

SPORTS

Golden Duplantis soars to six-metre vault

Triple gold medallist Dalaloyan proves standout gymnast at Euros

BERLIN, Aug 13, (RTRS): Armand Duplantis, another of Scandinavia's phenomenal young athletic talents, brought down the curtain on a breakthrough European Championships with a record-breaking triumph in one of the all-time great pole vault competitions.

The US-raised Swedish teenager became the youngest man ever to clear six metres as he set three world junior records, finishing with a remarkable new mark of 6.05 metres.

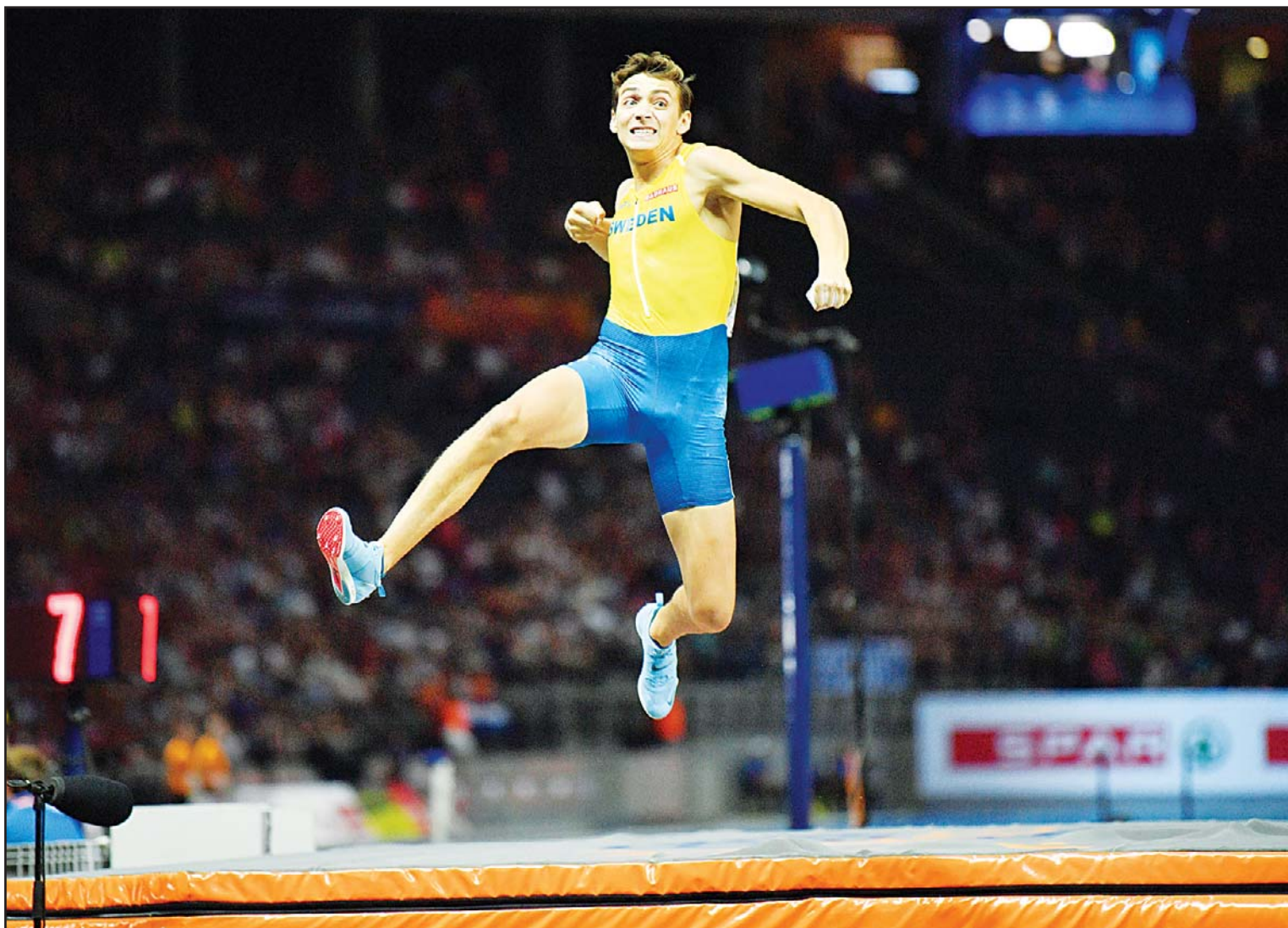
On another splendid night of athletics, Dina Asher-Smith became only the third woman to win the European sprint treble as Britain's men and women both roared to victory in the concluding 4x100m relays.

