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FENCING FRENZY

CLOUVEL GETS THE CROWD CHEERING IN MODERN PENTATHLON

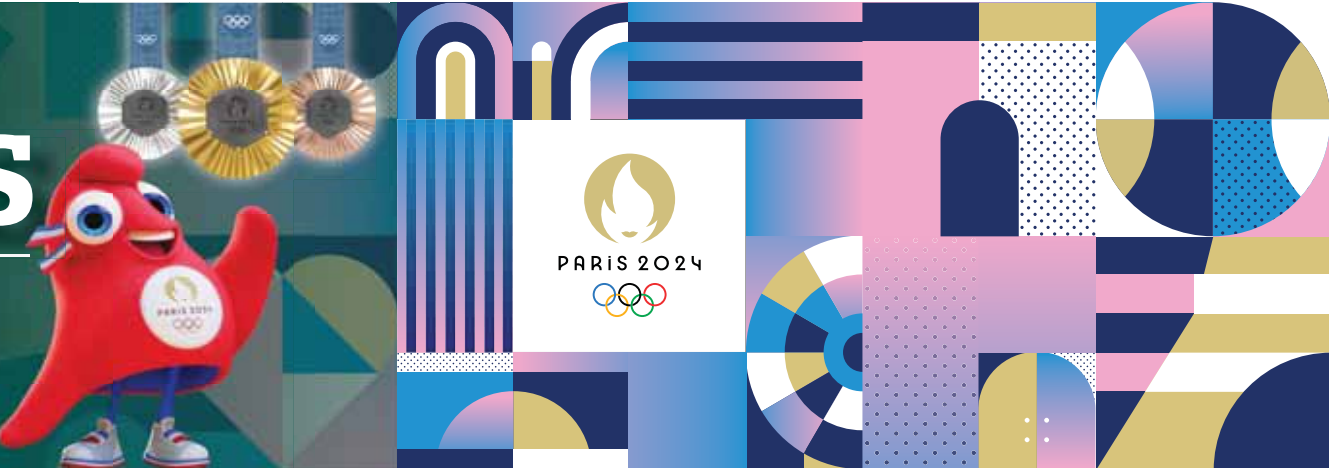
The fencing ranking round of the Modern Pentathlon might normally be a contender for lowest profile event of the Olympics but a sizeable Paris crowd produced plenty of noise. French medal contender Elodie Clouvel had them stomping and cheering as she led the women's competition at the North Paris Arena, a cavernous exhibition centre out on the fringes near Charles de Gaulle airport. She registered 27 wins and eight defeats from her one-to-one bouts to end up with 260 points. Hungarian Michelle Guljas was second, on 245, with Britain's defending champion Kate French third on 240.

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GULF TIMES
SPORT



SHEIKH JOAAN ATTENDS FIFA RECEPTION AT PARIS OLYMPICS

Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) President HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani attended the FIFA reception held at the FIFA House in Paris yesterday on the sidelines of the 2024 Olympic Games. QOC Secretary-General and Qatar Football Association President Jassim al-Buenain also attended the reception along with members of the FIFA Council and the International Olympic Committee. The FIFA House included a section highlighting the successes of the last edition of the World Cup hosted by Qatar in 2022, highlighting the significant positive impact of this event on world football. This occasion was an opportunity for Qatar to confirm its commitment to continuing to achieve the legacy of the first World Cup to be held in the Middle East and the Arab world. This achievement paved the way for making the region an active partner in the growth and development of football at the regional and international levels, and enhancing the role of sport in promoting understanding and co-operation between peoples. This success also contributed to building confidence in the ability of the countries of the region to host one of the largest sporting events in the world in the future.



BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Younousse and Tijan lose in semis, to fight for bronze

World No. 1 pair Ahman and Hellvig too good for Qatari pair

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Qatar's Cherif Younousse and Ahmed Tijan went down to Sweden's David Ahman and Jonatan Hellvig 13-21, 17-21 in the semi-finals of the beach volleyball at the Paris Olympic Games yesterday. The 13th seeds will now take on defending champions Anders Mol and Christian Sorum of Norway in the bronze medal match tomorrow at 9pm. Younousse and Tijan had won bronze at the Tokyo Olympics three years ago. World No. 1 pair Ahman and Hellvig were in supreme form as they secured Sweden's first-ever Olympic medal in beach volleyball and handed out Younousse and Tijan's first defeat in six matches played in Paris.

With Ahman spearheading the Swedish attack and Hellvig chipping in a couple of kill blocks, the duo mercilessly hammered out an emphatic first set win in a quite one-sided contest. Younousse and Tijan fought back in the second set, scoring five points in a row and broke away with an 8-4 lead.

