

Argentina hopeful of medals from football, hockey and basketball

Argentina's best chance to bag medals from Beijing Games will be from basketball, soccer and field hockey.

Argentina won two gold medals, the men's soccer and men's basketball, and four bronze medals at the 2004 Athens Games.

Most members of the defending basketball champion team will compete in Beijing and Argentina is one of the hottest teams to win the men's basketball title.

Houston Rockets' rookie Luis Scola and Chicago Bulls' Andres Nocioni are still the centre piece of the Argentina's squad, while team leader Manu Ginobili is waiting for the final decision on his injury to compete here.

Argentina soccer sensation Lionel Messi will lead the team to retain the gold medal in Beijing. The team will also have Manchester United forward Carlos Tevez and Liverpool's Javier Mascherano.

Basketball and soccer are the best hopes for Argentina to win the gold medals at the Beijing Olympics, while women's field hockey vowed to break through this time.

Luciana Aymar, tagged as Maradona of Hockey, will lead an experienced team which won silver at the 2000 Sydney Olympics and bronze at the 2004 Athens.

They lost to the Netherlands 4-2 on penalty strokes in the semi-finals in Athens four years ago, and beat China 1-0 to take the third placing. Five newcomers have been added and the team is seeking nothing but the gold medal in August.

Besides team events, Argentina will also take part in swimming, sailing and tennis.

World No. 7 tennis player David Nalbandian will lead the charge in the tennis event. He missed the Athens Games because of injury and this time he recovered from another arm injury to give the charge in Beijing.

Shan Lei (© IANS / India eNews)