
PÉREZ WINS DISCUS IN DRAMATIC FASHION AT PAN-AMERICAN GAMES

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After the marathon and 20km race walk events, held in previous dates, athletics took centre stage at the 18th edition of the Pan-American Games with the beginning of the track and field programme on Tuesday (6).

Five finals took place at the Estadio de la Videna, and on a cool evening in Lima Cuba's Yaime Pérez produced the best performance by taking victory in the discus with a Games record of 66.58m.

The 28 year-old Cuban, world ranked No.1 and world leader with 69.39m, was in command after round one with 63.88m. Brazil's Andressa de Moraes, world ranked No.4, delivered a South American record of 65.98m in round two and seemed to be heading to the gold medal, but Pérez rescued herself in the final round to capture the victory with 66.58m.

The Cuban from Santiago, who gained the silver medal in Toronto four years ago, captured her first Pan-American gold. Cuban athletes have been dominant at this event, with 11 triumphs in the past 13 games.

De Moraes couldn't improve her effort from round two. Brazilian Fernanda Martins, world ranked No.9, was third with 62.23m, while Cuba's defending champion Denia Caballero, world ranked

No.3, was third with 60.46m.

Jamaica's Fedrick Dacres also confirmed his favouritism by retaining his discus title with a Games record of 67.68m. Dacres, world ranked No.2 and second on the 2019 world list with 70.78m, produced a solid series: 66.14m, 67.68m, foul, 65.02m, 65.07m and foul.

Dacres' winning mark erased one of the oldest Games records (67.32m by Cuba's Luis Mariano Delís from 1983), leaving his compatriot Traves Smikle in second place with 65.02m and USA's Reginald Jagers in third with 64.48m.

HISTORIC GOLD FROM MALONE

Tuesday 6 August will be remembered by sports fans in the British Virgin Islands as the day the country obtained its first gold medal at the Pan-American Games, thanks to Chantel Malone's 6.68m (-0.3m/s) victory in the long jump.



Chantel Malone sails to long jump victory at the Pan-American Games in Lima (Getty Images) © Copyright

Malone, who has jumped 6.90m this season, took control of the event in round one, reaching the winning distance. USA's Keturah Orji challenged her with 6.66m in round four, but was only

good for the silver medal. Jamaica's Tissanna Hickling was third with 6.59m, while Colombia's Catherine Ibarguen, world ranked No.2, was fifth with 6.54m.

TRACK TRIUMPHS FOR WODAK AND MARTÍNEZ

The last two finals of the day were contested on the track, where the temperature by the end of the session had dropped to 16C.

Canada's Natasha Wodak delivered Canada's first ever gold at the women's 10,000m with her victory in a Games record of 31:55.17. The 37 year-old took advantage of the fast pace set by compatriot Rachel Cliff (9:27.91 at 3000m and 15:53.37 at 5000m), and unleashed a strong attack in the final kilometre (3:01). Mexico's Risper Biyaki was second with 31:59.00, while Cliff was third with 32:13.34.



Natasha Wodak on her way to winning the 10,000m at the Pan-American Games in Lima (Getty Images) © Copyright

Mexico's Fernando Martínez also benefited from a strong kick to take the gold medal in the men's 5000m in 13:53.87. The 26-year-old produced a final kilometre of 2:28 to beat Brazil's Altobeli da Silva (13:54.42) and Chile's Carlos Díaz (13:54.43).

Canada's Damian Warner leads the decathlon with 4499 points after day one (10.32, 7.74m, 15.01m, 1.97m, 47.77). The 2015 world silver medallist is 39 points up on his day-one score from 2015 when he set a Games record and currently holds an 87-point advantage over compatriot Pierce Lepage.

South American athletes dominated the 20km race walk events on Sunday (4) with Colombia's Lorena Arenas (1:28:03) and Ecuador's Brian Pintado (1:21:51) obtaining the victories.

Arenas, always in the leading group, passed the 10km mark in 44:12 and capitalised on the penalisation suffered by Brazilian Érica de Sena after the 14th kilometre. Arenas' time was a Games and a national record.

After cruising in 42:14 at the 10km mark, Pintado was stronger in the final metres and beat Brazil's Caio Bonfim and Guatemala's José Alejandro Barrondo by six seconds.
