Taylor claims gold in triple jump

WIRE SERVICE REPORTS

RIO DE JANEIRO — Christian Taylor of the United States retained his Olympic men's triple jump title on Tuesday, recording the longest jump of the year to claim the podium top spot.

Taylor, the defending Olympic and world champion, made his mark of 17.86 meters with his first jump, staking a claim for the gold medal that his rivals were unable to match.

His American teammate Will Claye took silver and China's Dong Bin went home with bronze after they recorded 17.76 and 17.58, respectively, also at their first attempts.

"The job is done," Taylor told reporters. "I never thought on my first jump that would be the gold medal.

"I wanted it so much. It came together, the stars aligned," he said.

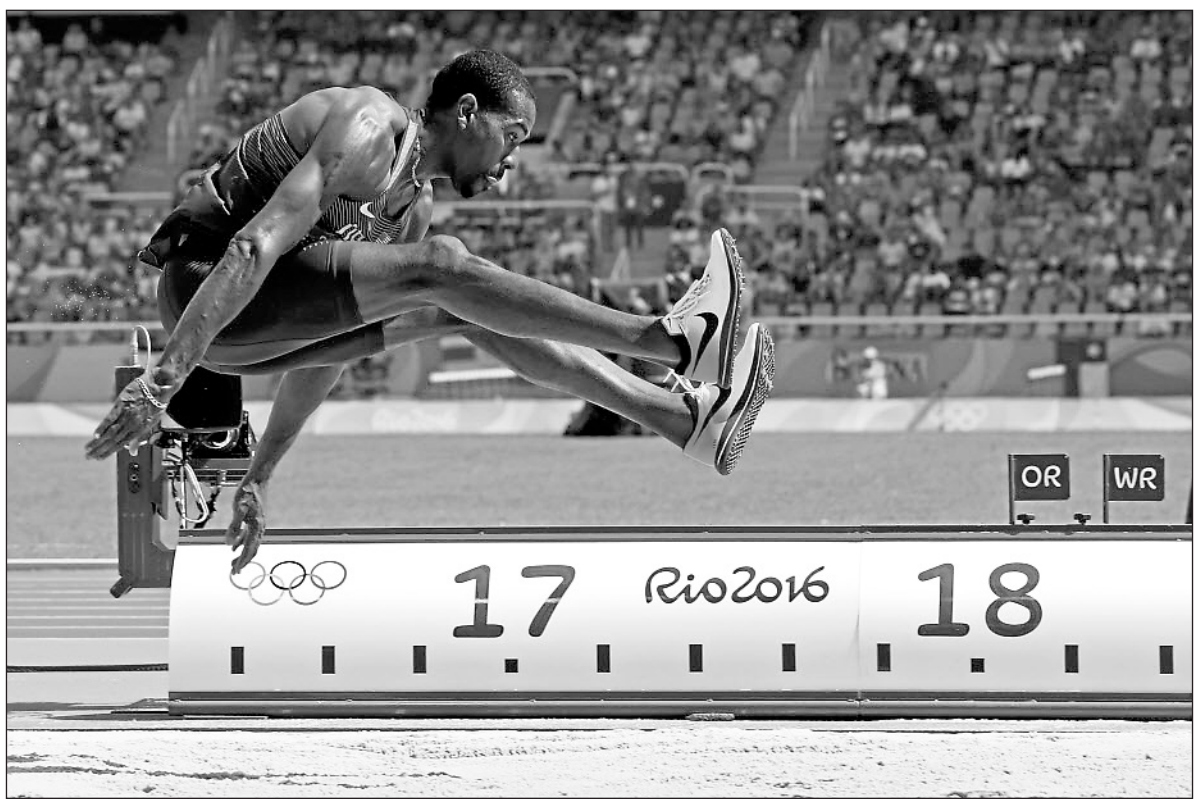
In what soon developed into a predictable tussle for silver and gold from within the U.S. team, the rest of the field in Rio fell behind to join the spectators watching Taylor and Claye re-enact their Olympic duel from London four years ago.

A notable absentee was world silver medallist Pedro Pablo Pichardo of Cuba, who would have been a challenger for the gold having posted several marks at 18 meters and further in 2015.

The 23-year-old has reportedly struggled with an ankle injury and opted not to jump in Rio, smoothing the way for Taylor.

Taylor's road to Rio has been a rocky one after a worsening knee injury forced him to switch his takeoff leg after his 2012 Olympic triumph, a radical move in one of the most technically challenging events in athletics.

After a "game-changing" 2015, the 26-year-old was once again clearing the 18-meter mark, making a jump of 18.21 meters at the Beijing world championships to claim second place in the all-time list behind Briton Jonathan Edwards's 1995 world record of 18.29.



