

Metro/Sports

Michael Johnson Gets His Gold in Sidney

The United States went off the gold standard years ago, but Michael Johnson never has.

The sprinter with the Midas touch added to his personal gold reserve Monday when he became the first man to win back-to-back Olympic gold medals in the 400 meters.

In a remarkable 11-year career as one of the world's elite track and field athletes, Johnson, whose Olympic signature has been his dazzling gold running shoes, has never won anything but gold medals.

On Monday, he won his fourth Olympic gold medal. Johnson, who has lived in Dallas his entire life except for his four years at Baylor University, also has a record nine gold medals from the World Track and Field Championships.

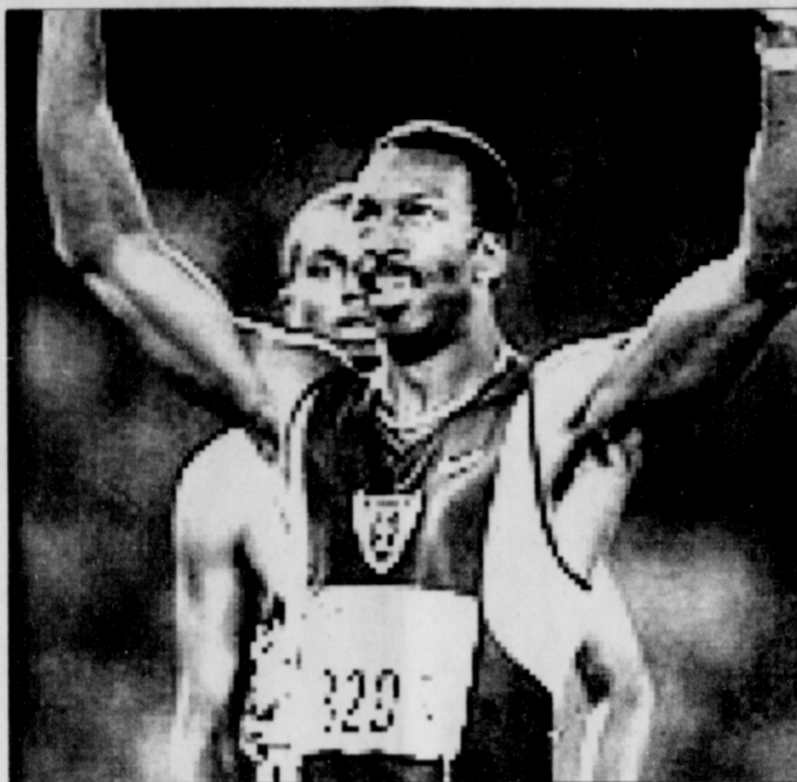
"In 1990, when I finished university, my coach, Clyde Hart, and I sat down and talked about what we wanted to accomplish," Johnson said. "It's good to know we can sit

back and say we accomplished everything we set out to do."

Johnson's winning time of 43.84 seconds didn't approach his world record of 43.18 he set in the 1999 World Championships or even the Olympic record of 43.49 set four years ago.

But the weather in Sydney has been cooler than sprinters like, and this was a strategically conservative race planned to ensure that he won the gold medal in what he said would be his last Olympics. "Today's race was a lot more conservative than it would have been if the weather had been better and there was a chance to break a world record," Johnson said. "But you have to take chances to break world records, and I couldn't take a chance with the way Alvin [Harrison] was running and the way Greg [Haughton] was running."

Harrison, Johnson's U.S. teammate, finished second in 44.40 to



U.S. Olympic Medalist Michael Johnson

take the silver medal. Haughton, a Jamaican who has been Johnson's training partner under Hart the past two years, took the bronze in 44.70.

Johnson will run in the 4x400-meter relay later this week in what certainly will be his last Olympic race. But he hasn't decided whether it will be his last race of all or whether he'll try for a fifth consecutive world championship next year.

"Right now I'm going to take some time off before I decide what my plans are for the future," he said. "At this point, I'm not thinking about the World Championships next year. I'm thinking about getting back to my wife and son tonight. I haven't seen them for a few days."

Johnson's wife, Kerry; his parents, Paul and Ruby; his brother and three sisters; Hart; and Johnson's physical therapist, Dale Smith of Dallas, were all on hand to share the moment with him.

Johnson was the undisputed star of the Olympics four years ago, when he became the first man to win the 200 and 400. He set a world record of 19.32 seconds for the 200. This time, Johnson has been somewhat overshadowed by Marion Jones, who is trying to win five gold medals, and Australian Cathy Freeman, who moments before Johnson's race won the women's 400 and became the first Aborigine to win an individual medal in the Olympics.

But Johnson didn't mind being out of the glare of the spotlight. He said he enjoyed not having the pressure of trying to be the first to win the two events he won in '96.

"I knew coming in that this would not be the same type of situation as Atlanta," Johnson said. "That was a once-in-a-lifetime situation. And, honestly, it is something I would not want to go through again. Cathy and Marion, these Games are theirs."

Disappointing Diagnosis for Injured Player

A Beaverton High School football player who suffered a serious spine injury on the field Friday night will be paralyzed from the neck down.

Doctor Randall Chesnutt announced that diagnosis Monday, a full day after Kris Tyacke underwent a six-hour surgery at Doernbecher Children's Hospital.

The boy's father, Darrell Tyacke, said the family is trying to "look at the pitcher as half-full,

not half-empty," when deciding what steps to take next.

The elder Tyacke thanked the community for the "incredible support" the family has received since Kris was injured on Friday. Tyacke ran an option around the right end in the first quarter and landed awkwardly when a Glencoe defender tackled him. The defender reached to help him up, but Tyacke didn't move.

