



IAAF Continental Cup
OSTRAVA 2018
08-09 September

NEWSLETTER 6

SUPPORTING CONTINENTS FROM THE SCHOOL DESKS TO THE STANDS

17 500 pupils and students of primary schools, secondary schools, and members of athletics clubs have been involved in a year-long project Ostrava Supports Continents, common project of Czech Athletic Federation, City of Ostrava and Moravian-Silesian Region. 4000 of them came to the City stadium on Saturday, another 4000 of them are coming on Sunday. They created amazing atmosphere on the first competition day, cheering for all athletes even the opposite corner of the stadium, doing Mexican wave, taking selfie with athletes. Just like loyal fans, they got dressed in colorful jerseys of the continents they support and coloured the City stadium stands this way. They brought also huge home-made banners which were impossible to overlook.

This year-long competition culminated before the beginning of the Continental Cup - these children competed in a few athletic disciplines. And the four captains of the continents became their biggest fans right there at the track. They supported them, cheered for them, pushed them to better results and went through the races as if they competed themselves.

Even though it may seem this was the first time these children could talk to the athletics stars, it is not so. Captains kept in touch with "their" schools during whole year, sent letters, even video-called



Photo: Czech Athletic Federation

them a few times, for example to wish the children Merry Christmas. The children definitely knew what big stars they could meet.

The continent that pupils or children support got included to the school syllabus, so they could learn about interesting facts from the farthest corners of the world or cook international meals. "When the children saw how much the captains support them all year, they wanted to return this support. So in the case of Team Africa, the students organised a charitable collection and in collaboration with one of the foundations sent a big amount of soft toys and clothes to Africa's children. "It is

beautiful to see that this project has this dimension, too," says Nikola Samková, the manager of the project.

The parents of young athletes were deeply moved as well. They had tears in their eyes when they came for their children to the mixed zone just couple seconds after Colin Jackson, Mike Powell, Jana Pittman, and Nezha Bidouane personally gave trophies and medals to the young athletes. These are some of the moments that world athletics brings to Ostrava. It is an experience for a lifetime.

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Photo: Czech Athletic Federation

OPENING CEREMONY AT THE CITY STADIUM

Crowded City stadium, colourful jerseys of all four continents all across the audience, star team captains on the track, performance of popular Czech music band Mandrage, introductory speeches from Sebastian Coe, the IAAF President, and Libor Varhaník, the LOC & Czech Athletic Federation President. All of this as a warm up for upcoming moment. "I declare open the IAAF Continental Cup 2018," announced Robert Plaga, Czech Minister for Education, Youth and Sports with huge applause, and weekend full of amazing athletic battles could start. Tomáš Macura, the City Major of Ostrava, and Ivo Vondrák, Governor of the Moravian-Silesian Region, were also there as guests of honour. 37 events in total will be seen within the two days in Ostrava, top Czech "athletic city".

CATERINA IBARGUEN TRIES NEW EVENT

Columbian Caterina Ibarguen is currently the most successful triple jumper. However, that is not enough for her! This season she started to combine triple jump with long jump and triumphed at overall series of Diamond Leagues at two technical events which has never been done before. "First, I wanted to take a part as long jumper only at Central American and Caribe Games. However, I needed to qualify for it and that is why I started to compete at long jump in the beginning of the season. I performed well and even gained golden double at the Games which was incredible. That is why I decided to continue," explained Ibarguen. However because of the World Championships she is planning to fully focus on triple jump next year.



Photo: Czech Athletic Federation

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SPRINTER JOSEPH MILLAR IN THE DISCUS CIRCLE

Team Asia-Pacific member Joseph Millar from New Zealand took part in various disciplines during the first day of the the IAAF Continental Cup 2018. He ran 200m, was one of the 4x100m relay team members, and took part in the discus throw as well. Ehsan Hadadi from Iran who was originally nominated could not come because of an injury. The team captain was trying to persuade the shot putter Thomas Walsh, but he refused because of the possibility of an injury. The shot put competition was starting right after the discus throw and so he did not want to risk it. Joseph Millar volunteered to take part in the competition, and even though he finished last with the result of 27.15m, he recieved a thunderous applause when leaving the stadium.

THE PLAY-OFF DID NOT FIT THE DISCUS THROWERS

One of the rules that were meant to make the competitions more attractive in some of the technical disciplines is play-off system for the best four after first three attempts. Most of the athletes were able to keep the leading position and they claimed the victory. DeAnna Price in hamer throw, Ruswahl Samaai in long jump, Caterina Ibarguen in triple jump or Darian Romani in shot put all claimed the leading position without any setbacks. Discus thrower Andrius Gudzius foot fouled and dropped out in semifinals. Excellent Sandra Perkovic failed as well. She foot fouled during the last throw and Yaime Perez could be calmer during her attempt. She put all her strength the throw anyway and performed her best performance at the competition.



Photo: Czech Athletic Federation

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VADLEJCH BACK IN HEALTHY SHAPE IN OSTRAVA

He was fighting till the last moment, he wanted medal from European Championships in Berlin so much. However, the previous problems with back stopped him from proper training preparation. Czech javelin thrower Jakub Vadlejch finished eight.

"He was not physically ready for the European Championships as we would wish. Anyway, I was proud to see him going for it and fighting every attempt. He might not have a medal but this attitude will help him grow," said Jan Železný, the triple Olympic winner and Vadlejch's trainer after the javelin throw final.



Photo: IAAF

After that Vadlejch had to decide – will he end the season or will he try to catch up with double session trainings to prepare for finals of Diamond League series and IAAF Continental Cup 2018 in Ostrava? However, he would not be a double winner of prestige DL series if he had given up before the end of the season. "His back did not hurt during qualification and the final at the European Championships. So he was motivated to train again and improve. Now it all depends on how his organism will react on the fact that his health is back in shape. He can definitely throw far but even more important will be to adapt to the specific rules and get the best standing out of it," adds Železný. On Sunday Vadlejch will come back to Ostrava city stadium for the second time this year. Will he win again?

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