

Freddy Adu Just Wants to Have Fun

Adu winning praise for his stellar performances

By RAHUL VAIDYANATH
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As the knock-out stages of the FIFA U-20 World Cup begin, one of the players who has made the biggest impact on the tournament thus far is Freddy Adu, captain of the U.S. team.

A poll on fifa.com asks the reader to select the best player thus far at the FIFA U-20 World Cup. At the time of writing, Adu is a close second behind Mexico's Gio Dos Santos.

Adu has had enough ups and downs in his short career that you'd think he's in his late 20s. He became the youngest player ever to play in MLS at the age of 14.

But criticism about his lack of maturity dogged him and Adu received a suspension in his first season for complaining to the media about his lack of playing time. Much debate has taken place about how much pressure he's been under and its effects on his play and life.

Adu is writing a new chapter in his life these days as he leads the U.S. into the round of 16. "When I'm having fun, I play my best," Adu told reporters after the U.S. upset Brazil 2-1 in Ottawa last Friday night.

"It's been a long road. It's been a long time coming."

Adu's focus is on having fun and enjoying himself as he tries to get away from the pressure and questions about a future in Europe. "Everything is now. You can't get carried away about the past. It's 'What have you done for me now?'"

Adu took center stage in the FIFA U-20 World Cup by scoring a hat-trick in a 6-1 demolition of Poland. His coach Thomas Rongen said, "Freddy played the perfect game against Poland. He's taking the rest of the team with him."

Against Brazil, Adu again lead by example, setting up the winning goal. "I was caught in two minds. I just hit it across the mouth of goal and it landed at Josie's [Josmer Altidore] feet."

Adu also received praise from

Brazil's coach Nelson Rodrigues: "He is a very skillful player. He's got the characteristics of a South American player as well."

Adu was involved in all aspects of the game—creating scoring opportunities, making tackles, and relentlessly hassling Brazil's keeper.

Adu knows what works for him. His motto is to just have fun. "I'm in my own little world. I want to just have fun. It's on the background of my computer. Just have fun."

That sounds appropriate enough for the 18-year old. But he also realizes the enormous responsibility placed on his shoulders.

"I'm very proud to captain a U.S. team to a win against Brazil. When I look back on this someday, I can say 'That was a great achievement.'"

The U.S. came out on top of Group D, appropriately referred to as the 'Group of Death' by the Americans and Brazilians because of the quality of all the teams in the group.

Naturally, Adu is very optimistic about his team's chances. "We've got so many weapons. You can't key on one person or the other guys will hurt you. Against Poland it was me and [Danny] Szetela. Today Josie.

"The U.S. is starting to develop the talent. We can play with anybody."



AIRADU: Freddy Adu outjumps Brazil's Roberto as the pair try and head the ball at the FIFA U-20 World Cup in Ottawa last Friday.

Amputee Pistorius to Take On World Champion

DURBAN, South Africa (Reuters)—Double-amputee Oscar Pistorius is set to take on world and Olympic 400 meters champion Jeremy Wariner at an International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) meeting in Sheffield, England, on July 15.

"Ninety percent of my races have been against able-bodied athletes," Pistorius told Reuters from his home in Pretoria last Friday.

"They've all been in local meetings, but I've been happy with the results."

South African Pistorius, 20, was born without fibulae and had both legs amputated below the knee when he was 11 months old.

He runs with specially manufactured carbon-fiber blades fitted to his legs and holds the double amputee world record in the 100 meters, 200 meters, and 400 meters.

Pistorius has a personal best of 46.34 seconds in the 400 meters and has set

himself the goal of competing in the Olympics. The world record stands at 43.18. Wariner's best time this year is 44.02.

The IAAF will monitor the Sheffield race to help it decide whether the specialized equipment gives Pistorius an advantage.

Pistorius said his success against similarly equipped opponents was an indication that he did not gain undue assistance.

"If my blades are helping me unfairly, then why aren't they giving the rest of the 70 percent of disabled athletes who use the same equipment the same advantage?" he said.

Pistorius has recently returned from "six days of media" in the United States during which his story was splashed across major television networks.

He recently competed in meetings in Iceland and Italy in addition to Sheffield.



TAKING ON THE WORLD: Double-amputee Oscar Pistorius of South Africa is set to take on World and Olympic 400 meters champion Jeremy Wariner at an IAAF meeting in Sheffield, England, on July 15. Pistorius is shown here winning the 200-meter T44 for men during the Athens 2004 Paralympics Games in Greece.



