



TOKYO 2020

TOKYO 2020

TOKYO 2020 ONE

LEBANESE ATHLETICS' EVOLUTION
2016-2019

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Ph.D., OLY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

An architect by training and an alumnus of the School of Architecture of Alba with a Master's degree in Civil Engineering from CHEBAP, Paris - France, and a Ph.D. from Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania - USA, in steel structure, Dr. Gaby Issa-El-Khoury has always had two passions: teaching structure to student architects, and athletics, as both an athlete and a coach. He held the Lebanese Record in long jump from 1982 until 2004 and currently still holds the indoor record with his best jump at 7m41. He participated in the Olympic Games in Los Angeles, LA84.

He studied athletics and followed training courses with the French Athletics Federation, World Athletics (formerly IAAF) and the American Athletics Federation, USATF.

Previously, he had coached the CAEJ, *Club des Anciens Elèves de Jamhour*, and currently coaches the Blue Stars Sporting Club, AUB varsity team, and the Lebanese Army Elite Athletics Team.

Dr. Issa-El-Khoury also created a new concept in athletics: National Athletics Performance Level Estimation, NAPLES, for all track and field events. Working closely with Dr. Chafic Mokbel, a Telecom engineer from Paris, he developed this statistical process and applied it to Lebanon, France, Jamaica, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, with the results being published in the USJ conference paper in November 2021.

The author's first book, *Rio 2016*, studies current Lebanese athletes, and those that have represented the country in athletics at the Olympic Games since 1960. Currently, the author is tackling the evolution of Lebanese athletics and athletes during the Olympiad that preceded Tokyo 2020, including the years 2016 to 2019, along with notable events in 2021 that led up to the Olympics, because the 2020 Olympic Games were held in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is important to note that nothing worth mentioning took place in 2020 because of the numerous lockdowns in Lebanon.



Gaby Issa-El-Khoury Ph.D., OLY (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)



MOT DU DOYEN

Depuis sa création en 1943, l'Alba s'est toujours fait un point d'honneur de rester à la pointe de l'enseignement des Beaux-arts. Innovant sans cesse, développant de nouvelles formations en adéquation avec les évolutions de la société et du monde de la culture, analysant les besoins des acteurs culturels, répondant à la demande sans cesse en mouvement des différents marchés du travail, l'Alba a toujours été réactive, efficace et entreprenante.

L'institution est ainsi très vite devenue une référence, et un acteur académique incontournable dont la réputation, portée par ses diplômé(e)s, a traversé les frontières du Liban pour rayonner de par le vaste monde.

Cette réalité dont je suis évidemment très fier, est le fruit du travail acharné de nos enseignants qui, sans relâche, ont œuvré à la transmission d'un savoir artistique à la fois théorique et pratique de qualité, tous pédagogues hors pair qui ont ouvert la voie à l'expression des talents infinis de générations d'étudiants. Qu'ils en soient ici remerciés.

Mais il faut souligner aussi, au crédit de l'Alba, son implication continue au sein des problématiques nationales, son engagement permanent au cœur des différents échelons de la société et des institutions étatiques, au service d'une certaine idée du Liban, ce «pays-message» si bien décrit par le regretté Jean-Paul II.

Cette mission sacrée, nous l'avons ancrée dans nos principes d'enseignement, de façon à ce que s'en imprègnent nos étudiants, et qu'elle devienne également la leur, tout au long de leur vie.

Dans le corpus des valeurs que nous défendons depuis toujours, il en est une qui sonne comme une évidence, mais qui mérite pourtant d'être ici rappelée : « un esprit sain dans un corps sain ».

A l'Alba, nous savons combien le sport est essentiel, combien il est fédérateur, et combien il véhicule d'éléments formateurs pour l'esprit, avant même le corps.

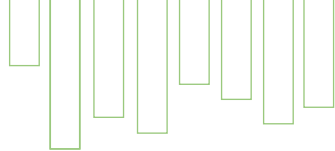
Dr. Gaby Issa-El-Khoury, architecte diplômé de l'Alba, et qui y enseigne depuis de longues années, est lui-même un athlète de haut niveau : fort de ce qui précède plus haut, et parallèlement à sa carrière d'architecte et d'enseignant, il porte haut le flambeau de l'athlétisme libanais, et nous livre dans les pages qui suivent, un précieux document de référence, pour éclairer les arcanes de ce sport d'excellence sur le territoire libanais.

Les éditions de l'Alba se devaient de saluer ce travail et d'œuvrer à la publication de cet ouvrage, fruit d'une longue recherche.

C'est maintenant chose faite : bonne lecture !

André Bekhazi

Doyen



DEAN'S MESSAGE

Since its creation in 1943, Alba has always made it a point of honor to remain at the forefront of Fine Arts education. Constantly innovating, developing new training programs in line with the evolution of society and the world of culture, analyzing the needs of cultural actors, responding to the ever-changing demands of the various job markets, Alba has always been reactive, efficient and enterprising.

The institution has thus very quickly become a reference, and an unavoidable academic actor whose reputation, carried by its graduates, has crossed the borders of Lebanon to radiate throughout the world.

This reality, of which I am obviously very proud, is the fruit of the relentless work of our professors who, without respite, have worked at transmitting an artistic knowledge both theoretical and practical of quality, all outstanding pedagogues who have opened the way to the expression of the infinite talents of generations of students. May they be thanked here.

But we must also underline, to Alba's credit, its continuous involvement in national issues, its permanent commitment at the heart of the different levels of society and state institutions, in the service of a certain idea of Lebanon, this "country-message" so well described by the late John Paul II.

We have anchored this sacred mission in our teaching principles, so that our students will be imbued with it, and it will become theirs throughout their lives.

In the corpus of values that we have always defended, there is one that sounds like an obvious one, but which deserves to be reminded here: "Men's sana in corpore sano" (a healthy mind in a healthy body).

At Alba, we know how essential sport is, how much it federates, and how much it conveys formative elements for the mind, even before the body.

Dr. Gaby Issa-El-Khoury, an architect graduated from Alba, and who has been teaching there for many years, is himself a high level athlete: on the strength of the above, and in parallel to his career as an architect and professor, he carries high the torch of Lebanese athletics, and delivers to us in the following pages, a precious reference document, to shed light on the arcane of this sport of excellence on the Lebanese territory.

The Alba editions had to salute this project and to work for the publication of this book, fruit of a long research.

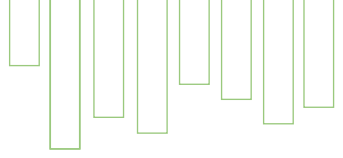
It is now done: enjoy reading it!

André Bekhazi

Dean

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AVANT - PROPOS

Ma vie en athlétisme a toujours été une double vie. Dans un premier temps j'étais un athlète et, en tant que tel, je m'astreignais à des entraînements réguliers et à un rythme de vie assez contraignant.

Dans un deuxième temps j'étais l'entraîneur de mon club, le Club des Anciens Elèves de Jamhour, CAEJ. Je me devais donc d'écrire des programmes d'entraînements pour mes athlètes et faire le suivi de leur progression et tirer les leçons qu'il fallait pour apporter les changements et améliorations qui s'imposaient pour que mes athlètes deviennent les meilleurs au niveau national et pourquoi pas international.

J'ai commencé ma deuxième « vie » en athlétisme relativement tôt, à juste 24 ans parce que le pays était en guerre et que notre coach au CAEJ venait de quitter le pays suite à la guerre de la montagne en septembre 1983.

Après une année de coupure, le club décidait de rouvrir ses portes en août 1984, à mon retour des JO à Los Angeles, LA84. C'était un nouveau défi pour moi que je relevais bon gré mal gré, mais avec beaucoup de plaisir je devrais ajouter.

A l'époque non seulement je trouvais cette solution normale mais aussi la seule possible. Mais aujourd'hui avec le recul, je trouve qu'il y a eu deux personnes exceptionnelles qui ont permis cette nomination et qui m'ont fait une confiance absolue alors que rien ne les y préparait ou les obligeait.

Le Recteur du Collège Notre-Dame de Jamhour de l'époque, le R.P. Pierre Madet était un personnage extraordinaire, un visionnaire. Déjà la congrégation jésuite lui avait alloué une totale confiance en lui confiant les deux postes clés du Collège, le rectorat et l'intendance (d'ailleurs depuis ces deux postes ont toujours été tenus par deux personnes différentes, n'est pas Pierre Madet qui veut!).

P. Madet m'a confié l'entraînement de tous les jeunes de l'école sans aucune hésitation et m'a fortement encouragé. Avec le peu de temps qui lui restait pour s'occuper du club, il a toujours répondu présent à toutes les réunions et m'a toujours assuré de son soutien indéfectible (il voulait même nommer le sautoir de saut en longueur en mon nom !).

La deuxième personne qui m'a accordé sa confiance était le président du CAEJ de l'époque, celui qui a orchestré le renouveau du club et qui l'a propulsé au-devant de la scène nationale, Michel Tannous.

Je le dis de suite, Michel est mon beau-frère, l'époux de ma sœur, mais pour ceux qui le connaissent bien, ils savent le peu de poids que porte ce lien de parenté chez Michel, et c'est tout à son honneur.

Le souci de Michel a toujours été de prendre le club vers l'avant tout en prônant professionnalisme, intégrité et perfection.

Nous avons fait équipe 18 ans durant et nous avons mis sur pied l'athlétisme au collège et au club, en créant une structure nouvelle pour les deux entités. Et celle-ci perdure jusqu'aujourd'hui.

Mon premier livre ayant paru très peu de temps après le décès de mon papa, je n'avais pas la tête à écrire cet avant-propos, mais aujourd'hui je trouve qu'il est grand temps de rendre à César ce qui est à César et de donner le mérite de la renaissance du sport au collège à qui de droit.

À Pierre Madet et Michel Tannous, je vous dois mes carrières en athlétisme, soyez-en remerciés ici.

PS : Cet avant-propos a été écrit en français en hommage à la francophonie des deux, le Père Madet était français et un fervent défenseur de la langue de Molière, et Michel, comme tout ancien du Collège Notre-Dame de Jamhour, est un amoureux de la langue française.

Gaby Issa-El-Khoury, Ph.D., OLY

I have always led a double life in athletics. In the beginning, I was an athlete and as such, I was obliged to train regularly and to lead a rather constraining rhythm of life.

Then, I became the coach of my club, the *Club des Anciens Elèves de Jamhour*, CAEJ. Thus my responsibilities switched to writing training programs for my athletes, following up on their progress and getting the feedback to make the necessary changes and improvements for them to become the best at the national or even the international level.

I started my second "life" in athletics relatively early. When I just turned 24, I took on the responsibility of being a trainer because our coach at CAEJ had decided to leave the country following the war in the Chouf region in September 1983.

After a one-year break, the club decided to reopen its doors in August 1984, when I returned from the Olympic Games in Los Angeles, LA84. It was a new challenge for me but I took it willingly.

At the time, I not only found this solution the normal thing to do but also, the only one possible. Today, in hindsight, I find that there were two exceptional people who made this appointment possible and who had absolute confidence in me even though nothing prepared them or obliged them to do so.

The Rector of *Collège Notre-Dame de Jamhour* at the time, Reverend Father Pierre Madet, was an extraordinary person and a visionary. The Jesuit congregation had already entrusted him with the two key positions of the College, the rectorate and the superintendence (after that, these two positions have always been held by two different people, not everyone is Pierre Madet!).

He, in turn, entrusted me with training all the students without any hesitation and he strongly encouraged me. With the little time he had left to take care of the club, he was always present at all the meetings and always assured me of his unwavering support (he even wanted to name the long jump runway after me!).

The second person who put his trust in me was the president of CAEJ at the time, the one who orchestrated the revival of the club and propelled it to the forefront of the national scene, Michel Tannous.

I will say it right away, Michel is my brother-in-law, my sister's husband, but for those who know him well, they know how little weight this family link carries in Michel, and it is all to his credit.

Michel's concern has always been to take the club forward while advocating professionalism, integrity and perfection.

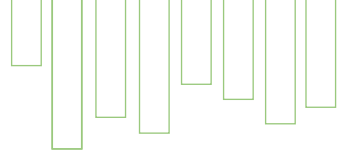
We teamed up for 18 years and built athletics at the school and the club, creating a new structure for both entities. And it continues to this day.

Since my first book was published very shortly after my dad's death, I was not in the mood to write this foreword, but today I think it is high time to give credit where credit is due and to give both of them the credit for the rebirth of athletics at the *Collège Notre-Dame de Jamhour*.

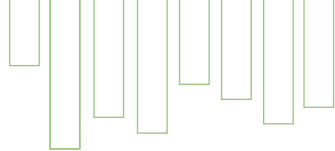
To Pierre Madet and Michel Tannous, I owe my athletic careers to you, and I thank you for that.

PS: This foreword was written in French as a tribute to both Father Madet who was French and a fervent defender of the language of Molière and Michel who, like any alumnus of *Collège Notre-Dame de Jamhour*, is a lover of the French language.

Gaby Issa-El-Khoury, Ph.D., OLY



PREFACE



This book is about Lebanese track and field, or more specifically, about Lebanese athletes. Some of you might wonder why I am writing this book, but my answer is simple, since Lebanon's induction into the Olympic Games in 1946, no one has ever covered or documented anything related to Lebanese track and field. So being a huge athletics fan, a coach, and an Olympian, I took it upon myself to keep records of all that is athletics related. Moreover, being a professor at the University of Balamand, at the *Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts*, Alba, I find it my duty to do so. Alba encourages us professors to do research on Lebanese topics, something that can be helpful to our country, so what better way to serve a national cause?

There is a lot of material and information pertaining to athletics: biomechanics, training plans, physiology, and statistics. The latter are done for European countries, Great Britain and France to name a few, or the United States of America, one of the best countries in track and field, if not the best.

But how about Lebanese athletics? Lebanon is among the developing countries, and there is almost nothing written on Lebanese athletics.

An Olympiad is the four-year period separating two consecutive Olympic Games. It has become a tradition to evaluate any sports at the end or at the beginning of an Olympiad. So, it is time to do so for Lebanese athletics.

In parallel to this study, I tackle another problem: evaluating a nation's level in any event in track and field. This is the first time that such a question is raised, and more specifically, the first time that a scientific answer is found.

I worked closely with another professor from the University of Balamand, Dr. Chafic Mokbel, to develop NAPLES (National Athletic Performance Level Estimation).

Using this new theory, I define the Lebanese level for all Olympic events in track and field (men and women) for the years 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 (only results will be shown in this book).

I sincerely hope that this work will effectively help Lebanese athletes and Lebanese sports in general.

Gaby Issa-El-Khoury, Ph.D., OLY

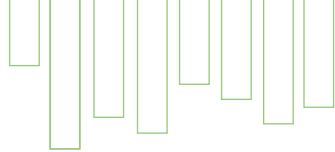
Details of the NAPLES
could be seen if you write to gissaelkhoury@alba.edu.lb

CHAPTER 1



TOKYO 2020NE

Introduction



Introduction

Tokyo 2020ne

These games will be remembered because of the two letters added after the zero. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Olympic Games were postponed for a year and were finally held between July 23, 2021 and August 8, 2021.

The end of an Olympiad, a 4-year Olympic preparatory period, is typically the best time for an evaluation of all sports. It is the time where athletes, coaches and federations try to assess a performance; whether it was a progression, a regression or a stagnation.

After the Olympics in Rio, a book where Lebanese athletes were studied and highlighted for the first time, was published. For Rio, the years examined were 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015. This book will focus on the years 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. Although an extra year was added before the Olympics, 2020's pandemic made it difficult to hold any championships and very few competitions and meetings were held in Lebanon in that year. And to be consistent with our first work, the study stopped in 2019.

Using NAPLES for all 4 years, it will be easy to visualize the evolution for each event in both the women and men's events.

Meanwhile, the rules have changed between Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020. For Rio, when an athlete was automatically qualified with his/her performance, an athlete of the opposite gender could be sent along to the Games as well. In 2016, Chirine Njeim qualified for the women's marathon, and the best male athlete, the 110m hurdler Ahmad Hazer, went along with her.

However, for Tokyo 2020, if an athlete qualifies, no other can go along, regardless of his or her gender. In case no athlete qualifies, only one can participate. Three athletes were "fighting" for this wild card spot, Chirine Njeim in the marathon, Aziza Sbaity in the 100m and Nouredine Hadid in the 200m.

Chirine raised the bar very high when she ran a new national record of 2:36:40 on the 13th of April 2021 earning 1068 points in the World Athletics scoring table. It wasn't until June 13th 2021 that Nouredine would do better with 20.83 on the 200m earning him 1093 points on the same table. Aziza, with her 11.68 on June 17th 2021 and 1056 was still behind Nouredine who was chosen to represent Lebanon at the Olympic Games in athletics.

It takes commitment and hard work to reach this level, whether it was Chirine, Aziza or Nouredine. This book is a tribute to the Lebanese athletes who train hard to qualify for the Olympic Games. It is our duty to acknowledge them and all their hard work and sacrifices, and to applaud where they are today. This book is not only about those who went to Tokyo 2020 or were on the verge of doing so, but about all Lebanese athletes who put in the same amount of work.

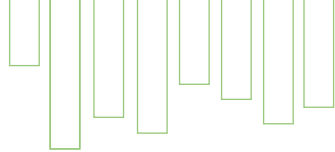
It is thanks to all those athletes that Lebanon could send Nouredine. Although he is the best, he couldn't have reached this level alone, he needed all of his track mates and opponents.

This book is about you and for you.

CHAPTER 2

ETHICS & SPORTS





2.1 Introduction

Winning has become so important that some athletes are willing to take any extra step in order to do so. That is when drugs come into the equation. Doping has been present ever since the Greek Olympiads with hallucinogenic mushrooms, but it wasn't until an athlete died at the Olympics in 1952 that it became a serious problem. The very first time the International Olympic Committee, IOC, started to examine this issue was in 1961, when a medical commission was created to analyze the use of prohibited substances.

Athletes are people we look up to. With social media nowadays, sport stars are built in a heroic manner (Lines, 2001). Thus, any flaw in these "heroes" is very badly reflected on their image and their sports.

All aspects of the champion's life are looked at. Gambling becomes a national problem when committed by a superstar. Their image could be damaged by such non-socially accepted behaviors.

Athletes using prohibited substances to win don't always behave in an unethical manner. Social pressure is such that it is no more the sole responsibility of the athlete (Connor, 2009).

Doping has always been the primary concern of the IOC and the National Federations. On the other hand, what about other non-sportsmanship attitude? Can we just ignore them because they are not doping-related?

How about the athlete's behavior off the track? Can we just ignore her/his attitude once she/he is outside the sports arena? That is where ethics comes into play.

But what is ethics? Can we define ethics?

2.2 Ethics

Aristotle states that "virtue is practical, and that the purpose of ethics is to become good".

"Simply stated, ethics refers to standards of behavior that tell us how human beings ought to act" (Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University).

In layman's terms, ethics is doing the right thing. But how can we define the "right thing?" To answer that question, it would be more helpful to state what ethics is not.

Ethics is non-religious. Even when people are not religious, ethics still applies.

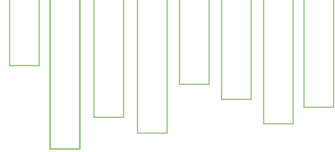
Ethics is different from the law. Sometimes laws are put to serve a political party and are thus biased.

Ethics is not science. Science can bring us data that can help us understand a situation, but science cannot teach us how to make an ethical choice.

Ethics is not the same as feelings. Sometimes we feel good even when we make a bad choice. Feelings can be trained to help us feel good when we do a good thing, however, that is not always true (Markkula Center).

Lines, G. (2001). Villains, fools or heroes? Sports stars as role models for young people. *Leisure Studies*, 20(4), 285-303.

Connor, J. (2009). Towards a sociology of drugs in sport, *Sport in Society*, 12(3), 327-328. DOI: 10.1080/17430430802673676



2.3. Coaches

Sports do not only involve athletes, there are other people involved. Coaches are a key component in the ethical behavior of all athletes. They are the “go to person” when there is a tough decision to make. They are the ones to encourage or, on the contrary, to forbid the use of prohibited substances.

The coach’s attitude towards the referee or the opponent will either encourage the athlete to behave badly or to be respectful of his opponent.

There is a difference between gamesmanship and sportsmanship. The former puts the win above any other consideration while the latter stresses on good practice and ethical involvement. In the former philosophy, there is no cheating unless you are caught doing it.

Sportsmanship promotes honesty, virtue and honor. It is the job of the coach to decide which of the two philosophies athletes are going to follow.

2.4 Athletes

If athletes only follow the ethical route, that would be enough. That is how important their behavior is. When we talk about sports, we generally talk about superstars. Their actions are always scrutinized by everyone and people look up to them and try to imitate them.

An athlete can disappoint his fans if he behaves badly during a game or a competition. Winning is what fans expect from champions, but does it have to be at all cost? Athletes can display proper leadership and behavior by competing in an honorable way, by respecting their opponents and by winning fairly. Nevertheless, they can also be honorable by losing graciously.

Fans always expect their star to win with honor. When caught cheating, this scandal will destroy both the athlete’s legacy and the betrayed fans’ devotion.

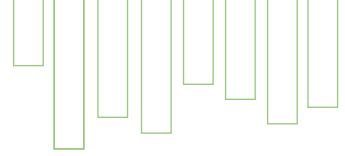
When losing to a better team, athletes should acknowledge the other team’s success by shaking hands or by having a little chat after the game. Fans will then follow in their steps.

2.5 Fans

We have already talked about fans and how they react to their champion’s attitude. Athletes are at the center of the competition, but fans have a role to play. They can either enhance the image of their team or destroy it.

Fans who deliberately yell when the opponent scores or when he/she puts on a good show, are not helping their own team, they are encouraging other fans to behave exactly like they do.

Fans and parents have shown that they are not capable of cheering for their kid’s rival. Gamesmanship philosophy can be applied to fans: winning at all cost can badly be reflected on your athletes. Is this the ethical message that we want our children to learn? Is this an honorable way to win? Shouting or cheering for your teammate is very important and encourages the athlete and creates a healthy atmosphere for that specific sport, whereas it should be done by respecting other athletes.



2.6 Ethics for all: Athletes, coaches and fans

Doping is certainly the most significant problem in ethics. The IOC created an agency to control this problem. WADA, World Anti-Doping Agency, is in charge of writing the rules and publishing all prohibited substances. This is a non-ending struggle and battle between gamesmanship and sportsmanship.

Social media plays a critical role not only in portraying super stars like heroes, but most importantly, by putting incredible pressure on them to win. Athletes are super stars only when they win! They are easily forgotten when they lose.

Moreover, it is clear that ethics is not only about doping or using prohibited substances, it is much more than that.

Ethics in sports is not only doing the right thing, but competing with honor and virtue. And it does not only apply to athletes, but also to coaches and fans. They are equally responsible for ethical behavior in the sports arena.

The star athletes are the modern "heroes" and this comes at a high price. Any flaw is scrutinized by all and is immediately posted on social media. No room for error!

Being a champion is not only winning, it is also teaching generations what honor, virtue and ethics truly are.



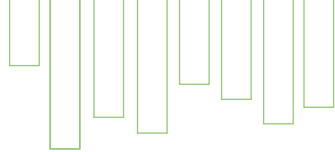
Acknowledging your opponent's good race is as important as your own performance. Nouredine Hadid (left) and Jad Khoury (right) after the 100m race (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

CHAPTER 3



SPRINTS & HURDLES MEN

100m, 200m, 400m,
110m Hurdles, & 400m Hurdles



3.1. Introduction

The sprints have always been the most popular of the men's events. We can't talk about sprints without highlighting the monumental impact Nouredine Hadid has had on them. His record-breaking spree began in 2016 when he secured the 200m Lebanese record with a 21.50 run. The year after, he broke the 100m record with 10.58, and finally, in 2019, he broke the 400m record by running 47.36. For younger athletes, holding more than one record is quite common, but on the national level it becomes rare, and so, to hold three records is just super-natural. Only one other athlete was able to do the same in 1974, Christian Turkieh.

When it comes to the 60m, the shortest sprint distance, Chris Boulos is a serious contender, whereas on the 200m, Mahmoud Daou is Nour's most consistent nemesis. In the latter distance, Nouredine excelled; not only does he hold the record, but he is the first and still the only Lebanese to break the 21 seconds barrier, running a time of 20.84s at the 2019 World Championships in Doha. It is worth mentioning that, in the finals of this championship, Nouredine missed the bronze medal by just 0.01s!

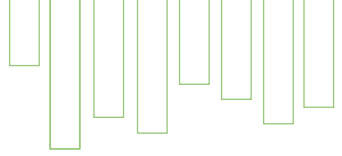
Back when the Hazer brothers were still competing, the high hurdles were definitely races that were not to be missed. Over the 110m H, Ahmad Hazer is Lebanon's best hurdler while his older brother Ali leads the 400m hurdles. Both of them hold the Lebanese records in their respective events with Ahmad clocking 14.06 back in 2011, and Ali clocking 52.95 in 2014.

Ahmad was the best athlete in 2016, thus earning him a spot at the Olympics in Rio. Shortly after, Nouredine Hadid dominated the Lebanese track and field arena, not just in the sprints, but by ranking as the number one overall athlete from 2017 onwards.

To the onlooker, Nouredine would be considered an occasional 400m runner. He ran the distance three times in 2016, once in 2018, and twice in 2019. In his second race of 2019, he cruised through a mesmerizing 400m race managing to break the Lebanese record. That's just how good he is!

Nathan Nammour, a Lebanese-American living in the United States of America, clocked 47.57 on the 400m in 2018. Had he continued to run after that, the competition between him and Nouredine would have definitely raised the level of the 400m event, and I am sure that the Lebanese record would have been even better than it is today.

As stated earlier, the hurdles were the Hazer's playground. While Ahmad's last race took place in 2019, Ali's was in 2017. Dany Bassous was the best hurdler in 2018 whereas, in 2019, it was Ayman Koubaydat. What is worth mentioning is that we have an up-and-coming hurdler, Marc-Anthony Ibrahim, who was consistently dominant over the 400m hurdles in 2021. At just the age of 18 years old, he became the first sprinter of his age category not only to qualify automatically to a World championship but to also run a semi-final in the world U20 category.



