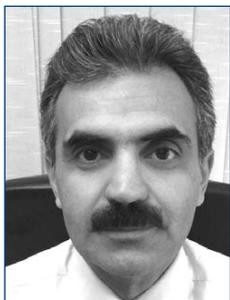




«Queen of sports» On the way to the XXXIII olympic games in paris

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Abstract

Objective of the study was to analyze the performances of the strongest athletes and sports teams following the results of the 2022 and 2023 World Championships.

Methods and structure of the study. The competitive activity of athletes who competed at the 2022 and 2023 World Athletics Championships was analyzed. The results of the unofficial team competition are considered.

Results and conclusions. The American team achieved the most victories at world championships - 15 out of 19 possible. The Jamaican national team has lost ground, first of all, we are talking about its male part. Two African teams - Kenyan and Ethiopian - are leaders in middle- and long-distance running and the marathon. As for the teams from Europe, it will be difficult for them to fight for a place in the top five at the Games. As the trend of development of the "queen of sports" in the world shows, track and field athletes (men and women) for the most part "overstepped" the sports results of those who actively trained and performed in the twentieth century.

Keywords: IAAF, RusAF (Russian Athletics Federation), Olympic Games, World Championships, groups of athletics events, confederation-associations, medals, countries, Russian athletics.

Introduction. The global sports community has been living according to a non-standard pattern for the second Olympic cycle. A similar phenomenon in sports has arisen for objective reasons since 2019.

In the shortened current Olympic cycle (2022-2024), the main starts for track and field athletes were two world championships - 2022 (Eugene, USA; moved from 2021 to 2022) and 2023 (Budapest, Hungary; held according to original terms). The World Championships (in stadium conditions), which have been held in athletics since the summer of 1983, have become those starts that make it possible to evaluate the level of sportsmanship of national teams of countries and, in particular, of each individual athlete.

More than 1,705 athletes from 179 countries took part in the competition in the United States (214 countries are members of World Athletics), and in Hungary,

according to World Athletics regulations, about 1,800 places were allocated for competition participants. In fact, a record number of athletes took to the start – 2,100 from 195 countries (+ a team of refugee athletes).

For the first time in their history, the USA and Hungary hosted world championships held in stadium conditions (previously, these countries only hosted indoor world championships).

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Results of the study and discussion. In each of the world championships under consideration, 49 sets of medals were played - 24 each for men and women and in the mixed 4x400 m relay, where two men and two women start at the start team (included in the world championship for the first time in 2019). Based on the results of the Eugene and Budapest World Championships, the balance of power in the international athletics arena a year before the Olympic Games is as follows.

The success of US track and field athletes at the World Championships (including the Olympic Games) has not been in doubt for a long time. Of the 19 world championships, the American team won in the unofficial team competition in 15 (the GDR won two victories each, the Russian Federation and Kenya won one each). The continuity of methodological, practical and other approaches to the training process that has developed over decades, both for men and women, has

a positive impact on the final result. In this regard, the team does not yet see worthy competition. Compared to the 2022 World Cup, teams from Jamaica, Ethiopia, Kenya and Canada remained in the top ten. And, if these teams in Budapest lost their best positions in the table to the Canadians in terms of the number of gold medals, then in terms of the total number of medals they still became the best. It is worth adding to this that in terms of the number of points scored (the number of participants in the final stage of the competition is taken into account), the Jamaicans (139) and Kenyans (112) were second only to the Americans (277). If at the previous championship one European team made it into the top ten, this time there are five. This once again confirms the opinion that there are problems in European athletics, which performs inconsistently at major competitions. The Chinese team lost its ground significantly, remaining in Hungary with two medals (Table 1).

