



GoodSport NEWS

S R I L A N K A O L Y M P I C W E E K L Y N E W S B U L L E T I N



MEASURING THE PLIGHT OF TOMORROW - LANKAN ATHLETE AND ATHLETICS

Former Lankan short distance champion Shehan Ambeypitiya lives with an ear to the ground.

In reality he could feel the vibes of the local athletic fraternity in every sphere – be it in schools, the armed forces and at the international level.

He could hear a lurking mole underground and a truck moving on the adjacent surface simultaneously.

Sitting along with him GoodSport paused for moment and took into stock the pros and cons of athletics and athletes in the present context.

Leave a side one’s political affiliations, the ground reality is - all is not hunky-dory.

Yet, here this instance we are ascertaining the probing line of continuance of an athlete of any level.

Just probe and analyze just for our comprehension – how are they surviving in this unforgiving reality?

This inquisitive inquiry got Ambeypitiya’s mind racing.

He began his analysis in this manner; he said “The sporting world is actually evolving.

“It may be bio mechanical technology, the nutrition aspect of it, in relation to athletics or athlete at international level.

“It is very important and it is on the upward trend. In contrast, in our own backyard the situation is limp-grey.

“It is very difficult for our athletes. For their nutrition their costs are prohibitive.

“Mercifully, a majority of our athletes are with the armed forces.

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“There they are somewhat looked after along with a monthly stipend. Nonetheless their income level has not expanded; any sponsorship that they receive have not increased, but the cost of sustenance in current circumstances is hanging above the highest point in Colombo -- “The Nelum Kuluna.”

“For example, a pair of spikes which was in the region of Rs. 25,000/- has escalated to around Rs. 100,000/-. The list can go on and on. In fact, it is a huge hike for a mundane athlete. Under these circumstances the progress of an athlete is a task of its own. However, when it comes to international competition Lankan athletes are pitted on even keel. There are no freebies. Most of the athletes are backtracking at the moment. The problem is real and a quick solution is forthcoming. Next year the very competitive Asian Games is on and so is the Junior Commonwealth Games is just around the corner and the time is running out.”

Indeed, it is a herculean task. To become an international athlete, the challenges are real. Then GoodSport moved from the senior lot where they get some solace even through the armed forces.

But, we delved into the plight of the Junior athlete who are in the more dependent on the support of the parents of a particular athlete. How would they survive? – leave alone progress on this ground reality. You cannot cast them aside. For instance, Commonwealth Bronze Medal winner Nethmi Ahinsa is still schooling. But, she identified through the schools’ system while was a teenager. They hail from very difficult terrain and the parents in most cases are poor or lower middleclass. Former Junior Olympic medal winner, Parami Wasanthi is another similar case. She came from the same conditions and she could not survive.

The former champion short distance runner measured and answered in this manner. He opined “As far as Nethmi is concerned she is rare talent. But, in general the plight of these athletes remain a grey area. In reality under the present circumstances athletes are now rather reluctant to engage in extra-curricular activities. For the parent, they need another passive income to support a child who is involved in sport.

“Ironically at present, parents who come under the above mentioned category find it difficult to sustain the family and their other immediate needs before supporting a talented young athlete. If they support the child’s sport, they may fall short of other pressing household necessities. Especially for the breadwinner of the family it is a very complex situation taking into consideration of running balanced family life.

“As a society we are in together. The situation is really tough. Even the government in power is in no position get involved in this situation directly. The only way out to my mind is to seek the support of the private sector especially the conglomerates who are riding high. They have to seek a way out in the same manner that Crysbro did with the NOC SL Junior athletic programme. The private sector could play a leading role at this juncture. There may be other companies in the realm who would be in a position to help the junior athletic in this country presently. This is the right time to take the lead. This is the time they could invest in our next generation. At present we are losing a lot of talent and if the private sector is willing to take a progressive stance to save our athlete and athletics – this is the most opportune moment.”



MESSI'S MESS-UP



Saudi Arabia produced one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history Tuesday, beating Lionel Messi's Argentina 2-1 in an astonishing Group C match.