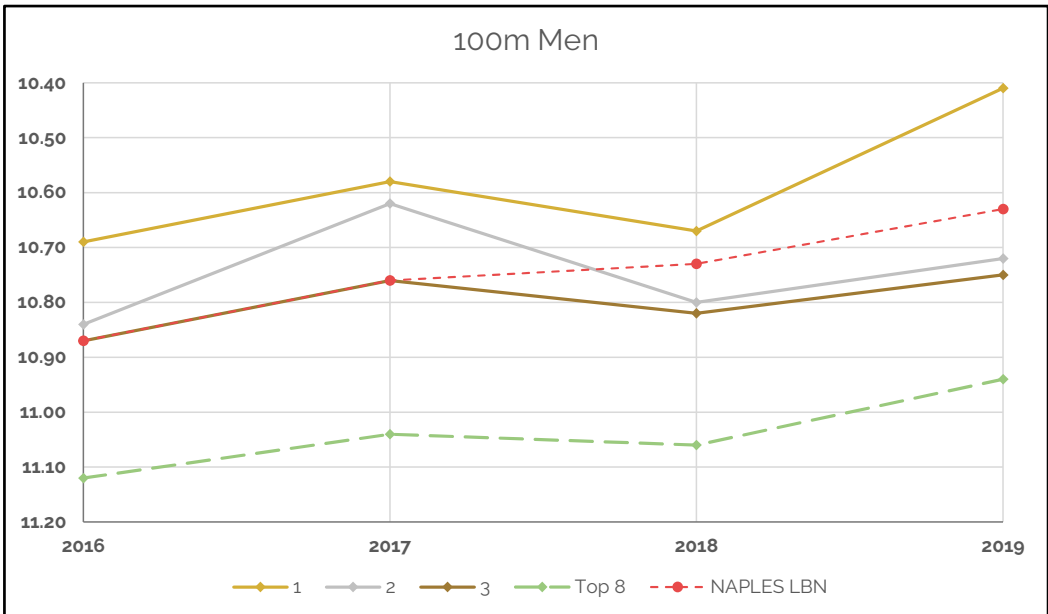
Mohamad Mortada, one of the best athletes over 200m and 400m. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)



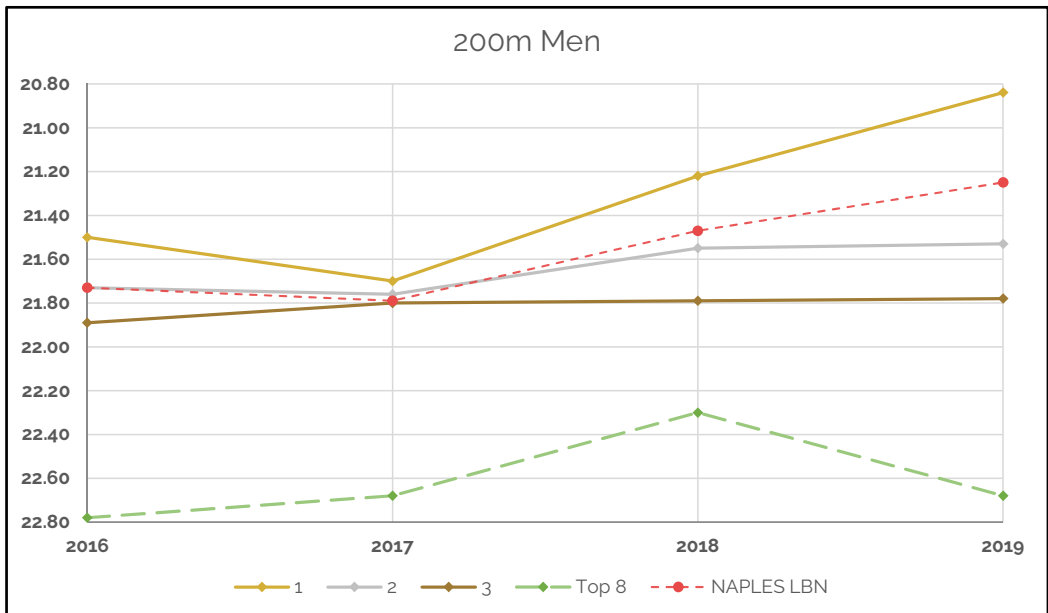
Marc-Anthony Ibrahim, the first Lebanese athlete to make it to the second round in an international competition. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

3.2. Tables & Graphs

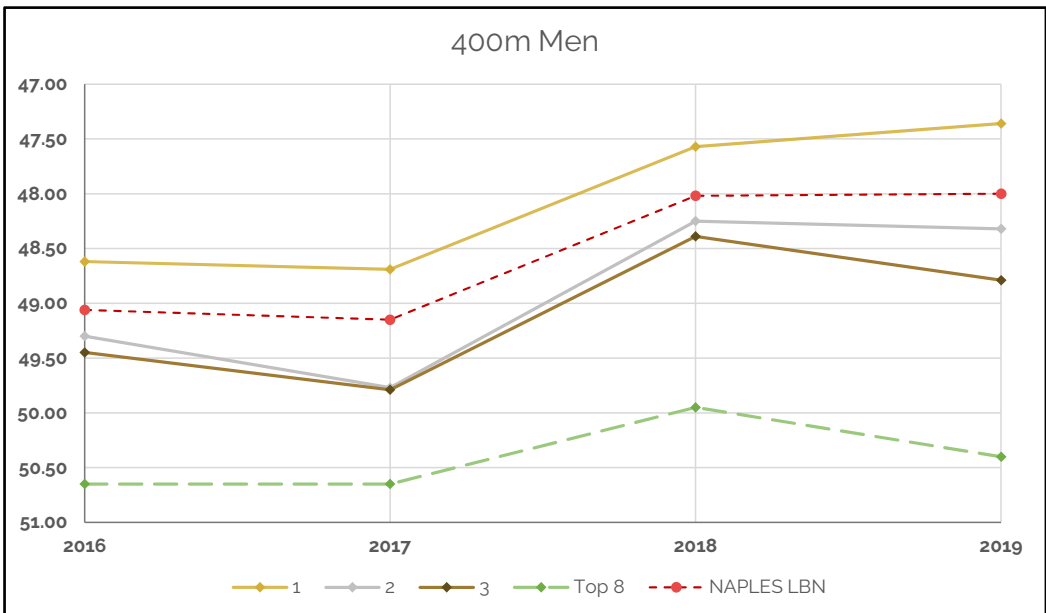
100m Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019			
1	Noureddine HADID	10.41	1	10.69	1	10.58	1	10.67	1	10.41		
2	Christophe BOULOS	10.62	4	10.95	2	10.62	2	10.80	6	10.88		
3	Mahmoud DAOU	10.72	2	10.84	5	10.88	4	10.83	2	10.72		
4	Hassan Solh	10.75								3	10.75	
5	Chadi OMEIS	10.76					3	10.76	3	10.82		
6	Hassan SALEH	10.86							7	11.01	4	10.86
7	Jad KHOURY	10.87	3	10.87	6	10.95	5	10.91	5	10.87		
8	Abdel-Rahim RAYES	10.87			4	10.87			8	10.94		
9	Hamze HASSAN	10.89	8	11.12	7	10.99	6	10.99	7	10.89		
10	Ramzi NAIM	10.99	5	10.99								
11	Hassan MANSOUR	11.04	6	11.04								
12	Anthony MIKHAEL	11.04			8	11.04						
13	Chadi FARHAT	11.06						8	11.06			
14	Raphael SAMAHA	11.09	7	11.09								
NAPLES LBN			10.87		10.76		10.73		10.63			



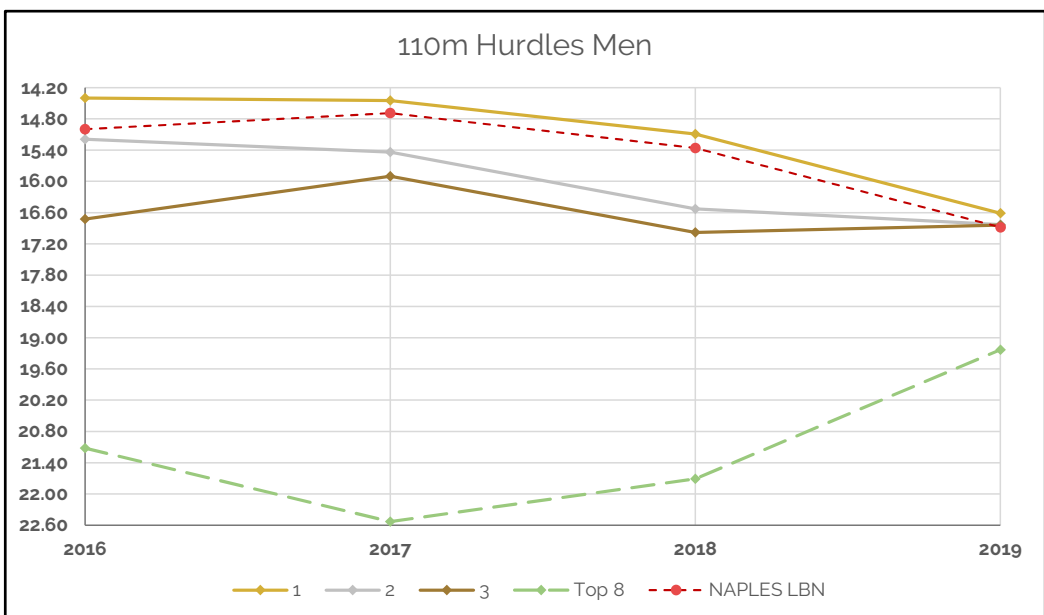
200m Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Noureddine HADID	20.84	1	21.50	2	21.76	1	21.22	1	20.84
2	Mahmoud DAOU	21.53	2	21.73	1	21.70	2	21.55	2	21.53
3	Hassan SOLH	21.78					8	22.30	3	21.78
4	Hassan MANSOUR	21.79	3	21.89	4	21.90	3	21.79	4	22.10
5	Charles KARAM	21.80			3	21.80				
6	Nathan NAMMOUR	21.88					4	21.88		
7	Christophe BOULOS	21.91	7	22.49	5	21.91	5	22.08	6	22.17
8	Ali HAZER	22.11	4	22.11						
9	Mohamad MORTADA	22.11					6	22.18	5	22.11
10	Jad KHOURY	22.15	5	22.25	6	22.15	7	22.26		
11	Raphael SAMAHA	22.44	6	22.44						
12	Abdel-Rahim RAYES	22.47							7	22.47
13	Anthony MIKHAEL	22.54			7	22.54				
14	Hamze HASSAN	22.68			8	22.68				
15	Hassan SALEH	22.68	8	22.78					8	22.68
	NAPLES LBN			21.73		21.79		21.47		21.25

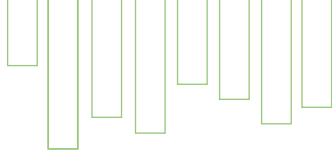


400m Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Noureddine HADID	47.36	2	49.30			2	48.25	1	47.36
2	Nathan NAMMOUR	47.57					1	47.57		
3	Mahmoud DAOU	48.32	5	49.55			5	48.66	2	48.32
4	Hassan MANSOUR	48.39	1	48.62	1	48.69	3	48.39	3	48.79
5	Mohamad MORTADA	48.60			3	49.79	4	48.60	5	49.10
6	Hussein ZAAITER	48.89							4	48.89
7	Ramzi NAIM	49.45	3	49.45	5	50.10				
8	Thomas SEMAAN	49.46	4	49.46						
9	Mohamad HANNOUF	49.77			2	49.77			7	50.37
10	Ahmad MOHSEN	49.84	6	49.98	8	50.65	6	49.84	6	50.11
11	Daniel BASSOUS	49.88	7	50.18	4	49.88				
12	Ali MORTADA	49.94					7	49.94	8	50.40
13	Malek SHATILA	49.95			7	50.49	8	49.95		
14	Charles KARAM	50.16			6	50.16				
15	Ali HAZER	50.65	8	50.65						
	NAPLES LBN			49.06		49.15		48.02		48.00

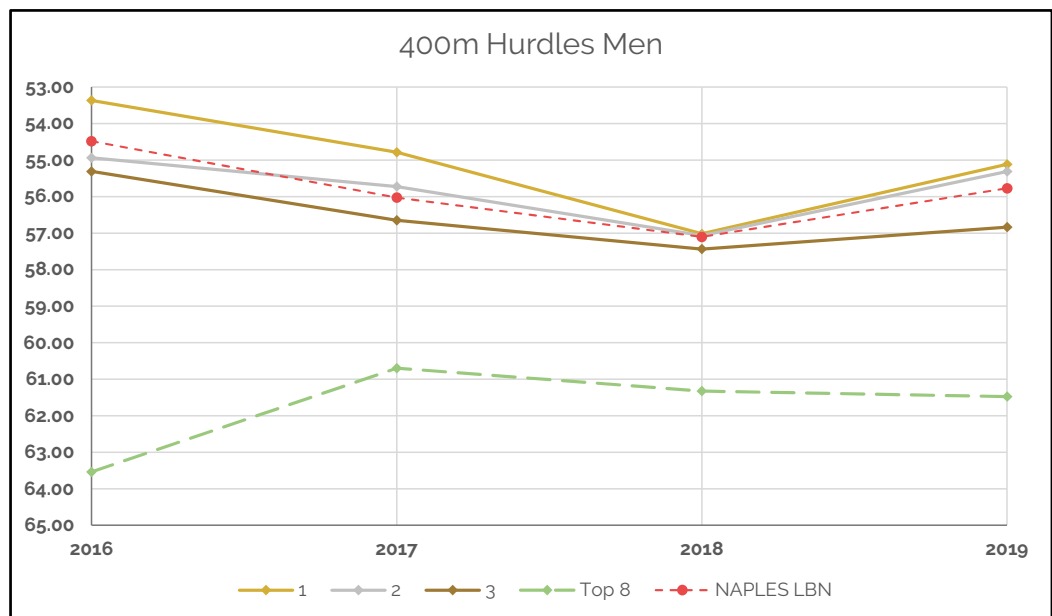


110m H Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Ahmad HAZER	14.40	1	14.40	1	14.45	1	15.09	1	16.61
2	Ali HAZER	15.19	2	15.19	2	15.44			6	19.23
3	Hussein HUSSEINI	15.90	4	17.14	3	15.90	2	16.53	3	16.84
4	Lukman KHODR	16.72	3	16.72	4	16.93				
5	Ali HACHEM	16.83							2	16.83
6	Ali JAMALEDDINE	16.86							4	16.86
7	Khaled KANAAN	16.98	5	18.87	5	17.57	3	16.98		
8	Carl LEWIS	17.62			6	17.62				
9	Ibrahim SAFADI	18.74							5	18.74
10	Khaled MANSOUR	19.47					4	19.47		
11	Christopher FADDOUL	19.51							7	19.51
12	Marc-Anthony IBRAHIM	19.63							8	19.63
13	Khaled KHALAF	19.87					5	19.87		
14	Elie DEKMARJIAN	21.12	6	21.12						
15	Hassan HAJJ	21.48					6	21.48		
16	Hamo OHAN	21.69					7	21.69		
17	Mazen CHRIM	21.71					8	21.71		
18	Marc FARTANIAN	22.48			7	22.48				
19	Jean-Pierre GERJI	22.53			8	22.53				
NAPLES LBN										
				15.00		14.69		15.36		16.88





400m H Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019		
1	Ali HAZER	53.37	1	53.37	3	56.65					
2	Daniel BASSOUS	54.79	2	54.94	1	54.79	1	57.02	2	55.31	
3	Ayman KOUBAYDAT	55.12					3	57.44	1	55.12	
4	Lukman KHODR	55.31	3	55.31	4	58.10					
5	Hussein HUSSEINI	55.73	6	59.62	2	55.73	2	57.07	6	1:00.13	
6	Marc-Anthony IBRAHIM	56.84					8	1:01.33	3	56.84	
7	Ragheb RAAD	58.67	4	59.09	6	59.09	4	58.67	5	58.91	
8	Khaled MANSOUR	58.73				5	58.73	5	59.14		
9	Christopher FADDOUL	58.73							4	58.73	
10	Ahmad HAZER	59.09	4	59.09	7	59.89					
11	Khaled KHALAF	59.30					6	59.30			
12	Mazen CHRIM	1:00.63	7	1:00.63					8	1:01.48	
13	Khaled KANAAN	1:00.70				8	1:00.70				
14	Adham DANDACH	1:01.14					7	1:01.14			
15	Kevin AOUN	1:01.46							7	1:01.46	
16	Hamoud YAACOUB	1:01.83	8	1:01.83							
NAPLES LBN				54.48		56.03		57.10		55.78	



3.3. Straight, up, or down

NAPLES values give us a clear idea about how the sprints and hurdles events evolved over this Olympiad.

It is not surprising that the 100m national level improved significantly from 10.87 to 10.63 and that is mainly due to the high level that Nouredine Hadid attained. Nouredine broke the record three times in 2019 running 10.46 in March then 10.41 twice. The result of his high-level performances directly impacted the rest of his 100m field of athletes, pulling them and motivating them to run better and faster for a chance to come even a little bit closer to him and even beat him.

Sometimes all it takes is one good athlete to raise the bar! Usain Bolt did the same for his home country and for the world level. You couldn't beat him by running an ok race, athletes had to give their all "between the lines" in order to be number one in any championship.

The 200m is Nouredine's main event, so it is almost natural to see an improvement over this distance which dropping the overall time from 21.73 to 21.25. the Lebanese level is now in the low 21 seconds! Nouredine even helped to improve the level in the 400m with his Lebanese record, thus the level went from 49.06 to 48.00.

In both hurdle events, the best Lebanese athletes, mentioned before, stopped running and thus the level went down from 15.00 to 16.88 in the 110m hurdles, and from 54.48 to 55.78 in the 400m hurdles. The same positive effect of an athlete on the national level can be seen in the negative way; when the best athlete stops competing, the level decreases. Using the same example of Usain Bolt, we can clearly see that Jamaica has lost its edge in both the 100m and 200m since the fastest man alive stopped running.



Nouredine Hadid, the best athlete in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021. He is also the first and only athlete to break the 21 second barrier in the 200m. Here in Tokyo 2020. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)



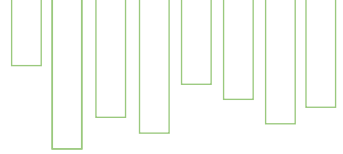
Nouredine Hadid (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

CHAPTER 4



MIDDLE DISTANCES & STEEPLECHASE MEN

800m, 1500m & 3000m Steeplechase



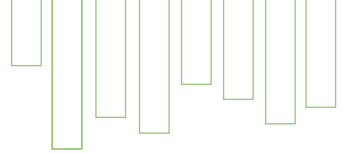
4.1 Overview

Middle distance events have recently become almost as popular as the sprints. It is thrilling for viewers to watch athletes intelligently and strategically balance between speed and endurance in races such as the 800m and the 1500m, which are short enough to be fast but too long to go all out.

In the 800m, four athletes emerge at the top of this Olympiad: Mohamad Hannouf, Peter Khoury, Hassan Caracalla and Ali Mortada. Hannouf tops the group with 1:52:15 while Ali comes in fourth place with 1:54.52. Although Mohamad Hannouf was away from the track in 2018, he was consistent in his performances: 1:52.17 in 2017 and 1:52.15 in 2019, proof of his huge potential over this distance. Peter Khoury broke the 2 minutes barrier for the first time in 2016, improving from 2:01.95 to 1:54.43 in that same year. And since then, he has been steadily improving year after year and is now, in 2019, at 1:52.83. (At the date of publication, Peter improved his PB to 1:51.74, and is considered in 2021 the best runner over 800m, Hannouf being at 1:52.09 and Mortada at 1:53.93)



Mohamad Hannouf, one of the best Lebanese 800m runners, and one of the most promising athletes over this distance. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)

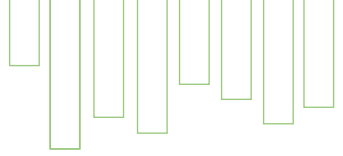


Peter Khoury and Mohamad Hannouf are also dominant in the 1500m race, where they rank first and third respectively with 3:57.53 and 3:59.06. Khaled Dennaoui comes in second place with 3:58.94. An athlete that should be mentioned is Munir Kabbara. He is an American Lebanese runner living in the United States of America and on publishing date, Munir improved the 1500m national record with 3:47.24 in 2021. This young man has the tremendous opportunity and privilege of running in the NCAA program. American programs for sports, whether in high school or universities, are behind most Olympic medals (as an example, Anthony Conrad Nesty who won the Olympic gold medal in the 100m butterfly in Seoul 1988 for Suriname, the only gold medal for this country!).



Peter Khoury, very talented young athlete with potential to blossom in the upcoming couple of years. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

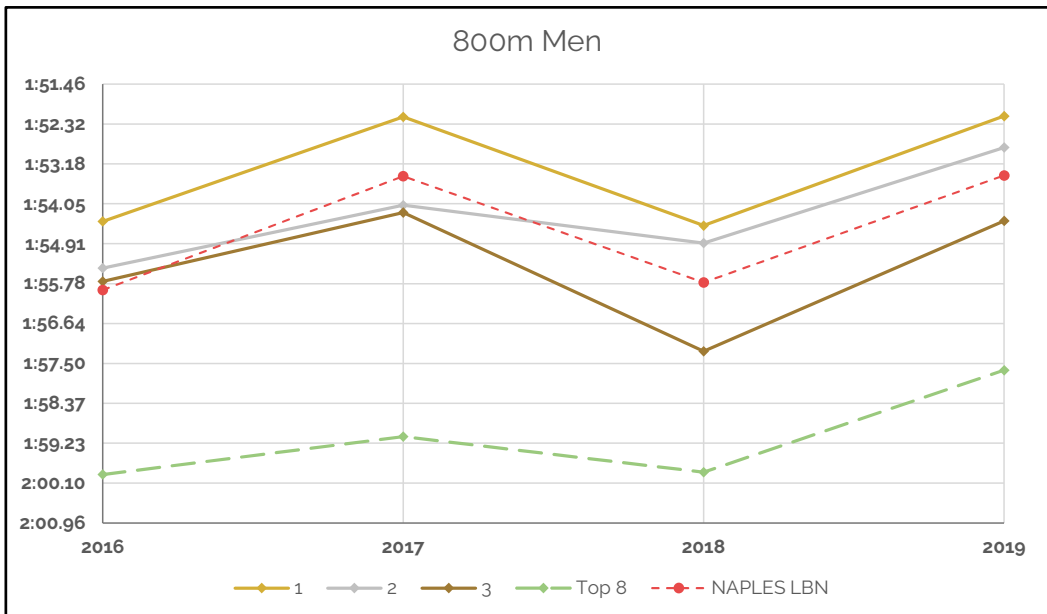
The 3000m SC is not a very popular race in Lebanon, thus it is seldom placed in meeting programs. Athletes only get to run this race mainly at the Lebanese Individual Championship and at the Club Championship. Running a race a few times per season is not the ideal way to improve performances in an event and that is exactly the problem with the steeplechase race. Ahmad Ghalia, who improved his personal best from 10:46.06 in 2010 to 9:36.76 in 2019, had been training hard to improve the national record of 9:02.73 set in 1981 but, it was Munir Kabbara who beat him to this quest. He bettered the Lebanese record running the 3000m SC in 9:00.90 in 2021 in Los Angeles, California, USA.

