



GOLDEN GIRL



Marnie leads them home Photos Henry Benjamin

Teenage sensation Marni Burger made Australia's first night in the pool a golden one by smashing the field in the junior girls 200 metre butterfly.

The 16-year-old Victorian swam a time of 2:19.29 in her pet event - 4 seconds faster than her nearest rival to win Australia's second gold medal at the Maccabiah Games. She told Hayom: "I'm very happy. Great Maccabiah!"

Marnie also captured silver in the 100 metres freestyle living up to her billing as one of the Aussie delegation's big medal hopes. Fellow gun junior Ashleigh Smart finished fourth in the same race

Earlier, Greg Shein went close to ending a 16 year individual medal drought in the open division by swimming a personal best to finish fourth in the 200 metres breaststroke.

Junior Joshua Balsim was another to just miss out on a medal for Australia after leading the 200 metres butterfly for the majority of the race only to fall away in the final 50 and finish fourth.

Other highlights from the evening included a personal best from David Schnabl in the 100 metres freestyle won by Olympic champion Jason Lezak. He finished eighth but was delighted with his time and thrilled to swim next to the three time Olympic gold medallist who obliterated the field to win his first gold medal of the meet.

"Lezak and I unzipped each other's suits after the race so that was the highlight for me," he said.

Smart finished 5th in the junior 200 metre breaststroke final to go with her impressive freestyle race, Yuriy Burunov was 7th in the 200 metre butterfly while Avi Bart and Julian Kowal both swam personal bests in the Juniors.



by Daniel Garb

RUGBY BOYS TO PLAY FOR GOLD

by Daniel Garb

The 24-year wait is finally over for the Australian Maccabiah Rugby team after they qualified for their first final at the Games since 1985 with a 41-19 demolition of Israel.

Their opponents in the gold medal match will be bitter rivals Great Britain who accounted for Australia in the opening game of the competition.

Dealt a cruel blow only weeks before the tournament when they were switched to the group of death with the Brits and South Africa, the Australian march to the decider has been a challenging but brave one for a tight knit group that has acted as outstanding ambassadors for their country both on and off the field.

Coach Andrew Hendry said the achievement is still to sink in but he has always had faith his players could qualify for the final, despite the uphill battle. "I knew that if we got through the group stage we could do it because getting over that hurdle would give us the momentum to kick on."

He added: "We took the game to them tonight and controlled it from the start. It was a superb performance from the whole squad."

The semi-final win was set up by a blistering first half that the home nation had no answer for. The Australian forwards swamped the Israeli pack from the opening play, constantly winning possession of the ball for their backs to penetrate a stunned opposition defence.

The opening try came after 10 minutes from a break down the left by lock Brad Sewitz who set Steve Cohen free allowing the half-back to pass to David Davis in the corner.

Captain Alex Lehrer put in another faultless display at full-back and was instrumental in setting up Australia's second try with a darting run that made the Israelis look like statues before finding centre Keith Friedlander to finish off a scintillating piece of play.

Steve Cohen capitalised on the Australian dominance by slotting the conversion and then another penalty shortly after to make it 18-0.



Hockey girls barrack for the rugby boys P: Henry Benjamin

There was still more pain to inflict on the Israelis in the first half when flanker Jon-Jon Levy broke free in one of his many dangerous runs that almost took the Aussies over the line again.

A penalty was called which Cohen steered home with his deadly

right boot for an astonishing 21-0 half-time buffer.

Stung by the domination of the men in gold, Israel looked a different side at the beginning of the second half, pressing Australia close to their defensive line as they battled to get back into the contest.

A desperate piece of defending by Lehrer prevented an immediate response but it was not long before the constant pressure broke down the tough Aussie backline.

The gap was closed further with a second try to the Israelis which woke up their fans and had the large Australian contingent, including the Australian Ambassador to Israel James Larsen and Victorian Opposition Leader Ted Baillieu, worried for the first time in the match.

Australia needed a circuit breaker to change the momentum and when winger Jarrad Shein capped off his brilliant performance with a brave charge at a high ball to win a penalty, Australia was able to extend the lead back to 12 with yet another true kick from Cohen.

Friedlander's second try shortly after put the memorable result beyond doubt before an exclamation mark was put on the performance with a fourth try from Jason Levine.

The gold medal match between Australia and Great Britain will be on Wednesday night at Herzliya.

FUTSAL BOYS OUT OF MEDALS

by David Weiner

The Aussie futsal junior boys beat Italy 6-4 on Sunday afternoon, but learnt that they will miss out on the medal play offs on goal difference after an upset result in another match did not go their way.