Many had expected the South American team, ranked third in the world, unbeaten for three years and among the favorites to win the tournament, to sweep aside its opponent, ranked 48 places below it in the world rankings.

All the pre-match talk focused on Messi, one of the greatest players ever who is playing in what is likely to be his last World Cup. The Argentina captain scored an early penalty to put his side in the lead, but two second-half goals from Saleh Al-Shehri and Salem Al Dawsari turned the game on its head.

The thousands of Saudi fans inside the Lusail Stadium couldn't believe what they were watching as they celebrated their unexpected victory, said CNN.

Without taking away the aroma of the memorable Saudi win, undoubtedly Argentina still could live within the frame and believe the guile of Messi and co and bounce back into contention. Yet, now they will have to beat Poland and Mexico and beat them convincingly during the coming fortnight.

LEO MESSI'S LEGACY IS SECURE NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS IN QATAR

Qatar 2022 is a World Cup tournament in name only

The build-up, the time of year, the lack of warm-up games, the host nation's attitude towards human rights abuses and more just doesn't sit right with many supporters of the beautiful game.

It is, however, another opportunity for one country to take home the greatest soccer prize the planet has to offer.

A chance to be top of the world order for at least the next four years.

For one player, perhaps more than any other, it also represents a last chance to underscore his monumental legacy to a game that he has served so well.

Lionel Messi will be playing in his last World Cup finals and has, for all intents and purposes, rewritten the history books to this point and written his name large right across them.

His place in the annals isn't in doubt, though his inability to help secure a World Cup win for his beloved Argentina has always been used as a stick to beat him with when it comes to discussing the greatest players across the decades.

Pele won three they'll say. Zidane laid his hands on the trophy back in 1998 of course. Yada, yada, yada.

The many, many individual awards and wins in domestic cup finals or European finals are a constant reminder of his consistent mastery.

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He trails in career goals to his eternal rival, Cristiano Ronaldo — another legendary player expected to be playing his last World Cup this winter — but can legitimately claim to be better in almost every other aspect. However, that argument is moribund these days and certainly won't be explored in any depth in this column.

Suffice it to say that on this occasion, it's difficult to see what Ronaldo will add to the Portuguese squad other than his experience in past tournaments. At 37 his star is fading fast, and he might just have bitten off more than he can chew in trying to match his nemesis this time.

Alongside Neymar and Kylian Mbappe et al, Messi comes into the tournament in better personal form and, arguably, in a much better frame of mind.

He appears happy and settled, in stark contrast to Manchester United's talisman. In fact, everything has slotted into place for Leo at just the right time. However, back in 2014, it also appeared that Messi's time had finally come.

Argentina had a strong squad in Brazil and were difficult to beat, but in their biggest moment they didn't have the cutting edge required and the ever-ruthless German squad destroyed their dream in the final during extra time.

A man-of-the-match award for Messi was scant consolation for having to walk past that golden trophy without being able to lay both his hands on it and lift it aloft.

The recent Copa America triumph may have gone some way to assuaging the pain of that defeat, with Messi's tears of joy at the end of their final victory over Brazil genuine and uncontrollable.

Throughout that particular tournament, both Argentina as a group and Messi himself looked strong, confident and ready to take on all comers.



Under the tutelage of Lionel Scaloni, La Albiceleste are reborn.

So much so that they are unbeaten in 35 games at the time of writing, and are just a handful from breaking Italy's international record.

Not that it will be on the player's minds when they take to the field against Saudi Arabia, Mexico and Poland in their Group C matches.

That's because there is only one goal. THE goal.

If it is Messi that gets his hands on the trophy on Dec. 18, the naysayers that continue to denigrate his vast canon of work and achievements will be forced back in their box. Literally nowhere else for them to go.

It's already nigh on impossible to dispute his standing in any event, and yet the lack of a World Cup can always fill up a few more column inches.