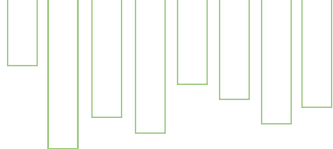


Munir Kabbara, a Lebanese-American athlete, living in the States and making the most of the NCAA program. He broke 3 Lebanese records, 1500m, 3000m SC and the 5000m in 2021. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

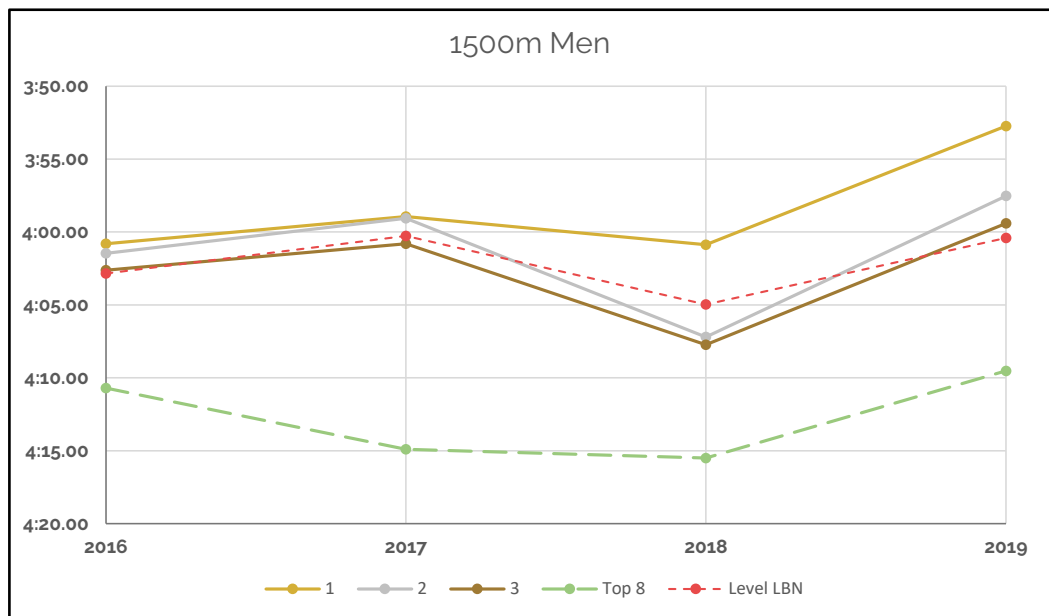
4.2. Tables & Graphs

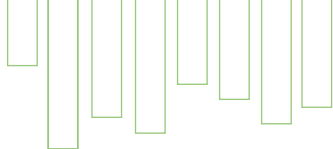
800m Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Mohamad HANNOUF	1:52.15	1	1:54.43	1	1:52.17			1	1:52.15
2	Peter KHOURY	1:52.83	2	1:55.44	3	1:54.24	2	1:54.90	2	1:52.83
3	Hassan CARACALLA	1:54.08	3	1:55.73	2	1:54.08	7	1:59.71	3	1:54.42
4	Ali MORTADA	1:54.52					1	1:54.52	4	1:55.08
5	Kamal AHMAD	1:55.51			8	1:59.09	3	1:57.24	5	1:55.51
6	Abdo HÉLOU	1:55.83	4	1:55.83	5	1:57.38			6	1:56.60
7	Ahmad ALI	1:56.25	5	1:56.25			6	1:58.89		
8	Ahmad CHOUR	1:57.08	8	1:59.91	4	1:57.08				
9	Ali IBRAHIM	1:57.65							8	1:57.65
10	Mountaser HAMIYE	1:57.65			6	1:57.71	5	1:58.75	7	1:57.65
11	Khaled DENNAOUI	1:57.86			7	1:57.86				
12	Nabih OBEID	1:57.99	6	1:57.99						
13	Ahmad MOHSEN	1:58.33					4	1:58.33		
14	Hussein KHALIFE	1:59.81	7	1:59.81						
15	Ali AHMAD	1:59.86					8	1:59.86		
	NAPLES LBN			1:55.91		1:53.45		1:55.75		1:53.43



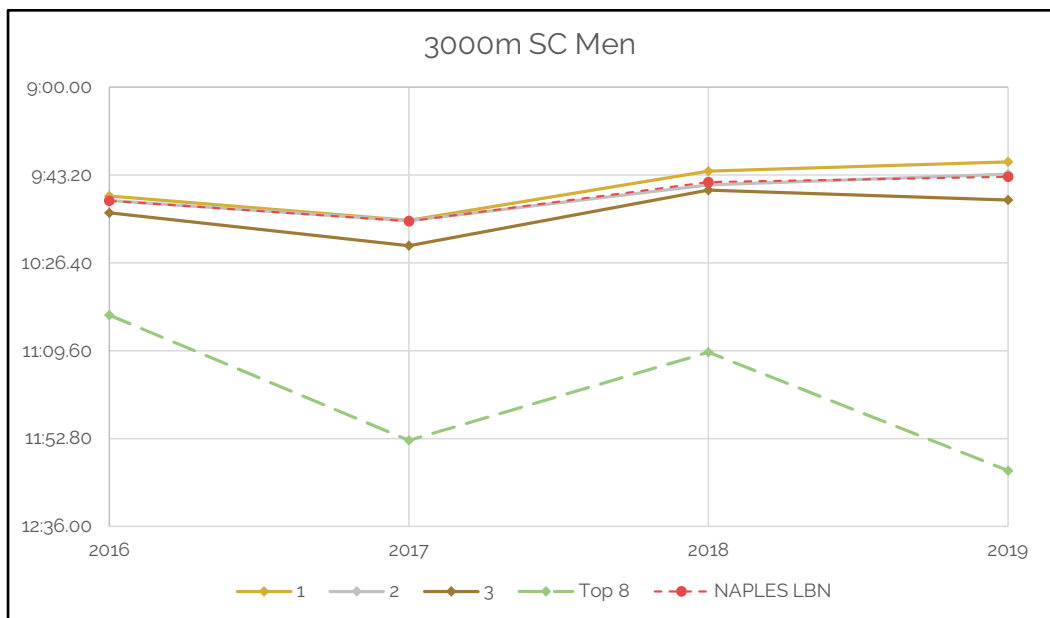


1500m Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Munir KABBARA	3:52.73	5	4:05.00					1	3:52.73
2	Peter KHOURY	3:57.53	6	4:05.54	4	4:01.60	1	4:00.87	2	3:57.53
3	Khaled DENNAOUI	3:58.94	1	4:00.81	1	3:58.94			4	4:00.70
4	Mohamad HANNOUF	3:59.06	3	4:02.61	2	3:59.06			3	3:59.41
5	Hassan CARACALLA	4:00.81			3	4:00.81	2	4:07.20		
6	Kamal AHMAD	4:01.15			8	4:14.90	5	4:08.68	5	4:01.15
7	Nassim KABBARA	4:01.46	2	4:01.46			3	4:07.73		
8	Ali SOUIDAN	4:04.98	4	4:04.98						
9	Ahmad GHALIÉ	4:06.56			6	4:09.83			6	4:06.56
10	Ali MORTADA	4:08.02					4	4:08.02	7	4:10.55
11	Abdo HÉLOU	4:08.85	7	4:08.95	5	4:08.85				
12	Mohamad HAIDAR	4:09.16					6	4:09.16		
13	Ali AHMAD	4:09.52							8	4:09.52
14	Mountaser HAMIYE	4:09.70					7	4:09.70		
15	Ahmad ALI	4:10.70	8	4:10.70						
16	Ahmad CHOUR	4:11.55			7	4:11.55				
17	Mohamad KADDOUH	4:15.50					8	4:15.50		
	NAPLES LBN			4:02.84		4:00.27		4:04.97		4:00.40





3000m SC Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Ahmad GHALIÉ	9:36.76	6	10:46.18	3	10:18.03	5	10:20.82	1	9:36.76
2	Ali SOUIDAN	9:41.36	5	10:26.04	2	10:05.74	1	9:41.36	2	9:42.79
3	Mohamad KADDOUH	9:48.03	3	10:01.88	4	10:24.72	2	9:48.03		
4	Ismat GHREIZI	9:50.65	2	09:55.77	6	11:14.60	3	9:50.65		
5	Hussein KAIS	9:53.52	1	9:53.52	1	10:05.55	4	9:54.96	4	10:03.50
6	Omar KEK	9:55.50							3	9:55.50
7	Imad JEZZINI	10:02.22	4	10:02.22						
8	Saleh ZAAITER	10:48.32	7	10:48.32						
9	Mountaser HAMIYE	10:52.14	8	10:52.14						
10	Khodr YASSINE	10:53.67					6	10:53.67		
11	Hussein KARAALI	10:53.85			8	11:53.72	7	10:53.85		
12	Hussein ZEYAT	11:01.37			5	11:01.37				
13	Zeid SAYED	11:06.22							5	11:06.22
14	Bassam HAYECK	11:10.21							6	11:10.21
15	Zein FARRAN	11:10.43			7	11:33.90	8	11:10.43		
16	Zakaria HAROUKI	11:31.15							7	11:31.15
17	Nour AJAM	12:08.55							8	12:08.55
	NAPLES LBN			9:55.91		10:05.97		9:46.78		9:44.12



4.3. Straight, up or down

Using **NAPLES** values, it is clear that all three events improved over this Olympiad. The 800m started at 1:55.91 and ended at 1:53.43, while the 1500m went from 4:02.84 to 4:00.40. Both events saw their national level improving by a bit more than 2 seconds showing good progressions over these distances.

Despite the fact that this event is not frequently put in meetings, the NAPLES value of the 3000m steeplechase improved from 9:55.91 to 9:44.12 which is almost a 10 second progression. There is a direct correlation between the results of the 5000m and the 3000m. The steeplechase seems to be an added challenge that somehow excites the athletes. The improvement that we have witnessed in the 3000m SC can be partly explained by the progression in the 5000m.



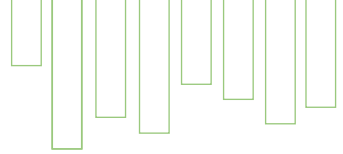
3000m Steeplechase men during the Lebanese Open Clubs Championship.
(Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

CHAPTER 5



LONG DISTANCE & MARATHON MEN

5000m, 10 000m & Marathon



5.1. Overview

Long distance has always been an army specialty. No one could beat them at these distances, that is, until Nader Jaber.

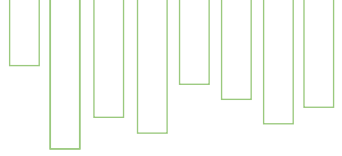
Nader dominated both the 5000m and the 10 000m for the duration of all this Olympiad. He remained the top athlete in both distances and thanks to him the level in Lebanon improved. On a side note, Nassim Kabbara was able to beat him only once in the 5000m in 2018.



Nader Jaber, best athlete in this Olympiad over the long distance races on track, specifically 5000m and 10 000m. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)

The Awada family considers long distance running a family matter. Hussein, the uncle, is the marathon record holder whereas Bilal, his nephew, is a serious contender to take over his crown. He is already better than Hussein in the 5000m but still has some work to do in the 10 000m.

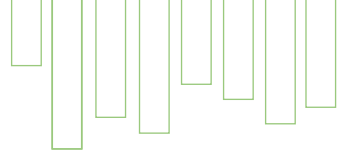
In the marathon, Hussein Awada, with his national record at 2:20:31 took Lebanon to a very different level in the event. Although during this Olympiad he “only” managed to run a time of 2:30:03, no one even came close to defeating him during this period.



Hussein Awada, Record holder of the marathon with an exceptional time of 2:20:31. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)



Bilal Awada, nephew of Hussein, will he break the marathon record? He has all it takes to do so. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)



What has changed this time around, i.e in 2021, is the leadership over the long-distance events. This year, Bilal Awada managed to run faster than his uncle, the previous leader Hussein Awada, in the marathon. On the other hand, Tony Hanna who happens to be in the top 8 of the 5000, the 10 000m and the marathon, has won a half-marathon race and a 10k race that same year 2021.

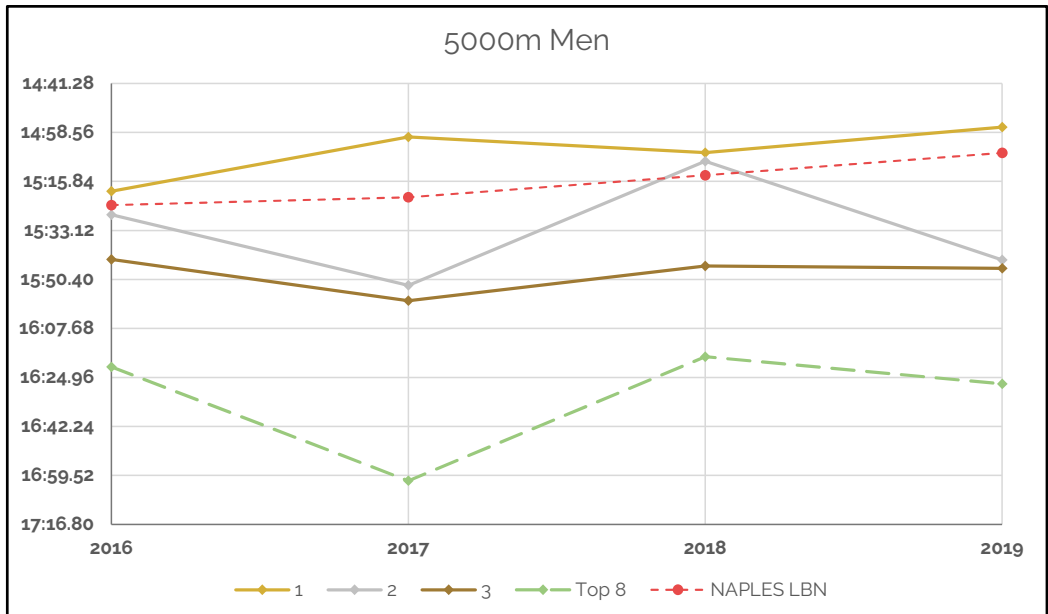


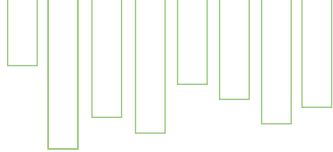
Tony Hanna, was always in the top 8 in the long distance events. In 2021 he improved to be the best over the long distances events. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)

It is also worth highlighting Munir Kabbara's record of 14:33.3 on the 5000m which he ran in 2021. With three national records under his belt, Munir seems to be the leader of Lebanese distances from the 1500m to the 5000m including the steeplechase.

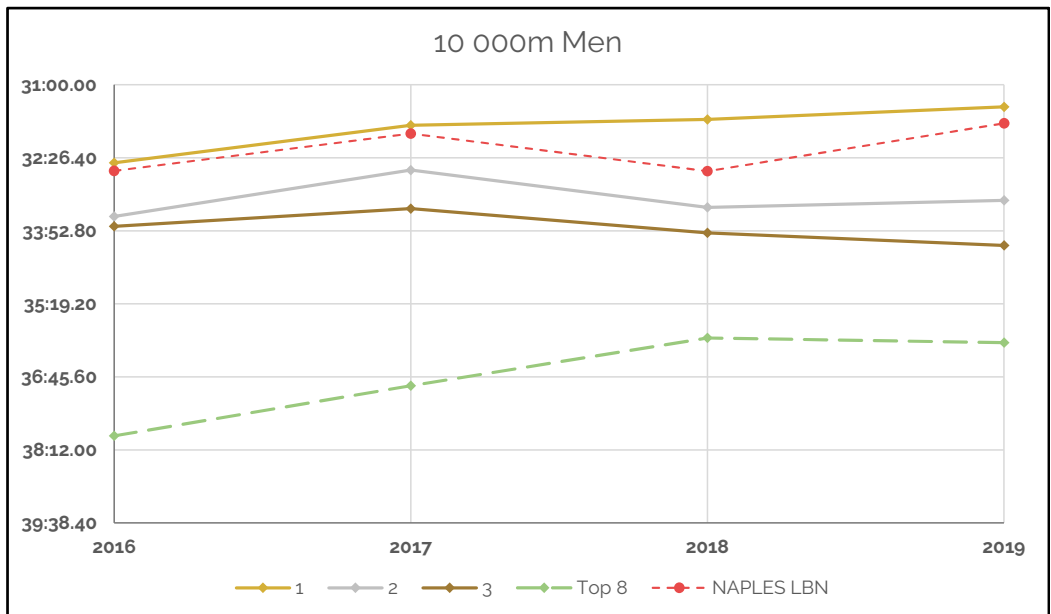
5.2. Tables & Graphs

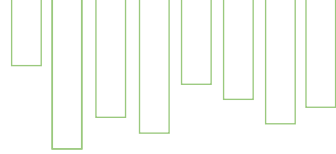
5000m Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Nader JABER	14:56.69	1	15:19.30	1	15:00.16	2	15:08.72	1	14:56.69
2	Nassim KABBARA	15:05.67	6	16:07.82			1	15:05.67		
3	Bilal AWADA	15:27.64	2	15:27.64	2	15:52.48	6	16:00.00	4	15:46.47
4	Zaher ZEINEDDINE	15:43.34	3	15:43.34			3	15:45.70	2	15:43.52
5	Wael NADER	15:46.70							3	15:46.70
6	Tony HANNA	15:52.07							5	15:52.07
7	Darwich HADID	15:53.15	8	16:21.24	4	16:17.45	4	15:47.23	6	15:53.15
8	Imad JEZZINI	15:54.04	4	15:54.04						
9	Nour SOBH	15:55.40					5	15:55.40		
10	Hussein AWADA	15:57.38	5	15:57.38	6	16:38.39	7	16:03.69		
11	Omar ABOU-AHMAD	15:57.93			3	15:57.93				
12	Nicolas MARTA	16:11.78	7	16:11.78						
13	Hussein KAIS	16:16.61			5	16:28.12	8	16:16.61		
14	Mohamad GHALI	16:20.24							7	16:20.24
15	Ali ZOUEIBY	16:27.23							8	16:27.23
16	Ismat GHREIZI	16:56.82			7	16:56.82				
17	Hussein ZEYAT	17:01.40			8	17:01.40				
	NAPLES LBN			15:24.20		15:21.48		15:13.63		15:05.79



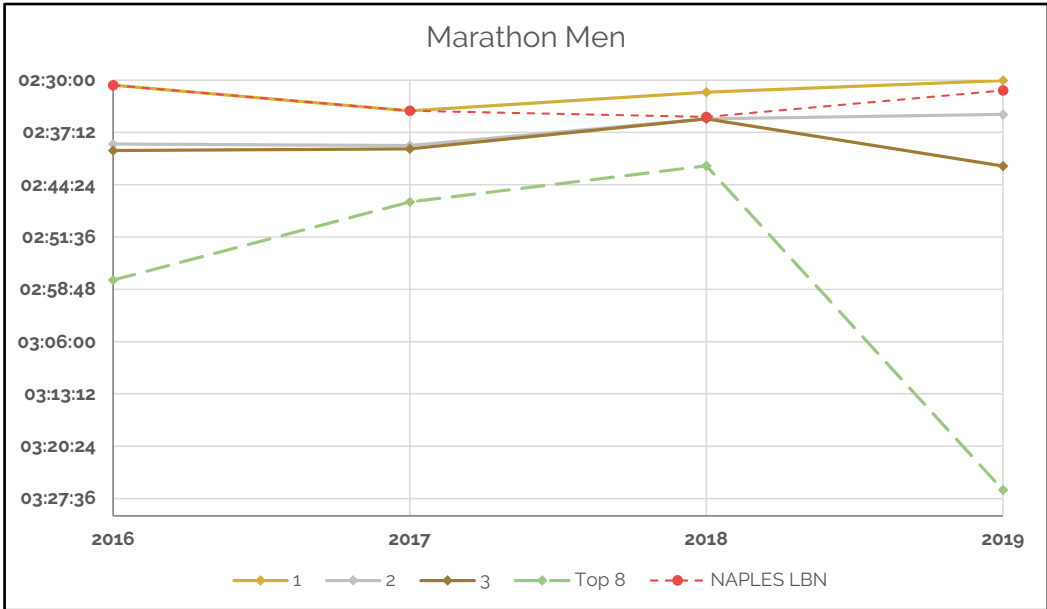
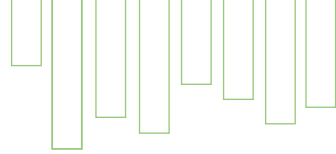


10000m Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Nader JABER	31:26.28	1	32:32.54	1	31:48.02	1	31:41.36	1	31:26.28
2	Hussein AWADA	32:41.05	2	33:35.93	2	32:41.05	2	33:25.17	6	34:45.86
3	Bilal AWADA	33:16.88	3	33:47.45	3	33:26.55			2	33:16.88
4	Omar ABOU-AHMAD	33:26.59			4	33:26.59				
5	Omar ISSA	33:29.10	4	34:02.91	5	33:29.10	3	33:55.26	5	34:44.13
6	Nour SOBH	33:59.12					4	33:59.12		
7	Darwich HADID	34:10.13	5	35:13.57			5	34:32.15	3	34:10.13
8	Tony HANNA	34:11.60					6	34:50.57	4	34:11.60
9	Daoud MOUSTAPHA	34:42.78			6	34:42.78	8	35:59.66		
10	Wael NADER	35:21.99					7	35:21.99		
11	Zaher ZEINEDDINE	35:43.49			7	35:43.49				
12	Youssef WEHBE	35:46.98							7	35:46.98
13	Khodr KHODR	36:05.30							8	36:05.30
14	Chadi HALABI	36:54.91	6	36:54.91	8	36:56.15				
15	Marwan ARABI	37:09.99	7	37:09.99						
16	Charbel MERHEB	37:55.50	8	37:55.50						
	NAPLES LBN			32:42.08		31:57.90		32:42.37		31:45.77





Marathon Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019			
1	Hussein AWADA	02:30:03	1	02:30:42	1	02:34:14	1	02:31:41	1	02:30:03		
2	Tony HANNA	02:34:44			5	02:41:51	4	02:37:38	2	02:34:44		
3	Bilal AWADA	02:35:20			4	02:41:42	2	02:35:20				
3	Zaher ZEINEDDINE	02:35:20	2	02:38:49	2	02:39:00	2	02:35:20				
5	Nicolas MARTA	02:39:27	3	02:39:42	3	02:39:27	7	02:40:57				
6	Saleh ZAAITER	02:39:42	6	02:53:17			5	02:39:42				
7	Imad JEZZINI	02:40:48					6	02:40:48				
8	Nabil TABBAL	02:41:48					8	02:41:48				
9	Youssef WEHBE	02:41:50							3	02:41:50		
10	Tarek HELAYHEL	02:44:54			6	02:44:54						
11	Khaled ALI	02:45:00			7	02:45:00						
12	Marwan ARABI	02:45:28	4	02:45:28								
13	Nader GHANAM	02:46:46			8	02:46:46						
14	Wissam YAZBECK	02:50:00	5	02:50:00								
15	Wissam KHEIR	02:50:28									4	02:50:28
16	Danny CASPRIM	02:54:20									5	02:54:20
17	Fabien KATTLUN	02:56:47	7	02:56:47								
18	Ali TAHA	02:57:32	8	02:57:32								
19	Elie HALLASSOU	03:03:29					6	03:03:29				
20	Chadi HALABI	03:04:20					7	03:04:20				
21	Adel NEHME	03:26:26					8	03:26:26				
	NAPLES LBN			02:30:42		02:34:14		02:35:04		02:31:26		



5.3. Straight, up or down

Using the **NAPLES** model to assess the national level in any event, it is made clear that the best athlete has a significant impact on a nation's performance level. Thus, when those top-level athletes stop running or when their performances drop, the level in their event tends to drop as well. Hussein Awada was the best during this Olympiad but as he was getting closer to retirement age his performances dwindled. As a consequence, the NAPLES value for the marathon decreased between 2016 and 2019.

As for the 5000m and 10 000m, Nader Jaber was adamant to beat the army squad, his hard work ethic ensured that he took the Lebanese level up with him. Looking at the numbers and graphs, it becomes clear how the first two events improved while the marathon declined.

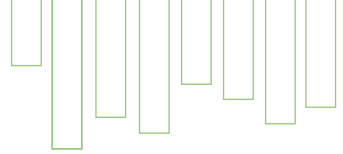
The improvement in the 5000m is close to 20 seconds, whereas in the 10 000m there is almost a one-minute improvement between the first year and the last one. In the marathon however, the level dropped by close to a minute.

CHAPTER 6



JUMPING & THROWING EVENTS MEN

High Jump, Long Jump & Triple Jump
Shot Put, Discus Throw, Hammer Throw
& Javelin Throw



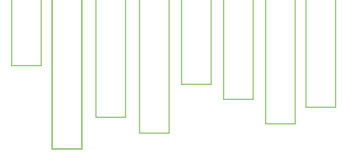
6.1. Overview Jumping events

We will start our jumping analysis with the high jump. Lebanon's all-time best athlete, Jean-Claude Rabbath, was the first to jump higher than 2m whilst he was still in the U20 category, breaking both the national record and the U20 record with a jump of 2.06m in 1996. So, in 2017, when I saw Georges Ghafary attempting a jump at 2.07m, I was very surprised to see someone trying to better Jean-Claude U20's record. And he did it! He broke the U20 record that had stood for 21 years. He later went on to jump even higher in 2018 when he jumped 2.08m in Wisconsin, USA. After Jean-Claude retired, only Georges was able to jump over 2m. No one else could do it since, and today, in 2021, there is no jumper close to 2m.



Georges Ghafary did the unthinkable and broke the U20 Lebanese record in the High Jump which was held by no other than Jean-Claude Rabbath. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)

The next event I will assess is the pole vault. Sadly, not one athlete specialized in this beautiful event that mixes both the athleticism of track athletes with that of gymnasts. In addition to being a challenging sport, it is one that requires one's own equipment, mainly a vault that is personalized according to an athlete's level and weight. This could be one of the main reasons behind the total absence of this event in Lebanon.



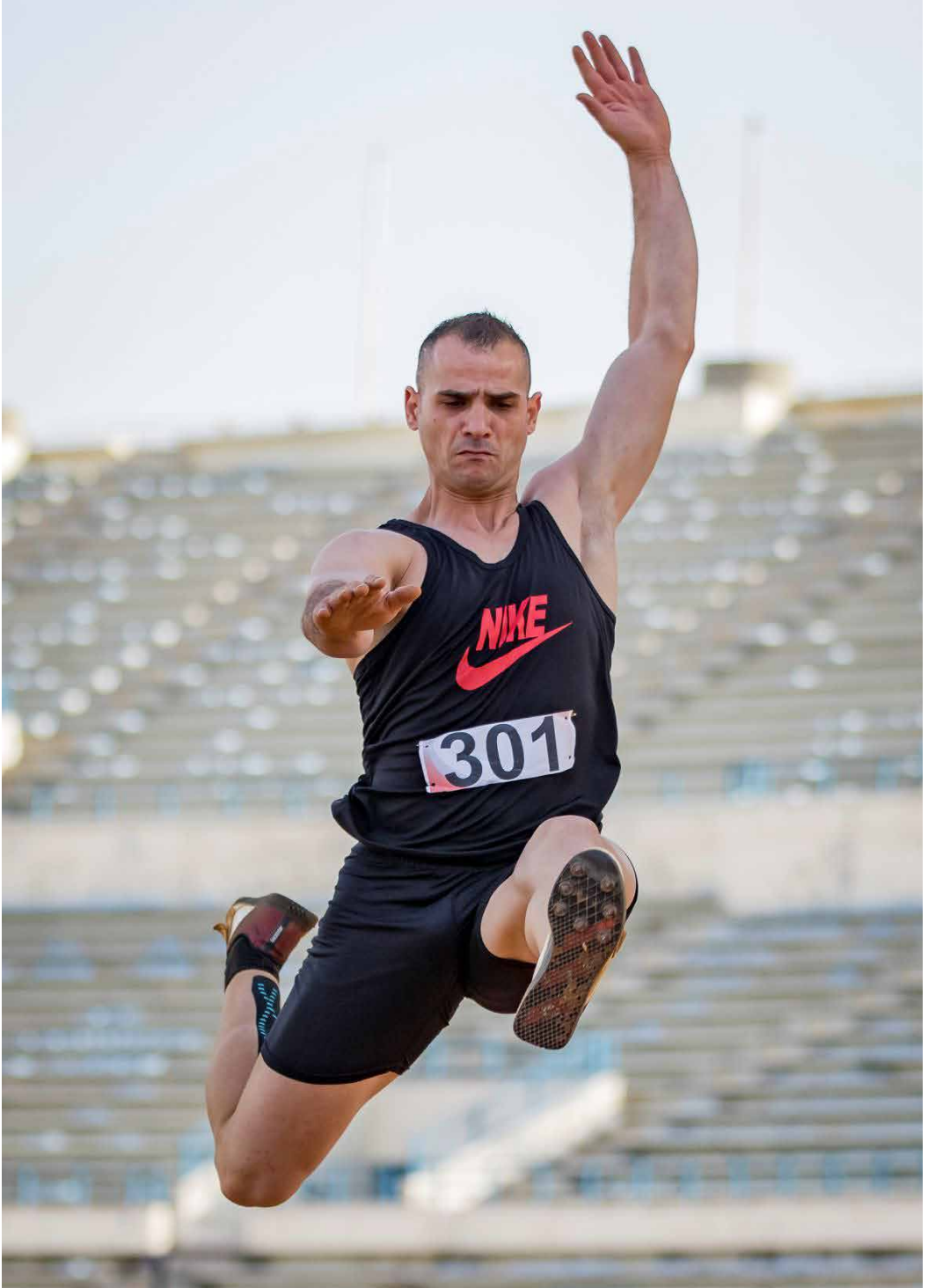
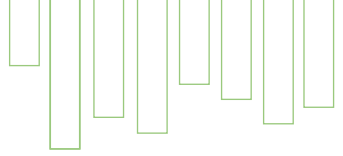
On the other hand, long jump is the most popular jumps event in Lebanon, where almost every meeting has a long jump contest for both men and women. This event had to wait till 2019 to have a clear leader, Serge Artoun, who jumped a distance of 7.12m. 7 meters jumpers are rare in Lebanon and there are only a handful of them. If we go back to the first Lebanese record beyond the 7m mark, we have to go back to 1975 when Elie Sfeir jumped 7.17m. In 1982 Gaby Issa-El-Khoury bettered that record with a jump of 7.24m. Issa-El-Khoury improved the record to a 7.41m indoor jump in 1984 and it wasn't until 2004 that Marc Habib beat it with a jump of 7.43m. Prior to Marc, only one athlete could jump 7.02m in the early 2000s, Naji Majdalani. After Habib, Fouad Younan jumped 7.03 in 2003, then Mohamad Traije went over 7m with 7m10, in 2012, and now Artoun is at 7.12m.



