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Olympic deadlines plague Athens, IOC

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — The chief overseer of the 2004 Olympics delivered a sharp message Thursday to organizers facing tight construction deadlines: Stop talking and start building.

The demand by International Olympic Committee envoy Jacques Rogge reflected the growing concern that lack of coordination and Greece's dense bureaucracy could plunge the games back into crisis.

"The IOC expects, of course, the start of the construction pretty soon," Rogge said as he began a two-day inspection visit that included meetings with Premier Costas Simitis and other government leaders.

The warning was not as stern as last year, when IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch told 2004 organizers that an alarming lack of progress put the Athens Games in jeopardy. But Rogge's statement showed a much tougher IOC line after praising Athens for quickly responding to Samaranch's ultimatum.

Rogge reportedly spelled out his concerns to Simitis during a 45-minute discussion that focused on construction of Olympic venues and transportation infrastructure. Rogge made no comment after the meeting.

Greece's Socialist government directly controls major Olympic construction projects and has rejected complaints of falling behind schedule. Even President Costis Stephanopoulos said Monday it was the Greek style to pull things together "at the last minute."

There is now heavy pressure to show results.

Simitis has demanded various departments speed up their work. Athens 2004 head Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki met Wednesday with government leaders, and urged streamlined procedures to get the projects under way. She accused some ministers of failing to appreciate the need for action.

Prosecutors drop Benitez investigation

NEW YORK (AP) — For the second time in as many months, prosecutors said Thursday they will not file criminal charges against New York Mets relief pitcher Armando Benitez, accused by his former girlfriend of attacking her.

An investigation of the alleged assault determined that there was "an insufficient legal basis on which to proceed with a criminal prosecution," said Mary DeBourbon, a spokeswoman for Queens District Attorney Richard Brown.

Stacey O'Neill, Benitez's former girlfriend, filed a complaint at the 109th Precinct in Queens on Jan. 3, alleging that the pitcher punched her and left her neck with a scar from a scratch on Oct. 18. The alleged attack took place on an off day between the NL championship series and the World Series.

In the police report, O'Neill said she did not alert police at the time because she was afraid of Benitez.

Brown's office said that in a letter dated Feb. 6, "the young woman who filed the original complaint requested that this office not prosecute charges."

Last month, Baltimore prosecutors announced that a domestic abuse case filed against Benitez by O'Neill had been dismissed, citing insufficient evidence. O'Neill had filed a complaint against Benitez in December saying he slammed a door against her during an argument on Nov. 8.

PENN STATE

Continued from Page

face A&M-Corpus Christi. In the afternoon, the Aggies will take on Penn State at 5:45 p.m. They finish up Sunday, when they play A&M-Corpus Christi at 1 p.m. to wrap up the invitational.

> *"We'll fix [the low scoring] and get right back on track."*
>
> — Selena Collins
> A&M sophomore catcher

The Aggies will look to rebound from a loss on Wednesday. In the loss, A&M was held to a season-low one run.

"We're disappointed about that," said sophomore catcher Selena Collins. "We'll fix that and get right back on track."

FLORIDA

Continued from Page

give us their best shot," Kleinecke said.

This weekend will signify the end of a tough eight-day stretch for the Aggies, who, after Sunday, will have played against four teams ranked in the top 45. A&M's biggest win of the season was a 5-2 decision over No. 21 Louisiana State University on Saturday.

The new WingspanBank.com polls have the Aggies ranked 30th, the first time since 1998 A&M has broken into the top 30.

A&M will return home Feb. 2[illegible] when it begins Big 12 play against Oklahoma State.

COLORADO

Continued from Page

"This is a good team," A&M women's basketball coach Peggy Gillom said after Tuesday night's loss. "We have got to do the things we need to do, and we have to play with effort."

Tip off against the Buffaloes will be at 7 p.m.

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