

Physically I'm tip-top, says Miyazaki

Japan's 'Golden Bolt' stuns medical science to set world record

KYOTO, Japan, Sept 23, (AFP): A fleet-footed Japanese centenarian raced into the Guinness World Records reference book on Wednesday and declared himself a "medical marvel" as he continues to stalk sprint king Usain Bolt.

Hidekichi Miyazaki, dubbed "Golden Bolt" after the fastest man on the planet, clocked 42.22 seconds in Kyoto to set a 100 metres world record in the over-105 age category — one for which no mark previously existed — a day after reaching the milestone age.

"I'm not happy with the time," the pint-sized Miyazaki told AFP in an interview after recovering his wind. "I started shedding tears during the race because I was going so slowly. Perhaps I'm getting old!"

Indeed, so leisurely was his pace that Bolt could have run his world record of 9.58 four times, or practically completed a 400 metres race — a fact not lost on Miyazaki.

"I'm still a beginner, you know," he said, grinning from ear to ear. "I'll have to train harder. Training was going splendidly, so I had set myself a target of 35 seconds. I can still go faster."

"I will say this: I'm proud of my health," added Miyazaki, the poster boy for Japan's turbo-charged geriatrics in a country with one of the world's highest life expectancies.

"The doctors gave me a medical examination a couple of days ago and I'm fit as a fiddle.

"My brain might not be the sharpest but physically I'm tip-top. I've never had any health problems. The doctors are amazed by me. I can definitely keep on running for another two or three years."

Dressed in his trademark red, tight shorts hiked alarmingly high, Miyazaki got off to a wob-

bly start before finding a gentle rhythm and trotting across the finish line to loud cheers, greeted by his great-grandchildren carrying bouquets.

Cheekily, he celebrated by striking Bolt's famous "lightning" pose before being presented with a certificate from Guinness officials.

Asked about Bolt's latest heroics at last month's athletics world championships in Beijing, Miyazaki screwed up his nose and said with a chuckle: "He hasn't raced me yet!"

The twinkle-toed Miyazaki, who holds the 100 metres world record for centenarians at 29.83 seconds, insisted there was still time for a dream race against the giant Jamaican.

"I would still love to compete against him," said Miyazaki, who loses valuable seconds because he cannot hear the starter's gun go off.

"Two or three years ago Bolt came to Japan and said he wanted to meet me. There was a call about it but I was out and he left without meeting me. I felt deeply sorry."

Miyazaki, who was born in 1910 — the year Japan annexed Korea and when the Titanic was still being built — only took up running in his early 90s and prepares for races by taking a sneaky catnap.

He stands just 1.53 metres (five feet) tall and weighs in at 42 kilograms (92 pounds).

He trains religiously by popping a kilogram weight into a rucksack and going for daily walks around his local park in Kyoto, where he now lives.

"It's all about willpower," Miyazaki said of his need for speed. "You have to keep going."

Japanese television crews jostled as Miyazaki, a native of tea-growing Shizuoka prefecture, arrived for his record tilt sporting dapper white



Hidekichi Miyazaki (in red), 105 imitates the pose of Usain Bolt after running with other competitors over eighty years of age during a 100-metre-dash in the Kyoto Masters Autumn Competition in Kyoto, western Japan on Sept 23. (AFP)

slacks and a Panama hat. Job done on the track, the Japanese iron man proved he was a

dab hand at the shot put, tossing a best effort of 3.25 metres before calling it a day.

"I can't think about retiring," said Miyazaki, whose next competition is next month's Japanese Masters

Championships. "I have to continue for a few more years, to show my gratitude to my fans."

Belgium to host Britain in Davis Cup final on clay

Wozniacki downs Konjuh to reach quarters

TOKYO, Sept 23, (AFP): Number one seed Caroline Wozniacki outclassed Ana Konjuh of Croatia 6-2, 6-2 at the Pan Pacific Open Wednesday, advancing to a quarter-final against German fifth seed Angelique Kerber.

The Danish former world number one, winner here in 2010, took one hour and 22 minutes to complete the night match.

