

US men’s basketball team holds off Australia

REUTERS

RIO DE JANEIRO — The United States survived a scare before taming scrappy Australia 98-88 in an Olympic men’s basketball thriller on Wednesday and extended its winning streak to 20 games.

The Americans trailed by five at half-time and were behind early in the fourth quarter when

Carmelo Anthony, who is playing in his fourth Olympic games, put a U.S. roster of NBA All-Stars on his shoulders. Anthony finished with 31 points, including nine 3-pointers. At one point in the fourth quarter, Anthony scored 10 consecutive points.

The Australian team and its “Boomer” lineup, led by NBA players Andrew Bogut, Patty Mills and Matthew Dellavedova, gave the U.S. fits with its motion offense and a 68 percent shooting performance in the first half. But the U.S. clamped down enough defensively in the second half to get by.

Mills had 30 points to lead Australia.

Women’s basketball team tops Serbia

The U.S. women’s basketball team faced its sternest test of the Rio Games and tougher questions after beating Serbia 110-84 on Wednesday to remain on course for a sixth successive gold.

After winning their opening two games by an average of 52 points, the Americans had to settle for a more modest 26-point margin of victory against the 14th ranked Serbs.

But in the wake of a third consecutive blowout, and their 44th successive victory in the Olympics, American players were once again facing uneasy questions about the lack of depth, quality and competitive-

ness in the women’s game and its place on the Olympic program.

“I don’t even know how to answer anymore,” said Diana Taurasi who scored a game high 25 points. “Would it (be) better if we lost by 50?”

“We have 12 women who dedicate their lives to the game of basketball year around. To knock us for doing that? That’s a bit disrespectful, I would say.”

Phelps, Lochte advance in 200 IM

Michael Phelps advanced to the 200-meter individual medley semifinal Wednesday, about 12 hours after winning his third gold medal at these Olympics.

Phelps, who expects to retire after the Games, admitted to some fatigue at the Olympic Aquatics Stadium following a historic night.

“I guess I have been able to put my body through things like this over the years, and hopefully I can keep it rolling one last time,” he said.

On Tuesday, Phelps captured gold in the 200-meter butterfly, then anchored the Americans’ winning 800-meter freestyle relay about 70 minutes later.

The two gold medals — combined with the one he won Sunday in the 400-meter freestyle relay — give him 25 career Olympic medals, 21 gold. No Olympian has ever won more medals.




Phelps said he plans on “leaving everything in the pool one last time.”

Longtime rival Ryan Lochte recorded the top preliminary time in the event. He and Phelps will swim next to each other in lanes four and five later Wednesday.

This is the only individual event for Lochte, who has 12 Olympic medals of his own.

Belmonte, Chalmers win swimming gold

Mireia Belmonte won the 200-meter butterfly on Wednesday to become the first Spanish woman to win an Olympic swim-

Medals tally				
Current top 20 by total medals won - After Day 4				
COUNTRY				TOTAL
United States	9	8	9	26
China	8	3	6	17
Japan	3	1	10	14
Russia	3	6	3	12
Australia	4	0	5	9
Italy	3	4	2	9
Hungary	4	1	1	6
Korea	3	2	1	6
France	2	3	1	6
Great Britain	1	3	2	6
Canada	0	1	4	5
Thailand	2	1	1	4
Kazakhstan	0	1	3	4
Sweden	1	2	0	3
Germany	1	2	0	3
Chinese Taipei	1	0	2	3
Brazil	1	1	0	2
Netherlands	1	0	1	2
Greece	1	0	1	2
Belgium	1	0	1	2

Note: Some countries tied in 20th position may be excluded from the table.
Source: Infrastrada
Staff, 10/08/2016

ming gold medal. The silver medallist in London four years ago went a step better in Rio with a winning time of two minutes, 4.85 seconds, the fastest time this year.

Australian Madeline Groves, who went into the race with the fastest time of 2016, took the silver medal and Japan’s world champion Natsumi Hoshi of Japan won bronze.