ERIC SEALS | USA TODAY

Christian Taylor of the U.S. competes Tuesday in the men's triple jump final at the Rio 2016 Summer Olympic Games at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Medals tally

Current top 20 by total medals won - After Day 10

COUNTRY	G	S	B	TOTAL
United States	26	23	26	75
China	15	14	17	46
Great Britain	16	17	8	41
Russia	11	12	12	35
Japan	7	4	16	27
France	7	9	8	24
Italy	8	9	6	23
Australia	6	7	9	22
Germany	8	6	6	20
South Korea	6	3	5	14
Canada	2	2	9	13
Hungary	5	3	4	12
Netherlands	6	2	3	11
Kazakhstan	2	3	5	10
Brazil	2	3	4	9
New Zealand	2	6	0	8
Denmark	1	3	4	8
North Korea	2	3	2	7
South Africa	1	5	1	7
Cuba	2	1	3	6

Note: Some countries tied in 20th position may be excluded from the table.
Source: Infrostrada
Staff, 16/08/2016 REUTERS

US women's basketball reaches semis

The United States steamrolled to its 47th straight Olympic win on Tuesday, routing Japan 110-64 to reach the semifinals of the women's basketball tournament and taking a step closer to a sixth consecutive gold medal.

With an overall record of 64-3, Olympic losses are rare for the U.S. but Japan could lay claim to one of them.

History, however, was of little help to the 16th-ranked Japanese who were going up against a powerhouse that has outscored opponents by a staggering 44.6 points per game, on average, in Rio.

As it has been all tournament, U.S. scoring was done by committee with seven players hitting double figures, led by Diana Taurasi and Maya Moore with 19 points apiece.

It took the Americans nearly a full half to get their bearings, but once they did the result was predictable as U.S. shooters found their range, pouring in over 100 points for the fifth time in six games.

With two minutes to go in the opening half, energetic Japan had worked their up-tempo style to perfection, cutting the Olympic champions' lead to 46-44, but the U.S. finished with a flurry, going on a 10-2 run to ease into the second half with a 10-point lead that would only grow.

The U.S. will now await the winner of Canada and France, who play later on Tuesday, while the other semifinal will feature Serbia and Spain.

Serbia had earlier upset second-ranked Australia 73-71 while Anna Cruz hit a last gasp buzzer-beater to lift Spain over Turkey 64-62.

Kenyan takes women's 1,500m gold

Kenya's Faith Kipyegon won the women's Olympic 1,500 meters gold on Tuesday after unleashing a devastating second half of the race to leave Ethiopia's world record holder Genzebe Dibaba trailing in second place.

Kipyegon, fastest in the world this year, sat in the pack as the runners virtually jogged the opening stages before she and Dibaba took off and pulled clear after a 56.8-second lap.

World champion Dibaba, who has struggled with injury this year, led with 200 to go but the 22-year-old Kipyegon forced her way past and drove for the line to win in four minutes 8.92 seconds.

Dibaba held on for silver, with American former world champion Jenny Simpson taking bronze ahead of compatriot Shannon Rowbury.

US women's volleyball advances

Patience has been a key word for the U.S. women's volleyball team at these 2016 Summer Games.

The Americans are ranked No. 1 in the world but chasing their first Olympic gold after near misses in the past, and they know it will take a match-by-match approach.

This attitude served them well Tuesday in a quarterfinal victory over Japan at Maracanazinho Arena.

The Japanese are a relatively short team that compensates with quickness and tenacity, The U.S. had to keep hammering away at the net with their size advantage.

So their straight-set win — 25-16, 25-23, 22-22 — was fueled by spikes and blocks.

The U.S. now advances to the semifinals against the winner of the Russia-Serbia match.

Bolt coasts into 200m semis

Usain Bolt roused a quiet morning at the Olympic stadium as only he can on Tuesday, remaining firmly on course for his historic "triple triple" by coasting through the 200 meters heats in 20.28 seconds.

Racing in the ninth heat and cheered every step of the way by the sparse but vocal crowd, the Jamaican led coming off the bend and was able to take his foot off the gas to progress comfortably to Wednesday's semifinals.

Bolt secured the 100-meter title on Sunday to take another step on the path to an unprecedented third successive sweep of all three Olympic sprint titles — 100, 200 and 4x100 meters.

The Jamaican considers the 200 his specialist event and has promised to mount a Rio assault on his 1999 world record of 19.19, but that will have to wait for the final.

The man most likely to beat him, Justin Gatlin, also had no problems getting through, even if he coasted through the final 20 meters to win his heat in a relatively pedestrian 20.42.

American LaShawn Merritt showed no signs of fatigue from winning a bronze medal in the 400 on Sunday, a strong finish carrying him to victory in heat eight in 20.15.

