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Kasyanov and Melnychenko the overnight leaders in Kladno, injuries knock out Clay and Sebrle – IAAF Combined Events Challenge



Roman Sebrle and Bryan Clay watch the competition in Kladno after the pair was knocked out by injury in the 100m (Pavel Gryc)

Kladno, Czech Republic - Ukrainians hold first-day leads in both the Decathlon and Heptathlon competitions at the **TNT-Fortunate Combined Events competition** in Kladno, Czech Republic. The meeting is the third installment of the **IAAF Combined Events Challenge**.

Standing atop the Decathlon point totals after the first day is Oleksiy Kasyanov with 4451 points, with an advantage of 76 points over Jamie Adjetey-Nelson of Canada. Forging a lead in the first event of the day, the 100m, the fourth placer in last year's Berlin World Championships relinquished the overall top spot only once during the session—and that by only two points after the High Jump. Otherwise, he was always in control.

The Heptathlon midway leader is Hanna Melnychenko with 3666 points, a 59-point bulge over Eliska Klucinova of the Czech Republic. Melnychenko moved to the front after the day's second event, the High Jump, and never surrendered her lead after that.

Kasyanov cruises first day – Decathlon

With unfortunate injuries besetting Olympic champion Bryan Clay and world-record holder Roman Sebrle in the opening event – Clay the victim of a groin injury and Sebrle a tender hamstring giving way - the Decathlon competition assumed an unexpected look right from the beginning.

Kasyanov emerged from the 100m with an early overall lead after his 10.69 sprint for 931 points. Running in the same heat was Adjetey-Nelson, who posted a 10.76 and garnered 915, just ahead of Maurice Smith of Jamaica and 19-year-old Czech Jaroslav Hedvicak, the former world youth silver medalist, both with 10.79 and 908 points.

Others slipping under eleven seconds were Lithuania's Darius Draudvila (10.87), current World junior silver winner Eduard Mihan of Belarus (10.94), American Jake Arnold (PB 10.99) and Czech Pavel Baar (10.99).

Kasyanov (*pictured right*) and Adjetey-Nelson also held their top two positions after the Long Jump, in which they posted the two best efforts of the day. The Ukrainian's 7.79m led the field and gave him a 1938 total after two events. The Canadian followed with 1877 after a 7.61m leap. Moving into third with a 7.40m jump was Mihan at 1784, just five points ahead of fourth-place Hedvicak whose 1779 total resulted from a 7.24m. A notable withdrawal came after the long jump as Kazakhstan's Dmitriy Karpov, still trying to find his form of recent years, jumped only 6.61m which left him in twentieth place when combined with his 11.18 in the 100.

Except for the top two places, the Shot Put event did some major scrambling of positions. Aleksey Drozdov of Russia was the event winner with 15.95m, and his 2558 aggregate moved him from ninth



into third, one point ahead of Smith with 2557, whose 15.15m was almost two metres below his normal range. Draudvila stayed just a breath away, in fifth with 2553, on the strength of his 15.03m effort. Meanwhile, Kasyanov held to a firm overall lead with 2742 after a 15.24m put, as Adjetey-Nelson moved marginally closer in second at 2660 as a result of his 14.89m throw.

Moving to the High Jump, the Canadian equaled his PB of 2.09m which, combined with Kasyanov's 2.00m, flipped the positions of the two leading decathletes after the fourth event. With 3547, Adjetey-Nelson held a razor-thin two-point advantage over Kasyanov's 3545 with only the 400m remaining on the first day. Drozdov also equalled his PB with 2.12m for the best height of the day, and he solidified his third-place position at 3473. Draudvila moved ahead of Smith, thanks to a 2.00m jump compared with the Jamaican's 1.94m, as the two accumulated 3356 and 3306, respectively. Notable among the others were Marcin Drozdz of Poland at 2.09m, and young Czech Adam Nejedly whose PB 2.06m moved him into eighth overall.

A very determined Kasyanov attacked the 400m to close the first day, and his 48.07 ended up as the top time of the session. It was enough to send the Ukrainian back into the lead with 4451 points over Adjetey-Nelson, who ran 49.70 and tallied 4375 for the first five events. With a 48.69 one-lap time, Draudvila moved into third with 4232 over Drozdov as the Russian produced only a sluggish 51.32 to tally 4228. With the day's second-fastest time of 48.25, Smith held fifth but kept his top-three chances alive by staying within range at 4203.

