Report: women's pole vault - IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019

30/09/2019



With a clutch third attempt clearance at 4.95m, Anzhelika Sidorova prevailed in a titanic battle over Sandi Morris to claim gold in the women's pole vault.

On a quest to secure their first major outdoor titles, Sidorova and Morris were on fire, producing perfect score cards through 4.90m, a height that only the pair managed to conquer in a competition that will be remembered as the deepest in World Championships history.

“I knew that we had to jump 4.90 to reach the podium, but it turned out we needed to go to 4.95m,” said the authorised neutral athlete, who jumped to silver at the 2014 and 2018 editions of the World Indoor Championships. “I felt confident at every height. I just focused on clearing each height on my first attempt because that was the only chance to win.”

“My first thought today, if nothing else, was just to have fun, go out and enjoy it, and I did, and that showed in the way I jumped,” said Morris, who jumped to silver medal performances at the 2016 Olympic Games and 2017 World Championships before taking world indoor gold last year. “I knew it was going to be between me and Sidorova.”

A record 17 athletes advanced to the final after topping the automatic qualifying height of 4.60m in Friday's qualification round. Illustrating the quality of the field, an opening height of 4.50m, the highest ever start at the World Championships, did nothing to winnow the field; 4.70m, the next height, eliminated just four.

But only six remained after 4.80m, where the casualties included 2015 world champion Yarisley Silva, 2012 Olympic champion Jenn Suhr and 2017 bronze medallist Robeilys Peinado.

The medallists were decided at 4.85m. Morris and Sidorova moved on after their fourth straight clearances of the night while Katerina Stefanidi, the defending champion, sailed clear on her second. Meanwhile, Canada's Alysha Newman and Swede Angelica Bengtsson bowed out to finish fifth and sixth, respectively. Bengtsson was pleased; her third attempt clearance at 4.80m added four centimetres to her national record - after she broke a pole.

“This is the first time it has happened in my career, and I am very happy it happened,” Bengtsson said, “because I always wanted to break a pole.”

After a first miss at 4.90m, Stefanidi had the bar raised to a would-be lifetime best of 4.95m. Her first try wasn’t especially close. Neither was her second, forcing the Greek Olympic champion to settle for bronze.

Morris was up next, produced plenty of height but hit the bar on the way down. Sidorova’s jump was eerily similar. Morris produced a near identical jump on the second time of asking while Sidorova came up well short, sailing under the bar. Morris then dug deep and came tatalisingly close with her third, but brushed it with her arm on the way down.

Conversely, Sidorova’s jump was clean to mark her second career best of the night, to finally clinch global gold. Emotionally spent, she burst into tears and called it a night.

“A few weeks ago I cried when I lost the Diamond League final,” Sidorova said. “Now I’m glad I was beaten there. It made me angrier, stronger and much more focused on the main season’s goal.”