Canada's Andre de Gasse, bronze medalist in the 100, ran the quickest time of the session, clocking 20.09 to cross first in the final heat.

Rangers' Choo to have surgery

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

MAJOR LEAGUES

Texas Rangers right fielder Shin-Soo Choo will have surgery Wednesday to repair his broken left wrist and forearm.

Choo, who was injured Monday, will have a plate inserted into the arm. It isn't yet known if the surgery will end his season.

Choo was hit by a pitch from Oakland's Ross Detwiler during Monday's game. He was examined on Tuesday by club physicians and it was determined that he needed surgery.

The injury marks the fourth time this season that Choo has been placed on the disabled list. He previously was sidelined with calf, hamstring and lower back injuries.

"It's obviously very challenging news," manager Jeff Banister said after Monday's contest. "I feel for Choo. He's such a key part of this club and this organization; you feel terrible for him, personally. It's a gut punch and one that we will be challenged with, but we have to continue to play."

Choo has played in just 45 games this season. He is batting .247 with seven homers.

Texas recalled outfielder Ryan Rua from Triple-A Round Rock to fill the roster spot.

Holliday set to undergo thumb surgery

St. Louis Cardinals outfielder Matt Holliday is slated to undergo surgery on his broken right thumb on Wednesday.

Holliday was struck on the thumb by a pitch from Chicago Cubs reliever Mike Montgomery last Thursday. He was placed on the disabled list two days later, consulted with a hand specialist on Monday and made the decision to have surgery on Tuesday.

It hasn't yet been determined if Holliday will be able to return this season.

Holliday, 36, is in the final season of a seven-year, $120 million contract. The Cardinals hold a $17 million option for next season.

Holliday is batting .242 with 19 homers in 2016.

Brantley out four months after surgery

Cleveland Indians outfielder Michael Brantley underwent a 45-minute operation on Monday to address the chronic biceps tendinitis in his right shoulder.

Brantley will need about four months to recuperate and hopes to be ready for the beginning of next season.

Brantley had surgery for a torn labrum in his right shoulder in November, and he was limited to just 11 games this season. He hit .231 with no homers in his short 2016 season after batting .310 with 15 homers in 137 contests last year.

Brantley was named to the All-Star team in 2014, and he finished that season hitting .327 with 20 homers.

Dr. Keith Meister and Dr. Mark Schickendantz performed the surgery this week, and they confirmed that the labrum in Brantley's shoulder is now stable.

Tigers' Cabrera out of lineup

Detroit Tigers first baseman Miguel Cabrera was out of the starting lineup for Tuesday's game versus the visiting Kansas City Royals, but manager Brad Ausmus still considers the 33-year-old slugger "day to day."

Jarrod Saltalamacchia was inserted in the lineup in place of Cabrera, who strained his left biceps during Monday's 3-1 loss to the Royals.

The Tigers' lone All-Star this season, Cabrera played only four innings Monday but was hurt in the first when his arm bent awkwardly after making contact with Kansas City right fielder Cheslor Cuthbert.

Mariners put Paxton on DL

The Seattle Mariners recalled right-hander Cody Martin from Triple-A Tacoma on Tuesday and placed left-hander James Paxton on the 15-day disabled list.

Martin, who will be available to pitch in Tuesday night's tilt versus the Los Angeles Angels, posted a 1-2 mark with a 2.70 ERA in five relief appearances with Seattle this season. The 26-year-old owns a 9-7 record with a 3.93 ERA in 23 games with Tacoma.

Paxton sustained a left elbow contusion on Aug. 7 after he was hit by a line drive.

Pats' Gronkowski sits out practice

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

NFL PRESEASON

New England Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski was not on the field for Tuesday's joint practice with the Chicago Bears after pulling up with an undisclosed injury.

The Patriots and Bears are holding three joint practices at Gillette Stadium ending Wednesday.

Gronkowski took himself out after going for a pass from quarterback Tom Brady in 7-on-7 drills along the sideline. The severity of the injury was unknown but it does not appear to be a serious issue.

Gronkowski, 27, walked to the sideline after the play and met with a trainer before heading to the lower practice field. After about 10 minutes there, he retreated to the locker room.

The 6-foot-6, 265-pound Gronkowski, who had 72 catches for 1,176 yards and 11 touchdowns last season, takes a beating in the regular season, so he is likely to sit out the entire preseason in an effort to keep him fresh. He hasn't played in a preseason game since 2012.

The Patriots and Bears hold a final practice Thursday before their preseason game at Gillette Stadium on Thursday night.

Patriots release Vereen

The New England Patriots released defensive back Brock Vereen, the team announced Tuesday, bringing an end to an odd series of events.