Australia’s Kyle Chalmers won the gold medal in the men’s 100 freestyle, the blue-ribbon event in the pool. Pieter Timmers of

Pats’ Ebner makes Olympic history

BY SCOTT ALLEN
THE WASHINGTON POST

In the U.S. men’s rugby sevens team’s 26-0 win over Brazil on Tuesday, 27-year-old New England Patriots safety Nate Ebner scored a try and received a yellow card for a an illegal hit.

Not to worry, Nate, this one won’t bring a fine from NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell.

Ebner made history earlier in the day when he became the first active NFL player to compete in the Summer Olympics in the U.S. team’s 17-14 loss to Argentina.

A sixth-round draft pick in 2011 out of Ohio State, where he played football and rugby, Ebner received permission from the Patriots to train with the U.S. Olympic team earlier this year. He plans to rejoin the Patriots when rugby sevens competition concludes on Aug. 11.

Back at Patriots training camp in Foxborough, Massachusetts, New England Coach Bill Belichick wore a USA Rugby shirt in support of Ebner and arranged for his players to watch the United States’ second game as a team.

“Bill is all about America, our country, a true Patriot,” New England safety Devin McCourty told NESN. “I just know Bill and figured one way or the other it was going to be an option where the game was playing somewhere in the building.”

One could forgive Ebner’s NFL teammates who gathered to watch his game if they were confused about the format of rugby sevens, which differs from traditional union rugby and is making its debut as an Olympic sport.

As the name suggests, rugby sevens features seven players per side, as opposed to 15. Games consist of two seven-minute halves and the rules are designed to place an emphasis on speed. Fans who like watching the NFL would probably enjoy rugby sevens.

As The Washington Post’s Adam Kilgore, who watched



DAN POWERS | USA TODAY

United States forward Nate Ebner (12) is wrapped up by a player from Brazil during a rugby sevens match between USA and Brazil at Deodoro Stadium in the Rio 2016 Summer Olympic Games on Tuesday.

the U.S. women’s team make its rugby sevens debut in Rio, wrote: “If you would like to replicate playing rugby sevens, it’s easy. Sprint to the end of your street and back, then run into an oak tree before climbing into a running dryer full of rocks for a few seconds. Repeat for seven minutes, take a knee for 120 seconds, and then do it again.”

Rugby sevens is the fastest-growing women’s sport in the United States, according to an HSBC report, and there’s hope among the American rugby community that the exposure of the Olympics and NBC Sports’ partnership with Premier Rugby — the top club rugby league in England — will continue to spur the sport’s growth.

“Once viewership in

this country increases, there’s going to be companies out there that are going to want to put their name on a jersey or put their name on a stadium wall,” former U.S. sevens rugby captain Gary Hein said before the USA Sevens Rugby tournament in Las Vegas in March.

Having an NFL player as an ambassador for the sport can’t hurt.

the World Series of Fighting contract leading to major opportunities.

“It’s perfect for me,” he said. “The four-fight contract has pretty decent pay, so for once I won’t be fighting for nothing, and I think it’s designed so that four fights should get me a title shot if I’m not winning for them. If I’m not, I doubt they’ll have any interest in signing a guy like me again.

“But if you win three fights, I’d bet the fourth one is a title fight, and if you win a title for them, you’re a big name around the world,” he said.

Brady will sit out preseason opener

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

As is usually the case for many teams early in the pre-season, the New England Patriots plan to sit a number of their top players during their preseason opener against the New Orleans Saints on Thursday.

According to a Boston Herald report, quarterback Tom Brady, tight end Rob Gronkowski and wide receiver Julian Edelman are all out.

Brady would miss out on an opportunity for some pre-season reps ahead of a regular season in which he is suspended for the first four games due to his involvement in the Deflategate scandal.

Of the trio of sitting veterans, only Edelman is injured. He was just activated from the physically unable to perform (PUP) list after having left foot surgery, but felt some numbness and pins and needles

in practice Tuesday.

