

Linda's Beijing Journal: Day Seven

By Charles F. Gardner

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Editor's note: Linda McDonald will write a daily journal for JSOnline, tracking the progress of West Allis gymnast Chellsie Memmel and commenting on the Olympic scene in Beijing. Linda is a nationally rated gymnastics judge, clinician and choreographer and close friend of the Memmel family. Originally from Green Bay, Linda now lives in Aurora, Ill.

Beijing - Today we went to the men's all-around finals, and 75% of the spectators were Chinese. They were so loud in the venue (the National Indoor Stadium). The two Americans, Jonathan Horton and Alexander Artemev, did well. Yang Wei of China won by a wide margin.

As we were about to leave the venue, a storm hit. It was a torrential downpour. Everyone was required to leave, and the staff began to distribute ponchos.

We put on our ponchos and decided to take a cab. When we reached the street, there were no cabs! We walked about two miles in a monsoon to finally reach a cab. The rain continued all day, and many competitions were canceled.

We were told that the Chinese Olympic organizers fired off some kind of rocket/firework to ensure rain would not ruin the Opening Ceremony. True or not, the rumor now is that all this rain is because they messed with the weather.

We laid low for the rest of the afternoon and did some laundry. Later, we returned to the Bank of America house for dinner.

The best news of the day came after Chellsie went to the doctor to get an X-ray of her broken right ankle, and the doctor gave her a great review. No damage was done by her week of training and competition. The ankle is healing nicely and she is well on the road to recovery.

Chellsie also had one of those Olympic thrills when she had her picture taken with Michael Phelps, who already has won five gold medals at the Games. He told her that he watched the Olympic gymnastics trials and was truly impressed with her performance.

Tomorrow (10:15 tonight, Milwaukee time) is women's all-around finals. We will all be there cheering on Shawn Johnson and Nastia Liukin and hoping for fair play.