Sprinters tangle in hot semi

THE simmering rivalry between Olympic hopefuls Ryan Bayley and Shane Perkins erupted last night in their sprint semi-final at the Australian track cycling championships.

Race judges awarded their third and deciding heat to Bayley, the two-time Olympic gold medallist from WA, after he crashed out.

The commissaires also warned Bayley for "incorrect behaviour" after he angrily reacted to the incident. The back of Bayley's skinsuit was burnt as a result of the crash.

Officials warned Perkins, from Victoria, for "moving down towards the inside of the track when a rival was already there."

Bayley and Perkins are in a hotly-contested field for sprint berths in the Australian track team at the Beijing Olympics.

There was already a testy relationship between the pair, given an extra dimension because Perkins is now engaged to Bayley's younger sister Kristine, a former national-level track rider.

Perkins qualified second-fastest, with Bayley third, in the flying 200m on Wednesday and there was some by-play between the two riders as the Victorian saw he had gone faster than the double Olympic champion.

As fastest qualifier, Mark French easily beat fellow Victorian Jason Niblett 2-0 to reach the final.

French beat Bayley 2-0 in the final for his fifth senior Australian title.

The racing was much tighter between Bayley and Perkins in the semi-final – and also edgier.

Bayley won heat one while Perkins used different tactics to easily turn the tables in heat two.

The crash happened as they rounded the final bend on the last lap of heat three.

In the bronze-medal ride-off, Perkins was too strong for Niblett, also winning 2-0.

In other racing last night, Victoria easily beat New South Wales to win the 4000m teams pursuit.

– AAP, Sydney

Ouch!: Ryan Bayley crashes during last night's sprint semi-final against Shane Perkins in Sydney.

IN BRIEF...

Bases loaded

SYDNEY: The New South Wales Patriots and Perth Heat line up in the first clash of the best-of-three Claxton Shield baseball finals series at Blacktown Olympic Park tonight. New South Wales qualified for the finals as Eastern Division champions, narrowly holding out the Queensland side featuring Trinity Beach's Brett Roneberg. The series continues tomorrow and Sunday, should a third game be required.

One more for Benji

SYDNEY: Wests Tigers are today expected to announce the re-signing of Kiwi Test five-eighth Benji Marshall until the end of the 2009 NRL season. Marshall comes off contract at the end of 2008 and recently made it clear he hoped to have his future sorted out before the season kicked off on March 14. The Tigers have scheduled a press conference at their Concord Oval training base this morning where it is believed Marshall will sign.

Bogut on target

DALLAS: Australia's Andrew Bogut had 24 points and 14 rebounds in one of his better NBA games of the season yesterday but it wasn't enough to get the Milwaukee Bucks past Dallas. Dirk Nowitzki had his first career triple-double with 29 points, 10 rebounds and 12 assists to lead the Mavericks to a 107-96 victory, stretching their home winning streak to eight games. Nowitzki, the defending league MVP, consistently passed out of double-teams to open teammates.

Suns grab Shaq

PHOENIX: The Miami Heat have traded centre Shaquille O'Neal to the Phoenix Suns in exchange for forward Shawn Marion and guard Marcus Banks, the Heat said yesterday. The Suns have the best record in the Western Conference but believe they need a bigger inside presence to battle with the likes of San Antonio's Tim Duncan and the Los Angeles Lakers' newly acquired Pau Gasol. The 35-year-old O'Neal was in his fourth season with the Heat.

Hendrix cited

SYDNEY: South Dragons forward Bakari Hendrix will face the NBL tribunal on a charge of striking with his elbow.The charge arose from an alleged incident with Cairns forward Martin Cattalini in the fourth quarter of Wednesday's upset 95-90 win against the Taipans at Melbourne's Vodafone Arena. Hendrix was charged after NBL interim CEO Chuck Harmison viewed video footage of the incident and decided to refer the matter to the tribunal.

Kart speedsters chase Vic titles

CAIRNS pair Lydon Dodge and Thomas Janusz will look to make an early impact on the competition year when the 2008 Victorian Karting Championships start today.

More than 450 entrants across 16 categories will be in action at the Beckley Park Raceway in Corio, a northern suburb of Geelong, with qualifying starting today followed by heats tomorrow and finals on Sunday.

