
Ibarguen's terrific triple jump of 15.31m in Monaco

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Caterine Ibarguen produced the best triple jump of the last six years to earn a dramatic victory at the **IAAF Diamond League** meeting in Monaco's Stade Louis II, registering an Area record of 15.31m to put her fifth on the world all-time list on Friday (18).

She touched down in the sand just 19cm shy of Inessa Kravets's world record of 15.50m set at the 1995 IAAF World Championships.

The Colombian needed something big with her final effort to wrest back the lead from Russia's Yekaterina Koneva, whose second round personal best of 14.89m had bettered Ibarguen's first round effort by 11cm. Koneva's effort also bettered Ibarguen's 2014 world-leading mark by two centimetres.

The 2013 world champion and this year's Diamond Race leader strove to regain her lead, registering 14.81m before recording two fouls, the second of which looked long enough to have put her back in front.

The Colombian made her frustration plain, her thick black ponytail switching as she punched the air, but after her next jump, she was jittering her legs in anticipation of the official figures. She knew it was big, and she was right.

As Ibarguen skipped back down the runway, Koneva was preparing for the final jump of the competition more in hope than expectation. She produced an effort of 14.50m, highly respectable, but in the circumstances, entirely insufficient.

Ibarguen's mark, as one might expect, was a 2014 world lead, a Diamond League record and a national record.

It was her first jump over 15 metres, adding 32cm to her previous best of 14.99m, set at altitude in Bogota three years ago.

"The hard work is paying off," said Ibarguen, who extended her winning streak to 17 consecutive competitions. "I never doubted my chances of winning. I never lost faith. The world record is there, it's not far. I will strive and fight for it."

A 53rd consecutive shot put victory earned in characteristically commanding fashion by New Zealand's Valerie Adams effectively defended her possession of the Diamond Race, although the reigning Olympic and world champion will need to compete in her IAAF Diamond League final in Brussels on 5 September.

Adams made her intentions clear with a first round effort of 19.71m before moving to another level with her second attempt, a mighty roar announced a throw which thudded into the blue plastic cushions laid in the quadrant at 20.38m, just eight centimetres short of her 2014 world-leading mark.

A third round of 20.30m underlined her intent. Christina Schwanitz, of Germany, who took silver behind Adams at last year's IAAF World Championships in Moscow, raised her game in the final round to secure second place with 19.54, but Adams rounded things off with 20.34m.

Point made but pressure growing

"I like the feeling of having such a long unbeaten series, but the pressure is growing with every competition," commented Adams. "The last time I lost was in the year of the last Commonwealth Games, so I'm having a fourth anniversary."

The men's 400m saw world champion LaShawn Merritt win with relative ease in 44.30, with fellow American Gil Roberts second in 44.52.

Fabiana Murer, Brazil's 2011 world champion, won the pole vault with an effort of 4.76m, pushing the London 2012 Olympic Games champion, Jennifer Suhr, into second place with 4.71m, the height also reached by Greece's third-placed Ekaterini Stefanidi. Cuba's 2012 Olympic silver medallist Yarislay Silva was a disappointing equal seventh with 4.40m.

Barbora Spotakova, the double Olympic javelin champion, making a return to international action after taking almost a year out to have a child, got into the winning groove with season's best of 66.96m, with second place going to Slovenia's Martina Ratej, who threw 64.58m.

Kaliese Spencer, of Jamaica, earned victory in the 400m hurdles in 54.09, with last year's world champion and Diamond Race winner Zuzana Hejnova happy enough with seventh place in 55.86 in what was her first race this season after a series of calf injuries.

"I was careful today," said Hejnova. "It was a test for me."

Poland's Piotr Malachowski enhanced his Diamond Race lead with a victory in the discus with a third-round effort of 65.84m, with Cuba's Jorge Fernandez second with 65.46m.

Li Jinzhe, of China, was victorious in the rather mediocre long jump with a last round effort of 8.09m which took him past Ther Netherlands' Moscow 2013 silver medallist Ignisious Gaisah, who had a best of 8.01m.

Jairus Birech was the outstanding performer in the men's 3000m steeplechase.

The Kenyan finished 50 metres clear of his nearest challenger to win in 8:03.33, just under a second shy of his 2014 world-leading time of 8:02.37 and he is now in control of the Diamond Race in his event.