



GoodSport NEWS

S R I L A N K A O L Y M P I C W E E K L Y N E W S B U L L E T I N

OLYMPIC NEWS

Equestrian – the first to jump the Olympic hurdle



National Olympic Committee celebrates Olympic Day virtually

The date June 23 is more than significant to the entire Olympic fraternity. In short, the Olympians consider this day as their birth anniversary and over the years Sri Lanka also plays a pivotal role in the proceedings.

However, owing to the prevailing pandemic conditions the proceedings have been conducted under strict health guidelines virtually, but with all the frills connected to keep the interest and the spirit of Olympism intact.

The proceedings got underway with B.L.H. Perera, Programme Director, NOC Sri Lanka making his opening remark on the topic "Olympism -

and the Birth of Modern Olympic Movement".

National Olympic Committee Sri Lanka President Suresh Subramaniam who began his speech by greeting the viewers home and abroad said that it was another sombre moment to the whole world owing to the pandemic situation, but they would strive to work towards the light at the end of the tunnel.

He added "This is another milestone in the Olympic Calendar – 23rd June being the Olympic Day Celebration. We in Sri Lanka are very grateful to the Olympic Committee – one is for permitting the entire world to participate in the upcoming Olympic

Games during these challenging times and also we are grateful for Tokyo 2020 for allowing the athletes to excel."

The NOC SL President further said "the Olympic Day Run is one of the important events in the Olympic calendar celebrated by all Olympic Nations over the years.

This year too we have got caught to the pandemic as a result we are having this event on a virtual basis and I am ever so grateful for the rest of the world who are participating in our Olympic day celebrations.

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I also would like to emphasise this year we have six disciplines from which one has qualified; it being equestrian.

I would also like to congratulate all the participants who have qualified especially equestrian who have done so on merit and the other five on a tripartite (Wildcard) basis, being the best in their respective disciplines.

Among the noteworthy features in this year's programme there was the first ever Olympic Day song composed and sung by Mario Ananda.



Hello. I am Matsushita Hiroaki, the Mayor of Sammu City.

The day's proceedings were added with an international flavour when messages from international leaders and profes-

sionals which included the IOC President Thomas Bach, Mayor of Hashima City His Lordship Satoshi Matsui - Mayor, Hashima City, Japan and His Lordship Hiroaki Matsushita - Mayor, Sammu city, Japan, Mr. Brian Lewis - President, Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee, Dr. Alexis Lyras - President of Humanity for Olympism alliance, His Lordship Chen Weiqiang - Deputy Secretary General of Asian Games Organizing Committee, and Vice Mayor of Hangzhou who felicitated the NOC SL for conducting this virtual spectacle.



Chen Weiqiang
Deputy Secretary General of HAGOC
Vice Mayor of Hangzhou

Deputy Secretary General

Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games Qualifier in Equestrian.



I am Satoshi Matsui, the Mayor of Hashima City, Gifu Prefecture, Japan.



Trans weightlifter Laurel Hubbard is named in New Zealand's Olympic team

The New Zealand weightlifter Laurel Hubbard is set to make history and headlines after being confirmed as the first transgender athlete to be selected to compete at an Olympic Games.

The 43-year-old will be a live medal contender when she competes in the women's super heavyweight category on 2 August.

But Hubbard's inclusion remains controversial, and will disappoint those who believe she has an unfair advantage over her rivals.

Hubbard, who won silver at the 2017 world championships and finished sixth at the 2019 edition after recovering from a serious arm injury at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, said she was delighted to have been selected.

"I am grateful and humbled by the kindness and support that has been given to me by so many New Zealanders," Hubbard said in a statement.

"When I broke my arm at the Commonwealth Games three years ago, I was advised that my sporting career had likely reached its end.

But your support, your encouragement, and your 'aroha' [affection] carried me through the darkness.

"The last eighteen months has shown us all that there is strength in kinship, in community, and in working together towards a common purpose," Hubbard added. "The 'mana' [honour] of the silver fern comes from all of you and I will wear it with pride."

Under IOC guidelines issued in November 2015, athletes who transition from male to female are allowed to compete in the women's category without requiring surgery to remove their testes, provided their total testosterone level in serum is kept below 10 nanomoles per litre for at least 12 months – a rule followed by the IWF.

However, a number of scientific papers have recently shown people who have undergone male puberty retain significant advantages in power and strength even after taking medication to

suppress their testosterone levels. Hubbard lived as a male for 35 years, and did not compete in international weightlifting.

But since transitioning she has won several elite titles.

The New Zealand Olympic Committee chief executive, Kereyn Smith, said Hubbard would be welcomed to the New Zealand team.