Paramedics secured Tyacke onto a flat board, cutting off his jersey, pads and mask. They said he was awake and talking as they moved him from the field to the hospital.

He spent six hours in surgery, but doctors were unable to restore feeling and control in most of his body.

Sonics Hope Ewing's the Answer

The Seattle SuperSonics aren't making any guarantees to their fans. Or to Patrick Ewing. With the addition of Ewing, the Sonics have a starting center to go with Gary Payton, Vin Baker, Rashard Lewis and Brent Barry. But even with the 38-year-old Ewing playing well, the Sonics are still looking up at the best in the Western Conference, the defending champion Los Angeles Lakers and the Portland Trail Blazers.

"We've got to worry about what helps the Sonics," general manager Wally Walker said after the 12-player, four-team trade Wednesday

brought Seattle its first legitimate starting center since Jack Sikma, who was traded to Milwaukee after the 1986 season."

It's not without risk because of Patrick's age and injuries, but we felt we had to take a risk to get a center," Walker added.

The Sonics made it to the NBA finals against Michael Jordan and Chicago in 1996. But they didn't have a true center, making do with Shawn Kemp and Sam Perkins. A year ago, the Sonics were one of the smallest teams. They tried to match up with Shaquille O'Neal of the Lakers and Rasheed Wallace of

the Trail Blazers with Baker and Horace Grant, two power forwards, as their big men. It was a mismatch. Despite Payton's sixth straight All-Star season, they finished seventh in the West and were eliminated in the first round of the playoffs.

But is Ewing the answer? He never won a championship in New York and is headed into his 16th NBA season with creaky knees and a surgically repaired wrist. He had a minor knee operation in June. Against Indiana in the Eastern Conference finals last season, the Knicks were 2-0 when Ewing sat

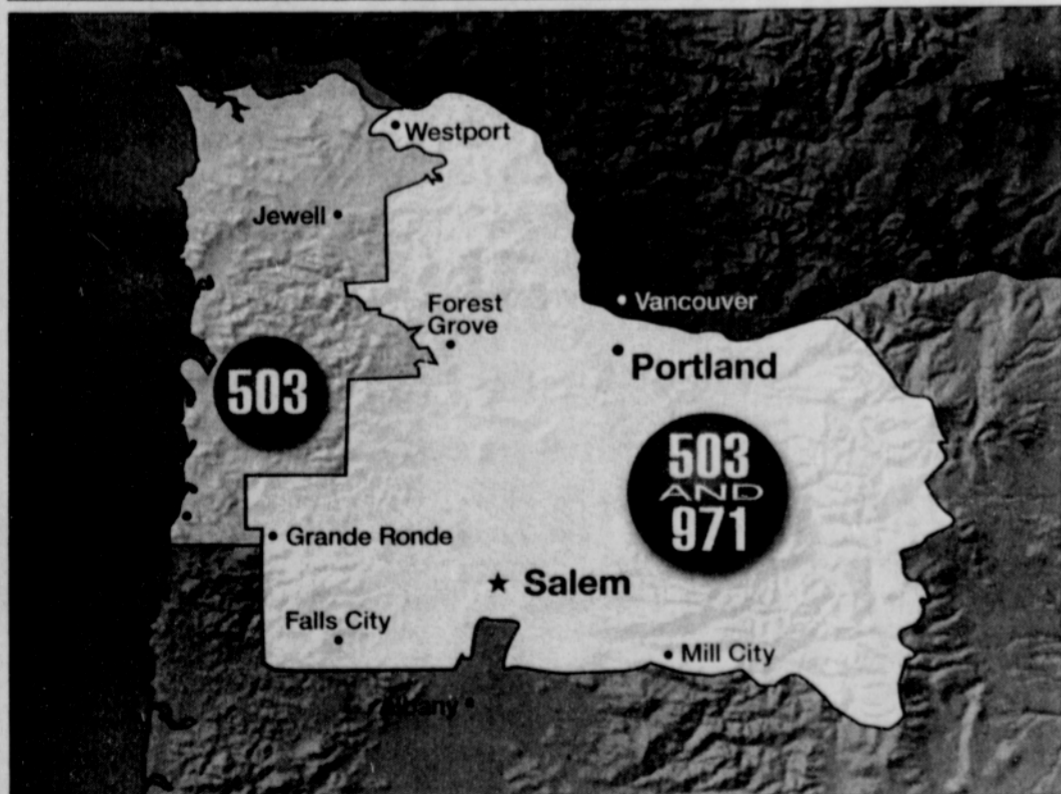
out injured and 0-4 when he played.

Ewing has one year remaining on a \$60 million, four-year contract and has said he would like to play two more years beyond the 2000-2001 season. The Knicks didn't want him beyond next season.

"The bottom line is he felt totally disrespected and he felt it was time for him to move on," Ewing's friend, Alonzo Mourning, said from the Sydney Olympics.

Ewing will earn \$14 million next season. The Sonics made it clear he's going to have to play well to get another contract.

If you're on speaking terms with anyone in the Portland metro area, be sure to learn the new area code.



To better serve a growing population and its increased reliance on modems, wireless phones, fax machines, and pagers, the phone companies of Oregon have added a new 971 area code to the 503 area. This kind of change is not just occurring in Oregon, but throughout the country. And because the new codes differ in format from previous codes that contained either a '1' or a '0' in the second digit, you should check all specialized Central Office-based systems for compatibility. Some of these systems may require reprogramming or upgrading. Cellular phones must be reprogrammed by your cellular service provider.

To test your equipment, call the new Oregon area code test line at 1-800-000-0000. If you have any difficulty dialing the new area code, please call your operator to assist you in placing your call.



The Oregon Telecommunications Association and Your Local Telecommunications Providers