The Olympic Stadium saluted Poland's matchless 33-year-old hammer thrower Anita Wlodarczyk, who won her fourth successive title with a championship record of 78.94 metres, and 34-year-old Portuguese Nelson Evora, the triple jump winner almost 10 years to the week since he leapt to Olympic gold in Beijing.

Yet it was the youthful mastery of Duplantis that caused most astonish-



Asher Smith



Sweden's Armand Duplantis celebrates after an attempt in the men's pole vault final at the European Athletics Championships at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin, Germany, on Aug 12. (AP)

have ever gone higher than Duplantis now, indoors or out.

"6.05 is the jump of my life. It was such an unreal competition, I feel like I'm dreaming right now. It's been one of the most special moments of my life and I'll never forget it," said Duplantis, who has now broken 13 world junior records.

"But I wouldn't have been able to do it without those two pushing me. That was the motivation right there. Each time, I knew if I wanted to win, I had to clear it."

When Duplantis cleared 6.05m, France's great 31-year-old three-time champion and former Olympic gold medallist Lavillenie hugged him, almost as if recognising that he was handing over the baton of greatness to the teenager.

Asher-Smith, taking Britain from fourth to first with a scintillating anchor leg, emulated East Germans Petra Vogt (1969) and Katrin Krabbe (1990) as the only women to achieve the sprint treble.

On another fine night for Britain, Laura Muir kicked for home after just a lap-and-a-half of the 1,500m final, stretched away and then courageously held on down the home straight in 4:02.32 to become the first woman from her country to take the metric mile crown.

The saddest sight of the night was the Kenyan-born Israeli, Lohah Chemtai Salpeter, winner of the 10,000m, running off the track when locked in a duel with Dutch Sifan Hassan at the bell of the 5,000m.

Salpeter had sprinted to the line and thought she had won the silver, only to realise there was another lap to go. Hassan went on to win easily in a championship record 14:46.12.

"When she stopped, I went: 'What

is she doing? What should I do?' I heard the people shout. It was crazy," said Hassan.

Britain and Poland both finished with seven athletics golds but Germany amassed most medals, 19, headed by Gesa-Felicita Krause's successful defence of her 3,000m steeplechase title on Sunday, their sixth gold.

Triple gold medallist Artur Dalaloyan proved the standout gymnast at the men's European Championships, adding two individual apparatus triumphs 24 hours after leading Russia to the team title.

Dalaloyan, the 22 year old European all-around silver medallist last year, took gold in both the vault and the parallel bars as well as bronze in the floor exercises at the SSE Hydro Arena.

"My favourite medal was the team medal, because everybody in Russian gymnastics worked towards it," said Dalaloyan, delighted at how he had grown as an athlete at these championships.

"Two years ago I wasn't a part of the main Russian team. Back then I was a boy and not a man. Now I feel as though I have grown up and have an understanding of what I want to get from gymnastics."

Dalaloyan had been spurred to do better, he said, by a mistake that he had made on the floor.



Artur Dalaloyan of Russia (center), celebrates with the gold medal after placing first on the parallel bars during the men's artistic gymnastics finals at the European Championships in Glasgow, Scotland, on Aug 12. At right is silver medal winner David Belyavskiy of Russia and left is bronze medal winner Oliver Hegi of Switzerland. (AP)

US dominate meet

Caribbean sprinters take 200m races at NACAC Championships

TORONTO, Aug 13, (RTRS): Caribbean sprinters swept the 200 metres races as US overall dominance continued on the final day of the North American Central American and Caribbean (NACAC) championships in Toronto on Sunday.