"As well as being among the world's best for her event, Laurel has met the IWF eligibility criteria including those based on IOC guidelines for transgender athletes," she said.

"We acknowledge that gender identity in sport is a highly sensitive and complex issue requiring a balance between human rights and fairness on the field of play.

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“As the New Zealand team, we have a strong culture of ‘manaaki’ [respect] and inclusion and respect for all.

We are committed to supporting all eligible New Zealand athletes and ensuring their mental and physical wellbeing, along with their high-performance needs, while preparing for and competing at the Olympic Games are met.”

The county’s weightlifting federation president, Richie Patterson, added that Hubbard had shown “grit and perseverance in her return from a significant injury and overcoming the challenges in building back confidence on the competition platform.”



Laurel Hubbard competing at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Australia’s Gold Coast, where she suffered a serious injury.

“Laurel is an astute student of the sport and technically very good with the lifts. We look forward to supporting her in her final preparations towards Tokyo.” Some of Hubbard’s rivals, including the Belgian weightlifter Anna Vanbellinghen, have previously claimed she will have an unfair advantage.

“Anyone that has trained weightlifting at a high level knows this to be true in their bones: this particular situation is unfair to the sport and to the athletes,” Vanbellinghen said recently.

Vanbellinghen, who competes in the same +87kg division as the New Zealander, stressed she fully supports the transgender community and that her comments were not a personal criticism of Hubbard.



Felix books Olympic berth, Bromell storms to 100 win

Alyson Felix punched her ticket to a fifth Olympic games while Trayvon Bromell cemented his status as favourite to succeed Usain Bolt as world's fastest man with victory in the 100m at the US track and field trials in Oregon.

The 35-year-old Felix, the only woman in history to win six Olympic track gold medals, produced a signature display to snatch second in the 400m at Hayward Field and clinch her place at next month's Tokyo Games.

Felix, who resumed her track and field career two years ago after life-threatening complications arising from the premature birth of her daughter, looked to be fading out of contention coming down the stretch.

But the 13-time World Championship gold medallist dug deep to reel in the field and claim second place, a result which was greeted with the loudest roar of the night.

"Man, it has been a fight to get here and one thing I know how to do is fight, and I just did that all the way home," said an elated Felix, whose time of 50.02 seconds was her fastest in the event since 2017.

Quanera Hayes -- another returning mother -- won in 49.78sec while Wadeline Jonathas claimed the other ticket to Tokyo after coming third in 50.03.

Felix, who will retire after next month's Olympics, said she hoped her qualification would send a message to other mothers.

"I think society tells us a lot of times if you have a child your best moments are behind you but that's absolutely not the case," Felix said.

- Wire-to-wire Bromell -

Elsewhere on Sunday, Bromell blasted to a wire-to-wire victory in the 100m, winning in 9.80sec.

The 25-year-old from Florida, who has made a remarkable return to form this year after a career ravaged by injuries, took first ahead of Ronnie Baker (9.85sec) and Fred Kerley (9.86sec.)

Justin Gatlin meanwhile failed in his quest to make a fourth Olympic games at the age of the 39, coming home in eighth place in 10.87sec.

Bromell, the fastest man in the world over 100m this year with a season's best of 9.77sec, will head to Japan as hot favourite for the 100m.

No American sprinter has won the Olympic 100m crown since Gatlin took gold at the Athens Olympics in 2004.

Elsewhere, Michael Norman won the 400m to clinch his first Olympic ticket, winning in 44.07sec. Michael Cherry was second in 44.35sec while Randolph Ross was third in 44.74sec.

In the women's 100m hurdles, world record holder Keni Harrison made up for her 2016 trials heartache after a convincing victory in 12.47sec.

Harrison was the favourite for Olympic gold in 2016 but failed to qualify for the Rio games at the trials where she finished sixth in the final.

Brianna McNeal, who won gold in Rio in Harrison's absence, finished second in the final with a time of 12.51sec. Christina Clemons was third in 12.53sec.

McNeal's participation at this week's trials is shrouded in controversy. The 29-year-old is facing a five-year suspension for an anti-doping rules violation, and was only allowed to compete in Eugene because she is awaiting a hearing at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

McNeal, who served a one-year suspension in 2016 after three whereabouts violations, could be kicked off the team if she loses her appeal, which is expected to be heard sometime in the next few weeks.

McNeal said the uncertainty surrounding her Olympic participation did not tarnish the result.

"I can celebrate," McNeal said. "I'm just happy that I had the opportunity to compete here. It's been a long journey so for the next few weeks I'm just gonna pray."