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RUNNING

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Lord Seb Coe proudly carries the Olympic Torch



THE LONDON OLYMPICS 2012

Laura Fountain reports on the Athletics at our successful games

From the moment young athletes were chosen to do the honours and light the flame during the opening ceremony, a bold statement was made. The 2012 games had always aimed to leave a lasting legacy for East London and the country as a whole, and to inspire a generation. But on display in the Olympic stadium just a week later was proof that talent is

already waiting in the wings of British athletics. 19 year-old Katarina Johnson-Thompson who earlier this year had beaten Jessica Ennis' British junior record for the heptathlon, finished 15th in her first Olympics showing she's set to be a contender come Rio. 18-year-old Adam Gemili had only switched full-time to athletics from football in January, but since then he'd set a new

World Junior Championship 100m record of 10.05 seconds. He may not have made the final this time round but his potential gives us hope of a new dawn for Team GB in the 100m. And Ross Murray, who admitted that six months training preceded by 'two years on the lash' probably wasn't the best preparation for an Olympic games, showed promise in the 1500m - if he



Jessica Ennis does Team GB proud by taking Gold



PERFORMANCE



WOMEN'S HEPTATHLON

GOLD
ENNIS JESSICA
GBR

SILVER
SCHWARZKOPF LILLI
GER

BRONZE
CHERNOVA TATYANA
RUS

can just keep himself down at the track rather than the pub.

ROLE MODELS

Team GB's current crop of athletes means there's no shortage of role models for young talent to learn from. The future might be bright, but the present is luminous. Mo Farah, Jessica Ennis, the Brownlees are all household names now following their Gold medal performances in London. Triathlon is already one of the fastest growing sports in the UK but after the brothers from Yorkshire swam, rode and ran their way to the Gold and Bronze medal positions it looks set to get even bigger as a nation dusts off its bikes and swimming goggles. For Ennis, anointed as the face of the games and who had missed the opportunity to compete in Beijing due to injury, the pressure was on and the expectation high. Ennis was

the bookies' (and the nation's) favourite to take Gold in London after winning Silver at last year's World Championships in Daegu. But Ennis was the personification of keeping calm under pressure. She came out of the blocks to win her heptathlon hurdles heat in 12.54 seconds, a time equal to Dawn Harper's Gold medal winning time from the individual hurdles event at Beijing 2008. A string of personal best performances culminated in the final heptathlon event, the 800m, in which

She came out of the blocks to win her heptathlon hurdles heat in 12.54 seconds

Ennis kicked hard on the final straight as the nation willed her on to take the race and the heptathlon Gold.

RUNNING STARS

Ennis led the Gold rush for Team GB on a night that was to become Super Saturday. Greg Rutherford took the Gold medal in the long jump and then Mo Farah lined up in the 10,000m final. Farah, who moved his training to Oregon to work with coach Alberto Salazar, faced stiff competition from the Kenyan and Ethiopian athletes. But a perfectly executed race plan and a killer kick saw Farah take Gold followed swiftly by his American training partner Galen Rupp in second place, leaving Ethiopian Tariku Bekele to collect the Bronze. 'Same time next week then?' became the joke from sofa pundits as we waited to see whether Farah would go for the double in the



Mo Farah is a true inspiration to us all



5,000m the following Saturday. Another nail-biting final awaited us but Farah delivered with a last mile of 4:50 and a final lap of 52.9 seconds to take Gold.

MARATHON DRAMA

The games weren't going as expected for Kenya. Marathons are difficult races to predict the outcome of, but it's fair to say that not many people would have picked Stephen Kiprotich from Uganda as the eventual winner in a line-up that included Kenya's Wilson Kipsang, the second fastest man in history. Kiprotich has a PB of 2:07:20 and didn't better that to claim his country's first Gold since 1972 - his winning time was 2:08:01. But distance races aren't just about who can run the fastest and a tactical race can often yield surprising results. Kipsang had surged early - too early it seemed. He was caught by his Kenyan team-mate Abel Kirui and Kiprotich, and had to make do with the Bronze medal.

Was an over-reliance on pacemakers in big city marathons to blame? Or was there something else going on in the Kenyan camp? The nation that many predicted would dominate the distance races took home just two Gold medals from London. The first came in from Ezekiel Kemboi in the steeplechase - a race they've won every Olympics since 1968. The second delivered with it a world record as David Rushida threw tactics aside and went out hard from the gun in the 800m, intent on a good time. A new world record of 1:40:91 was set to the delight of the crowd. Kenya's African rivals Ethiopia, meanwhile, took home three Gold medals, all won by the team's women: Meseret Defer in the 5000m; Tirunesh Dibaba who sprinted the last lap of the 10,000m to claim

victory and Tiki Gelana who battled it out in the marathon to take Gold.

AN OLYMPICS FOR WOMEN

London 2012 was an Olympics that saw women take centre stage just as much as their male counterparts. For the first time ever, the teams of all of the 204 countries taking part included women in their contingent as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Brunei sent female sports women to the Games for the first time. Team GB was made up of 48.2% women while, in another first, there were more women than men on the US team. Four of those women made their presence known on the track in the in the 4x 400m relay. Tianna Madison, Allyson Felix, Bianca Knight and Carmelita Jeter, passed the baton flawlessly to clinch Gold and smash a 27-year-old world record.

The event many people had been waiting for though was the showdown in the 100m. It was Usain Bolt vs Yohan Blake in what has widely been called the greatest 100m ever. All competitors went under 10 seconds with the exception of Asafa Powell who pulled up injured. Bolt came back from injury and being beaten twice by Blake earlier in the year to answer the question everyone had been asking for the past two weeks. After a night out celebrating with the Swedish handball team until 3am, Bolt was back in the heats of the 200m ready to do it all over again. This time it was a clean sweep for Jamaica as Bolt, Blake and Warren Weir took Gold, Silver and Bronze. So there was little surprise when Bolt and Blake, joined by Nesta Carter and Michael Frater for the 100m relay, took the top spot on the podium and a new world record to boot.

OLYMPIC MOMENTS

■ **BARON PIERRE DE COUBERTIN**, the founder of the modern Olympics, said: "The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part; the essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well." Three athletes in particular personified that sentiment at London 2012.

■ Marathon runner **GUOR MARIAL**, a Sudanese refugee living in the US ran under the Olympic flag. Unwilling to run under the flag of Sudan, where 28 members of his family were murdered during the Sudanese civil war and unable to compete on the US team, he competed as an independent. He finished 47th in a time of 2:19:32.

■ **OSCAR PISTORIUS** made history as the first amputee sprinter to take part at the Olympics after the Court of Arbitration for Sport cleared him to compete against able-bodied athletes in 2008. Pistorius finished second in his 400m heat in a time of 45.44 seconds to reach the semi-final where he finished eighth.

■ **SARAH ATTAR** made history in the 800m heats by becoming the first woman from Saudi Arabia to compete in athletics at the Olympic Games. The stadium cheered Attar as she finished 43 seconds behind heat winner Janeth Jepkosgei Busienei of Kenya.