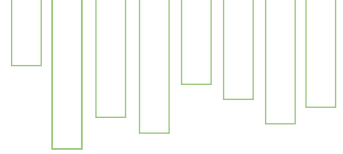
Serge Artoun worked his way to the first place in the long jump. Best jumper since 2018, he went beyond the 7m mark in 2019. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)

There is an almost perfect correlation between the long jump and the triple jump in Lebanon. So, it is perfectly normal to see the same names in both horizontal jumps. But in the latter jump, the Hanna brothers were a great addition to the Lebanese team. Unfortunately, both of them chose to compete for Canada instead: the older one, Patrick in 2015, and the younger one, Frederic, in 2018. Thus, only Frederic is present in this Olympiad with a personal best of 14.41m. Serge Artoun did better in 2019 with a jump at 14.49m taking the lead in this event too. Ra'fat Matar is third behind Artoun at 14.34m.

Ra'fat Matar and Hadi Ismail are the closest two contenders in the long jump but are not yet at 7m.



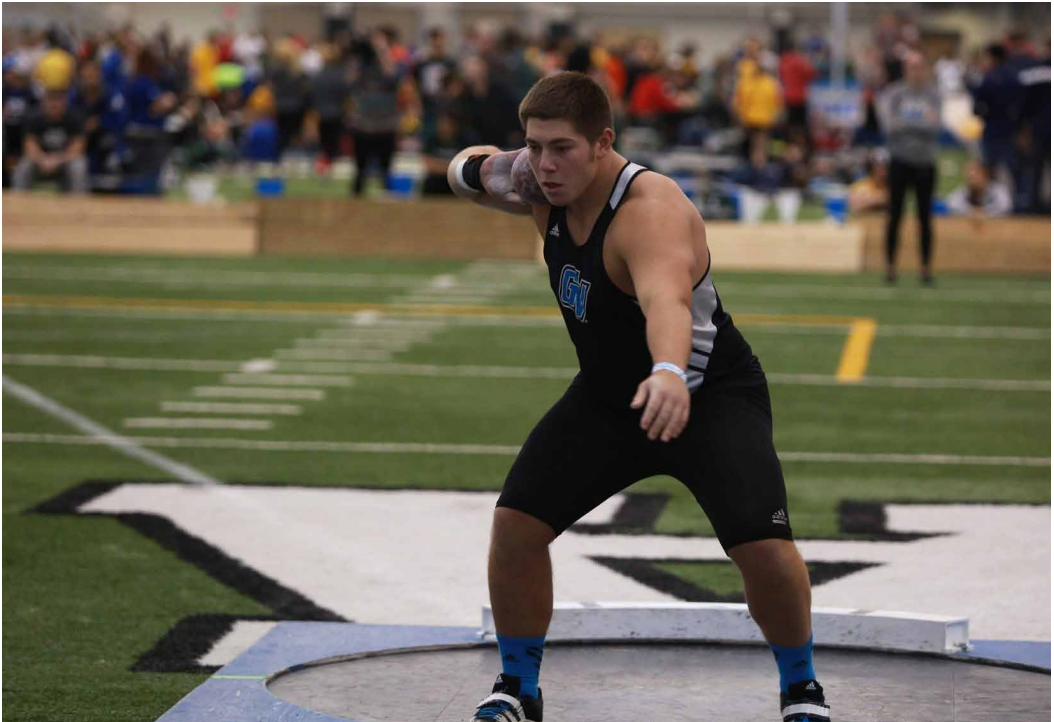
Ra'fat Matar, a very good triple jumper during this Olympiad. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)



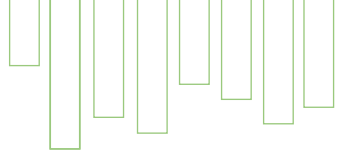
6.2. Overview Throwing events

Of the four throwing events the shot put is the most popular, at least that was the case in this Olympiad. Basically, there is a reason for that: it is easier to set the field for a shot-put contest than it is for the longer throwing events. Discus, hammer, and javelin throws are not only long throws but the implements used can damage the soil where they land, especially the hammer. As for the javelin, special care should be taken due to the risk it presents for referees and other athletes present on the field.

In 2016, Christopher Saikalis, a young American Lebanese thrower living in the United States, visited Lebanon for the first time and participated in the shot-put event at the Lebanese championship. This young man was able to throw a shot at 17.51m making him the first thrower to go beyond 17.50m in a Lebanese championship. Before him, Badri Obeid was the first thrower in Lebanon to cross the 17m mark. Christopher holds the Lebanese record with a performance of 18.00m which he did in 2016 in the United States of America. The next generation is not even close yet; no one has been able to throw better than 15m! It is about time to go beyond 15m, beyond 16m, and then beyond 17m.



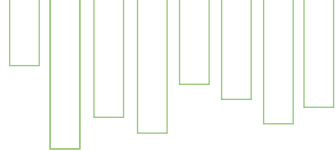
Christopher Saikalis, another Lebanese-American living in the States making the most of the NCAA program. He is the first and the only Lebanese to break the 18m mark.



Badri Obeid, the best Lebanese shot putter for many years. He lost his first place and national record to Christopher Saikalis. Now he leads again the shot put top 10. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)



Rami Mansour is today the best Lebanese discus thrower. He has a chance to beat Georges Hachem's record in this event. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)



In the discus throw, though he is still far from Georges Hachem's record of 54.15m set in 2004, Rami Mansour is the best athlete with a personal best of 48.34m. There are two other athletes who were able to go beyond 44m, Badri Obeid with 44.75m and Joseph Ghafary with 44.20m.

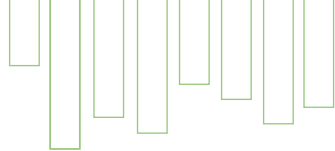


AB Shaheen, Lebanese record holder of the Hammer Throw. He lives in the States and is the only thrower to throw above 51m. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)

The hammer throw is the least popular of the throwing events. Afif Boutros held the Lebanese record for 35 years with his throw of 48.46m set in 1965. Thirty-five years later, in 2000, Victor Hajj-Moussa then managed to break this record with 50.19m. It wasn't until 2010 that the first Lebanese went beyond the 51m mark. AB Shaheen, a Lebanese American residing in the United States, started his quest with a record of 52.98 in 2010 to later reach 58.41m in 2013. After that Shaheen disappeared for 5 years and resurfaced in 2018 and 2019 to throw 56.36m. The closest athlete behind him is below 40m.

Three names come to mind when talking about Javelin Throwing: Abdel-Rahman Hallani, Nabil Akoumi and Adham Darkoub. All of these throwers are above 50m throwers, with throws of 59.01m, 57.90m, and 52.34m respectively.

In this event, the first place was always shared between Hallani and Akoumi. This mini contest between them did a great good for the event and the performances for both went up in this event starting 2018 when Akoumi joined. It would be an incomplete study if we just look at 2019 without taking into account 2021, the year Akoumi became the only thrower to go beyond the 60m mark with a throw of 61.36m.



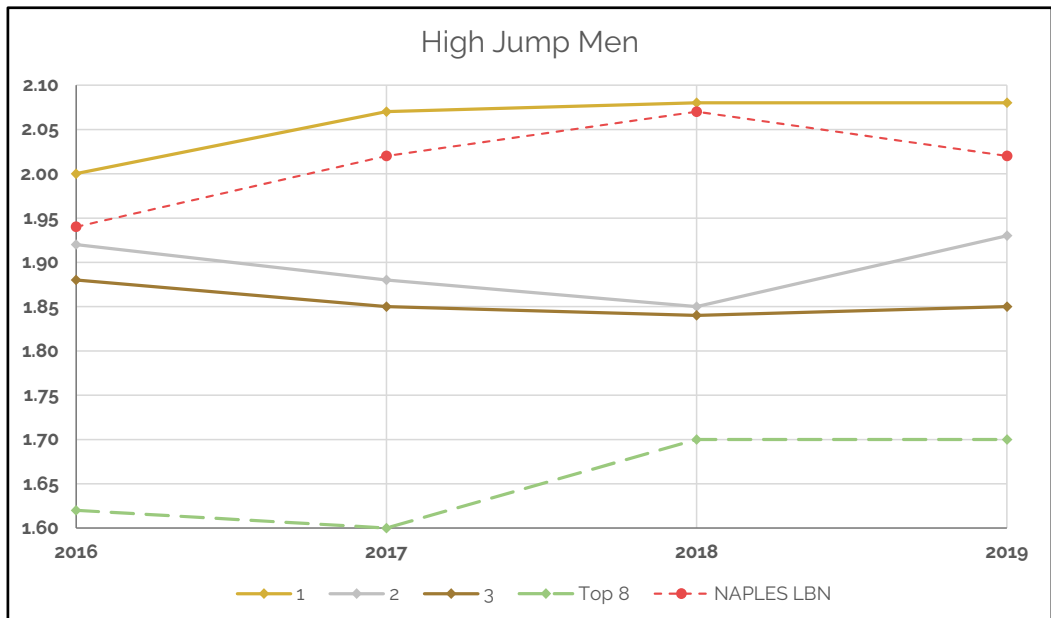
Abdel-Rahman Hallani, the best javelin thrower during the years of this Olympiad. His PB is beyond 60m, set in 2013. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)

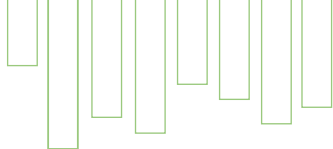


Nabil Akoum, a newcomer to this event. He grabbed the first place in 2019 and went over 60m in 2021. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)

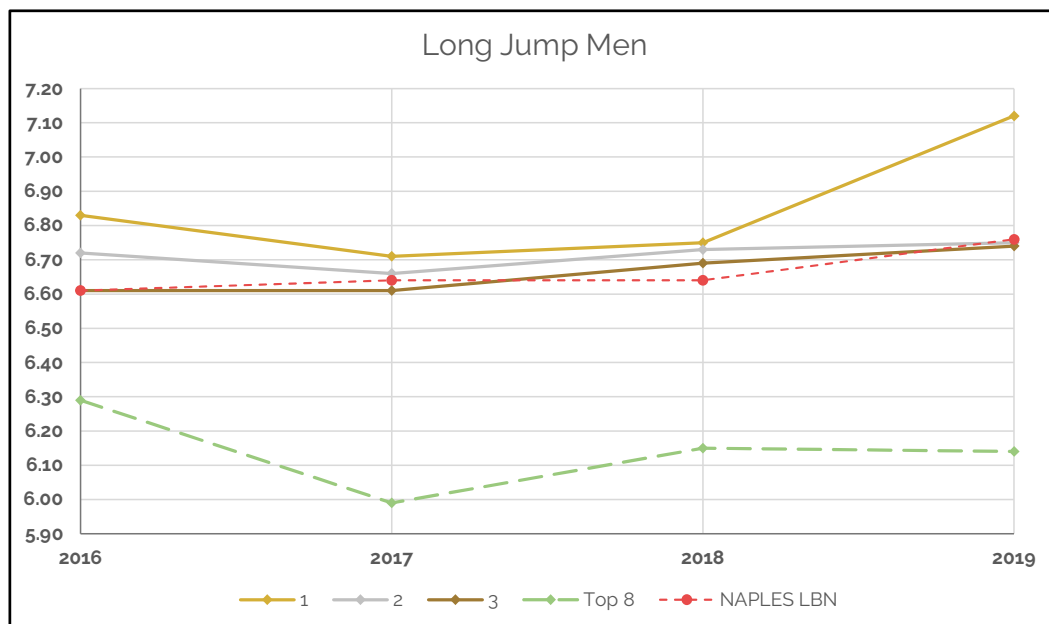
6.2. Tables & Graphs

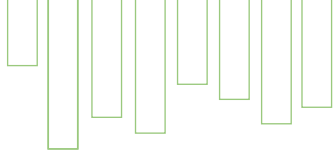
High Jump Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019			
1	Georges GHAFARY	2.08	1	2.00	1	2.07	1	2.08	1	2.08		
2	Noureddine KARIM	1.93					4	1.80	2	1.93		
3	Abdel-Rahman BERJAOUI	1.92	2	1.92	2	1.88	2	1.85	3	1.85		
4	Ali DIRANI	1.88	3	1.88	3	1.85	3	1.84				
5	Mahdi IDAWI	1.85	4	1.85	5	1.72						
6	Ali KANAAN	1.85	5	1.84	3	1.85						
7	Pierre SARKIS	1.80	6	1.80								
8	Karl RIZK	1.80					6	1.70	4	1.80	4	1.75
9	Charbel ELIAS	1.75								4	1.75	
10	Joseph SOUAIBY	1.75								4	1.75	
11	Mohamad MAWLA	1.75							6	1.75	7	1.70
12	Mario NASSOUR	1.70	7	1.65	6	1.70	7	1.70				
13	Ahmad HAZER	1.70								7	1.70	
14	Ali MOUSSA	1.70							7	1.70	7	1.70
15	Elio CHARBEL	1.70								7	1.70	
16	Ronald KASSAB	1.62	8	1.62	8	1.60						
	NAPLES LBN			1.94		2.02		2.07		2.02		



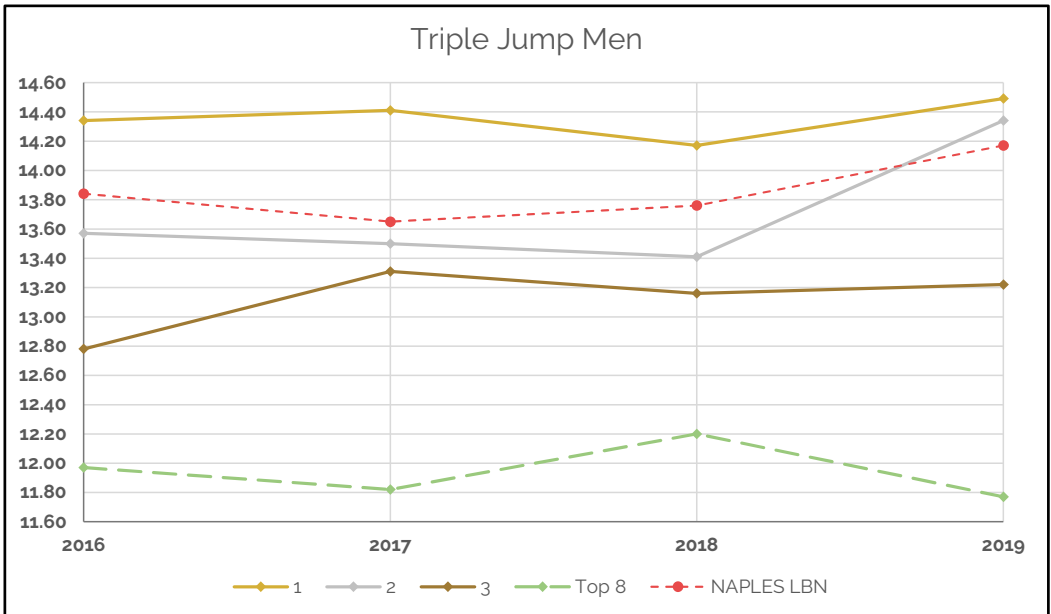


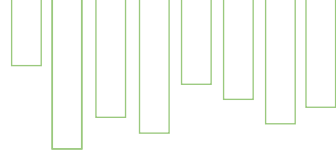
Long Jump Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Serge ARTOUN	7.12			4	6.61	1	6.75	1	7.12
2	Ali HAZER	6.83	1	6.83						
3	Rafaat MATAR	6.75	7	6.30	3	6.61	5	6.19	2	6.75
4	Hadi ISMAIL	6.74	3	6.61	1	6.71	2	6.73	3	6.74
5	Mohamad TRAIJE	6.72	2	6.72			3	6.69		
6	Ahmad HAZER	6.66			2	6.66	5	6.19		
7	Abbas KOBEISSI	6.55	5	6.41	6	6.34	4	6.55	4	6.35
8	Frédéric HANNA	6.46	4	6.46						
9	Fouad YOUNAN	6.43	6	6.39	4	6.43				
10	Georges MATTA	6.29	8	6.29						
11	Ali MOUSSA	6.23							6	6.23
12	Joe AZAR	6.23			8	5.99	8	6.15	5	6.23
13	Youssef HAMADE	6.19							7	6.19
14	Marc HABIB	6.18					7	6.18		
15	Samir NOHRA	6.14			7	6.02			8	6.14
	NAPLES LBN			6.61		6.64		6.64		6.76



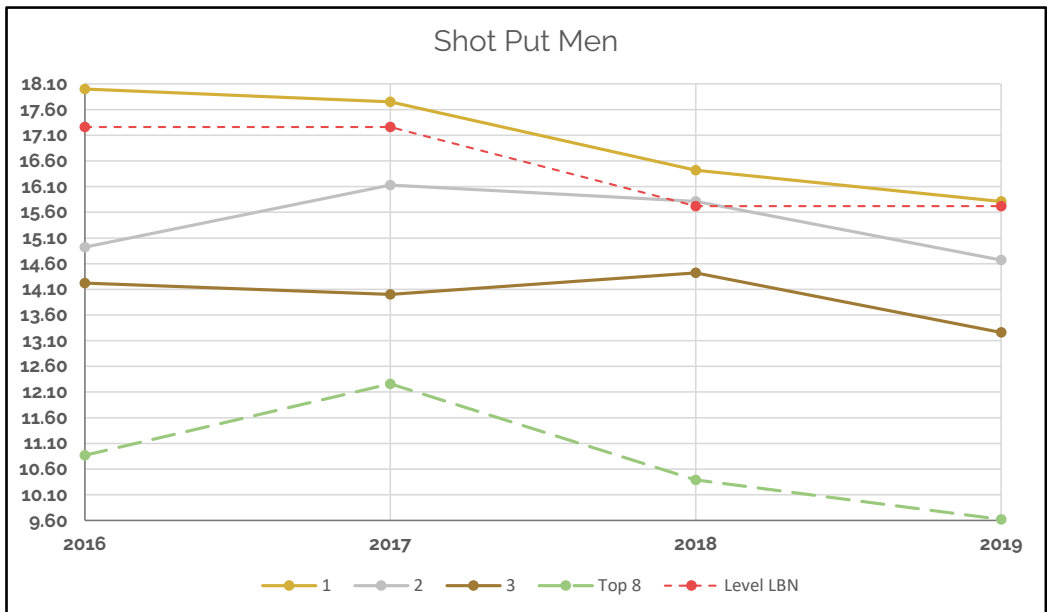


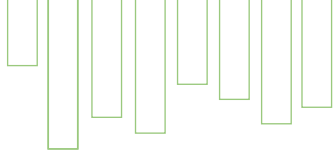
Triple Jump Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Serge ARTOUN	14.49			3	13.31	1	14.17	1	14.49
2	Frédéric HANNA	14.41	1	14.34	1	14.41				
3	Rafaat MATAR	14.34	2	13.57	2	13.50	3	13.16	2	14.34
4	Mohamad TRAIJE	13.41					2	13.41		
5	Karl RIZK	13.22			8	11.82	4	12.94	3	13.22
6	Ali DIRANI	12.82			4	12.82				
7	Ghassan ZGHEIB	12.81	6	12.52	5	12.81				
8	Abbas KOBEISSI	12.78	3	12.78			7	12.34		
9	Mazen CHRIM	12.76	4	12.59	6	12.76	8	12.20		
10	Joe AZAR	12.69					5	12.50	4	12.69
11	Jean-Paul MATAR	12.57	5	12.57	7	12.00				
12	Ronald KASSAB	12.50					6	12.35	5	12.50
13	Samir NOHRA	12.16							6	12.16
14	Joseph AZZI	12.13	7	12.13						
15	Ahmad JAWAD	12.11							7	12.11
16	Joel RIZK	11.97	8	11.97						
17	Mohamad HAWILO	11.77							8	11.77
	NAPLES LBN			13.84		13.65		13.76		14.17



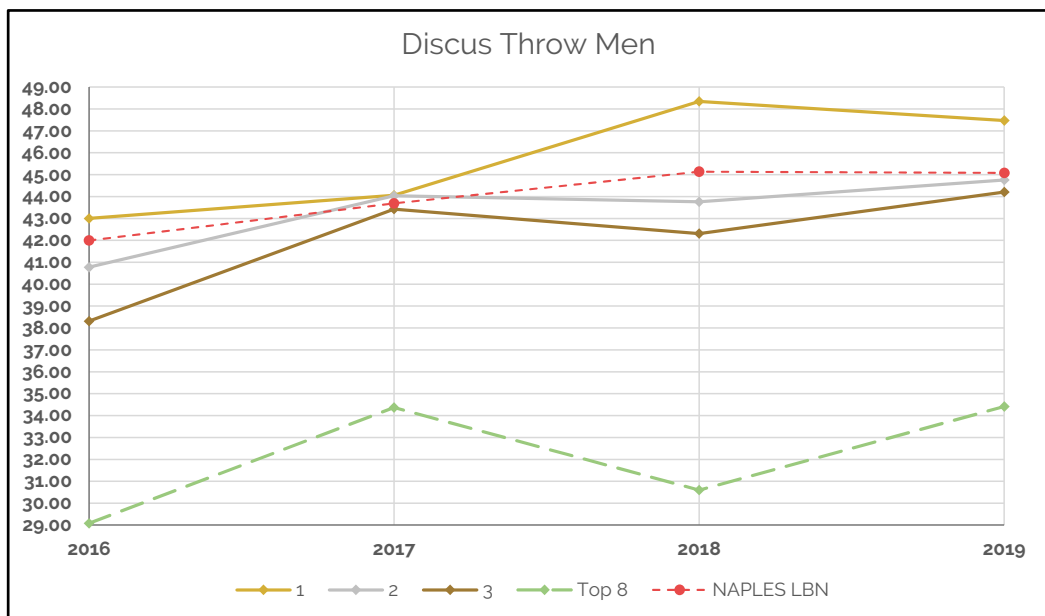


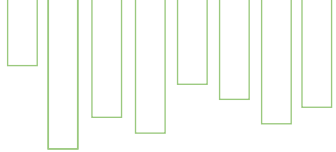
Shot Put Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Christopher SAIKALIS	18.00	1	18.00	1	17.75	1	16.42		
2	Badri OBEID	16.13	2	14.92	2	16.13	2	15.81	1	15.81
3	Alain SAAD	14.67	3	14.22	3	14.00	5	13.37	2	14.67
4	Ali ABBAS	14.42	6	13.30	4	13.79	3	14.42		
5	Nabil AKOUMI	14.07					4	14.07	4	13.06
6	Georges HACHEM	13.59	4	13.59	7	12.95				
7	Ayman ACCACHE	13.42	5	13.42	5	13.41				
8	Charbel SAAD	13.26			6	13.24	6	13.04	3	13.26
9	Jean-Claude ABOU-FAYCAL	12.97	7	12.97						
10	Rami MANSOUR	12.26			8	12.26				
11	Charbel KHOURY	11.00					7	11.00		
12	Imad KAISSI	10.87	8	10.87						
13	Cyril DAGHER	10.82					8	10.39	5	10.82
14	Mario HAJJAR	10.38							6	10.38
15	Elie FIKANI	9.72							7	9.72
16	Jad HARB	9.62							8	9.62
	NAPLES LBN			17.26		17.26		15.72		15.72