On Monday, multiple media outlets reported Vereen had retired from football two days shy of his 24th birthday. Then, the Twin Cities Pioneer Press reported that Vereen had changed his mind, and he was reinstated to the Patriots' roster only to be released by the team.

Vereen, who is the brother of New York Giants running back Shane Vereen, played in 16 games for the Chicago Bears in 2014. He also competed in three contests for the Bears in 2015 before being released on Sept. 29.

He was signed by the Patriots to the practice squad on Nov. 18.

The 5-foot-11, 200-pound Vereen was selected in the fourth round by the Bears in 2014.

Chiefs' Charles ready to return

For the first time since tearing his ACL in October, running back Jamaal Charles will be on the field with the Kansas City Chiefs on Tuesday.

Charles was activated from the physically unable to perform list and returned to limited practice.

Charles, 29, and the Chiefs have said they will be cautious as he works back from the knee injury. He was hurt in Week 5 last season, and the Chiefs still earned a wild-card spot with a committee approach led by Charcandrick West.

But as Charles returns, West will be idle because of a mild strain of his left elbow. He was hurt in last Saturday's preseason game against Seattle.

49ers sign QB Ponder

The San Francisco 49ers, who are having quarterback injury issues, signed former first-round pick Christian Ponder to a one-year contract on Tuesday.

Ponder hasn't played in an NFL game since Oct. 2, 2014. He was the 12th overall pick in the 2011 NFL draft by the Minnesota Vikings.

The signing of Ponder occurs as Colin Kaepernick continues to deal with issues with his throwing arm. In addition, the 49ers lost quarterback Thad Lewis to a torn ACL in his left knee in Sunday's preseason game with Houston and placed the journeyman on injured reserve on Tuesday.

Ponder, 28, joins probable starter Blaine Gabbert and rookie Jeff Driskel as San Francisco's healthy quarterbacks.

Baseball

Continued from Page B5

runs coming on the Betts homer in the fifth. He walked five, one in each inning, and struck out two while often pitching from behind in the count.

Boston threatened a few times in the early innings but came up empty. The Red Sox left the bases loaded in the third before finally breaking through in the fifth.

Andrew Benintendi led off with a double off the wall in right and Xander Bogaerts drew a one-out walk. Betts then crushed his two-out, three-run homer to left on the first pitch from Gallardo, giving the Red Sox a 3-0 lead.

Boston starter Eduardo Rodriguez breezed through the first four innings, not allowing a hit, but came out because of left hamstring tightness after two pitches in the fifth. Barnes came on to replace him and completed a walk to Pearce before retiring the next three batters.

Rodriguez finished with seven strikeouts and two walks.

NOTES: OF Joey Rickard will have his injured thumb examined Wednesday, and manager Buck Showalter said the Orioles hope he will be cleared to resume baseball activities soon. … Baltimore pitching coach Dave Wallace (personal) needed to go home for three days, which means Dom Chiti takes over his role while Brian Graham will become the bullpen coach. … Manager John Farrell said the Red Sox have had internal discussions about RHP Jonathan Papelbon, who was recently released by Washington. Should Papelbon sign with Boston, Farrell said he would not be a closer. … Farrell also said that INF Hanley Ramirez, currently on the bereavement list, is scheduled to come back to the team on Thursday in Detroit and would miss both games of the brief series in Baltimore.

Royals 6, Tigers 1

DETROIT — Danny Duffy won his ninth straight decision with the aid of four solo home runs, including the first of Raul Mondesi's career, as the Kansas City Royals defeated the Detroit Tigers 6-1 on Tuesday at Comerica Park.

Duffy (10-1) limited the Tigers to one run on three hits while striking out five in 7 2/3 innings. He has the longest winning streak by a Royals pitcher since Jeremy Guthrie won 10 straight decisions in 2012-13.

The breakthrough homer for the 21-year-old Mondesi came in his 19th game and 60th official at-bat.

Alex Gordon, Eric Hosmer and Kendrys Morales also homered for Kansas City, which has won eight of 10. Gordon, who scored twice, stretched his hitting streak to seven games

Tigers starter Justin Verlander (12-7) allowed five runs — three earned — on four hits while striking out six in seven-plus innings.

Jarrod Saltalamacchia homered for Detroit, which has lost seven of its last nine. Slugger Miguel Cabrera sat out with a left biceps strain.

Hosmer's 16th home run to straightaway center gave the Royals a 3-1 lead in the seventh.

Sloppy play by the Tigers allowed the Royals to tack on two runs in the eighth. First baseman Saltalamacchia, filling in for Cabrera, failed to catch third baseman Casey McGehee's low throw on Gordon's leadoff grounder. Gordon reached second on the play and advanced to third on a single by Alcides Escobar, who reached second on left fielder Justin Upton's nonchalant relay throw.