

# Pearson sounds Olympic warning

**MELBOURNE:** Australia's Sally Pearson laid down a marker ahead of the London Olympics by winning the 100 metres hurdles at the Melbourne Track Classic in a scorching 12.49 seconds in drizzly rain yesterday.

The world champion, a strong contender for gold in London, charged out of the blocks and streaked away from the field to cross more than seven-tenths of a second in front of American Yvette Lewis at Lakeside stadium. "Holy crap!" the blonde 25-year-old shrieked to a clutch of reporters, after celebrating victory by skipping and jumping along the track in front of roaring fans in the stands.

"It's just really fantastic and really exciting but at the same time I've got to keep grounded, I've got to focus on the London Olympics. That's still a fair way away and there's a lot more training to go.

"I'm in good shape and I'm loving it and I'm just going to look after myself, that's all I can do.

"(My rivals will probably be worried, but at the same time, there's nothing I can do about that."

Pearson's time on a damp, spongy track that had absorbed a day's rain improved on her 12.66 at Sydney last week and shows ominous form five months and three days before the hurdles heats kick off on Aug. 6 in London.

It was also the Beijing Olympic silver medalist's fourth fastest time, only bettered by her semi-final and final runs at the Daegu world championships and at a Diamond League meeting in Birmingham last year.

Although appearing flawless in its execution, her 22nd victory in her last 23 races in the event took her by surprise.

"I thought I was going really badly actually. I got halfway through the race and I thought, 'no, no, no, everything's completely off at the moment'.

"I came back and it was so much better than I thought it was going to be."

REUTERS

# Qatar GP titles for Lemoine, Poret, Balzer and Florjancic

**DOHA:** French duo Cyrille Lemoine and Jeremy Poret, Italy's Stefania Balzer and Slovenia's Rok Florjancic took overall category honours in the UIM-ABP Aquabike Grand Prix of Qatar in Doha Bay, yesterday.

Lemoine finishing third in yesterday's heat in Runabout F1, Poret completing the Doha win-double in Ski, with Stefania Balzer taking her second career heat win.

In Freestyle the accolades belonged to Rok Florjancic who produced a stunning performance to also complete the win-double in Doha, to take a second Grand Prix title in as many events, with his brother Nac in second place and Frenchman Romain Stampers third overall.

After Friday's bitter disappointment, heat 2 in Runabout F1 belonged to Franky Zapata; the Frenchman took the lead on lap 2 and held off a fierce race long challenge from countryman Francois Medori. Zapata eventually running out the winner by four seconds.

Medori's second place put him into second place overall and a controlled ride and third place was enough to give the 2009 World Champion, Cyrille Lemoine, the GP title and the lead in the World Championship standings.

Italy's Lorenzo Benaglia completed the overall podium line-up, after finishing in fourth place ahead of the top placed Qatari rider, Waleed Al Sharshani and France's Didier Chabert.

In Ski F1, France's defending World Champion, Jeremy Poret, produced another command performance to take his second heat win of the weekend and the Qatar Grand Prix title for the second year in a row.

In a repeat of Friday's heat, Poret found himself trailing in third after the start, but passed the early leader Ludo Caumont to take the lead on lap two. Poret's only real challenge coming from countryman Jean-Baptiste Botti who kept the pressure on the Champion for 10 of the 13 laps, closing the gap to two seconds, but was unable to force the leader into a mistake, with Poret claiming the win and the title.

Third place for Ludo Caumont,



The podium winners at the UIM-ABP Aquabike Grand Prix of Qatar in Doha Bay, yesterday. The President of Qatar Marine Sports Federation (QMSF), Sheikh Hassan bin Jabor Al Thani was present during the medal ceremony.

his second top three finish in two days, put the Frenchman into second place overall, whilst second place for Botti and his fifth place yesterday moved him into third in the Grand Prix standings.

Behind the leading trio Emanuele Balzer and Nachete Armillas enjoyed a race long fight for fourth spot, the Spanish rider Armillas stealing through on lap 9, with Italian Alberto Monti completing the top six in yesterday's heat. The outcome of the Ski Ladies Qatar Grand Prix was all but settled on the opening lap, with favourite and defending World Champion Julie Bulteau late out onto the water for the start of the race and retiring almost immediately with a broken engine. Italy's Stefania Balzer took full advantage of Bulteau's misfortune, leading from the start and dominating the race to run out an easy winner by nearly nine seconds, to take a second career Grand Prix title. Slovenia's Pija Sumer put in a second solid performance, her third place on Friday and second place in heat 2 giving her the runners-up slot, with Russia's Irina Babenko finishing third.

AGENCIES



Action from the opening round of the World Championship organised by QMSF, under the presidency of Sheikh Hassan bin Jabor Al Thani, in collaboration with H2O Racing and under the auspices of the UIM in Doha Bay yesterday.

PICTURES BY IBRAHIM KUTTY