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Heptathlete Burnett in the box seat | Day 8 wrap

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Australian Uniroos - Day 8 at Taipei 2017

Huge crowds at the basketball and athletics provided the canvas for some scintillating competition on day eight of the World University Games in Taipei.

The Emerging Opals are off to the gold medal game in women's basketball after a pulsating 78-74 semi-final win over hosts Chinese Taipei at a packed Taipei Arena.

The team now has a day off before the gold medal game against Japan on Monday night, after the Rising Sun pulled off an upset win over Russia 84-63 in the other semi-final.

After a slow start, the young side hit the lead before half-time and despite being often headed were just as regularly in front as they withstood the furnace-like atmosphere provided by the 18,000-strong crowd and a determined home side who never gave in. [Read more here.](#)

In the final night at the pool, dual Commonwealth Games gold medallist Lesiton Pickett collected a silver medal in the 50m breaststroke, to round of the Australian campaign that was highlighted by the two gold medals to Sian Whittaker in the 100m and 200m backstroke. [Read more here.](#)

Athletics - A day after Kyle Cranston took the gold medal in the men's decathlon, fellow multi-eventer and Australian Catholic University student Alysha Burnett takes a second-place position after her first day of competition in the heptathlon.

Opening her seven-event account with a 14.60 (-1.4) run in the 100m hurdles, Burnett then equalled her personal best in the high jump with 1.86m - a Commonwealth Games 'B' qualifier.

Finishing with a 25.92 (-0.2) run in the 200m, Burnett sits 141 points behind the current leader, Verena Preiner of Austria.

At just 20-years-of-age, Burnett became Australia's youngest ever heptathlon national champion in April when she took the title with 5817 points.

After strong runs in the heats and the semi-finals of the 100m hurdles, Michelle Jenneke (The University of Sydney) pulled up in the final with hamstring soreness, jogging across the line for 8th place. Jenneke will now set her sights on preparing for the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games trials in February.

In the women's 3000m steeplechase Paige Campbell (Charles Sturt University) ran an aggressive race to narrowly miss out on the medals, finishing fourth in 10:36.36. Studying a Bachelor of Physiotherapy, the 21-year-old ran a near three second personal best. The race was won by Tugba Guvenc of Turkey in a sprint finish. Stella Radford (The University of Melbourne) came home in 13th place with 10:36.36.

In the field, University of Southern Queensland's Lara Neilson finished 6th in the final of the women's hammer throw with 65.47m.

Fellow throwers William White and Liam O'Brien, both of whom hail from the University of Queensland, finished 7th with and 11th respectively in the men's javelin final. The event was taken out by local-favourite Chao-Tsun Cheng on his final throw that broke the Asian record by over two metres (91.36m) leading to an explosion of celebration from the host nation.

Two-time IAAF world championships representative Nick Hough (The University of Sydney) eased through his heat of the men's 110m hurdles, clocking a headwind time of 13.93 (-2.8) to book himself a lane in the semi-finals on Sunday.

Stephen Knuckey (RMIT University) also booked himself another run in Taipei, running second in his heat of the 800m in 1:52.47 to auto-qualify for Sunday afternoon's semi-finals.

Both Hannah Joye (Griffith University Gold Coast) and Nicola McDermott (The University of Sydney) cleared the required 1.75m in the women's high jump to advance to Monday evening's final.

In the morning Jess Pickles (University of Queensland) lined up for the women's 20km walk but was disqualified mid-race.

Water Polo - On paper, the women's water polo semi-final match-up against Russia looked a tough assignment. The undefeated Russian's topped Pool A with five wins, whilst the Unirooms reached the quarters after finishing fourth in Pool B with two wins and three losses, albeit a final pool match 22-1 trouncing of Argentina.

And that's how it panned out. Despite getting within a single goal late in the first half, the Russian's proved too strong, taking a 13-7 win to move into the semi-final.

Russia opened the scoring in the opening minute and proceeded to demonstrate why they are the favourites for the gold medal.

Opening quarter went the way of Russia, 4-1 with Julia Barton (University of Newcastle) getting the Unirooms on the board.

The Australian's played well in the 2nd, with Daisy Carter (TAFE NSW) scoring the opening two goals of the term to drag the margin back to 4-3 and the Unirooms pressing strongly to rattle the Russians who proceeded to pile on the next three goals to lead 7-3 at half time.

Russia extended the lead in the third period, with two goals to the Unirooms - Mollie Williams (Indiana University) and Carter - to trail 11-5 at the final break.

Ruth McClean (Australian Catholic University) opened the scoring in the final term, but the Russians were too strong.

"They definitely up for the game and I think in all aspects they did everything at a higher standard than we did today," Casey said after the match.

"We got the momentum in the second but they came back at us harder and fastest and after that we couldn't match them."

"When you lose a quarter you are always disappointed because you're out of the top four but now our aim is to get to that 5th and 6th match as we want to come as high as we can, so we're very determined."

The Unirooms head to the 5-8 place classification on Sunday as the men continue their 9th-12th classification matches v USA.

Table Tennis - It was a big day for our table tennis players who returned to the tables after kicking off their competition yesterday, with the Unirooms winning four of their eight encounters at Xinzhuang Gymnasium.

Kane Townsend (The University of Sydney) and Jake Duffy (The University of Queensland) led the way for the Australians both winning their men's singles clashes 3-0 over Jit Tay from Singapore and Lars Banning from The Netherlands respectively.

Erny Tsao (University of New South Wales) won his encounter over Chak Kou (Macau) 3-2, while Sarah Tan (The University of Sydney) fell to Gaukhar Almagambetova (KAZ) in her first contest of the day 3-1, but found her way to the winners list soon after, defeating Marion Tamm (EST) 3-0.

Rossalean To (Monash University) lost to Chloe Thomas of Great Britain while Antong Zhang (Macquarie University) put up a fight with Nai Jiang of New Zealand, but lost the match 3-2.

Wushu – Curtin University Bachelor of Health, Safety and Environment student Joshua Lim was the first of the Australians to compete in the Wushu in the Pool rounds of Taijijian. Wushu is a martial art and a full-contact sport derived from traditional Chinese martial arts. Competitive wushu is composed of two disciplines: Taolu or forms and Sanda or sparing/fighting. Lim finished in 11th place with a score of 8.25.

Tennis - Australian tennis player Nick Horton (The University of Texas) was forced to retire out of his third-round consolation match against New Zealander Matthew Alexander.

Diving - Nicholas Jeffree (University of Technology Sydney) lined up on the 10m Platform preliminaries and qualified for the semi-finals with a total of 266.50. In the semi's he found the going tough to place 17th with 310.70 points.