For Clay and Sebrle, remainder of season uncertain

But it was the early departures of Clay and Sebrle that captured most of the attention on day 1 in Kladno.

After posting a world-leading 8483 just over two weeks ago in Götzis, Clay was hoping to have one more good score before the US Championships next week. Instead, he and Sebrle - the meeting's marquee athletes - became the first athletes not to finish this weekend.

"It's just crazy that the top two competitors would not survive this first event," said Clay after returning from a physiotherapy session.

The American came out of the blocks well in the 100 metres and covered the first half of the race normally before the injury occurred. He shut down immediately and jogged across the finish line in 14.05.

"I hit a hurdle with my trailing leg in Götzis. I thought at the time there was a little strain. But the second day doesn't require much speed after that, so I was able to finish without a problem," he continued. "Because of the quick turnaround between decathlons, I didn't test the leg in practice, but everything pointed to my condition being OK."

Sebrle had been well aware of his hamstring condition in the run-up to the Kladno competition, and he had even dropped out of the second day at Götzis as a precaution. The injury is now more of an immediate concern for the Czech than for the American as Sebrle is looking ahead to the European Championships in six weeks' time and a chance at an unprecedented third gold medal in the decathlon. For Clay, there was never an important high-level competition on his outdoor schedule this season.

"Unlike Bryan's situation, I had known for a long time that I was in fragile condition. I could feel it every day in my training. I could have probably run 11 or 12 seconds today, but it would have meant risking the rest of this season, which includes the European Championships. Even as it is, I'm going to have to hope my Federation will grant me a 'wild card' selection, and then I'll have also hope for the best as I try to recover from this physical problem."

Returning to Europe about a week ago, Clay and his coach had been staying at the home of world-record holder Roman Sebrle in the western section of Prague, not far from the Kladno meeting site. "Bryan was well-rested from the trip, and was waking up normally without jet-lag," Clay's coach Kevin Reid explained. "The training sessions were normal and would not have predicted this injury."

Clay's immediate plans are uncertain. "I've got to be careful this year," he admitted, "because I've got to put up some really big marks the next two seasons. My goal is to be on the Olympic podium again in London," he said, adding that in so doing, he would be the first athlete to win a decathlon medal in three Olympic Games.

Melnychenko consistent – Heptathlon

Fortunately, the Heptathlon competition proceeded without the injuries which detracted from the men's event. Jana Koresova of the host country led the way in the 100m Hurdles with a 13.59 and captured 1037 points. Also running in the same heat was Hanna Melnychenko of Ukraine, whose 13.71 for 1020 points stood in second place ahead of the 13.83 and 1003 points of France's Amandine Constantin. Canada's Susan Coltman and Lyudmyla Yosypenko of Ukraine were close behind with 13.84 and 1001 points to round out the top five.

Melnychenko (*pictured right*), the sixth-place finisher at last



season's Berlin World Championships but far back in the final standings at Götzis two weeks ago, moved solidly to the lead after the High Jump. Her 1.84m led all competitors for 1029 points, producing a 2049 total and a 95-point advantage over Yosypenko at 1954 after a 1.78m leap. Marina Goncharova of Russia also used a 1.78m to move into a close position behind Yosypenko with 1947, just ahead of Czech Eliska Klucinova at 1945 after a 1.81m performance.

In the Shot Put, Klucinova managed to dent Melnychenko's big lead with her 13.83m toss. With this effort - the second-best of the competition - juxtaposed with the Ukrainian's sub-par 12.67m, the Czech amassed 2728 to move within 27 points of Melnychenko's leading 2755. Goncharova held third at this point with a 13.42m throw for a three-event total of 2702, as Yosypenko's 12.50m dropped her into fourth at 2648. The biggest upward move of the event came as a result of Karolina Tyminska's field-leading 14.37m. The Polish athlete, seventh in the Beijing Heptathlon, catapulted from twelfth to fifth at 2613, as her best events are ones still remaining in the programme.

Melnychenko increased her lead in the first day's final event, the 200m, as her 24.74 for a 3666 total moved her to a 59-point advantage over Klucinova, who slid back despite running close to her PB with 25.08 to close out the afternoon with 3607. As expected, Tyminska had the best time of the day with 24.33, and it was enough to elevate her from fifth to third with 3562, just five points ahead of Yosypenko (3557 after running 24.76) and 14 points in front of Goncharova (3548 after a 25.45 half-lap).