Dodge, who recently picked up a much-prized factory driver's spot with the CRG team, will use the event to fine-tune preparations for next month's national championships in Launceston.

The reigning Queensland Country champion finished ninth at last year's nationals and has set his sights on a top-five finish in Launceston.

He will line up in a 53-strong clubman light class field while Janusz, a much-travelled driver who competed without luck last year, will contest both the clubman heavy and clubman super heavy classes

Dodge will hope for better fortune than experienced at Townsville's Australia Day Cup meeting where, after setting the fastest qualifying lap times, he was forced out of the pre-final and final with mechanical problems.

Craig Ross
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While Dodge had a forgettable meet, a number of other Cairns competitors made the most of their opportunity in Townsville, including senior drivers Paul French and Ryan Wilkins.

French showed the benefit of ongoing fitness training to take out the sportsman super heavy class honours while Wilkins made light work of his move out of the junior ranks to win the senior national heavy event.

Fellow Cairns competitors Jason Fewins and Blake Harris also hinted at a promising year ahead by finishing third in the sportsman heavy and sportsman light divisions respectively.

Junior club members also shone with Zachary Pattel (midgets) and Matthew Flay (rookies) cruising to victory while Matt Coulson impressed with his third place in junior national light competition.

The next Cairns club meet is set to go ahead on February 23 after the scheduled day/night 2008 karting opener at Edmonton's Cairns International Motor Speedway was washed out last Saturday.

Giteau uses full force to win halfback battle

MATT Giteau has won the first round of his battle with Queensland's Berrick Barnes for the Wallaby number 10 jersey, driving the Perth side to a 39-15 over the Reds in the final trial before next weekend's Super 14 opener.

While Giteau was involved in all that was good about the Force, Barnes did not have the same impact and also floated out a pass intercepted by Drew Mitchell for the home side's fourth try.

By then Giteau had already created one try for Cameron Shepherd and put the Force back on the front foot. And Queensland's positives were more fleeting on a chilly night.

Meanwhile, All Blacks star Daniel Carter landed the early punches but rival five-eighth Kurtley Beale delivered the knockout blow as the New South Wales Waratahs beat the Crusaders 24-14 in a rugby trial at the Sydney Football Stadium last night. The Waratahs again showed their depth by coming from 14-0 down.

WESTERN FORCE 39 (James Stannard, David Pusey, Cameron Shepherd, Drew Mitchell, Nick Cummins, Lachlan MacKay tries; Matt Giteau 3 cons, pen goal) d QUEENSLAND REDS 15 (Chris Latham, Chris Sale tries; Clinton Schifcofske con, Berrick Barnes field goal) at Members Equity Stadium, Perth. Referee: James Leckie (Aus). Crowd: 4422.

NSW WARATAHS 24 (Brett Sheehan, Kurtley Beale, Alit Mafi tries; Kurtley Beale 3 cons, Kurtley Beale pen goal) d CRUSADERS 14 (Casey Laulala, Tim Bateman tries; Daniel Carter 2 cons) at Sydney Football Stadium. Referee: Brett Bowden. Crowd: 7949.

RACE DIVIDENDS

Mornington

Race 1: 1 Abitofun $10.90 $2.20 4 Broadarrowbilly $1.90 9 Second Glance $6.20. Q: $31.20. E: $80.30. T: $1,440.50. A2: 1-4 $12.60, 1-9 $38.70, 4-9 $23.80. FIRST 4: (JACKPOT 1 4 9 10): $3,152.50. Scr: 8.

Race 2: 9 Donns Rossa $10.30 $2.40 8 Creative Song $2.10 10 Iron Charger $2.10. Q: $28.00. E: $41.60. T: $233.20. A2: 8-9 $5.80, 9-10 $7.90, 8-10 $4.00. FIRST 4: (9 8 10 2): $1,031.00. Scr: 6,7,12,13.

Race 3: 10 Portland Paije $4.80 $2.00 7 Nobel $1.40 11 Efficacious $5.60. Q: $14.30. E: $16.80. T: $357.20. A2: 7-10 $6.50, 10-11 $23.40, 7-11 $17.50. FIRST 4: (10 7 11 4): $3,419.20. Scr: 3L,13,14.