The boys shot out to a 3-1 lead; Matt Rosenberg, Yoni Hochberg and Jacob Nightingale all got on the score-sheet before the interval.

There were glimpses of the side's passing range on show in the second, with Josh Goldberg threatening down the left with a number of hefty strikes. Nightingale coolly slotted away his second seven minutes into the second, before Josh Bloom was called upon to make a sharp save with his legs.

Two quick Italian goals kept the Aussies on their toes, but Rosenberg came back on to claim a hat-trick with two neatly taken goals that ended the Australians' group campaign on a high. The side now heads into the play-offs for the minor rankings.

LUCK THEN NO LUCK FOR HAYDEN

Hayden Miller an 18-yr-old from Melbourne, had unexpected good luck when he skipped a round in the Judo competition but two losses to Israeli contenders have seen him lose out on a personal medal.

He is still pinning his hopes on picking up a gong in the teams event.



Brad Sewitz is the only member of the rugby team who already has a Gold Medal. Brad won it at the last Maccabiah in 2005 when he was playing for his native South Africa. But the 28-yr-old Sydney businessman will now take to the field next Wednesday night in a bid to score two consecutive Gold Medals albeit each one for a different country. Brad moved from Johannesburg to Sydney in 2008 and is now qualified to play for Australia,

Henry Benjamin

FUTSALLERS PLAY THRILLING MATCH

by David Weiner

There might be three days left in the Maccabiah futsal competition, but if there is a better game than Sunday night's quarter-final, it would have to be one heck of a match.

The Aussie open futsal side pushed Russia, the 2001 and 2005 Maccabiah and 2007 Rome Champions, to extra time in an epic futsal quarter final. The match ended 2-2 at the end of a pulsating normal time, before the Russians ran away with it late in the second half of overtime to win 6-2 – a score belying the tale of the tape.

The hero for the Green and Gold was goalkeeper John Myers – his herculean display, filled with one-on-ones, reflex and penalty saves, will go down as one of the most memorable performances by any Australian athlete at these games

This was a match of the highest quality – open, played at a breakneck speed and filled with trickery and finesse.

Jordan Mundell almost opened the scoring for the side in the ninth minute, but off the back of their keeper's save, the Russians marched down the other end and seized the chance to score off a counter attack.

Paul Meltz was injected into the match and snatched an equalizer minutes later. Mundell charged down the left flank and cut the ball inside, where Meltz did well to sneak the ball past the oncoming keeper and delight the packed house watching in the stands.

The Russians were a canny, experienced unit and the Aussies' Achilles heel was the amount of fouls they were conned into. With more than five minutes still in the half they had induced the Aussies into making 5 fouls – meaning every foul thereafter was a penalty. Myers stood tall for two out three, but a third cannoned off the post before being tucked away on the rebound.

Sam Kettler, Adam Fridman and Doron Pozniak all forced saves from the keeper in the first period, but the side had done well to get out with a 2-1 score line.

It was a gripping second half. Myers made a number of stupendous saves, the Aussies' scramble defense was inspired, but the Russians didn't look like cracking.

Step up Doron Pozniak. With three minutes, 50 seconds on the clock, he rifled a free kick home.

When Tow had a shot smartly saved with the last kick of the match, we were headed into extra time.

The goal that broke the camel's back came three minutes in, when the Russians finally beat Myers from the penalty spot. Tow, Fridman and Meltz both came within a whisker, but it all fell apart for the Aussies when the Russians slid the winner home in the final 30 seconds of the first half of overtime. Fridman was given his marching orders for a second bookable offence, and the game was all over, as Russia clinically closed it out, while benefiting from the extra man and another penalty.

It was a formidable showing from a side so young that half its squad is still in their teens. So much so, Captain Doron Pozniak is one of the side's elder statesmen at 26 years old. The crafty veteran reflected on the match saying: "To make it through to the second round was my dream. We've never done that. Now when these guys take on Australian futsal, they take us seriously."

TENNIS STARS IN SIGHT OF MEDALS

by Henry Benjamin

Michelle Rubin has made it into the semi-finals of the Open Tennis to join veterans John Gering and Bert Rosenberg on the road to Gold.

Also making the trip to gold contention are Paul Ehrlich and Lance Rosenberg in the 45+ doubles and Lance's father Bert partnered with an Israeli in the 65+ together with Steven Goldberg and Steven Gostin in 50+ doubles. Caron Stein remains in contention in the Women's 40+.

