



THE DAILY NEWS

KOBE 2024 PARA ATHLETICS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

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Japanese

Yesterday's **Highlight**

World-record story from a rivalry

The Para Athletics World Championships started in 1994. There have been many great games to watch. This is the 11th championships. On May 23th, the seventh day of the competition, a rivalry match was also seen. Record and the story of a memorable new world record battle.



■ Women's 200m T36

Just before 18:00, the women's 200m T36 was about to start. Among the 7 athletes, Yiting Shi (China), who held the world record (28.17 seconds) for the gold medal at the Tokyo Paralympics, and Danielle Aitchison (New Zealand), the world champion who won the Paris Championships last year, are the two most notable participants.

She has been a good opponent for several years, and Shi won the 200m race as a defending champion with notable world record in the 200m at the Tokyo Paralympics, and Aitchison finished second in her first appearance. In the 100m held a three days ago, Shi won with a new record of 13.5 seconds, breaking Aitchison's world record of 0.06 seconds. Aitchison was second with a time of 13.48 seconds. What kind of drama can be seen at 200m race?



It was the six lane Shi that made a sharp jump out of the gun. From her favorite start, she smoothly accelerates to the top of the corner to final straight. The seven lane Aitchison followed closely behind, and at this point the game was narrowed down to these two athletes.

When she is in the final straight, Aitchison changes the gears. When she accelerated with a smooth stride, she caught the Shi within 50 meters to go. Aitchison's speed continued to increase as she raced across the finish line in strong form.

The time is 27.47 seconds. It was an impressive new world record, breaking the previous world record held by Shi by as much as 0.7 seconds. Shi, which came in second about 5 meters behind, also set a new Asian record with a good time, surpassing the previous world record (0.11 seconds difference).



After the finish, Shi walked up slowly to Aitchison, who was kneeling on the track, they hugged each other in honor and mutual respect.

After that, when Aitchison came to the mix zone, she smiled from ear to ear and said,.

"I had a good run and getting a great record. I'm so happy!"

When I asked her what she said when you hugged Shi after the finish, she said, "She can't speak English. We just hugged and shared our mutual happiness. She is a very nice person. I want to continue to grow as a good competitor."

Shi looked Aitchison as she spoke, smiling, and passed behind her.

Aitchison is 22 and Shi is 26 years old. How long we can expect to witness the historical good races between two top athletes.

**Competition Schedule
and Results**



■ Men's 400m T13



Skander Djamil Athmani of Algeria, who was absent at the last Paris Championships, competed in the men's 400m T13, which started at 18:27. **Athmani** was the athlete who won the gold medal at the Tokyo Paralympics in 2021, setting a new world record of 46.70 seconds. At last year's Paris Championships, Japan's **Ryota Fukunaga** won the event with a time of 47.79 seconds. After around a year, who will be the winner? **Athmani** or **Fukunaga**. You cannot miss it!

Fukunaga is in lane six, and **Athmani** is in the outside lane. **Fukunaga** is chased while watching **Athmani** run. When the gun rang out, **Fukunaga** jumped out from a low position. **Athmani**, on the other hand, uses bullet-like acceleration to beat other athlete one after another. By the time he turned the second corner from the back straight, **Athmani** was alone on top position. As he raced across the finish line, he set a new world record in 46.44 seconds, breaking his own world record.

"A great start led to a new world. This record is not unique to me. The coach I had been working with, the coach who looked like family, was as happy as I was. It's a world record for working with a coach." said **Athmani** quickly.

He missed the 400m at the Paris Games last year. He was disqualified for being seconds late for the call room. "So I was in the call room 10 minutes ago to make sure I wasn't late for this championships."

Looking ahead to last year's gold medalist **Fukunaga**, **Athmani** was working out a race plan. "It was to run with **Ryota** right behind him, saying to himself, "He's catching up, he's catching up." Run away from him. If he ran like that, he set a new world record. I mean, **Ryota** led us to the world record."

Fukunaga, who played against world record holder **Athmani** for the first time, said, "I was already surprised by **Athmani**'s speed in the back straight. ". "In my regular practice, I practice with a training partner who runs in the 45 second range, so I wasn't surprised, but I want to spend a little more time reviewing what I'm missing."



Athmani deepened his impression of **Fukunaga** by running with him for the first time. "Very good athlete. He'll make more time. He will also run with **Ryota**, who has grown up in the Paris Paralympics. I think he's our best competitor for running faster."

Athmani will aim for 45 seconds in the 400m at the Paris Paralympics, which is 100 days away. "I really respect my rival. But once you're on the track, the rest is to fight yourself. When you respect yourself, you respect your rivals. I'm going to try to set a new world record in Paris, wishing everyone well."



Fukunaga, who chased **Athmani's** back, also " **Athmani** is the biggest rival. But in athletics, I think my rival is myself. **Athmani** is certainly amazing. But it doesn't mean we can't catch up. If you believe in yourself and build on each challenge you face every day, you will get there. I don't know if it's the Paris Paralympics, but I still want to work towards Paris."

After the goal, **Athmani** and **Fukunaga** hugged each other and praised each other's success. A new story began at the Kobe 2024 World Para Athletics Championships.

Competition Schedule and Results



GO KOBE 2024!

experience

Echoing the cheering of students in the Universiade Memorial Stadium from the first day of Kobe 2024 World Para Athletics Championships. The students are 30,000 people from about 200 schools: elementary, junior high, high, and special support schools in Hyogo, mainly Kobe city.



On a beautiful day of May 21st, students from Kobe Gion elementary school were watching the morning session. They were sending cheers for the events of javelin throw and wheelchair race in front of them.

Mr. Ikki Yagata, the 5th grade student, is a sports boy who usually belongs to a rugby team. He once had the experience of riding a wheelchair used in wheelchair basketball at a club team event, but this is his first-time watching para athletics. "It was very cool that they're racing at high speed as general athletics event!", he said with applause and "the effort of each athlete finishing without giving up was amazing." At his school, a friend using wheelchair is sitting together in a classroom. He also told us with passion, "I've learned there are people with many kinds of disabilities through watching para athletics today. We have a friend using wheelchair at our school. We need to think how we can play with the friend and enjoy together with people with or without disability."



Ms. Rio Morishita, 5th grade student too, who uses a wheelchair since she was 3 years old due to a disease, was watching the first time of para athletics as well. "It's totally different from my wheelchair. In the shape, the posture of riding in a forward-leaning, and it's so fast!" She once had experienced para sport, Boccia you can enjoy it while remaining seated in a wheelchair. "I became to be able to hit a white Jack ball (target ball) after trying many times. Boccia was fun too, but I definitely want to ride the wheelchair racer" she said. We may see Ms. Morishita running on the world stage as a wheelchair para athletics athlete.



Kobe Gion elementary school is the only public elementary school has a class specifically for students of hard hearing. Ms. Ayane Matsui, 5th grade student of that class, is also the one of the students impressed by the first-time- watching para athletics. "I've watched para athletics on TV, but it is the first time in the stadium. I'm very impressed by running of the athletes with visual impairment and their guides." She also told surprisingly to watch the event of Javelin throw in front of her, "it is surprising that they throw the javelins while remaining seated.!" And she was impressed by the efforts of volunteers and assistants supporting the athletes to bring the javelin back to them and assist to seat in the throwing chair. "To see the people supporting each other, it made me want to cherish my friends

For Mr. Ysuiro Yakeo, a teacher of general affair from the same school, it was the first time to watch para athletics. He said, "I saw the children talking how the athletes became to be able to throw the javelin like that, to see the throwing distance from the throwing chair, the movement of bending their upper bodies, the athletes' muscular figures."

Mr. Takeo told that watching para athletics competition will be an experience directly touches the hearts of the children.

"We have students with hard of hearing and wheelchair in our school. I want the students to raise their hearts to cherish other people and themselves by actually seeing and feeling the efforts of the athletes with many kinds of disabilities."



Not only the students who cheered for para athletics, but also the athletes who competed in the stadium, expressed their joy. They said, "we were so happy to hear the powerful cheers from the children, and it gave us more strength than usual."

After their races, we could see the athletes went to the stands where the children are sitting to take photos together and respond requests for autographs. An athlete from the visual impairment class climbing up the stands and enjoyed a sound performance taping the children's back together. "I can't speak Japanese but want to say Arigato to the kids!"

Kobe 2024 World Para Athletics Championships also become a place where there's a precious opportunity for interaction between children and top athletes. The communications during this competition will remain deeply in the hearts of not only the children but also the top athletes of the world.