

Birmingham Professor teams up with Olympians in Beijing

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As the athletes enter the starting blocks in Beijing, a sports scientist from the University of Birmingham is at the centre of the action, working with Olympians from across the world.

This morning was the women's marathon. I got up early to watch it on TV. What a race. Mara Yamauchi did so well to finish in 6th. I have had regular contact with Mara in the last couple of years and she prepared for this so meticulously! I am all admiration for the determination of Mara and to perform so well on the day is just fantastic. She got everything right including her nutrition and I am sure she will only get better. Congratulations Mara well done!!

I spend the morning at the PowerBar Energy Centre and on TV we saw Michael Phelps win his 8th gold medal! Wow! It was relatively quiet again at the Centre.

At lunch time I went for a long run. I ran 2 hours (24km) in the heat and humidity. I lost bucket loads of sweat and it is hard to stay hydrated. Being out there in the heat running, makes you really appreciate what the girls in the marathon had to do earlier in the day.

In the afternoon Shona Halson from the Australian Institute of Sport visited us in the centre. Shona used to be one of my students and she is now is the senior recovery scientist at the AIS. It was great to catch up.

In the evening we had tickets to athletics. We went over to the magnificent stadium, had to drop off a few PowerBar products for Keninisa Bekele with Jos Hermens, the Dutch manager of Haile Gebrselassie, Keninisa Bekele and many other great athletes. At night the stadium was even more impressive and we saw a night of great athletics including the 10,000 meter final for men. Also we saw Jeanette Kwakye make it to the final and finish in 6th, well done Jeanette!!! Unfortunately Nicola Sanders missed out on making it to the final by 0.08 seconds. Christine Ohurougu cruised through to the final. The British high jumpers all 3 made it to the final.

The 10,000 meters for men was a fast race with the Ethiopians finishing 1,2 and 6. Haile Gebrselassie was in 6th and I am sure he had hoped for a lot more. Keninisa Bekele was very impressive and won in a new Olympic record. Seleshi Sihine was not far behind. It was interesting that many of the Chinese left the stadium before the 10,000 meters began and they really have not been exposed much to athletics. The crowds go crazy at unexpected moments and they are quiet when something exciting happens...

Another great great days in Beijing !

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