

London 2012 Olympics

12 days more



Hands up: Great Britain's Dai Greene (right) congratulates Puerto Rico's Javier Culson after he won the 400m Hurdles at Crystal Palace.

Greene puts on fighting face despite defeat to Culson

You can see why Dai Greene was made captain of Britain's track and field team. At a verbal pace faster even than his 400 metres hurdle running he turns defeat into a likely victory, switching the heat to the formidable Puerto Rican who beat him here at Crystal Palace.

Javier Culson, who was among Greene's victims at last year's World Championships in Daegu, is unbeaten this term and resisted the GB captain's finishing kick at this London Diamond League meeting with a winning time of 47.78sec, which equalled his season's best. Greene ran 48.10 in second ahead of Angelo Taylor and Britain's Jack

Green after Bershawn Jackson had been disqualified in lane eight for a false start.

This close to the Games you see athletes chipping away at one another on and off the track. The form book suggests Greene's full recovery from a winter knee operation may not come soon enough for him to break Culson's hold on the division.

But the combative streak that prompted Charles van Commenee to award him the captain's role was apparent as Greene heaped pressure on the lanky, diamond encrusted Culson, who will join him in one of the great face-offs of the London athletics programme. "Three rounds in four days is very

different to a one-off race," Greene said. "Running in the Diamond League races is very different to the one-off events. He [Culson] is one of the most prominent sportsmen in his country and there's going to be a lot of weight on his shoulders, even though he's not in a home Olympics." That's the spirit. Expectation will bear far more heavily on the darling of Welsh athletics than an athlete from Puerto Rico, but you can tell Culson fears his rival's tenacity and talent for peaking when he needs to.

Not that Greene sees it as a two-horse race. He said: "Angelo Taylor made a few mistakes at the US Trials but I certainly wouldn't rule him out.



Missy Franklin will use Games to propel legendary career

Missy Franklin qualified for seven different events in this year's Summer Olympics. She will take part in four individual contests and three team-based relays in London.

That's not even the kicker. Franklin is just 17 years old. She's the newest athletic prodigy, whether you pay attention to swimming or not.

Franklin's rise to dominance on the American circuit just has that feel to it. She enjoyed unbridled success at the U.S. Olympic Trials, and she enters London's games on a full head of steam.

Franklin's astounding story doesn't just factor in her age. It's her age plus her plethora of talent. She just broke Natalie Coughlin's 100-meter backstroke record in Omaha, and there's no higher standard in women's American swimming than the 11-time Olympic medalist.

She hasn't necessarily come out of nowhere.

She's had some success at the World Aquatics Championships, but the Olympics are a different animal. The entire world's gaze rests on you in London. Can anyone even tell me when the World Aquatics Championships are? It's nothing against the event, but I bet not.

Given her performance so far, it's hard to believe that Franklin will go "belly up" in the face of competition. She's already beaten the titans of women's American swimming, and that's an accomplishment unto itself.

I don't expect Franklin to make a Michael Phelps-like rise at this year's Olympic games, but I expect the arc of her career to be very obvious. When the festivities are over, no one will have any doubt who the next great swimmer is.

Franklin only has complete influence over four of her seven events. She can't make her relay teammates swim faster, but she can hold up her leg of the race.



Down and out: Asafa Powell injured his groin at the Jamaican trials.

Asafa Powell pulls out of Crystal Palace race with groin injury

Asafa Powell is certain he will be fit for the Olympic Games despite pulling out of the Diamond League meeting in London to rest a groin injury. The former world record holder was due to compete against American Tyson Gay and a host of British athletes in the 100 metres at the meeting on Friday but cancelled his appearance as a precaution to save himself for the Games.

Two weeks ago, Powell had to be helped off the track after finishing third behind world champion Yohan Blake and world record holder Usain Bolt at the Jamaican Olympic trials.

His omission from the Aviva London Grand Prix will give Powell's supporters a worrying flashback to last year when the

29-year-old missed the event before withdrawing from the world championships in Daegu. "I need to ensure I'm ready for the Games and cannot take any risks. I will be ready in August," said the former 100m world record holder.

"I've been carrying some soreness in my groin since the Olympic trials and have been unable to train at 100 per cent."

Powell is the fourth fastest man in the world this year behind compatriots Yohan Blake and Usain Bolt, and American Justin Gatlin. He has run under 10 seconds more than 80 times in his career, but has never won an individual gold at a major international championship, finishing fifth in the Olympic 100m final in both Athens and Beijing.



Power ranking biggest threats to Team USA basketball

The 2012 USA Men's Olympic basketball team is one of the most stacked rosters the country has ever put together. There have been plenty of arguments on whether this group of players could potentially beat the 1992 Dream Team who destroyed their opponents on the way to a gold medal at the Barcelona Games.

However, instead of a purely hypothetical matchup against a team of Hall of Famers, Team USA actually has to get through a number of top-flight international squads before they can even say they are the best team on the planet at this instance.

Tyson Gay races to 100 win in London prelude



U.S. track and field star Tyson Gay battled inclement weather and a slow start to win first place against a strong field - minus Jamaican Asafa Powell - in the Diamond League in London on July 13.

Gay's winning time of 10.03 seconds wouldn't normally be considered anything to shout about, but considering the conditions outside in London, he performed admirably. U.S. sprinter Ryan Bailey came in second place, posting a time of 10.09, and Jamaica's Nesta Carter came in third with a time of 10.13. Gay's time of 10.03 was the fastest time of the day, too, and nobody cracked the 10-second barrier in the foul conditions at Crystal Palace.

As I mentioned, Asafa Powell didn't compete. He told MailScanner has detected a possible fraud attempt from "www.bbc.co.uk" claiming to be BBC.com: I need to ensure I'm ready for the Games and cannot take any risks. I will be ready in August. I've been carrying some soreness in my groin since the Olympic trials and have been unable to train 100 p.c. This is a tense time for all the athletes, as they prepare their bodies and minds for the Summer Olympic Games. They have to walk a tightrope between over-training and under-training themselves leading up to the grueling test that's coming in a few weeks. Gay is fortunate to be heading into London healthy, and his win will surely give him the confidence that is so crucial to performing at the top of his game.

Final preparations under way as first fully 'dressed' Olympic venue unveiled



Water Polo Arena: New images show how the venue will look during the Games.

With just two weeks to go until the Olympic Opening Ceremony, London 2012 has revealed the 'Look of the Games' at the Water Polo Arena on the Olympic Park.

In total, the London 2012 Organising Committee (LOCOG) will dress 32 sporting venues and 61 non-competition venues across the UK, with a specific design system and colour scheme for each venue.

Vibrant colours have been selected to complement the venues and sport - including purple for the Olympic Stadium, blues for water-based sports and oranges and magenta for indoor and contact sports, such as Weightlifting and Boxing.

The designs extend across every aspect of the Games, from spectator arrival into Heathrow all the way through to the colours and designs of seats in the venues.

They have been applied to over 250,000

individual designs, from tickets and medals to street dressing and gardening guides. 'Stunning backdrop'

Local authorities across the UK are also using the London 2012 look in cities, towns and villages. A wide range of materials have been made available, from banners to bunting and floral displays, all of which were procured in line with LOCOG's Sustainable Sourcing Code

LOCOG Director of Brand, Marketing & Culture Greg Nugent said: 'Over the last few years we have worked really hard to make sure that we dress up, as a nation, and celebrate the Games.'

'We now have what must be the world's biggest set of Rings in Richmond Park, banners and bunting in Glasgow and now we turn to finishing the job with our venues.'

We look forward to creating a stunning backdrop for the world's greatest athletes.'