
Martinot-Lagarde powers to 7.47 clocking in the 60m hurdles in Lievin

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Pascal Martinot-Lagarde hadn't run faster than 7.61 in his six races prior to the Meeting Hauts-de-France Pas-de-Calais in Liévin on Wednesday (19) night but the Frenchman showed some of his finest form in front of a capacity home crowd.

As Lievin returned to the top tier of indoor athletics after a lengthy hiatus, Martinot-Lagarde highlighted the occasion by winning the 60m hurdles final in his fastest time in four years.

The European 110m hurdles champion was the first to rise and he cleared each barrier cleanly, keeping his momentum and crossing the finish-line in 7.47 - the second fastest time in the world this year and only 0.02 shy of his lifetime best. "The start was the key," Martinot-Lagarde told L'Equipe. "After the heat, my coach said to me not to change anything from the second hurdle. The main thing was the start and the first hurdle."

Martinot-Lagarde was pursued by Kuwait's Yaquob-Mohamed Al Youha and Spain's joint world bronze medallist Orlando Ortega who finished second and third in 7.54 and 7.56 respectively.

During his post-race interview, Martinot-Lagarde encouraged the crowd to get behind Armand Duplantis who was attempting to break the world record in the pole vault for the third time in eleven days.

The manner in which Duplantis scaled 6.07m on his first attempt suggested 6.19m was very

much within the 20-year-old's capacity last night but this height will have to wait for another day. He came close on his first two attempts before stalling out on his third attempt.

"I did 6.07m and that was a great jump," he said. "But after that I felt my legs abandoned me a little bit and I didn't have quite the same speed in my approach. Out of my three tries at 6.19m, I think my second attempt was the closest but I think that I lost speed. I feel quite tired; Glasgow was only a few days ago."

Two-time world outdoor champion Sam Kendricks was second with 5.90m and former European U23 champion Ben Broeders continued his breakthrough indoor season. Broeders has completed prolifically this winter and he improved his Belgian record with a first-time clearance at 5.80m which also matched the Olympic qualifying standard.

Bekh-Romanchuk wins long jump in the sixth round

Ukraine's Maryna Bekh-Romanchuk kept her unbeaten streak in the long jump alive - but only just.

The world and European silver medallist trailed Nigeria's Ese Brume who set the standard in the second round with 6.82m but Bekh-Romachuk displayed her competitive spirit again with a sixth round jump of 6.90m.

Not only has Bekh-Romanchuk won her four competitions this winter, she has also jumped 6.90m or further on each occasion: 6.92m in Karlsruhe, 6.96m in Torun, 6.90m in Glasgow and 6.90m in Lievin.

Double European U23 champion Jemma Reekie also followed up her victory over 1500m in Glasgow on Saturday afternoon with further success last night but this time over 800m.

Reekie had to battle to the line on Saturday to chase down Ethiopia's Dawit Seyaum but the Brit concluded her indoor campaign with a commanding victory over four laps of the track. Reekie tracked the pacemakers closely before stretching away on the last lap, winning by the best part of two seconds over a highly accomplished field.

Reekie, who holds the British indoor record at 1:57.91, came home in 2:00.34 ahead of Uganda's reigning world champion Halima Nakaayi in 2:01.96 with Ethiopian record-holder Habitam Alemu third in 2:02.04.

The programme began with a world best in the rarely-run 2000m steeplechase. World 3000m steeplechase finalist Marusa Mismas from Slovenia possessed the superior finishing speed and technique over the barriers to beat Bahrain's Winfred Yavi for the victory and the world best. Her time of 5:47.79 is also faster than Gesa Felicitas Krause's world outdoor best, although the indoor version is devoid of the water-jump.