

NIGERIA BOOKS OLYMPIC BERTH



Nigeria manager Stephen Keshi and player Kenneth Omeruo celebrate after the win

Brazzaville

Nigeria demonstrated what a good away team they are by forcing a 0-0 draw in Congo Brazzaville at the weekend to win a 2016 Olympic Games football qualifier.

Known as the 'Dream Team', the west Africans advanced 2-1 on aggregate after winning the first leg in Port Harcourt two weeks ago by that score.

Nigeria also impressed on the road this year in qualifiers for the 2015 All-Africa Games, an under-23 competition like the Olympics.

After hammering Gabon 4-1 in Libreville, they overcame

Zambia 2-1 in Lusaka to reach the Africa tournament during September in Brazzaville.

In November, Nigeria will join hosts Senegal, Algeria, Egypt, Mali, South Africa, Tunisia and Zambia at an Olympic tournament, with three 2016 Rio Games places up for grabs.

After wasting many first-leg chances, Nigeria coach Samson Siasia vowed that his team would attack a Congolese side guided by veteran French coach Claude Le Roy at Stade Municipal in Atlantic oil hub Pointe-Noire.

Keeping the promise, the 'Dream Team' spent much of the opening half on the

offensive with Usman Mohammed, Daniel Etor and Oghenekaro Etebo threatening to score.

Even during a more balanced second half, Nigeria created the better chances and substitute Aminu Umar squandered a late chance to win the second leg.

Nigeria have been the most successful African football nation at the Olympics, winning the 1996 Atlanta tournament and finishing runners-up to Argentina in Beijing seven years ago.

Mali followed up a solitary-goal away victory over Gabon by winning the return match 2-0 at Stade Modibo Keita

in Bamako. The Gabonese had to score first to have a realistic chance of salvaging the tie, and they did after 68 minutes.

Unfortunately for the visitors, the goal came at the wrong end of the pitch with Mboudou Karl putting the ball into his net.

Adama Traore added a second Mali goal a minute from time to earn his team an easier-than-expected passage to Senegal for the November 28-December 12 tournament.

Mali qualified once for the Olympics football tournament, topping a 2004 Athens group before losing to Italy in the quarter-finals.

New 1.5km record

I'M SHOCKED: KATIE

Kazan

Katie Ledecky of the US admitted she was shocked after breaking her own 1,500m freestyle record in the heats of the world swimming championships in Kazan yesterday.

The 18-year-old, who also holds the 400m and 800m records, clocked 15min 27.71sec to better the 15:28.36 secs she swam at the Pan-Pacific Games in August last year.

"My coach told me to swim the first 900m easy, build over the next 300, then the final 300 was my choice and to be honest, it felt pretty easy," said Ledecky, who came within a second of her 400m record on Sunday.

"I wasn't kicking much and I think breaking the world record is testament to the hard work I have put in and the shape I am in right now.

"I am pretty shocked that I was able to do that."

Ledecky only recently finished high school in Maryland, but this is the eighth

time the teenager has set a world record in her fledgling career.

It is the fourth time the defending champion has broken the 1,500m record alone having first achieved the feat in Barcelona two years ago on her way to winning the world title.

This is the second world record to fall in Kazan after Sweden's Sarah Sjöström feat in the women's 100m butterfly heats on Sunday.

Sun eyes second gold

Also in yesterday's heats, Chinese medal-machine Sun Yang stayed on course to claim the second of the four golds he wants in Kazan after cruising into Monday night's 200m freestyle semi-finals as the fastest qualifier.

Sun defended his 400m freestyle title on Sunday, but faces some stiff competition over the shorter distance.

Britain's James Guy, who took silver behind Sun in the 400m final, was just 0.10sec behind Sun's time of 1min 46sec dead.



Germany's world record-holder Paul Biedermann and Australia's Cameron McEvoy are also medal contenders for Tuesday's final at 0.39sec behind Sun's time.

Missy Franklin of the United States opened her individual campaign as the world and Olympic 100m backstroke champion was fifth fastest into yesterday's semifinals.

Hungary's 'Iron Lady', Katinka Hosszu, was the fastest through in a national record of 58.78sec but will sit out the evening's backstroke semis to defend her

200m individual medley world title. She finished second to Australia's Emily Seebohm in her heat having won gold to Seebohm's silver at the 2012 Olympics and Barcelona's worlds in 2013.

After Australian medal hopes Mack Horton and Christian Sprenger bombed in their respective heats and the men's team failed to qualify for Sunday's 4x100m freestyle final, Mitchell Larkin was fastest through to the evening's 100m backstroke semi-finals.

Ronaldo 'gifts his agent an island'

Porto

Cristiano Ronaldo and James Rodriguez were among the guests to attend the glitzy wedding of super-agent Jorge Mendes on Sunday.

The Real Madrid duo made their way to Porto to celebrate alongside almost 400 other guests at the swanky bash.

Ronaldo was given the honour of being best man and reports in Spain suggest he lived up to the billing by buying Mendes his own Greek island as a wedding present.

Mendes, who has brokered more than £1billion of transfer deals and has a client list that includes Jose Mourinho and David de Gea, married Sandra Barbosa in the affluent Foz do Douro.

Other star names at the bash included Real Madrid president Florentino Perez, players such as Fabio Coentrao, Pepe, Deco and Jose Bosingwa and former Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson.

During his time at Old Trafford Ferguson claimed Mendes was one of the best agents he ever had the pleasure to deal with.

He said: 'Jorge Mendes is the



C. Ronaldo

best agent I dealt with, without a doubt. He was responsible, looked after his players... and was very fair with clubs.'

In recent seasons Mendes, who is dubbed one of the most powerful men in football, has helped United bring such players as Ronaldo, Nani, Anderson, Angel di Maria and Radamel Falcao to Old Trafford.

Ultimate Frisbee is now an Olympic sport

London

Flying disc sports, including Ultimate Frisbee, have been officially recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Disc-based games are played in 58 countries around the world by thousands of athletes.

The World Flying Disc Federation (WFDF) said it was "honoured and humbled" by the IOC's decision to grant it full

recognition. "This is an incredible milestone in the 30-year history of WFDF," it added.

"Today's decision will give a further boost to our efforts to increasing the presence of Flying Disc sports in all countries and on all continents." The announcement was made at an IOC session in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday.

The WFDF governs several disc-based activities, including

Ultimate Frisbee, Disc Golf and Freestyle.

Ultimate, as it is more commonly known, is the most popular and originated in the US in the 1960s. It is a self-refereed non-contact team sport played with a Frisbee. Two teams of seven play against each other on a playing field around the same length as a football (soccer) pitch. Games last 100 minutes and are split into two halves, and the

aim is to catch the disc in your opposition's end zone.

"To compete at the highest level, Ultimate players require speed, agility and endurance," the UK's governing body UK Ultimate said. "Yet beginners find the game easy to learn and fun to play." Unlike the majority of other team sports, it is does not have a referee and instead relies on "sportsmanship and fair play", according to the WFDF.



An Ultimate Frisbee player