

Day 10: "Blade Runner" completes gold treble, China hits 200-medal mark

09:05, September 17, 2008

South African sensation Oscar Pistorius completed a hat trick of gold medals in sprint events at the Beijing Paralympics on Tuesday as host China crossed the 200-medal mark.

South Africa's Oscar Pistorius competes during the final of the men's 400m T44 event at the National Stadium , also known as the Bird's Nest , during the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing, Sept. 16, 2008. Pistorius claimed the title of the event with a result of 47.49 seconds and set a new world record. (Xinhua Photo)

Pistorius, dubbed the "Blade Runner" for the J-shaped carbon-fiber blades he uses, won the 400m final in a world record time of 47.49 seconds to add to his titles in 100m and 200m. He bettered his own world record by more than two seconds.

"I'm delighted to break the world record. I have a lot of pressure on this competition," said the 21-year-old.

Pistorius was born without his fibula, the smaller of the two bones in the lower legs, and when he was 11 months old both limbs were amputated below the knee.

Canada's Chantal Petitclerc celebrates after crossing the finish line during the final of the women's 1500m T54 event at the National Stadium , also known as the Bird's Nest , during the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing, Sept. 16, 2008. Petitclerc claimed the title of the event with a result of 3:39.88. (Xinhua Photo)

Pistorius had sought to compete in last month's Beijing Olympics but eventually failed to reach the qualifying standard. He said had it not been for the legal case with the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), which ruled his J-shaped blades gave him an advantage over able-bodied athletes, he might have qualified for the Olympics.

Meanwhile, Canadian wheelchair racer Chantal Petitclerc reached the top of the podium for the fifth time after she clocked a fastest time of 3 minutes 39.88 seconds in women's 1,500mT54 final.

China's athletes celebrate after the final of men's 4x400m relay T53/T54 event at the National Stadium , also known as the Bird's Nest , during the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing, Sept. 14, 2008. The Chinese team claimed the title of the event with a time of 3:05.67, and set a new world record. (Xinhua Photo)

Petitclerc, 39, had also won 100m, 200m, 400m and 800m in her class. She joins

swimmers Natalie du Toit of South Africa and Matthew Cowdrey of Australia as the most titled athlete in Beijing.

The Chinese juggernaut kept rolling on the penultimate day of the Paralympics, raking in seven more gold medals to lead the medal count with 87 golds and 207 in total. Britain was a distant second on the ladder with 42 golds and 102 medals, and the United States third with 36 golds and 98 overall.

Wang Fang wrapped up her second Paralympics trip with a "double-double" as the 25-year-old Chinese added the 100m T36 gold to her 200m title. She won both events in Athens in 2004, too.

"I feel relaxed and relieved now," said Wang. "I haven't been back home for more than one year. I miss my family very much, and I hope that I can have a reunion as soon as possible."

Chinese athletes celebrate during the awarding ceremony for the final of the women's 4x100m relay T53/54 event at the National Stadium , also known as the Bird's Nest , during the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing, Sept. 16, 2008. The Chinese team claimed the title of the event with a time of 57.61 seconds, and set a new world record. (Xinhua Photo)

Also at the Bird's Nest stadium, the Chinese were triumphant in two relay events - men's 4x100m relay T11-13 and women's 4x100m T53-54.

Elsewhere, China claimed three team events in table tennis, and Qi Dong snared the host nation's ninth gold in powerlifting.

Outside the sporting arena, South African amputee swimmer Natalie du Toit and Panaman visually impaired runner Said Gomez were named winners of the Whang Youn Dai Achievement Award, the International Paralympic Committee said.

Dr Whang Youn Dai, after whom the award is named, will present the award to Du Toit and Gomez at the closing ceremony on Wednesday.

Whang, from South Korea, contracted polio at the age of three, but became that country's first disabled female physician, and has dedicated her life to working for people with disabilities. She instituted the award at the 1988 Paralympics in Seoul.

Du Toit, who won five gold medals for the second consecutive Paralympics, was given the award after nominations were received from the Chefs de Mission of 24 delegations, the IPC and members of the press corps.

Gomez, 44, was competing in his fifth Paralympics, but was travelling with national Paralympic Committee funding for the first time after he paid for his own trips on the first four occasions.

Natalie du Toit of South Africa competes during women's 100m butterfly S9 final of the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing, September 7, 2008. (Xinhua Photo)

More than 4,000 athletes from 147 countries and regions are competing in 20 sports over five categories of disability, with 472 gold medals at stake.

Eight gold medals are up for grabs on Wednesday.

"Source:Xinhua"