

London 2012 Olympics - 26 days more



LONDON: Giant Olympic rings were unveiled on London's Tower Bridge Wednesday to mark one month to go until the 2012 Olympics. The rings, which weigh three

tonnes, were lowered into place on the landmark on the River Thames as the chief organiser of the London Games, Sebastian Coe, and Mayor of London Boris Johnson

looked on. Preparations for the Games took another step forward when the main press centre, which will play host to 21,000 accredited members of the media, offi-

cially opened at the Olympic Park in Stratford, east London. The Olympics open on July 27 and the closing ceremony takes place on August 13. AFP



Usain Bolt upset in Jamaican 100 metre finals

The Fastest Man in the World wasn't the fastest man in Jamaica on Friday night.

Instead, that honour was snatched away by Yohan Blake, the man they call "The Beast," who blew away Bolt out of the starting blocks and finished the 100-metre final in 9.75 seconds to upset the world-record holder by 0.11 seconds in the Jamaican Olympic trials.

A shocker? Well, that's for the world to decide. One thing for sure, however, is that the calculus for the London Olympics has changed dramatically.

"Nine-point-seven-five, it's awesome," Blake said. "I won the world championship, so I've got that. Now, I'm the national champion for Jamaica, so I've got that. And now, I go into the Olympics like this."

Blake is, indeed, the reigning world champion, but that victory came with an asterisk because Bolt, the reigning Olympic champion, didn't run that night in South Korea after being disqualified for a false start.

This was their first rematch, their first

real race since then between the training partners. Bolt was considered the favorite, not only because of his world record - 9.58 seconds - but because Blake had never run faster than 9.82 in his life.

Well, now, he has.

The 9.75 seconds on a calm night in Kingston goes down as the best time in the world this year and also breaks the four-year-old National Stadium record; both previous marks were 9.76 - both held by Bolt. Only Bolt, Asafa Powell and Tyson Gay have ever run faster.

As much as the numbers, though, it was all that daylight between Blake and Bolt at the finish line that told this story. Blake got ahead early and, for a while, looked to have more of a tussle on his hands with Powell, who finished third, than with Bolt. As he always does, Bolt rallied at the end, leaning at the line - to make sure he held onto second.

"No pressure at all," he said.

- Sporting News

Usain Bolt lost to Yohan Blake in the finals of the

Richards-Ross sets US trials 200m pace

EUGENE, Oregon, June 29 (Reuters): Sanya Richards-Ross sprinted to the year's second fastest time as she won her women's 200 metres semi-final at the U.S. Olympic athletics trials on Friday.

"I knew I had to run fast," the former 400 metres world champion told reporters after clocking 22.15 seconds to lead Allyson Felix, Jeneba Tarmoh, Tianna Madison and Carmelita Jeter into Saturday's final.

"I just wanted to execute well and get a good lane for the final," added Richards-Ross, who has already made the U.S. team for next month's London Games by winning the 400 metres.

Only her own 22.09 is faster this year.

Twice Olympic silver medallist Felix and Tarmoh, who are awaiting the resolution of their tie for third place in the 100, almost shared times again in the 200.

Felix won the third semi-final in 22.297 after Tarmoh had run a wind-assisted 22.298 in the first semi.

"Feeling good," said Felix as she was shepherded away from the track by coach Bob Kersee.

The pair should decide by late Saturday whether to hold a runoff or coin flip to decide which of them will compete in the even in London.

Madison finished behind Tarmoh in 22.33 with world 100 champion Jeter grabbed the last qualifying spot in 22.64.

Jeter won the 100 earlier in the trials with Madison second.

In a depleted men's 200, world medallist Wallace Spearmon led qualifying with a quick but wind-assisted 20.17 seconds.

"I didn't want to run that hard in the first round, but you have to do what you can to make the team," said Spearmon, who was qualified for a lane violation after finishing third in the 2008 Olympics.



Lochte looks good in semis

OMAHA: Ryan Lochte came out on top in another semifinal tussle with Michael Phelps on Friday at the US Olympic swimming trials as he set himself up for a tilt at a 200m backstroke-medley double.

Lochte settled for bronze in the 200m medley at the Beijing Olympics behind Phelps and Hungary's Laszlo Cseh, then eclipsed Phelps -- and his world record -- at the World Championships in Shanghai last year. He signalled his intentions for the final with a victory over Phelps in the first semifinal in 1min 55.51sec -- the fastest time in the world this year. Phelps was second, and second-fastest overall into the final, in 1:56.66.

The clash was part of a busy night for Lochte, who led the way into the final of the 200m backstroke in 1:55.73. "I knew he kind of took off, so I was like I probably should save something for tomorrow," Phelps said. "I kind of shut it down once

the race was kind of over." So far this week, Phelps and Lochte are 1-1 in finals as the trials offered a glimpse of a rivalry that will be on display at the London Aquatics Centre.

