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## VIEWPOINT: LONDON OLYMPICS 2012

# Political rivalry fine, just don't overdo it



### EYE ON LONDON

By CHIA HAN KEONG  
SPORTS EDITOR

MUCH as the organisers of the Olympics might wish that politics are kept separate from sports at the Games, it is nearly impossible to do so.

Ever since Nazi Germany met a defiant African-American in Jesse Owens back in the 1936 Games, political tensions have crept into the Olympics, no matter how much the purists have insisted that it should not be encouraged.

Indeed, after the tragedy of the 1972 Munich Games, in which 11 Israeli athletes and coaches were killed by Palestinian gunmen, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) are understandably disapproving of any politically motivated actions during the Games.

Still, at international-level events like these, there is little the IOC can do to stop rivalries that are born of political tensions.

Sports superpowers China and the United States have been locked in a fierce power struggle at the top of the medal table since the 2004 Olympics.

To a smaller degree, there are rivalries stretching across the medal table: Britain's age-old duel with Australia, Japan's losing battle with South

Korea, New Zealand's eagerness to pull its weight against Australia, as well as Russia's attempts to reign supreme over post-Soviet states such as Kazakhstan and Lithuania.

Such rivalries are fine with the IOC, as well as the sports purists. They add intensity and fervour to the competition, capture fans' imagination and enliven the atmosphere of the Games.

For example, Britain's dominance over Australia in the medal table since the 2008 Beijing Games has led to some good-natured ribbing of its archrival, which takes pride on being a sporty nation.

But any sort of tension amid such rivalries becomes uncomfortable, even unbearable, if nations overdo it.

The recent doping accusations made by the US media and coaches over the sudden success of Chinese swimmers like Ye Shiwen and Sun Yang have left a bitter taste among fans and athletes alike.

While the suspicions may be valid, it seems terribly unsporting to air such doubts as publicly as US coach John Leonard did with regard to Ye, without any concrete proof.

Sun has also been grilled by the US media on the validity of his world record-breaking 1,500m freestyle win.

The unhappy athletes have in turn hit back, accusing the US of lacking sportsmanship, especially considering that the US has also had its fair share of dope cheats.

It all ratchets up the already

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## Ads for online games too sexy for kids?

By MICHAEL ALLEN

ADVERTISEMENTS for a new free online game have sparked an outcry among concerned parents and gamers for being sexually suggestive.

This is especially because kids are exposed to them as well.

These ads, seen on a website of home-grown game distributor AsiaSoft Online, are for a game called MCCQ. The ads depict scantily clad female cartoon characters, with captions such as: "At first it was just once a week, now I do it everyday. Come do it with me - I'm easy to access."

Stomp contributor Simon took images of the ad and posted them on the citizen-journalism website last Saturday.

In the post, he noted that AsiaSoft games are played by people of different ages. Of the ads, he wrote: "I find it too suggestive for a non-rated website."

In response to my paper's queries, an AsiaSoft spokesman said that the ads are a

"tongue-in-cheek approach to promote the game's easy-to-access feature and to poke fun at gamers' addictive habits".

"We apologise if the adverts gave the impression that they are 'too suggestive'," she said.

She added that the ads were created and published by AsiaSoft's marketing team, and the game does not have any mature content.

When contacted, the Media Development Authority said that while it takes "a light-touch approach" to Internet regulation, it will take action if guidelines under the Internet Code of Practice are breached.

Under the Code, prohibited material include that which is objectionable on the grounds of public interest and morality.

Dr Carol Balhetchet, director of youth services at the Singapore Children's Society, said kids who view sexually suggestive content can be led easily into searching for more explicit content. Online users who host such websites often fail to see



"TONGUE-IN-CHEEK": This ad for an AsiaSoft Online game promotes its "easy-to-access" feature. (PHOTO: INTERNET)

the consequences of their actions.

She said: "We can't blame parents and we can't be supervising our children 24/7. Therefore, there needs to be some

form of policing."

She calls for the formation of a "community agency" to keep

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