not even the critical eye of USOC vice president George Steinbrenner af-

ected them in a 101-84 victory over Cuba.

"Just because we can't dunk doesn't mean our games aren't fun," guard Dawn Staley said. "It was a good time."

New York Yankees owner Steinbrenner and Olympian Seattle Pippen were among those taking in the distaff Dream Team, which was led by Lisa Leslie's 24 points. The women even outscored the men's team, which rang up 96 points Saturday against Argentina.

The gold-medal favorite softball team, playing for the first-ever Olympic medal in their sport, ripped Puerto Rico 10-0. The game was stopped after six innings — one inning early — under a rule that prevents running up the score.

"The meaning of this game was different, and to see those Olympic rings associated with our game is truly a great day for all softball fans and anyone associated with this game," enthused designated hitter Michele Smith said.

Both of the women's teams entered the Olympics on a tear. The women hoopsters went 52-0 in their pre-games schedule, while the softball team has won three straight world championships and lost just one game in international play since 1986.

SWIMMING

Swimmer Dolan nipped teammate Namesnik by .35 seconds to give America a 1-2 sweep in the 400-meter — and the first gold medal for the host nation on Day 2 of competition.

"Dolan Is Golden" read one sign in the stands, and the gold medalist — who overcame a battle with severe asthma — led the crowd in a chant of "U-S-A!"

After Beard's silver medal performance, the relay team defeated Sweden and Germany for the swimmers' second gold of the night.

The big news again in the qualifying heats was the failure of the Chinese women. The team, which figured to dominate here, instead placed

Medals table

1996 ATLANTA

Through 27 total medals Sunday, July 21

	G	S	B	Tot
United States	2	6	2	10
Germany	0	4	5	9
France	3	2	3	8
Russia	3	2	2	7
China	3	2	1	6
Poland	4	0	0	4
Belgium	2	0	2	4
Bulgaria	0	0	4	4
Italy	1	1	1	3
Australia	1	0	2	3
Cuba	0	2	1	3
Hungary	0	0	3	3
Turkey	2	0	0	2
South Korea	1	1	0	2
Belarus	0	2	0	2
Brazil	0	1	1	2
Sweden	0	1	1	2
Canada	0	0	2	2
Costa Rica	1	0	0	1
Ireland	1	0	0	1
Kazakhstan	1	0	0	1
South Africa	1	0	0	1
New Zealand	0	0	1	1
Greece	0	1	0	1
Japan	0	1	0	1
Spain	0	1	0	1
Yugoslavia	0	0	1	1

no one in the finals after winning just a single gold medal on Saturday.

The Chinese swimmers, queens of the world championships two years ago, failed to bounce back from a subsequent steroid scandal.

The other big swimming news: Penny Heyns of South Africa took gold in the 100-meter breaststroke, outswimming Beard after earlier smashing her own record in event with a time of 1:07.02.

Claudia Poll's win in the 200-meter freestyle delivered the first Olympic swimming gold medal in Costa Rica history.

WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS

The women's gymnastics squad, before a screaming Georgia Dome crowd of more than 32,000, wound up in sec-

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Janet Evans looking to make one last splash

ATLANTA (AP) — Janet Evans holds three world records, has four Olympic gold medals and a silver. She has carried the Olympic torch twice, and then got to pass it over to The Greatest.

So how does she top all that? It could happen Monday, when the 400-meter freestyle offers Evans a strong chance to become the first U.S. woman to win five Summer Olympics golds and to tie speedskater Bonnie Blair for most gold medals by a U.S. female athlete.

But the swimmer with the unorthodox windmilling stroke and the dazzling smile, whom the world has watched grow up from the petite 16-year-old in Seoul who didn't even have a driver's license, is determined not to let anything spoil this, her final, Olympics.

"For me to be on this Olympic team was my goal, to finish my career on home soil," said Evans, who turns 25 next month. "These last few months have been a dream come true. If I do well, it's a good way to finish my career."

The 400 — she'll also compete in the 800 — offers a chance to avenge her upset defeat in Barcelona. Winning it back "would be fun," she says, but regardless, there will be no repeat of her tearful disappointment in Barcelona, which helped push her into a short-lived retirement.

"If I don't do well, then it's an honor just to be here," she said.

The honors began when she served as the third Olympic torchbearer, following decathlon champion Rafer Johnson and the granddaughter of Jesse Owens as the flame began its 84-day journey from Los Angeles. On Friday night, she became No. 10,000 as she dashed up a ramp to hand it over to Muhammad Ali for the lighting of the flame for the Centennial Olympics.

"I did not know until about three hours before I did it," she told NBC afterward. "And I have to tell you, that was the greatest thrill, because when the crowd was cheering for the torch

when I was standing out there, it was awesome.

"But then when he stepped out there, I mean it was just electricity and it was the greatest feeling. I was very honored to be giving something so monumental to him."