They kept in front until 11-8, when Ahman and Hellvig took their turn in scoring a five-point run to regain the lead. The Qatari team caught up momentarily at 13-13, but that was the last time the score was level. The Swedes broke away again and cruised on to a 21-17 close, crowned by a monster block from Hellvig for the match winner.

The Swedish blocker finished with five stuffs and an ace towards a 16-point match high. Ahman added 14 kills in attack. Cherif and Ahmed scored 12 points apiece.

"I think we had a really good match," Ahman said. "We played really, really solid in our side-out, we believed in our game and really went for it every chance we had. I think it was really strong to come back from being down in the second set and how we managed to come back and win in straight sets."

"I can't really believe it, but we're in the



Ahmed Tijan (right) of Qatar and Jonatan Hellvig of Sweden in action during the beach volleyball semi-final during the Paris Olympics at the Eiffel Tower Stadium yesterday. (Reuters)



Qatar's Cherif Younousse (right) speaks to Sweden's David Ahman after the match.

final. It will take some time to realise that we made it," added Hellvig. "If someone told us a few years ago that we would be in a final, I don't think anyone would believe that. We

have done it. It has been an incredible journey over the last few years and now we're super proud that we made it to the final."

Earlier, in the first semi-final, Mol and Sorum were knocked out by Germany's Nils Ehlers and Clemens Wickler 13-21, 21-17, 13-15. Ehlers, who stands at 6 feet 11 inches (2.11 metres), used his height and reach to great effect as Germany took the first set.

But to the delight of their fans, some wearing Viking helmets, the Norwegian pair battled back to square the match. After a tight decider, a dramatic review challenge over a net fault ruled in favour of the German pair.

The winners collapsed on the sand, with the stands shaking to the sound of thunderous stamping. After the match a visibly emotional Ehlers said he had "goosebumps and tears in my eyes."

"I almost have no words. We can go for gold. It's incredible."

ATHLETICS

Qatar's Samba eyes medal in 400m hurdles

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Qatar's Abderrahman Samba will carry the big hopes of providing the nation with a first medal at the Paris Olympics today when he competes in the men's 400m hurdles final at Stade de France at 10.45pm Doha Time.

The two-time Asian Games champion and 2019 World Championships bronze medallist has been confident throughout of not just qualifying for the final but also winning a medal. Samba had finished fifth at the Tokyo Olympics three years ago.

In the semi-final, Samba appeared to have clipped one of the hurdles which slowed him down a bit but he held on to qualifying for the final as one of the two fastest finishers, clocking 48.20 secs.

The 28-year-old has had a season's best time of 47.97secs and a personal best of 46.98secs. He would surely need to push more on

that to make his dream of maiden Olympic podium come true.

But Samba has been focused. "Good preparation for the semi-final is crucial to achieve my goal of winning a medal. I hope to achieve the desired goal," he had said prior to the semis.

Samba will be facing a fearsome field which includes world record-holder Karsten Warholm - in a fight to retain his title as he goes up against Rai Benjamin, the Tokyo silver medallist who sits second on the world all-time list, and 2022 world champion Alison dos Santos, who claimed bronze in Tokyo and is third fastest in history.

Benjamin is the world leader following the 46.46 he registered at the US trials, ahead of Dos Santos, who set his fastest time of the year so far of 46.63 when beating Warholm with 46.70 in Oslo.

Between them they have the 17 fastest performances of all time and 24 of the top 25. Warholm had set a world record of 45.94 in Tokyo and would seek an encore.



In the semi-final, Samba clocked 48.20 secs to qualify for the final as one of the two fastest finishers.

QATAR STARS LEAGUE

We have to compete for titles, says Al Rayyan coach

AL RAYYAN, WHO FINISHED SECOND LAST SEASON, READY FOR OPENER AGAINST UMM SALAL

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Football giants Al Rayyan will be looking to go one better than last season. The eight-time champions launch the new Qatar Stars League (QSL) season with a clash against Umm Salal today.

New Al Rayyan coach Poya Asbaghi yesterday assured club fans the team would be aiming for title glories.

Last season Al Rayyan finished second behind champions Al Sadd in the QSL standings.

Their last title glory came in the 2014-15 season.

In an astonishing run of play, Al Rayyan sealed the QSL title honours with five rounds to spare in the 2015-16 season. It was Al Rayyan's first title win since the 1994-95 season.

"The challenge of coaching Al Rayyan is exciting as it is the biggest team in Qatar and I believe that Al Rayyan's goal is to develop further, and this season we have to compete for titles," Asbaghi said yesterday during a pre-match news conference.

"I am happy to be here and the team needs to work hard and develop constantly, and the important thing for us is to always be better, so if we do this we can achieve our goals," he added.