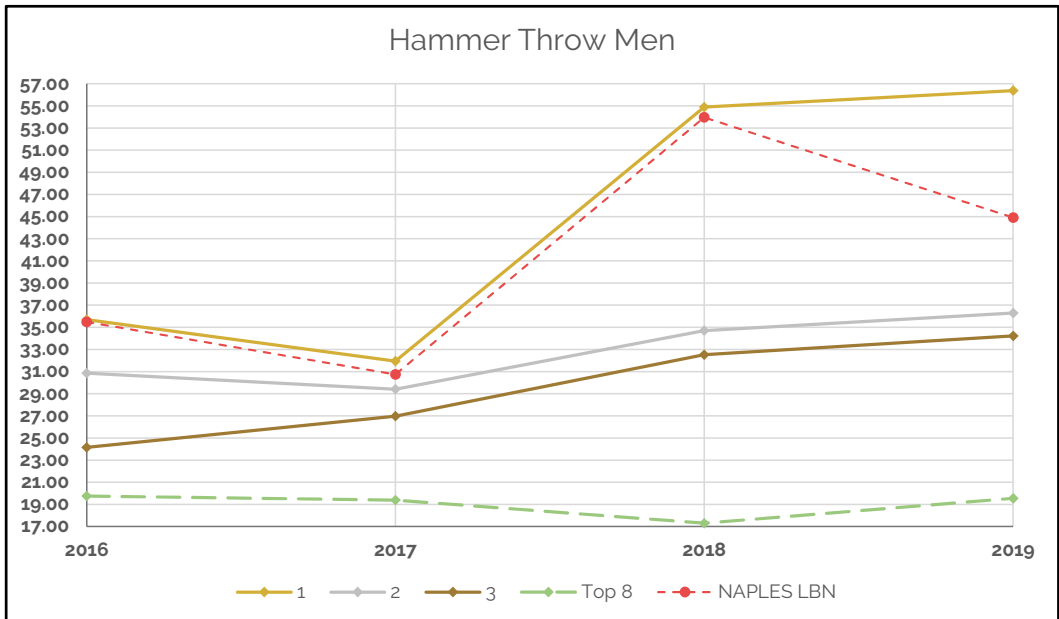


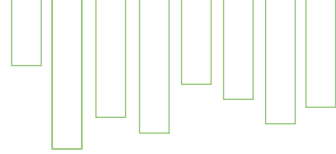
Discus Throw Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Rami MANSOUR	48.34	2	40.77	3	43.42	1	48.34	1	47.47
2	Badri OBEID	44.75			2	44.03	2	43.76	2	44.75
3	Joseph GHAFARY	44.20							3	44.20
4	Georges HACHEM	44.05	1	43.00	1	44.05	3	42.31		
5	Christopher SAIKALIS	39.63			4	39.63				
6	Jean-Claude ABOU-FAYCAL	38.31	3	38.31	5	37.37	6	33.15		
7	Ayman ACCACHE	37.22			6	37.22				
8	AB SHAHEEN	36.77							4	36.77
9	Ali ABBAS	35.86	4	35.86					7	35.35
10	Abdel-Rahman HALLANI	35.85			8	34.36			5	35.85
11	Charbel SAAD	35.66					5	33.38	6	35.66
12	Jad BHAMDOUNI	35.02	5	31.07	7	34.79	4	35.02		
13	Nabil AKOUMI	34.41							8	34.41
14	Charbel KHOURY	33.02	6	29.56			7	33.02		
15	Rony GHOSN	30.59					8	30.59		
16	Adham DAKROUB	29.41	7	29.41						
17	Mohamad Siraj TAMIM	29.08	8	29.08						
NAPLES LBN				41.99		43.68		45.13		45.08



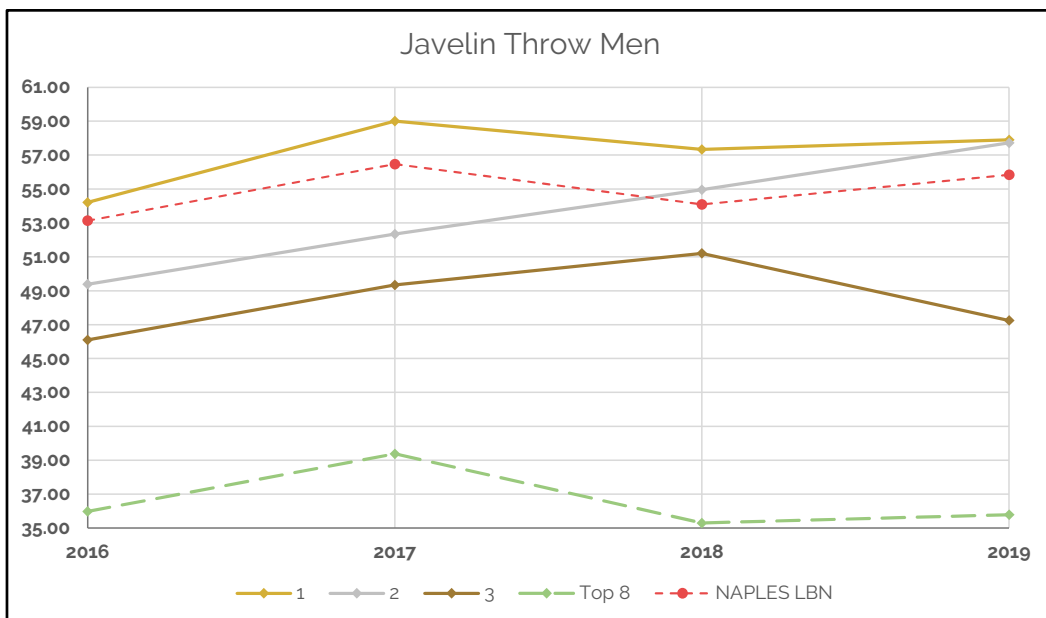


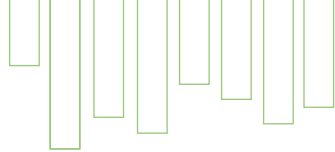
Hammer Throw Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	AB SHAHEEN	56.36					1	54.87	1	56.36
2	Rami MANSOUR	36.28	3	24.15			2	34.70	2	36.28
3	Majed ABOU-OMAR	35.67	1	35.67						
4	Joseph GHAFARY	34.21							3	34.21
5	Maher ABOU-HACHEM	32.52					3	32.52		
6	Georges HACHEM	31.94	2	30.85	1	31.94	4	29.20		
7	Jean-Claude ABOU-FAYCAL	29.40			2	29.40				
8	Badri OBEID	26.96			3	26.96				
9	Nabil AKOUMI	26.53							4	26.53
10	Ali ABBAS	24.32			4	24.32	6	21.28		
11	Charbel SAAD	23.11			5	23.11				
12	Cyril DAGHER	22.50					5	22.50	6	21.64
13	Abdel-Rahman HALLANI	22.38							5	22.38
14	Ayman ACCACHE	22.22	4	22.22	6	22.15				
15	Charbel KHOURY	21.16	5	19.75	7	21.16				
16	Joe MERHEB	19.72							7	19.72
17	Ralph NASSAR	19.54							8	19.54
18	Karl ZAGHRGHI	19.35			8	19.35				
19	Ernest ABBOUD	17.30					7	17.30		
NAPLES LBN				35.48		30.73		53.95		44.90





Javelin Throw Men		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Abdel-Rahman HALLANI	59.01	1	54.21	1	59.01	1	57.34	2	57.72
2	Nabil AKOUMI	57.90					2	54.96	1	57.90
3	Adham DAKROUB	52.34	2	49.38	2	52.34	3	51.20		
4	Alain SAAD	49.34	5	40.18	3	49.34	4	48.78	3	47.24
5	Ayman ACCACHE	49.01	3	46.10	4	49.01				
6	Ahmad CHAHINE	46.55	4	43.09	5	46.55				
7	Khaled HASSAN	46.08							4	46.08
8	Marc-Anthony IBRAHIM	45.51					5	39.58	5	45.51
9	Joseph NASSAR	41.80			6	41.80				
10	Marwan ALAEDDINE	40.42			7	40.42				
11	Jad HARB	39.38	6	38.34	8	39.38	7	37.21	6	37.59
12	Ali HAZER	39.14					6	39.14		
13	Walid KARAM	37.92	7	37.92						
14	Assaad TRADIEH	37.57							7	37.57
15	Mohamad SAKR	35.98	8	35.98						
16	Aldo KAZZI	35.78							8	35.78
17	Rony GHOSN	35.30					8	35.30		
NAPLES LBN			53.13		56.47		54.09		55.84	





6.4. Straight, up or down

The **NAPLES** model is a powerful tool to assess if an event's performance is going up or down; progressing or regressing. It is not enough to only evaluate the results of the top athlete of a certain event.

In the high jump, Georges Ghafary started jumping when he was very young but he cleared 2.00m for the first time in 2016. Since that date he continued improving and thus pushing up the Lebanese level. This event improved from 1.94m in 2016 to 2.02m in 2019 with a best of 2.07m in 2018.

In the long jump, for the first three years, 2016, 2017 and 2018, the Lebanese level oscillated around 6.60m. It wasn't until 2019 when Serge Artoun was able to surpass the 7.00m mark that the overall level improved to 6.76m.

As stated earlier, the triple jump is the long jump's twin event, the similarity of these events lies not only in their horizontal format, but also, in the fact that all of the athletes doing the long jump are the same ones doing the triple jump with the exception of Frederic Hanna who chose the Canadian nationality in 2018. Overall, the triple jump's level improved from 13.84m to 14.17m.

Although Christopher Saikalis raised the shot put to a higher level with his 18.00m plus mark, his absence from the Lebanese throwing scene in 2019 caused the level to drop from 17.26m in 2016 to 15.72m in 2019.

The discus throw progressed steadily over the past four years, climbing from 41.99m in 2016 to 45.08m in 2019. Georges Hachem the record holder was still the best in both 2016 and 2017, but in 2018 Rami Mansour took the number one spot and continued to improve the national level.

We already mentioned the huge impact of AB Shaheen on the hammer throw event. Unfortunately, having only competed in the 2018 and 2019 seasons and missing the 2016 and 2017 seasons, the national level had to struggle on the way up from a very low 35.48m to a 44.90m brought about by AB.

The fierce but friendly competition between the best two Lebanese javelin throwers took the national level from 53.13m in 2016 to 55.84m in 2019. As already mentioned, Akoumi's 60m throw in 2021 reflects positively on the national level.

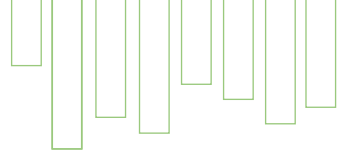


CHAPTER 7



SPRINTS & HURDLES WOMEN

100m, 200m, 400m,
100m Hurdles, and 400m Hurdles



7.1. Overview

One name comes to mind when talking about women's sprinting, Aziza Sbaity. Aziza broke the Lebanese record on more than one occasion the first time being in 2018 when she ran 11.75 in Amman, Jordan. In 2019 she did better than that with 11.73 in Qatar, Doha during the 23rd Asian championship. It wouldn't be fair not to mention her 2021 new Lebanese record of 11.68 in Rades, Tunisia.

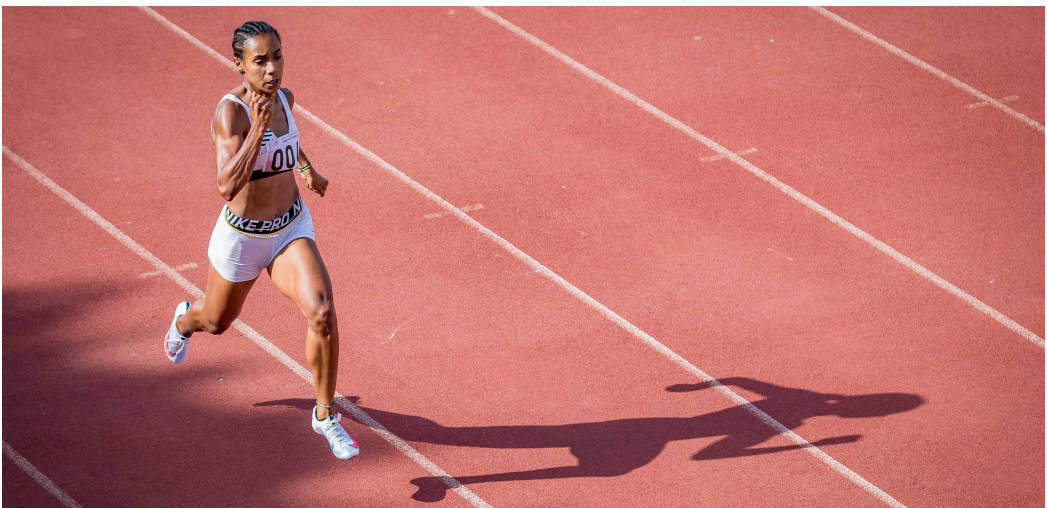
Other athletes worth mentioning in the 100m sprint are Olaa Baajour, Maissa Mouawad and Haya Kobrosli. The last two are at date of publication U20, they represent the future of the Lebanese sprint.

In the 200m, Aziza is still top 1. She couldn't break the Lebanese record yet but I think that this is coming soon. Until 2019 her best time was 24.03. Gretta Taslakian's record is 23.56, in 2007 in Cairo, Egypt. Aziza did her PB in 2021 when she ran the 200m in 23.77 in Montpellier, France. Diala EL-Khazen was top 3 for this Olympiad with 25.46 in 2019 at the American University of Beirut. Another name worth mentioning, Maissa Mouawad who is the third Lebanese woman to break the 25 seconds barrier in the 200m when she ran 24.97 in 2020.

Gretta Taslakian retired after 2016. During her last season she ran the 400m in 55.17. In this Olympiad, two other athletes ran in the 57 seconds, Diala EL-Khazen, 57.57, and Farah Tayar, 57.95. Farah is today in the varsity football team for an American university in Florida. And Diala is a 400m hurdles specialist.

In the hurdles two names come almost naturally to mind, Christel Saneh for the 100m hurdles and Diala EL-Khazen for the 400m hurdles. The former is the Lebanese record holder with 15.27 back in 2017 during the Francophonie Games in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. After setting the new national record in the 100m hurdles, Christel decided to focus solely on the long jump. Lea Mazloum seemed to be a good contender for Christel, unfortunately, there is no record of her competing after 2019.

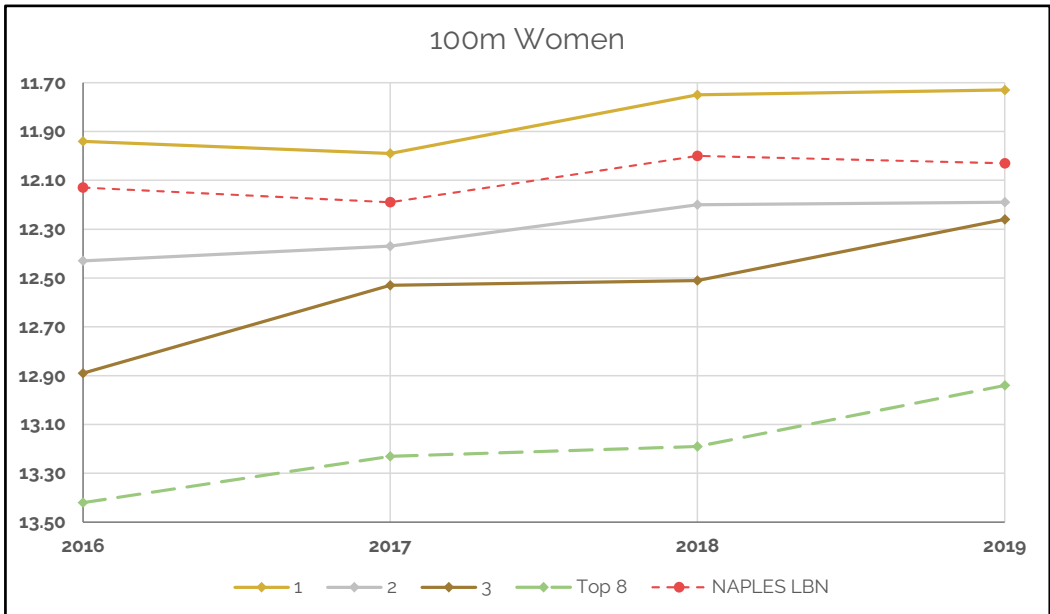
In the 400m hurdles, Diala's personal best of 1:04.24 was set in 2019. She had no serious contenders, only two athletes were close enough: Tara Kanj, 1:08.78 in 2019, and Lynn Ghezzaoui 1:08.08 in 2021. The 400m hurdles is one the toughest events but the most beautiful one in track and field and it is sad to see that it is not appealing to our women athletes.

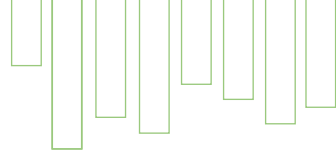


Aziza Sbaity during the 200m in Jamhour. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

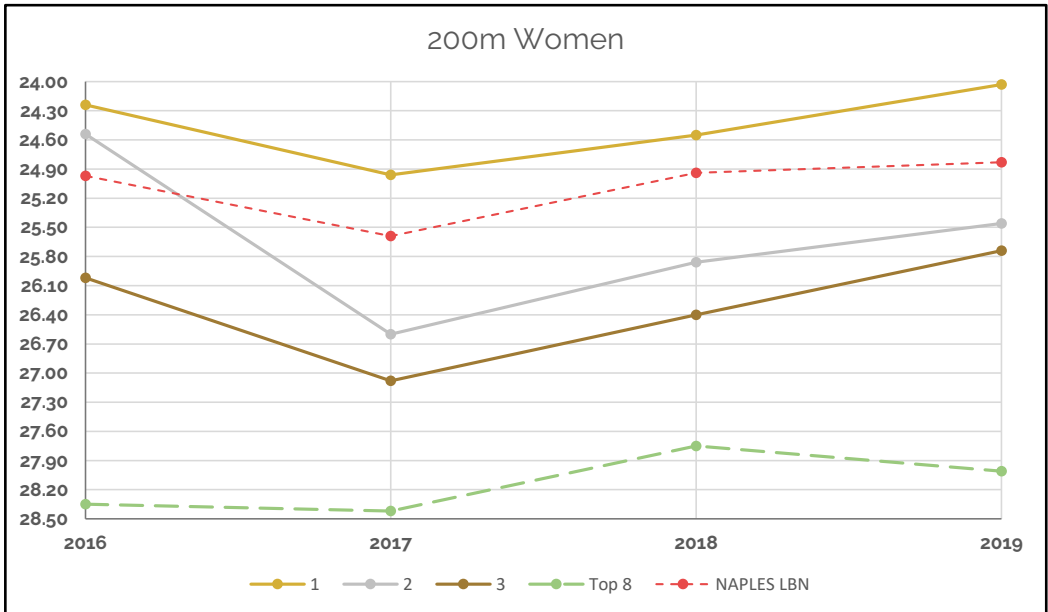
7.2. Tables and Graphs

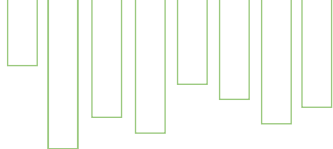
100m Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Aziza SBEITI	11.73	1	11.94	1	11.99	1	11.75	1	11.73
2	Maissa MOUAWAD	12.19	4	12.99	6	12.82	6	12.88	2	12.19
3	Ola BAAJOUR	12.20			2	12.37	2	12.20	3	12.26
4	Haya KOBROSLI	12.39					5	12.85	4	12.39
5	Léa OBEID	12.43	2	12.43	3	12.53	3	12.51	5	12.78
6	Krystel SANEH	12.69	3	12.89	4	12.69	7	12.95		
7	Yasmine YEHA	12.74			5	12.74	8	13.19		
8	Diala EL-KHAZEN	12.79			8	13.23	4	12.79	6	12.88
9	Lea MAZLOUM	12.93	8	13.42					7	12.93
10	Farah TAYAR	12.94	8	13.42					8	12.94
11	Tamara AWADA	12.96	7	13.39	7	12.96	8	13.19		
12	Joelle FEGHALI	13.09	5	13.09						
13	Laura SALIBA	13.30	6	13.30						
14	Christine DAOU	13.42	8	13.42						
	NAPLES LBN			12.13		12.19		12.00		12.03



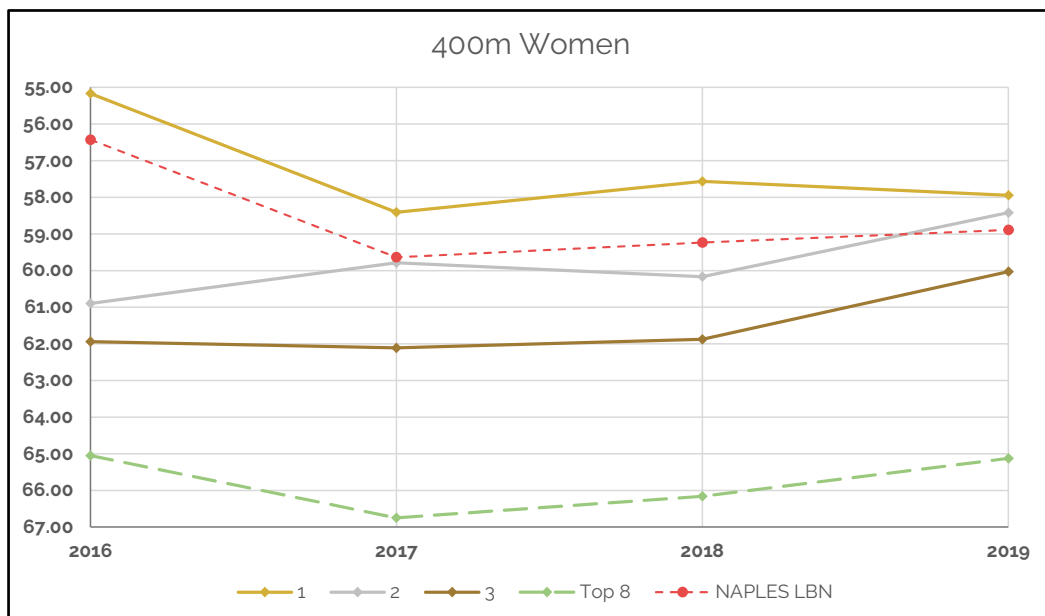


200m Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Aziza SBEITI	24.03	2	24.54	1	24.96	1	24.58	1	24.03
2	Gretta TASLAKIAN	24.24	1	24.24						
3	Diala EL-KHAZEN	25.46			4	27.11	2	25.86	2	25.46
4	Ola BAAJOUR	25.74			6	27.19	3	26.40	3	25.74
5	Haya KOBROSLI	25.82			8	28.42	5	26.68	4	25.82
6	Léa OBEID	26.02	3	26.02						
7	Farah TAYAR	26.31							5	26.31
8	Maissa MOUAWAD	26.49	5	26.71	2	26.60	4	26.64	6	26.49
9	Joelle FEGHALI	26.56	4	26.56	3	27.08				
10	Laura SALIBA	27.01	6	27.01						
11	Yasmine YEHIA	27.15	8	28.35	5	27.15	8	27.75		
12	Nour GHOSTINE	27.18					6	27.18		
13	Rebecca KASSAB	27.50	7	27.50						
14	Ghia MTAYREK	27.52					7	27.52		
15	Tamara AWADA	27.74			7	27.74				
16	Zoe DAGHER	27.85							7	27.85
17	Tara KANJ	28.01							8	28.01
	NAPLES LBN			24.97		25.59		24.94		24.83

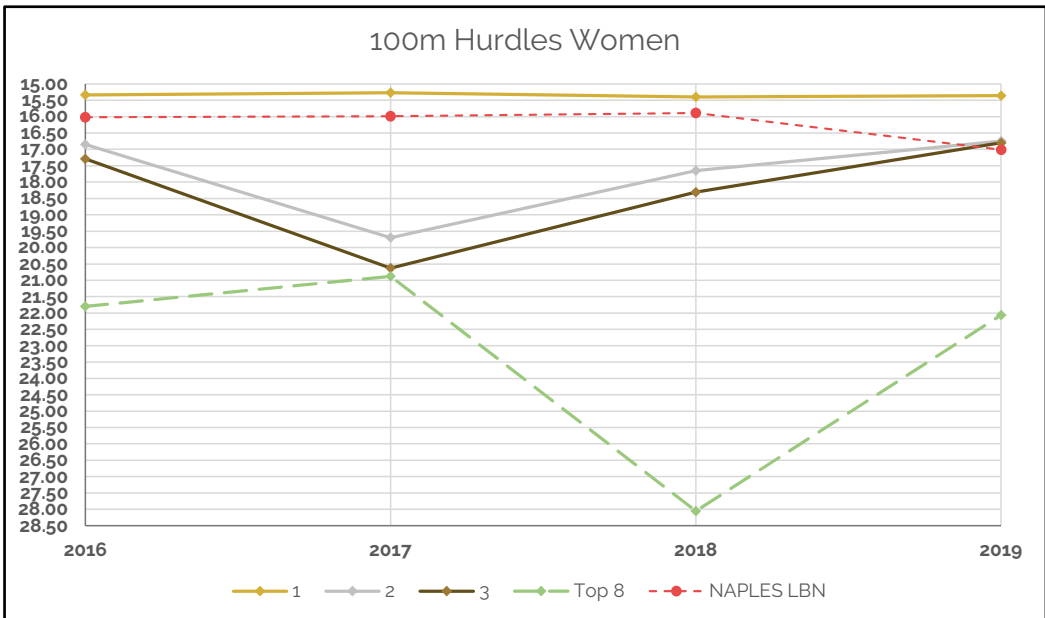




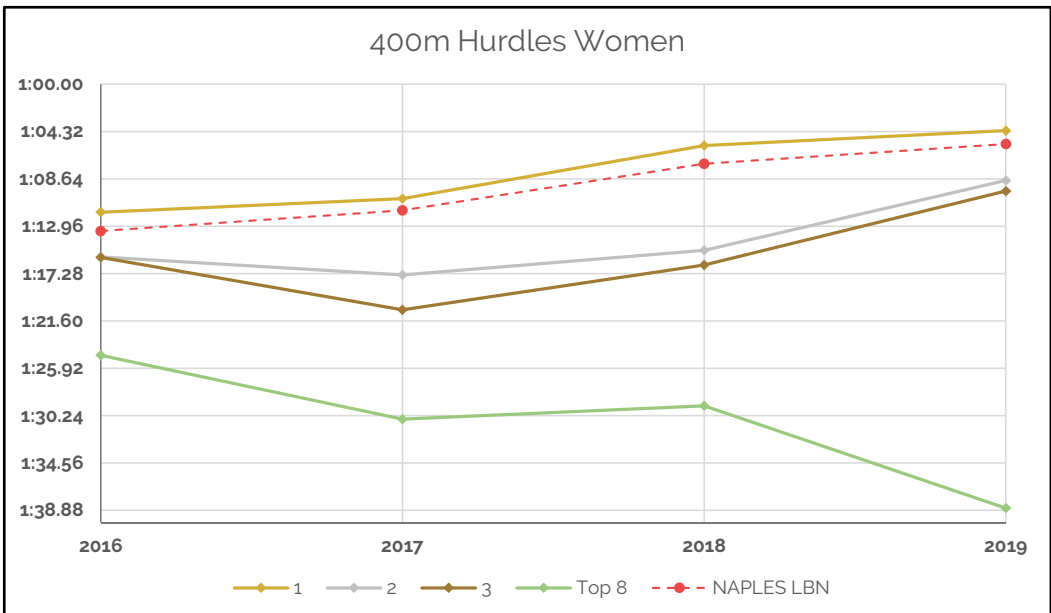
400m Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Gretta TASLAKIAN	55.17	1	55.17						
2	Diala EL-KHAZEN	57.57			2	59.79	1	57.57	2	58.42
3	Farah TAYAR	57.95	2	01:00.90	1	58.41	3	01:01.88	1	57.95
4	Haya KOBROSLI	01:00.03							3	01:00.03
5	Saria TRABOULSI	01:00.17			3	01:02.11	2	01:00.17		
6	Zoe DAGHER	01:01.25	5	01:02.38	7	01:04.81	5	01:03.31	4	01:01.25
7	Ghia MTAYREK	01:01.94	3	01:01.94	4	01:02.20	4	01:03.05	6	01:03.26
8	Sara-Jo KORTBAWI	01:02.16	4	01:02.16						
9	Sara AWALI	01:02.57			5	01:02.57	7	01:05.52		
10	Lynn GHEAZAWI	01:02.89							5	01:02.89
11	Rebecca KASSAB	01:03.64	6	01:04.31	6	01:03.64				
12	Marina FENIANOS	01:04.24					8	01:06.16	7	01:04.24
13	Maria NOHRA	01:04.36					6	01:04.36		
14	Nourhan TAGHRID	01:04.72	7	01:04.72						
15	Taghrid NAAMAN	01:05.05	8	01:05.05						
16	Karina MOUJAES	01:05.13							8	01:05.13
17	Lina JAAFAR	01:06.75			8	01:06.75				
	NAPLES LBN			56.43		59.64		59.24		58.89