And being the last torchbearer made her feel "very, very, very, very honored. That's one 'very' for each gold medal."

Evans is one of the few American women swimmers who had been given a shot at winning a gold. But Evans, whose three gold medals at Seoul were all the more stunning because of wide belief she beat drug-enhanced competitors, noted that four of five Chinese swimmers failed to make it out of Saturday's preliminaries.

"For me to be on this Olympic team was my goal, to finish my career on home soil."

— JANET EVANS
U.S. Olympic swimmer

"I think it's a good sign for swimming and it's nice to know that if they were taking steroids, it doesn't really seem like maybe they are any more," she said.

"I can't say the competition is 100 percent clean, but for me, I've seen the Eastern bloc swimmers and the Chinese swimmers start off a competition by dominating the first couple of races, and it's really intimidating for us, who train hard and are clean," she said. "It was nice tonight that everyone was just doing our best, and we have a chance to win a lot of medals."



The Olympic career of Janet Evans

1988 Seoul Games:
Three gold medals- 400-m, 800-m and 1600-m freestyle

1992 Barcelona Games:
Gold Medal- 800-m freestyle

1996 Atlanta Games:
Competing in 400-m and 800-m freestyle

Lending A Helping Hand

Various volunteer support groups spend time promoting A&M athletic programs

By Ross Hecox
THE BATTALION

They are rather conspicuous at Olsen Field during the baseball season. Fans can spot them before, during and after games roaming the stands for hidden foul balls.

And, of course, they answer to the crowd's familiar cry — "Pick it up!" — to retrieve bats and baseballs that fly off the back screen.

It is hard not to notice the Diamond Darlings hard at work on the baseball field. But like the array of other host organizations supporting A&M sports, the Diamond Darlings do more than just retrieve baseballs.

This group is one of many that volunteer massive amounts of time and energy to promote, support and perform a wide spectrum of services for their respective athletic programs.

While the Diamond Darlings help out the baseball program, the football team relies on the Aggie Hostesses for support and the basketball team enlists the Aggie Angels.

The 30 Loves, the Goal Patrol and the Aggie Gents also work hard in supporting tennis, soccer and women's basketball respectively.

The tasks these women and men perform include organizing fundraisers and dinners, attending all home games and many away games, passing out materials or selling programs, and showing recruits around campus.

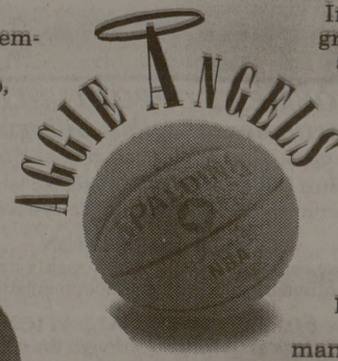
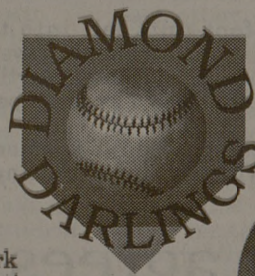
"We meet recruits and help to make them comfortable and feel at

home," Aggie Hostess Stephanie Burns said.

While the specific duties of each group vary, the members' most important job is to attend games.

"Basically, anything that we are asked to do, we do," Diamond Darlings captain Leslie Walton said.

"At Olsen, we sell programs and chase the ball. When people come into Olsen,



it's our job to be cheerful. We are there to promote Aggie Baseball."

Jessica Hatch, who was an Aggie Angel the last three years, said the Angels try to motivate fans at A&M basketball games and help them have a good time.

"It's all support and motivation," Hatch said. "The main goal is to work at the games to make it fun for everybody."

In addition to their duties at athletic contests, these groups act as public relations teams for the community and help out at charity golf tournaments, the local Special Olympics and Big Event.

Penny King, A&M associate athletic director for business and faculty staff sponsor for the Diamond Darlings, said representing sports teams is an important job for these organizations.

"The purpose of having them is to expose the community to sports," King said. "They try to get involved with any community function that is going on. It is all volunteer work. It shows the dedication people have for A&M."

The many tasks required of these organizations demand a lot of time. Simply being at a game is more than just a two-hour affair.

"It's really time consuming," Hatch said. "You have to be there at least an hour-and-a-half before the game, and an hour-and-a-half after the game."

Despite all the hard work and dedication required, Burns said being an Hostess has been a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

"It is a good way to get involved with Texas A&M sports," Burns said. "The best thing about my job is the fact that I love sports and found a good way to contribute to A&M sports in the best way I can."

Walton said the organizations provide individual and group benefits. "You develop strong friendships," Walton said. "I love the girls that I am involved with."

"You will hear a lot of the girls say that it's time consuming, but it's work that you don't mind doing. There is a personal reward. You feel good because you're in a position to make people feel good."