Asbaghi, who has been roped in by Al Rayyan for just one season,



Al Rayyan coach Poya Asbaghi addresses a press conference along with Brazilian forward Roger Guedes in Doha yesterday. **Right:** Umm Salal coach Patrice Carteron addresses a news conference.



"Let us hope that this season we have the same quality to achieve that. Of course, we have a lot of respect for the competitor and we know that Al Rayyan are bigger than us, but in football nothing is guaranteed, we will do our best to get the best possible result," Carteron added.

Umm Salal player Antonio Mansi said: "I am very happy to play for The Orange Fortress and even happier with the welcome and celebration I received from everyone. I hope to do the best and make the club's fans happy."

He added: "The Netherlands camp was positive and we had good and strong training and I was happy with the camp and the spirit that prevailed in it."

The match will be played at Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium, the home venue of Al Rayyan.

FIXTURES
09/08/24 6:30: Al Rayyan vs Umm Salal at Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium
09/08/24 8:30: Al Khor vs Al Gharafa at Al Bayt Stadium

10/08/24 6:30: Qatar SC vs Al Duhail at Khalifa Stadium
10/08/24 8:30: Al Shamal Vs Al Sadd at Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium

11/08/24 6:30: Al Wakrah Vs Al Ahli at Al Janoub Stadium
11/08/24 8:30: Al Shahania Vs Al Arabi at Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium

DIVING

China's Xie successfully defends springboard title

Reuters
Paris

China's Xie Siyi successfully defended his gold medal in the three-metre springboard diving at the Paris Olympics yesterday after taking two years out of the sport since he claimed top honours in Tokyo.

Teammate Wang Zongyuan took silver while Mexico's Osmar Olvera got the bronze medal.

Xie, 28, finished on 543.60 points after delivering six near-perfect dives in Paris' most competitive diving event yet, keeping alive China's bid for a clean sweep of diving golds at the Games, with two more events to come.

"I feel really thrilled," Xie told reporters after the victory ceremony. "I rested for nearly two years since Tokyo and only came back last year. It has been really challenging for me."

Wang, 22, who has reigned in the event in all major global competitions in the last couple years as Xie was on the sidelines, lost points on a less than satisfactory fifth dive, but delivered the highest points in the final with 102.60 points in his last dive to take second place.

"Indeed I made a mistake. It was more my problem not pressure from the competitors," Wang, who secured 530.20 points, said after also repeating his result from Tokyo in 2021. "I was thinking too much



FROM LEFT: Silver medallist China's Wang Zongyuan, gold medallist China's Xie Siyi and bronze medallist Mexico's Osmar Olvera Ibarra stand on the podium after the men's 3m springboard diving final during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the Aquatics Centre in Saint-Denis, north of Paris, yesterday. (AFP)

about how to perform my best that I became uptight in fifth dive," Wang said. "When I knew the gap (between me and Xie) before the last dive, my mind was completely relaxed. I never felt so calm. Of course it's a shame but this is the charm of competitive sports. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. I'll just have to work

harder to be better in the next four years," he added. Xie and Wang are the only divers who managed to achieve over 100 points in a single dive yesterday. Xie scored 100.70 points in his last dive to secure his top spot. Olvera, 20, who won silver in the synchronised event, wowed the spectators with smooth execution and perfect entries in his last two dives, but he was not able to

close the gap after a problematic third dive. Still, the Mexican received the loudest cheers from the crowd, having emerged as China's biggest challenger in his second Olympics and garnering a total of 500.40 points.

"I achieved my goal," Olvera said. "I knew if I wanted to win a medal I needed to achieve 500 points and I've managed to do so." "I'm very happy," he said.

Swedish swimmer out of marathon in River Seine

PARIS: Swedish marathon swimmer Victor Johansson has pulled out of the Olympic men's 10km event scheduled for today citing concerns about the water quality of the Seine river, Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* reported. Both Paris 2024 organisers and World Aquatics guaranteed the water quality met the thresholds set by the sport's governing body. Johansson told the paper triathletes had fallen sick after swimming in the urban river during the Olympic competition, without naming any. "There is a lot of information that has been flying around, but what we know for sure is that people have become ill," the paper quoted him as saying. "So even though the levels (of E.coli bacteria) have gone down, it didn't feel good to start. The triathletes were in the Seine for about 20 minutes, and despite the short time, some got sick," Johansson added. "Paris 2024, together with World Aquatics, has put in place a rigorous water quality monitoring process," Games

organisers said in a statement to Reuters. "Today's results were considered 'very good' according to the World Aquatics thresholds for E.coli and Enterococci on all four testing points across the marathon swimming course." World Aquatics in a statement added: "The men's marathon swim will only take place after analysis of the latest water quality readings overnight. "We are very confident that the water quality will remain very good and that the race will be able to go ahead." Swedish media reported that the nation's triathlete Tilda Mansson fell sick and was vomiting a few days after competing in the women's event on July 31, though the team did not confirm there was a connection with the Seine water. The Netherlands' Sharon van Rouwendaal won the women's 10km event earlier yesterday, saying she had swallowed some of the Seine water during her swim but was fine about an hour after the race. The women's event went ahead as scheduled after organisers said the water quality had met acceptable thresholds.



