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### **Kyle conquers decathlon to take gold**

Super student-athlete Kyle Cranston (Australian Catholic University) has produced an upset victory in the hardest athletics discipline of all taking out the gold medal in the decathlon at the 2017 Summer Universiade in Taipei.

Ranked twelfth by personal best heading into the Games, Cranston sealed his medal with a 4:42.08 performance in the 1500m, taking his total score to 7687.

After two grueling days of competition at Taipei Stadium, Cranston set new personal bests in four of his ten events taking the win from Juuso Antero Hassi of Finland with 7566 points and Aaron Booth of New Zealand with 7523 points.

The 24-year-old who is currently studying Exercise and Sports Science at the Australian Catholic University was able to shine as the hot conditions took a toll on the European athletes.

In winning gold, Cranston becomes Australia's first ever medallist in the decathlon at the Summer Universiade.

"It's comforting to know that I can perform at this level, this late in our season – it's very hard event to event – you need to stay positive and I was able to do that," he said.

The Bankstown Sports Club member started his 10-event campaign in blistering fashion, leading the competition at the end day 1 with a first day personal best total of 4016 points, and never looked back.

Cranston first won his heat of the 100m in a PB of 11.12 (-0.4), before a 7.04m (+0.5) performance in the long jump. He then followed with a PB throw of 13.76m in the shot put, 1.98m clearance in the high jump and finished his first day of competition with a half a second PB in the 400m, stopping the clock in 48.99 seconds.

On the second day, Cranston opened up with a 15.11 (-0.2) run in the 110m hurdles, a 41.53m throw in the discus, an equal PB clearance of 4.60m in the pole vault, a 56.30m throw in the javelin and finished with a 4:42.08 run in the 1500m.

As if juggling work, social life and studies wasn't enough, Cranston's sport of choice requires athletes to excel at all sorts of disciplines that demand strength, power, endurance and technique.

A self-described 'jack-of-all-trades, master-of-none', Cranston used to be a thrower but injuries persuaded the Sydneysider to give the multi-event sport a crack.

Self-coached for the last 12 months, Cranston has also received support from Ron White and John Quinn with some of the technical and mental aspects of his chosen discipline.

At the 2015 Summer Universiade, Cranston finished in 8th place, the experience helping him make the most of a second crack at the Games title.

He will now focus his attention on the upcoming Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast.

"I came here with the goal of 7600 points which is the Commonwealth Games B qualifier and I got that and also a gold!"

"It was a good PB on day 1, I can definitely capitalise on that, hopefully I can get the 'A' [qualifier]."

"The support from my team has been amazing – the guys back home where watching late at night I felt the love and all the messages."

Controversy surrounds Griffith's placing in the women's 800m

The women's 800m final ended in controversy and it may not be finished just yet.

From bittersweet emotions to joy and then potential disappointment, Monash University's Georgia Griffith was upgraded to the bronze medal in the women's 800m after initially crossing the line in fourth place after race winner Rose Almanza Blanco (Cuba) was disqualified for appearing to run approximately 15 metres on the inside of the track with 180m to go.

However later in the evening the revised result appeared to be altered, reinstating the Cuban and relegating Griffith back to fourth, albeit after the medal ceremony and with Griffith, and the bronze medal, back at the Games village.

Australian team officials have sort clarification from Games officials and will be seeking further clarification ahead of a probable appeal after viewing race video when officials return to the stadium on Saturday.

A gutsy and attacking run from start to finish, Griffith kicked hard in the final straight to finish in a time of 2:03.52.

It's been a breakthrough season for the 20-year-old who has run under her previous personal best eight times in 2017.

Griffith, who recently returned from the IAAF World Championships in London

"I felt so close to a medal, so yeah, it does feel quite bittersweet," said before she learnt of the possible disqualification of the Cuban.

"Luckily I had a clear run in the last hundred, but yeah it was tight with a lot of jostling up until then."

"It was a little tricky trying to hold my position in the race, I think when I did try and kick my legs were a little tired out trying to weave in and out of the field. I definitely gave it my all."

The former world junior championships finalist (Eugene 2014) has a bright future in Australian middle-distance racing, after she attended her first IAAF World Championships in London just last month.

In 2017 Griffith had a breakthrough season that saw her reduce her personal best over the 800m down to 2:00.90 – the 13th fastest Australian over the distance ever.

"The season has been really good, but I'm looking forward to a little break."

Coached by Steve Ellinghouse Griffith will now set her sights on Australian team selection for the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast.

In the women's hurdles 2015 Summer Universiade bronze medallist Michelle Jenneke breezed through her opening heat, taking the win comfortably in 13.44 (-1.8).

"I felt really good," Jenneke said.

"It was really nice to be out here, the crowd was amazing, I felt pretty good over the first couple of hurdles and then really just controlled that race, and only did what I had to do."

Jenneke, who studies mechatronics, a combination of mechanical and electrical engineering, said she was confident she is fit after a very long season.

"London was really good, I was really happy with my performance there. Conditions weren't great so to pull those times I was pretty happy with that," she said before the Games.

A Rio Olympian, Jenneke also recently took part in the IAAF World Championships in London, reaching the semi-final placing 21st overall.

Fellow hurdler Liz Clay ran a disappointing 14.92 for 6th place.

In other results, Bachelor of Biomedicine student Isaac Hockey (The University of Melbourne) ran a brave race in the final of the men's 1500m finishing in a solid 6th place in 3:45.32.

Sydney University's Angus Armstrong has put himself into the final 12 athletes bound for the pole vault final on Sunday after successfully clearing 5.30m on his first attempt. Western Australia's Stephen Clough cleared 4.90m but will not progress to the final.