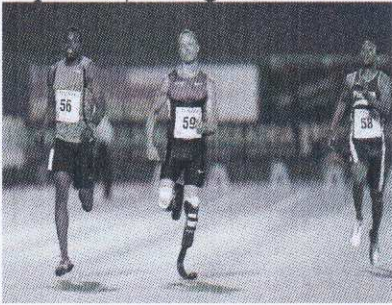


Pistorius runs poor time but finishes second

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Oscar Pistorius of South Africa (C), Javere Bell (L) of Jamaica and Isabelt Juarez of Italy compete during the men's 400 metres event at the 23rd International Athletics Meeting in Lignano Sabbiadoro July 17, 2012

Image by: Alessandro Garofalo / REUTERS

South African double-amputee sprinter Oscar Pistorius finished second in a 400-metre race in Italy on Tuesday, his final tune-up for the London Olympics

Pistorius clocked 46.56 seconds — well off the personal best of 45.07 he ran at the same meet last year — to finish behind Calvin Smith of the United States. Smith won in 45.52.

“My time wasn’t among the best. But I’m good physically and mentally,” Pistorius said. “I’ve used a lot of energy in these past few days, both in training and with the media because of my participation in the Olympics. The race went well, I felt fine, I just lost a bit of acceleration halfway through.”

Pistorius will become the first amputee track athlete to compete at the Olympics after being selected by South Africa to run in London. He’s set to compete in the individual 400 and the 4x400-metre relay, although the team hasn’t decided which leg he will run.

“I’d prefer to run the third leg, that would be the best,” Pistorius said. “But the first one could be fine. The relay is really my race. I’ve always done team sports.”

Pistorius won last year’s race in Lignano to qualify for the world championships. This time, he finished ahead of four other runners, including Jamaicans Ricardo Cunningham and Javere Bell.

“I could have done the same time as last year, but I didn’t want to run the risk of getting injured,” Pistorius said. “It wasn’t important to test my speed today. It was like training, in the next two weeks I will try to do my best before London. I’m sure I can beat my personal best. The Olympics pushes me so much, that will make me run better.”

Meanwhile, American Lolo Jones won the women’s 100 hurdles in a time of 12.85. Ireland’s Derval O’Rourke was second in 13.05.