Athletes dive into the Seine river at the start of the women's 10km marathon swimming final at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at Pont Alexandre III bridge in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

CYCLING

French joy as Thomas shows grace under pressure for omnium gold



France's Benjamin Thomas competes in the men's track cycling omnium points race of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines National Velodrome yesterday. (AFP)

There is never a good time to fall off your bike but 23 laps from the end of an Olympic omnium points race decider with a gold medal on the line looked like being curtains for Frenchman Benjamin Thomas at the National Velodrome yesterday.

Instead, the 28-year-old picked himself up, checked that he and his machine were still intact, and then rode a wave of noise to the finishing line for a sensational victory.

Thomas, twice world champion in the multi-event discipline which of-

fers the ultimate test of stamina and strategy, edged out Portugal's Iuri Leitao to deliver France's first track cycling medal of the Games.

"That was crazy race today. I don't believe the medal is around my neck," Thomas, who finished an agonising fourth in Tokyo three years ago said after shedding tears on the podium.

Shortly before Thomas's victory ride almost took the roof off the velodrome, Ellesse Andrews earned New Zealand's first track cycling gold for 20 years and only second ever as she beat

a high-quality field to win the women's keirin.

Andrews, the world champion in the event initially paced by an electric motorcycle before a three-lap thrash to the line, dominated the final, holding off Britain's Emma Finucane around the last lap to win comfortably.

Finucane, who had been tipped for a second gold after winning the team sprint, ended up in third place behind Dutch rider Hetty van de Wouw.

Netherlands' powerhouse Harrie Lavreysen continued his march towards what looks like a certain gold

in the men's sprints as he cruised into Friday's semi-finals.

There was some good fortune for Britain's Jack Carlin as he was spared elimination in the quarter-finals when Japan's Kaiya Ota appeared to have taken a 2-0 lead in the best-of-three heat but was relegated after the judged deemed he had made dangerous move. Carlin, a bronze medallist in Tokyo, then won the decider.

The Briton will have to find a way of beating reigning champion Lavreysen though today if he is to keep alive his hopes of a first Olympic gold medal.

HOCKEY

Netherlands clinch gold over Germany in shoot-out thriller

CAPTAIN HARMANPREET DOUBLE TAKES INDIA TO BRONZE



Netherlands' players pose on the podium with their gold medals during the Olympic Games at the Yves-du-Manoir Stadium in Colombes yesterday. (AFP)

AFP
Paris

The Netherlands beat Germany in a shoot-out to win the men's Olympic hockey gold yesterday, breaking a 24-year drought in what they hope will be the first of a Dutch double.

A tense game ended all square at 1-1, with fourth-quarter goals in quick succession from Dutch captain Thierry Brinkman and Germany's Thies Prinz. The match went to a shoot-out, with each player going one-on-one with the goalkeeper. The first two efforts for each side were saved before Brinkman put the Dutch 1-0 up. Dutch keeper Pirmin Blaak then saved again from Prinz, giving the Netherlands the edge over their bitter rivals.

This van Dam and Justus Weigand both netted for the Netherlands, leaving Duco Telgenkamp with the chance to win the match.

The 22-year-old nonchalantly scooped the ball beyond Jean-Paul Danneberg in the German goal to give the Dutch their first gold medal in the men's competition since 2000. The Netherlands face China in the women's final today. The Germans and the Dutch share a lengthy rivalry as two of the great



Netherlands' goalkeeper Pirmin Blaak and India's goalkeeper Sreejesh Parattu Raveendran celebrate with their medals yesterday. (AFP)

powerhouses of world hockey.

Germany, the reigning world champions, came into the match with the confidence of knowing they had edged the pool game between the sides 1-0.

They also had history on their side having won all four of their previous Olympic finals including against the Dutch in London in 2012. For their part, the Dutch team were keen to bounce back from what was seen as a disastrous campaign in Tokyo, which saw them finish sixth – their worst result since 1984. The first half was played at a furious pace as both

sides looked for a way through the tightly organised defences.

That made for just four shots at goal, three of them falling to Germany, who also had the only penalty corner which Tom Grambusch was unable to convert. It was the Germans, under the watchful eye of Chancellor Olaf Scholz in the stands, who dominated possession with 62 percent over the first 30 minutes. The Dutch, cheered on by another vast army of orange-clad supporters, began to assert themselves as the game moved into the third quarter. They made their dominance count in

the opening minute of the fourth quarter.

