Sports and politics: An indigestible mix

When politics invades the arena

A LOOK at politics and the Olympics:

1964: At the Tokyo Olympic Games, Japanese athlete Tomoko Izawa set a new world record at 100m.

1984: In Los Angeles, American swimmer Florence Osami became the first woman to win three gold medals.

2000: At the Sydney Games, Australian swimmer Grant Hackett set a new world record in the 200m freestyle.

2004: In Athens, Greece, American swimmer Missy Franklin set a new world record in the 100m backstroke.

2012: At the London Games, British swimmer Luke Greenbank set a new world record in the 200m freestyle.

Politics on the podium

POLITICIANS aside, what should one make of individuals, groups or athletes who use sports to make a political point?

Spiegel's stand on Darfur is neither the first nor the last time that such an event will be used to further political issues, particularly at the national and international levels.

The mass appeal of sports and the resulting media focus make it easy for athletes to make a political statement. As the national anthem is played at the opening and closing ceremonies, athletes have been known to raise a political issue when the flag is lowered or raised.

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