



Yesterday's **Highlight**

The heat continues in the rain

On May 19, the third day of the Championships, freezing rain began in the morning and continued until last event. Even though, many spectators came to the stadium and gave a warm applause and cheers to the athletes. The new world record was set in the women's shot put T20, and it was a good day.

■ **Women's Long Jump T12**



In the long jump of the visually impaired Class T12 for women, Yokutkhon Kholbekova of Uzbekistan won the gold medal with a record of 5.48m, which she set in the third attempt.

In addition to Sara Martinez of Spain, who won a silver medal at the Tokyo Paralympics, Kholbekova, who won a silver medal at the Paris Games last year, and Uran Sawada of Japan, who won a bronze medal, were among the six competitors.

Martinez scored 5.16m in the first attempt, and Kholbekova marked 5.39m. The winner, Kholbekova, performed consistently in the 5m range jump in all six attempts. She won the gold medal with a record of 5.48m for the third time in the first half. When asked for comment after the competition, she said, "For me, it was my first gold medal at a world championships. I'm very happy. Thank you, Kobe. "Arigato Japan !" she expressed her delight by mixing English and Japanese.

Sawada, who won two consecutive bronze medals following last year's Paris Games, set a 4.92 m in her third attempt, and kept the third position just following Kholbekova and Martinez. Sawada's personal best was 5.70m at the Beijing Grand Prix in 2018. If we compare only the personal best of among the participants in this championships, Sawada's record is the best. One of Sawada's goals in this

competition was to compete by jumping over the 5m. In the first half, she focused on keeping records steadily, and in the second half, she changed to be more aggressive than first half attempt.

In the sixth and final attempt, it was 5.00m. Although she felt to mark her target, but she got a good impression and finished the competition with a smile on her face.

■ **Men's 400m T36**



In the men's 400m T36 final of the cerebral palsy class, 8 athletes who had cleared the preliminary round on the May 19th participated in this event. James Turner (Australia), who won the gold medal at the Paris Games, led the way in the home straight, but lost his balance just before the finish line, and William Stedman (New Zealand), who was right behind him, won in 53.36 seconds. Turner came in second, for just minimum difference by 0.16 seconds, while Matsumoto Takeru of Japan came in fourth with a time of 56.42 seconds.

Stedman smiled and said, "I still can't believe it because I didn't think we could win. I'm really happy to have a good race." "All I wanted to do was relax and follow it to the end. I actually used up all my legs in the last 10m, so I didn't know what would happen, but I just thought I would keep moving my legs until I crossed the finish line." he said, after the race.

They are also expected to face each other at the Paris Paralympics, but "I'm looking forward to running with you again. Jimmy (Turner) is a great player, though, so you never know what's gonna happen."

Turner, who lost, expressed regret, saying, "Second place is frustrating. I've been training hard and I think I can run faster. But I didn't get any results today. Because of cerebral palsy, the body tends to harden when running, and at the end, the body cannot control itself." Still, the champion said, "I'm looking forward to the Paris Paralympics. It's gonna be the right place where I can really shine."

Matsumoto, who was in fourth place same result as the last Championships, "Last year, he was passed by another competitor just before the finish line, but for this time, he was in position to gain one more position within striking distance."



■ **Women's 800m T54**

In the Women's 800m T54 (w/ wheelchair) final, Merle Marie Menje of Germany won marking 1:58.47.

In the final, Menje jumped out immediately after the starting signal. The competition for position in the open lane is an important point for mid and long distance races, but we keep the lead from the inside. China's Tian Yajuan came in second, followed closely



by Japan's Momoka Muraoka in third. They circled at a slow pace in the rain, turning the last corner and entering in the final straight line in what turned into a fierce last-spurt battle. At this point, two Chinese players ran in parallel just outside of Muraoka, who was in the second position, and tried to come from behind to win the championship with Muraoka, but Menje escaped slightly. It was a close one, with 4 people reaching Muraoka in 1:58.

"Amazing to win! I don't know how to put it into words. I just can't believe it." said Merle joyfully. She is now 19 years old. She also competed in the Paris Championships last year, when she was fifth position. "I'm not good at starting, so I just focused on starting point.

I didn't expect to run at the front, but when I came forward with a strong feeling, I succeeded."

"It's frustrating, but it's also a sign of growth that I was in a dead-heat group because I used to fall way behind in such fierce competition. It was a race where I realized how much I had grown and what I was missing." said Muraoka, who finished 1:58:88, just 0.03 seconds behind the third-place athlete. During the last spurt of the race in the rain, the handrim of the wheelchair slid, causing frustration. "It was a minimum goal to finish in 4th place in the final, but I thought that if I was a member of today's final, I might be able to get a shot at the podium, so I am disappointed."



