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Wei Jizhong is president of the International Volleyball Federation

Olympic rules branded outdated

By SUN XIAOCHEN in London sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

Wei Jizhong, president of the International Volleyball Federation and former secretary-general of the Chinese Olympic Committee, wants everyone in China to take a deep breath.

A number of controversial calls at the London Olympics have riled the most populous nation in the world. Chinese netizens have fiercely criticized rulings they perceive as "unfair", attributing them to the Olympics organizing body's bias toward the host city.

But Wei said the debatable refereeing during the London Olympics should be blamed on outdated rules and deficient judging systems.

"Officiating problems happen at every Games, but it's not fair to blame them only on the referees. It's also unfair to slam the International Olympic Committee and local Olympic organizing committee for allegedly favoring the host nation," Wei said in London on Friday.

One call that incensed netizens was the International Cycling Union's decision to strip the Chinese cycling team of its gold medal in the women's team sprint track event last Thursday. It later refused China's appeal. But when a British cyclist later admitted to intentionally taking a fall to win a medal, the ICU did nothing.

In gymnastics, Chen Yibing, China's defending champion in the rings event, seemed to have won gold with a flawless routine and a solid landing on Monday, but he was denied a victory after Brazilian rival Arthur Nabarrete edged Chen out by 0.1 of a point despite a jittery landing.

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ANJA NIEDRINGHAUS / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Carmelita Jeter of the United States reacts as she crosses the finish line to win the women's 4x100m relay on Friday. The US set a world record of 40.82 seconds.

US blows away 4x100m field

American team smashes 27-year-old record and leaves world in its wake

By PAUL GIBLIN in London Xinhua

The US women's 4x100m quartet smashed the world record as it won the gold medal in the Olympic Stadium on Friday night.

The US quartet of Tianna Madison, Allyson Felix, Bianca Knight and Carmelita Jeter shattered the previous record of 41.37 seconds, which had been set by the German Democratic Republic in 1985, to establish a new time of 40.82, over half a second faster.

Jamaica finished second, while Ukraine won a creditable bronze.

The race had always promised to be fast with Jamaica fielding a team led out by 100m gold medalist Shelly Ann Fraser-Pryce and including, Sherone Simpson, Veronica Campbell Brown and Kerron Stewart.

Fraser-Pryce may have been Olympic 100m champion, but she was always trailing Madison, who flew out of the blocks and handed over a lead to Felix.

The new 200m gold medalist is having a fantastic Games and widened the lead. Knight held the gap and Jeter tore down the

final straight, raising the baton in triumph as she crossed the line.

The second relay of the night had nine finalists after South Africa had been reinstated after crashing out on Thursday, that allowed "Blade Runner" Oscar Pistorius to make his second Olympic appearance although the battle for the medals didn't involve the South Africans.

The Bahamas led after the first two laps before Toby McQuay put the US ahead going into the last 400m. That only set the stage for greater drama as Ramon Millar ran the race of his life to close a 3-meter gap on US anchor Angelo Taylor.

Miller caught Taylor with 50m remaining and strode on to victory. The Bahamas had finished fourth four years ago,

this was ample compensation.

Meseret Defar from Ethiopia produced the fastest turn of speed in the last 200m of the women's 5,000m to claim her second Olympic gold medal in the event.

Defar, the gold medal winner in Athens in 2004 was able to outpace Vivian Cheruiyot of Kenya and her fellow Ethiopian, Tirunesh Dibaba to claim gold.

Dibaba went into the race as double gold medal winner at 5,000m and 10,000m in Beijing and in good form after winning the 10,000m final just a week previously.

The race ignited with four and a half laps remaining when Dibaba decided it was time to wind the pace from the average of 75 to 68 seconds per lap to spread out the field and bring the Africans to the fore.

Entering the 400 meters, it was clear the medals were going to be decided between the African runners and Defar had the speed on the final straight while Defar ran out of gas and was overtaken by Cheruiyot in the closing meters.

Meanwhile, Kipyego finished fourth, Gelete Burka fifth and Kibiwot sixth to highlight the dominance of the Ethiopians and Kenyans in the race.

There was a Turkish 1-2 in the women's 1,500m as European champion Asli Cakir took gold and Gamze Bulut silver with Maryam Jamal from Bahrain in third.

A cagey first three laps saw the race explode at the start of the last lap, but there was disaster for the US' Morgan Uceny, who was caught and fell out of

the race when all of the runners were still in with a chance.

Cakir hit the front on the final straight and had enough to hold on as Bulut produced a powerful finish to steal ahead of Jamal.

Renaud Lavillenie of France set an Olympic record of 5.97 to take gold in a thrilling pole vault ahead of Bjorn Otto, who risked everything on one last desperate vault for 6.01, 10 cm higher than his previous best.

Otto's brave bid failed, leaving him to settle for silver, while Raphael Holzdeppe claimed bronze.

Steve Hooker's reign as Olympic pole vault champion came to an end when he failed to clear 5.65. The Australian had struggled for fitness and form in the run up to London and was never able to produce his best.

Mom's the word when it comes to Games glory

The most important cheerleaders for some of the Chinese Olympic members are their parents and, as Chen Xiangfeng reports from London, the hands that rocked the cradle also come with voices that tell the stories behind the glory.

The world's best badminton player was on the court demolishing his opponent, and among the voices in the cheering crowd that Lin Dan heard, there was one that must have stood out — that of his mother, Gao Xiuyu. For her, the night her son won Olympic gold was one of the proudest moments of her life.

In the packed Wembley stadium at the London Olympics, the top Chinese shuttler battled Malaysian challenger Lee Chong Wei to defend his crown

in one of the most well-fought matches in the badminton competition. And Lin Dan's mother was watching every move, together with her husband, Lin Jianbin, and new daughter-in-law Xie Xingfang.

"It felt so great," the proud mother says. It was the first time she and her family had watched Lin Dan in competition, although the shuttler is a veteran of three Olympics. Gao had not been there before, not even during the Beijing Olympics in 2008 held on home ground.

"I have never watched his

games on the spot. Frankly, I never dared to do that," Gao says.

The reason she made the trip this time was because she was invited by a Chinese media corporation, which also sponsored family members of some other China Olympic athletes.

There are reportedly more than 2,000 journalists from China covering the London Games and competition is intense. One strategy for that elusive exclusive has been to get the inside stories from those closest to the Olympians — their family.

"When all focus is on the ath-

letes and their individual stories, we found that fans are very interested in knowing more about the competitors' families, and how their parents have contributed to their success," says Wang Yongzhi, who is in charge of the Olympic program from qq.com, one of China's leading web portals.

"We started a special program called 'Home of the Olympians' Moms', and we invited the parents of some celebrity athletes to London so they can share their stories and feelings online."

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Parents of Lin Dan, China's badminton ace, and Xie Xingfang (left), Lin's wife and the silver medalist in the women's badminton singles at the Beijing Olympics, cheer for Lin in London on July 30.

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