Despite an unbeatable and frankly obscene seven Ballons d'Or, more man-of-the-match performances than you can shake a stick at, innumerable 'worldies' that could make up a best goal ever compilation all on their own, the most goals and assists for club — Barcelona — and country, ever, as well as in Spain, and many more records besides, it still appears that Leo Messi has got to prove himself once more.

Let's be crystal clear here. A World Cup final win for Argentina is hugely important for the country as a whole, the squad and for Messi himself.

It would, in a sense, elevate Leo to a place where the air is so rarified that he might just be the only player to inhabit it.

It would stop, in an instant, the often embarrassing comparisons to Diego Maradona. To Cristiano Ronaldo. To Pele, and to just about any other player with a reasonable enough stat that hacks can find an angle for.

Lionel Messi's legacy was already secured long before Qatar 2022, and whatever happens over the next four weeks won't change that.

Indeed, a World Cup Final win will only enhance it.

THREE OLYMPIC VOLLEYBALL MEDALS STOLEN FROM CALIFORNIA HOME



Authorities didn't immediately identify the owner of the medals.

It's the second time this year that a medal belonging to a member of the women's volleyball team has been stolen in Orange County.

Jordyn Poulter reported her 2020 gold medal stolen May 25 after her car was broken into at a parking garage in Anaheim, police said.

Detectives later arrested a suspect in the theft, but weren't immediately able to locate the missing medal.

It was finally returned in June after the owners of an Anaheim barber-shop reported finding the medal inside a plastic bag discarded

LAGUNA HILLS, Calif. -- Authorities were looking for three Olympic medals belonging to a member of the U.S. women's volleyball team after they were stolen from a Southern California home.

The medals were being temporarily stored at a Laguna Hills home and were inside a safe that was taken in-

an Oct. 29 burglary, Orange County Sheriff's Department said.

No arrests have been made.

The gold medal was from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, the silver from the 2012 London Olympics and the bronze from the 2016 games in Brazil.

ed outside their business and turned it over to police.

A 31-year-old Anaheim resident described by police as having a lengthy criminal history has been charged in the theft.

Courtesy AP

CHALITHA PUSHPIKA UPSETS FRONT-RUNNER CHANAKA



M.H.Chalitha Pushpika (From Sri Lanka Navy) came in front to pip front runner Chanaka Perera at the SLG Golf Ranking Tournament held at the Royal Colombo Golf Course between 15th to 18th November 2022.

Chalitha recorded a gross score of 272 over four rounds to come ahead-

of Chanaka Perera who returned a gross of 278.

The Royal Colombo Course was heavy, and the top players had to rely on long carry shots.

Chalitha Pushpika scored under par rounds to return the best cards over four rounds.

R.M. Saman Rupasinghe from SL Navy was placed 4th with a gross score of 301.

But, officially he is the 02nd Runner up of this tournament, because Priya Hemantha is a Coach and participated behalf of all Sri Lankan Golf Players.

| | NAME | DAY 01 | DAY 02 | DAY 03 | DAY 04 | TOTAL |
|----|----------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|
| 1 | M. H. Chalitha Puspika | 69 | 67 | 70 | 66 | 272 |
| 2 | M. U. Chanaka Perera | 69 | 69 | 72 | 68 | 278 |
| 3 | H.L.Priya Hemantha | 76 | 72 | 78 | 74 | 300 |
| 4 | R.M.Saman Rupasingha | 81 | 72 | 72 | 76 | 301 |
| 5 | Rosana Prasad | 78 | 74 | 78 | 83 | 313 |
| 6 | I.P.P.K.Illangarathne | 80 | 76 | 81 | 80 | 317 |
| 7 | H.P.Alokshana Weerasinghe | 80 | 82 | 82 | 82 | 326 |
| 8 | R.D.Chanaka Rajapaksha | 81 | 74 | 85 | 87 | 327 |
| 9 | M.M.Thenuk Sathnidu | 81 | 77 | 88 | 83 | 329 |
| 9T | G.G.Sankanath Hesara | 81 | 82 | 80 | 86 | 329 |