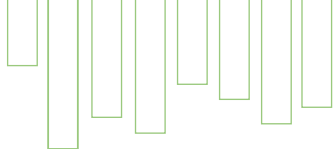


100m H Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Krystel SANEH	15.27	1	15.34	1	15.27	1	15.40		
2	Lea MAZLOUM	15.36							1	15.36
3	Léa DIB	16.75					3	18.31	2	16.75
4	Bethany NASRALLAH	16.80					2	17.65	3	16.80
5	Laura SALIBA	16.85	2	16.85						
6	Tara KANJ	17.29	3	17.29						
7	Anis LAYL	18.23	4	18.23						
8	Marise NASSOUR	18.58			3	20.63	4	18.58	4	19.22
9	Ayend Christ DAOU	18.88	5	18.88	2	19.70	5	20.62		
10	Patil YAACOUBIAN	20.11	6	20.11						
11	Samah CHOUCAIR	20.27	7	20.27	4	20.88				
12	Clara MOHTAR	20.51					7	28.05	5	20.51
13	Maria NOHRA	21.62					6	21.62		
14	Rawane TABBARA	21.80	8	21.80						
15	Aghapy ANTOUN	22.06							6	22.06
	NAPLES LBN			16.02		15.99		15.89		17.01



400m H Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Diala KHAZEN	01:04.24	2	01:15.75	1	01:10.45	1	01:05.59	1	01:04.24
2	Tara KANJ	01:08.78							2	01:08.78
3	Marina FENIANOS	01:09.75					2	01:15.17	3	01:09.75
4	Lynn GHEZAWI	01:10.85					3	01:16.49	4	01:10.85
5	Corine FREIHA	01:11.68	1	01:11.68						
6	Maissa MOUAWAD	01:15.80	3	01:15.80						
7	Claudia ZMOKHOL	01:17.40			2	01:17.40				
8	Rim KHALIL	01:17.47					7	01:23.32	5	01:17.47
9	Ayend Christ DAOU	01:18.71	4	01:18.71	6	01:23.32				
10	Marise NASSOUR	01:18.97	6	01:23.01	5	01:22.70	4	01:18.97	6	01:19.83
11	Samah CHOUCAIR	01:20.55	5	01:20.55						
12	Fatima MAZAHM	01:20.58	7	01:23.23	3	01:20.58	5	01:21.28		
13	Fatme ZAATARI	01:22.14			4	01:22.69	6	01:22.14		
14	Joy-Lynn KORTBAWI	01:24.73	8	01:24.73						
15	Roxane RAJI	01:27.71			7	01:27.71				
16	Lynn BOU-NASREDINE	01:29.35					8	01:29.35		
17	Ariane FAYAD	01:30.57			8	01:30.57				
18	Lea BOU-FADEL	01:35.88							7	01:35.88
19	Laetitia FAKIH	01:38.68							8	01:38.68
	NAPLES LBN			01:13.40		01:11.51		01:07.26		01:05.46





7.3. Straight, up or down

Sometimes all it takes is one good athlete to push everyone up. That is what happened in the 100m, 200m and the 400m hurdles. In the first two events, Aziza Sbaity pulled the Lebanese level up thus improving the national level.

In the latter, it has been a long time since anyone specialized in the 400m hurdles. Usually, the 400m dash runners try their luck on the hurdles and the results vary with each athlete. Diala El-Khazen chose the 400m hurdles to be her event, not the 400m dash. She concentrated all her efforts on her event, and, as a consequence of this specialization, the level went up.



Diala El-Khazen, best athlete over the 400m Hurdles for 3 years in this Olympiad. A very talented athlete with a chance to break the Lebanese record in her favorite event. She holds the Lebanese record in the 4x100m relay. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)



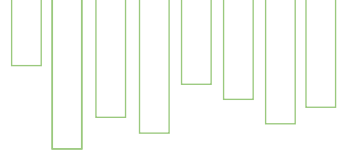
Aziza Sbaity, the fastest Lebanese woman in the 100m, she holds the record in this event, as well as the 4x100m relay Lebanese record. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

CHAPTER 8



MIDDLE DISTANCES & STEEPLECHASE WOMEN

800m, 1500m & 3000m Steeplechase



8.1. Overview

In the 800m and the 1500m races, two athletes were the best during this Olympiad: Nadia Dagher, a Lebanese-German runner, and Sara-Jo Kortbawi. Sadly, both talented ladies were absent during this same Olympiad. The former chose not to compete in Lebanon after 2017, while the latter stopped running.

It is unfortunate that Sara-Jo is no longer running. She had great potential in the middle distances but was she pushed too hard too soon? We shall never know, except that the bottom line is the disappearance of this promising young talent from the track was definitely a huge loss for Lebanon.

Nadia set the 1500m national record in 2016 with a time of 4:37.39 which still stands today.

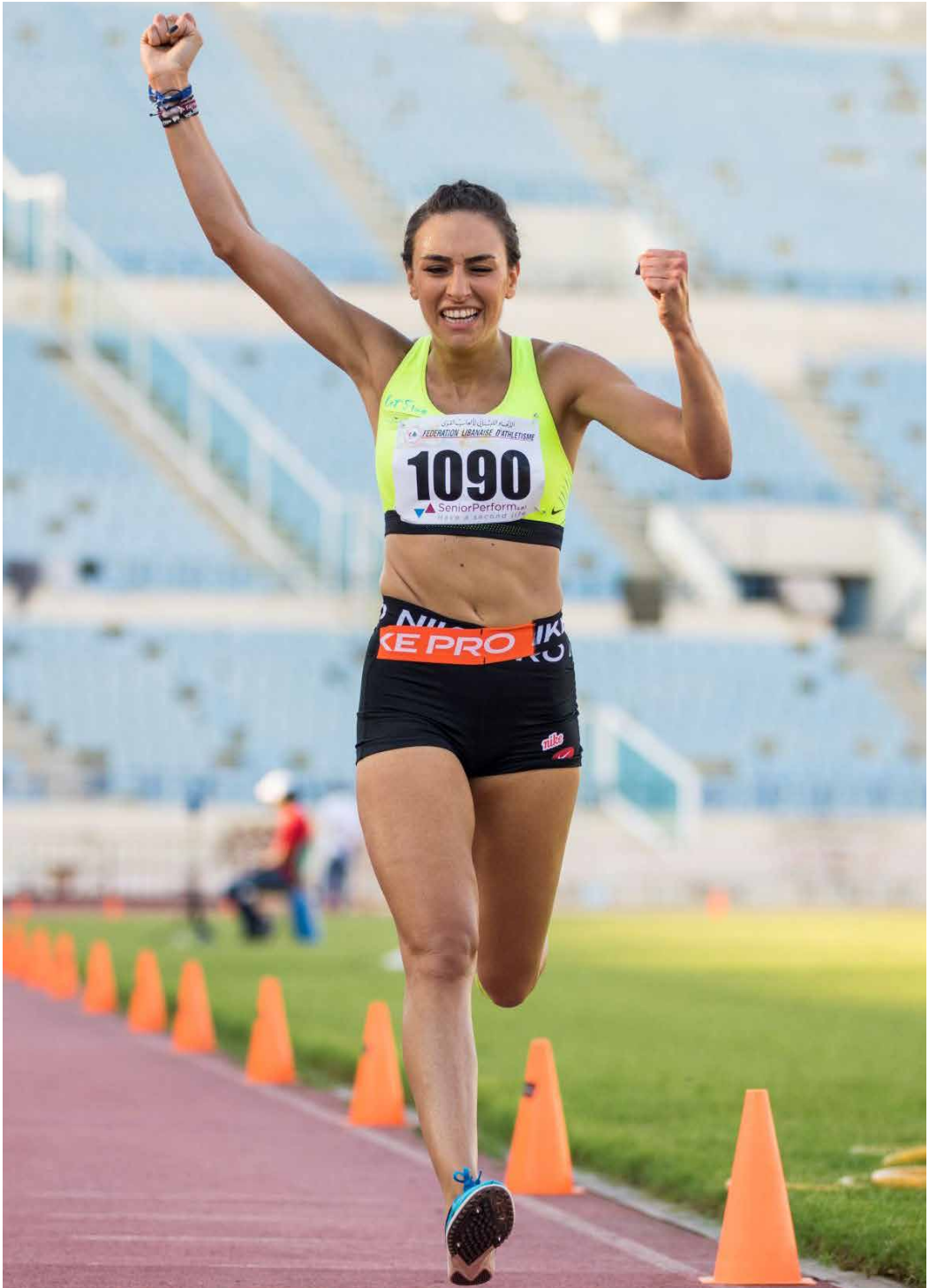
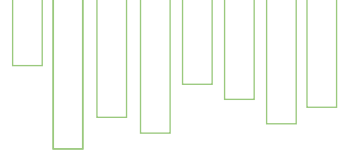


Women's 3000m (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

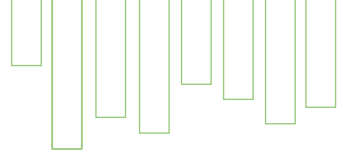


Nadia Dagher, Lebanese-German athlete living in Germany. She participated in the Lebanese championship most recently in 2017. She is the Lebanese record holder of the 1500m and the 5000m.

This overview will be incomplete without mentioning Joan Makary's 2021 results. Joan ran the 1500m in 2021 in 4:37.62 just 23/100 off the record. Another prominent middle distance and long-distance runner, Jennifer Tomazou has her PB under the 5 minutes mark with 4:53.53 set in 2018.



Joan Makary, 2021 saw the rise of Joan in the 1500m. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)



Joan used to be a long-distance runner but in 2021 she switched to shorter distances; the 800m and the 1500m. As stated earlier she is very close to the 1500m record but she still is relatively slow on the 800m, with a PB of 2:19.24 in 2021. On the bright side, she is still young and she can improve greatly on both of these distances.

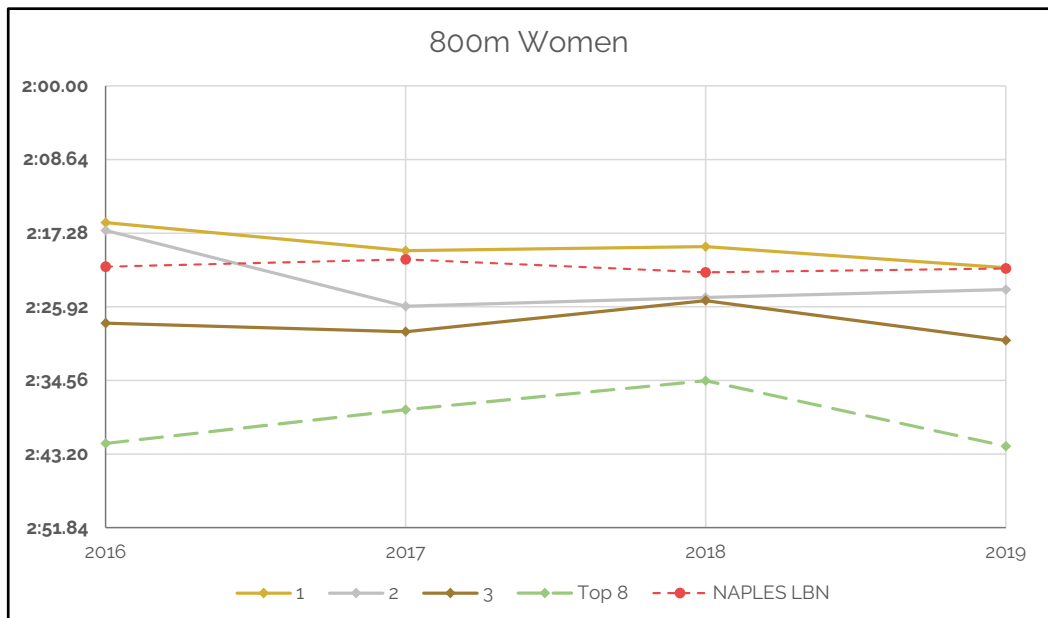


Loaa Zaarour is becoming the best runner in the steeplechase. She is getting very close to the Lebanese record. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

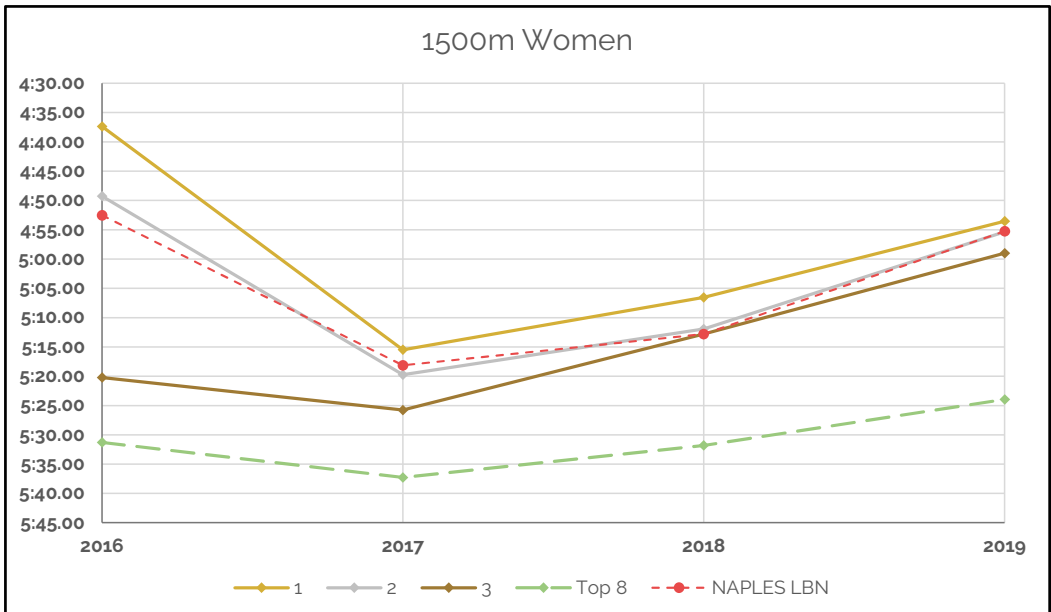
The steeplechase is not a popular race among female athletes. In 2017 Nadia focused only on the 3000m Steeplechase neglecting all other distances including her best one the 1500m. But during this Olympiad one athlete stands out, Loaa Zaarour. Loaa decided to train almost solely for the steeplechase and she broke the 12 minutes mark in 2020 with 11:57.06 which she improved in 2021 when she ran 11:56.73, just shy of 3 seconds off the Lebanese record of 11:53.87 set by Hoda Awadi in 2011.

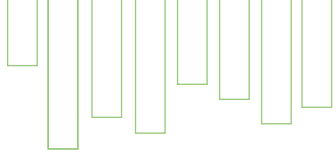
8.2. Tables & Graphs

800m Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Nadia DAGHER	02:16.05	1	02:16.05						
2	Sara-Jo KORTBAWI	02:16.96	2	02:16.96	5	02:30.70				
3	Farah TAYAR	02:18.87	3	02:27.85	1	02:19.35	1	02:18.87	1	02:21.35
4	Lina JAAFAR	02:23.90			3	02:28.84	3	02:25.20	2	02:23.90
5	Gretta TASLAKIAN	02:24.82					2	02:24.82		
6	Ghia MTAYREK	02:25.86	5	02:33.24	2	02:25.86				
7	Loua ZAAROUR	02:29.86			7	02:36.30	4	02:30.32	3	02:29.86
8	Manal TAYAR	02:30.22	4	02:30.22						
9	Laura FALLAHA	02:30.60					5	02:30.60		
10	Corine FREIHA	02:30.67	6	02:33.86	4	02:30.67				
11	Nada KURDI	02:31.23					6	02:31.23		
12	Hiba ITANI	02:33.47					7	02:33.73	4	02:33.47
13	Maria KIWAN	02:34.60					8	02:34.60		
14	Yasmina FAKHRI	02:35.62	7	02:37.04	6	02:35.62				
15	Hala MURR	02:36.44							5	02:36.44
16	Joya FEGHALI	02:37.14							6	02:37.14
17	Krystel SANEH	02:38.00			8	02:38.00				
18	Saria TRABOULSI	02:41.95	8	02:41.95						
19	Rola MAKKI	02:42.29							8	02:42.29
NAPLES LBN				02:21.22		02:20.36		02:21.88		02:21.43

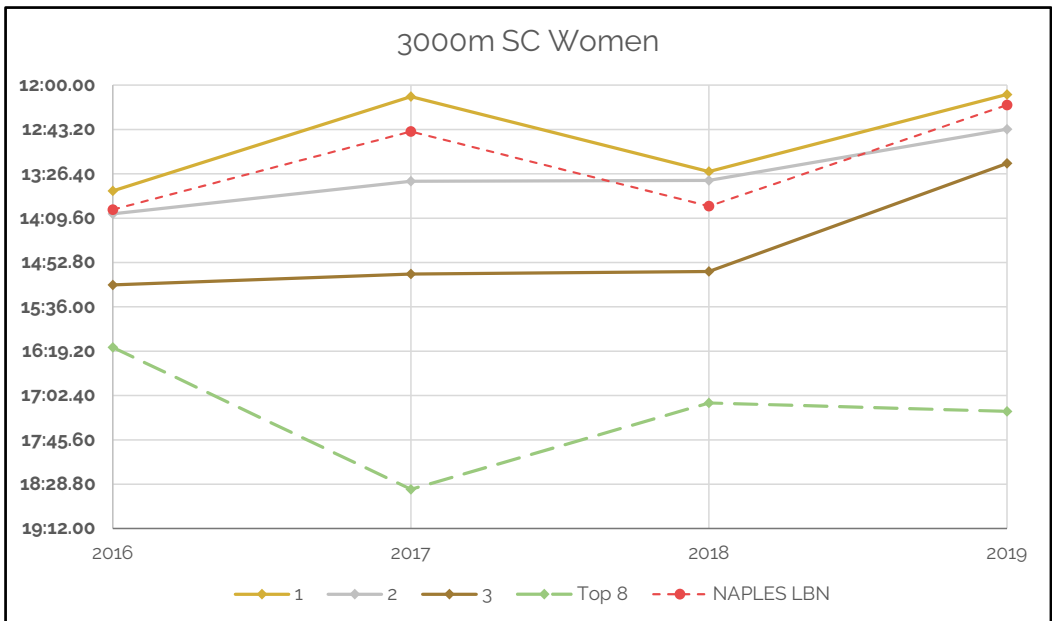


1500m Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Nadia DAGHER	04:37.39	1	04:37.39						
2	Sara-Jo KORTBAWI	04:45.20	2	04:45.20						
3	Jennifer TOMAZOU	04:53.53			3	05:25.78	7	05:22.62	1	04:53.53
4	Joan MAKARY	04:55.35								
5	Loua ZAAROUR	04:59.02	8	05:31.30			2	05:11.97	3	04:59.02
6	Nada KURDI	05:00.88								
7	Emessa MELKI	05:04.06								
8	Farah TAYAR	05:06.58					1	05:06.58		
9	Lina JAAFAR	05:09.74			1	05:15.51			6	05:09.74
10	Laura FALLAHA	05:12.80					3	05:12.80		
11	Hala MURR	05:14.89			2	05:19.74	4	05:14.89		
12	Maria KIWAN	05:16.56					5	05:16.56		
13	Hiba ITANI	05:19.07			6	05:29.74	6	05:19.07	7	05:19.21
14	Yasmina FAKHRI	05:20.25	3	05:20.25	4	05:27.27	8	05:31.84		
15	Lynn DOUGHAN	05:22.25	4	05:22.25	7	05:34.41				
16	Manal TAYAR	05:23.34	5	05:23.34	5	05:29.40				
17	Aline Merheb	05:23.97								
18	Stéphanie KHORIATY	05:24.26	6	05:24.26						
19	Tala SALAM	05:27.47	7	05:27.47						
20	Angela SAADE	05:37.29			8	05:37.29				
NAPLES LBN					04:52.55	05:18.15	05:12.83	04:55.28		





3000m SC Women		Olympiad	2016	2017	2018	2019
1	Loua ZAAROUR	12:09.18				1 12:09.18
2	Nadia DAGHER	12:11.15		1 12:11.15		
3	Aline MERHEB	12:43.05			1 13:24.25	2 12:43.05
4	Diana FAKHRAN	13:16.35	2 14:05.44	2 13:29.10	2 13:32.98	3 13:16.35
5	Manal TAYAR	13:43.19	1 13:43.19			
6	Katya RAJEH	13:49.33				4 13:49.33
7	Tamara ZEIN	13:54.74	3 15:14.71	3 15:04.00	4 15:05.44	5 13:54.74
8	Raissa HADDAD	14:42.21				6 14:42.21
9	Karine CHRIM	15:01.62			3 15:01.62	
10	Nour ACHKAR	15:04.01		4 15:04.01		
11	Ariane FAYAD	15:48.20	4 15:48.20	6 18:33.80		
12	Fatme ZAATARI	15:49.97			5 15:49.97	
13	Chloé KARAM	16:06.14	5 16:06.14			
14	Karen FEGHALI	16:08.68		5 16:08.68		
15	Joy-Lynn KORTBAWI	16:15.56	6 16:15.56			
16	Marita MATTA	17:09.71			6 17:09.71	
17	Sara LOTFI	17:18.00				7 17:18.00
	NAPLES LBN		14:01.42	12:45.17	13:57.98	12:19.48



8.3. Straight, up or down

The level in the 800m during this Olympiad remained almost constant. In 2016 it was 2:21.22 while in 2019 it remained at 2:21 but just a few hundredth slower, 2:21.43.

As for the 1500m, in 2016 the level was the best, at 4:52.55, but when Nadia stopped running this distance the level dropped down drastically in 2017 to 5:18.15. The competitive atmosphere between the women helped improve the event in 2019 again causing their NAPLES value to rise to 4:55.28, a bit slower than 2016 but much better than in 2017.

On the other hand, the 3000m Steeplechase started really slow in 2016, 14:01.42, and improved steadily over the years to reach its best in 2019, 12:19.48. Loaa Zaarour's will and dedication to break this record and improving this event's level will probably help make this race a popular one for Lebanese women.



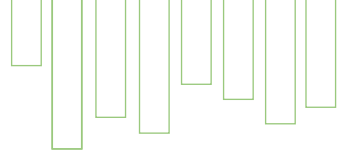
Loaa Zaarour (Left), Joan Makary (Right) (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

CHAPTER 9



LONG DISTANCE & MARATHON WOMEN

5000m, 10 000m & Marathon



9.1. Overview

When we talk about long distance running in Lebanon, three names come to mind, Chirine Njeim, Maria-Pia Nehme and Nesrine Njeim-Leene.

Although these distances are different, in both terms of distances and training, yet we see the same names. Of course, these athletes are very good but maybe Lebanon lacks real specialists for each of these distance.

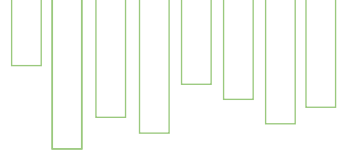
Chirine qualified for the marathon in Rio 2016, thus her 10 000m is good enough for her to be among the top 3 Lebanese athletes. She was the first athlete to run below 3 hours in the marathon. She started her marathon journey with a time of 3:07:00 in 2012 and her last 3-hour marathon was in 2014 with a time of 3:03:53.

In April 2015 she ran her first sub 3 in the marathon, 2:46:41, becoming the first Lebanese to do so. In 2016 she ran 2:44:19 becoming the first Lebanese woman to qualify for the Olympics. She improved her time in 2017 with 2:39:21 dropping under 2:40. And finally she produced her best performance in 2021 while she was trying to qualify for Tokyo 2020 running a time of 2:36:40.

All in all, only 4 women could achieve such outstanding performances. Maria-Pia Nehme was the second woman to follow Chirine to the sub 3 club when she ran 2:53:38 a couple of months after Chirine in December of the same year 2015.



