

Duplantis fulfils childhood dream

AFP, Paris

Armand Duplantis says the defence of his Olympic pole vault crown in world record style came as no surprise as he had visualised it a "million times" when practising as a child in his own backyard.

Coached by his American father Greg, a former pole vaulter, Duplantis is a product of a track and field-crazy family which had their own vaulting apparatus in the garden.

They were all present in the stadium and it was to them that Duplantis hurtled after sailing over 6.25 metres with no "pre-canned nonsense".

"That's just overflowed with emotions, freaking out," said Duplantis, the new record improving his previous best by 1cm in front of a delirious 69,000-capacity crowd at the Stade de France on Monday night.

"I've been fortunate enough to do it several times now, but every time the feeling is kind of the same. This was a more extreme version.

"When I'm going over the bar it's like AI (artificial intelligence), it doesn't feel real. That was more hysteria and freaking out."

Having started vaulting at the age of four in his backyard on a makeshift runway and landing pad, Duplantis revealed his *deja vu* moment.



"I've visualised this moment a million times in my life. I mean, this is every time I was in my backyard," he said of his world record vault.

"I would just imagine that the bar was at the world record mark. It was the Olympic final -- that's pretty much exactly what I visualised."

Duplantis was happy to bask in the moment and not be drawn into looking too far into the future after his success. It was the ninth time the Swede had

broken the world record, an astonishing achievement given he is still only 24 years old.

The silver medalist on the night, American Sam Kendricks, managed 5.95m, a full 30cm short of Duplantis' mark.

What next for two-time Olympic champion Duplantis, who is also twice world outdoor and indoor gold medalist, three-time European champion and a three-time Diamond League winner?

"Probably one of the moments where I cared least about the future is right now, soaking up this moment right now," said Duplantis.

"How can I care about anything else? When things align the way they did for me, you've got to enjoy those kinds of things.

"I try to enjoy as best as I can." Duplantis could have waited until back on the circuit for a tilt at the world record, for which prize money is given, but he chose to attempt it on track and field's biggest stage.

"The biggest dream since a kid was to break the world record at the Olympics," he said.

"I've been able to do that in front of the most ridiculous crowd I've ever competed in front of.

"If I don't beat this moment in my career, then I'm pretty pretty okay with that. You know, I don't think you really can get much better than what just happened. So it's dang amazing."

Of his final vault, Duplantis said he was "just trying to control the energy rather than let it control me".

"I didn't really have anything to lose either. I'd already won and broke the Olympic record, I was already Olympic champion for a second time."



TODAY'S GOLD RUSH

ATHLETICS Marathon Race Walk Relay Mixed 11:30 pm	SKATEBOARDING Men's Park 9:30 pm
MEN'S DISCUSS THROW 12:25 am (Thursday) Men's 400m final 1:20 am (Thursday)	CYCLING TRACK Men's Team Pursuit 10:33 pm Women's Team Pursuit 10:57 pm
MEN'S 3000M STEEPLECHASE 1:43 am (Thursday)	WRESTLING Men's Greco-Roman 77 kg Men's Greco-Roman 97 kg Women's Freestyle 50 kg Starts from 10:15 pm
SPORT CLIMBING Women Speed 4:54 pm Sailing Mixed Multihull Medal Race 6:43 pm Mixed Dinghy Medal Race 7:00 pm	ARTISTIC SWIMMING Team Acrobatic Routine 11:30 pm
WEIGHTLIFTING Men's 61 kg 7:00 pm Women's 49 kg 11:30 pm	TAEKWONDO Women's 49 kg 1:19 am (Thursday) Men's 58 kg 1:37 am (Thursday)
	BOXING Men's 63.5 kg 2:34 am (Thursday) Men's 80 kg 2:51 am (Thursday)

Unaccommodating Paris restaurant apologies to Serena

REUTERS, Paris

A luxury Parisian hotel has apologised to tennis great Serena Williams after she complained, in a social media post seen by millions, that she and her family were turned away from its restaurant on Monday.

"Yikes @peninsulaparis I've been denied access to rooftop to eat in a empty restaurant of nicer places but never with my kids. Always a first," Williams said on X.

