

Dibaba still the best

Ethiopia's serial record holder Genzebe Dibaba won a fourth consecutive world indoor title when she romped to victory in the 3,000m in Birmingham last night.

In a memorable opening night of track and field for Russians cleared to compete as neutrals in the wake of the doping scandal that has engulfed their country, Danil Lysenko and the unbeatable Mariya Lasitskene took gold in the men and women's high jump competitions.

Dibaba came to Birmingham as double defending 3000m indoor champion and had also won the 1500m in Istanbul in 2012.

And the 27-year-old favourite made no mistake at the Arena Birmingham, streaking around the blue track for an unprecedented eighth Ethiopian victory in the last nine world indoor 3000m events, Kenya's Hellen Obiri the only blot back in 2012.

Obiri, the world outdoor 5,000m gold medallist who won silver over the distance in the Rio Olympics and also picked up 1500m bronze at the 2013 worlds in Moscow, could only finish fourth this time around.

"I'm very happy to be indoor 3000m champion for a third time. This day is for me and my country," said Dibaba.

"It was a tactical race and I controlled all my competitors. With 1000m left they all pushed very hard and at that moment I had to go and win the race."

British hopes rested with European indoor champion Laura Muir and Eilish McColgan, whose mother Liz won silver in 1989. It was eventually Muir who hung on for bronze, a first global medal.

Current world record holder for the 1500m (both indoor and outdoor), the indoor 2000m, the indoor 3000m, the indoor 5000m, the indoor mile, and the indoor two-mile, Dibaba was happy to sit at the back as Muir took up the early front running.

Halfway through the 15-lap race on the 200m track, Germany's Konstanze Klosterhalfen surged, Dibaba moving effortlessly through the field into second, Obiri on her shoulder.

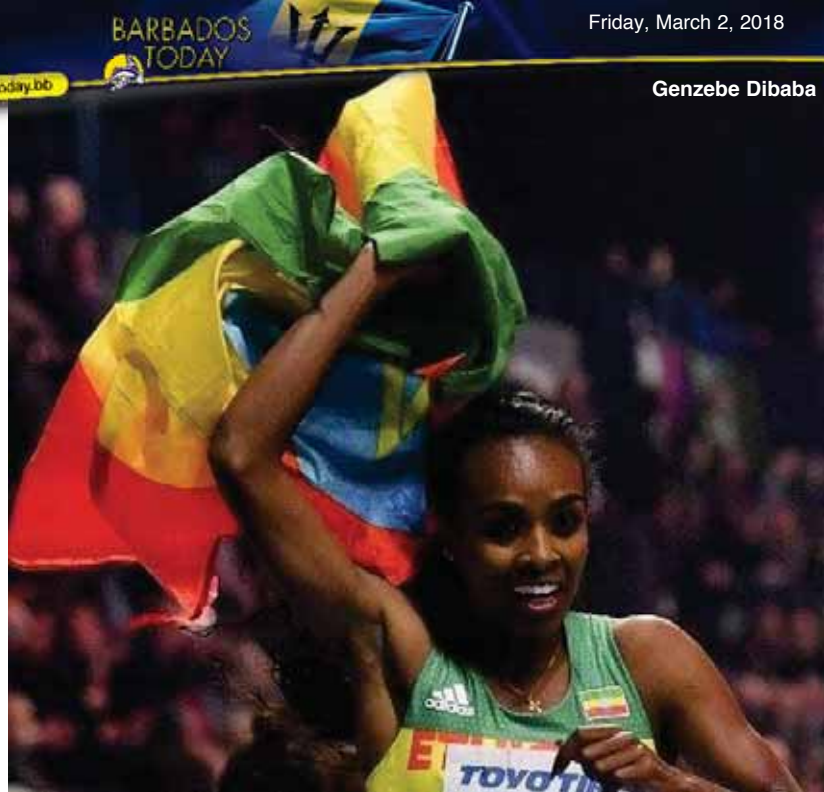
Three laps later, Dibaba pushed the pace as the field split, with Ethiopian-born Dutch runner Sifan Hassan sticking with the pace.

The final 400 metres saw Dibaba sprint clear, Hassan in second ahead of Muir as Obiri struggled.

Dibaba seemed to pull up slightly in the last frenetic lap, but held on for victory in 8min 45.05sec, with Hassan cleverly shifting across the lanes to deny Muir.

The men's high jump saw a repeat of the London world outdoor competition as Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim, winner in the British capital last summer, faced off with Lysenko.

Barshim landed four perfect jumps before



failing three times at 2.36m, leaving the window open for the 20-year-old Lysenko.

The Russian sailed over on his third attempt at 2.36m to ensure Barshim did not regain the world indoor title he won back in 2014. Germany's Mateusz Przybylko claimed a bronze with 2.29m.

"Honestly I didn't expect to win this event," said Lysenko. "I just tried my best to the end of the competition."

Barshim added: "I'm happy with the medal but not quite the result."

The second Russian/neutral title came in the

women's high jump, Lasitskene regaining the world title she shared back in 2014 under her maiden name of Kucina.

Lasitskene cleared a best of 2.01m for her 38th successive competition victory, an incredible record dating back to 2016.

