



Berlin Mayor Klaus Wowereit (R) holds aloft the World Athletics Championships flag while IAAF president Lamine Diack (L) and acting president of the Berlin 12th IAAF World Athletics Championships 2009 Organising Committee Clemens Prokop (C) look on during the closing ceremony of the 11th edition in Osaka on Sunday.

Curtain falls on Osaka WC

USA fire Olympic warning to China

Athletics

AFP, Osaka

Nine days of sweat and tears at the World Athletics Championships ended with the United States firing a clear warning to China ahead of next year's Olympics.

China has made noises about wanting to overhaul the Americans at the top of the medals table in Beijing, but they won't be making much dent on the track and field.

As expected, the United States led the medal haul here with 14 gold. Kenya came second with five, thanks to their incomparable distance runners, while Russia was third. China was a distant 11th with a single gold to Liu Xiang.

In a meet where no world records fell, Tyson Gay was the standout performer, clinching gold medals in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay to cap a breakthrough season and set himself up as the potential star of the Olympics.

He plans to return to Asia some time this season to continue his preparations for the 2008 Games.

"I'm looking forward to coming back to Asia and running some 100s," said the 25-year-old

American who joined an elite group to win three gold in the same championships.

"I still have some things I want to work on and go into next year in a positive frame of mind."

His key sprint rival, 100m world record holder Asafa Powell, had a disappointing championships, finishing third in the blue ribbon event, and knows he has work to do to haul in Gay.

"My championship is over right now but I'm still looking forward for better things to come," said the Jamaican.

"Right now I'm just looking forward. I'm trying to keep my head up and stay focused."

The women's 100m crown went to Jamaica's Veronica Campbell while American Allyson Felix claimed the 200m title. Felix also won gold in the 4x100m and 4x400m relays to match Gay's medal tally.

At the height of the Japanese summer, athletes had intense heat and humidity to deal with and Africa's endless staple of distance runners coped best.

It was a Kenyan sweep in the marathon with Catherine Ndereba claiming the women's title and Luke Kibet the men's.

Other standouts were China's

to reinforce herself as a major talent and firm favourite for Olympic gold.

Her irrepressible compatriot Kenenisa Bekele won the men's version for a third straight time and appears unbeatable.

The 25-year-old said he would have a crack at his own world record in Brussels later this month, and attempt the 5,000-10,000 double in Beijing.

"After Osaka my big goal is the Beijing Olympics," he said.

"Three years ago (in Athens) I missed being double champion. If I can I would love to try to do that again at the next Olympics."

With Bekele opting out of the 5,000m here, Kenyan-born American Bernard Lagat won the final day for a rare double after also capturing the 1,500m.

Another Ethiopian, the flawless Olympic champion Meseret Defar, timed her run to perfection to win her first 5,000m title.

She too is toying with the double at the Olympics.

It was a Kenyan sweep in the marathon with Catherine Ndereba claiming the women's title and Luke Kibet the men's.

In Pool A, Japan routed Hong Kong 7-1.

gangly Liu Xiang who won the 110m hurdles title for the first time and heads to the Olympics with massive pressure on him as Asia's leading hope.

Bangladesh take

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will face the home side today and two-time champions South Korea on Thursday.

The remaining clashes against two regional heavyweights means Mahbub Harun's boys have little chance to add any point but the two wins have already fulfilled the preliminary target of the coach.

A fourth-place finish in the group will give Bangladesh a chance to play in the 5th-8th place play-offs.

In another Pool B match, captain Hu Rui slammed six goals to lead China to a 13-0 win over Thailand after leading 7-0 at the break. Meng Jun and Yu Yang scored a brace each as China, who lost to India 1-0, kept their semifinal hopes alive with six points from three games.

Rana played six Tests and 25 one-day internationals before his untimely death in his hometown.

Dighinala reach DC Cup final

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachari

Dighinala reached the final of the Second Deputy Commissioner Gold Cup football tournament when they ousted defending champions Khagrachari Sadar in tiebreakers in the semifinals here yesterday.

The regulation period ended in a 1-1 draw at the local stadium and the 30-minute extra-time failed to change the fate of the game, taking it into a marathon penalty shootout.

Dighinala, who won 8-7 in sudden death, will take on the winners of Manikchhari-Ramgor second semis in the final.

Raju fires 7 goals

UNB, Dhaka

Raju Mia slammed a double hattrick while Khalilur Rahman a treble as Rainbow SC crushed Mirpur Chalantika SC 11-1 in yesterday's Third Division Football League at the Outer Stadium.

Raju netted seven goals while Khalilur added four for the winners while Jewel scored the consolation goal for Chalantika.

In the day's other match, Rahmatganj SC beat Shantinagar Club 2-1 with Jahangir and Khoraching Marma finding the target for the winners. Rana reduced the margin for the vanquished.

Seven zonal champions along with holders Dhaka will play in the final round.

The seven zonal qualifiers are Gopalganj, Tangail, Rajshahi, Jessor, Pirojpur, Dinajpur and Comilla.

Youth kabaddi from tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

The eight-team final round of the Fresh IGP Cup National Youth Kabaddi championship will begin at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court tomorrow.

Seven zonal champions along with holders Dhaka will play in the final round.

The seven zonal qualifiers are Gopalganj, Tangail, Rajshahi, Jessor, Pirojpur, Dinajpur and Comilla.

Road named after Rana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A Khulna city road was yesterday named after Manzurul Islam Rana, the national cricketer who died in a road accident in March this year.

Khulna City Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman unfurled the plaque of renaming the Mughuni main road as Manzurul Islam Rana road.

