



NEW OLYMPIC STADIUM. Tokyo's National Stadium, the centerpiece of the 1964 Summer Olympics, has hosted its final sporting event. The stadium will be demolished to make way for a new 80,000-seat structure that will be the main venue of the 2020 Olympics. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

Tokyo's National Stadium hosts final sports event

By Jim Armstrong
AP Sports Writer

TOKYO — Tokyo's National Stadium, the centerpiece of the 1964 Summer Olympics has hosted its final sporting event. The stadium will be demolished to make way for a new 80,000-seat structure that will be the main venue of the 2020 Olympics.

Japan faced Hong Kong in a rugby match at the 54,000-seat stadium, which opened in 1958 and hosted the opening and

closing ceremonies, as well as athletics, at the 1964 games.

Workers will begin demolishing the stadium in July and work on the new Olympic Stadium will begin in October 2015.

Already there has been criticism that the cost for the new stadium is too high. The original budget was 300 billion yen (\$3 billion), but Japan's government said the cost will be scaled down to 130 billion yen (\$1.3 billion).

Mao Asada to take a year off from figure skating

By Jim Armstrong
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Japanese figure skater Mao Asada will take a season off from competitive skating and says there is a 50 percent chance she will return to the sport.

Speaking at a news conference, Asada said she is mentally and physically tired and wants a chance to focus on other aspects of her life, including attending university.

"I worked very hard from Vancouver to Sochi," said Asada, who won silver at the Vancouver Winter Olympics. "Now I feel it's time to take a year off and rest. We'll see how I feel after a break. At this point it is 50-50."

Asada captured her third world title at the figure skating world championships in Saitama, Japan, in March, which followed a sixth-place finish at the Sochi Olympics.

The 23-year-old Asada went into Sochi carrying gold medal hopes, but finished a disappointing 16th in the short program before an inspirational free skate that vaulted her up the standings. Asada is the only female figure skater who has landed three triple axels in one competition.

While conceding there is a chance she may return to competition, Asada said she



SKATING HIATUS. Japanese figure skater Mao Asada leaves a press conference in Tokyo. Asada said she is taking a season off from competitive skating, and also said there is a 50 percent chance she will return to the sport. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)

can't picture herself competing at the next Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea in 2018.

Asada began figure skating at the age of five and made her senior debut in the 2005-2006 season. She won her first world title in 2008. Her longtime rival, Yuna Kim of South Korea, retired after Sochi.

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