Race 4: 1 Ballyboe $5.10 $1.70 2 Band Camp $1.70 9 Spiritofthecountry $4.00. Q: $9.30. E: $20.20. T: $256.30. A2: 1-2 $3.20, 1-9 $5.40, 2-9 $10.50. FIRST 4: (1 2 9 11): $1,014.40. Scr: 13.

Race 5: 1 Stage Presence $1.60 $1.00 6 Atomic Chilli $5.50 7 Golden Sails $2.30. Q: $16.90. E: $24.70. T: $184.20. A2: 1-6 $6.20, 1-7 $4.60, 6-7 $29.50. FIRST 4: (1 6 7 9): $1,212.80. All Started.

Race 6: 2 Kelculate $5.60 $1.90 12 Forever Fun $2.40 4 Podarok $1.80. Q: $16.40. E: $47.40. T: $130.60. A2: 2-12 $6.80, 2-4 $5.90, 4-12 $10.50. FIRST 4: (2 12 4 8): $2,574.60. Scr: 13,14.

Race 7: 1 De Ja View $2.20 $1.20 2 Cape Clinton $1.60 7 Paternity $1.60. Q: $4.10. E: $7.10. T: $30.70. A2: 1-2 $3.10, 1-7 $3.00, 2-7 $6.90. FIRST 4: (1 2 7 3): $77.20. Scr: 6L,9.

Race 8: 11 Our Jackie $6.40 $2.00 4 Emilydelago $3.70 6 Lominsta $1.50. Q: $47.80. E: $79.90. T: $426.80. A2: 4-11 $8.70, 6-11 $3.30, 4-6 $12.90. FIRST 4: (11 4 6 2): $1,346.20. Scr: 3,10.

EXTRA DOUBLE: 10 Portland Paije 1 Ballyboe $53.90. OCF: 4 Da Hussler 7 Doctor Billings. DOUBLE: 2 Kelculate 1 De Ja View $12.60. TREBLE: 1 Stage Presence 2 Kelculate 1 De Ja View $23.90. OCF: 1 Stage Presence 7 Stella Rossa 1 De Ja View.

Ascot Park

Race 1: 4 Vegas Girl $10.90 $2.20 1 Mr Ziggy $9.40 11 Vital Princess $9.90. Q: $98.70. E: $128.60. T: $18.00. A2: 1-4 $18.70, 4-11 $28.00, 1-11 $28.00. All Started.

Race 2: 5 Pinchanapunch $4.50 $1.60 6 Felsteg $2.70 10 Bubs $7.20. Q: $13.20. E: $37.50. T: $243.50. A2: 5-6 $6.10, 5-10 $17.00, 6-10 $9.70. All Started.

Race 3: 8 Urangmaam $5.70 $1.80 12 Turn The Page $17.40 7 All Ova Grover $3.00. Q: $186.50. E: $419.50. T: $2,344.00. A2: 8-12 $48.50, 7-8 $18.20, 7-12 $145.60. All Started.

Race 4: 6 Twizel Magic $9.80 $5.70 1 Killigrew $3.80 3 Jacobs River NTD. Q: $26.90. E: $39.10. T: $153.20. All Started.

Race 5: 4 Nobel $3.10 $1.30 2 Spike Spence $2.10 7 Lotus $3.50. Q: $10.80. E: $15.20. T: $120.10. A2: 2-4 $4.40, 4-7 $8.90, 2-7 $14.70. All Started.

Race 6: 3 Second Audition $5.60 $2.10 9 Salazar $2.20 1 Exonerate $2.60. Q: $20.50. E: $35.80. T: $296.50. A2: 3-9 $10.70, 1-3 $11.50, 1-9 $13.50. All Started.

Race 7: 12 Sophie Dolman $22.40 $4.30 7 Fly Solo $2.00 4 Ultimate High $1.80. Q: $53.70. E: $76.10. T: $673.80. A2: 7-12 $17.60, 4-12 $22.70, 4-7 $5.00. Scr: 2.

Race 8: 9 Wish Me Luck $46.50 $8.50 2 City Of Choice $1.70 7 Halon $1.70. Q: $165.70. E: $412.80. T: $3,705.30. A2: 2-9 $42.50, 7-9 $29.40, 2-7 $9.30. All Started.

