

China’s clean sweep dream in diving on track

AFP, PARIS

Yang Hao and Lian Junjie played their parts with aplomb in China’s bid to take all eight diving golds on offer by winning the men’s synchronised 10 metre platform event on Monday.

The pair led the event from the first round and finished on 490.35 points - becoming the second Chinese diving pair to top the podium so far at the Paris Olympics.

Britain’s Tom Daley was dethroned as Olympic champion on Monday but took an emotional silver medal with partner Noah Williams with 463.44 points, followed by Canada’s Ryan Wiens and Nathan Zsombor-Murray who won bronze.

Yang, 26, and 23-year-old Lian have dominated the world championships in the last three years in the event but it was their first time to stand on top



of the Olympic podium.

The Chinese pair, the 7th to start, kicked off their routines with a forward dive in pike position and immediately established their lead.

Their skill in their last dive and the most difficult routine in their programme – the forward four and a half somersault with a near-perfect entry - landed the event’s highest score on Monday, 103.23 points.

“When we first saw the draw that the British team would dive right before us, we felt some pressure as they were also an excellent pair, but we did better today and that was how we won,” Lian told reporters.



Heat warning issued for Paris

France’s meteorological agency has issued a weather warning for Paris and the surrounding areas with storms and highs of 35 degrees Celsius expected on Tuesday as the capital hosts the Olympic Games. The agency put in place a “yellow alert” – the second of four levels – which advises people to “be attentive” to the impact of heat when playing sports or engaging in other physical activity.

Triathlon-Swimming training cancelled for second day over Seine pollution

Paris Olympics organisers cancelled the triathlon swimming training session in the Seine river for a second day on Monday, 24 hours before the men’s race, after heavy rain late last week increased both pollution levels and the speed of the current. Fifty-five triathletes are scheduled to line up today on a floating pontoon and dive into the Seine, marking the first time athletes have competed in the river at an Olympics since 1900.

Biles back at practice after injury scare



Simone Biles is doing well and was back at practice on Monday, a day after the American made a triumphant return to the Olympic stage despite being hobbled by pain in her left calf, her mother Nellie told NBC’s Today Show. The four-times Olympic champion left the competition area on Sunday after performing on her first apparatus. Despite the nagging pain, Biles was dominant, leading the U.S. to a huge win in team qualifying while also qualifying first in the all-around before an ecstatic, star-studded crowd at the Bercy Arena.

Dealing with popularity a challenge for Lyles

AFP, Paris

Noah Lyles says he is relishing the chance to perform before a packed stadium at the Paris Olympics three years after running in eerie silence at the pandemic-hit Tokyo Games.

But the US sprint king tipped to be one of the faces of the Paris Games said Monday that his growing fame has become a problem in the Olympic Village.

Lyles, the reigning world 100m and 200m champion, is aiming to emulate his idol Usain Bolt by completing a sprint double in Paris, following a bitterly disappointing campaign in Tokyo.

Yet the charismatic American revealed that his preparations for Saturday’s opening rounds of the 100m have been disrupted by his increasing popularity, boosted recently by the Netflix documentary “Sprint”.

“I’ve become kind of popular in the village and unfortunately that has come with its own set of challenges in being able to find my own space within the village, whether that’s eating or training in the gym,” Lyles told a press conference on Monday.

The 27-year-old, who has openly talked about his struggles with mental health and depression in recent years, said he has been forced to eat meals at unusual times in order to find peace and quiet.

For now, Lyles has no plans to quit the village but he hopes in future more can be done to provide quiet areas for athletes.



“I know some athletes like to leave the village and have their own hotels but I like to enjoy the whole Olympic event. But it has come with its own challenge of finding a safe place.

“It’s been kind of hard for me to find that place. I don’t want to leave but it’s definitely something I feel like after this Olympics I’m going to have to have conversations higher up than me about it,” he said.

“I want to enjoy the Olympics but just being able to find a safe place has been a little difficult these past few days as I’m trying to prepare and dive deep into my mental state.”

Despite his apparent unease with life in the village, though, Lyles cannot wait to parade his talents before a packed house at the 69,000-capacity Stade de France – a stark contrast to Tokyo, where Covid-19 restrictions meant athletes performed in an empty stadium.

“I’m an emotional person,” Lyles said. “And when I got to the finals in Tokyo and we walked into that empty stadium, and we’re all just standing behind the blocks. That’s usually the moment in my head where I’m like ‘It’s showtime!’

“And I just remember thinking ‘This is not it. This is not fun. This is not cool. This is not what I wanted.’ And it sucked.”

Lyles left Tokyo with only a bronze medal from the 200m and later broke down in tears talking to reporters when reflecting on his disappointing Olympic campaign.

BFF expects FIFA go-ahead on Centre of Excellence

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation has said it expects a positive response from football’s world governing body, FIFA, over its proposed Centre of Excellence in Cox’s Bazar following completion of assessment over the project’s environmental impact.

According to the federation’s general secretary, Enran Hossain Tushar, the BFF received positive recommendations on the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) from the Department of Disaster Science and Climate Resilience of Dhaka University and send the same to FIFA earlier this month.

The BFF spokesperson said they would start construction work on the 20-acre land project in Ramu upazila of the coastal district once given the go-ahead by FIFA, expected by the end of next month.

The government had allocated the land in Khuniya Palong reserved forest to BFF in July 2022, much to the frustration and anger for environmentalists and wild life enthusiasts.

FIFA, after scrutinising media reports and through own assessment, asked the BFF to conduct an independent environmental assessment in February this year.

