



Gold medalist Katie Nageotte celebrates after winning the women's pole vault. (AP Photo Francisco Seco)

LOSSES IN TRACK, WINS ON FIELD: ANOTHER ROCKY DAY FOR USA

By EDDIE PELLIS
AP National Writer

A five-minute burst of action near the backstretch of the Olympic track served up the perfect snapshot of what is going right, and all that is going wrong, for the U.S. track and field team in Tokyo.

At one moment in the pole vault pit Thursday night, Katie Nageotte cleared 4.90 meters (16 feet, 1 inch) and went running up to the stands to celebrate a gold medal that had looked like a lost cause only an hour earlier.

At the next, just as the 400-meter sprinters approached the halfway point, American champion Michael Norman was steaming so far ahead of the competition, it became clear he could not sustain the pace.

He didn't. Norman finished fourth. The U.S. men's sprinters, once the dominant power across the global track game, left the stadium without having won a single gold medal over the first seven days of the nine-day meet.

But Nageotte's gold, won in a tense back-and-forth with Russian athlete Anzhelika Sidorova, was the third victory in the field for the U.S., two of which have been won by women.

With only two days left at Olympic Stadium, what started as anomaly can now be considered a trend:

The U.S. closed Thursday with five — and 20 medals overall, which is 13 more than anyone else — and there have been some exceptions to the trends.

Athing Mu and Sydney McLaughlin lived up to their hype to capture the country's only two golds from the track. And Ryan Crouser gutted out an emotion-drenched victory to defend his Olympic shot put title.

Very few would've figured Crouser's win Thursday would be the first in any event for the men, who make up about half of the deepest team in the world.

Norman's fourth-place finish capped a dreary



(Matthias Hangst/Pool Photo via AP)
Ryan Crouser, of United States, holds a sign while celebrating winning the gold medal in the final of the men's shot put.

day of running for the red, white and blue.

He is something of a celebrity in Japan because his mother was born here and set a national middle-school record in the 100 meters. He was supposed to be part of a showdown with Steven Gardiner of the Bahamas, but Gardiner won this easily, in a time of 43.85 seconds, to add to his title from the world championships two years ago in Qatar.

Much earlier in the day came a rite of passage for the U.S. at the Olympics: A debacle in the men's 4x100 relay.

This time, it was Fred Kerley and Ronnie Baker who got tangled up in an exchange, costing them precious time and leaving the U.S. not with a "DQ," but with an unsightly "6" by its name. Sixth place means they won't get to run for the first relay gold since Bolt left the scene.

One day since the best one left — for the men's sprinters might be in the 4x400 relay. The U.S. has won that event at seven of the last nine Olympics.

Michael Cherry is expected to be part of that team. The 26-year-old Cherry, who finished a spot behind Norman in the 400, tried to put a positive spin on things. It is, he insisted, a young team heading into the unknown. According to USA

Track and Field, 81 of the 133 members of the team are at their first Games.

Nageotte is 30, but fairly new to the major international stage. She's now on a list with Jenn Suhr and Stacy Dragila as American Olympic champions in pole vault.

It was so close to not happening.

Nageotte, who battled COVID-19 earlier in the year only to best (4.95) to win the Olympic trials, said she felt tightness in her leg during warmups.

She opened her evening with two straight misses at the first height, 4.5 meters.

Facing elimination, she cleared the height on the third try and jumped for joy.

Much later, after she cleared 4.9 and Sidorova missed, Nageotte ran into the stands for hugs, and shared congratulations with her competitors on the track. Then, she taped up the pole, had the bar set at 5.01 and geared up for a chance at a new U.S. record.

She took off down the runway but pulled up short. She could not focus, given what she'd just been through.

"The emotion of winning," she explained.

At this Olympic track meet, the U.S. is looking in lots of different places to find it.

OLYMPIC SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE HAWAIIANS 'RECLAIM' SURFING WITH MOORE'S OLYMPIC GOLD

By SALLY HO
Associated Press

Carissa Moore wore a white and yellow plumeria pinned next to her ear for her victory-lap interviews after making history as the first Olympic gold medalist at surfing's historic debut.

Her mother — crowned the Honolulu Lei Queen in 2016 — had given her the flower hair clip before she left for Tokyo to remind the only Native Hawaiian Olympic surfer of where she came from.