FREEDOM FOR CHINESE ATHLETES: This is the wish of author and founder of the Olympic Freedom T-shirt Movement, Kai Chen. He released his autobiography 'One in a Billion' earlier this year.

Olympic Freedom T-shirt Movement Launched

Freeing the spirit of the Olympic athlete

Editor's note:

Former Chinese National Basketball player Kai Chen recently held a press conference in Southern California. There, he launched the Olympic Freedom T-shirt Global Movement. This article is the first in a two-part series covering Chen's wish to "free the spirit of the athlete," not only in China and for the Olympics, but also globally. Chen released his autobiography earlier this year.

By LINDA SLUPSKY

Epoch Times Southern California Staff

A new movement has surfaced in Southern California. This movement is expected to be felt in Beijing by next August when the Olympics begin. Actually, this movement began in the heart of its founder Kai Chen, during the dark days of the Cultural Revolution in China.

"No athletics at all" existed during 1966-1971 of China's Cultural Revolution, according to eyewitness, Kai Chen, a former Chinese National Team basketball player. Chen is the voice behind the Olympic Freedom T-shirt Movement.

In 1971, sports resumed in China, but the Cultural Revolution continued five more years until Mao's death. During the Cultural Revolution, some teenagers of intellectuals or families that had relatives in Taiwan were sent to rural areas to be reeducated as peasants. Once far away from the city and their families, they were now prospects for the national teams. These teams were to be developed to open up China with other countries according to Chen.

Chen tells the story of 15 kids that were packed up and sent to Beijing. Two remained with Chen for the Chinese National Team. Chen was selected for the basketball team.

Chen's teenage friend, Xiao, was at first selected for the national track and field team. But since his father served for the Kuo Min Tang Army and in opposition of the communist regime, he was later expelled from the team. Xiao

died in despair.

"Once you're born on Earth to do this, and this is taken away, is there anything more cruel? People lose their purpose in life." Chen added, "The Communist Party denies what you love."

It was the death of his friend Xiao that was the impetus sitting in Chen's heart for so many years to help free the spirit of the Chinese athlete.

In 1979, Chen had hoped to be on the 1980 Chinese National Olympic Team, but because China boycotted the Moscow Olympics, his dream ended similar to Xiao's.

Turning Defeat Into Inspiring Book

Instead of giving up, Chen decided to stay strong. He decided to put his energy into telling his story and the nature of Chinese athletics in his book. *One in a Billion—Journey Toward Freedom* (The Story of a Pro Basketball Player in China), was released earlier this year. Chen completed the book in 1993, but with small children, he delayed publishing the book. Now with his children grown up and the Olympics approaching, he could not wait any longer.

"My conscience tortured me." Innocent people died. All this was screaming in the back of my head," says Chen.

Chen is not bitter for not being in the Olympics, nor is he insisting on boycotting the Beijing Olympics. Instead he asks that people wear his Olympic Freedom T-shirt during their travels to China.

"China to allow people to wear this

T-shirt and walk on the street," is Conscience Foundation member John Li's wish. The T-shirt shows an image of the tanks on Tiananmen Square.

"The 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre gave the world's people a bad image to host the Olympics any earlier," Li added. China's communist regime promised to improve human rights and Li suggested that the people of the world need to ask the Communist Party to obey their words.

"If there were no CCP (Chinese Communist Party), I would go back to facilitate the Olympics." Chen hopes that people can see the CCP for what it really is, the "ultimate evil in the world."

Chen shared his thoughts about the Chinese communist regime. Chen said that the political culture in China is to be a "cog in a machine." Everybody serves the government or the collective.

Next week in Part II, Chen shares his thoughts about Yao Ming, the NBA, sports ethics, and a few more words about freedom.

How to Help Support Olympic Freedom

The Olympic Freedom Run series will begin on August 5, 2007, in Los Angeles and will continue as long as the funding from donations. The two-hour run will start in Chinatown and end at the Los Angeles Olympic Coliseum. All participants will receive a free T-shirt. Donations to help support the Olympic Freedom T-shirt Global Movement may be sent to: OFTGM, PO Box 1341, Rohnert Park, CA 94297-1341.

All proceeds from Chen's book "One in a Billion" will also be used to fund the production of T-shirts and the series of runs. It is available at: www.freewebs.com/oneinabillion



MLB ALL-STAR GAME: American League All-Stars Mike Lowell #25, Manny Ramirez #24, Josh Beckett #19, Jonathan Papelbon #58, and Hideki Okajima #37 of the Boston Red Sox walk on the field before the 78th Major League Baseball All-Star Game at AT&T Park on July 10 in San Francisco, California.