

## Sports

# Warholm, Thompson-Herah named World Athletes of the Year

**PARIS:** Norwegian 400m hurdler Karsten Warholm and Jamaican sprinter Elaine Thompson-Herah were named the World Athletes of the Year on Wednesday for sensational performances at the Tokyo Olympics.

Warholm received the men's award for smashing the 29-year-old world record to win the Olympic final in a time of 45.94sec. His performance is widely considered one of the greatest Olympic track performances of all time.

Thompson-Herah took the women's award for achieving the sprint double at a second consecutive Olympics. Although her compatriot Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce was the favourite for the 100m coming into the Games, Thompson-Herah beat her to retain the short sprint title she won five years earlier at the Rio Olympics. In the 200m she held off 18-year-old Namibian revelation Christine Mboma to complete an Olympic 'double-double'.

In addition to her Olympic triumphs, Thompson-Herah also clocked 10.54sec and 21.53sec over 100m and 200m respectively to move to second on the world all-time lists behind the late Florence Griffith Joyner. "I went very close to the world record so, you know, anything is possible. No spikes hanging up any time soon!" the 29-year-old said at the World Athletics ceremony in Monaco.

## 'I hope I get some crowd'

She said the world championships in Oregon next year were "my next big target" and expressed hope that, unlike the empty stands at the Olympics where spectators were banned because of the COVID-19



Karsten Warholm



Elaine Thompson-Herah

pandemic, she would be performing in front of a full house. "It is close to home, I hope friends and family can come out and watch. I hope I get some crowd as well," she said. Warholm's time obliterated the previous men's one-lap hurdles record of 46.78sec set by Kevin Young of the United States at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

All three medallists — American Rai Benjamin and Alison dos Santos of Brazil — finished inside the old record. "First when I saw the time, I was like, 'This must be a mistake!' Because I didn't see that one coming. And I didn't see the victory coming before crossing the finish line," Warholm said on Wednesday.

"It was a very intense race, I knew the American and the Brazilian and all the other guys were really chasing

me. "I always go out hard and I never know what is going on behind me. I was just fighting all the way to the finish line. When I realised 45.94 was the reality, I was thinking: 'This is not too bad. I'll take it!'"

Athing Mu, the 19-year-old American who was an impressive winner of the women's 800m Olympic title, was named the Female Rising Star. Erriyon Knighton, the American sprinter who at just 17 years old finished fourth in the men's 200m final in Tokyo, won the equivalent men's award. There was a special award for Mutaz Essa Barshim of Qatar and Italian Gianmarco Tamberi, who shared the Olympic men's high jump gold medal in a moment that touched a nerve with the public. The awards were decided by the World Athletics Council and more than 300,000 online voters. —AFP

## Arab Masters Championship

**KUWAIT:** President of Kuwait and Arab Tennis Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will hold a press conference tomorrow evening to speak about Kuwait's hosting of the Arab Masters



Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Championship to be held at Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis Complex from Dec 6 until Dec 12. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber will speak about the challenges the organizing committee faced under the current health situation besides other issues.

## KSSC to hold closing ceremony of annual shooting championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Shooting Sport Club (KSSC) will organize the closing ceremony of the Late Sheikh Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah annual shooting championship tomorrow in the presence of championship sponsor Sheikh Sabah Bader Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Sheikh Abdallah Thamer Ali Al-Sabah and President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex. President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Duajj Al-Otaibi spoke about the importance of this annual championship and the large number of shooters who are participating in it from both genders and wished them all success. Otaibi thanked the administrative and technical departments for their efforts as the current activities are being held with observance to health protocols of Coronavirus pandemic.



Duajj Al-Otaibi

## Skating showpiece axed over Japan border ban

**TOKYO:** Figure skating's Grand Prix Final will no longer take place in Japan next week over a ban on new foreign arrivals to the country prompted by the Omicron variant, organisers said yesterday.

Separately, Kazakh boxer Gennady Golovkin's world title fight against Ryota Murata in Japan is now in doubt, with promoters telling AFP they do not know if it will go ahead on December 29 as scheduled.

The Japanese government announced Monday that it would ban all new foreign arrivals because of the heavily mutated Omicron coronavirus variant. That has forced Grand Prix Final organisers to pull the plug on the showpiece event in Osaka, just two months before the February 4-20 Beijing Winter Olympics. "We deeply apologise to everyone involved for causing so much trouble, but we ask for your understanding," a Japan Skating Federation statement said. Governing body the International Skating Union said: "The ISU will evaluate a possible postponement to hold the event at the end of the season and will take a decision as soon as possible." The December 9-12 Grand Prix Final was set to feature the cream of this season's skating talent, including three-time men's world champion Nathan Chen of the US and Russian sensation Kamila Valieva.

Japanese skater Yuma Kagiyama, who qualified for the men's singles final after winning Grand Prix events in Italy and France, had earlier reacted to news of a likely cancellation on Twitter with an emoji shedding a tear. Japan's Olympic champion Yuzuru Hanyu did not qualify for the final after missing events through injury. —AFP