

Germany win world open water relay



From left: The silver medal team from Italy, the gold medal team from Germany, and the bronze medal team from the United States stand on the podium after the 5km mixed relay open water swim at the World Swimming Championships in Yeosu, South Korea on July 18. (AP)

Diving gold and perfect marks for Chen at age 13

GWANGJU, South Korea, July 18, (AP): Germany won the mixed 5-kilometer open water team relay at the world swimming championships in a close finish over Italy and the United States on Thursday.

The German quartet of Lea Boy, Sarah Kohler, Soeren Meissner and Rob Muffels finished in a time of 53 minutes, 58.70 seconds.

Italy, with Rachele Bruni, Giulia Gabbrielleschi, Domenico Acerenza and Gregorio Paltrinieri, were two-tenths of a second behind in a time of 53:58.90.

Haley Anderson, Jordan Wilimovsky, Ashley Twichell and Michael Brinegar made up the

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American team which finished just three-tenths of a second behind Germany to take bronze in 53:59.00.

There are two males and two females on each team who swim 1.25 kilometers each, but the order in which they swim is up to the individual country.

The German team, anchored by Muffels, were disadvantaged by a yellow card issued to Boy in the leadoff leg. A second yellow card would have resulted in disqualification, so each of the German swimmers needed to be careful of their tactics for the rest of the race.

Muffels was a member of the German team that won the same event in Kazan, Russia four years ago. "I think each of us did a really good job, it was a perfect strategy," Muffels said of the decision to lead off with two female swimmers. "The conditions were quite good with some little waves, and they were not too big



Evangelia Papazoglou and Evangelia Platanoti of Greece perform their routine in the artistic swimming duet free final at the World Swimming Championships in Gwangju, South Korea on July 18. (AP)



Gold medalist China's Chen Yuxi (left), stands with compatriot and silver medalist Lu Wei, as they pose for photographers after the women's 10m platform diving final at the World Swimming Championships in Gwangju, South Korea on July 17. (AP)

or challenging."

Twichell swam third for the Americans.

"I went off with a little bit of a lead, but I knew there were three guys – the Chinese, Germans and Italians – that were coming up on me," Twichell said. "I just had to stay strong in the beginning, and

when the Chinese guy came up with me, just tried to get into his pocket and felt like I did a really good job drafting off those three for as long as I could."

"Distance swimmers don't get to swim relays all that often ... but we put together a really good result. It's a sprint for us,

so it was really fun watching Michael (Brinegar) bring it home so well."

Brazil's team finished fourth, Australia were fifth and France, Netherlands, Hungary, China and Russia rounded out the top 10 of the 21 countries in the race.

The open water races conclude Friday with the men's and women's 25-kilometer races, both non-Olympic events.

Meanwhile, thirteen-year-old Chinese diver Chen Yuxi won the women's 10-meter platform final at the world swimming championships on Wednesday, and received two perfect marks for her third drive.

Chen finished on 439 points to clinch the gold medal at her first worlds.

"Everybody told me to relax before the final, but I still could hear my heart beat," Chen said.

"I was shaky in the first two dives and then I felt better and better. I thought about challenging myself and reaching above 440."

It was the ninth diving gold medal in nine events at Gwangju, with three events remaining, all Olympic disciplines. The men's 3-meter springboard is set for Thursday, the women's 3-meter on Friday and the men's 10-meter platform on Saturday.

Another 13-year-old Chinese diver, Lu Wei, provided competition for Chen before winning silver Wednesday with 377.80 points.

"Although I had a gold medal from the synchro, I was still nervous about competing in the individual event," Lu said. "I made a mistake in the second dive but overall was OK."

American Delaney Schnell was third with 364.20 points.

NBA Roundup

Suns agree to deal with F Diallo

Thunder to keep Paul for now

OKLAHOMA CITY, July 18, (RTRS): The Thunder's discussions to trade newly acquired Chris Paul have stalled, ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski reported Wednesday, increasing the odds that the point guard begins the season in Oklahoma City.

The Thunder have been working with Paul's agent on a suitable trade since acquiring him from the Houston Rockets last week in a deal for Russell Westbrook and two first-round picks, but Wojnarowski reports nothing is materializing. The report adds that Oklahoma City believes trade talks could improve after Dec 15 – when players signed this offseason can be included in deals – or after the 2019-20 season.

The Miami Heat have been widely reported as a potential suitor for Paul, but the sides have been unable to agree on compensation.