Koen Bijen flicked the ball across goal for Brinkman to stab home on the volley from close range. Shortly after, Gonzalo Peillat – an Olympic champion with Argentina in 2016 – hooked brilliantly off the German line as Bijen's flick appeared to be heading in. Immediately the Germans were up the other end, forcing a penalty corner which Prinz, on his second attempt, slammed past Blaak.

Johannes Grosse came close to a winner two minutes from time with Blaak again making a good stop and the Dutch then failed to capitalise on a penalty corner – their only one of the game – in the final minute, sending the game into a dramatic shoot-out.

Earlier Eight-time champions India came from behind to collect their 13th hockey medal with a hard-fought 2-1 win over Spain in the bronze medal match.

Harmanpreet Singh scored from two penalty corners after Marc Miralles had given Spain the lead at the Yves du Manoir Stadium in Colombes, northwest of Paris. It is India's fourth bronze medal, and second in succession following Tokyo, and adds to their eight golds, the last of which came in 1980, and one silver.

FOCUS

Morocco outclass Egypt to take men's football bronze

AFP
Nantes, France

Morocco claimed the bronze medal in the Olympic men's soccer tournament with a crushing 6-0 win over Egypt thanks to Soufiane Rahimi's double and goals from Abde Ezzalzouli, Bilal El Khannouss, Akram Nakach and Achraf Hakimi in Nantes yesterday.

Morocco, who lost 2-1 to Spain in the semi-finals, bounced back with the biggest win of the tournament so far to reach an Olympic podium for the first time. The bronze is also the country's first medal in a team sport.

"We had to earn our victory, it wasn't easy. It's important to get failures first and learn from mistakes and we were able to come back stronger," Morocco manager Tarik Sektioui told reporters.

"It was not easy, we had very tough matches. Players were aware of their responsibility and played with a lot of pride."

Egypt suffered their first regular time defeat of the tournament but despite the drubbing equalled their best result at the Olympics with a fourth place finish as in 1928 and 1964.

Ezzalzouli opened the scoring with a superb shot into the top corner after 23 minutes, before tournament top scorer Rahimi doubled the lead three minutes later with a fine header from Ezzalzouli's cross.

El Khannouss got on the scoresheet six minutes into the second half with a great low finish after a solo run off Ezzal-

zouli's second assist and Rahimi netted his eighth Olympic goal to make it 4-0.

The 28-year-old Rahimi became the first player to score in six consecutive Olympic games, while his scoring record is the best since 2004 when Argentina's Carlos Tevez also had eight.

Defender Nakach tapped in from Rahimi's pass and captain Hakimi completed the rout with a terrific free kick three minutes from time.

"We are proud of winning this medal, we worked very hard and sacrificed a lot," Hakimi said.

"We wanted the gold, unfortunately we didn't make it to the final but we showed character and we were able to win an historic medal for Morocco."

"As captain, I would like to thank our fans that were here and in Morocco."

The podium finish was key for Morocco to confirm their rise in football, coach Sektioui said, after the country reached the 2022 World Cup semi-finals and finished fourth after knocking out heavyweights Spain and Portugal in the knockout rounds.

"It shows Moroccan football is in a good path and we are making good progress. We had to succeed after the World Cup we had," he said. Hakimi added that it was not only Morocco that was growing in world football, but the whole continent.

"We had opened a lot of doors not only in our country but for African football," Hakimi, 25, added. "Today there were two African countries fighting for a third and fourth place. Everyone saw the quality we have."



Morocco's forward Soufiane Rahimi celebrates scoring his team's third goal in the bronze medal football match against Egypt during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the La Beaujoire Stadium in Nantes yesterday. (AFP)

Uzbekistan's Rashitov retains featherweight title in Paris

Uzbekistan's Ulugbek Rashitov retained his men's Olympic taekwondo featherweight (-68kg) title yesterday, beating Jordan's Zaid Kareem to the gold medal.

Rashitov defeated Kareem in two rounds, scoring 5-4 3-1, securing the first round win with a stunning turning kick to the head that earned five points. The Uzbek fighter gained his second gold medal after claiming his first in Tokyo three years ago when he made history by becoming his country's first Olympic taekwondo champion. Brazil's Edival Pontes and China's Liang Yushuai won the bronze medals.