At this pinnacle point, Moore is still in disbelief when she's compared to Duke Kahanamoku, the godfather of modern surfing who is memorialized in Hawaii with a cherished monument.

As celebrated at home as she is loved by fans and peers around the world, it was a characteristically modest statement from one of the world's greatest surfers after she took home gold in the sport's inaugural Olympic competition.

The methodical Moore found her rhythm with the ocean to deliver the kind of standout, power-surfing performance that has defined her career. The picture-perfect ending even included a rainbow that popped into the sky as she shredded waves in the final against South African rival Bianca Buitendijck.

Moore has now become a realization of Kahanamoku's dream, at once the symbol of the sport's very best and a validating force for an Indigenous community that still struggles with its complex history.



(AP Photo/Francisco Seco, File)
Carissa Moore, of the United States, celebrates winning the gold medal in the women's surfing competition. The first Olympic gold medalist for surfing, Moore, is the only Native Hawaiian surfer at the Games.

"It's a reclaiming of that sport for our native community," said Kūhiō Lewis, president of the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, which convenes the largest annual gathering of Native Hawaiians.

Lewis said all the locals he knew were texting each other during the competition, glued to the TV and elated, even relieved, by Moore's "sur-real" win. He called it a "come to home moment" for a community that may never reconcile its dispossession.

After centuries of colonization by various

European settlers, Hawaii was annexed by the United States in 1898 after the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy by U.S.-backed forces in 1893.

"At times, we're an invisible people. We're lumped in to other ethnic groups. Our sport is being defined by other groups. This puts it into perspective," Lewis said. "It feels like an emerging of a people, of a native community that has been invisible to many."

All eyes were on Moore when the Tokyo Games began, not only because she was the medal favorite as the reigning world champion but also because she was competing for the United States. Until then, Moore had always surfed for Hawaii in the professional World Surf League, which recognizes it as a "sovereign surfing nation."

U.S. Senator Brian Schatz of Hawaii this week honored both Moore and Kahanamoku on the Senate floor.

"There's a saying that the best surfer is the person having the most fun and that's unquestionably the case with Carissa," Schatz said. "She's an intense competitor who wants to win every event she enters, but also one who wants to see her opponents — and more importantly the sport of surfing itself — succeed."

With this new global platform, Moore says she is proud of what she represents and wants to spread positivity as her idol did.

"This was his dream to have surfing in the Olympics," Moore said. "I hope I made him and my people proud."



OLYMPICS ON TV

FRIDAY, AUGUST 6

(All times Eastern)

Schedule subject to change
and/or blackouts

BASEBALL

11:30 p.m.

CNBC — Baseball (Bronze Medal Game)

BASKETBALL

8 p.m.

NBC — Men's Basketball (Final)

3 a.m. (Saturday)

CNBC — Women's Basketball (Bronze Medal Game)

BEACH VOLLEYBALL

9 p.m.

CNBC — Men's Beach Volleyball (Bronze Medal Game)

10:30 p.m.

CNBC — Men's Beach Volleyball (Gold Medal Game)

DIVING

8 p.m.

NBC — Men's Diving (Platform Qualifying)

9 p.m.

USA — Men's Diving (Platform Semifinal)

2:30 a.m. (Saturday)

USA — Men's Diving (Platform Final)

FIELD HOCKEY

6 a.m.

USA — Women's Field Hockey (Gold Medal Game)

GOLF

6:30 p.m.

GOLF — Women's Golf (Final Round)

GYMNASTICS

10:40 p.m.

USA — Rhythmic Gymnastics (Group Qualifying)

HANDBALL

4:30 a.m.

USA — Women's Handball (Semifinal)

MARATHON

6 p.m.

USA — Women's Marathon

SOCCER

7 a.m.

NBCSN — Men's Soccer (Bronze Medal Game)

SWIMMING

7:30 a.m.

USA — Artistic Swimming (Team Qualifying)

TRACK AND FIELD

3:30 a.m.

NBC — Women's 20km Walk

8 p.m.

NBC — Track & Field (Finals)

VOLLEYBALL

8 a.m.

USA — Women's Volleyball (Semifinal)

12:30 a.m. (Saturday)

USA — Men's Volleyball (Bronze Medal Game)

WATER POLO

3:30 a.m. (Saturday)

USA — Women's Water Polo (Gold Medal Game) ---



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