

Dominance continues for men's squad

By ASSOCIATED PRESS
in London

When there's gold to be had, don't ever doubt the Chinese.

When it comes to silver and bronze, it can get tricky. It did at men's gymnastics on Monday.

The Chinese won their second straight Olympic title and third in four Games, making anyone who wrote them off after a dismal performance in qualifying look silly. Their score of 275.997 points was more than four points better than Japan, which needed help from a DVR to finish second.

Britain was initially announced as the silver medalist, setting off raucous celebrations at the O2 Arena. The British don't have a proud history in gymnastics — they barely have any history — and this was their first men's team medal in a century. But Japan questioned

the score of three-time world champion Kohei Uchimura on the pommel horse, the team's last routine.

While judges huddled around a video screen, Uchimura and his teammates sat stone-faced while the British partied. About five minutes later, Uchimura's score was revised and Japan was awarded the silver while Britain was bumped down to bronze.

It was of little consolation to the Japanese, who were bested by the Chinese yet again.

Just like everybody else.

China has also won the past five world titles, and now has gone eight years without losing at a major competition.

The Americans, hoping for their first Olympic title since 1984 after finishing No 1 in qualifying, lost all hopes for any medal with a dismal showing on pommel horse, their second event. They rallied to finish fifth.



JULIE JACOBSON / ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Chinese team holds up cutouts of gold stars as they celebrates their gold medal in the artistic gymnastics men's team final on Monday.

China crushes Croatia in women's basketball

Led by center Chen Nan's 28 points, squad cruises to second win of tournament

By XINHUA in London

The way Team China is playing in the women's basketball tournament suggests it is gunning for a matchup against consensus favorite Team USA.

After beating the Czech Republic 66-57 in its opener, China crushed Croatia 83-58 on Monday. China has opened with victories in its first two games against strong opponents.

Center Chen Nan scored 28 points to lead China and Miao Lijie added 17. Both are major reasons why China has started white hot out of the gates.

The team finished fourth at the Beijing Olympics and are in the driving seat to take on Angola and Turkey in the preliminary rounds before facing the mighty US, which it has never beaten at the Olympics.

Miao also dished out 10 assists and added five rebounds in China's victory on Monday.

"We took the game really serious and that's why we beat them by a big margin," Miao said of the team's 25-point victory, which matched the US' margin of victory against Croatia on Saturday.

Croatia's Iva Ciglar said her team had two different approaches to the matches against the US and China.

"The US were really, really strong, but we thought we could beat China. China played a good game, they deserved the win. They have the quality to play against anyone in the world," Ciglar said.



CHARLES KRUPA / AP

China's Miao Lijie (left) celebrates after scoring with teammate Song Xiaoyun against Croatia on Monday, in London. China beat Croatia 83-58.

Croatia started the game efficiently and led at one point in the first quarter.

"Croatians are very skillful and better than us in 1-on-1. We changed the defense to zone in the second quarter, which was the key to the victory," said China's coach, Sun Fengwu.

Leading 39-31 in the first half,

China blew the game wide open in the third quarter behind a series of jumpers by Chen at the top of the paint. China led by as many as 20 points in the third. Chen Xiaoli, Miao and Gao Song made three straight three-point plays that gave China a 60-40 lead with 3:04 left in the period.

Croatia committed 25 turnovers, which China converted into 24 points. China also had 25 assists for the game.

"We had too many mistakes and turnovers. I don't know what's the problem with our defense," said Croatia's coach Stipe Bralic.

Sandra Mandir led Croatia with

22 points and Andja Jelavic added 11, but the backcourt pair had 11 turnovers combined.

"The Croatian team plays a similar game to us — small, but fast. Today we were faster and did a better job on the pick-and-roll. It's a game of speed and preciseness," Sun said.

Romania's shooting star full of relief

By BARBARA SURK
in London
Associated Press

Alin George Moldoveanu won the 10-meter air rifle equaled the Olympic qualifying record and collected the gold medal at the London Games on Monday, making up for his narrow miss at Beijing four years ago.