Junior Decathlon

On a day when no other competitor bettered him in any event, Adam Sebastian Helcelet amassed a formidable lead with 4028 points in the junior division (including 6kg shot put). The first day saw PBs from the Tomas Dvorak-coached athlete in the Long Jump (6.94m), Shot Put (15.37m) and 400m (49.31). Michal Stefek stands in second with a first-day total of 3775.

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Kasyanov and Klucinova take Kladno titles – IAAF Combined Events Challenge



Eliska Klucinova high jumping in Kladno (Pavel Gryc)

Kladno, Czech Republic - Oleksiy Kasyanov of Ukraine and Eliska Klucinova of the host Czech Republic won the Combined Events titles at the 4th staging of the **TNT-Fortuna Meeting** in Kladno on Tuesday and Wednesday. The competition was the third step in this season's **IAAF Combined Events Challenge**.

Kasyanov moved out of the lead near the end, and he had to overcome a small deficit after the penultimate event. But with a fine 4:27.93 in the 150m, he was able to dispatch any other challenges and accumulate 8381 points in his victory. Aleksey Drozdov of Russia with 8246 and Canada's Jamie Adjetey-Nelson at 8239 waged a tight battle for the remaining podium spots.

For Klucinova, the last two days were a whirl she will never forget. With PBs in five of the seven events (only missing the Shot Put and the 200m - the latter by 0.08 seconds), the one-time Kladno resident gave her old neighbours a memorable moment by exactly equaling the 22-year-old national record of 6268 set by Zuzana Lajbnerova in the 1988 Götzis meeting when Klucinova was only nine weeks old.

Today's landmark performance came after an up-and-down 2009 season in which Klucinova was still recovering from injuries. Finally this past winter, she was able to get a full period of training, an early payback of which came two weeks ago as a 6007 score nearly surpassed her then-PB of 6015 during often inclement conditions in Götzis. Now, she's reached an even higher level as the European Championships approach in six weeks' time.

Marina Goncharova of Russia (6182) and Ukraine's Lyudmyla Yosypenko (6142) took the next two places in the overall standings.

Kasyanov consistent – Decathlon

First-day leader Kasyanov of Ukraine quickly extended his 76-point overnight lead to 124 as a result of a PB 14.24 performance in the 110m Hurdles. Despite also running a lifetime best of 14.62, Adjetey-Nelson fell back in the point totals to 5271 although he easily remained in second. Maurice Smith of Jamaica sneaked into third with 14.20 and an aggregate 5152 as Lithuania's Darius Draudvila dropped to fourth at 5147 after a 14.47 clocking. American Jake Arnold, who yesterday ran for the first time under 11 seconds in the 100m, continued his fine sprinting as he led all competitors with a hurdles PB 14.11 to move into fifth with 5087. Drozdov saw his 15.03 time push him downward to sixth at 5074, only seven points ahead of Eduard Mikhan's 5067 which resulted from the Belarusian's PB 14.38.

A big PB of 49.17m in the Discus [previous 44.81m] helped Adjetey-Nelson cut Kasyanov's lead to 80 as the Ukrainian's best was more than two metres back of the Canadian. But Kasyanov's seven-event total of 6204 appeared to be an adequate cushion in front of Adjetey-Nelson's 6124. Smith had the best fling of the session with a PB 53.02m, and this moved him to within 39 points of second at 6085. Draudvila's 47.95m throw was off his usual norm, and although still in fourth, the Lithuanian saw his spread over fifth place shrink to only 29 at 5975. Drozdov and Arnold switched places as the Russian moved into fifth at 5946 with a 50.10m effort, while the American dropped back to sixth with 5919 after a still-respectable 48.15m.

Kasyanov got back the points he lost in the Discus and then some with a 4.70m leap in the Pole Vault. With 7023 after eight events, the Ukrainian pushed his margin to 148 over Smith, who moved up into second at 6875 after vaulting 4.60m. Adjetey-Nelson dropped into third with 6855 as a result of a 4.40m best, while Arnold predictably did well in the event with 5.00m to take over fourth at 6829. Drozdov (4.80m) and Mikhan (=PB 4.60m) were fifth and sixth with 6795 and 6611, respectively. The best effort of the afternoon came from 19-year-old Adam Pasiak, whose 5.10m PB established a Kladno meeting record.



