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Fascinating night of athletics in Lignano



Lolo Jones on the way to her 7.89 meet record in Moscow (Nikolay Matveev)

The 800 metres races were in the spotlight at the International Meeting "Sport e Solidarietà" in Lignano Sabbiador, Italy, a fascinating seaside resort on the Adriatic coast.

In the men's 800 metres Kenyan Job Kinyor clocked an impressive 1:44.39 leading two more men under the 1:45 barrier: Australian Jeff Riseley, second in 1:44.48 and US Tyler Mulder, third in 1:44.75. In this outstanding race eight men dipped under 1:46. Kinyor came to the fore last May when he finished second to 800 metres super-star David Rudisha at the Samsung Diamond League in Doha in 1:43.76.

Italian 800 metres champion and 2008 World Junior finalist Giordano Benedetti dipped under the 1:46 barrier for the first time ever in his career finishing fourth in 1:45.34 which improved his PB by almost a second.

Cuban Yusneisy Santiusti Caballero, who lives in Italy and runs for the Italian top club Assindustria Sport Padova, won the women's 800 metres in 1:59.95 ahead of US middle distance runners Maggie Vessey (2:00:59) and Anna Pierce (2:00-66) and Jemma Simpson from Great Britain (2:00.72). Italian champion Marta Milani, semifinalist in the 400 metres at the World Championships in Daegu, improved her PB finishing sixth in 2:01.35.

In the women's 1500 metres US Gabriele Anderson beat favourie Lisa Dobriskey from Great Britain, World silvermedallist in Berlin 2009, in 4:04.84 to 4:05.27. Italian 800 metres Indoor record holder and 2009 European Indoor bronze medallist Elisa Cusma showed her improvement finishing sixth in 4:07.55. Margherita Magnani smashed her PB from 4:11.65 to 4:08.94.

In the men's 1500 metres Kenyan Jame Magut held off US David Torrence to win in 3:37:44 to 3:37.57. 18-year-old Geoffrey Barusei, who entered the meeting with a 3:33.39 PB, finished third in 3:37.84.

Former double 60 metres Hurdles World Indoor champion Lolo Jones, who recently made the US Olympic team for London thanks to her third place at the US Trials, cruised to a winning 12.85 in the women's 100 metres hurdles ahead of 2006 World Indoor champion Derval O'Rourke, runner-up in 13.02.

In a meeting which combines world-class athletics and competitions dedicated to disabled athletes the men's 400 metres race was one of most popular events of the evening as it featured "Blade Runner" Oscar Pistorius who is preparing for his first Olympic Games in Gemona del Friuli not far from Lignano Sabbiadoro. Pistorius, semifinalist at the World Championships in Daegu and second at the African Championships in Porto Novo in 45.52, could not repeat his last year's win in Lignano in 45.07 and had to settle with second place in 46.56 behind Calvin Smith Jr. (the son of former 100 metres world record holder and 200 metres world champion Calvin Smith) who won unchallenged in 45.52.

The men's 100 metres win went to Aaron Armstrong from Trinidad and Tobago in 10.30. Henry Frayne from Australia, World Indoor silver medallist in Istanbul last March, leapt to 7.80, far from his 8.27 seasonal best set earlier this year during the Australian season.

Diego Sampaolo for the IAAF

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