The Miami Herald reports the Heat are only willing to take on Paul's burdensome contract – which has three years and \$124 million remaining, including a \$44.2 million player option in 2021-22 – if they also receive their own 2021 and 2023 first-round picks, which the Thunder acquired via other trades.

A day after officially signing him as a free agent, the **New York Knicks** announced forward **Reggie Bullock** had surgery in New York for a cervical disc herniation.

The team said the surgery was successful and that an update on his rehab and progress would be provided around the start of training camp.

On Tuesday, SNY reported Bullock was expected to miss at least a month of the regular season with a previously unknown medical issue, which led to a reworking of Bullock's original two-year, \$21 million free agent agreement with the Knicks. Bullock wound up signing for two years and \$8.2 million, multiple outlets reported Tuesday.

The **Toronto Raptors** agreed to a two-year deal with free agent point guard **Cameron Payne**, The Athletic reported.

Payne, who turns 25 next month, joins his fourth NBA team since the **Thunder** picked him 14th overall in the 2015 draft out of **Murray State**.

He split the 2018-19 season with the **Chicago Bulls** and **Cleveland Cavaliers**, averaging 6.3 points and 2.7 assists in 40 games (13 starts). Payne has posted career averages of 6.0 points, 2.5 assists and 16.0 minutes in 153 games (28 starts).

Free agent forward **Cheick Diallo** agreed to a two-year contract with the **Phoenix Suns**, ESPN reported.

The 6-foot-9 Diallo became an unrestricted free agent when the **New Orleans Pelicans** declined to tender him a qualifying offer.

Diallo played in 133 games over the past three seasons for the Pelicans, producing averages of 5.5 points and 4.6 rebounds. He averaged 6.0 points and 5.2 rebounds in 64 games (one start) last season.

Former **Suns** lottery pick **Dragan Bender** has agreed to play for **CSKA Moscow**, Yahoo Sports reported.

Yahoo said that Bender's agree-

ment allows him to look for NBA deals "for a little while longer," which matched a story from Eurohoops.net that said the 7-foot-1 forward will sign a multiyear deal with the Russian club unless he receives "an interesting" offer from an NBA team.

The 21-year-old Croatian averaged 5.0 points, 4.0 rebounds and 18.0 minutes in 46 games (27 starts) for the Suns in 2018-19.

The **Detroit Pistons** claimed center **Christian Wood** off waivers from the **Pelicans**, according to The Athletic.

Wood, 23, impressed in an eight-game stint (two starts) with the Pelicans late last season, averaging 16.9 points, 7.9 rebounds and 1.3 blocks in 23.6 minutes per game.

He has career averages of 5.3 points and 2.9 rebounds in 9.9 minutes per game across 51 appearances with four teams since entering the NBA undrafted out of UNLV in 2015.

If this basketball thing doesn't work out for **Brad Stevens**, he already has a backup plan in mind.

The **Boston Celtics** coach joked on Wednesday that he's hoping to capitalize on his resemblance to Democratic presidential candidate **Pete Buttigieg**. An Indiana native who coached at Butler in Indianapolis, Stevens was the youngest coach in the NBA when he was hired at the age of 36 to take over the Celtics in 2013. He says he is a fan of the 37-year-old South Bend, Indiana, mayor, who would be the youngest president in US history.

Enes Kanter took a playful swipe at him. **Kemba Walker** will try to replace him. **Kyrie Irving** is no longer with the Celtics, but his brief flameout in Boston is still on the minds of fans in the city and even, apparently, players who have yet to play a minute for the team.

On the day that the Celtics introduced Walker as their point guard of the future, Kanter said he chose the No. 11 last worn in Boston by Irving in part because it was his number in Oklahoma City in 2016-17. But he also quoted a commercial in which Irving aspired to have the number retired in his honor.

Irving was the Celtics' big free agency splash two summers ago, when he asked the **Cleveland Cavaliers** to trade him and they shipped him to Boston for the immensely popular **Isaiah Thomas**. The Celtics, who had just lost to Cleveland in the Conference Finals, returned to the East Finals the next year – when Irving was injured – but bowed out in the second round this season, when he was healthy.

Reece to start for All Blacks vs Pumas

WC countdown starts for SA, Australia at Ellis Park

JOHANNESBURG, July 18, (RTRS): South Africa and Australia ramp up their World Cup preparations when they clash in their opening game of the shortened Rugby Championship season at Ellis Park on Saturday, for which both sides have made surprise selections.

