

The meeting



For the third year at the Stade de France, the Meeting reaches new summits. The records fall in great numbers, the performances stacking up like there is no tomorrow. Marion Jones, a newcomer to the venue, sweeps aside the opposition and racks up a solid time of 10''84 in the 100 m. Maurice Greene, he too a novice in this competition, runs the 100 m in under 10 seconds (9''96). Hicham El Guerrouj sets the stadium alight with a potentially record-breaking 1,500 m (3'28''38). Russian athlete Olga Yegorova dominates the 3,000 m (8'23''75) where three national records are broken. When it comes to the final reckoning, the organisers are all smiles: the Meeting climbs to third in the IAAF ranking for the meetings, headed by the not to be overlooked meetings in Brussels and Zurich. It largely justifies its position in the closed circle of Golden League meetings.

The performance

It is the work of a master of the track, a legend in middle-distance running. Two years prior to winning the world title in the 1,500 m, Hicham El Guerrouj throws the stopwatch into turmoil on the Stade de France track. Setting off on the basis of his world record (3'26''00 in 1998), the Moroccan fails his attempt, but his ease with setting the pace and his capacity to maintain it right to the end discourages his adversaries. He completes his attempt in a time of 3'28''38, way ahead of

Bernard Lagat (3'30''83). At the time, Hicham El Guerrouj had run better than his time at the Stade de France only five times. Furthermore, just three men have bettered that in the entire history of the discipline: Bernard Lagat (3'26''34 in 2001), Noureddine Morceli (3'27''37 in 1995), and Noah Ngeny (3'28''12 in 2000).

The anecdote

The name Leslie Djhone is familiar to all athletics fans and he is of course associated with his sport, the 400 m flat race. For a long time however, the French athlete preferred the long jump, achieving a personal best in the sport with 7.92 m. In 2001, he was already performing at the Meeting, but in the long jump competition. Then aged 20, he proved to be fairly discrete there, finishing in 7th place with 7.76 m. Three years later, he was to join the closed circle of French athletes having won an event at the meeting, but this time it was in a circuit of the track.

The quote

"I won in Stéphane Diagana's lair. The crowd was carrying him but I was able to beat him. It was really important for me to win here, especially in view of the world championships in Edmonton."

Angelo Taylor (E-U), winner of the 400 m hurdles in 48''10

The public

57,000 spectators

The records

Four meeting records: André Bucher (Switzerland), 1'43''34 in the 800 m, Hicham El Guerrouj (Morocco), 3'28''38 in the 1,500 m, Marion Jones (E-U), 10''84 in the 100 m, Olga Yegorova (Russia), 8'23''75 in the 3,000 m. Five national records: Yuriy Borzakovskiy (Russia), 1'43''76 in the 800 m, Glody Dube (Botswana), 1'44''59 in the 800 m, Daniela Yordanova (Bulgaria), 8'30''59 in the 3,000 m, Katalin Szentgyorgyi (Hungary), 8'32''70 in the 3,000 m, Alesya Turova (Belarus), 8'32''89 in the 3,000 m.