As always, the duel between the superstars drew the spotlight on a night when three finals decided six spots on the team for London. Nathan Adrian won the 100m freestyle in 48.10sec with Cullen Jones second in 48.46. Adrian's time made him the fourth-fastest swimmer in the world this year in the prestige freestyle sprint, although the time was a second slower than the 47.10 that's been posted by world leader Australian James Magnussen. Jason Lezak, hero of the US 4x100m free relay team in Beijing, finished sixth, which should be enough to give him a trip to London as part of the relay pool.

- Times of India



Oscar Pistorius fails to qualify for Olympic 400m

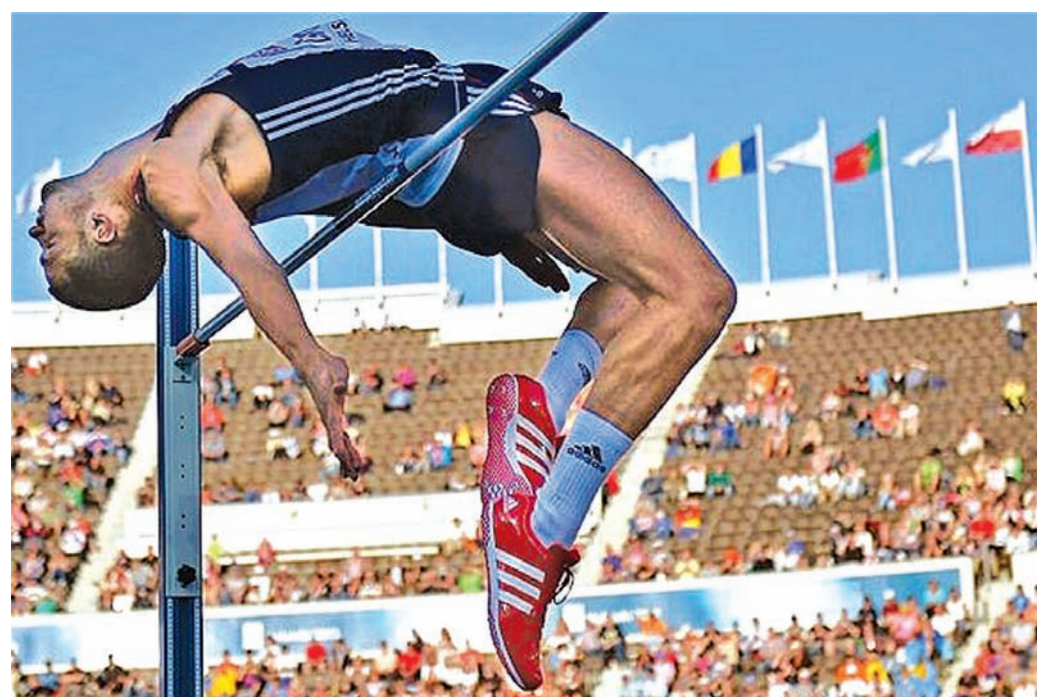
The Olympic Games has lost one of its biggest names. Oscar Pistorius, the double amputee from South Africa, has failed to make the South African 400m team. Pistorius has spent the past few weeks travelling the world, across Europe, the USA and Africa, trying to run an "A" standard of 45.30sec. He had his last chance at the African championships in Benin on Friday, but he could only clock 45.52sec. That was good enough to win him a silver medal, but not to fulfil the selectors' stringent criteria.

Pistorius could still make the South African 4x400m relay team, but even that cannot be taken for granted. He was controversially dropped from the quartet after he helped them to set a national record in the heats

of the 2011 world championships, and he has suggested that certain figures within the administration hold a grudge against him.

Pistorius holds one "A" standard, set in a domestic competition, but the selectors stipulated that he would need to add another to make the grade.

The Games will be poorer for his absence. He was gracious about his failure to qualify, saying: "I had felt very strong coming into this competition as my fitness and speed has been continually improving. I was in good shape to set the time and believe my speed will only increase over the next few weeks." He still has three titles to defend at the Paralympics, and he says they will now be his "big focus", along with the relay.



Robbie Grabarz reaches gold standard in high jump at European Championship

A bold prediction, perhaps, but one that has to be taken seriously after the 24 year-old continued his remarkable rise from Lottery funding reject to world-class athlete by winning his first international title at the European Championships on Friday night.

He won it on a comeback from Lithuania's Raivydas Stanys after both cleared 2.28 metres but Ahmed was so confident Grabarz would

win gold that he had the Union flag ready for his lap of honour as Stanys failed with his third attempt at 2.31m.

His victory was one of two golds for Britain in Helsinki's Olympic Stadium as Rhys Williams, the son of Welsh rugby union great JJ Williams, triumphed in the 400m hurdles in 49.33sec -- a performance that should secure his ticket to London 2012 as his time

was 0.17sec inside the Olympic A qualifying standard.

Scottish 800m runner Lynsey Sharp completed Britain's best night of the championships with a brilliant surge of pace in the final straight to take silver, though her time of 2min 05.2sec, a personal best, was agonisingly outside the 1min 59.90sec she needed to seal Olympic selection. - The Telegraph

Robbie Grabarz took gold on comeback after clearing 2.28m along with his Lithuanian opponent