

India's Olympic javelin star Chopra eyes 90m club

Agence France-Presse in Doha

India's Olympic javelin champion Neeraj Chopra fell short at the Doha Diamond League, as America's Kenny Bednarek scorched to a world-leading 19.67 seconds in the 200 metres with the Paris Olympics looming.

Chopra's final throw of 88.36m was just two centimetres behind his Czech rival Jakub Vadlejch, who took silver behind the Indian at the Tokyo Games in 2021.

Tokyo gold medallist Steven Gardiner said he was "just where I wanted to be" after a dominant 400m win 11 weeks before the Paris Games.

And Kenyan world title-holder Mary Moraa held off Britain's Jemma Reekie to win the women's 800m by half a second in 1:57.91, her season's best.

After Doha, there are seven more Diamond League meets around the world – including Paris on July 7 – before the Olympics start on July 26.

In the javelin, Vadlejch hurled 88.38m with his third throw and Chopra was unable to surpass him in his first competition of the season.

"It was a little bit revenge for last year," said Vadlejch, who lost out to Chopra by four centimetres

in Doha last year. "I think it's a good rivalry and it's good for the spectators."

Chopra, who again missed out on joining the elite 90m club, vowed to improve next time around. "I'm not satisfied with my effort," he said. "I think I can do something about this and maybe next competition I will throw far."

88.36m

Neeraj Chopra's best throw at the Doha Diamond League meeting - just 2cm behind his javelin arch-rival Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic

Bednarek, second to Canada's Andre De Grasse at the Tokyo Games, laid down a marker for next month's US trials with his 19.67, his personal best and a meet record, against a strong 200m field.

The 25-year-old beat his victorious 4x100m World Relays teammates Courtney Lindsey and Kyree King into second and third place, with Joseph Fahnbulleh completing an American one, two, three and four.

"I feel great about the race. I knew I was in this shape, I just had to put it down on the track," Bednarek said. "I'm healthy, I'm stronger than ever and I'm ready to go."

Meanwhile Gardiner, of the Bahamas, ran 44.76 to win the 400m ahead of Zambia's Muzala Samukonga, with Tokyo Games relay gold medallist American Vernon Norwood fourth.

"It's put me in a good position," Gardiner said afterwards. "My health has to come first but it's just where I wanted to be – just have a healthy season this year and come out on top in Paris."

In the men's long jump, Greek Olympic champion Miltiadis Tentoglou's 8.36m was only good for second behind Jamaican Carey McLeod's leap of 8.52.

Brazil's Alison dos Santos set a meet-record 46.86 in the men's 400m hurdles – the fifth fastest time ever. Britain's Daryll Neita pipped America's Tamari Davis on the line to win the women's 100m by one-hundredth of a second in 10.98.

Kenya's Brian Komen headed compatriots Timothy Cheruiyot and Reynold Kipkorir Cheruiyot with 3:32:43 in the men's 1,500m. Britain's world indoor champion Molly Caudery won the women's pole vault from Nina Kennedy.



India's Olympic champion, Neeraj Chopra, hurls the javelin during the Diamond League track and field meeting in Doha, Qatar. Photo: Xinhua