The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Men Grab First Volleyball Gold Since '80

August 12, 2012



From left, Sergey Tetyukhin, Sergey Grankin and Nikolay Apalikov celebrating winning the gold in volleyball Sunday. **Dominic Ebenbichler**

Russia won the gold medal for the first time since 1980 with a come-from-behind five-set victory over Brazil on Sunday in the Olympic volleyball final.

Second-ranked Russia dropped the first two sets before denying top-ranked Brazil match point twice to spark a comeback in the 19-25, 20-25, 29-27, 25-22, 15-9 victory, paced by middle blocker Dmitriy Muserskiy with 31 points.

The Russians thought they'd won it on Muserskiy's kill in the fifth set and began to celebrate, but the officials awarded the point to Brazil. After regrouping, Muserskiy came right back to spike match point.

"I think that those people that did not believe in us, they turned their back and went away after the second set, but those who trusted, they are the most valuable. I think we have shown our character," Russia's Sergey Tetyukhin told reporters.

The win gives the Russians four gold medals in volleyball, most of any nation. The last time

Russia was atop the podium was at Moscow, when the former Soviet Union won gold on home soil.

• • •

An emotional Anna Chicherova banished the pain of an injury-marred season to soar to gold in the women's high jump Saturday.

Sixth in Athens and a bronze medalist in Beijing, Russia's 30-year-old world champion cleared the first five heights at the first time of asking before becoming the only woman to get over the bar at 2.05 meters on her second attempt.

Chicherova has suffered a rash of injuries since winning the world title last year, including a back problem she incurred when the weights fell off the bar when she was lifting.

"I'm extremely happy. It is my dream," she told reporters. "I cannot say it was easy for the last two months. I had the problem with my back in July, and I knew I didn't have room for any mistakes tonight.

"I know the price of this medal, and I know I deserve it," she added, fighting back tears.

"When I got to the high jump area today, I told myself, 'You do not have the right not to win this because of all the people who have helped and supported you.'"

Brigetta Barrett of the United States, with the London crowd roaring her on, jumped a personal best 2.03 meters on her second attempt to clinch silver.

Chicherova's compatriot Svetlana Shkolina won bronze after needing three jumps to match the American at 2.03, also a personal best height.

"I have worked really hard over the last four years," said Shkolina, who finished eighth at the Beijing Games. "To do a personal best in the Olympic Games is something that is very special to me."

• • •

Russian Mariya Savinova added Olympic gold to her world crown when she timed her run to perfection to secure an impressive 800 meters victory Saturday.

Savinova, the European female Athlete of 2011, did not panic when defending champion Pamela Jelimo of Kenya kicked three meters clear down the back straight on the final lap. Jelimo paid for going too soon, and Savinova took over to storm to gold in 1:56.19. South African Caster Semenya produced a late burst to win silver in 1:57.23.

"It's just amazing. Right now I can't feel anything, but I'm amazed. It's been hard work, but it's the Olympics," said Savinova.

Semenya, the 2009 world champion, whose emphatic victory in Berlin raised questions about her biological sex and started a verification process that still clouds her achievement, trailed the field at the bell and had too much ground to make up.

Russian Ekaterina Poistogova clocked 1:57.53 for bronze. Jelimo faded out of the medals and was fourth.

• • •

Russia's Yury Postrigay and Alexander Dyachenko blew away the field to take victory in the men's C2 200 canoeing in a thrilling sprint for the line before roaring crowds in the inaugural final at the Olympics on Saturday.

Raman Piatrushenka and Vadzim Makhneu of Belarus took silver, and Britain's Liam Heath and Jon Schofield the bronze.

The sprint over 200 meters is new to the Olympic program and is designed to increase interest in the sport. The canoeists take three strokes per second in an explosive fight for the line. The Russian pair had a good start but powered away from the field in the middle 100 meters in the most comprehensive victory of the day's racing on Dorney Lake. They thrust their paddles in the air as they crossed the line and roared with delight.

• • •

Russia gained in the gold medal tally — for the 2004 Summer Olympics.

Cyclist Viatcheslav Ekimov, the second-place finisher in the road race time trial at the Athens games, will be given the gold medal after American Tyler Hamilton was formally stripped of his gold Friday for having used performance-enhancing drugs.

Hamilton admitted last year to having used banned substances, after denying allegations of doping for years.

The silver medal will now be awarded to American Bobby Julich and the bronze to Australian Michael Rogers.

• • •

Olympic gold medalist in the high jump Ivan Ukhov has promised to melt his medal to turn it into an accessory for his wife.

"I promised my wife a gold chain, and when we go home, we'll melt it down. I don't like jewelry," he told journalists, according to website Sports.ru.

It was not clear whether the 26-year-old seriously intends to melt his gold medal, which he was awarded Tuesday after jumping 2.38 meters on a wet night in London to beat out America's Erik Kynard.

(AP, Reuters, MT)

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/08/12/men-grab-first-volleyball-gold-since-80-a16967