Race 9: 7 Vapourizer $5.90 $2.30 3 Peter Porter $3.40 10 Art Society $3.10. Q: $33.80. E: $80.00. T: $333.60. A2: 3-7 $13.30, 7-10 $12.00, 3-10 $25.20. Scr: 1,8,15,16.

EXTRA DOUBLE: 4 Nobel 3 Second Audition $17.30. OCF: 4 Nobel 7 Shaky Bridge. DOUBLE: 9 Wish Me Luck 7 Vapourizer $416.90. TREBLE: 12 Sophie Dolman 9 Wish Me Luck 7 Vapourizer $5376.00. OCF: 7 Fly Solo 6 Chief Ruler 4 Kompressor.

Bunbury

Race 1: 12 Gretelle $4.60 $1.70 6 Goldy Junior $3.60 14 Universal Reigns $2.80. Q: $31.80. E: $49.80. T: $431.50. A2: 6-12 $11.50, 12-14 $9.00, 6-14 $19.70. FIRST 4: (JACKPOT 12 6 14 5): $1,113.00. Scr: 13,15L,16.

Race 2: 7 Core Asset $5.20 $1.80 1 All Spots $3.30 4 Governor Arnold $1.40. Q: $41.40. E: $73.50. T: $266.70. A2: 1-7 $7.00, 4-7 $5.10, 1-4 $8.70. FIRST 4: (7 1 4 5): $360.20. Scr: 15,16.

Race 3: 8 Exitt $2.60 $1.30 2 At Long Last $3.00 1 Akhenhome $5.70. Q: $18.80. E: $28.30. T: $303.20. A2: 2-8 $7.90, 1-8 $10.40, 1-2 $44.80. FIRST 4: (8 2 1 12): $1,136.80. Scr: 15,16.

Race 4: 6 Ima Kahn $4.40 $2.30 1 Hotel Casuarina $1.70 and 4 Jay Four Ex $1.00 dh 2. Q: (1 6): $10.40, (4 6): $2.00, E: (6 1): $25.10, (6 4): $5.80. T: (6 1 4): $47.30 (6 4 1): $26.10. FIRST 4: (6 1 4 3) $97.60 (6 4 1 3) $47.60. All Started.

Race 5: 2 Interange $3.60 $1.80 1 Blazing Colorado $1.60 4 Danish Currency $3.20. Q: $5.40. E: $20.20. T: $97.20. A2: 1-2 $2.50, 2-4 $7.80, 1-4 $6.10. FIRST 4: (2 1 4 3): $229.00. All Started.

Race 6: 13 Star Encounter $3.50 $1.60 1 Double Barrel $3.50 5 Suspense Account $1.80. Q: $29.50. E: $38.50. T: $184.20. A2: 1-13 $17.60, 5-13 $5.60, 1-5 $11.50. FIRST 4: (13 1 5 2): $1,637.40. Scr: 11,14.

Race 7: 11 Sleepwalk $17.60 $3.30 5 Swiss Watch $1.50 1 Danby Wiske $1.50. Q: $33.50. E: $70.80. T: $253.80. A2: 5-11 $9.30, 1-11 $8.70, 1-5 $5.30. FIRST 4: (11 5 1 3): $768.00. Scr: 15.

Race 8: 4 Villa Rocca $3.70 $1.40 1 Cavalier Way $12.10 12 Modelite $19.20. Q: $89.60. E: $74.50. T: $15,519.20. A2: 1-4 $28.10, 4-12 $262.30. FIRST 4: (JACKPOT 4 1 12 3): $841.25. All Started.

Race 9: 8 Czar You Crazy $13.20 $3.00 5 Jean $1.50 13 Classy Clan $14.20. Q: $24.40. E: $37.70. T: $1,832.10. A2: 5-8 $7.70, 8-13 $40.10, 5-13 $13.30. FIRST 4: (JACKPOT 8 5 13 4): $963.75. Scr: 15.

EXTRA DOUBLE: 2 Interange 13 Star Encounter $21.70. OCF: 2 Interange 13 Star Encounter. DOUBLE: 4 Villa Rocca 8 Czar You Crazy $57.90. TREBLE: 11 Sleepwalk 4 Villa Rocca 8 Czar You Crazy $712.50. OCF: 1 Danby Wiske 4 Villa Rocca 5 Jean.

Tamworth

Races 1-9 abandoned due to the weather and state of track.