

Oscar ends with a gold

AFP, London

"Blade Runner" Oscar Pistorius on Saturday ended the last full day of competition of the London Paralympics by storming to victory in his favoured event, as most of the final golds were decided.

Pistorius, 25, had been favourite to retain his T44 400m title for single and double below-the-knee amputee sprinters being the only man in the field to run under 50sec.

The result never looked in doubt from the gun, as the South African struck out on his own to lead coming into the last half-lap and was roared along the line in 46.68sec by the crowd at the packed 80,000-capacity Olympic Stadium.

Brazil meanwhile defended their unbeaten record in five-a-side football, beating France 2-0 to clinch their third gold in the three Games since the sport was introduced.

Bosnia-Herzegovina gained revenge over Iran for their defeat in Beijing four years ago, clinching the men's sitting volleyball title 3-1, while China won three out of four of the team gold medals played on Saturday in table tennis.

The haul took their overall tally in the competition to 14 out of 29 golds on offer -- one more than on home soil in 2008 -- with 21 medals in total.

In the pool, Victoria Arlen of the United States secured her first gold of the Games in the S6 100m freestyle after three silvers and a row about her classification on the eve of the Games.

Brazilian swimmer Daniel Dias, who was born without hands and feet, secured his sixth of the Games.

Canada wrestled the men's wheelchair basketball title back from their old foes Australia thanks to a dominant performance from the world's best wheelchair player, Patrick Anderson, in front of thousands of Canadian fans.

Anderson scored 34 points to help Canada win 64-58 and avenge their defeat to the Australians in the 2008 final in Beijing.

In wheelchair tennis, former military



South Africa's double-amputee sprinter Oscar Pistorius crosses the finish line to win gold in the men's T44 400m final of the London 2012 Paralympic Games at the Olympic Stadium in London on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

helicopter pilot Noam Gershon, who was injured during Israel's 2006 war with Lebanon, took the men's quad singles titles for the Jewish nation's first gold of the Games.

The 29-year-old, who received congratulations at courtside from Israel's president and sports minister, said he planned to mark the win by getting "really drunk".

But he also dedicated his medal to his grandmother, who celebrates her 88th birthday on Sunday.

Dutch tennis ace Esther Vergeer, gold medalist in the women's singles on Saturday and unbeaten in 470 matches, and Marjolein Buis beat compatriots Aniek Van Koot and Jiske Griffioen to win the women's doubles.

Shingo Kunieda of Japan meanwhile beat France's Stephane Houdet in the men's singles final.

Sunday sees the quadrennial festival of disabled sport spill out onto the streets of the British capital, with four

marathon races starting and finishing on the Mall outside Queen Elizabeth II's London residence, Buckingham Palace.

Large crowds are expected as the best wheelchair, amputee, blind and visually-impaired 26.2-mile (42-kilometre) racers go past key landmarks in the city, including the Tower of London and the British parliament.

Sunday's programme also sees defending champions Ukraine take on Russia for seven-a-side football gold and Australia face Canada in the "murderball" -- wheelchair rugby final.

From 1930 GMT, London will bid an emotional farewell to the Olympics and Paralympics, organisers said, with Coldplay headlining a closing ceremony entitled "Festival of the Flame".

Artistic director Kim Gavin told reporters that it will draw heavily on Britain's rich history of cultural, musical and seasonal festivals, taking spectators on a journey through the seasons to music

Italian GP Hamilton's

AFP, Monza

Lewis Hamilton won the Italian Grand Prix for the first time in his career here on Sunday and record his second win in the last three races.

The McLaren driver - who has been linked with a move to the Mercedes team - beat home Mexican Sergio Perez in a Sauber while World Championship leader Fernando Alonso was third in a Ferrari.

Defending world champion Sebastian Vettel failed to finish as did his Red Bull teammate Mark Webber.

Team satisfies Whatmore

AFP, Dubai

Pakistan coach Dav Whatmore on Sunday said he was happy with the team's progress in the shortest format of the game ahead of this month's World Twenty20, saying the team was responding well.

Pakistan pulled off a sensational super over win against Australia in the second Twenty20 here on Friday, taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series with the final match also in Dubai on Monday.

Whatmore said it was good to have wins on the board.

"I am very much delighted," Whatmore told reporters.

"We can't do any more than to win two out of two, it was an exciting finish but it's good to have the experience of the super over leading up to the World Twenty20."

The 58-year-old former Australian batsman said his team responded well after losing the preceding one-day series 2-1.

