



**DO IT FOR YOURSELF,
NOT FOR THE GLORY**

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Tokyo 2020, an Olympics like no other. Postponed by a year due to the pandemic to 2021, this year's games managed to showcase the best side of humanity over those 16 days. With no fans, strict safety guidelines, the Tokyo Olympics 2020 were a testament to the resilience of us humans in the face of difficulties. Some of the key moments that stood out over these games were;

- Mutaz Barshim and Gianmarco Tamberi deciding to share the mens' high jump gold
- Siffan Hassan tripping and falling in her 1500m heat but getting back up and went on to win her heat
- A relative unknown Italian named Marcell Jacobs winning the mens' 100m final
- Simone Biles showing the importance of mental health over gold medals by pulling out of some of her competitions and many more...

A moment that stood out to me was an incident that took place towards the end of the mens' pole-vault competition. At just the age of 21, Armand Duplantis of Sweden was the favorite to win Gold. The Olympic record stood at a mere 6.03m, a record set by the Brazilian Thiago Braz, whereas the world record, a record currently held by Duplantis himself, stood at 6.18m. He achieved this feat in February 2020 when he broke a record that had stood strong for almost 26 years. Therefore, it came as no surprise when Duplantis secured his gold medal by clearing a height of 6.02m in his first attempt.

Now that the gold medal has been secured is generally when the gold medalist attempts the higher heights, in an attempt to break a few records.

As things currently stood, Armand Duplantis – cleared a height of 6.02m; the Olympic record – stood at 6.03m. A difference of just 1cm. It seemed obvious that as things stood, Duplantis will soon be able to have his name written in not only the world record books, but on the Olympic record books as well. But instead of attempting the easier 6.04m first and securing the Olympic record to his name as well, Duplantis attempted the much riskier 6.19m, going straight for his Personal best. At the time, this move baffled me because why would he attempt something risky and potentially throw away the opportunity to hold both the world and the Olympic records at the same time?

But what really is the point of breaking the Olympic record with a smaller height when you know you have the potential to jump much higher? A record is just something that brings you glory, however performing better than you did yesterday, performing at your personal best brings much more genuine satisfaction. Duplantis didn't manage to clear the height of 6.19m that day, but it was never in doubt that he was worthy of holding that Olympic record.

And although Duplantis didn't improve on his personal best that day, Christopher Nilsen, the silver medalist did. The height he cleared - 5.97m, was his personal best. And in many ways, Nilsen's performance that day was much, much more special than Duplantis's. He jumped the best he had ever jumped at a competition.

Sometimes, we tend to focus just on the glory. The world tries to indicate that life is a competition, that the only winners in life are the best of the best, that no matter how much effort you put into something, if you're not one of the best at doing it, it doesn't really matter, that you're a failure. But what is the value of glory if there is no personal growth? What is more important is to forget about the glory and focus on becoming the best version of one's self day in, day out, just as all Olympians, including Nilsen and Duplantis strive to be.



Christopher Nilsen



Armand Duplanti