The joy of running in Lebanon. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)



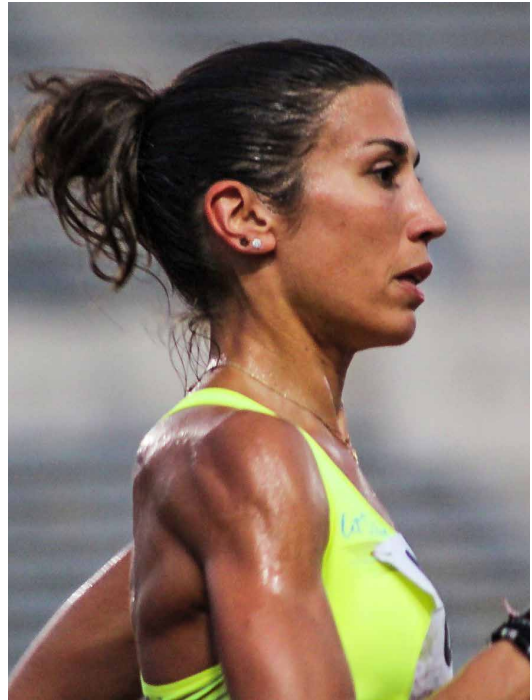
3 years later, Tiana Abdel-Massih joined this elite club becoming the third Lebanese lady to join the sub-3 clan with a time of 2:58:43 in 2018. And in 2019 Nesrine, Chirine's older sister ran a time of 2:53:39 to be the fourth one to join this very exclusive group.

Performance is sometimes more than just numbers and athletes know that. It takes more than just training to perform well. When Chirine broke the 3-hour barrier for the first time, it was what allowed Maria-Pia to do so, although both were ready to run that fast prior to their races. 3 hours was more a psychological barrier than a fitness issue.

Prior to starting her long-distance journey, Maria-Pia Nehme was a middle-distance runner, 800m and 1500m, until she joined Inter-Lebanon in 2006. She started running long distance and she succeeded at one point in time to hold all the Lebanese records, in the 3000m (in 2013), the 5000m (in 2015), the 10 000m (in 2019), the half-marathon (in 2015) and the marathon (in 2009), with respectively 10:05.42, 17:07.99, 36:31.80 (which is still the Lebanese record), 1:18:45 and 3:00:02.



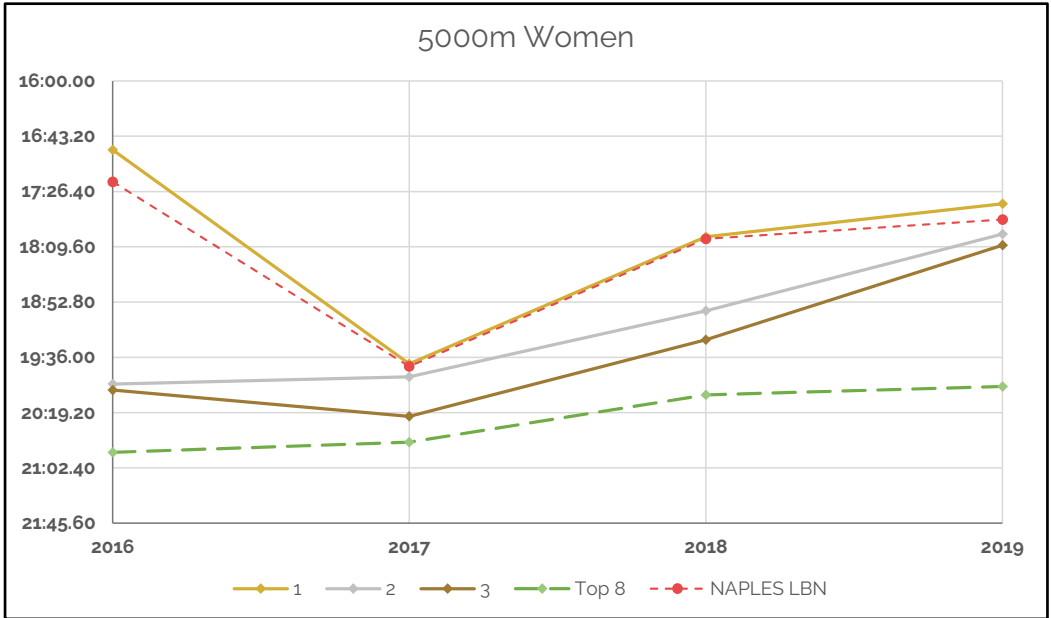
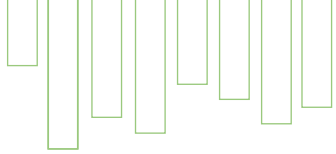
Nesrine Njeim-Leene, a very good contender on the long distance runs with a focus on the 10 000m and the marathon. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)



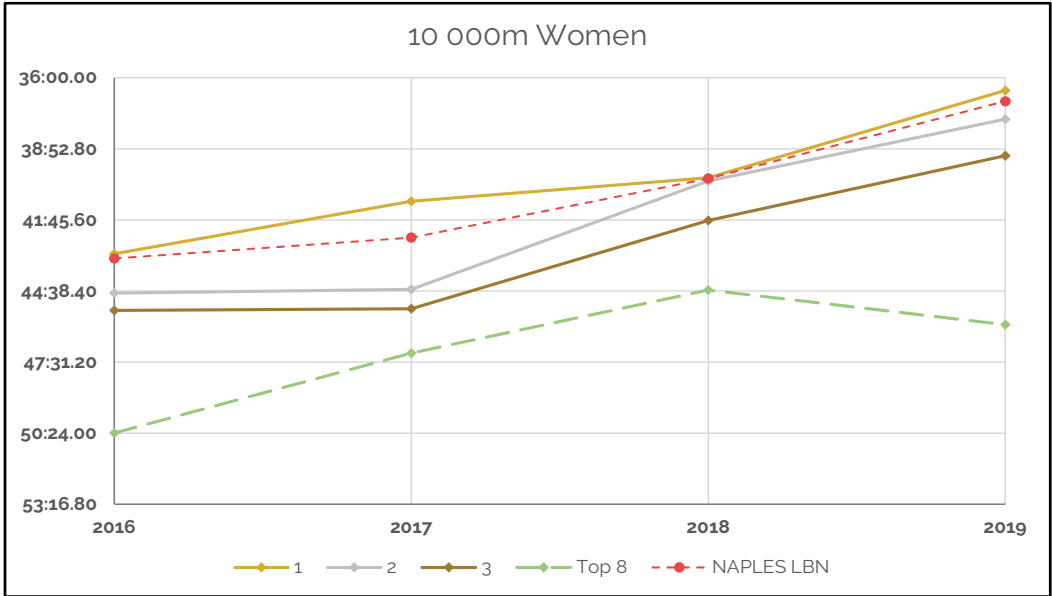
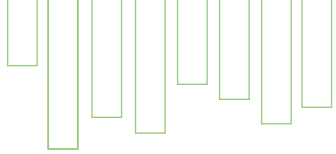
Maria-Pia Nehmé, long distance specialist, she once held the Lebanese records of the 3000m, 5000m and 10 000m (the 10 000m record is still hers). (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)

9.2. Tables & Graphs

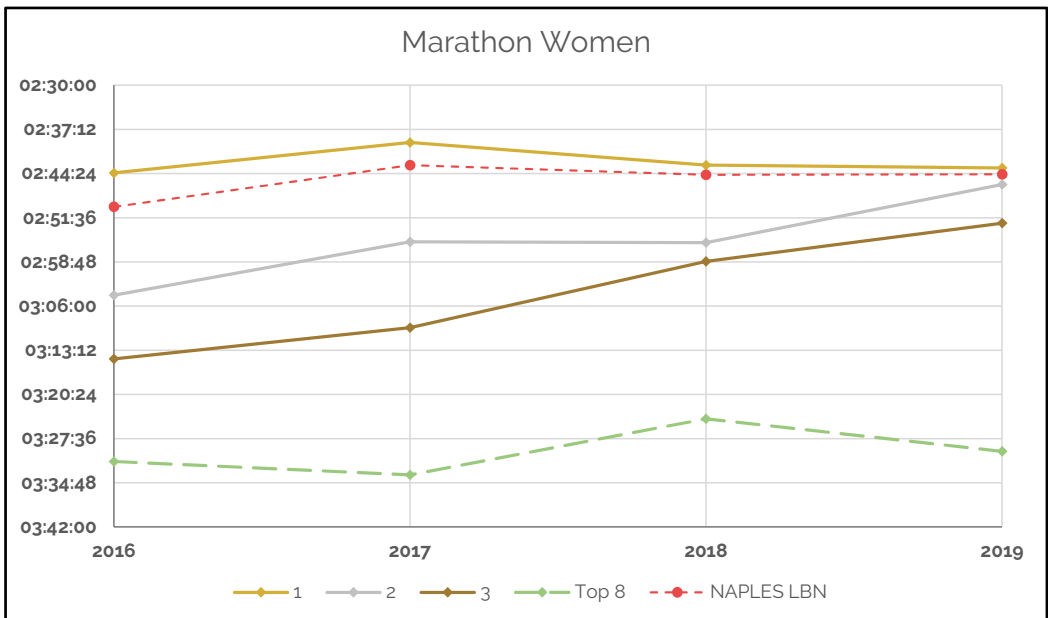
5000m Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019			
1	Nadia DAGHER	16:53.89	1	16:53.89								
2	Chrine NJEIM	17:35.91							1	17:35.91		
3	Maria-Pia NEHMÉ	17:59.72							1	18:01.91	2	17:59.72
4	Joan MAKARY	18:08.37							5	19:58.55	3	18:08.37
5	Nesrine NJEIM LEENE	18:45.04							2	18:59.61	4	18:45.04
6	Emesa MELKI	19:12.66									5	19:12.66
7	Jennifer TOMAZOU	19:18.34	8	20:48.21	5	20:29.86	8	20:05.39	6	19:18.34		
8	Tiana ABDEL-MASSIH	19:22.21							3	19:22.21		
9	Zeinab BAZZI	19:28.61							4	19:28.61		
10	Sylvie ANTOUN	19:41.09	4	20:03.52	1	19:41.09						
11	Loua ZAAROUR	19:44.20									7	19:44.20
12	Léa ISKANDAR	19:51.27							2	19:51.27		
13	Sonia HANNA	19:56.89	2	19:56.89								
14	Aline MERHEB	19:58.76							3	20:22.11	8	19:58.76
15	Randa DAKROUB	20:01.17							6	20:01.17		
16	Sara-Jo KORTBAWI	20:01.67	3	20:01.67								
17	Nadine KALOT	20:03.49	6	20:46.20								
18	Nadia NEHMÉ	20:22.36							4	20:22.36		
19	Stéphanie KHORIATY	20:30.55							6	20:30.55		
20	Ghina ASSIR	20:33.90	5	20:33.90								
21	Houri SOFIAN	20:42.11							7	20:42.11		
22	Diana FAKHRAN	20:42.31							8	20:42.31		
23	Joumana ALAMEH	20:48.01	7	20:48.01								
	NAPLES LBN			17:18.83		19:43.13		18:03.42		17:48.33		



10000m Women		Olympiad	2016	2017	2018	2019
1	Maria-Pia NEHMÉ	36:31.80				1 36:31.80
2	Chirine NJEIM	37:40.98				2 37:40.98
3	Nesrine NJEIM LEENE	39:09.85			2 40:10.83	3 39:09.85
4	Léa ISKANDAR	40:03.30		1 41:00.35	1 40:03.30	
5	Aline MERHEB	41:46.79		2 41:50.00	3 41:46.79	4 42:17.32
6	Nadine KALOT	41:55.36	1 43:08.10		4 41:55.36	5 43:04.49
7	Joan MAKARY	41:57.27			5 41:57.27	
8	Nada KURDI	43:16.75			6 43:16.75	
9	Jennifer TOMAZOU	43:17.07		3 44:16.40	7 43:17.07	
10	Yasmine ACHKAR	44:17.20				6 44:17.20
11	Katia RACHED	44:34.35		4 44:34.35		
12	Joumana ALAMEH	44:36.18	2 44:43.62		8 44:36.18	
13	Lily BEJJANI	45:15.82				7 45:15.82
14	Aline MATTA	45:25.74	3 45:25.74			
15	Ghina ASSIR	45:26.63		5 45:26.63		
16	Reem ABOU-HOSN	45:26.64		6 45:26.64		
17	Nada JISR	45:33.88		7 45:33.88		
18	Nadia NEHMÉ	45:39.30		8 45:39.30		8 46:00.20
19	Houri SOFIAN	46:49.47	4 46:49.47			
20	Krystel CHEBIB	47:44.65	5 47:44.65			
21	Yasmina FAKHRI	48:51.69	6 48:51.69			
22	Michelle BOU-EID	49:55.70	7 49:55.70			
23	Alma KHADRA	50:23.71	8 50:23.71			
	NAPLES LBN		43:19.41	42:28.52	40:05.18	36:57.21



Marathon Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Chirine NJEIM	02:39:21	1	02:44:19	1	02:39:21	1	02:43:04	1	02:43:31
2	Nesrine NJEIM LEENE	02:46:12	2	03:04:14	2	02:55:33	4	03:03:17	2	02:46:12
3	Maria-Pia NEHMÉ	02:52:30					2	02:55:40	3	02:52:30
4	Tiana ABDEL-MASSIH	02:58:43	4	03:18:55			3	02:58:43		
5	Nadia DAGHER	03:00:12							4	03:00:12
6	Aline MERHEB	03:09:32	5	03:23:44	3	03:09:32				
7	Nadine KALOT	03:12:36	3	03:14:37	4	03:12:36	5	03:15:57	5	03:14:25
8	Zeinab BAZZI	03:16:25					6	03:16:25		
9	Katia RACHED	03:19:22	8	03:31:21			7	03:21:23	6	03:19:22
10	Nada JISR	03:19:41			7	03:29:47			7	03:19:41
11	Ghina ASSIR	03:24:23			5	03:28:12	8	03:24:23		
12	Joumana ALAMEH	03:24:40	6	03:24:40						
13	Houri SOFIAN	03:28:19	7	03:28:19						
14	Hiba TRABOULSI	03:29:07			6	03:29:07				
15	Lily BEJJANI	03:29:42							8	03:29:42
16	Karine FERZOLI	03:33:31			8	03:33:31				
	NAPLES LBN			02:49:51		02:43:03		02:44:38		02:44:32



9.3. Straight, up or down

Of all three events, only the 5000m saw its NAPLES value decrease between 2016 and 2019. Maybe because Nadia Dagher set the 5000m record in 2016 with a sub-17-minute time of 16:53.89. This performance pulled the Lebanese up with a NAPLES value of 17:18.83, whereas, in 2019, NAPLES value dropped to 17:48.33.

The 10 000m saw its NAPLES value improve from 43:19.41 in 2016 to 36:57.21 in 2019. This increase is not only due to the fact that the best Lebanese athletes ran this distance but road races have become increasingly popular, especially the 10K, a race that is short enough to try and long enough to enjoy the challenge.

With Chirine qualifying for the Olympics in the marathon, this road race became very attractive. On top of that, more athletes are travelling nowadays, mainly Europe, to run international marathons, not forgetting the Beirut Marathon. All of this took NAPLES value for the marathon from 2:49:51 in 2016 to 2:44:32 in 2019.



Chirine Njeim, the only female athlete to qualify for the Olympics. One of the very few athletes worldwide to have participated in both winter and Summer Olympic Games. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)



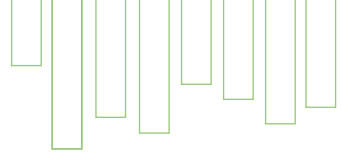
Chirine Njeim,
(Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

CHAPTER 10



JUMPING & THROWING EVENTS WOMEN

High Jump, Long Jump & Triple Jump
Shot Put, Discus Throw, Hammer Throw
& Javelin Throw



10.1. Overview Jumping events

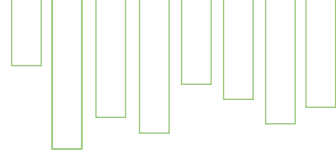
The best way for athletes to improve is to have a direct opponent who is close enough to them but still manages to beat them from time to time. When you lose to this competitor you are eager to win the next tournament. And similarly, when you are in the winning position your opponent tries his/her best to overcome you. This is what healthy competition is like and it is an almost sure way for the event's level to improve.

There are many examples of this theory in the sports world not only in track and field. Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost (Formula 1) were one example outside athletics. Yuriy Sedykh, longest world record holder in hammer throw, who died in 2021, achieved his record thanks to his rivalry with fellow Sergey Litvinov.

Mayssa Mouawad and Nourhane Kouche competed together in the high jump almost since the beginning of their careers (the correct word would have been against each other but the negative connotation is not welcome here). With the age difference, Nourhane had to wait a couple of years to start her duel with Mayssa.



Mayssa Mouawad, the best Lebanese high jumper, she broke the Lebanese U18 record when she was just 17 years old, U18. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)



For the first two years, 2016 and 2017, Nourhane was better. But starting 2018, Mayssa became Lebanon's number 1 high jumper. Not only did she jump the highest during these years, but she broke the national record in 2019, with a jump of 1.73m, when she was still U18. After that, in 2021 she bettered her record with a height of 1.74m, and she was U20!

It is a completely different story in the long jump. Christel Saneh dominated this event since 2008 when she took the number 1 spot and never let go of it till this day, with one exception in 2010 when Diala El-Khazen was number 1. It is interesting to note that Christel took the lead when she was only 14 years old!

In 2013, when Christel was still U20, she broke the Lebanese record the first time with a jump of 5.66m. After that she moved her attention to the 100m hurdles while still focusing on the long jump. She broke the hurdles record in 2016 and again in 2017 with 15.32 and 15.27 respectively.

In September 2017 she decided to go back to her first love, the horizontal jump. Christel broke the Lebanese record in 2018 with a jump of 5.73m, when she got the gold medal at the West Asian Championship in Jordan.

It is important to point out that Christel broke the Lebanese record again in 2021 with a jump of 5.87m during a local Lebanese meet.

As with the men, the same athletes are in the triple jump. So, it is almost natural to see Christel in the top spot. There is a new talent in this event, Lynn Azar, who broke the U18 Lebanese record with a jump of 11.08m and was ranked top 1 in 2019. For the ranking to be complete it is worth mentioning that in 2021 Christel jumped a PB of 11.62m earning her the number one Lebanese spot.



Lynn Azar, a "natural" jumper, she has all it takes to be a very good triple jumper. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)



Christel Saneh, record holder in the 100m hurdles, the long jump and the 4x100m relay. In 2017 she decided to go back to her first love, the long jump. She broke her own record three times since then. (Photo by courtesy of Marc-Anthony Ibrahim)

10.2. Overview Throwing events

Throwing, has never been a popular event in Lebanon. Lebanon has been missing a female shot put athlete for quite a long time. The last specialized shot putter, Fatme Dandan, threw 9.52m in 2016 which is not even close to her best of 10.15m in 2011.

Mira Ibrahim was ranked first in the discus throw through the whole Olympiad with a personal best of 32.42m set in 2019. Unfortunately, Mira stopped athletics after 2019.

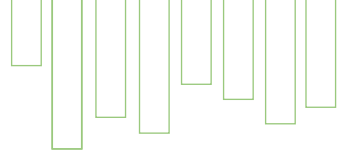


Mira Ibrahim, the best discus thrower in this Olympiad, she held first place in all of 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)

Mariam Youssef relatively a new comer to the throwing events. She started with the hammer throw in 2018 and was ranked first in her first year of competition. Mariam kept improving until she threw a distance of 33.02m in 2021, breaking one of the oldest Lebanese records set by Jeannette Ayoub: 32.22m in 1999! But in 2021, Samantha-Ann Haddad an American Lebanese living in the States competed at the Lebanese Cup and broke Mariam's record with a throw of 37.48m.



Mariam Youssef broke the Lebanese record in the hammer throw while just 17 years old. She is becoming the hammer specialist and is working towards regaining her title. (Photo by courtesy of Marise Nassour)



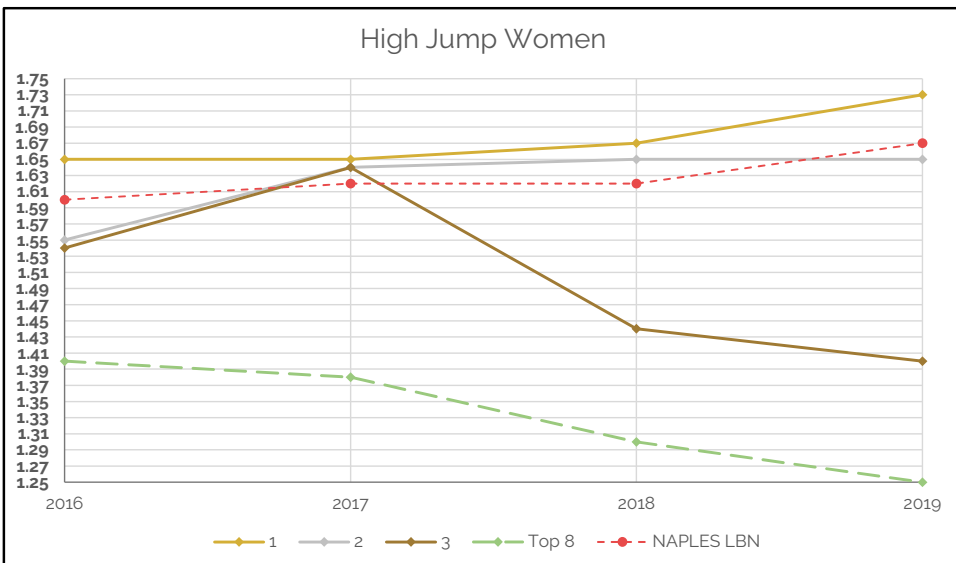
Jeannette Said has been the best javelin thrower, breaking the Lebanese record back in 2012 with a distance of 39.31m. Samantha Saikalis another American Lebanese living in the States took the first rank 2 years in a row, in 2016 and 2017 with a best of 38.22m. But she withdrew after 2017 and Jeannette was again number one.

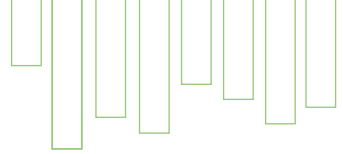


Jeanette Said, one of the best javelin thrower during this Olympiad, she sat in first place in both 2018 and 2019. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

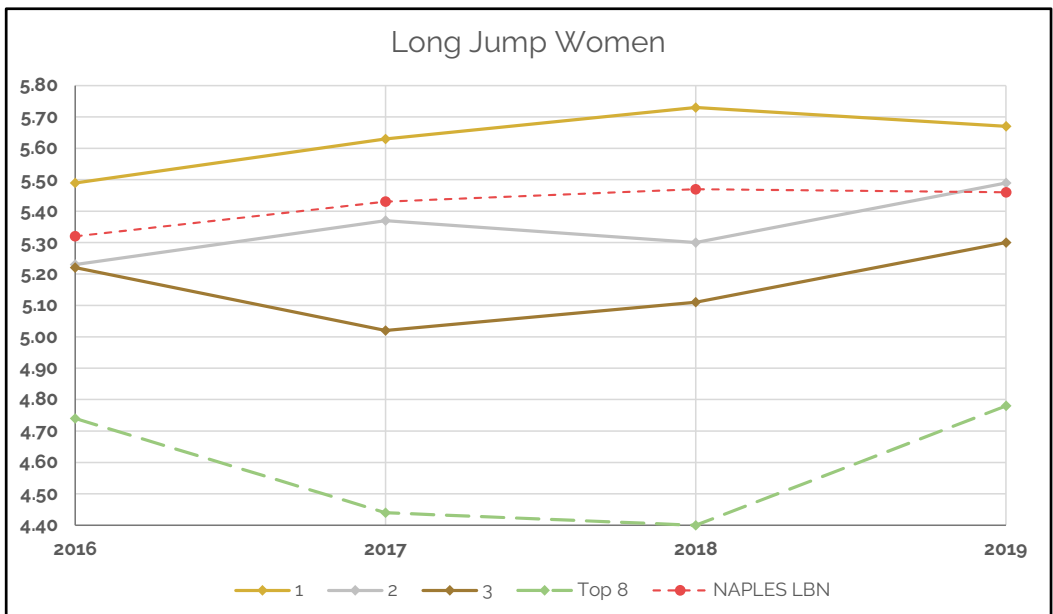
10.3. Tables & Graphs

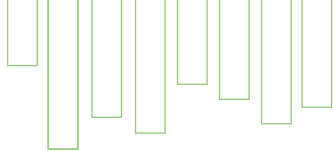
High Jump Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Maissa MOUAWAD	1.73	5	150	2	164	1	167	1	173
2	Nourhane KOUCH	1.65	2	155	2	164	2	165	2	165
2	Samantha SAIKALIS	1.65	1	165	1	165				
4	Karine BITCHAKJIAN	1.54	3	154						
5	Marie SEMRANI	1.51	4	151						
6	Karina MOUJAES	1.44					3	144	3	140
7	Lara SALEH	1.42	6	1.40	4	142	5	140	4	135
8	Rea AZAR	1.42			7	138	4	142		
9	Roxane RAJI	1.40	6	1.40	5	140				
9	Krystel SANEH	1.40	6	1.40	5	140				
11	Sarah ABOUD-JAOUDE	1.38			7	138				
11	Clara MOHTAR	1.38			7	138				
13	Maria NASSAR	1.35							4	135
14	Maria MERHEJ	1.34					6	134		
15	Perla ABOU-RJEILY	1.30							6	130
15	Ghaya DARJANI	1.30					7	1.30		
15	Elindra KALOST	1.30					7	1.30		
18	Marise NASSOUR	1.29							7	129
19	Chloe ASSEILY	1.25							8	1.25
19	Cyrine CHIDIAC	1.25							8	1.25
19	Chanel KAMEL	1.25							8	1.25
19	Zoe SALEM	1.25							8	1.25
	NAPLES LBN			1.60		1.62		1.62		1.67