"We played consistent cricket and the players have responded well after the ODIs because there was just one day in between the change of the format," said Whatmore, who took over in March this year.

"There is a very strong bond between the players, that's very good and they support each other and are ready to play for each other and for the country," said Whatmore, who also coached Sri Lanka to the 1996 World Cup title.

Whatmore said he was sure of the team's combination for the World Twenty20, where Pakistan is in Group D along with Bangladesh and New Zealand.

"I am sure of the combination. We certainly need to know the conditions in Kandy where our first two matches are to pick the best combination. We don't have easy opponents because we think all the teams are

Talent hunt gains pace

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

A countrywide talent hunt programme for the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) Academy in Sylhet is gaining pace as coaches have been scouting for talented young players for the U-14 and U-18 age groups for the last nine days.

The programme is in its initial phase where 20 BFF-appointed and 40 recruited coaches are working phase by phase with around five lakh budding footballers in around 500 upazilas of the country for selecting five players from each administrative unit for the U-14 and U-18 levels, making the number of selected at around 5,000.

The detailed plans for the programme were laid out at a press conference of the Development Committee of the federation at the BFF House yesterday with committee chairman Badal Roy in chair.

"The programme will be carried out in all 64 districts except Gazipur, Chuadanga and Gaibandha who do not have a District Football Association. We expect that no aspiring footballer will be out of the

programme apart from the three districts," said Badal Roy.

These selected players from the upazila level will be sent to the district level from September 16 where they will undergo another trial to reduce the number further for the divisional level. The divisional level will feature 120 players, 10 from each division and age group, and their trial will be held in Dhaka at the presence of FIFA-appointed coaches who will select 60 players for the academy.

The academy will groom these budding footballers, under guidance of FIFA appointed coaches and a technical director, and prepare these players for the future. The academy is expected to work as a pipeline for the national team in future.

Roy expected that they could start the grooming after Eid-ul-Azha and by that time the logistics at the academy will be in place. At the moment, the academy has the basic infrastructure with dormitories, gym, swimming pool and play grounds, but equipment and logistics are not in place.

The talent hunt programme has an estimated budget of 50 lakh taka, all of which is being borne by the sponsorship money from Dhaka Bank Limited.

SA take T20 lead

Cricket

AFP, Chester-le-Street

Jacques Kallis guided South Africa to a seven-wicket win over World Twenty20 champions England in the first Twenty20 international at Chester-le-Street on Saturday.

The Proteas were in trouble at 29 for three, chasing a seemingly modest 119 for victory. But opener Kallis, returning to international duty after being rested from the drawn one-day series between the two countries, made 48 not out off 44 balls with seven fours.

Together with left-hander JP Duminy (47 not out) he shared an unbroken stand of 90 in 91 deliveries as the Proteas, who won with an over to spare, went 1-0 up in a three-match series ahead of this month's World Twenty20 in Sri Lanka.

England can expect to face plenty of spin on receptive pitches in Sri Lanka but Broad, like Kallis returning after being rested from the one-dayers, had no undue worries about his team's ability to play slow bowling.

South Africa captain AB de Villiers praised his attack, with man-of-the-match Dale Steyn taking one for 13 in four overs and spinners Robin Peterson and Johan Botha sharing four wickets, for setting up this victory.

"The bowling was brilliant, led by Dale Steyn. He bowled with a lot of pace and looked like taking wickets throughout," said de Villiers.

"We never allowed England to get momentum."

Steyn added: "I can live with bowling one-over spells. It's a lot easier than Test matches."

South Africa saw hard-hitting opener Richard Levi caught in the slips off Jade Dernbach and Twenty20 international debutant Faf du Plessis lbw to fast bowler Steven Finn.

De Villiers was then caught behind by Craig Kieswetter off Dernbach for 10.

South Africa were now 29 for three and England, all but out of the contest after their innings, were back in the game.

But if South Africa could produce one decent partnership they would win and in world class all-rounder Kallis and left-hander Duminy they had the men for the job

in the absence of the rested Hashim Amla.

Ultimately England's 118 for seven -- their third lowest total in this format -- did not give their bowlers enough of a score to defend.

Spin bowling, long regarded as the Proteas' Achilles heel, accounted for four England wickets with Botha (two for 19) and left-arm Peterson (two for 27), striking after de Villiers won the toss.