Springbok coach Rassie Erasmus has been at pains to explain he has not picked a 'B' side for the contest, but looking at the players he has left out, it is hard to come to any other conclusion.

The likes of key flyhalf Handre Pollard, giant number eight Duane Vermeulen and powerful hooker Malcolm Marx, among others, are all missing, sent instead to New Zealand this week in preparation for their clash with the world champions on July 27.

"There's no disrespect to Australia at all," he told reporters. "If we didn't have the tough draw in terms of travelling with New Zealand and Australia, we would have picked the best first-choice team for this one and the next."

The Boks have an especially inexperienced backline, with scrumhalf Herschel Jantjies making his debut, and

only 21 caps between fullback Warrick Gelant, wings Sbu Nkosi and Makazole Mapimpi, and centre Andre Esterhuizen.

Erasmus says he has gone for all out pace with the back three he has selected. "Australia play a width game, a high-paced outflanking game," he said. "They tend to try to go around you and we feel with those two (Nkosi and Mapimpi) and Warwick at the back, it's

RUGBY

the best combination to try and contain them speed-wise."

The pack has more experience and plenty of grunt, led by 'enforcer' and captain Eben Etzebeth at lock.

Erasmus has also suggested Australia will be more susceptible under the high ball without sacked fullback Israel Folau in their side.

Meanwhile, uncapped winger Sevu Reece has been named to start on the right wing for an experimental All Blacks side in their rugby Championship opener against Argentina in Buenos Aires on Saturday.

Reece is the only uncapped player in the starting side but four others – prop Atu Moli, loose forward Luke Jacobson, flyhalf Josh Ioane and outside back Braydon Ennor – should make their test debuts from the bench.

Dolson makes late go-ahead basket, Sky edge Dream 77-76

Howard leads Storm to win over Lynx

MINNEAPOLIS, July 18, (AP): Natasha Howard scored a career-high 33 points, Sami Whitcomb made five of Seattle's 12 3-pointers and the Storm closed the game on a 10-0 run to beat the Minnesota Lynx 90-79.

Seattle led 78-66 with 6:25 left until Minnesota made 3-pointers on their next three possessions to pull within three. The Lynx got as close as 80-79, but Seattle answered with 10 straight points, highlighted by Whitcomb's drive and no-look pass to Alysha Clark.

Whitcomb had 15 points and eight assists and Clark added 12 points and seven rebounds. Seattle (11-8) have won a season-high three straight games without stars Breanna Stewart, Sue Bird and Jewell Loyd.

Seattle opened the game on a 15-4 run as Minnesota made just two of their first eight shots. The Storm led 26-16 after the first quarter and 40-30 at halftime behind 25 combined points from Howard and Whitcomb.

Sylvia Fowles had 16 points and seven rebounds for Minnesota (10-8). Danielle Robinson



In this Aug 1, 2018 file photo, Las Vegas Aces guard Kayla McBride shoots around Phoenix Mercury forward DeWanna Bonner during the second half of a WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

added 14 points, 10 assists and four steals.

Mercury 69, Wings 64
In Phoenix, Brittney Griner scored 23 points, including the go-ahead basket with 33.9 seconds left, and the Mercury held off the Wings.

Griner made a hook shot in the lane to give Phoenix a 65-64 lead. After Kaela Davis was off on a 3-pointer, DeWanna Bonner

sank two free throws for a three-point lead. Dallas elected to go for a quick 2-point shot, Griner grabbed the miss and she made two free throws to seal it.

Essence Carson and Camille Little each added 11 points for Phoenix (8-8).

Arike Ogunbowale scored 14 points on 6-of-22 shooting for Dallas (5-12), who are winless on the road this season in eight

attempts.

Sky 77, Dream 76
In Chicago, Diamond DeShields scored 20 of her season-high 22 points in the first half. Stefanie Dolson made a go-ahead layup with 2.3 seconds left and the Sky beat the Dream.

DeShields made 1 of 2 free throws with 31.3 seconds left to

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pull Chicago to 76-75, and the Sky forced Atlanta into a long 3-pointer by Alex Bentley at the other end. After a timeout at 6.9, Courtney Vandersloot drew two defenders on a drive into the lane and found an open Dolson under the basket. Atlanta had an open shot in the corner at the buzzer but Brittney Sykes' shot was off the mark.

DeShields was 10 of 13 from the free-throw line and also grabbed eight rebounds for Chicago (10-8), who have won three straight games.

Renee Montgomery led Atlanta (5-12) with 23 points and six assists.