■ **Women's Shot Put T20**

Another world record was created. In the women's shot put T20 (for intellectual disabilities), Sabrina Fortune of England marked 14.73m in her 6th throw, breaking the world record of 14.39m set by Poleth Isamar Mendes Sanchez. Mendes Sanchez finished in second place with a 13.90m in her third attempt.

Reina Hori of Japan, who participated in the world championships for the first time, finished in seventh with an Asian record of 12.26m. "The difference between the world record and the Asian record is huge. Although I was keenly aware of the difference between me and the rest of the world, this experience will surely lead to my growth. Next, I would like to improve the Asian record to 13m and 14m, so that Asians can break the world record." she said through tears.



■ **Men's Long Jump T63**



Leon Schaeffer of Germany, the world record holder of the T63, won the gold medal in the men's long jump T63, in which classes competing with a thigh prosthesis on one leg (T63) or both legs (T61) competed in a mixed race, with a 7.22m in the final attempt. After winning three consecutive championships in Dubai 2019 and Paris last year.

12 athletes participated, from host country three athletes Atsushi Yamamoto, Katsuaki Inagaki and Hajime Kondo, in addition includes Paris Bronze medalist Joel de Jong (South Africa).

In the first attempt, de Jong took the lead with a 6.82m, but in the second tentative, Schaeffer turned it around with a 6.84m. In the third round, he extended his distance to 7.03m, putting pressure on his rivals. De Young topped Schaeffer with 7.02m in the fourth attempt and 7.04m in the sixth attempt. Schaeffer, who jumped immediately after, regained the top position with the 7.22m to win the championship.

Schaeffer said with a big smile, "I'm very excited and relieved to win three consecutive title. Thanks to Joel, it was a fun game." He was led by de Young before the final attempt, but, "I love pressure. So I told myself, I'm gonna show the strength I have before I jump. Anyway, I just tried to run up with the speed I've been practicing so hard this season, and I got a good jump in my final trial. I want to win the Paris Paralympics again."

Yamamoto set a season best with 6.48m kept temporary third position, but he failed to improve his record and ending in fifth position. Also, Kondo set his personal best jumping 6.18m, and Inagaki recorded 5.63m but he was not able to improve his result staying in 9th position.

Yamamoto, whose adjustment was delayed due to his injury. "I could perform better, but in current circumstance, I could obtain my best result" he said.

He will continue challenging and trying to be qualified for his 5th consecutive Paralympic Games.



**Competition
Schedule
and Results**



GO KOBE 2024!

Smile Resonance Campaign!

Smile Resonance Campaign or "Sumarezo" for short. The campaign is a cross between "smile" and "resonance," meaning empathy, resonance and deeper understanding. It is a campaign to support the athletes by combining their feelings, personalities and smiles. The campaign vehicle wrapped by Championships Logo will tour 15 leading symbiotic society host towns across the country. Photography sessions were held to show the smiles of people who participated in networking events with para-athletes and school visits.



Host Towns are 15 cities (Misawa City, Aomori Prefecture; Tono City, Iwate Prefecture; Odate City, Akita Prefecture; Fukushima City, Fukushima Prefecture; Setagaya Ward, Tokyo; Edogawa Ward, Tokyo; Kawasaki City, Kanagawa Prefecture; Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture; Ise City, Mie Prefecture; Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture; Akashi City, Hyogo Prefecture; Ube City, Yamaguchi Prefecture; Iizuka City, Fukuoka Prefecture; Tagawa City, Fukuoka Prefecture; Oita City, Oita Prefecture) certified by the national government to promote initiatives to realize a symbiotic society in conjunction with the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics. Starting at the National Stadium, which was the track and field venue for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, the Smalezo campaign visited schools and para-sports events in the Tohoku, Kyushu and Chugoku regions, the Tokyo metropolitan area, and the Chubu and Kinki regions. It also visited sponsoring companies, and finally held a photo session at a ceremony venue 100 days before and a special needs school in Kobe City.



In addition to the 6,778 people who showed up in support of the national Sumarezo campaign, as many as 4,666 people showed up at the online Sumarezo campaign photo session for those who couldn't go to the event in person. The Sumarezo campaign has brought a circle of smiles to more than 10,000 people nationwide.



Photographers with visual impairments took the photos. Instead of looking at the faces of the people in the cheering photos, the shutter releases with a shout of "Go for it ~". Through the campaign, children who shouted "Go for it ~" in a cheerful voice, and people who sat in the frame with a shy but powerful gutsy pose, expressed their sympathy, saying, "Para-athletes have become more familiar."

The smiling cheering photos are used visually in various decorations, such as the streamer at Univer Memorial Stadium, to entertain the eyes of athletes from various countries participating in the world championships as well as spectators who come to cheer. If you go to the venue, please pay attention to the supporting photos. Maybe you'll meet the smile of someone you know. Let's cheer for the athletes with the smiling people in the picture.