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Eight shuttlers thrown out of Olympics

China's top pair among group banned for throwing matches

By SUN XIAOCHEN in London

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The ugly side of sports reared its head again with eight badminton players thrown out of the London Olympics on Wednesday.

Four doubles pairs, including China's world No 1 tandem of Yu Yang and Wang Xiaoli, were disqualified from the Games by the event's governing body, the BWF, for intentionally losing their final group matches in order to

secure better match-ups in the knockout stage.

BWF announced it was expelling South Korean pairs Jung Kyung-eun and Kim Ha-na and Ha Jung-eun and Kim Min-jung, the Indonesian duo Meiliana Jauhari and Greysia Polii and the Chinese pair at a packed news conference at Wembley Arena.

The Chinese delegation endorsed the decision.

"The behavior of Wang and Yu violated the fair-play spirit of the Olympics and will be punished after an internal investigation," the delegation said in a statement. "The Chinese

Olympic Committee has always opposed anybody, any team, any form of violation of the spirit of sports and will never stop urging its athletes to carry forward the Olympic spirit."

The specific regulations the players were charged with were "not using one's best efforts to win a match" and "conducting oneself in a manner that is clearly abusive or detrimental to the sport."

Boos rained down in the 25,000-seat Wembley Arena when the players failed to exert themselves during the final pool matches on Tuesday evening. They served into the net repeatedly and sent some run-of-the-mill smashes wide.

Yu and Wang lost to Jung and Kim to remain the group runner-up and avoid an early



Wang Xiaoli

meeting with compatriots Tian Qing and Zhao Yulei, who finished second in the opposite group.

The Koreans were thinking along the same lines.

The International Olympic Committee hailed the BWF's decision as a bold move to keep the sport healthy.

"We applaud the federation for having taken swift and decisive action," IOC communi-



Yu Yang

cations manager Emmanuelle Moreau was quoted as saying by Xinhua News Agency. "Such behavior is not compatible with the Olympic values."

People in badminton circles approved as well.

"It's a good decision and the right thing to do. It sends the right signal that world badminton won't accept that kind of behavior," said Australian coach Lars Bundgaard.

Adrianti Firdasari, a women's singles shuttler from India, said such matches are unfair to fans. "As an athlete I'm very disappointed. It's not good for the sport, and people buying the tickets came to see the match but they didn't get that. It's fair for them to be disqualified."

China's top men's seed Lin Dan blamed the introduction of round-robin stages rather than a straight knockout tournament for the ugly scene.

"They might seem to be playing without regard to sportsmanship, but it's also a problem with the competition format," Lin said after thrashing Indonesian veteran Taufik Hidayat in the men's singles quarter-finals.

Hidayat echoed Lin. "I prefer for them to be dis-

qualified because it affects the reputation of badminton," he said. "I hope it doesn't happen again in future, as it is an embarrassment for our country."

"This kind of thing frequently happens, and the BWF has to take it really seriously. I hope this will be a lesson they can learn from."

Yu later explained they were only trying to save energy for the knockout rounds starting on Wednesday.

"We would try hard in every match if they were elimination games," she said. "Because they are the group stage, that's why we were conserving energy. If we're not playing our best it's because it doesn't matter - if we're first or second (in the group) we're already through."



Wiggins becomes national treasure

By MARK MEADOWS in London

Reuters

Britain's BBC runs the country's most recognized sports person of the year award and although it is only Aug 1, Tour de France and Olympic time trial champion Bradley Wiggins can pretty much mortgage his house on winning.

The fact fellow rider Mark Cavendish took last year's award after being crowned world champion and winning the Tour points classification shows how huge cycling has become in Britain in a short space of time having once been seen as a minority sport.

"To be honest I said all year this was the plan. I think I've answered all the questions in the last six weeks," Wiggins said on Wednesday after winning a British record seventh Olympic medal having previously claimed six on the track.

Earlier on Wednesday, rowers Helen Glover and Heather Stanning won the women's pair title to register Britain's first gold medal at the Olympics.

The pair, who also captured the host nation's first women's Olympic rowing gold medal, crossed the line well clear of Australia with world champions New Zealand taking bronze.

Wiggins' time trial triumph came just over a week after becoming the first Briton to win the world's greatest stage race, the grueling three-week Tour,



Once you're an Olympic champion, the other ones, you just don't talk about them. 'How many you won?' You say three golds, you never say, and two silvers and a bronze."

BRADLEY WIGGINS
CYCLING TIME TRIAL GOLD MEDAL WINNER

Britain's Bradley Wiggins pedals to the finish line on his way to winning the gold medal in the men's individual cycling event at the London Olympics on Wednesday.

LEFTERIS PITARAKIS / ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEE "CYCLING" PAGE 2

Stars and gripes but flag issue symbolizes partnership

Age of globalization means getting the best deal, Peng Yining reports.

Every morning for the past 20 years, Karyn Abe has run the Stars and Stripes up the flagpole in her garden. Every evening, the flag is lowered and stored away, ready for use the

next day. The 68-year-old resident of Hawaii flies the 1.2 by 1.8 meter national emblem to show her allegiance to her country. But for Abe, and many other US citizens, the flag's provenance

is as important as the ideals it embodies.

COVER STORY When she learned earlier this month that most US flags sold in the country are made in China, she checked

the packaging in which her flag came.

"Thank goodness. My flag was made in the United States!" she said. "It seems a shame to outsource such an American-based thing as our own flag."

And it's not just Chinese-made flags. The matching blazers and uniforms that members of Team USA wore at the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympic Games caused an uproar. They, too, were made in China.

The flames were fanned by

politicians, such as Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who said the uniforms — designed by the US couturier Ralph Lauren, but outsourced to China — should have been put in a pile and torched.

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