

INTERNATIONAL Herald Tribune

THE GLOBAL EDITION OF THE NEW YORK TIMES

THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 2008

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Nikon ushers in the era of the video SLR



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On women's golf tour, English to be required

Koreans call LPGA rule reasonable

By Larry Dorman

Concerned about its appeal to sponsors, the U.S. women's professional golf tour, which in recent years has been dominated by players born outside the United States, has warned its members that they must become conversant in English by 2009 or face suspension.

"We live in a sports-entertainment environment," said Libba Galloway, the deputy commissioner of the tour, the Ladies Professional Golf Association. "For an athlete to be successful today in the sports entertainment world we live in, they need to be great performers on and off the course, and being able to communicate effectively with sponsors and fans is a big part of this."

"Being a U.S.-based tour, and with the majority of our fan base, pro-am contestants, sponsors and participants being English speaking, we think it is important for our players to effectively communicate in English."

The LPGA and the other professional golf tours, unlike professional team sports, are dependent on their relationships with corporate sponsors for their financial survival.

Although Galloway insisted that "the vast majority" of the 120 international players on the LPGA circuit already spoke enough English to get by, she declined to say how many did

not. There are 26 countries represented on the LPGA Tour. South Korea, with 45 golfers, has the largest non-U.S. contingent. The LPGA says that 358 American players are now eligible for the Tour.

The LPGA's new language policy — believed to be the only such policy in a major sport — was first reported by Golfweek magazine on its Web site Monday. According to Golfweek, the LPGA held a meeting with the tour's South Korean players last week before the Safeway Classic, at which the LPGA commissioner, Carolyn Bivens, outlined the policy. Golfweek reported that many in attendance misunderstood the penalty, believing they would lose their tour cards if they did not meet the language requirement.

Even so, the magazine reported, many South Korean players interviewed supported the policy, including the Hall of Famer Se Ri Pak. "We agree we should speak some English," said Pak, who added that she thought fines seemed a fairer penalty than suspensions. "We play so good over all. When you win, you should give your speech in English."

She added: "Mostly what comes out is nerves. Totally different language in front of camera. You're excited and not thinking in English."

Major League Baseball, which has

ENGLISH, Continued on Page 19

Athletes try to cash in as China looks for stars

By David Barboza

BEIJING: At times during the Olympics, athletes like Dwyane Wade and Serena Williams seemed to be working as hard off the court as they were on the court.

Wade, a star player for the Miami Heat, and Williams, the tennis sensation, courted the Chinese media, chatted online with Chinese sports fans and strategized with their agents about how to tap into the rising Chinese market.



Filippo Monteforte/AFP
Though focused on winning a gold medal, the NBA star Dwyane Wade also sought endorsement deals while in China.

"It's something we talked about in anticipation of his coming here for the Olympics," said Henry Thomas, Wade's agent, who was in Beijing wining and dining sponsors. "We talked about what we could do to raise his profile here."

While the world is tallying the benefits, political and economic, that China will reap from having been the host of a nearly perfect Olympic Games, the star athletes who competed here are making their bids to cash in on the Chinese boom in sports marketing and sponsorship deals.

The business has grown into a \$15-billion-a-year industry, up from

about \$1 billion a year in 1994, according to Zou Marketing, a sports marketing consulting firm in Beijing.

"It's like leading mice to cheese," said Tom Doctoroff, chief executive in greater China for J. Walter Thompson, an advertising agency, referring to athletes and the Chinese market. "The question is, do these celebrities have what it takes to make it in China?"

More than most countries, sports marketing experts say, Chinese fans will back only athletes with personality and a long winning streak, meaning many top athletes may fall flat here.

"You have to define the sport and be a master of the universe," Doctoroff said. "It's extremely imperial. Anyone who can't be the emperor of basketball or the queen of tennis won't make it."

Wade and Williams think they rate. In interviews over the past two weeks, the two said they and their agents had come to realize that promoting themselves in China could give them added cachet with global

CHINA, Continued on Page 13



Damon Winter/The New York Times

Hillary Clinton declared herself to be "a proud supporter of Barack Obama" and urged Democrats "to unite as a single party."

■ Barack Obama's economic message is not helped by the story line of the convention: personality and conflict.

■ Amid the hoopla for the first female runner-up, Barack Obama's breakthrough is being soft-pedaled. Articles, Page 5

■ Tracing Barack Obama's rise through four Democratic conventions, from invisible man to center of attention.

Forcefully, Clinton makes case for Obama

She rallies supporters while protecting her hopes for another run

By Patrick Healy and Brian Knowlton

DENVER: With her husband looking on tenderly and her supporters watching with tears in their eyes, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton deferred her own dreams and delivered an emphatic plea at the Democratic National Convention to unite behind her rival, Senator Barack Obama, no matter what ill will lingered.

