



Brazilian women grab v'ball gold

AFP, London

Brazil rallied to beat the world number one-ranked United States 3-1 Saturday and win the London Olympics women's volleyball gold medal.

In a rematch of the Beijing Olympic final, Brazil shrugged off their shaky start and again proved too strong for the Americans, winning by scores of 11-25, 25-17, 25-20, 25-17.

The Americans had looked poised to turn the tables this time, reaching the final without losing a match. Indeed the Americans had not lost a match in 2012.

Brazil, meanwhile, struggled in the group stage, losing twice in their pool but scraping into the quarterfinals in fourth place.

Once into the knockout phase they delivered two dominant performances with Sheilla Castro, Thaisa Menezes and Fabiana Claudino rounding into form.

On Saturday, the US started strongly and capitalized on a plethora of Brazil's errors. But the Brazilians regrouped for the second set and after going ahead with a narrow third-set win were full of confidence.

Jacqueline Carvalho led all scorers in the match with 18 points as the Brazilian women delivered what they hope will be the first half of a volleyball double.

Earlier Saturday, Japan claimed bronze with a 3-0 victory over South Korea (25-22, 26-24, 25-21).

Super heavyweight Joshua

AFP, London

Britain's Anthony Joshua won the men's Olympic super heavyweight (+91kgs) gold on count-back against defending champion Roberto Cammarelle of Italy after their bout finished 18-all on Sunday.

Italy immediately appealed the decision after Joshua overturned a three-point deficit heading into the final round to clinch the narrowest of victories.

Joshua, 22, only took up boxing four years ago, but the 2011 world silver medalist from Baku, Azerbaijan, added Olympic gold to his collection with victory in the final bout of the London Games.

Watford-born Joshua earned Britain's third boxing gold and their fifth medal in London following on from flyweight Nicola Adams and bantamweight Luke Campbell victories in their gold-medal bouts.

Both fighters made a conservative start with barely a punch thrown in the opening minute, until Cammarelle caught the Londoner in a corner and the pair traded blows, but the Italian came out on top to take the first round 6-5.

Things did not improve in the second for Joshua as the defending champion took 7-5 to take a 13-10 lead into the third to frustrate the home hope.

The pair traded blows in the last round, but a flurry of punches from Joshua made their mark as the Italian appeared to tire in the final round as he paid the price for holding on too many times.



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Uganda's Stephen Kiprotich celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the marathon gold in the London Olympics yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Rhythmic, relentless Russia

AFP, London



Before a sea of red, white and blue flags, Russia pursued their merciless dominance of rhythmic gymnastics by claiming their fourth consecutive Olympic group title on Sunday.

The Russian team posted a score of 57.000 points to finish above Belarus and three-time world champions Italy at London's Wembley Arena, to the delight of the many Russian supporters present.

With Evgenia Kanaeva having successfully defended her title in Saturday's individual final, Russia have now won every Olympic gold medal in the sport since the start of

the 2000 Games in Sydney.

Italy secured the world crown in 2009, 2010 and 2011 and were bidding to claim a first Olympic gold medal, but they had to content themselves with bronze, eight years on from a second-place finish in Athens.

In the final, the five-strong teams perform only two meticulously choreographed routines -- one with balls, and one with hoops and ribbons.

Russia earned a score of 28.700 for their balls display and although the Italians' energetic routine stirred their many compatriots in the audience, it was only good enough for second place.

The second routine involves three ribbons and two hoops, the gymnasts tossing the objects between each

other as they run, leap and roll around the mat.

The Russian display was a visual treat, the gymnasts sporting silver leotards with bright pink skirts and sporting ribbons coloured yellow, green and red that evoked a carnival feel.

Their sprightly performance yielded 28.300 points and it proved enough for gold, with the Italians' high-energy routine, soundtracked by Gioachino Rossini's 'William Tell Overture', only earning a mark of 27.325.

Belarus slipped in front of Italy with their routine, leaving some of the Italian gymnasts in tears but giving the Belarusians their third medal in the event after silver in Sydney and

Team USA prevail

INTERNET



Somewhere in the midst of their relaxing afternoon stroll to the gold medal, Team USA looked up and found themselves in a fight. Spain rained 3-pointers over the Americans' heads. Pau and Marc Gasol bullied the U.S. frontline. And after U.S. centre Tyson Chandler became entangled with Sergio Rodriguez in the second quarter, the little Spanish point guard stepped up and jabbed his right index finger into Chandler's face.

Rodriguez's message was clear: For all your NBA talent, for all your American dominance, you will not push us around.

Yes, Team USA's gold-medal rematch with Spain proved nearly as difficult as their battle in Beijing four years ago. Just like in 2008, the Americans finally separated themselves from Spain in the closing minutes of the fourth quarter, holding on for a 107-100 victory that gave them their second straight Olympic gold medal.