Kerber has won six of her past 10 meetings with Wozniacki, including the April final of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in Stuttgart, Germany.

Swiss teenager Belinda Bencic edged past former US Open champion Samantha Stosur in a gruelling second-round thriller.

TENNIS

The 18-year-old, ranked 15th in the world, spent two hours and 16 minutes to win 6-7 (7/5), 6-3, 6-4, surviving constant pressure from the big serves and sizzling returns of the 22nd-ranked Australian.

The victory means Bencic will play her first match against Spanish third seed Garbine Muguruza in the quarter-finals.

Early on in the match, Bencic beamed visibly frustrated with her mistakes, suffering three double faults in the first set while Stosur demonstrated her finesse with seven aces. But Stosur decelerated in the second set as Bencic found her rhythm to end the set 6-3.

The Australian veteran came back late

in the third set, when she narrowed a 4-0 deficit to 4-3, causing her teenage opponent to have a chat with her coach who is also her father.

The young star in the end managed to maintain her momentum to grab victory.

In other matches Muguruza, the world number eight, outperformed Czech Barbora Strycova 6-3, 6-4.

Kerber came behind for a 5-7, 6-1, 6-0

victory against American Madison Brengle.

Belgium will host Great Britain in November's Davis Cup final on clay in the city of Ghent, the local organisers said on Wednesday.

Tennis Vlaanderen said in a statement that the Nov. 27-29 matches would take place in a 13,000-seater hall at the

Flanders Expo on the edge of Belgium's third-largest city.

The choice of clay as the surface was widely expected given that British number one Andy Murray has won grand slams at Wimbledon and in New York on grass and hard court respectively while only reaching the semi-finals of the French Open on the clay courts at Roland Garros.

Murray's two singles victories and a win in the doubles, with his brother Jamie, against Australia secured Britain's place in the final.

Slovakian second seed Anna Karolina Schmiedlova advanced on Wednesday to the quarter-final of the WTA Korea Open after a tough bout with Christina McHale of the United States. Schmiedlova, ranked 31st in the world, needed three sets to oust McHale 6-2, 4-6, 6-3.

Belgium's Alison Van Uytvanck, seeded eighth, took a tiebreaker to win the third set against Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic 6-3, 1-6, 7-6 (7/3).

Sixth-seeded Martin Klizan advanced to the second round of the Open de Moselle on Tuesday after local favorite Paul-Henri Mathieu retired with an Achilles' tendon injury.

Playing for the first time in Metz, Klizan led 6-7 (1), 6-3, 3-2 when Mathieu called it quits after nearly two hours of play.



Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark serves a ball against Ana Konjuh of Croatia during the second round of the Pan Pacific Open women's tennis tournament in Tokyo on Sept 23. (AP)

Singapore GP to 'tighten' security after track breach

SINGAPORE, Sept 23, (AFP): Singapore Grand Prix organisers said Wednesday they would tighten security and fortify barriers after a British spectator crossed the track while the race was in full swing.

Yogvitam Pravin Dhokia, 27, was charged at a district court on Tuesday with committing a "rash act" that endangered the lives of drivers during Sunday's night race.

Closed-circuit television footage released after the race showed Dhokia wriggling his way through a gap in the metal fence and onto the track on the street circuit in the business district.

Clad in a T-shirt and shorts, he crossed the track, first walking slowly and then accelerating as race cars sped by.

Following this incident, Singapore GP has set up an internal multi-departmental taskforce to review the security plan at all track

access points," organisers said in a statement.

This includes "fortifying the infrastructure and manpower at the Marina Bay Street Circuit", Singapore GP added.

It said the spectator had entered the track through one of the designated safety egress points, which must be left open and unlocked under regulations from the sport's world governing body FIA.

This is a safety precaution to let marshals go in and out and a driver escape quickly during a crash or mechanical failure.

MOTOR RACING

In Singapore, fans are positioned close to the track in some parts of the street circuit, most of which is enclosed by walls and tall metal fencing.

Race winner Sebastian Vettel had a major shock on lap 36 when he spotted the man walking on the track.

"There's a man on the track!" he yelled over the team radio as the safety car came out.



Vettel

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