She also went close in three efforts on what would have been a championship record of 2.07.

Defending world champion Vashti Cunningham of the United States took silver on countback from Italian Alessia Trost after both cleared 1.93. (AP)

McDonagh wins with Elegant

British golfer Pat McDonagh took the top position in the third Annual Elegant Hotels Golf Tournament held at the Apes Hill Golf Club recently.

A repeat guest at the Group's Colony Club property, McDonagh captured the 2018 title from a field of 47 other players including guests from across the Group's Colony Club, Tamarind, The House and Crystal Cove hotels as well as national hero Sir Garfield Sobers and Group Chief Executive Officer, Sunil Chatrani.

Tamarind guest Steve Daborn took a close second place while Ian Preston, a guest at The House, took the third spot. Another Colony Club guest, Anne Campbell, was named the Best Female of the tournament and took the overall sixth position.

Gayle Talma, Elegant Hotels Group operations director thanked all the golfers for participating and noted that the response to this year's tournament was overwhelming.

"This year was fantastic. We came up with the concept for the tournament from our guests. At the time we realised we had a lot of golfers staying at our properties and they were always playing their own friendly competitions. So we decided this was the perfect opportunity to organise a tournament just for our guests as we are always looking for ways to create memorable experiences for them.

"The first year we had 20 golfers, by year two that number grew to 35 and this year we had to move from 40 to 44 and finally cut off at 48. Even after increasing the number of golfers we still had a wait list with a number of persons who were unable to play.

"There has also been an increase in female players over the last three years. In 2016 we only had one female golfer, by year two we had seven and this year we had a total



Pat McDonagh won his third annual Elegant golf tournament.

of 13 females. There is a definite demand for the competition from our guests and we have a few who even plan their holidays around it, so we are already looking at next year's tournament and ways in which we can accommodate the high demand."

Talma noted that the tournament, which is complimentary to guests staying a minimum of five nights at participating hotels, is a thank you for their patronage and loyalty to the Elegant Group.

"Prizes included accommodation from two to five nights across the properties, dinner at Daphne's Restaurant, Sunday brunch at the newly opened Tapestry Restaurant at Treasure Beach Hotel, spa treatments at Waves Hotel & Spa and The House, a luxury catamaran cruise and dining vouchers for the properties across the Group." (PR)

Golf boost for St Lucia

The eyes of the world golfing fraternity have turned to the Caribbean and St Lucia in particular, after Sandals Resorts International and World Golf Hall of Famer Greg Norman confirmed plans to design a new 18-hole championship golf course on the island.

It will be the second partnership between two of the most powerful global brands, following the development of the golf course in Emerald Bay, Bahamas, by the Greg Norman Company, a project that has already brought major benefits to that island.

"They had a Web.com tournament there, and what did the Web.com tournament do, the PGA Tour did? It gave them massive exposure, and I was with a couple of PGA players recently who played that golf course and were totally over the moon about it, and they said we want to go back there, not just to play golf, but we want to go back there to experience what Sandals did in Emerald Bay. It'll be no different here," said Norman.

Norman, who won over 90 tournaments and spent more than six years in the number one position during his career, and who also holds the record of being voted into the Hall of Fame with a higher percentage than any other golfer in history, toured the Sandals Cap Estate Golf and Country club this week with his team, and they were excited by what they saw.

He said: "What I'm very proud about is that what you have out here is a diamond in the rough, and I mean that with all sincerity."

The visit by Norman was in keeping with a promise made by Sandals chairman Gordon 'Butch' Stewart to turn the facility into a world class one, shortly after Sandals acquired the 18-hole Cap Estate Golf Course in 2017.

The Greg Norman Company is recognised as the leading designer of golf courses in the world, and wherever he stamps his name, the global golfing fraternity is sure to follow.

Sandals deputy chairman and chief executive

officer Adam Stewart said that the new championship golf course could be finished as soon as the next 12 to 14 months.

"It's going to be a game-changer for this destination and it's going to be a game-changer for our company."

Going beyond the enhanced golfing facilities, Sandals also plans to break ground on a fourth resort in St Lucia in 2018, Sandals La Source St Lucia, and the CEO confirmed that all was on track.

"I must say that this (is a) 380-room masterpiece, we have never worked more assiduously and more focused on building the best resort that our hotel chain in 36 years has ever built. It'll be all-suite. It will have butler-suites that will rival any room in any resort anywhere on planet earth. It'll employ 900 more St Lucians permanently, and it will employ 1,200 Saint Lucians during the construction phase, it will complement everything we've done here, and of course we are going to put a lot of golfers in it and promote it as a golf destination. It will raise our annual economic footprint in Saint Lucia to over US\$105 million of economic contribution."

It was welcome news for St Lucian Prime Minister Allen Chastanet, who attended the press conference along with Minister with responsibility for tourism, Dominic Fedee. Both men agreed that these were phenomenal developments for the future of tourism, especially since it comes on the heels of the island enjoying record growth in the sector for 2017.

"I think that St Lucia's best days are still ahead of it, and I think that there are some incredible things that are going to be taking place in St Lucia. We have to know that the world is moving at a very fast pace, and we have to remain competitive. We've got to strive to be number one; we've got to strive to be the best." (PR)