

2018 Winter Games

Column: Kim Jong Un plays the Olympics like a champion



AP Photo/Amy Sancetta

In this Feb. 10, 2006, file photo, Korea flag-bearer's Bora Lee and Jong-In Lee, carrying a unification flag lead their teams into the stadium during the 2006 Winter Olympics opening ceremony in Turin, Italy. North Korea plans to send a spotlight-stealing delegation to next month's Winter Olympics in the South Korean county of Pyeongchang.

By JOHN LEICESTER
Associated Press

North Korea suddenly making nice for the duration of next month's Olympic Games in South Korea, putting seven decades of enmity on hold for 16 days with its offers to send athletes and entertainers across their heavily militarized border, won't fundamentally change what happens next.

When the Olympic flame has been extinguished, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will continue to use every tool at his disposal, including his gulags and thought police, to maintain his iron grip on power, demanding unfailing loyalty from each and every North Korean, just as his grandfather and father did before him.

To preserve the dynasty they handed down, one where the Kims and their trusted lieutenants ruled across decades when millions starved, he will continue the North's push for an arsenal of nuclear-tipped missiles that could strike faraway cities — to make sure that world leaders think thrice about any scheme to topple him.

So, when the medals have all been won, the world will almost certainly find itself back at square one: Worrying again about whether Kim and U.S. President Donald Trump are just a misstep or an angry tweet away from reaching for those nuclear buttons they've bragged about.

Because North Korea has been so closed for so long, trying to determine the intentions of Kim Il Sung, Kim

Jong Il and now Kim Jong Un has often been an exercise in guesswork. But it's safe to say they all shared the same priority: the survival of themselves and their regime. Kim's unexpected offer earlier this month to send a delegation to the games in Pyeongchang must be seen through that lens. From his perspective, an Olympic truce is a low-risk gambit that helps the No. 1 purpose of his regime: buying more time for Kim.

Having no part at all in the Feb. 9-25 games just 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of the heavily mined border that divides the Korean peninsula would have been worse for Kim. It would have made the North appear even more isolated, not only targeted by U.S.-led international sanctions but cut off from the far more forgiving sporting world, too. That takes some doing.

Instead, by sending singers, dancers, an orchestra and a cheering squad, the North gets to whoop it up at the South's Olympic party, ditches its pariah costume for a couple of weeks, and temporarily confuses and distracts the world from its stated goal of perfecting and growing its nuclear arsenal. Not a bad trade-off.

The few athletes the North is likely to send will almost certainly return home empty-handed. But Kim can lean on his mouthpieces in the North's entirely state-controlled media to pen fawning peacans anyway.

In sports, North Korea barely makes a dent, despite

Kim's supposed love of the NBA and occasional visits from Dennis Rodman. But Kim has favored winter sports, and one of his big showcase projects — a ski resort three hours outside Pyongyang — attests to that.

The South, for its part, would have looked churlish by refusing Kim's outstretched hand, even as he holds missiles in the other one. Should this thaw, like previous ones, again fail to produce a broader, more enduring melt of frosty ties between the Koreas, it should at least reassure Olympic athletes and visitors that they won't be risking their lives by putting themselves within range of Kim's troops.

The International Olympic Committee stands to gain from this, too. Before the Koreas started talking again, Russia was shaping up as the dark cloud over the first Winter Olympics since its armada of doped athletes, helped by state officials and a lab director later turned whistleblower, topped the medal table in Sochi in 2014, only to lose that spot when medals were later stripped.

IOC President Thomas Bach will still face tough questions in Pyeongchang about why Russian athletes are being allowed to compete again so soon after the Sochi scandal. But thanks to the Koreas, he'll also be able to crow that the Olympics are a force for human cooperation, even peace.

Kim, for one, would like us to believe it — however true or untrue the reality might be.

Sports court to start Russian Olympic doping appeals

Monday marks the beginning of 39 Russian athletes' appeals

Associated Press

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — The Court of Arbitration of Sport will begin appeals hearings on Monday for 39 Russian athletes disqualified from the 2014 Sochi Winter Games for doping and banned for life from the Olympics.

Two key witnesses, Russian whistleblower Grigory Rodchenkov and World Anti-Doping Agency investigator Richard

McLaren, will testify by video or telephone link to the closed-door hearings, CAS said in a statement Wednesday.

The court said the combined hearings should last for six days at a conference center in Geneva, near the European headquarters of the United Nations.

One panel of three judges will hear 28 cases and a second trio will judge 11. Two of the judges — Christoph Vedder and Dirk-Reiner Martens, both from Germany — will sit on both three-man panels, CAS said.

Verdicts are expected by Friday, Feb. 2, one week before the Pyeongchang Olympics opening cere-

mony in South Korea. A further three appeal cases in biathlon will not be heard next week, the court said.

