



Russia's Daria Dmitrieva performs her ribbon program during the individual all-around qualifications of the rhythmic gymnastics at Wembley yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Britain take bronze

REUTERS, London

Britain's women beat New Zealand 3-1 to take Olympic hockey bronze on Friday, winning a match played mostly in midfield in which all the goals came from set-piece penalty corners.

Britain controlled the game but had few chances from open play and could not convert two penalty corners in the first half, giving New Zealand the chance to build up pressure towards the interval.

The Kiwis upped the pressure in the second half and struck the post in the first minute but Britain pushed to force errors in the D to take advantage of their strong penalty corners.

In the 45th minute, that tactic paid off and the hosts scored from a penalty corner when Alex Danson deflected a pass from captain Kate Walsh for her fifth goal in London.

Crista Cullen scored from a well-placed drag flick penalty corner in the 59th minute and Sarah Thomas deflected another corner into the goal four minutes later.

The Kiwis, whose previous best Olympic placing was sixth, pulled back a goal with a penalty corner deflection with just two minutes left.

US women outlast Aussies

AFP, London

Four-time defending champion United States advanced to the Olympic women's basketball final with an 86-73 victory over Australia on Thursday, stretching the US Olympic win streak to 40 games.

The Women's NBA stars will try to take home their fifth gold medal in a row in Saturday's championship game against the winner of a later semifinal between undefeated France and reigning European champion Russia.

Mellouli digs deep

AFP, London



Tunisia's Oussama Mellouli survived a late surge from his rivals to win the men's 10km swimming marathon on Friday and become the first person to hold all three Olympic titles in both pool and open water races.

Mellouli broke clear at the start of the last lap and clung on in the final stages to hold off Germany's Thomas Lurz and Richard Weinberger of Canada.

The Tunisian, who also came third in the 1500m freestyle on Sunday, finished 3.4sec ahead of Lurz in a superb time of 1hr 49min 55.1sec at a sun-soaked Hyde Park.

World champion Spyridon Gianniotis of Greece finished just outside the medals in fourth place, with Great Britain's Daniel

Fogg fifth.

Mellouli's victory represented yet another milestone for the pioneering 28-year-old.

In 2008 in Beijing, three months after returning from an 18-month doping ban, he became the first African man to win an Olympic gold swimming medal when he topped the podium in the 1500m freestyle.

He is the second man to have tasted victory in the Olympic open water swimming marathon, after Dutchman Maarten van der Weijden won the inaugural event in Beijing four years ago.

Mellouli also collected a bronze in the 1500m at these Games last weekend.

Mellouli made the early running on a baking hot afternoon on the Serpentine lake, with a pack of swimmers assembling behind



Tunisia's Oussama Mellouli prays after winning gold in the men's 10km marathon swimming at Hyde Park yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Obama hails soccer gold

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama congratulated the US women's football team after it clinched a 2-1 victory over Japan at the Olympic final at London's Wembley Stadium on Thursday.

"We have to give a special shout out to the women's soccer team today avenging the loss in the World Cup," said Obama, during a visit to the US Olympic Committee's training center in the western state of Colorado.

US footballer Carli Lloyd's double gave her country a third successive gold medal, making up for her defeat against the Japanese team at the World Cup.

Lloyd missed a penalty when the US lost the Cup final in an agonizing shootout, but she enjoyed sweet redemption at Wembley with a goal in each half.

Although Japan's Yuki Ogimi got one back, the US team held on to secure their fourth gold in women's football in the last five Olympics.

The United States has enjoyed a remarkable run of Olympic success since women's football was introduced to the Games in 1996.

"We could not be prouder" of all of America's athletes in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, Obama said, referring to the Olympic counterpart for athletes

USA avenge WC loss

AFP, London



The United States clinched a 2-1 victory over Japan in the Olympic women's final on Thursday as Carli Lloyd's double gave her country a third successive gold medal and avenged last year's World Cup final defeat against the Asian giants.

Lloyd missed a penalty when the US lost that World Cup final in an agonizing shootout, but she enjoyed sweet redemption at Wembley with a goal in each half and, although Japan's Yuki Ogimi got one back, the US held on to secure their fourth gold in women's football in the last five Olympics.

The US have enjoyed a remarkable run of Olympic success since women's football was introduced to the Games in 1996 and their triumph in London followed previous wins in Atlanta in 1996, Athens in 2004 and Beijing in 2008.

Even when they didn't win the tournament, in Sydney in 2000, they still went away with the silver medal and Japan, who had been attempting to become only the second team in history to hold the women's World Cup and Olympic titles, were unable to break their stranglehold despite an impressive display.

The chance to avenge a heartbreaking loss against Japan in Germany just over a year ago had propelled Pia Sundhage's US side towards the final and they finished the job thanks to Lloyd's goals, including a sublime solo effort, and a superb display from goalkeeper Hope Solo.

Japan were making their first appearance in the women's Olympic final and, with gold at stake in front of an 80,203 crowd, there were a few nerves in the opening stages.

Saki Kumagai made a hash of controlling a long ball on the edge of her own penalty area and Alex Morgan quickly took advantage, seizing possession before testing Japan goalkeeper Miho Fukumoto with a powerful strike.

Chen in different class

AFP, London



China's Chen Ruolin was in a class of her own Thursday, defending her women's Olympic 10m platform diving crown in dominating style to claim her second gold medal at the London Games.

The Chinese star peeled off five fantastic dives to score 422.30 points and beat her nearest rival by 55.8 points in the most convincing victory in the seven diving events so far at the Aquatics Centre.

Australia's Brittany Broben took silver with 366.50 and Pandeleda Rinong claimed the bronze with 359.20 to give Malaysia a first ever Olympic diving medal.

It was China's sixth gold diving medal in London out of seven events. The only dent in China's dominance so far was Russian Ilya Zakharov's triumph in Tuesday's men's 3m springboard ahead of both Qin Kai and defending champion He Chong, which ended China's hopes of sweeping all eight golds.

"I'm very relaxed. It's like it's not the Olympic Games. I feel no high pressure, I'm relaxed," Chen said, with the Chinese flag draped around her shoulders.

"I feel very pleased to have another gold

medal for China."

It was 19-year-old Chen's fourth overall gold medal at the Olympics and she was in blistering form off the high tower.

Chen also became the fourth diver to win women's 10m platform at successive Olympic Games, joining Americans Dorothy Poynton-Hill and Patricia McCormick and China's Fu Mingxia.

She led all scorers with 86.40 on two dives -- an armstand back double somersault with one and a half twists and a back two and a half somersault with one and a half twists. Her other dives were scored 85.50, 84.80 and 79.20.

Chen, who won the individual and synchronised events as a 15-year-old at Beijing four years ago, was unchallenged in the prelims, semifinal and the final of the London platform event.

Chen earlier won the synchronised 10m platform with Wang Hao.

Broben, 16, ensured she won silver with a closing 81.60 for her back two and a half somersault with one and a half twists to claim Australia's first medal in the platform event since Chantelle Michell-Newbery's gold medal win and Loudy Tourky's bronze in the final at Athens in 2004.



China's Chen Ruolin competes in the women's 10m platform diving at the London Olympics on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP



What to WATCH

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Live from 5:30am

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Day 15