Jamila Khatoon, mother of Rana, expressed her disappointment over Bangladesh Cricket Board's delaying in naming a gallery of the Khulna Divisional Stadium after her son's name according to its commitment.

"The BCB must come forward without any further delay to perpetuate the memory of my son," she demanded.

Rana played six Tests and 25 one-day internationals before his untimely death in his hometown.

Ponting in doubt

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remain behind and may join the squad later in the week.

Watson has a hamstring injury, while Clark's son has been taken ill.

Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland said "a private family issue" had arisen with Ponting during the weekend.

"The situation is expected to be clearer later in the week, at which time Ponting's availability would be re-assessed," Sutherland said.

Dhoni equals

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Matt Prior after he lost his balance and lifted his back foot for a few fleeting seconds off Sourav Ganguly before accepting Kevin Pietersen's outside edge off Zaheer Khan.

And he then took a sharp catch to dismiss Ian Bell as England lost three wickets in seven runs and lost its way.

Ganguly, in fact, had a hand in each of the first five wickets that England lost before picking his sixth victim when he held a skier from Jonathan Lewis off Ajit Agarkar.

Proteas' chance

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Smith remained coy about South Africa's main challengers but said teams who were able to adapt to the different demands of the new format would prosper.

"I think it will probably be the team with the most imagination that does best. One good performance can close the game down, and the unorthodox players come into their own in a tournament like this," he said.

Boucher was also fined for questioning the importance that players attached to the tournament, while India has notably rested stars such as Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly.

REMAINING FIXTURES

Sept 05: 6th ODI, The Oval

Sept 08: 7th ODI, Lord's

It's wide open: Colly

AFP, London

England thrashed Australia by 100 runs at Southampton two years ago, a prelude to England's 2005 Ashes success.

But the selectors had to name their squad for the Twenty20 before that campaign started.

And the likes of batsman Ian Bell and pace bowler James Anderson, who have helped England into a 3-2 lead in the seven-match series, have failed to make it into the party.

Instead, England have opted to include several Twenty20 specialists such as off-spinner Jeremy Snape and batsman Darren Maddy, neither of whom have flourished during their previous England appearances.

"You can't say you wish they were going now," replied Collingwood when asked about the omission of Bell and Anderson.

"The squad has been selected and it's very exciting one. There are individuals picked in there to do certain jobs. I think we've got all Plan As and Plan Bs covered. Time will tell."

England are in Group B along with World Cup holders Australia, South Africa and minnows Zimbabwe.

They have so far had mixed fortunes in Twenty20 contests against old rivals Australia, whom they meet again in Cape Town on September 14.

England thrashed Australia by 100 runs at Southampton two years ago, a prelude to England's 2005 Ashes success.

But it was a different story in January when Australia won the second Twenty encounter between the two teams by 77 runs at Sydney.

"They've obviously got a lot of skills and power so they're going to be a massive threat," the 31-year-old Collingwood said of Australia.

"I'm sure they'll come up with plans of how they're going to attack the Twenty20 format -- it'll be interesting to see."

"We'll go in with our own ideas and see who comes out on top."

Collingwood, who has won one and lost one of his two Twenty20 matches leading England, both against the West Indies at The Oval in June, said the compressed nature of the format made life tough for captains.

"It's difficult," he said. "I think you have to be very well prepared as captain, certainly on field placings, where you're going to bowl, have a Plan B and sometimes even a Plan C."

"It's hectic, a bit mind-boggling at times."

Twenty20 timeline

AFP, Johannesburg

Most boundaries in an innings:
20 -- West Indies v England, Oval, 2007

Most runs in career:
259 -- Graeme Smith, South Africa, 5 matches

178 -- Ricky Ponting, Australia, 5 matches

110 -- Stephen Fleming, New Zealand, 5 matches

Most runs in an innings:
98 not out -- 55 balls -- Ricky Ponting, Australia v New Zealand, Auckland, 2005

96 -- 56 balls -- Damien Martyn, Australia v South Africa, Brisbane, 2006

Most matches played:
6 -- England

5 -- Australia, New Zealand, South Africa

3 -- Sri Lanka, West Indies

2 -- Pakistan

1 -- Bangladesh, India, Zimbabwe.

Most matches won:
3 -- Australia

2 -- England, New Zealand, South Africa, Sri Lanka

Highest innings totals:
221-5 -- Australia v England, Sydney, 2007

214-5 -- Australia v New Zealand, Auckland, 2005

209-3 -- Australia v South Africa, Brisbane, 2006

208-8 -- West Indies v England, Oval, 2007

Lowest innings totals:
79 (14.3 overs) -- Australia v England, Southampton, 2005

114 (18.3 overs) -- South Africa v Australia, Brisbane, 2006

115 (18.2 overs) -- Sri Lanka v New Zealand, Auckland, 2006

Most sixes in an innings:
14 -- Australia v England, Sydney, 2007

89 not out -- 58 balls -- Graeme Smith, South Africa v Australia, Johannesburg, 2006

Most wickets in career:
9 -- Paul Collingwood, England

7 -- Andrew Symonds, Australia

Best figures:
4-0-22-4 -- Paul Collingwood, England v Sri Lanka, Southampton, 2006

4-0-24-4 -- Jon Lewis, England v Australia, Southampton, 2005

Most matches in career:
6 -- Paul Collingwood, England

6 -- Kevin Pietersen, England

KNOW-HOW

AFP, Johannesburg

How Twenty20 cricket is different from the regular 50-overs-a-side internationals:

* As the name suggests, each side gets to bat for 20