Adjetey-Nelson picked an opportune time for a big PB 62.74m [formerly 59.53m] in the Javelin for a nine-event 7634 total, as he moved 11 points ahead of Kasyanov (7623 after a 50.78 throw) with one event remaining. Smith meanwhile moved from second to third after a 60.14m fling, but his 7615 kept the top three within 19 points of each other. Slightly farther back in fourth was Drozdov at 7588 after a 63.64m throw which displaced Arnold, whose 58.56m sent him to fifth at 7545. The top throw of the session was 64.09m by Brent Newdick of New Zealand, and although he held sixth as a result, he was more than 200 points behind Arnold at 7342.

Kasyanov (*pictured left*) ran the 1500m together with Mikhan and Newdick as a measure of security in achieving a time which would bring him back to the

lead at the end of the two days. It may have been overkill, because his 4:27.93, giving him a two-day 8381, easily achieved the needed margin over Adjetey-Nelson's 4:52.28. In fact, Drozdov was able to slip in with 4:43.52 at the end and claim second, 8246 to 8239.

In all, six competitors surpassed the benchmark 8000 level, Adjetey-Nelson and Newdick (8091) for the first times in their careers. It was agonizing to see the hard finish of Mikhan in the 1500m, in the day's best time of 4:27.84, bring him to a frustrating 7999 total. Barcelona should be his moment to enter The Club.

Break out for Klucinova – Heptathlon

Starting the second day, Hanna Melnychenko of Ukraine stretched her overall margin to 88 points with a composite 4600 after a 6.27m leap in the Long Jump, as Klucinova of the Czech Republic still held second at 4512 after a PB 6.18m. Karolina Tyminska, ordinarily an international-level long jumper, missed a big opportunity to move up strongly against the leading pair. The Pole struggled to only 6.21m and barely held on to the third spot with 4477. Only two points behind in fourth was Lyudmyla Yosypenko of Ukraine with 4475 after a 6.22m leap, as Marina Goncharova jumped 6.11m to remain in fifth with 4431. In fact, the Long Jump discipline did nothing to change the top nine placeholders after the end of the first day. The day's top performance came from Blandine Maisonnier of France with 6.33m as she remained in sixth at 4418.

The Javelin saw the biggest turning point of the two days, as Klucinova bettered her PB by more than three metres with an astounding 50.75m, the day's only effort surpassing fifty metres. A South African winter training camp with instruction from World record holder Jan Zelezny may have played a significant role in this quantum leap in her javelin ability. The highly-cheered performance lifted her into the overall lead at 5387 as other top placings were scrambled greatly during this sixth event. Previous leader Melnychenko, not usually a strong javelinist, dropped to fourth with 5176 after a meek 35.21m. Meanwhile, Yosypenko and Goncharova threw 49.04m and 47.14m, respectively, to move into second and third at 5317 and 5236. Tyminska inexplicably continued her downward spiral after one of the day's shortest throws of 32.84m as she held sixth at 5008. Just ahead of the Pole was Maisonnier with 5022 after a 36.69m effort.

Klucinova knew what she had to do to convert her six-event lead into an overall win, and her determined PB 2:15.85 clocking in the 800m easily brought her to victory. The Czech's final total of 6268 was a PB by 263 points, and it was the conglomerate of five personal bests over the two days.

To preserve her win over Yosypenko, Klucinova needed to ensure she finished within about four seconds of the Ukrainian. When Klucinova crossed the line well in front of Yosypenko, who finished last in 2:19.88, the Czech could finally relax. Goncharova ran an outstanding 2:11.28 and slipped into second place at the end with 6182 as Yosypenko slid to third at 6142. Early leader Melnychenko held fourth at the end with a 2:16.72 and an aggregate 6045, while Tyminska sprinted hard over the final straight to win the top heat in 2:09.41 and take fifth overall with 5981. All of the top five finished surpassed the 5900 qualifying standard for Barcelona.

Junior Decathlon

The Czech Republic's Adam Sebastian Helcelet, who should be a medal contender at next month's World Junior Championships in Moncton, Canada, easily won the junior division of the Decathlon with 7588 points. But the junior performance of the weekend was the 64.07m javelin throw by 18-year-old Marek Lukas. Even in the senior javelin competition, only Brent Newdick, with 64.09m, barely surpassed the brilliant mark by the young Czech. Ironically, it was not a PB for Lukas. That stands at 64.17m.

Ed Gordon for the IAAF