Rashitov dominated the contest in the Grand Palais, beating all opponents in round-of-16, quarter-finals and semi-finals by scoring wins in the first two rounds of each match. Taekwondo matches at the Paris Olympics are decided over a maximum of three rounds. Rashitov delivered a humbling 2-1 9-2 defeat to China's former

world champion Liang Yushuai on his way to the final. The Chinese fighter did not manage a single kick during the match. Loud cheers from the home fans were not enough for the host country's hopeful Souleyman Alaphilippe and the Frenchman bowed out to Spain's Javier Perez Polo in the quarter-finals. Kareem strengthened Jordan's Olympic position in taekwondo, which had already brought the country two Olympic medals – gold at Rio 2016 and silver in Tokyo.

South Korea's Kim wins women's featherweight gold

South Korea's Kim Yu-jin won the Olympic gold medal in the women's taekwondo featherweight division (under-57kg) by beating Iran's Nahid Kiyanchandeh who claimed silver yesterday. Kim defeated Kiyanchandeh in two rounds, scoring 5-1 9-0. Bulgaria's Alizadeh Kimia and Canada's Skylar Park won the bronze medals.



Silver medallist Jordan's Zaid Kareem (left), gold medallist Uzbekistan's Ulugbek Rashitov and bronze medallists China's Liang Yushuai (second right) and Brazil's Edival Pontes (right) celebrate on the taekwondo men's -68kg podium in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

WRESTLING

Japan's Fujinami ambles to freestyle gold

Reuters
Paris

Japanese wrestling juggernaut Akari Fujinami extended her outrageous winning streak to claim the women's 53kg freestyle gold of the Paris Olympics at the Champ-de-Mars Arena yesterday.

The 20-year-old arrived in Paris with a 130-0 record and capped her campaign with ridiculous ease winning the gold medal contest against Ecuador's Lucia Yeppez Guzman by technical superiority.

In a totally lop-sided contest, Fujinami raced to 10 points while her opponent could not score any and the euphoric Japanese leapt into the lap of her father, also her coach, in her animated celebration.

"I don't pay too much attention to my record," Fujinami said. "I just want to become stronger."



Japan's Akari Fujinami celebrates with freestyle 53kg wrestling gold. (AFP)

To become an Olympic champion, I have worked so hard. "A lot of unfortunate incidents can happen on the Olympic stage but I had no fears. At the moment, I'm simply happy and overjoyed. I want to enjoy this medal and I'm going to eat a lot of yummy food."

Fujinami had the bout in the bag with a 6-0 lead in the first period and sealed win with a go-behind to maintain the longest winning

streak among active wrestlers. In the men's Greco-Roman section, in which holds below the waist are prohibited, Saeid Esmaili won the 67kg gold as Iran retained the title. Esmaili had edged out Tokyo champion Mohammedreza Geraei in a playoff to book his ticket to Paris and the 21-year-old offered a glimpse of his form with a 9-0 rout of Cuban Luis Orta to move on to the final.

Orta had moved up after winning the 60kg gold in Tokyo but had to settle for bronze in Paris. Esmaili had to fight for his 6-5 win against Parviz Nasibov in the gold medal bout though after the Ukrainian, who took silver, opened up a 3-0 lead in the first period.

The Iranian staged a brilliant comeback in the second period to draw level at 5-5 and then eked out a slender lead, which he fiercely defended in the final minute.

Bulgaria's Semen Novikov denied Iran a second Greco-Roman gold by winning the 87kg event with a 7-0 romp against Alireza Mohammadipiani, who took silver.

Novikov scored first on passivity and got a lift for two in the first period. He added two more early in the second and one for a step-out to surge far ahead.

Ukraine's Zhan Beleniuk, who won gold in Tokyo three years ago and silver in Rio 2016, won bronze before leaving his shoes on the mat signalling his retirement.

"For me, it's enough. It's a good time to retire," he said.

Carrington leads New Zealand to kayak gold

New Zealand's Lisa Carrington led her women's kayak four crew to the gold medal at the Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium yesterday, increasing her personal Olympic tally to six golds and one bronze with another stunning performance. Germany came in second and Hungary third but it was the Kiwis who were triumphant, with Carrington, her nation's most successful Olympian of all time, slapping the hull after they crossed the finish line in first place after a tough battle.



FROM LEFT: New Zealand's gold medallists Lisa Carrington, Alicia Hoskin, Olivia Brett and Tara Vaughan celebrate after the women's kayak four 500m final of the canoe sprint competition at Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium in Vaires-sur-Marne during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games yesterday. (AFP)

ATHLETICS

Tebogo denies Covid-hit Lyles for gold, ‘Super Syd’ roars to WR

‘IT MEANS A LOT TO THE AFRICAN CONTINENT’



Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone of the United States celebrates after setting a new world record to win the women's 400m hurdles gold at the Paris Olympic Games yesterday. (AFP)

AFP
Paris

Letsile Tebogo claimed a historic Olympic 200m title for Botswana yesterday as Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone produced a stunning performance to smash the world record in the women's 400m hurdles as she took gold.