SILVER 21st FOR LENA

By David Weiner

Lena Sachs celebrated her 21st birthday in style, teaming up with her mum Debbie and Jackie Vilensky to claim a Maccabiah Games ten-pin bowling silver medal.

In the first tournament that mother and daughter have combined, they were slated for a bronze medal until the second placed Israelis were disqualified for illegally changing their playing order.

Both Debbie and Vilensky bowled above their averages to claim another medal 12 years after winning together at the 1997 Games. Debbie said that the birthday present for her daughter was the "icing on the cake".

"We've played netball together, and waterski; we're quite a sporting family. But this is the first time we've bowled together ... so today was quite exciting," she said.

Meanwhile, the men's side finished in sixth; with Sachs, Zalman and Dobov enjoying a much stronger second session in the afternoon.



FOOTBALLERS OUT OF CONTENTION

by Daniel Garb

The dream run of Australia's men's open football team is over. Australia has been beaten 3-1 by Argentina in the quarter finals.

The South Americans were always going to be a difficult obstacle to overcome but it was the Aussies who shocked them 10 minutes in to the game with Wednesday's hero against Peru, Adam Rischin, grabbing the opener.

But a poor end to the first half allowed the Argentinians to score three times before the main break, virtually putting paid to Australian hopes. "In every other game we've scored right at the death, maybe it was scoring early for once that hurt us," quipped coach Andrew Prentice. "I'm proud of the boys, they had a great tournament but today we didn't play to the best of our ability. We've defended so well until now but today we let in some soft goals against a side who I think we can match."



Coach Andrew Prentice explains a move to Hayom's Daniel Garb photo: Henry Benjamin

Ari Ritz was instrumental in setting up Rischin goal, breaking down the right flank and cutting the ball back to the penalty spot for his fellow Victorian to slot home.

Some sloppy defending allowed for an equalizer with the usual miserly defense of Australia losing concentration and leaving an Argentine striker alone on the box to make it 1-

1. An unfortunate own goal from Australia meant the South Americans made it 2-1 shortly after and a third before half-time from a lovely flowing move.

Clearly the better side with the ball at their feet, Argentina looked dangerous going forward but at the back they still presented Australia with chances to get back into the game.

Always dangerous from a set piece, captain Ryan Bloch got on the end of a Ritz corner early in the second half but failed to direct his header goliards. Some nice combination play between Ritz and Josh Braver down the right gave Braver the chance to deliver a dangerous cross soon after but there was no-one in position to slot the ball home.

The loss now means Australia will play Canada tomorrow in the playoff for positions 5-8 which is a very respectable result from a squad of only 15 players that had huge question marks hanging over their heads before the tournament began.

They accounted for Peru and Chile and drew with the might of the USA to be one of the success stories of the Australian delegation.

The open men's soccer team would like to thank their sponsors for their assistance in getting the team to Israel: Stonecoat, Sodastream, Investec, Swaab Attorneys, Fermamax.

MACCTILDAS OUT WITH HEADS HELD HIGH

by David Weiner

By world football standards, you've done well if you've beaten Brazil and Great Britain in the one tournament. The Macctildas have done exactly that, and while they bowed out of the competition on Sunday, their four point tally was a meteoric stride from the women's football campaign four years ago.

The girls' campaign ended after a 1-1 draw with Brazil. They entered the game needing a win and other results to go their way to make the bronze medal play off, but despite controlling the majority of the match, they couldn't muster enough scoring opportunities to earn a spot in the medal rounds.

Talia Mossenson converted a spot-kick on 20 minutes, after Lani Kahn was chopped down in the box in the middle of a burst down the right flank. While the girls seemed to be comfortably controlling the flow of proceedings, a defensive lapse gifted a 38th minute equalizer.

The defeat might have knocked them out of the competition, but section manager Sydney Kahn hailed the girls' campaign, which included the country's first ever victory in open women's football, as well as the camaraderie and spirit that the squad brought to the competition. "This is a fantastic group. They range from 16-29 years old, but they bonded like sisters ... and they can never take away the elation we felt after that first game."

Coach Martin Cohen added that while the Americans and Israelis were in another class, his young charges had done a sterling job. "There was heart, soul and everyone gave 100%. Every single girl played to their full ability."

Both men hope to keep the nucleus of the youthful side together, with the Maccaboy Australia International Games looming at the end of 2010. Cohen beamed: "All is looking good for future of Jewish women's football – especially the Macctildas!"

MEDAL TALLY

At going to press our tally is:
2 GOLD 3 SILVER 10 BRONZE

HAYOM

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