“We have received a positive assessment report,” Tushar told reporters yesterday.

“The salient recommendations of the report are: We cannot build any infrastructure outside the designated 20-acre land; we will have to plant more trees than those that will be cut; we will have to create some vegetation for the elephants and create a water body for reptiles. We will also have to integrate the local populace with the project, either through creating employment opportunities for the adults or through giving sporting opportunities for their children.

“We have already sent the recommendations to FIFA in the beginning of the month and we expect an instruction from FIFA by the end of August,” Tushar added.

The Centre of Excellence is supposed to be a residential training facility, under a FIFA project worth 3.6 million dollars, featuring two standard-sized football pitches apart from a four-storey dormitory and medical facilities, among other things.

Bijoy falls in nervous 90s in practice match

SPORTS REPORTER

BCB Green opener Anamul Haque Bijoy fell on nervous nineties while Yasir Ali and Mushfiqur Rahim scored fifties on Day One of the three-day practice match against BCB Red at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram on Monday.

Bijoy made 90 off 185 balls with seven fours and a six before he was trapped in front by pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib just after the tea break.

The opening day’s proceedings were interrupted by rain after the same over. BCB Green were 220 for five at that time and the day’s play was called off two hours later due to bad light.

Despite losing two quick wickets to Sakib (3-35) after being sent into bat first, Bijoy steadied the ship by adding 95 runs for the third wicket with Yasir.

Yasir made 58 off 71 balls while Mushfiqur hit three fours and as many sixes for his 53-ball 51 before he became pacer Khaled Ahmed’s first scalp in the innings.

Out of the box thinking earns HP win over Shaheens

SPORTS REPORTER

“All’s well that ends well,” said Bangladesh Cricket Board High Performance Unit’s captain Mahmudul Hasan Joy, whose maiden five-wicket haul in first-class cricket earned his side a five-run win over Pakistan Shaheens in the second four-day game in Darwin, Australia yesterday.

The match swung in the balance throughout Day four, testing both teams resolve but in the end the HP were able to find a way, albeit a bit unconventional, to get the job done.

The HP Unit required six wickets to win while having 160 runs left to defend on the final day and expectations were that the pace trio of Ripon Mondol, Rejaur Rahman Raja and Maruf Mridha, who collectively claimed eight wickets in the first innings, will be leading the charge.

But on the day, it was the part-time off-spin of Joy that won the HP Unit the game.

Joy, who had broken a 96-run opening stand the previous day, first sent back two set batters in Tayyab Tahir (43) and Omair Yousuf (45).



Later, when tail-enders Khurram Shahzad and Mohammad Ali were running away with the game, having formed a 57-run stand for the eighth wicket, Joy turned the game around once again by removing both batters in consecutive overs.

Selector Hannan Sarkar, who is with the HP outfit in Australia, felt that Joy bowling his part-time off-spin with the second new ball won the HP Unit the match.

“We normally use pacers from both ends when we take the new ball [available after 80 overs]. But in this game the pacers didn’t get the breakthroughs with the new ball, Joy did. The batters played for the turn but the new ball doesn’t turn, it goes straight on so they missed the line of the ball,” Hannan told The Daily Star yesterday.

With the win, HP Unit also drew the two-match series as they had lost the first match against the Shaheens by 149 runs.

But their gritty performance in the second game and their willingness to use an unconventional method to win brought a pleasing end to the red-ball part of their Australia tour.

Hathurusingha’s ‘different style’ a problem for Tigers?

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon all but laid bare the intricacies of the Tigers’ dressing room and the inherent culture of the country’s cricket during his press conference on Sunday, admitting that coaching style of head coach Chandika Hathurusingha was a mismatch in Bangladesh’s circumstances as he did not give any preferential treatment to star players.

Hathurusingha in the past had differences with the likes of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad in his first stint and his second stint has seen him falling out with Tamim Iqbal.

“I agree that his [Hathurusingha] man management style and communication is totally different. His biggest problem is his difficulty in adjusting to our country’s culture,” the BCB president said on Hathurusingha, whose contract will run till the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy.

“He doesn’t give anyone special consideration, which is a big problem. In our country, you have to give some [special consideration]... especially for our more



experienced players. But I didn’t hear any complaint from the rest of the [T20] World Cup squad and most of them praised him,” he said.

When the BCB appointed Hathurusingha for a second stint, despite the ungainly manner in which the Sri Lankan had left the Bangladesh job in 2017, they were hoping he would act as a strict disciplinary, like he had done in his first stint. However, now there appears to be mixed feelings following two failed World Cup campaigns.

“When he came [for the first time] and we interviewed him, I understood that he is a

very strict person, like a strict principle. I felt it was important to bring discipline,” Nazmul said on Hathurusingha’s appointment in 2014 which was the precursor for his reappointment. “His analysis and planning were also brilliant. He would plan which ball we should use on what type of wicket against which opponent. We got success at that time and were happy with him,” he added.

After falling back on proven methods, the BCB has now come to the realisation that cricket has moved onto a different plateau from 2014-2017 and the sluggish pitches used for short-term success at that time have directly contributed to current batting problems. But man management appears to be crux of the issue now and Papon said that players now have a different outlook on coaches after working under Steve Rhodes and Russell Domingo.

“Later when Hathurusingha arrived it was difficult for him to adjust and I am not denying it. I think the board should have been more involved and have more communication with the players and understand the players,” he said, suggesting the BCB has a culture and management style issue to solve.