

Magazine apologizes to Ye for controversial article

Chinese scientists criticize Nature story on record-breaking swimmer

By HUANG KUN in London
Xinhua

A prestigious academic journal apologized to Chinese swimmer Ye Shiwen on Monday for carrying a controversial article on its website that "gave the impression that we were supporting accusations against her" with implication for doping.

The article titled "Why great Olympic feats raise suspicions" was published on Nature's website on Aug 1, which says that Ye's gold-winning performance is "anomalous" and implies that her clean drug test during competition can't rule out the possibility of doping.

The 16-year-old Ye broke a world record to win the women's 400m individual medley gold and followed up with a 200m medley gold in the London Olympics.

Nature's article has been criticized by many scientists, who are the major readers of the journal.

Lai Jiang, a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, commented on the journal's website that the article is so scientifically wrong that it "is a textbook example of what we call 'cherry pick your data'".

Chinese scientists have signed on an open letter to challenge the Nature article.

Nature apologized in an "Editor's Note" on Monday, saying:



But we acknowledge that the combination of errors ... gave the impression that we were supporting accusations against her, even though this was emphatically not our intention."

EDITOR'S NOTE OF THE SCIENCE MAGAZINE NATURE

tor's Note" on Monday, saying: "The news story was triggered by a debate that was already active, concerning the scale

of Ye Shiwen's victory. Such debates have arisen over many outstanding feats in the past, by athletes from many countries, and it is wrong to suggest, as many of the critics do, that we singled her out because of her nationality.

"The story's intention as an explainer was to examine how science can help resolve debates over extraordinary performances, not to examine those performance statistics in detail. Several analyses done by others convinced us that it was fair to characterize Ye's performance as 'anomalous' — in the sense that it was statistically unusual.

"But we acknowledge that the combination of errors discussed above and the absence of a more detailed discussion of the statistics (which with hindsight we regret) gave the

impression that we were supporting accusations against her, even though this was emphatically not our intention.

"For that we apologize to our readers and to Ye Shiwen."

That note was co-authored by Tim Appenzeller, chief magazine editor of Nature, and Philip Campbell, editor-in-chief of Nature.

Nature is considered by the scientific community as one of the most prestigious academic journals in the world. Its major editing office is in London.

Appenzeller told Xinhua over phone: "I think it's pretty much what we want to say."

He added that the controversial article is an online news story, and it will not be included in the official printed journal of Nature.



HAVING A REARING GOOD TIME

PHOTO BY DAVID GOLDMAN / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hello Sanctos, the horse ridden by Scott Brash, of Britain, rears as the crowd cheers during a victory lap after Britain won the gold medal in the equestrian team show jumping event at the London Olympics on Monday.

Accused bottle-thrower pleads not guilty

By GREGORY KATZ in London
Associated Press

A man accused of throwing a plastic bottle onto the Olympic track seconds before the start of the men's 100m final pleaded not guilty on Monday to creating a public nuisance.

Ashley Gill-Webb, looking tired and wearing a white T-shirt, said he was "not guilty" during his brief appearance at Stratford Magistrates Court. He was granted conditional bail with trial set for early September.

Prosecutors asked that Gill-

Webb, 34, of Leeds in northern England, be banned from any Olympic venue and the entire Olympic Park for the duration of the Games. In addition to throwing the bottle, he was charged with using threatening words, disorderly behavior, and harassment.

The showcase event, won by Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt, was not disrupted on Sunday night, but Olympic officials on Monday sharply criticized the suspect.

Sebastian Coe, chairman of the London organizing commit-

tee, said there would be "zero tolerance" for anti-social behavior.

"Throwing a bottle on to the field of play is unacceptable, it's not just unacceptable at an Olympics Games but at any sporting event and anybody who does that will be removed," he said.

Coe said there was some "poetic justice" involved because the suspect had been sitting next to a judo star who hit him after he allegedly threw the bottle on Sunday night. Coe cautioned, however, that he was not supporting a vigilante

response.

Dutch judo star Edith Bosch, who won a bronze medal, told Dutch TV she acted out of disappointment and anger. She said she had seen the man acting oddly before the race began.

"I had seen the man walking around earlier and said to people around me that he was a peculiar bloke," she said. "Then he threw that bottle and in my emotion I hit him on the back with the flat of my hand."

Police said the man had allegedly shouted abuse before hurling the bottle just before the race

began.

Bolt, the Jamaican sprinter who won the race in an Olympic record time of 9.63 seconds, said he was unaware of the incident. However, US sprinter Justin Gatlin, who won the bronze medal, said he had been a bit distracted when the bottle was thrown.

"But when you're in those blocks and the whole stadium's quiet you can hear a pin drop," Gatlin said, adding that he did not think the race had been affected.

Australia to review swim disappointment

By AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE in London

Australia will review the disappointing performance of its much-heralded swimming team at the London Olympics, officials said on Monday, as they acknowledged the world had "lifted the bar".

Australia won one gold med-

al, six silver and three bronze in the pool in London — its lowest tally since Barcelona in 1992. It was also without an individual gold medalist for the first time since the 1976 Montreal Games.