Table 1. Ten strongest teams based on the results of the XVIII and XIX World Championships (unofficial team standings among countries that won medals; sum of all disciplines)

Place	Country	Men				Women				Total			
		G	S	B	Σ	G	S	B	Σ	G	S	B	Σ
XVIII World Championships, 2022 (Eugene, USA)													
1	USA	6	7	5	18	7	2	5	14	13	9	11 ¹	33
2	Ethiopia	1	2	--	3	3	2	2	7	4	4	2	10
3	Jamaica	--	1	--	1	2	6	1	9	2	7	1	10
4	Kenya	1	2	1	4	1	3	2	6	2	5	3	10
5	China	1	--	1	2	1	1	2	4	2	1	3	6
6	Australia	--	--	--	--	2	--	1	3	2	--	1	3
7	Peru	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	2	2	--	--	2
8	Poland	1	1	--	2	--	2	--	2	1	3	--	4
9	Canada	1	1	1	3	--	1	--	1	1	2	1	4
	Japan	1	2	--	3	--	--	1	1				
XIX World Championship, 2023 (Budapest, Hungary)													
1	USA	6	2	5	13	5	6	4	15	12 ¹	8	9	29
2	Canada	3	1	--	4	1	1	--	2	4	2	--	6
3	Spain	2	1	--	3	2	--	--	2	4	1	--	5
4	Jamaica	1	2	2	5	2	3	2	7	3	5	4	12
5	Kenya	--	2	2	4	3	1	2	6	3	3	4	10
6	Ethiopia	--	1	2	3	2	3	1	6	2	4	3	9
7	Great Britain	1	1	3	5	1	1	2	4	2	3 ¹	5	10
8	Netherlands	--	--	--	--	2	1	2	5	2	1	2	5
9	Norway	2	1	1	4	--	--	--	--	2	1	1	4
10	Sweden	2	1	--	3	--	--	--	--	2	1	--	3

Note: 12022 (USA): 4x400m mixed relay (2 men + 2 women): 1st place - Dominican Republic, 2nd place - Netherlands, 3rd place - USA. 2023 (Hungary): 4x400m mixed relay: 1st place - USA, 2nd place - Great Britain, 3rd place - Czech Republic. In Budapest, two gold medals were awarded for women in the pole vault, and therefore no one was awarded a silver medal, as well as two bronze medals for men.



In total, representatives from 46 teams won medals in 2023, compared to 45 in 2022. At the same time, 18 versus 22 received gold awards, respectively. In recent years, fluctuations in these figures have been minimal.

Performance of the leading teams. The rightful leader of world athletics, the *US team*, has been trying for years to demonstrate an integrated approach to the development of athletics, which determines its victory at such major competitions. The complexity itself lies not only in the medals won in various types of athletics, but also in the successful performance of men and women. The bulk of medals in Budapest (up to 60%) are in sprint, hurdles and relay races. US track and field athletes try to compete successfully in jumping and throwing events and, partially, in all-around events. Against this background, the “lagging” types are: middle and long distance running, marathon running and race walking. In fact, Americans gravitate more toward speed-strength (competitive) exercises (speed-strength events rather than endurance events).

Jamaican team. The main competitors of US sprinters - Jamaican track and field athletes - are gradually mastering other types of athletics. As the World Championships in Budapest showed, the athletes of the island state, in addition to short-distance running - 100 and 200 m, relay distances - 4x100 and 4x400 m, successfully performed in the 400-meter run, hurdles, and long jump.

Teams of Kenya and Ethiopia. Their priority sports remain middle- and long-distance running and marathon running. It is only thanks to these distances that they have high achievements among the world athletics community. Of the 48 medals competed at the

championship in Budapest in events with a predominant manifestation of endurance, both teams took about 40% of the awards with them to their homeland. The numbers for medals in Budapest, compared to Eugene, remained virtually unchanged.

For the first time in its history, the Spanish team won four gold medals at the World Championships, and all the gold was brought to the “walkers” team - men (2) and women (2). It was only thanks to their efforts that the Spanish squad became third.

Despite her popularity, the “queen of sports” is developing unevenly around the world. The unevenness lies in the fact that in some countries priority is given to certain types, in others - to a separate group of types, thirdly - there is a weak movement of athletics in general, etc. All this is directly proportional to the achievements of the confederations - associations.

The information presented in Table 2 clearly shows the extent to which the “queen” is moving in the World Athletics confederation associations.