Edelman, who caught 61 balls for 692 yards and seven touchdowns last season, did a walkthrough Wednesday before leaving practice to work on conditioning, according to the Herald.

The 6-foot-6, 265-pound Gronkowski, who had 72 catches for 1,176 yards and 11 touchdowns last season, takes a beating in the regular season so he is likely to sit out the entire preseason in an effort to keep him fresh throughout the season. That was the pattern the team followed during the 2015 pre-season.

Quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo will get a chance to get ready for the first four regular-season starts of his career with some extra reps. The 2014 second-round pick is just 20-for-31 for 188 yards with a touchdown in his pro career. He only had four pass attempts last season, completing one.

Olympics

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“This has been the most difficult journey. I took time off. The mind gets tired. So when I came back I was focused on Rio and it’s been difficult because I’ve had some poor performances over the last six months.”

The race was run in treacherous conditions but thankfully there were none of the accidents that marred the road race although former world champion Ellen van Dijk fell into the roadside foliage when riding uphill.

Armstrong used all her vast experience to tackle two tough climbs and stayed calm as the seconds ticked away on the run-in.

“When I looked out of the window at 4 a.m. I thought, ‘Oh!’ But I had two choices, get nervous, or say I’m the most experienced person out here and just attack it.”

Zabelinskaya, who fin-

ished third in the road race and time trial in London, was also in tears at the end.

She warmly congratulated her American rival though and the greeting was returned despite some riders openly questioning why Zabelinskaya was racing, given the IOC’s pre-Games stance.

“I didn’t really think about (the doping issue),” Armstrong, the oldest female Olympic cycling champion, said.

“Olga gave me a hug on the podium and said ‘I saw your son’ and she said it made her smile.

“You can get really stressed out around what somebody is or is not doing so I just try to eliminate those thoughts.”

Zabelinskaya said she was “happy” to end a traumatic week with a medal, having been about to board a plane home for Russia two days before the Games started.

“I am also disappointed that I could not win the gold medal because it is only five seconds to first place,” she said.

Phelps

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Tuesday’s 200 butterfly gold made him the oldest swimmer to win an individual Olympic title at 31 years and 40 days.

Put into perspective, if Phelps were a sovereign state he would rank 52nd on the all-time list in terms of total medals won. On golds alone, he would be in the top 40.

India, a nation of a billion people, has competed at

every Olympics since 1920 and only ever won nine golds, with not even a medal in swimming.

Mexico and Indonesia, two more of the world’s most populous nations, have just 19 golds between them.

Phelps has won more golds in the pool than China’s men and women combined, and he has not finished yet.

“He is just proving he is easily the greatest swimmer of all time and I am excited to see what he does next because once that guy gets hot you can’t really stop him,” said relay teammate Conor Dwyer.

MMA

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Boyington, the former New England Fights lightweight champion, made his World Series of Fighting debut October 2015 with a split-decision victory over Rodrigo Almeida at World Series of Fighting 24.

He followed that with a second split-decision win over Saul Almeida at World Series of Fighting 31 in his most recent fight on June 17.

“I haven’t had a hiccup lately, and I feel great,” said

Boyington. “I feel like I can challenge the best in the world, so now I can at least find out where I stand before it’s too late.”

While there is no specific time frame covering the World Series of Fighting pact, Boyington expects to fulfill the contract in two years or less.

“I think they’ll push me to fight as much as I want,” said Boyington. “Personally I like the idea of a four-fight contract because I don’t have to fight if I’m not healthy. When they came to Foxwoods before I had to fight because they asked me

to fight and I couldn’t say no or that would have been the end of it.”

He does hope one of the bouts under his contract will involve a potential World Series of Fighting date in New York, which legalized professional mixed martial arts earlier this year.

“They’ve got their first show in Madison Square Garden coming up, and I’ve got a lot of family in New York, so I’ve been wanting to fight there,” he said. “I’m hoping that happens, whether it’s the first one there or not.”

Boyington also sees success in his first fights under