At 85 for seven, England were in danger of posting their worst Twenty20 total before an unbroken stand of 33 in 27 balls between Broad and Graeme Swann, who both finished on 18 not out, gave them a foothold in the match.

No England batsman made more than opener Kieswetter's 25.

England's collapse started with a needless run out.

Alex Hales, who made an England Twenty20 best 99 against the West Indies in June after replacing the still exiled Kevin Pietersen, charged down the pitch for a non-existent single and, turning back, was run out by Kallis's direct hit.

Kieswetter then fell when he was plumb lbw to Botha's first ball.

And Ravi Bopara, who averaged just 5.50 with the bat during the one-dayers, fell cheaply in familiar fashion when he edged Steyn to Botha at slip.

Botha then struck again when he bowled dangerman Eoin Morgan for 10, after the former Ireland left-hander bottom edged a pull-sweep.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: 118 for 7 (Kieswetter 25, Bairstow 15, Broad 18 not out, Swann 18 not out; Peterson 2-27, Botha 2-19)

SOUTH AFRICA: 119 for 3 (Kallis 48 not out; Duminy 47 not out; Dernbach 2-31)

Result: South Africa won by seven wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Dale Steyn.

Men's best finish

outplayed Turkmenistan's FWM Bahar Hallaeva and Aknur Isaeva respectively while FWM Zakia Sultana and Nazrana Khan Eva lost to FWM Gozel Atabaeva and Ogulgerek Atabaeva.

Eva was the best female performer for Bangladesh in the tournament as she collected 6.5 points from 10 matches. Russia became champion and China became runner-up while Ukraine finished third.

Brown interim Kenya coach

AFP, Nairobi

Former Zimbabwean cricket coach Robin Brown has taken temporary charge of Kenya to prepare for this month's ICC Intercontinental Cup and two one-day series in Namibia, officials said.

Brown, who was appointed the country's head of cricket development in May, fills the position left vacant after Mike Hesson quit to take up the post of the New Zealand coach.

The Zimbabwean said it was unfortunate that security problems had deprived Kenya home advantage against Namibia, after the International Cricket Council (ICC) relocated the matches to Windhoek, but he believes the team should still put their act together.

Not just

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women's cricket team felt that the home side were merely a 'catch away from a series victory.'

"We played good cricket, but there are a few areas where we need to improve and the fielding is one of them. I think the girls were over-awed at the thought of a series victory and the loss in the second game dented their spirits," said Maben.

Mignon Du Preez, the South Africa skipper, was pleased with a rare success in the subcontinent.

"This is one of the rare wins that South Africa has had in the subcontinent and we are really happy. It's not very easy to play in these conditions," she said.

"We were a little tired because of all the travelling in the initial stages and we also had trouble adjusting to the pitch. But we have improved a lot after the first game and I am happy with the performance," she added.

She, however, stated that the series victory wasn't just a 'walk in the park' and that the visiting side was tested. "The Bangladeshis played some good cricket. They would have been a lot more competitive had they held on to their catches," said Du Preez.

Having lost the final game of the ODI series in such an emphatic manner, Bangladesh will hope that their players can recover in time for the T20 series which starts tomorrow.

Tigers lose final T20

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Pacer Shafiqul Islam did the early damages by sending back openers Adrian Barath and William Perkins in a tight and incisive spell, while left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak dented the home team further with the wickets of Navin Stewart, Justin Gullen and captain Darren Ganga.

T&T however rallied after that, building their recovery around a solid run-a-ball 40 by Sherwin Ganga, who first built a 39-run sixth wicket stand with Jason Mohammed and then an unbeaten 73-run seventh wicket partnership with Yannick Otley.

Otley was the one who provided the impetus during his 27-ball 52 which was punctuated by four sixes and a boundary. What seemed a lost cause for the home team was transformed into a thrilling win by the seventh wicket pair who romped home with three balls to spare.

Other than Razzak and Shafiqul, all Bangladesh bowlers were put to the sword with Shakib Al Hasan in particular coming in for harsh punishment, going for 29 runs in 2.3 overs.

