
Duran makes history at Toronto 2015

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History was made on Monday (10 August), the first day of athletics at the [Toronto 2015 Parapan American Games](#) as Cuba's Omara Duran clocked the fastest 100m time ever by a female para-athlete.

Despite rainy conditions during the heats, the 23-year-old clocked 11.65 seconds, 0.26 seconds faster than the previous T12 record set by China's Guohua Zhou at London 2012.

Her time was also 0.24 quicker than the previous fastest time run by a female athlete. At April's IPC Athletics Grand Prix South Africa's Ilse Hayes ran 11.89 in the T13 class.

"I'm really happy. Tomorrow I'm going to try win the gold medal, the weather wasn't a problem," said Duran afterwards on a day that saw torrential rain and an hour break in competition due to lightening.

The first race of the day saw a sensational finish in the men's 5,000m T54. After 12 and half laps, the USA's Daniel Romanchuk (11:44.88) beat Canada's home favourite Josh Cassidy (11:44.92) by just 0.04 seconds. Venezuela's Juan Valladares (11:45.06) took the bronze.

The first Games record and Canadian gold of the day came in the very next race, the men's 5,000m T11, courtesy of Jason Dunkerley (15:39.54). Chile's Cristian Valenzuela Guzman (16:21.31) took silver and bronze went to Darwin Castro (16:34.91). Brazil's Odair Dos Santos, the original winner, was disqualified.

Canada won a second gold in the women's 800m T54 through Diane Roy (2:01.24) who held off a challenge from the USA's Hannah McFadden (2:02.04) in the finishing straight. Bronze went to the USA's Cheri Marsden (2:13.76).

"It was hard to have expectation because that is my first big race this year," explained Roy. "I just went in my rip; I didn't want to go too fast and slip but I just kept pushing and I catch her so I am very happy."

There was a Colombian one-two in the men's 400m T38 with Dixon de Jesus Hooker Velasquez (54.36) lowering the Americas record by 0.17 seconds. Weiner Javier Diaz Mosquera (55.91) took the silver and Nicaragua's Carlos Castillo (59.02) the bronze.

Brazil's first gold on the track came through world silver medallist Veronia Hipolito (13.29) in the women's 100m T38. Teammate Jenifer Martins Dos Santos (14.14) and Mexico's Lucia Muro (14.92) took the remaining podium positions.

There was an Americas record in the men's 100m T35 as Argentina's Hernan Barreto (12.82) retained his Parapan title from four years ago. The USA's Ayden Dent (13.28) took the silver and Barreto's teammate Nicolas Aravena (13.34) the bronze.

An American record also fell in the very next race as Colombia's Juan Moreno Marquez (12.57) stormed to gold in the men's 100m T36. Silver and bronze went to Argentina's Enrique Rotondo (12.73) and Brazil's Rodrigo Parreira Da Silva (12.78) respectively.

Canada's multi-world champion Brent Lakatos eased to gold in the men's 100m T53. The world record holder finished in 15.11 well ahead of Brazil's Ariosvaldo Fernandes Da Silva (15.82) and Canada's Jean-Philippe Maranda (16.99).

There was a thrilling finish in the final of the men's 100m T54 with both Colombia's Sairo Moises Fernandez Lopez and Mexico's Juan Cervantes clocking the same time of 15.19. Fernandez Lopez was awarded gold after the photo finish and he was joined on the podium by Javier Rojas Diaz (16.10).

Likewise, the 1,500m T20 was equally as exciting with USA's Michael Brannigan (4:04.32) taking the gold in an Americas record from Venezuela's Luis Arturo Paiva (4:04.34) in second. Third was Jovito Gutierrez (4:12.39).

In the final medal event of the day, Brazilian teenager Petrucio Ferreira (10.77) showed what a talent he is by breaking the Americas record on his way to gold in the men's 100m T47. Cuba's Raciél Gonzalez (11.00) was second and Yohansson Nascimento (11.12) third.

In the field, Brazils won four gold medals. Mateus Evangelista Cardoso (6.20m) set a new Americas record in the long jump T37, Marivana Oliveira Da Nobreaga (8.29m) a new Games record in the shot put F35/36, Alessandro Da Silva (36.12) won the men's discus F11 in a news Games record and Pedro Neves Da Silva (5.11m) in the long jump T38.

"I'm very happy. I came here promising my family a gold medal. I kept that promise. I wanted a better score, but it didn't work," said Neves Da Silva.

"This is my first Parapan, my first international trip. I'm debuting with a gold medal. It's a dream come true."

Jamaica's Alphonso Cunningham (24.80m), the 2004 Paralympic champion, claimed gold in the men's discus F51/52/53/57, his country's first medal at these Games.

Americas records were broken on their way to gold by Mexico's Johnatan Salinas Ventura (9.68m) in the men's shot put F54/55, Canada's Kevin Strybosch (44.66m) in the discus F37 and Josh Farrell (14.05m) in the men's shot put F20.

The USA's Regas Woods (5.74m) won the men's long jump T42/44.