The player most responsible for delivering Sunday's victory wasn't on the U.S. roster in 2008. Kevin Durant has since become one of the NBA's biggest stars, and he played like one against Spain, totalling 30 points and nine rebounds. Durant's Oklahoma City Thunder lost the NBA Finals to the Miami Heat, but he leaves the summer with his first Olympic gold medal.

LeBron James hit a late 3-pointer to finish off Spain, and finished with 19 points and seven rebounds. He joined Michael Jordan as the only players to win the NBA regular-season MVP, NBA Finals MVP, NBA title and Olympic title in the same year.

Kobe Bryant scored 17 points in what could have been his final Olympic game. Mike Krzyzewski coached his final game for Team USA, joining Henry Iba as the only coaches to guide the U.S. to consecutive gold medals. He'll stay involved with USA Basketball, but has no plans to continue coaching the national team. Pau Gasol led Spain with 24 points.

GERMANY defend title

AFP, London



Germany won the Olympic title for the second successive time when they triumphed 2-1 against the Netherlands, the former champions, in a blood and thunder final on Saturday.

Both goals were scored by Jan Philipp Rabente, who thus denied the Dutch their dream of becoming the first nation to win both hockey golds at the same Games.

It was also frustrating for the Dutch as they had beaten the Germans in their pool match earlier in these Games.

But this is a very resilient German team, which they proved by scoring three late goals to defeat world champions Australia in the semifinals.

Though the Netherlands had reached the final with a 9-2 hammering of Great Britain, they found far fewer openings this time, especially in the first half.

Players with the skill of Florian Fuchs and Christopher Zeller for Germany, and Billy Bakker and Rogier Hofman threatened to break the defensive walls.

Eventually the three best chances of the half were created by the Dutch, but Germany scored the only goal.

First Bakker wriggled through and forced a good save from Max Weinhold, and then Bakker was set up by Robbert Klempman only for his shot to be deflected just past a post by a defender.

When Rod Weusthof was foiled only by a last ditch parry after a penalty corner it seemed that The Netherlands would make a breakthrough.

Instead Germany did, two minutes from

half-time.

Timo Wess sent a good through ball to Rabente, who forced his way past three defenders and, as he was falling, somehow levered the ball past the goalkeeper.

When Christopher Zeller hit a post for Germany early in the second half, it seemed to sting the Dutch team.

A period of prolonged pressure eventually brought two penalty corners, the second of which saw Sander de Wijn's hit find Mink van der Weerden, the tournament's leading scorer, who smashed it perfectly into a corner.

It was his eighth goal of the tournament, and his seventh from penalty corners, and with a quarter of an hour to go it jerked the match into a last phase of feverish intensity.

As the teams tired, openings began to present themselves more often. But it was Germany who found a little more from their reserves and made the killer thrust.

Rabente did well to force his way into the penalty circle, only for the Dutch defence to repel the attack.

But when Tobais Hauke launched the ball back into the danger area, two German players plunged for the ball near a post and Rabente got the golden touch.

There was still time for The Netherlands to rouse themselves for a couple of desperate last efforts, during which a heavy collision caused Germany's Timo Wess to be led off injured.

But it was not quite enough, and the finish saw the pitch strewn with exhausted, laid flat orange-shirted players, and embracing white-shirted ones. Australia scored a deserved 3-1 win over Great Britain which earned them the bronze medal.

Stunning Boudia

AFP, London



David Boudia became the first American since the great Greg Louganis to win the men's 10m platform gold with a sensational last-dive victory over China's world champion Qiu Bo at the Olympics Saturday.

Boudia held his nerve to execute a stunning back two-and-a-half somersault with two-and-a-half twists to deny the hot Chinese favourite gold with a winning 102.60 point dive.

Qiu, who had dominated the prelims and semifinal, could only come up with a 100.80 for the same dive to leave him with the silver medal, ahead of British crowd favourite Tom Daley.

Boudia, who only scraped into the semifinals in 18th place in the prelims, finished his six dives with 568.65 points to shade Qiu (566.85) by just 1.80 points. The partisan home crowd cheered wildly as Daley claimed bronze with 556.95, which he celebrated by leaping into the pool with his team-mates. But Qiu, who has dominated the event since the Beijing Games, looked shaken not to have taken gold.

Boudia's victory, following Russian Ilya Zakharov's victory in the men's 3m springboard final, left China with six of the eight diving medals, short of the coveted clean-sweep once again.

Qiu, who scored above 90 with all of his six dives, said he was not surprised to have lost the gold medal.

Boudia's unexpected victory breaks an American drought in the event since Louganis won his second and last platform title in 1988.



German players burst into jubilation after beating the Netherlands in the final of the men's hockey competition at the London Olympics yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP