

Breaking makes high-energy debut

Women's breakdancing competition kicks off in Paris, but sport's future uncertain

● Women's competition sees 17 B-Girls battling it out

● B-Girls from diverse countries like Japan, Lithuania, and Australia participate

AFP | Paris

The urban sport of breaking spun its way onto the Olympic stage yesterday for the first and possibly last time, amid the grand elegance of Paris' Place de la Concorde. Breaking, better known as breakdancing, made its Games

BETTER YOU KNOW

Breaking originated as part of hip hop culture in New York in the 1970s. What began in the block parties of the Bronx has reached the fountains and classical facades of one of Paris' most opulent public spaces, overseen by the International Olympic Committee

debut with the women's competition, featuring 17 dancers known as B-Girls going head-to-head in a series of battles to crown the inaugural champion.

The sport's appearance at the Olympics could be a fleeting one however, having already been dropped from the Los Angeles 2028 programme and no guarantees it will return in the future.

Organisers ensured it made the most of its time in the spotlight in Paris, pumping up the volume for an excited crowd that included rapper Snoop Dogg.

The first contest of the day was between India Sardjoe of the Netherlands, known by her B-Girl name India, and Refugee Olympic Team competitor Talash,

Talash, whose real name is France's Sya Dembele, competes in the Women's Breaking dance

Manizha Talash, left Taliban-controlled Afghanistan to live in Spain two years ago and danced wearing a blue cape with "Free Afghan Women" printed on it.

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Each battle sees B-Girls take turns to lay down their dance moves over a set number of rounds, with a panel of judges determining the winner.



The competition opens with a pool stage featuring four groups of four B-Girls, before moving onto the knockout stage.

The B-Girls perform on a circular stage, accompanied by a DJ pumping out hip-hop classics.

B-Girls in the women's event come from countries as diverse as Japan, Lithuania, Morocco and Australia. The reigning women's world champion is

Standings

#	NOC	G	S	B	Total
1	China	32	25	20	77
2	United States	30	38	36	104
3	Australia	18	15	14	47
4	France*	14	19	22	55
5	Great Britain	14	18	21	53
6	Japan	13	8	13	34
7	South Korea	13	8	7	28
8	Italy	11	11	11	33
9	Germany	11	9	7	27
10	Netherlands	11	6	9	26
11	New Zealand	6	6	2	14
12	Canada	6	5	11	22
13	Hungary	4	5	5	14
14	Ireland	4	0	3	7
15	Ukraine	3	4	4	11
54 Bahrain					1 0 0 1

Lithuania's Dominika Banevic, while the men's champion is Victor Montalvo of the United States.

Ma Long makes Chinese history with sixth Olympic gold

Ma Long made Chinese Olympic history with the sixth gold of his career yesterday in the men's team event in Paris to embellish his reputation as the best table tennis player ever.

The 35-year-old played his part in a 3-0 victory over Sweden that put China on the verge of a clean sweep in the French capital, although the matches were closer than the result suggests.

Ma's sixth gold took him past divers Wu Minxia and Chen Ruolin, and gymnast Zou Kai, with the most golds of any Chinese athlete in Olympic history.

As well as his record haul of Olympic golds, Ma has also won an astonishing 14 world titles and was China's male flag-bearer at the opening ceremony.

With a wealth of options at their disposal,



Ma Long (R) wins a point in the men's team final

up with Wang Chuqin, who had his bat accidentally broken by an overeager photographer earlier at the Games.

The Chinese duo raced into a 6-1 lead in the opening game, only for Anton Kallberg and Kristian Karlsson to fight back and take the game 11-8.

The South Paris Arena was full to capacity, and the overwhelming majority was supporting China, many of them decked out in the country's red.

They willed Ma and Wang to victory in the next game, but with little to decide between the two pairs, they went to a deciding fifth game.

Fittingly, Ma hit the winning shot with a howitzer of a forehand down the middle to put China 1-0 up in the final and on their way to another gold.

China controversially overlooked Ma for the singles in Paris, denying him the chance to win a third gold in a row in that event.

In his absence, Fan Zhendong won gold instead.

In the first match of the final, Ma paired

World record holder Amusan crashes out of Olympic 100m hurdles

World record holder and former world champion Tobi Amusan crashed out of the women's 100m hurdles at the Olympics yesterday as defending champion Jasmine Camacho-Quinn sailed into the final.

Amusan shocked the world in 2022 when she set a world record of 12.12sec on her way to victory at the World Championships in Eugene.

But the 27-year-old was way off that sort of pace yesterday and could only finish third in her heat behind Grace Stark of the USA and the Bahamas' Devynne Charlton in 12.55sec. That time was not good enough to secure passage into the final as one of the fastest losers.

Amusan, who successfully appealed against a doping ban earlier this year after she was accused of missing three doping tests, did not speak after her elimination.

Meanwhile, qualifying was dominated by US sprinters who clocked three of the four



Nigeria's world record holder Tobi Amusan reacts after failing to qualify fastest times in the heats.

Alaysha Johnson was quickest in the heats with a time of 12.34sec, just ahead of Puerto Rico's Camacho-Quinn (12.35sec).

Stark was third fastest in 12.39sec with Masai Russell fourth quickest in 12.42sec.

Camacho-Quinn, silver medallist at last year's World Championships in Budapest, is dreaming of becoming the first woman to win consecutive Olympic titles in the 100m hurdles.

Bulgaria's Nasar grins and bears it with world record weightlifting gold

Bulgarian Karlos Nasar became the lightest man to lift 400 kilogrammes in competition as he shattered the men's 89kg weightlifting world record at the Olympics yesterday.

Tied for first after lifting 180kg in the opening snatch round, the 20-year-old delayed his entry in the clean and jerk until most of his rivals had used

their three attempts at lower weights.

With his first lift he flipped 213 kilogrammes over his head to secure the gold.

That left him two attempts to total 400kg and he opted to aim high.

Nasar seemed barely troubled. Pausing an extra beat with the bar on his chest, he grinned,

before hoisting a world record 224kg over his head for a total of 404kg, another record.

Colombian Yeison Lopez was second on 390kg. Italian Antonino Pizzolato scored a dramatic bronze after failing on his first two attempts before he was only spared a no-score when judges upheld his appeal after a video review.



Karlos Nasar

US Olympic sprint star Lyles tests positive for Covid

Olympic 100 metres champion Noah Lyles revealed he tested positive for Covid two days before finishing third in Thursday's 200m final, adding that he believed his involvement in the Paris Games was now over.

Lyles, who had been bidding to complete a 100m-200m double in Paris, was taken off the track in a wheelchair following the race, won by Botswana's Letsile Tebogo.

He later posted on Instagram: "I believe this will be the end of my 2024 Olympics. It is not the Olympic(s) I dreamed of but it has left me with so much joy in my heart," Lyles added.

It means Lyles will play no part when the US quartet attempt to win 4x100m relay gold yesterday.

The 27-year-old American, who has suffered from asthma in the past, had been seen wearing a surgical mask shortly before Thursday's 200m final.

However, there had been no sign of illness when the American was introduced to the crowd before the race, bounding onto the track and gesticulating with his arms to pump up the crowd.

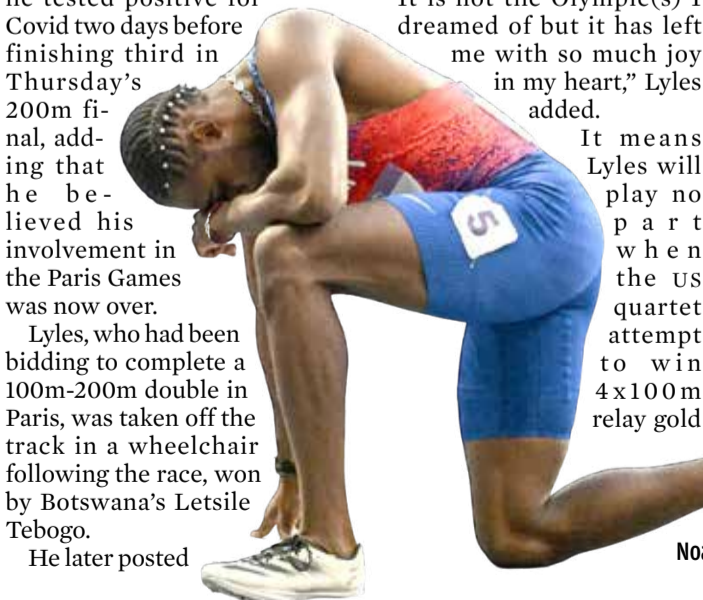
In an interview with NBC, Lyles said: "I woke up early, about 5:00am on Tuesday morning and I was feeling really horrible."

"I knew it was more than just being sore from the 100 (metres). We woke up the doctors and we tested and unfortunately, it came up that I was positive for Covid."

Lyles later told reporters that his illness "definitely affected my performance."

"I believe this will be the end of my 2024 Olympics. It is not the Olympic(s) I dreamed of but it has left me with so much joy in my heart"

NOAH LYLES



Noah Lyles

German cyclist Friedrich breaks women's sprint world record

Germany's Lea Friedrich smashed the women's sprint world record yesterday, just minutes after New Zealand's Ellesse Andrews did the same.

The 24-year-old blasted round the Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines velodrome in 10.029secs during qualifying to lay down a marker ahead of the final on Sunday.

Her sizzling ride came after new-

ly-minted Keirin gold medalist Andrews clocked 10.108 to better the previous world best (10.154) set by Canada's defending Olympic champion Kelsey Mitchell in 2019.

A new mark was on the cards after the Olympic record was lowered four times before Andrews and Friedrich took to the track.

A slew of world records have been set at the lightning-fast Paris velodrome, with nine before the exploits of Andrews and Friedrich.



Lea Friedrich