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Editorial

While writing last month's editorial about the recently held Olympic Games, an interesting thought crossed my mind, or, to be more precise, an old thought I had during the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games resurrected itself again. It came this time during the closing stage of the men's marathon, remember this drama? A Brazilian athlete, Vanderlei de Lima is his name, I think, was leading the field well out in front. He was only a few minutes away from the finish line and looked like a near certainty to win gold, when some lunatic jumped out from the spectators and literally tackled this leading athlete and manhandled him right into the spectators on the other side of the road! Although several brawny, close, spectators tackled the

troublemaker and hauled him off de Lima, this athlete had lost some thirty seconds by the time he had extricated himself from this entanglement and resumed his pace. Needless to say, by this time the second and third runners had passed the Brazilian, resulting in him winning only the bronze medal for third place!

But what impressed me most was this. This mighty Brazilian accepted his bronze medal proudly with a gracious smile and never a word of protest that he was robbed of silver or gold through no fault of his! Not a word, from him or his Brazilian team management! This guy is a gentleman as well as a true Olympian!!! This guy deserved a special Olympic

medal, I thought!!! This is exactly what I thought four years ago, after a specific event at the Sydney Olympics.

I'm sure you will remember the African man from one of the poorest States on earth, swimming in one of the men's events (I think it may have been the 400m freestyle) and he came from Guinea Bissau or some such very poor State.

This brings me back to my first sentence in this editorial! I'm sure we all admired the sheer courage and determination of this little guy from Africa who just kept on paddling to the finish-line on his own, as he was a full length behind the second-to-last competitor in his heat by this stage! No wonder most of the spectators rose to their feet to cheer him on in his last lap!!! What an Olympic spirit! What a true Olympic athlete! It mattered not to him that he came last by a country mile, doing the swim for his country seemed all that mattered to him! Who can ever forget the happy grin on his face as he acknowledged the loud applause from the crowd!!!

All of this brings me to the crux of my aforementioned wandering thoughts about a special Olympic award for an outstanding special feat or demeanour in keeping with the Olympic Oath of true and honest sportsmanship, and only two to be awarded in each Olympiad, one for the summer Games / Paralympics and one for the Winter Games section! Instead of a medal, my choice would be a five or six-pointed gold or silver star, about the size of the medals.

The IOC could call it the 'Olympic Star', a name that appeals greatly, don't you think? Ah well, my wandering thoughts will probably remain just that, wandering thoughts floating on the clouds of Fantasyland! "Far too much extra work for our already overstretched administration", the IOC would probably say!!! Still, it was a nice thought, don't you think? Especially when one thinks back a few Olympiads to another outstanding athlete, a 15 year old gymnast who flipped, flew and tumbled through the air with breathless precision to a near perfect score every time and who would certainly have been in the running for such an award at that time, a mere slip of a girl named Nadia Komenichi.

Cheerio, Paul.

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