Williams, a four-times Olympic gold medalist, was one of the Olympic flame's torchbearers during the Paris Games' opening ceremony. She is also among celebrities who have come out to see U.S. gymnastics star Simone Biles compete in the Games.

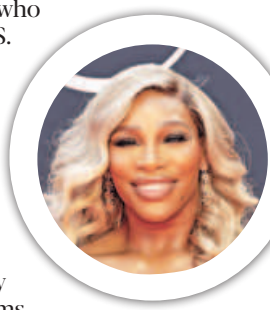
Her post was seen by more than 4 million viewers.

The Peninsula Paris, a five-star hotel whose gourmet restaurant offers a view of the Eiffel tower, swiftly responded: "Dear Mrs. Williams, Please accept our deepest apologies for the disappointment you encountered tonight. Unfortunately, our rooftop bar was indeed fully booked and the only unoccupied tables you saw belonged to our gourmet restaurant, L'Oiseau Blanc, which was fully reserved."

A second message followed, saying: "We have always been honored to welcome you and will always be to welcome you again."

Some of the responses to William's post were supportive, saying it was unacceptable that the restaurant didn't make room for her, others said that celebrities have no more right to a fully booked restaurant than anyone else.

Williams was much more positive after the Games' July 26 opening ceremony, claiming it to be an 'unforgettable' event on social media platform X.



Brazil's Alexandre makes historic debut

REUTERS, Paris

Brazil's Bruna Alexandre smashes and chops just like the other table tennis players at the Paris Olympics but when serving she uses the paddle in her left hand to throw the ball high.

That move, which now seems easy and natural, was what a seven-year-old Alexandre once struggled with the most as a one-armed girl who wanted to play the sport.

On Monday, she made history as the first Brazilian to compete at the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Alexandre's first Olympic journey was cut short by an unfortunate draw, with Brazil on Monday facing the world's top South Korean team in the first round, but she managed to put up two good performances in losing her doubles and singles matches.

"It wasn't the result I was hoping for, but we're very satisfied with what we achieved," said 29-year-old Alexandre after Brazil lost 3-1.

"We didn't give up until the end. Korea is one of the best teams. I managed to score some points, which made me very happy personally, and I'm very proud of my team for fighting until the end."

At three months old, Alexandre lost her arm due to a blood clot. She picked up table tennis aged seven and went on to win several championships plus a bronze medal



at the Paralympic Games in Rio 2016 and silver at Tokyo in 2021.

"Never give up on your dreams, regardless of whether you have one leg or one arm. Believe that everything is possible. After 22 years of my career today I'm here at the Olympics," she said.

Alexandre added that she was now eyeing gold in the Paralympics

and plans to come back to the Olympics in Los Angeles in 2028.

"There were other athletes who managed to play in the Olympic Games as well. I think this can help not only the sport but also the inclusion of people with disabilities," she said.

The Paralympics run from Aug. 28 to Sept. 8.



Abahani tent looted, vandalised

SPORTS REPORTER

The club tent of Abahani Limited, one of the most popular sporting clubs of the country, was vandalised and looted by miscreants a few hours after the resignation of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday.

The club was founded in 1972 by Sheikh Kamal, the eldest son of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and younger brother of former PM, who fled to India following her resignation.

Videos and photos shared by the club's press wing showed a trail of destruction at the players' dormitory and its offices, where documents were scattered and furniture were vandalised. The miscreants had also set fire to a portrait of Sheikh Kamal in front of the dormitory.

"Some miscreants entered the club premises in the evening and vandalised everything. They even took away tables, chairs, computers and documents," said a club employee seeking anonymity.

"The miscreants, who are probably from the Modhubazar, Shangkar and Rayerbazar areas, also took away approximately 500 trophies of football, cricket, hockey, table tennis, handball and volleyball," the official said, adding that no one was hurt in the incident as there was no players or officials at the dormitory during that time. In the incident as there was no players at the dormitory at that time.

Uncertain times in BCB

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has fallen into uncertain times after the fall of the Awami League government, still quite a few board officials returned to work yesterday as the BCB like the rest of the country tried to return to some semblance of normalcy.

The BCB has its hands full at the moment with many assignments lined up for various teams which includes the national team's tour of Pakistan in August.

