

Portland Observer **Metro/Sports**

Sydney's Olympic Games Sent Off in Style

Goodbyes shared after a wide array of memorable moments

From the fields of play to Sydney's spectacular harbor, Australia and the world's athletes cut loose Sunday, bidding goodbye to two weeks of sporting triumphs and doping scandals — a memorable Summer Olympics proud to claim the coveted title of "best games ever."

Fireworks rolled east across the Sydney sky, an 8.5-mile "fuse" that carried the Olympic torch's symbolic light from Olympic Stadium along barges in Homebush Bay to a jam-packed downtown, where the majestic Harbor Bridge exploded like a giant Roman candle in a festive fusillade of pyrotechnics.

100,000 thundered the response now known across the world: "Oi! Oi! Oi!"

Organizers wanted a relaxed closing show that let competitors and spectators send the games off in style. And a raucous, unethered, schtick party they got. It veered oddly among comedy (slapstick rou-

tines), ancient ritualism (Greek priestesses in flowing dresses) and the simply hallucinogenic (a giant upended fish skeleton and shrimp on bicycles) — testament to what choreography, technology and an arenaful of enthusiastic spectators can do.

The festivities began minutes after Elias Rodriguez of Micronesia ran into Olympic Stadium, ending the men's marathon and freeing the arena for athletes to swarm in. And if anyone worried these would be dubbed the "Drug Games," it didn't show Sunday night: The Olympic flame went dark, but the partying went on.

Olympics-giddy fans and volunteers packed a stadium crackling with energy. They did the wave, flashed flashlights by the thousands into a crystal-clear night and chanted that spirited "Aussie" chant.

And with cameras and carefree



Marion Jones came into the Sydney Games hoping to win five gold medals. After her 100 meters win, it seemed her prospects were good. When all was said and done, Jones left Sydney with three gold medals and two bronze.

smiles, 10,000 athletes flooded the biggest Olympic arena of all. Swimming gold medalist Ian Thorpe, in a red coat, carried the Australian flag, waving it to the music. It was a fun, festive end to the games. And, boy, was it weird.

Thirteen-year-old Nikki Webster, who journeyed through 50,000 years of Australian history in the opening ceremony, returned to star in the more festive wrapup, which grew progressively more surreal. If Salvador Dali ever held a homecoming parade, it might have looked like this.

A lawnmower crashed through a stage and hundreds of band members — on purpose — in a mass chase torn from a Buster Keaton movie. There emerged outsized plastic dancers, robots on stilts and an angry inflatable kangaroo pushed by trolls in halos.

Athletes batted around a behemoth eyeball. And nobody seemed to mind. "Let's party," the scoreboard pulsed.

The ceremony was broadcast live on giant screens across Sydney and Australia.

Carter Pushes Team USA to Gold

Vince Carter put the game away with a double-pump reverse slam, which he followed by blowing a kiss to the crowd. Moments later, he acknowledged what had become evident at the Sydney Games: The rest of the world is getting much better at basketball.

Carter and Ray Allen scored 13 points apiece Sunday as the U.S. Men's Olympic Basketball Team staved off a France rally to win the gold medal game 85-75.

France was within four points of the Americans with less than five minutes to play, providing Team USA with an unsettling flashback to the semifinals against Lithuania. The U.S. won that game 85-83 when Lithuania missed a three-point attempt at the buzzer.

"Basketball has evolved. It's come a long way," Carter said after Sunday's game. "We give respect to France and Lithuania. They pushed us to the end."



Vince Carter

Schrempf Announces Retirement

Portland Trail Blazers forward Detlef Schrempf announced his retirement Monday night, bringing an end to his 15-year NBA career.

Schrempf, who was born and raised in Germany, was one of the first international players to make an impact in the NBA. He spent one year in Portland after six seasons with Seattle, 4½ with Indiana and 3½ with Dallas.

"I would especially like to thank the Blazers organization," Schrempf said in a statement. "They are a first-class organization and gave me the opportunity to play for a champion-



Detlef Schrempf

ship-caliber team."

Schrempf enjoyed the most success with Seattle and Indiana. He represented the Sonics in two All-Star Games and helped the team reach the 1996 NBA Finals.

He was named to the All-NBA Third Team in 1994-95, when he averaged 19.2 points and 6.2 rebounds per game and shot 52 percent from the floor.

While with Indiana, he won the Sixth Man Award in 1991 and '92 and was a 1993 All-Star. His best statistical season was '93, when he averaged 19.1 points, 9.5 rebounds and 6.0 assists per game.



Portland's Pro-Am Basketball Team operating out of the Blazers Boys and Girls Club at the national championships in Melbourne, Florida.

Portland Team Soars

The Portland Pro-Am Basketball Team is in its third year of operating out of the Blazer Boys and Girls Club. This year's 5th grade team had an outstanding season.

The team started by winning the Lakeside Invitational Tournament in Dec. 99. They then won the Oregon/Washington Tournament at the Vancouver Hoop.

In Jan. 2000, they won an Invitational Tournament at the Vancouver Hoop.

In April 2000, they won the State AAU Championship, the qualifier for the national.

In May 2000, the Pro-Am team won the High

Five America Memorials Weekend Tournament.

Most recently, they won the Oregon State Games, the qualifier for the Nationals in New Orleans 2001.

Finally, the 5th grade Pro-Am Team represented the State of Oregon at the National AAU Basketball Tournament in Cocoa Beach Florida. There were a total of 89 teams and the Pro-Am team finished in the top 22.

Congratulations to these young men who have represented the State of Oregon with a touch of class.

Blazers Sign First Round Pick

The Portland Trail Blazers have signed Erick Barkley, their first round draft pick in the 2000 NBA Draft, to a multi-year contract. Per club policy, financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

"We are happy to announce the signing of Erick," said Bob Whitsitt, Portland's team president and general manager. "He's a competitive guy, he wants to win and he knows that we're trying to win. He'll be a good addition to our roster."

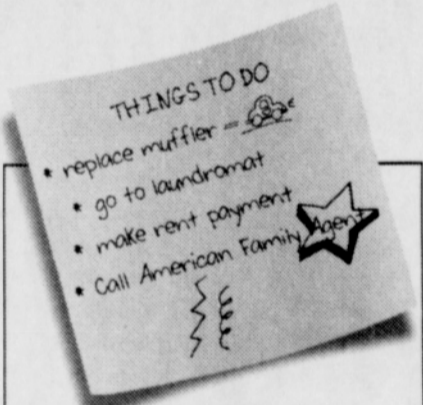
Barkley, a 6-foot-1 guard from

St. John's who was an early candidate from the draft, was a First team

All-Big East Conference selection as a sophomore after being a unanimous choice for the Big East All-Rookie Team following his freshman season. Averaging 14.6 points a game in two seasons at St. John's, he made 39.6 percent of his shots from the field, including 32.8 percent of his three-pointers and 72.7 percent of his free throws. Barkley also recorded 167 steals, fifth best ever at St. John's.

Happy Birthday Kim!

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