The Romanian missed a medal in the same event in 2008 by 2 millimeters. He blocked that out of his mind in London.

"I just went into it and tried to do my best like I do every time," Moldoveanu said. "I was calm, I did not feel pressure, because I did not know where I was. Now I am overwhelmed. It's crazy."

Moldoveanu and top-ranked Niccolò Campriani of Italy shot 599 in qualifying to equal the Olympic record by Zhu Qinan in 2004. Zhu, who went on to win the 2004 gold and 2008 silver, qualified 10th, missing the eight-man final by a point.

In the final, Moldoveanu was just a little more consistent, scoring 103.1 to Campriani's 102.5.

Moldoveanu totaled 702.1 and Campriani 701.5.

Campriani felt the pressure of going into the final as a gold favorite and had a tough time dealing with distractions.

Campriani slipped off the lead with shots in the 9-ring in the eighth and ninth rounds.

"There was a lot of pressure and of course, I am happy with a silver medal, but I am also happy to get the job done," Campriani said. "It was very hard to deal with, people talking about what I should achieve at Olympics and how many medals I should win as the No 1 ranked shooter."

"The distraction of high expectations when you still have to shoot a match is not ideal for a sport where adrenaline is not your friend!"

Gagan Narang of India, who runs a shooting academy in Hyderabad called Gun for Glory, finished with a 10.3 and then a 10.7 to snatch a bronze medal away from China's Wang Tao.

His compatriot, 2008 Beijing champion Abhinav Bindra, finished qualifying in 16th place, two shots out of the final.

Bindra's gold at Beijing was India's first in an individual event. And while Narang did not match Bindra's gold, he was relieved to win the bronze.

"I guess I have a huge (weight) off my shoulders," Narang said. "Bronze is a medal, and this is an Olympic bronze medal, so it's quite exciting."

Chinese men's duo suffers second loss in row

By XINHUA in London

Xu Linyin and Wu Penggen, China's lone pair in men's beach volleyball, suffered their second loss at the London Olympics on Monday.

Julius Brink and Jonas Reckerkmann of Germany, the 2011 World Championship bronze medalists, beat the Chinese duo 13-21, 21-19 and 15-8 in the preliminary match of Pool C in front of 15,000 spectators at the Horse Guards Parade.

With the victory, Brink and Reckerkmann, who also won the 2009 World Championship, guaranteed their place in the knockout stages with four points in hand.

Despite a yellow card for Xu, the Chinese pair forged ahead midway through the first set and despite deft touches from Brink and a strong arm

at the net in Reckerkmann, the Germans were unable to recover.

"It was due to the delay in play," said Xu. "The German guys were guiding the referee, but I did not touch the ball. The referees do make mistakes and I can understand, but they are not allowed to discuss with the referee. I was a little bit angry about the decision."

The Germany pair came back strong in the second set as they made a series of diving saves.

"We are a little disappointed. We had a couple of chances, especially in the second set. They came back and took a couple of crucial points and they saved the ball well. And in the third set they dominated," said Xu after the match.

Trailing 7-10, Brink and Reckerkmann launched a 7-1 run to seize

control of the second set at 14-11. Xu tried to narrow the gap with some kills, but only to see the Germany duo go up by 21-19.

"They are a good team, but we just thought we have to remain calm and we have to put on more pressure," said Reckerkmann. "We think the tactics worked better in the second set and second half of the game. We needed longer to get going and did too little at the start."

The deciding third set was defined by defense and counterattack play as the Germans streaked into a 7-3 lead and never looked back.

Holding only two points after two matches, Xu and Wu have to win against Konstantin Semenov and Serguei Prokoplev from Russia on Wednesday to keep their hopes alive of making the final 16 from Pool C.



PETR DAVID JOSEK / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Xu Linyin from China hits a ball during the beach volleyball match against Germany on Monday. China's lone pair lost the game.