All 42 athletes deny being part of a state-backed doping program for the Sochi Olympics.

The first group of athletes whose hearings have been combined are in bobsled, cross-country skiing, skeleton and speed skating. They include athletes who have continued to compete in World Cup races not controlled by the IOC.

The second group of 11 cases is from bobsled, luge and women's ice hockey.

Track and Field

IAAF visits Oregon in advance of 2021 World Championships

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

A delegation from the international governing body for track and field has been visiting Oregon to review preparations for the 2021 World Championships.

About 12 representatives from the IAAF and its partners arrived in Eugene, Oregon, on Monday. Branded Oregon21, the international event will be held at the University of Oregon's historic Hayward Field. It will be the first time track and field's premier biennial competition will be held in the United States.

IAAF CEO Olivier Gers said Wednesday that

in addition to assessing the preparations, the delegation is exploring ways to engage the rest of the state and the region in the event.

"It's critical that we build bridges and we build human connections between the IAAF and the teams locally that will be organizing the event," Gers said.

Hayward Field has hosted seven U.S. Track and Field championships and six Olympic Trials, as well as the annual Prefontaine Classic on the Diamond League schedule. The 2014 World Junior Championships were also held at the track, one of the most well-known in the sport.

Renovations to accommodate 32,000 spectators

for the World Championships were expected to start following the NCAA championships in June.

It is expected that more than 2,000 athletes from 214 countries will take part in the meet, which was awarded to Eugene in 2015. The event is scheduled for Aug. 6-15, 2021.

"It's a different scale than any other event," Gers said. "It will be in 2021 the largest sporting event of the year around the world."

This week's visit was the first of many for the IAAF, he said.

Doha is hosting the World Championships in 2019.

WRESTLING: Pendleton's Whaley goes 2-0 on the night at 160, 170 pounds

Continued from 1B

Bishop (220) earned 36 points for the squad without stepping foot on a mat. Pendleton went on to win 42-29.

Aiden Patterson (170), the only Buck wrestler to win their bout this time around, added six points to the team's total when he won by fall over Hood River's Nathaniel Quintanilla in 1:34.

Despite the loss, Hood River had a better outing this time around with four Eagles winning their respective bouts against the Bucks.

Ryan Zeller (120) and Adrian Ramirez (220) won by forfeit, while Alberto Rojas (182) was the only

Eagle to win by fall in the second match. He trapped Pendleton's Kirk Liscom in 3:30.

Chad Muenzer (126), Jason Shaner (132) and Cade Parker (138) were victorious by decision over the Pendleton opponents.

Muenzer defeated Chris Chambers by a 13-2 major decision; Shaner also by a major decision, 23-9, against Alex Rendon; and Park by a 12-7 decision versus Koby Jones.

Pendleton will return to the mat Saturday at the Colton Holly Memorial Tournament in Wilsonville.

Individual Results
Match 1
Weight Summary
138 M. Robertson (Pendleton) over V. Ortigoza (HRV) (Dec 6-4)
138 V. Ortigoza (HRV) over D. Hamilton (Pendleton) (Fall 5:50)

145 P. Armstrong (HRV) over S. Williams (Pendleton) (Fall 0:59)
145 M. Verdin (Pendleton) over M. Virgen (HRV) (Dec 15-8)
160 J. Whaley (Pendleton) over J. Kahler (HRV) (Fall 0:47)
170 J. Swaggart (Pendleton) over B. Griggs (HRV) (Fall 5:13)
170 J. Whaley (Pendleton) over A. McCreery (HRV) (Fall 2:18)
285 C. Durham (HRV) over J. DeGeer (Pendleton) (Fall 1:29)

Match 2
Weight Summary
113 C. Tremper (Pendleton) over Unknown (For.)
120 R. Zeller (HRV) over Unknown (For.)
126 C. Muenzer (HRV) over C. Chambers (Pendleton) (MD 13-2)
132 J. Shaner (HRV) over A. Rendon (Pendleton) (MD 23-9)
138 C. Parker (HRV) over K. Jones (Pendleton) (Dec 12-7)
145 B. Davis (Pendleton) over Unknown (For.)
152 I. Urbina (Pendleton) over Unknown (For.)
160 I. Bannister (Pendleton) over Unknown (For.)
170 A. Patterson (Pendleton) over N. Quintanilla (HRV) (Fall 1:34)
182 A. Rojas (HRV) over K. Liscom (Pendleton) (Fall 3:30)
195 A. Henderson (Pendleton) over Unknown (For.)
220 M. Bishop (Pendleton) over Unknown (For.)
220 A. Ramirez (HRV) over Unknown (For.)

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