Trinidad and Tobago national champion Kyle Greaux spoiled the host country's chances in the men's 200m, clocking 20.11 seconds to

upstage Canada's Commonwealth Games silver medallist Aaron Brown (20.20).

The women's race produced a tight finish as Olympic 400m bronze medallist Shericka Jackson of Jamaica won in 22.64 seconds, just 0.03 seconds ahead of Canadian Crystal Emmanuel.

Fedrick Dacres and Shanicka Ricketts added more gold for Jamaica.

Commonwealth Games champion

Dacres tossed the discus 68.47 metres to defeat team mate Traves Smikle (65.46m) and Ricketts, the Commonwealth runner-up, bounded 14.25m in the women's triple jump.

But US depth prevailed with the Americans winning 11 of the 17 events, six of them by their women.

Former world junior champion Shamier Little beat Jamaica's Commonwealth champion Janieve Russell

in the women's 400m hurdles, the American winning in 53.32 seconds.

The US women also won the 1,500m, shot put, javelin and both relays.

Former world indoor winner Marquis Dendy paced the men, winning the long jump with an opening of 8.29m, but Jamaica's Tajay Gayle made it interesting with a 8.24m leap on his last attempt.

US men also claimed the 3,000m steeplechase, where the only three contestants were Americans, the pole vault, 1,500m, and 4x400m relay.

Canadian sprinters got some revenge by winning the 4x100m relay in 38.56 seconds with Brown the anchor, and Kyron McMaster of the British Virgin Islands topped 400m hurdlers in 48.18 to add to his Commonwealth Games title.

Japan's athletes 'head' to Games

TOKYO, Aug 13, (RTRS): Japan bade farewell to their delegation of athletes heading to Jakarta for the Asian Games during a ceremony on Monday that illustrated the pressure Japanese athletes will be under when Tokyo hosts the 2020 Olympics.

Japan have set a goal of 30 gold medals from the Olympics in two years time, which would be almost double the record of 16 set when they last hosted the Games in 1964 and in Athens in 2004.

The Japanese team go to Jakarta expecting to show progress from their previous two Asian Games in which they secured 48 and 47 gold medals.

Although that was good enough for third in the medal table, Japan was some distance off second-placed South Korea and they will want to close that gap with their home Olympics just around the corner.

Athletes at Monday's event were treated to a visit by Prince Akishino,

ASIAN GAMES

who said he hoped the Asian Games would be a chance for Japan's athletes to engage with those from other nations in a bid for international harmony.

Former Olympic judo gold medallist Yasuhiro Yamashita was more demanding.

"Our goal is to win 30 gold medals at Tokyo 2020," said Yamashita, who is head of Japan's delegation going to Jakarta.

"To make this come true, we are working on several things, including the new sports that will debut at the Asian Games and that will also be at Tokyo 2020."

Daiya Seto, who won a gold and silver at the Pan Pacific Swimming Championships in Tokyo over the weekend, is one of Japan's main medal hopes in Jakarta.

"I have got gold medals at the last Asian Games so I want to do it again this time around," said Seto, who won two golds in 2014.

Team captain and Olympic silver medallist sprinter Ryota Yamagata spoke of the need to bring joy to the people of Japan, especially those affected by last month's flooding.

"I am from Hiroshima, which was hit by the heavy rain and there are people who are now suffering and struggling to live normally," Yamagata said.

"If we achieve all these goals and we do our best at the Games, then we can show again how amazing sport is."

Japanese sprinter Aska Cambridge has raced the very best in the world in relays but is heading to Jakarta for the Asian Games looking to establish a name for himself as an individual ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

In the aftermath of Jamaica's victory in the 4x100 metres relay at Rio that delivered Usain Bolt his ninth Olympic gold medal, it was perhaps easy to miss the Japan team in second.



Tori Franklin, of the United States, competes to win silver in triple jump during the NACAC Championships athletics meet in Toronto, on Aug 12. (AP)

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