Earlier, Mohammad Ashraful and Nasir Hossain did the bulk of the scoring as the Tigers reached a modest but competitive 124 for nine after 20 overs. Ashraful got BCB XI off to a good start, striking four boundaries and a six in his 21-ball 30, but after he was bowled by Otley with the score on 40, it started a procession of Bangladesh batsman to and from the pavilion. Captain Mushfiqur Rahim and star players Shakib and Mahmudullah Riyad left within twenty runs of each other, and the score would have been much less but for a 32-run sixth wicket stand between Nasir and Ziaur Rahman. Nasir remained unbeaten on 31 off 37 balls when the innings ended, while Sherwin Ganga and Dave Mohammed took three wickets each for the home team.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BCB XI: 124-9 in 20 overs (Ashraful 30, Shakib 10, Mahmudullah 12, Nasir 31 not out, Zia 13; D. Mohammed 3-17, S. Ganga 3-20, Otley 2-17, Emrit 1-18)

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO: 129-6 in 19.3 overs (J. Mohammed 24, S. Ganga 40 not out, Otley 52 not out; Razzak 3-17, Shafiqul 2-12, Abul 1-21)

Result: Trinidad & Tobago won by four wickets.

It's Novak

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Serb and he won the next three sets easily after losing the first. And the victory by the Serb in the championship match would mean 30 out of the last 31 majors have been won by either Djokovic, Roger Federer or Rafael Nadal.

"We were all praying for less wind today. He handled it better than I did yesterday but I came into today a different player," said Djokovic.

"Against Andy, there will be no clear favourite. He's going for a first Grand Slam and will be very motivated. Hopefully we will both come up with our best tennis."

Ferrer quickly wrapped up the opening set on Sunday's resumption before Djokovic, who hadn't dropped a set in the tournament, made the fourth seed pay, racing into a 5-0 lead in the second, even saving three break points in the fifth game in the process.

Ferrer, playing in his second US Open semi-final and bidding to make the final at a major at the 40th attempt, saved three set points in the seventh game before the champion lev-

12 in the theatre of dreams

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"Now I have to learn the things attentively in the Manchester School," he said through tears.

Of the 12 lucky footballers, there were three youngsters from BKSP and at the nomination of Mahmudul Hasan Kiron the entire student body of the sports institute broke into applause. The BKSP student who hails from Sherpur raced to first embrace the local coaches before going to the dais.

Kiron dedicated his achievement to one of his friends who had presented him with the Airtel SIM which he had used to register his name for the competition.

"I was a member of a BFF squad which was supposed to play in Denmark but the tour was unfortunately cancelled and I was very disappointed. I later registered myself in the Airtel programme but didn't expect to be one of the lucky 12. Now my dream has finally come true and I will travel to England," said Kiron.

Mashud Uddin Ahmed and Ripon Kumar Das, both BKSP students, were also part of the 12.

Mashud, who is called Messi by his BKSP teammates, and Ripon had both been continually lauded by their teammates in the Airtel squads in the final and it came as no surprise that both found their way into the England-bound squad.

"I don't know how I managed to take part in the three-hour practice session but I tried

my best. Already nine out of 12 names had been announced and I was thinking that my name would not be called. But thankfully I was number 10," said Ripon who hails from Faridpur.

The vast majority who did not make the final list looked understandably upset initially, but they cheered up soon enough and were seen congratulating the ones who had made it.

"I think that it is not about getting a chance in this team, rather the important thing is that we have learnt from foreign coaches and perhaps it will help us become better footballers in the future," said Mozammel Hossain Babu adding that he felt that the best 12 had been chosen.

"All 200 of us are the best footballers in the country and it is also a kind of pride for us. But we now want the opportunity to play. I will urge the football federation officials to include us in the different age-level teams. That will make us happy," said Anik of Barisal.

Half of the 12 selected booters have been in the system for long as they have played different age-level tournaments for junior national teams and some of them are already students of BKSP.

The selected booters are Mohammad Sujoy of Kishorganj, Shafayet Hossain Munna of Cox's Bazar, Mahmudul Hasan Kiron of Sherpur, Saeed Rakib Khan Evan of Barisal, Faisal Ahmed of Rajshahi, Mizanur Rahman of Chittagong, Razib Hossain of Chittagong, Ibrahim Babu of Cox's Bazar, Nadim Mahmud Limon of Tangail, Ripon Kumar Das of Faridpur, Mashududdin Ahmed of Chittagong and Mohammad Mithu of Narayanganj.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 25 mins and a word bank at the bottom.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters ZYUIAKGL GR BFGLF, AD KTB, YCYZD JGROKY FMIJY FTJ VM FTCY T CYZTRQT TVVTLFYQ: UMZLF-IOTK.

CRYPTOQUIP

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: HAVING INJURED ITSELF AND BEING UNABLE TO JUMP, THE FROG IS SUFFERING FROM LEAP DEPRIVATION. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals H