

# Warholm leads galaxy of stars at classy Euros

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AFP

Norway's Karsten Warholm fired out a broadside at Olympic contenders in the run-in to the Paris Games by winning a third successive European title in Rome on Tuesday as a galaxy of global stars showcased some scintillating form.

Warholm, the Olympic champion and a three-time world gold medallist, timed 46.98 seconds for the victory.

"I felt strong and I was in control," said Warholm. "Now it's back to training and keep on pushing."

"This is a good step on the road but this is more to build confidence and get the gold medal. In Paris I'll try to be as sharp as possible."

It was the first of four stunning championship records in a heady night of track and field at the Stadio Olimpico, with a large, raucous, flag-waving crowd in to support Team Italy captain Gianmarco Tamberi in the high jump.

The performance of the night arguably came in a thrilling men's triple jump competition.

Defending champion Pedro Pichardo, the Olympic and 2022 world champion, went out to a Portuguese record of 18.04 metres to better Briton Jonathan Edwards' previous championship best of 17.99m.

But Spain's Jordan Alejandro Diaz Fortun fired back in his penultimate jump with a massive 18.18m.

The winning distance was the third longest in history: only

Edwards with his 18.29m world record from 1995 and Christian Taylor of the USA have gone further.

“Seeing Pichardo jumping 18m was a motivation to jump even further because nobody came to to these championships to finish second or third,” said Diaz Fortun.

Back at the hurdles, Dutch star Femke Bol nailed a second women’s title in 52.49sec, also a championship record.

The 24-year-old, who has also won bronze as part of the 4x400m mixed relay, will aim for a second gold in the women’s 4x400m relay on Wednesday.

“I worked hard for these championships and I arrived here in good shape,” Bol said.

“I believe I can be even better at the Olympics.”

– Tamberi the showman –

While the crowds have been sparse for some sessions at the cavernous Olympic Stadium, there was no such fear given the presence of Tamberi. Even Italian President Sergio Mattarella was present.

And, ever the showman, the world and Olympic champion was afforded a standing ovation as he entered onto the track.

The Italian, as is occasionally his wont, left the left half of his face unshaved. Hushing the baying crowd gathered behind the jumping arena, Tamberi sailed over his opening effort of 2.22m to huge applause.

A couple of blips at 2.29 and then 2.33m saw him gamble and skip up. It paid off as Tamberi went on to seal a third European title in a championship record of 2.37m, a mile ahead in class from the rest of the field.

“I knew I was in a superb shape and I proved it,” said

Tamberi.

“I was a bit shaky at 2.29m, but then the show began. I did great things: now it’s time for the Olympics.”

Tamberi stated pre-tournament that he wanted Italy to top the medals table and his teammates have provided.

Shortly before Tamberi soared for his win, Nadia Battocletti wrapped up a 5-10,000m golden double to send the crowd into delirium.

It left Italy in number one spot in the table with 10 golds, seven silvers and three bronzes in a medal haul of 20 after five days of competition and with a sole session remaining, on Wednesday evening.

Estonia’s Johannes Erm amassed 8,764 points to claim the decathlon gold – his first senior outdoor title – from Sander Skotheim of Norway (8,635), with France’s Makenson Gletty taking bronze (8,606).

France’s two-time world champion Kevin Mayer, the world record holder in the 10-discipline event, finished fifth behind defending champion Niklas Kaul, but was content to have made the qualifying mark for his home Paris Olympics.

Switzerland’s Mujinga Kambundji ended any hopes of a British women’s sprint double, by beating Daryll Neita in the 200m in a photofinish.

Neck and neck down the straight, it was Kambundji who produced the dip that counted, getting the win by just a hundredth of a second in 22.49sec to Neita’s 22.50. France’s Helene Parisot clocked 22.63sec for bronze.

Austria bagged their first gold of the Euros when Victoria Hudson won the women’s javelin with a best effort of 64.62m.