The ICC is also reportedly monitoring the situation in Bangladesh and mulling whether or not to shift the ICC Women's T20 World Cup, set to begin in Bangladesh in October, elsewhere.

Members of the Army observed the BCB premises during a visit yesterday and assured the BCB of providing security in case of any trouble.

Although many BCB officials were absent, which includes president Nazmul Hassan Papon, those who were present yesterday said they are working according to the plans which had already been laid out.

The women's team players underwent individual training sessions in Mirpur even though their practice sessions for the T20 World Cup will officially begin on August 10, informed head of operations of BCB's women's wing Habibul Bashar.

Bashar also said that a decision on the tournament taking place in Bangladesh

is likely by August 10.

The women's National Cricket League (WNCL), which will be played in the T20 format to help prepare the cricketers for the upcoming tournament, is set to begin on August 19, and Bashar saw very little scope of that getting postponed.

"I talked to the players and told them not to stop practicing. The WNCL is very important ahead of the World Cup," Bashar told The Daily Star yesterday.



"We can't postpone [WNCL] since Sri Lanka A are also touring. It's not finalised yet but it has to take place in the first week of September. So, we can't postpone the WNCL," he added.

BCB chief executive officer Nizamuddin Chowdhury was absent in the BCB offices yesterday but when contacted, he told The Daily Star that no decision has come through on the present governance of the board, "The situation is still a bit uncertain and it's still too early. It's best to observe," he said.

Plans for the men's A team's departure for Pakistan are being made, "We were set to depart today [yesterday] but that has been postponed. But in 48 hours we will make a decision," Nizamuddin added.

At around 11:00 AM, a group of organisers and club officials gathered in front of the BCB premises under the banner of 'Cricket Organisers'.

Led by former joint secretary and

governance committee chairman Rafiqul Islam Babu along with other club officials, they showed up demanding justice for prevalent irregularities and corruption in the board.

Even though the incumbent board has not been dissolved, they also talked to officials yesterday, "After coming here we saw many are absent and we didn't like that. We want the officials not to interrupt the proceedings and the tours should go on as per schedule," Rafiqul told the media yesterday.

HP lose big against Pak Shaheens

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh High Performance (HP) unit finished their campaign in the Bi-Lateral 50-over series in Australia on a losing note, suffering a crushing eight-wicket defeat to Pakistan Shaheens at the DXC Arena in Darwin on Tuesday.

Asked to bat first, the HP unit lost half of their side for just 32 runs in 9.4 overs and they hardly could recover from the early collapse, getting bundled out for just 78 runs in 24.3 overs.

For the HP unit, Parvez Hossain Emon was the highest scorer, making 19 runs.

For Pakistan, Mohammad Imran Jnr finished with 3-22.

Pacer Ripon Mondol removed Sahibzada Farhan (0) in the second over before Usman Khan and Abdul Faseeh shared a 48-run stand for the second wicket to take them close to victory.

Faseeh soon became Ripon's second scalp in the contest but Usman's unbeaten knock of 39 off 45 balls, aided by Tayyab Tahir's 17 off 36 balls not out, guided them to 79-2 in 17 overs.

This was Shaheen's back-to-back win in the series after they beat NT Strike by four wickets in their opening match. Bangladesh HP unit earlier clinched a massive 112-run win over NT Strike.

SHORT CORNER



Alvarez set to join Atletico in 95m euro deal

Julian Alvarez is set to depart Manchester City for Atletico Madrid according to widespread reports on Tuesday with the English champions set to bank a huge profit on the Argentine in a deal worth up to 95 million euros (£81 million). The 24-year-old, who scored 36 times in two seasons at City, cost the Citizens just £14 million when he signed from River Plate in January 2022.

Romania turn to 79-year-old Lucescu for World Cup qualification

Romania turned back the clock on Tuesday when they appointed 79-year-old Mircea Lucescu as their new national coach -- 38 years after he left the post. Lucescu, who managed the side between 1981 and 1986, takes over from Edward Iordanescu, who stepped down after taking Romania to the last 16 of Euro 2024 in Germany. His club coaching career has taken him across Romania, Italy where he was in charge of Ronaldo at Inter Milan, Turkey and Ukraine, winning over 30 titles in the course of his career.

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