Tebogo's superb run left Noah Lyles' hopes for three gold medals in tatters as he was forced to settle for bronze and then revealed he has Covid. McLaughlin-Levrone left Dutch rival Femke Bol in her wake and in bronze medal position as the American improved her own world record to 50.37sec and retained her title from Tokyo.

Three of the five finals on a mesmerising night at the Stade de France were claimed by Americans, but the fancied Lyles was not among them.

Grant Holloway won the 110m hurdles gold that had eluded him at the Tokyo Games three years ago, while Tara Davis-Woodhall won the women's long jump. There was another exceptional performance in the men's javelin as Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem threw an Olympic record of 92.97m for his country's first individual gold at a Summer Games.

All the pre-race talk about the men's 200m was about 100m champion Lyles emulating Usain Bolt's sprint doubles. But there was to be an upset as the 21-year-old Tebogo raced to victory in an African record of 19.47sec, taking him to fifth on the all-time list.

He also became the first African to win the Olympic 200m metres. American Kenny Bednarek collected silver in 19.62sec and Lyles faded but took bronze in 19.70sec.

"It means a lot to the African continent because now they see Africa as a sprinting home, so we just had to make sure that the message is loud and clear," said Tebogo. "It was really a beautiful race for me," he added. He had stopped training for a month after the death of his mother Seratiwa in May and the spikes he wore to win gold bear his late mother's date of birth. "It's basically me carrying her through every stride that I take inside the field."

Lyles, who was pictured in the warm-up area wearing a mask, admitted after the race he had tested positive for Covid, which he said had "definitely affected my performance". "But to be honest, I'm more proud of myself than anything," he added. "Coming out and getting the bronze medal with Covid."

Lyles said he was going to be "very honest and transparent with the coaches" over his potential participation in today's 4x100m relay final. "I'll let them make the decision. No matter what happens, this 4x100m team can handle everything... I know they can come out with a win, break as many records as they put their mind to."

There was much pre-Games hype over the head-to-head between McLaughlin-Levrone and Bol, but there was only one winner on the night. The American tracked Bol and hit the home

straight well ahead before streaking home for an outstanding victory that left the Dutchwoman in tears. McLaughlin-Levrone said Bol and silver medallist Anna Cockrell had "so much depth... and so you get nervous".

"But you channel those nerves into excitement and this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to run in an Olympics," She added: "There are always things you can improve. There's no such thing as a perfect race but the closer and closer we can get to 49 (seconds) I feel like we're inching there... It's just building up the capacity in your legs to get you there."

Bol said she had blown her chance. "All you want to do in an Olympic final is to put up your best race. I screwed it up," she said.

Nadeem produced his best performance when it mattered as the Pakistani dominated India's defending champion Neeraj Chopra for gold to win South Asian boasting rights. Nadeem unleashed his monster throw on his second attempt, Chopra only managing 89.45m, more than three metres behind.

Reigning world champion Katarina Johnson-Thompson led after the first day of the heptathlon. The Briton had amassed 4,055 points after clocking 13.40sec in the 100 hurdles, and bests of 1.92m in the high jump, 14.44m in the shot put and timing 23.44sec in the 200m.

Belgium's two-time defending Olympic champion Nafi Thiam was in second on 4,007pts and American Anna Hall in third. The seven-discipline event wraps up today.



Botswana's Letsile Tebogo crosses the finish line to win the men's 200m final. (AFP)

Sheikh Joaan meets IOC member



Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) President HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani met Samira Asghari, a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on the sidelines of the Paris Games yesterday. Asghari is actively promoting sports among Afghan women, having gone from refugee to international basketball player to the youngest member of the IOC.

FOCUS

Nadeem wins javelin gold in historic first for Pakistan

AFP
Paris

Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem won the Olympic men's javelin title in Paris yesterday, his country's first individual gold at a Summer Games.

Nadeem threw an Olympic record of 92.97 metres for victory, India's defending champion Neeraj Chopra taking silver with 89.45. Grenada's Anderson Peters claimed bronze with 88.54m. "When I threw the javelin, I got the feel of it leaving my hand and sensed it could be an Olympic record," said the 27-year-old Nadeem.

Nadeem, the 2022 Commonwealth champion who was fifth at the Tokyo Olympics and a silver medallist at last year's Budapest world championships, said the result was "very important for Pakistan because I have worked very hard over the years for this".

"My training and hard work have paid off. The rivalry with Chopra is there, no doubt," he added. "Like cricket, the javelin rivalry was present! People back home in Pakistan and India were eager to see us compete together."