Year after year, the most effective approach to athletics takes place in the North American Association, but only thanks to two schools - the USA and Jamaica. The lion’s share of successes is associated with two countries. The same can be said in relation to the African confederation, where two countries - Kenya and Ethiopia - determine the success of the continent. In recent years, Ugandan endurance running has gradually begun to approach them. European athletics is winning medals due to greater team involvement and the development of more events overall.

It is not yet possible to single out any one team (country), since different countries compete at different championships. In 2015, the best were the British,

Table 2. Distribution of medals by confederations - associations included in the structure of World Athletics, based on the results of the XVIII / XIX World Championships (sum of all disciplines)

Indicators	Confederations – Associations					
	Asian	African	European	Oceania	North American	South American
Gold medals	5 / 3	9 / 9	10 / 16	2 / 1	19 / 20	4 / 1
Silver medals	5 / 2	12 / 8	12 / 15	-- / 2	20 / 18	-- / 3
Bronze medals	5 / 4	7 / 9	20 / 16	1 / 3	15 / 17	1 / 1
Total	15 / 9	28 / 26	42 / 47	3 / 6	54 / 55	5 / 5
Number of countries participating in the medal standings	7 / 7	7 / 6	19 / 18	1	8 / 9	3 / 5
Number of countries included in the confederation-association*	45	54	51	20	31	13

*Note: * the number of countries included in the confederation-association is indicated, according to World Athletics. In Budapest, two gold medals were awarded for women in the pole vault and, therefore, no one was awarded a silver medal, as well as two bronze medals for men. Oceania is represented by one country - Australia.*



in 2017 - the French, 2019 - the British and Germans. But for now, Great Britain can be considered the more successful team. Australia is the only member of the Oceania Association to win medals at the third championship in a row. On rare occasions, they are "helped" by one or two athletes from New Zealand. In addition, the Australian team won six medals for the first time in the history of the championships.

Russian "queen of sports". If in the last Olympic cycle (2017-2021) some of the strongest track and field athletes were given the right to participate in a number of major international competitions (the athletes were "endowed" with neutral status), then in the current one, not a single athlete was given such a right was. But, despite this, on March 23, 2023, the International Athletics Association decided to restore the full status of RusAF within its ranks. Thus, after seven years and five months, against the backdrop of fulfilling all legal and illegal requirements, track and field athletes of the Russian Federation could plan performances at international competitions in their calendar. As subsequent events showed, the permission was of a formal nature, and de jure World Athletics "put its decision on hold" (on the day the RusAF reinstated).

Conclusions. For the first time in the history of the World Championships, the team that won the unofficial team event won more medals - 33 - than the others. Prior to this, a kind of record belonged to the track and field athletes of the German Democratic Republic - 31 awards (1987).

The American team achieved the most victories at world championships - 15 out of 19 possible. US athletes (men and women) mostly win medals of various denominations in sprinting and hurdles, relay running, and partly in throwing and jumping events. In running, which primarily involves endurance, the Americans' chances of winning medals remain slim. The Jamaican national team has lost ground, first of all, we are talking about its male part. The lion's share of medals came from the island nation's women's team,

which currently remains competitive in sprint and relay events. Two African teams - Kenyan and Ethiopian - are leaders in middle- and long-distance running and the marathon. As for the teams from Europe, it will be difficult for them to fight for a place in the top five at the Games.

In total, medal winners are usually representatives of 45-46 countries. The largest number of medals remains with representatives of the North American association, where the vast majority of medals are in the sprint, hurdle and relay groups. The predictability of the results of the team wrestling at the Olympics in France is obvious. Undoubtedly, American athletes will win the fight for championship. Their hypothetical "competition" could be teams from Kenya, Ethiopia and Jamaica.

Previously, World Athletics took issue with the cancellation of the record achievements of track and field athletes who competed in the 20th century, complaining that they used "various tricks" in their preparation. But, as the development trend of the "queen of sports" in the world shows, track and field athletes (men and women) for the most part "overstepped" the sports results of those who actively trained and performed in the twentieth century.

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