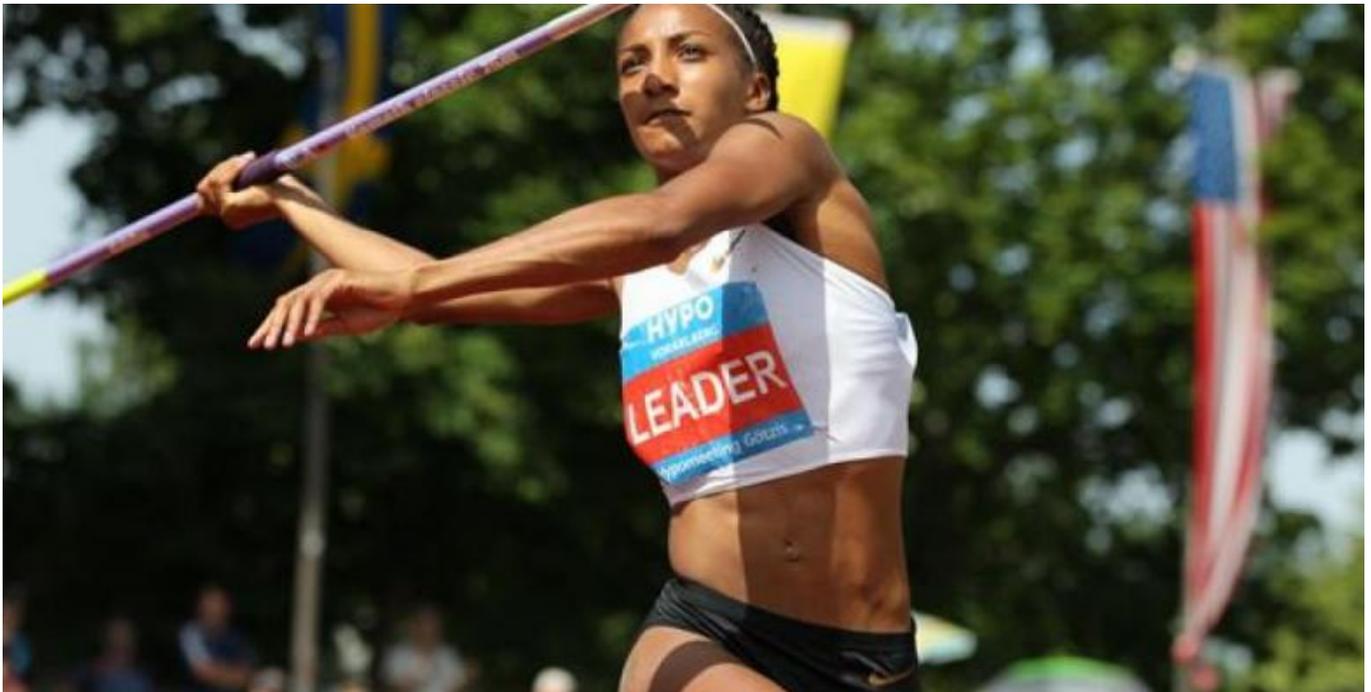

WORLD LEADS FOR THIAM AND WARNER IN GOTZIS

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Nafissatou Thiam claimed her second title in the heptathlon and Damian Warner his fourth in the decathlon at the Hypo Meeting **IAAF Combined Events Challenge** fixture in Gotzis, Austria, on Sunday (27).

Thiam tallied a world-leading 6806 to successfully defend her title at Moesle Stadium while Warner collected 8795, also a world-leading performance, to break his own Canadian record.

Thiam began strong on day two with a 6.62m leap in the long jump, improving her personal best by six centimetres and missing the Belgian record by a scant one centimetre. That upped her total to 5158 for a 126-point lead over Erica Bougard of the US, who also improved her personal best to 6.62m to remain in second with 5032 ahead of Cuba's Yorgelis Rodriguez, who reached 6.56m for 4983. World bronze medallist Anouk Vetter leaped 6.25m to up her score to 4763.

That put Thiam's tally 75 points ahead of last year's, well on course to challenge Carolina Klüft's European record. But those ambitions were halted in the javelin where, hampered by the winds, she could only manage a best of 47.20m, more

than 12 metres short of her 59.32m effort in 2017. That put her at 5964 points and effectively out of the record chase.

Rodriguez threw a season's best with 48.65m to overtake Bougard for second with 5817 to the American's 5737. Alina Shukh, the European U20 champion, won the event with 52.46m ahead of Vetter's 51.27m.

Thiam concluded a successful weekend with a 2:18.62 run in the 800m for a 6806 performance, the third best of her career. Her two days in Gotzis was highlighted by a world heptathlon best of 2.01m.

Rodriguez ran 2:12.73 to take the runner-up spot with 6742, a Cuban record. Bougard won the two-lap event in 2:08.42 to smash her heptathlon career best with 6725. Dutchwoman Vetter was fourth with 6428 ahead of Austria's Verena Preiner (6308 PB) and another Belgian, Hanne Maudens who scored 6252.

"It was a great weekend. I set a lot of PBs and I did not expect to score many of them," Thiam said.

"In the javelin there was a lot of wind and I changed my run-up, but I am not sad at all about missing the chance to break the European record. This competition was a step on the way towards the European Championships. I am looking forward to Berlin. This weekend I wanted to assess where I am at this point of the season."

WARNER THREATENS 8800

Warner, the overnight leader, picked up where he left off by winning the 110m hurdles in 13.56, a season's best, to increase his lead to 329 points over German Kai Kazmirek, whose 14.42 was also a season's best. German Rico Freimuth clocked 13.96 to move up from 11th to sixth. His compatriot Matthias Brugger improved his ranking from fifth to third after clocking 14.24.

Warner produced another season's best with 47.32m in the discus to increase his lead to 402 points. Kazmirek, the world bronze medallist, threw 43.76m to remain in second, just four points over Freimuth who finished second in this event with 48.58m over Grenada's Lindon Victor who threw 48.82m. Sadly Freimuth pulled out of the competition before the start of the pole vault.



Damian Warner on the way to another Canadian decathlon record in Gotzis (Jean Pierre Durand) © Copyright

That event was led by Maicel Uibo of Estonia and Zach Ziemek of the US, who both topped 5.30m. That moved Uibo from fifth into second, while Warner topped 4.80m. Brugger moved up to third thanks to a 5.20m clearance. Ziemek followed in fourth place.

Warner improved his total to 8028 after the penultimate event, reaching 61.94m in the javelin, 275 points up on Uibo who threw 61.75m. European U20 champion Nicklas Kaul was the best of the day, reaching 68.78m to climb into eighth place overall with 7470.

Warner crowned his successful weekend with a 4:26.59 run in the 1500m, finishing behind Brugger (4:23:93) and Dutchman Pieter Braun (4:24.29), to become the fourth four-time Gotzis winner after Carolina Klüft, Roman Sebrle and Sabine Braun.

“It means a lot to win this meeting for the fourth time,” said a delighted Warner. “I was solid across the board, especially in the long jump, the discus and in the hurdles. We were very lucky with the weather. I will now go back home to assess

the rest of the season.”

The Canadian star beat Uibo, who set a career best with 8514, and Braun, who improved his personal best to 8343. Uibo received strong support from a big group of Estonian fans who made the long journey to Austria.

“I did not make any particular highlights, but the key was to be consistent across all events,” Uibo said.