The sole gold came in the women's 4x100m freestyle relay. "We must do everything possible to get Australian swimming back on top," Swimming Australia president David Urquhart said in

announcing the wide-ranging review.

"This is not a time for blame and scape-goating. This is an opportunity to make the changes required to rise to the international challenge."

Urquhart said the review will be independent and conducted by experienced coach Bill Sweetenham and former Olympic champion Susie O'Neill, who has blamed the

poor showing on a lack of discipline compared to countries such as China.

"What I've been hearing ... is the work ethic from Australian swimmers is maybe not the same as it used to be 10 years ago," O'Neill said last week.

"Talent gets you this far in an Olympics; work ethic gets you across the line ... it's one part talent, it's four parts work ethic."

Urquhart said much had been said "by people here in London and back at home about our overall medal performance".

"While everyone is entitled to their own view, no one should doubt the commitment or effort of our swimmers," he said.

"All of them are proud to represent their country and have done their best in an incredibly competitive swim meet."

offtrack ...

WHEELS AFTER WATER

American swimmer Tyler Clary says he's considering a career as a race car driver when he hangs up his Speedo.

The gold medalist in the 200m backstroke said he's attended races at the track in Fontana, California, and, last year, participated with an off-road racing team.

"I want to take a serious shot at being a professional race car driver after swimming's over," Clary said on Sunday night's *Wind Tunnel* program on Speed Channel.

"It's funny because when you initially tell people that, you get laughs, complete surprise, but I know that this is something I could be really good at and, like I said, I want to take a serious shot at it."



SUPPORTERS BAND

They're loud, they're proud and they certainly know how to move a crowd.

The England Supporters Band has been following Britain's athletes around the Olympic Park for the past few weeks, banging drums and blasting their trumpets, lifting crowd spirits wherever they go.

The band was founded when leader John Hemmingham took a bugle into a soccer game in 1993 to support his favorite team.

The band is made up of more than 20 musicians, but there are rarely more than four playing at any time.

"We never practice the songs," drummer Steve Holmes said.

But they do give some forethought to what they play. In the men's hockey game between Britain and Argentina, the band played *Rule Britannia*, cheered on by the crowd.

FOUHY APOLOGIZES

Former world-champion kayaker Ben Fouhy apologized for his harsh criticism of New Zealand sports officials following his failure to qualify for the final of the 1,000m K-1 at the London Olympics on Monday.

Minutes after finishing sixth in his semifinal at Dorney Lake, the outspoken Fouhy said he was "disillusioned" and "disgusted" about the level of funding he has received from Sport New Zealand as he attempted to add an Olympic gold to the world title he won in 2003.

In an outburst that included some expletives, he also complained about being used as a "political pawn".

ASSOCIATED PRESS

REPORTER'S LOG | ZHANG HAIZHOU

Not all that glitters is actually gold

I was standing in central London's Piccadilly Circus on Friday afternoon, watching the Olympic women's swimming 800m freestyle final on the big screen.

I was surrounded by Britons who hoped to see defending champion Rebecca Adlington win gold at home.

The moment she finished third, my first thought was "she failed".

But I was quite surprised when the crowd burst into boisterous applause.

People were cheering and celebrating, as if Adlington was the champion.

I was even more impressed when I saw the 23-year-old smile happily in the BBC's live interview. Of course, she didn't look excited. But her features seemed relaxed and betrayed few signs of disappointment. She even exchanged a hug with a competitor.

The scene reminded me of other stories at the Olympics last week.

Zhou Jun, a 17-year-old female weightlifter, failed to hoist 95-kg in three snatch attempts and generated media criticism.

The City Times, a newspaper based in Yunnan province, called another Chinese weightlifter's failure in London a "disgrace".

Also last week, yet another weightlifter, Wu Jingbiao, burst into tears after winning silver. He even bowed down in front of the camera to apologize for "letting down his country and people".

The sharp contrast with what happened to Adlington and the Chinese weightlifters highlights that many Chinese are obsessed with the Olympic gold medal, which is considered a source of national pride and glory.

As a Chinese proverb goes, never judge a hero on the basis of success or failure.

Maybe it's time to debate whether some people are too obsessed with gold.

There are signs this mentality is shifting.

In addition to praising gold medalists, many netizens on Sina Weibo — a Chinese Twitter-like micro blog — applauded silver and bronze winners.

Many netizens published consolation messages on Weibo after the Chinese women's gymnastics team, the defending champion, burst into tears after finishing fourth.

"We know how hard you tried over the past four years. You are still the best! Girls, don't cry," one post read.

China won a record 51 gold medals in Beijing in 2008.

But the most impressive moment to me that year was when shooter Tan Zongliang won a silver medal in the 50m pistol.

Four years later, I still remember clearly when Tan, then 37, smiled at the camera and said silver is "good enough".

The Olympics is indeed about the glory of gold, but it's also about participation. People should be proud of, and applaud, anyone who participates, regardless of the final results.

It's certain that more Chinese athletes will be standing on the podium, receiving all colors of medals in the Games' final week.

In addition to the winners' tears of joy, I hope to see more happy and proud expressions from other medalists, too, as well as more applause from their fans.

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