Nadeem said he had big ambitions for throwing even further. "I was expecting to go even further and I am hoping to go even further," he said after his new

Olympic record beat his previous best by more than two metres. "I will try harder to even extend my personal best to over 95 metres."

Before Arshad's remarkable victory, Pakistan had never won an individual gold medal at the Olympics. All of Pakistan's previous three gold medals came in field hockey, with their team winning gold in 1960, 1968 and 1984.

Prior yesterday, only two Pakistan athletes had won individual medals of any colour – with a wrestling bronze in 1960 and a boxing bronze in 1988. Since the 1992 Barcelona Games, Pakistan has not won a medal of any kind.

Chopra was satisfied with his best throw, but not much else. "I'm not that happy with my performance today and also my technique and runway was not that good," he said. "Only one throw, the rest I fouled. That second throw I believed in myself to think I can also throw that far. But in javelin, if your run-up is not so good, you can't go very far."

Chopra admitted to not doing much throwing in training because of a groin injury. "The last two, three years were not so good. I'm always injured. I really tried hard, but I have to do some more work on my injury and technique. But I will work hard in the future. Today's competition was really great. Arshad threw really well. Congratulations to him and his country."



Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem poses after winning the javelin gold. (AFP)



Defending champion Neeraj Chopra of India had to settle for silver. (AFP)

MEDALS TALLY

TEAMS	G	S	B	T
1. United States	30	38	35	103
2. China	29	25	19	73
3. Australia	18	14	13	45
4. France	14	19	21	54
5. Great Britain	13	17	21	51
6. South Korea	13	8	7	28
7. Japan	13	7	13	33
8. Netherlands	11	6	8	25
9. Italy	10	11	9	30
10. Germany	9	8	5	22
11. Canada	6	5	10	21
12. New Zealand	5	6	2	13
13. Ireland	4	0	3	7
14. Romania	3	4	1	8
15. Ukraine	3	3	4	10
16. Hungary	3	3	3	9
17. Sweden	3	3	3	9
18. Uzbekistan	3	0	2	5
19. Brazil	2	5	8	15
20. Spain	2	3	8	13
21. Iran	2	2	2	6
22. Croatia	2	1	3	6
22. Cuba	2	1	3	6
24. Azerbaijan	2	1	1	4
25. Belgium	2	0	4	6
26. Hong Kong	2	0	2	4
26. Philippines	2	0	2	4
28. Indonesia	2	0	1	3
29. Serbia	2	0	0	2
30. Israel	1	4	1	6
31. Kazakhstan	1	3	3	7
32. Jamaica	1	3	2	6
32. Thailand	1	3	2	6
34. Switzerland	1	2	4	7
35. Denmark	1	2	1	4
35. Georgia	1	2	1	4
37. Ecuador	1	2	0	3
38. Greece	1	1	5	7
39. Poland	1	1	4	6
40. Kenya	1	1	3	5
41. South Africa	1	1	2	4
42. Argentina	1	1	0	2
42. Chile	1	1	0	2
42. Saint Lucia	1	1	0	2
42. Uganda	1	1	0	2
46. Chinese Taipei	1	0	5	6
47. Bulgaria	1	0	3	4
48. Austria	1	0	1	2
48. Czech Republic	1	0	1	2
48. Guatemala	1	0	1	2
48. Morocco	1	0	1	2
48. Norway	1	0	1	2
53. Algeria	1	0	0	1
53. Bahrain	1	0	0	1
53. Botswana	1	0	0	1
53. Dominica	1	0	0	1
53. Pakistan	1	0	0	1
53. Slovenia	1	0	0	1
59. North Korea	0	2	4	6
60. Türkiye	0	2	3	5
61. Mexico	0	2	2	4
62. Armenia	0	2	1	3
63. Ethiopia	0	2	0	2
64. India	0	1	4	5
65. Kyrgyzstan	0	1	3	4
66. Lithuania	0	1	2	3
67. Kosovo	0	1	1	2
67. Portugal	0	1	1	2
67. Tunisia	0	1	1	2
70. Colombia	0	1	0	1
70. Cyprus	0	1	0	1
70. Fiji	0	1	0	1
70. Jordan	0	1	0	1
70. Mongolia	0	1	0	1
75. Tajikistan	0	0	3	3
76. Dominica	0	0	2	2
76. Grenada	0	0	2	2
76. Malaysia	0	0	2	2
76. Moldova	0	0	2	2
80. Cape Verde	0	0	1	1
80. Egypt	0	0	1	1
80. Peru	0	0	1	1
80. Refugee Team	0	0	1	1
80. Slovakia	0	0	1	1
80. Zambia	0	0	1	1

Read as: G- Gold, S- Silver, B- Bronze, T- Total



Tara Davis-Woodhall of United States celebrates after winning long jump gold. (Reuters)