Clinton, who was once widely regarded as the favorite to win the Democratic nomination this year, also took steps Tuesday — deliberate steps, aides said — to keep the door open to a future bid for the presidency. She rallied supporters in her speech and, at an earlier event with 3,000 women, described her passion about her own campaign. In addition, her aides limited input on the speech from Obama's advisers while seeking advice from her former strategist, Mark Penn, a loathed figure in the Obama camp.

But the main task for Clinton at the convention — affirming her support for Obama in soaring and unconditional language — dominated her 23-minute speech, and she betrayed none of the anger and disappointment that she still feels, friends said, and that has especially haunted her husband.

Declaring herself to be "a proud supporter of Barack Obama," she urged Democrats to put aside their loyalty to her and unite behind the Illinois senator — or risk continuing Bush administration policies under the presumptive Republican nominee, Senator John McCain.

"Whether you voted for me or voted for Barack, the time is now to unite as a single party with a single purpose," Clinton said, beaming as those in the convention hall burst into applause.

DEMOCRATS, Continued on Page 8

Afghans' confidence fell with Kandahar prison's walls

By Carlotta Gall

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan: The Taliban bomber calmly parked a white fuel tanker near the prison gates of this city one evening in June, then jumped down from the cab and let out a laugh. Prison guards fired on the bomber as he ran off, but they missed, instead killing the son of a local shopkeeper, who watched the scene unfold from across the street.

Seconds later, the attacker fired a rocket-propelled grenade into the tanker, setting off an explosion that killed the prison guards, destroyed

nearby buildings and opened up a breach in the prison walls as wide as a highway. Nearly 900 prisoners escaped in the jailbreak, 350 of them members of the Taliban, in one of the worst security lapses in Afghanistan in the six years since the U.S. intervention here.

The jailbreak, on June 13, was a spectacular propaganda coup for the Taliban, not only in freeing their comrades and flaunting their strength but also in exposing the weakness of the Afghan government, its army and the police, as well as the international forces trying to secure Kandahar.

In the weeks since the jailbreak, se-

curity has further deteriorated in this southern Afghan city, once the de facto capital of the Taliban, that has become a renewed front line in the battle against the radical Islamist movement.

The failure of the U.S.-backed Afghan government to protect Kandahar has rippled across the rest of the country and complicated the task of NATO forces, which have suffered more deaths here this year than at any time since the 2001 invasion.

"We don't have a system here; the government does not have a solution," said Abdul Aleem, who fought the Taliban and helped to put some of its

members in the prison. They are on the loose again, and he now faces death threats and sits in his garden with a Kalashnikov on the chair beside him.

He said that without the presence of international forces in the city, the situation would be even worse. "If we did not have foreigners here, I don't think the Afghan National Army or police would come out of their bases," he said.

A rising chorus of complaints equally scathing about the failings of the government can be heard around the country.

AFGHANISTAN, Continued on Page 8

CURRENCIES New York

Wednesday, noon	Previous
€1=	\$1.4687
£1=	\$1.8304
¥1=	¥109.770
¥1=	SF1.1010
¥1=	SF1.1017

Full currency rates | Page 15

OIL New York, Wednesday, noon

Light sweet crude	\$118.05	▲ \$1.99
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STOCK INDEXES Wednesday

The Dow noon	11,450.89	▲ 0.33%
FTSE 100 close	5,528.10	▲ 1.05%
Nikkei 225 close	12,752.96	▼ 0.20%

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Sergei Grits/The Associated Press

U.S. ship delivers aid to Georgia

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Dallas docking in Batumi, Georgia, on Wednesday. To deliver aid and avoid a confrontation with Moscow, the United States bypassed the city of Poti, a Black Sea port that is controlled by Russian forces. Page 4

■ Russian stock markets remained skittish over fears of retaliation by Western countries after Russia recognized two separatist regions in the Caucasus. Page 14

Watching soccer on the small screen

Across Europe, the lure of professional soccer is so strong — and the hunger of some fans so great — that some mobile operators, especially in Britain, are reporting a rise in mobile phone viewing.

English Premier League matches can now be viewed via Vodafone in Britain. And the trend seems to be spreading to other sports as well. Page 11



Thai protest leaders challenge the police

Surrounded by thousands of supporters who blockaded the prime minister's office Wednesday, leaders of a long-running anti-government protest challenged nearly 2,000 police officers to enter and arrest them. Page 3

Dalai Lama, exhausted, calls off travel abroad

The Dalai Lama is exhausted, his office said Wednesday, and on the advice of his physicians, the 73-year-old spiritual leader of millions of Tibetan Buddhists has canceled foreign trips for the next three weeks. Page 2

Sudan hijackers surrender in Libya

Two men who hijacked a jetliner from Sudan's Darfur region and diverted it to a desert airstrip in southern Libya surrendered and freed all their hostages Wednesday after a daylong standoff, officials said. Page 8

Buying crumbling bridges

Reeling from the credit crisis, investment funds like Morgan Stanley have amassed an estimated \$250 billion war chest to finance a tidal wave of infrastructure projects — crumbling bridges and roads — in the United States and abroad. Page 11

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