

fornia as companies take marketing to a new level. They're paying commuters to plaster their cars with advertising. "Hey, it covers my car payment." 3A.

Ritalin argument headed to courts

Lawsuits in two states will test the diagnoses of hyperactivity in kids and the use of the drug Ritalin to treat it. Novartis Pharmaceuticals, accused of conspiring to push the drug, calls charges "preposterous." 3A.

Dogs enjoying a taste of the good life

Nothing's too good for Fido. Spot or Hank, right? Apparently not, as more pet owners happily shell out top dollar for gourmet chow (like a \$3 dog biscuit.) 1D.

► 10 great places to vacation with your pooch. 3D.

Today's editorial: The Olympic Games

In USA TODAY's opinion, "The hugeness of the modern Games — commercial stakes, prestige, etc. — is a burden to organizers and temptation to cheaters." Plus, other notes on the Games of Sydney. 18A.

Money: NHTSA to expand tire probe

Government plans to announce today a move to check Firestone tires sold under other names. 1, 7B.

► New fair disclosure rule will give small investors an equal hand in gathering data on companies. 3B.

Sports: Moratorium on college bowls

NCAA denies two cities' push for games and limits the total number to 26. 1C. College preview. 16C.

► Though Cards slugger Mark McGwire is hobbled, he has visions of postseason grandeur. In focus. 3C.

Life: Winery gives screw tops a shot

Plumpjack of Napa Valley believes the cork mystique will subside as connoisseurs lighten up. 5D.

► Catch a splash of color while vacationing this fall. Tour companies offer foliage-viewing packages. 9D.

► Holocaust documentary *Into the Arms of Strangers* (★★½) is a moving piece of cinema. Movies. 6E.

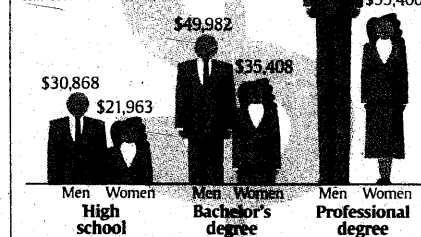
By John Siniff

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Salary disparity shrinking but not gone

The gap between the median earnings of men and women with equal educations is narrowing but has not closed.



Note: Figures are for 1998, the latest available, for people 25 or older doing fulltime, year-round work.

Source: Census Bureau

By Sam Ward, USA TODAY



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World catches u

Analysis shows USA won't dominate the medals ra

By Mike Dodd
USA TODAY

SYDNEY — The rest of the world's athletes have a message for the USA on the eve of the XXVII Summer Olympic Games: You're not in Atlanta any more, Toto.

Four years after U.S. athletes turned the Centennial Games into an all-American parade to the medal podium, the balance of power has shifted back to its traditional level. Without the home-country advantage, the USA is unlikely to repeat its 101-medal showing of the last Olympics and could even be knocked off the top spot in the medals chart.

USA TODAY has studied the 31 sports of the Sydney Olympics to project the performance of Americans and their chief rivals in each of the 300 events. The projections, based on performances in world championships and major international events, offer a number of tantalizing possibilities:

► The medals race will be among the closest in Olympic history, as the USA and Russia vie for the most trips to the podium, with Germany not far behind. The USA won 36 more medals than its closest competitor, Germany, at the Atlanta Games. This Olympics probably will be decided by fewer than 10 medals, which has happened only five times since 1912.

► Americans will win 92 medals, including 35 gold, compared with 87 for Russia (with 32 gold) and 73 medals for Germany. Host

Projected total medals

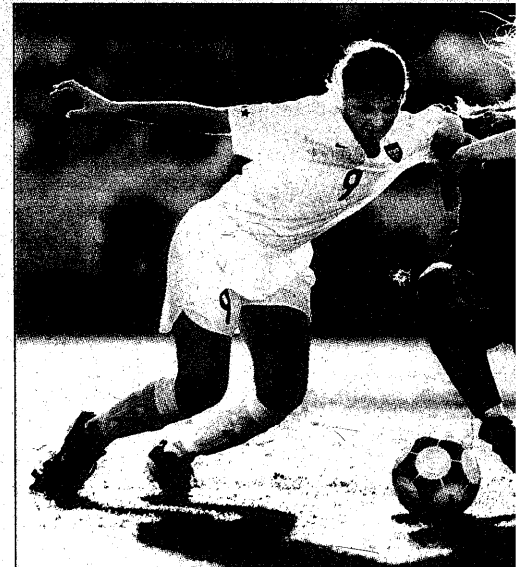
| | Gold | Total |
|-----------|------|-------|
| USA | 35 | 92 |
| Russia | 32 | 87 |
| Germany | 27 | 73 |
| Australia | 21 | 61 |
| China | 22 | 52 |

Source: USA TODAY research

By Suzy Parker, USA TODAY

Cover story

U.S. medal projections sport by sport athlete capsule 4-11F



By Robert Hanash

Jump-start: Mia Hamm, left, and the defending champion U.S. men's soccer team get a jump with an opening 2-0 win against.

See COVER STORY next page ►

Woods' latest trophy: \$100

Head-to-toe company man ready to sign a five-year endorsement deal extension

By Harry Blauvelt
USA TODAY

Tiger Woods will boost his bank account by about \$100 million with an expected five-year contract extension with Nike in what is believed to be the richest endorsement deal in sports history.

Nike's new deal with the world's No. 1 golfer could be finalized as early as today. It has been predicted that Woods might someday become sports' first \$1 billion man.

Neither Bob Wood, president of Nike Golf, nor IMG's Mark Steinberg, the golfer's agent, would discuss details. Other sources close to the negotiations put the figure at roughly \$100 million.

"I would assume it's one of the largest contracts in sports marketing history," Steinberg said. "It's been in the works for a long time."

Steinberg added that the contract fairly compensates Woods, not just for what he's done for Nike but for golf in

particular and sports generally. "In terms of golf, if it's not the No. 1 deal ever done, I'm not aware of a bigger or better one for everybody," Wood said. "Whatever he's making from us, he's worth it."

The contract starts in one year, when the old one expires. Woods signed his first Nike deal in 1996 for an estimated \$40 million over five years.

The one major difference between the new and old contracts is that Woods now is contractually bound to play the Nike Precision Tour Accuracy Ball. He's been using a Nike ball, without a contract, since the Deutsche Bank Open that he

Fierce competition. Adrenaline rushes. Grown men crying. Sydney? No,

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