



BISPO, KOZMUS AND KIPLAGAT IMPRESS IN VELENJE

29 June 2007 - Velenje, Slovenia - Brazilian long jumper Rogerio Bispo and Slovenian hammer thrower Primož Kozmus provided the chief highlights at the 12th MinersFest EAA meeting in the northern city of Velenje on Thursday, the sixth stop on the Slovenia International Grand Prix.

On an ideal evening for athletics, an enthusiastic capacity crowd filled the city's intimate municipal stadium for Slovenia's premiere annual athletics meeting, set beautifully among rolling hills, lush valleys and thick forests at the city's northwestern edge.

Fresh off of his national title one week ago, the 21-year-old Brazilian improved steadily throughout the competition. Reaching 8.03 in the fifth round, Bispo leaped 8.13 in the sixth to equal the stadium record set by Slovenian Olympian Gregor Cankar in 2000. Bispo has a career best of 8.21 from last year's Grand Prix in Rio de Janeiro.

Dimitros Diamadaras of Greece was a distant second with a 7.84 leap, also from the last round.

KOZMUS BOUNCES BACK WITH HOME VICTORY

Kozmus, No. 2 on this year's world list after his 82.30 national record, bounced back from his disappointing sixth place outing in Ostrava on Tuesday with an 80.09 victory.

"This morning I had a good technical training sessions, and that really helped today," said Kozmus, who fifth at the 2003 World Championships and sixth at the 2004 Olympic Games.

With three throws beyond 79 metres. Hungary's Krisztian Pars was a bit more consistent, reaching 79.99 to finish second, with Italy's Marco Lingua (76.23) third. Pars has an 81.40 season's best, currently third best in the world.

The Hammer Throw was part of the main programme, providing a rare opportunity for competitors to share the spotlight.

UGANDAN STEEPLECHASE RECORD FOR KIPLAGAT

Ugandan teenager Benjamin Kiplagat produced an impressive victory in the 3000m Steeplechase. Running virtually alone for two-thirds of the race, he reached the line in a national and national junior record 8:21.73, well ahead of Kenyans Caleb Ngetich (8:29.02) and Hillary Kiprono (8:32.94).

Seventh at the World junior championships in 8:34.14 last year, the 18-year-old Kiplagat has improved notably this year. Eight days ago in Cottbus, he clocked 8:25.55, and has also produced PBs of 3:40.76 in the 1500m, 7:49.99 for 3000m, and 13:22.67 for 5000m this season.

This year's Triple Jump revelation Marija Sestak, who earlier this month reached 14.92, won the Long Jump, reaching a 6.58 outdoor PB in the final round to beat another Slovenian, Nina Kolaric who reached 6.49, also in the final round.

2003 World champion Ana Guevara took a dominating victory in the 400m, lowering her season's best to 51.03. The 30-year-old Mexican star, based for the summer in Slovenia, easily beat back compatriot Gabriela Medina (52.54) and Croatia's World junior champion Daniela Grgic (52.72).

ELSEWHERE...

Slovenian national record holder Miran Vodovnik won the Shot Put with a fifth round 20.11. On the mend from nagging hand injuries, the 29-year-old backed up the promising performance with 20.03 and 20.04 efforts. Nedzad Mulabegovic of Croatia was second (19.99) and Slovak Milan Haborak (19.77) third.

The women's 800 was fiercely contested, with Croatia's rising Vanja Perisic besting Slovenia's veteran Brigita Langerholc 2:01.13 (season's best) to 2:01.48.

Regrouping from a poor start, European Championships 100m bronze medallist Matic Osovnikar won his specialty in 10.33, well ahead of Briton Rikki Fifton (10.38).

My run wasn't the best, which the result shows," said Osovnikar, who last year lowered the national record to 10.16. "My main goal now is the better my record at the World Championships."

Slovenia's Andrej Poljanec won the men's Pole Vault (5.42), and Viktor Shapoval of Ukraine the High Jump (2.23).

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