

Another drug cheat could walk free over IPL farce Dropped chance



Super scorer: Ebi Ere

Potent Dragons usher in Ebi era

Jon Pierik

SOUTH Dragons are primed to become one of the most potent offensive forces in the National Basketball League next season after signing marksman Ebi Ere to a two-year deal.

Ere, the league's leading scorer last season with 27.1 points a game, had been expected to return to Brisbane Bullets before that franchise folded.

The 194cm forward will now reunite with new Dragons coach Brian Goorjian, with whom he won a championship with Sydney Kings in 2004.

"I feel good. This will be a good situation," Ere said yesterday from Las Vegas, where he is playing in an NBA summer league with Memphis Grizzlies.

"The Dragons are a good franchise and hopefully we can bring some wins to the court and make a playoff run. If we get on it early, we have a chance at making the top four."

Ere, 26, also won a championship with the Bullets.

The revamped Dragons have also secured Australian Boomer Mark Worthington, Mika Vukona and Adam Gibson in recent months.

Jason Smith, who had a three-year deal with the Dragons fall over last week, has signed with the renamed Sydney Spirit.

West Sydney Razorbacks yesterday announced they had changed their name in a bid to unify basketball in a city that has just lost the Kings.

"We feel it is vital that we represent the entire community of Sydney," Spirit chief executive Steve Aquilina said. "By evolving into the Sydney Spirit, we believe we are offering all basketball fans in this city a team to call their own."

Aquilina said the decision to move on from the Razorbacks name was not taken lightly, and the signing of Smith would help entice former Kings fans to support the new club.

"Jason Smith is a legitimate superstar and was the face of the Sydney Kings for years," Aquilina said.

Smith, who is recovering from shoulder surgery and is likely to miss the first month of the season, has urged disenfranchised Kings supporters to get behind the Spirit.

"I'm extremely excited about furthering my career in Sydney and unifying a team that's really going to represent Sydney well," Smith said.

"We had a (Kings) grieving period over the last month, but to sign with this team is a real positive step in my career."

The new season begins on September 13.

with AAP

WORLD cricket could again be left red-faced with the latest player to test positive to a banned substance set to escape harsh punishment because of India's lack of attention to the sensitive issue of drugs in sport.

As it was confirmed an Indian Premier League player had tested positive for a banned substance this year, there were growing fears authorities would have little power to enforce sanctions. The Board of Control for Cricket in India,

Ben Dorries

which oversaw the IPL, has not signed up to the World Anti-Doping Agency regulations, so it was unclear what penalties could be imposed.

The issue could prove a major embarrassment because the IPL may only be able to suspend the player from its own tournament, leaving him free to continue playing Tests and one-dayers.

However the International Cricket Council, which confirmed the initial positive test, has promised to monitor the matter closely.

"It is the responsibility of the BCCI to deal with the process in a timely and fair manner," an ICC spokesman said.

"The ICC retains a right of appeal if any penalty that may be imposed is inconsistent with the WADA code."

Cricket websites have quoted unnamed officials as saying a pace bowler from the sub-continent was the player to fail an IPL random drug test.

Pakistani quick Mohammad Asif was detained at the Dubai Airport in June for allegedly carrying an illegal drug but charges against him were dropped after he spent 19 days

in detention. He later claimed that since he had passed two doping tests during the IPL, it proved he had not taken the drug.

Asif, along with fellow Pakistan paceman Shoaib Akhtar, was banned from the Champions Trophy in 2006 after they had tested positive for nandrolone. Akhtar had also been in the news during the IPL for allegedly carrying syringes in his baggage on his way to India.

It may be a while before the player's identity is known because authorities have to check if medical exemptions were sought for the drug.



Detained: Mohammad Asif



Fighting to compete alongside men: Narelle Keem works out at the Brizzi brothers gym at Kingsbury. Pictures: PETER WARD

Women shape up for equal rights

VICTORIA'S female boxers are shaping up for a chance to compete at the Olympic Games.

Amateur boxing officials are expecting the International Olympic Committee to allow women to box in the 2012 London Games.

The decision, due next year, will breach the last bastion of male exclusivity in Olympic sports.

Boxing is the only discipline in the summer Games in which women are not represented.

"All the advice I'm getting is that it will be included in London," Ted Tanner, chairman of Boxing Australia, said.

He said the international standard of female boxers is now very high and hoped the IOC decision would attract more Australian women to the sport from other martial arts and combat sports.

Tanner said the inclusion of women would help improve funding for the sport.

"I think it was old values that held women's boxing back," he said.

Women have to hold their

Mischa Merz and Daryl Timms

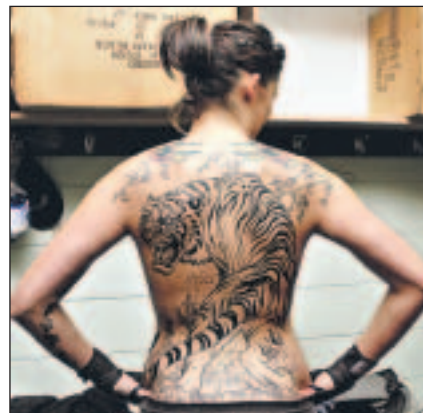
own national championships this month because this year's Australian titles will be staged in New South Wales, where female boxing is illegal.

NSW boxers will compete at the tournament in Brunswick on July 26 and 27, where participants will vie for the chance to represent Australia at the world amateur titles in Ningbo City, China, in November.

It will be the fifth world championships for women and while Australia has been represented before, only one boxer, South Australian Desi Kontos in 2002, has won a medal.

Victorian team members have been sparring with each other and professional boxer Susie Ramadan, who on Friday night won the national super bantamweight title at Knox Basketball Centre.

Ramadan, who scored a unanimous points decision over Edith Smith, is undefeated in four professional fights.



Tiger in the ring: hairdresser Michaela Ng hopes to represent Australia at the Olympics.

Among her admirers is Sam Soliman.

"Sam said he has seen plenty of women fight, but none have got the punches like she has," Ramadan's trainer Con Brizzi said. "He said she would be great in America."

Boxer Candy Revuelta, 24, says she hopes the impending decision about the Olympics will improve the level of women's participation in boxing.

She boxed for a year when she was a junior at 17 and had

one fight but stopped because there weren't any opponents in her flyweight division.

Revuelta resumed in October and has had one fight for one win under trainer Ben Chua. "After I had a break I realised I had a passion for it and I had always loved it. It's an exciting time for women's boxing. There's no way I would give it up now," she said.

Hairdresser Michaela Ng, 30, will be fighting in the 67kg

division and has her sites firmly set on the Olympics.

"I think if I could go to the Olympics that would be the best thing that ever happened to me. My dream has always been to go but I didn't think it could be a reality," said Ng, who has a 3-0 record.

Her trainer Sam Visiglio said she had a good chance of success at the national titles and beyond after recently beating an experienced German boxer, the Soliman-trained Rebekka Atz.

"She came in as the underdog after only two fights and just impressed us so much with her determination," Visiglio said. "It's a great incentive to think that she might be able to represent her country now."

An estimated 30,000 women from 120 countries box competitively. Last year's world titles in Russia attracted 152 boxers from 28 countries.

Vladimir Klitschko

THE nationality of world heavyweight boxing champion Vladimir Klitschko is Ukrainian, not Russian as reported yesterday.