

Table of Contents / Table des matières

Perfection within reach; Ottawa's Beres needs two wins to make Pan Am Games history
(The Ottawa Citizen, 2007.07.19, page: B1 / FRONT , Martin Cleary; With files from).....1/2

Perfection within reach; Ottawa's Beres needs two wins to make Pan Am Games history

(The Ottawa Citizen, 2007.07.19, page: B1 / FRONT ,
Martin Cleary; With files from)

Ottawa's Mike Beres is two victories from writing Pan Am Games history, but he doesn't want to think about it.

On a day when Ottawa–Gatineau athletes secured five medals, the RA Badminton Club athlete found himself in line to become the first male badminton player to win the maximum three gold medals in one Games after capturing the men's doubles final yesterday with William Milroy of Calgary.

"I'm aware of it," an exhausted Beres said in a telephone interview yesterday.

"It's racing through my brain now, but I'm trying to forget it and stay in the present. When I think in the future, it's something that doesn't work for me.

"If I play my best, there's that possibility. I must go home, clear my mind and get rejuvenated."

Canadian Denyse Julien is the only athlete to win three badminton golds in one Games — women's singles and doubles, and mixed doubles in 1995 — and is the top medallist with five gold, two silver and one bronze.

By securing his fifth career Pan Am medal yesterday in his third Games, Beres also became the second Canadian male to win that many medals in the sport.

Iain Sydie was the Canadian record holder with five Pan Am medals (4–1–0).

Beres has two gold, one silver and two bronze, but he's scheduled to become Canada's most successful male badminton player at the Games today.

Beres, 34, could complete the unique triple gold challenge as he's slated to play in the back-to-back men's singles and mixed doubles finals in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

He also led the parade of Ottawa–Gatineau athletes yesterday to the medal podium.

Gatineau swimmer Chanelle Charron–Watson, who trains in Quebec City, had a strong opening leg in the women's 4x200–metre freestyle relay as Canada won the silver medal.

"The biggest strength for our relay was the girls came in as a team and pushed each other," she said.

Montreal's Vincent Goodfellow, a member of the Ottawa Rowing Club, sat in the No. 2 seat as Canada hung on for the bronze in the men's heavyweight four, edging Mexico by three hundredths of a second.

The Canadian men's and women's squash teams were guaranteed bronze medals even before

posting victories in last night's semifinals.

Runa Reta of Gloucester defeated Silvia Angulo 9–7, 9–1, 9–3 as Canada defeated Colombia 2–1 in its women's semi.

Robin Clarke of Kanata played in the men's semifinal, helping Canada to a 2–0 victory over Brazil. In his match, Clarke defeated Luciano Barbosa 9–5, 5–9, 9–7, 9–4.

In the men's doubles badminton final, Beres and Milroy, the second seeds, beat top-seeded Howard Bach and Bob Malaythong of the United States 2–0 (22–20, 21–13) in 31 minutes.

"When we won, the adrenaline made me feel like I was on top of the world. Now that I've calmed down, I feel completely exhausted," Beres said.

His doubles win yesterday set off ecstatic celebrations in the grandstand at the Rio Centro badminton venue — led by Mike's mother, Nancy Beres.

"I think she's jumping up and down in the crowd right now," Mike Beres told reporters at the Games.

"My wife (Jo-Anne) is probably crying, and she'll probably make me cry later."

There were plenty of Canadian tears of joy at a cluster of venues yesterday as Canada harvested 10 medals — three gold, three silver and four bronze.

The other gold medals yesterday went to swimmer Scott Dickens of Burlington, Ont., in the men's 100-metre breaststroke and fencer Philippe Beaudry of Sherbrooke, Que., who won the men's sabre event. Nicolas Mayer of Montreal took bronze in the same event.

Beres said his biggest supporter, by far, has been his mother — his father, Steve, died in 1997 — and she has the passport stamps to prove it.

Nancy Beres, Jo-Anne and various other family members are fixtures at the international events Beres has competed in, including the Sydney and Athens Olympics, world championships in Glasgow and Los Angeles, the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne and now Rio.

Also yesterday, the U.S. won the women's 4x200-metre freestyle relay gold in a Pan Am Games record 8:02.03. Charron-Watson, Elizabeth Collins of Regina, Hilary Bell of Toronto, and Stephanie Horner of Beaconsfield, Que., were second in 8:04.56, which also eclipsed the previous record of 8:05.28.

In her first major international final, Calgary-based Seanna Mitchell of Manotick placed eighth in the women's 50-metre freestyle final in 26.43.

Matt Hawes of Stittsville moved into the men's 200-metre backstroke final with the second-fastest time of 1:59.29.

ILLUSTRATION:

Colour Photo: Streeter Lecka, Getty Images / Mike Beres of the RA Badminton Club lines up a return yesterday in the men's doubles final, which he and partner William Milroy won 2–0 (22–20, 21–13) over an American team. ;