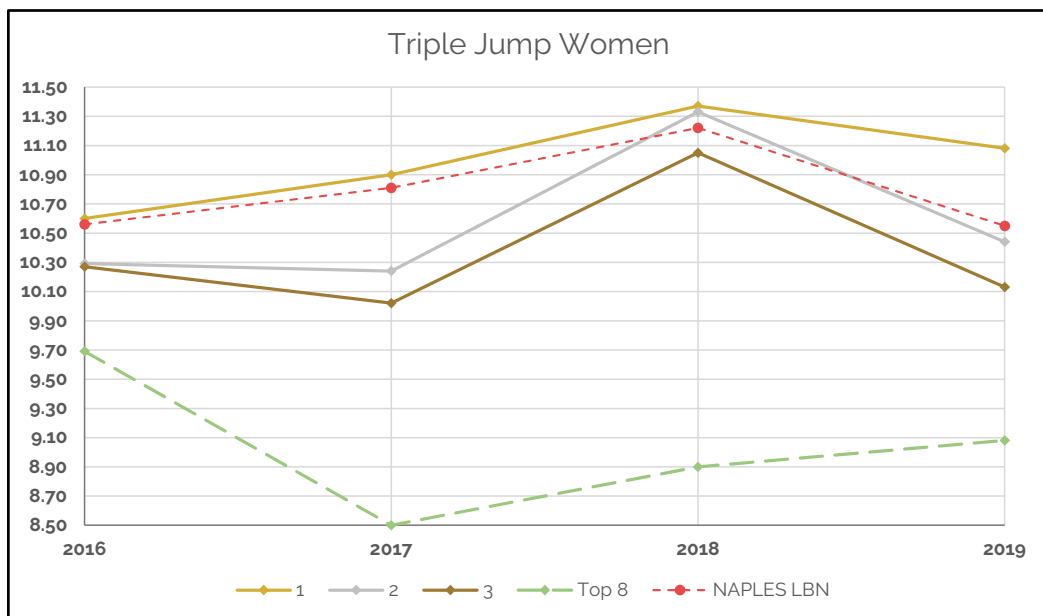


Long Jump Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019		
1	Krystel SANEH	5.73	1	5.49	1	5.63	1	5.73	1	5.67	
2	Lea MAZLOUM	5.49							2	5.49	
3	Angie SALEH	5.37	3	5.22	2	5.37	2	5.30	4	5.05	
4	Lea DIB	5.30							3	5.30	
5	Joy ABOU-SLEIMAN	5.23	2	5.23	5	4.99	3	5.11	6	5.02	
6	Line AZAR	5.04			6	4.62	5	4.82	5	5.04	
7	Diala KHAZEN	5.02	5	4.94	3	5.02					
8	Joelle FEGHALI	5.00	7	4.92	4	5.00	6	4.70			
9	Clara NASSOUR	4.97			7	4.44	4	4.97	8	4.78	
10	Christine DAOU	4.97	4	4.97							
11	Sabine KHOURY	4.93	6	4.93							
12	Yara HOTEIT	4.89							7	4.89	
13	Cynthia ABDEL-NOUR	4.74	8	4.74							
14	Maria NOHRA	4.61					7	4.61			
15	Maria MERHEJ	4.40					8	4.40			
	NAPLES LBN			5.32		5.43		5.47		5.46	

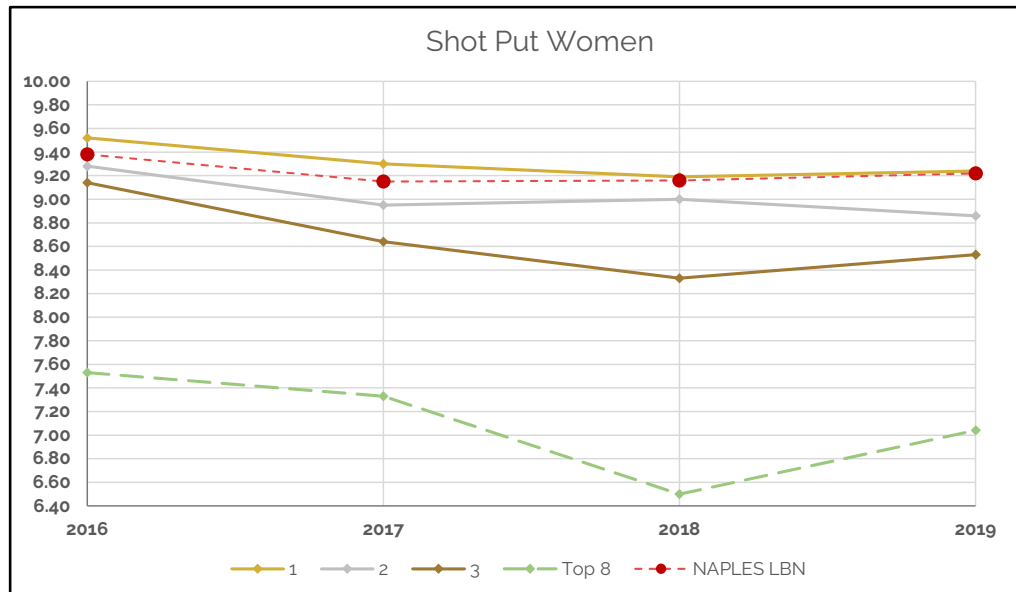




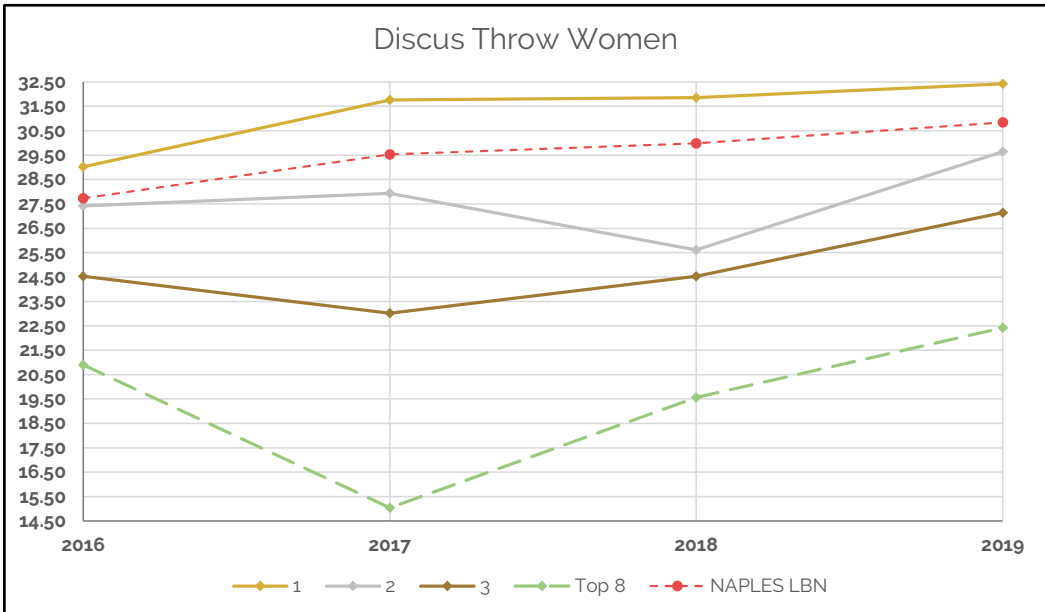
Triple Jump Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Krystal SANEH	11.37			1	10.90	1	11.37		
2	Angie SALEH	11.33	6	9.94	3	10.02	2	11.33		
3	Line AZAR	11.08	5	10.05	2	10.24	4	10.61	1	11.08
4	Joy ABOU-SLEIMAN	11.05	2	10.29			3	11.05	2	10.44
5	Sabine KHOURY	10.60	1	10.60						
6	Bethany NASRALLAH	10.42	4	10.07			5	10.42	3	10.13
7	Lory TACHIJIAN	10.27	3	10.27						
8	Clara NASSOUR	10.09					6	9.94	4	10.09
9	Nour GHOSTINE	9.77	7	9.77						
10	Farah TAYAR	9.69	8	9.69						
11	Gaëlle ABDEL-NOUR	9.55					7	9.40	5	9.55
12	Lea BOUDAKIAN	9.32			4	9.19			6	9.32
13	Nay MOUSTAPHA	9.13							7	9.13
14	Chanel KAMEL	9.08							8	9.08
15	Maria MERHEJ	8.90					8	8.90		
16	Maria NOHRA	8.59			5	8.59				
17	Karen FEGHALI	8.50			6	8.50				
	NAPLES LBN			10.56		10.81		11.22		10.55

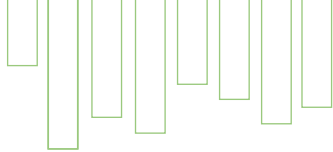


Shot Put Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Fatme DANDAN	9.52	1	9.52	1	9.30				
2	Nathalie BEJJANI	9.28	2	9.28	2	9.13	3	8.33	4	8.41
3	Krystel SANEH	9.24			3	8.95	1	9.19	1	9.24
4	Sara BECHARA	9.14	3	9.14						
5	Jeanette SAID	9.00					2	9.00		
6	Loane IBRAHIM	8.86					4	8.10	2	8.86
7	Céline HAGOPIAN	8.68			4	8.68	8	6.50		
8	Layal FATTOUH	8.55			5	8.55				
9	Karine NAGY	8.53	4	8.47					3	8.53
10	Maria ABOU-FARHAT	8.47	5	8.39	6	8.47				
11	Nathalie MOUAWAD	8.38	6	8.14	7	8.38				
12	Katia CHEKRI	7.94			8	7.94				
13	Maria GHARZOUZI	7.73							5	7.73
14	Iman KALLAS	7.67							6	7.67
15	Melissa CHEDID	7.53	7	7.53						
15	Maria SEMAAN	7.53	7	7.53						
17	Donia ABOU-JALAD	7.50					5	7.50		
18	Marise NASSOUR	7.34							7	7.34
19	Marita ABDALLAH	7.04							8	7.04
20	Maria-Pia ZINA-RAHMÉ	6.99					6	6.99		
21	Linda MOUSSI	6.82					7	6.82		
	NAPLES LBN			9.38		9.15		9.16		9.22

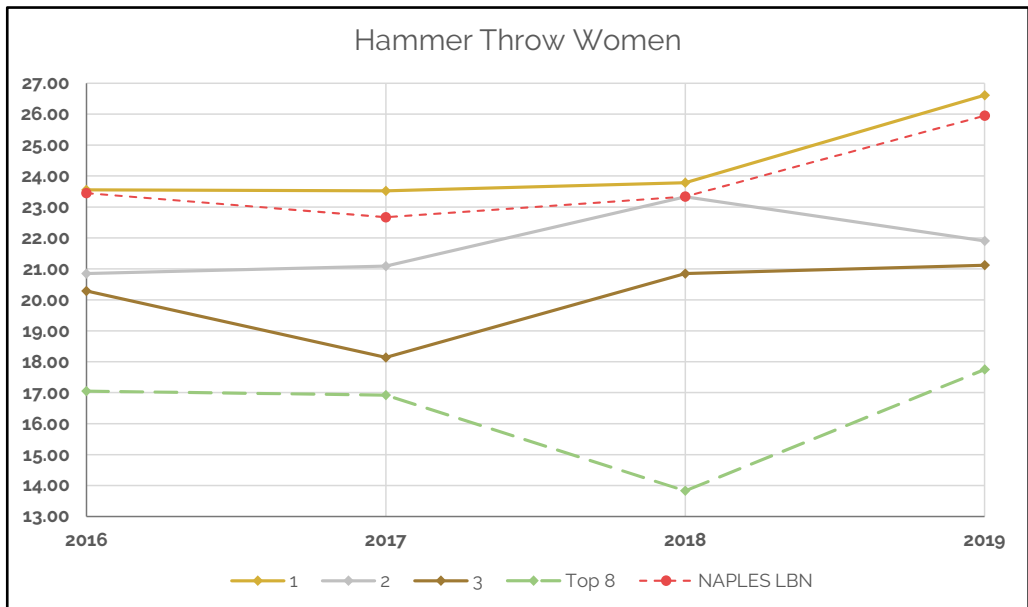


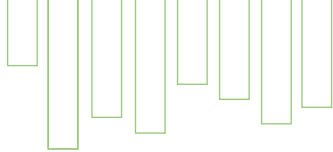
Discus Throw Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Mira IBRAHIM	32.42	1	29.02	1	31.76	1	31.85	1	32.42
2	Mariam YOUSSEF	29.64					3	24.53	2	29.64
3	Nathalie BEJJANI	27.93	2	27.42	2	27.93	2	25.61	3	27.14
4	Jeanette SAID	26.64							4	26.64
5	Loane IBRAHIM	25.54			7	18.20	4	22.65	5	25.54
6	Layal FATTOUH	24.53	3	24.53	3	23.02				
7	Nathalie MOUAWAD	24.49	4	24.49						
8	Pia SARKIS	23.86							6	23.86
9	Christelle JALKH	23.32	5	23.32	4	22.86	5	22.14		
10	Rosalia AZZI	23.02					7	21.47	7	23.02
11	Elissa SAAD	22.42	6	21.62	5	21.29			8	22.42
12	Karine NAGY	21.98					6	21.98		
13	Jana BOULOS	21.05	7	21.05						
14	Marie Michelle KHOURY	20.90	8	20.90						
15	Nadia NASR	19.57					8	19.57		
16	Fatme DANDAN	18.25			6	18.25				
17	Thea NASSAR	15.04			8	15.04				
	NAPLES LBN			27.73		29.53		29.98		30.84



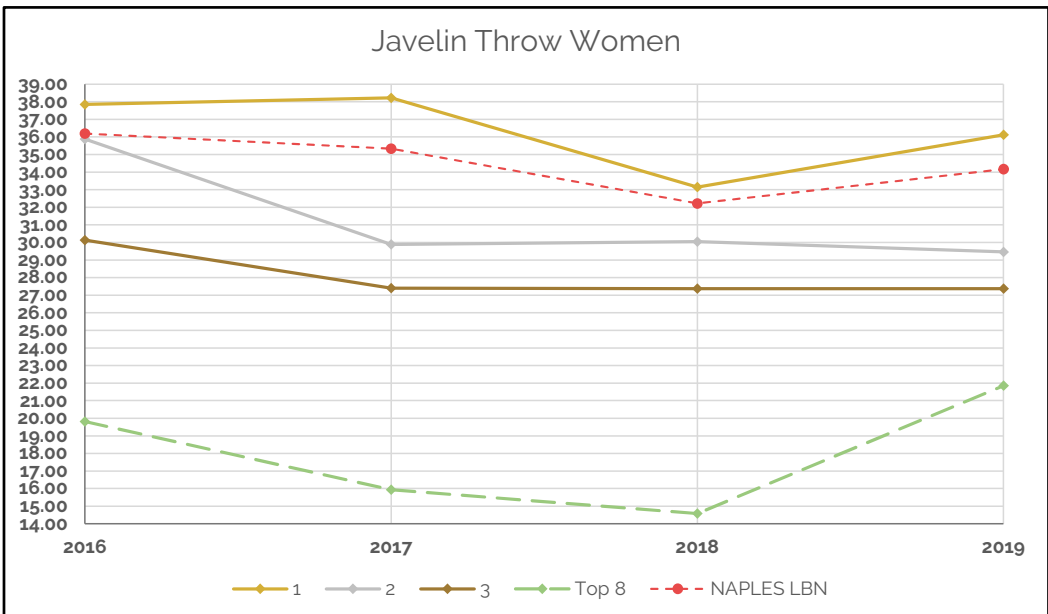


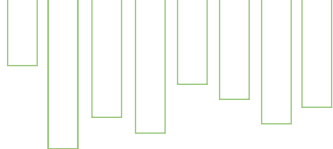
Hammer Throw Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019	
1	Mariam YOUSSEF	26.61					1	23.79	1	26.61
2	Mira IBRAHIM	23.55	1	23.55	1	23.52	2	23.33	6	19.24
3	Pia SARKIS	21.90							2	21.90
4	Thea NASSAR	21.12					5	17.98	3	21.12
5	Line HAIDAMOUS	21.09			2	21.09				
6	Nathalie BEJJANI	20.85	3	20.29	8	17.36	3	20.85		
7	Jeanette SAID	20.85	2	20.85	6	17.79				
8	Karine NAGY	19.73					4	19.73		
9	Karine BITCHAKJIAN	19.39							4	19.39
10	Joy FEGHALI	19.30							5	19.30
11	Katia CHEKRI	18.69	6	17.57	3	18.69				
12	Maria GHARZOUZI	18.66			5	17.80			7	18.66
13	Marise NASSOUR	18.54	4	18.54						
14	Maria ABOU-FARHAT	18.14	5	17.68	4	18.14				
15	Tamara AWADA	17.75					6	15.31	8	17.75
16	Marie Elie MERHI	17.60			7	17.60				
17	Rh�ea AKEL	17.09	7	17.09						
18	Cynthia BREIDI	17.05	8	17.05						
19	Lea ASSAAD	14.48					7	14.48		
20	Faten BOU-MJAHED	13.83					8	13.83		
	NAPLES LBN			23.45		22.67		23.34		25.95





Javelin Throw Women		Olympiad	2016		2017		2018		2019			
1	Samantha SAIKALIS	38.22	1	36.90	1	38.22						
2	Jeanette SAID	36.12	2	35.88	2	29.88	1	33.14	1	36.12		
3	Krystel SANEH	30.13	3	30.13								
4	Karine NAGY	30.04	4	28.21					2	30.04	4	26.14
5	Pia SARKIS	29.46							2	29.46		
6	Maria-Pia ZINA-RAHMÉ	27.40					3	27.40	4	27.26	3	27.37
7	Mira IBRAHIM	27.37	5	24.10	4	27.36	3	27.37	5	24.51		
8	Maria SEMAAN	23.06	6	23.06								
9	Sandra SLEIMAN	23.04									6	23.04
10	Joy FEGHALI	22.89									7	22.89
11	Diala CHAB	22.10							5	22.10		
12	Hanadi RAJEH	21.85									8	21.85
13	Maria GHARZOUZI	20.70	8	19.82	5	20.70						
14	Lea KALTCHIRIAN	20.13					6	20.13				
15	Rh�a FAREs	20.09							6	20.09		
16	Chloe MOKDESSI	20.01	7	20.01	8	19.11						
17	Marie Michelle KHOURY	19.64					7	19.64				
18	Lea ASSAAD	14.58							7	14.58		
	NAPLES LBN			36.19		35.33		32.22		34.16		





10.4. Straight, Up or Down

Breaking a national record helps improving a nation's level. That could be seen in both jumping events, the high jump and long jump. Mayssa improved the record in 2019 with 1.73m, thus NAPLES values increased between 2016 and 2019, going from 1.60m to 1.67m.

In the long jump, Christel broke the record in 2018 with 5.73m. similarly NAPLES values increased between 2016 and 2019, from 5.32m to 5.46m.

The triple jump has never been an event for which athletes train solely for. They all come from a long jump background. During this Olympiad, this event stayed at the same level. Maybe now that there is a pure triple jumper, Lynn Azar, the level will rise.

In the throwing events, the shot put and javelin throw's levels decreased, whereas the hammer and discus throws levels increased. Seeing as how there are new female athletes who are interested in the hammer throw, the level rose quite naturally. As for the discus, Mira Ibrahim kept on improving over the years pulling this event up.



Christel Saneh during Long Jump. (Photo by courtesy of Mary Joy Hakim)

CHAPTER 11

EVOLUTION OF LEBANESE ATHLETICS OVER THE OLYMPIAD

11.1. Overview

After reviewing all the events separately, we will now take a look at the evolution of them all during this Olympiad. It will then make it easy to compare different events and decide which one had the better or the best level.

It was obvious when talking about an event that one athlete could make a difference. Looking at the men's plot it is easy to see Nouredine Hadid's influence in all three sprint events, as well as Christopher Saikalis' influence in the shot put during the years 2016 and 2017. From this plot, we notice that the throwing events are not as good as the sprint or the jumps. In fact, the throwing events are the weakest ones.

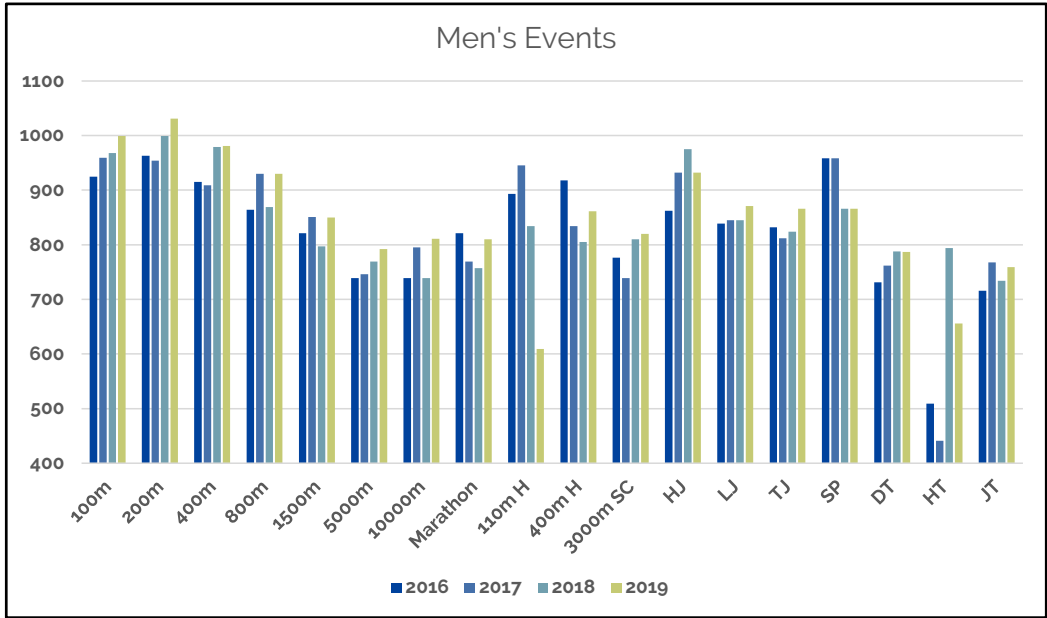
Chirine Njeim was the reason behind the upraise of the women's marathon. Aziza Sbaity did the same in the sprint events and Christel Saneh in the long jump.

To compare the events all together, scores for all performances were found in the World Athletics scoring table. As a reminder the points go from 1, the weakest performance, to 1400, well beyond world records.

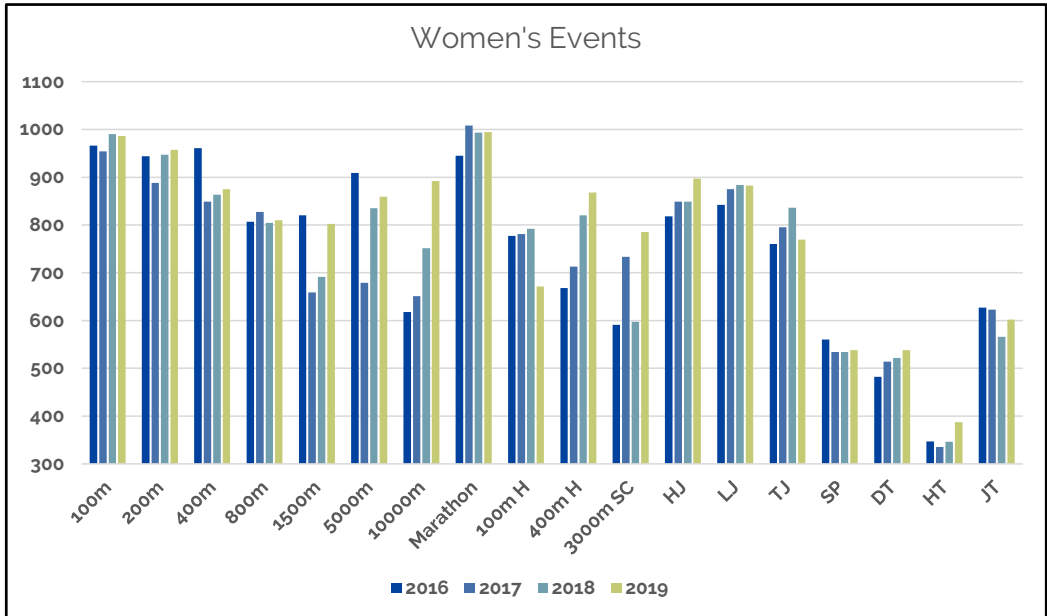


Lebanese Athletics Federation Referee. (Photo by courtesy of Christel Saneh)

11.2. Men's events over the 4 years

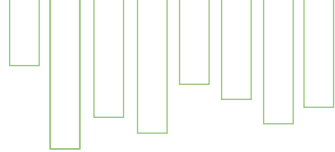


11.3. Women's events over the 4 years



CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSION,
WHERE DO WE GO
FROM HERE?



12.1. Conclusion, where do we go from here?

Describing Lebanon's current degree of athletic achievement is a great tool to assess the country's national level. After this evaluation, the next step would be to explore ways to improve the athletics scene. Not one track and field athlete has ever earned an Olympic or world medal. Is a medal a possibility for the Lebanese, or just an eternal dream?

Securing a medal in a major championship does not solely lie on the shoulders of the Lebanese Athletics Federation or the athletes; it is, among other things, a political endeavor. Sport governing bodies should be aware of this fact; an isolated federation or association cannot achieve this goal alone.

12.2. Factors for a Country's Success in Elite Sport

An Olympic medal is considered a nation's pride, and several countries used their medal count to prove a political stance (Nassif, 2018). For example, in the Cold War, the Soviets used their dominance in sports to prove their political supremacy over the United States' economic and political systems. Newly independent countries used sports as a tool for them to be recognized as free nations. Algeria, Morocco and Egypt, among others, worked hard to win some major medals to be recognized as new emergent countries that rejected colonialism.

For a country to have elite athletes, work should be done on the macro and micro levels. Two models proposed by De Bosscher and Reiche have been used to evaluate a country's elite sport policies: The SPLISS (Sport Policies Leading to International Sport Success) and the WISE (Women, Institutionalization, Specialization, Early learning). Each of these models uses unique factors in their identification of an elite sports group.

12.3. SPLISS

This model is based on 9 pillars that are divided into three phases: input, throughput and output (De Bosscher, 2015).

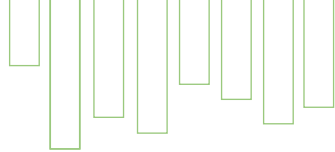
In the first phase, input, one important pillar is "financial support". It is the first pillar and can be considered the base, as nothing can happen without its support.

In the "throughout phase", eight pillars are considered:

- Governance, organization and structure of elite sport policies: if there is no governing body to manage this elite group, it is impossible to pursue this goal.
- Participation in sports: Although this point seems self-explanatory, participating in competitions is essential to an athlete's improvement.
- Talent identification and development system: Scouting for talent is an essential phase, as it allows training to be more efficient and good results more probable.
- Athletics and post-career support: Athletes are always afraid of the aftermath. What will happen to an athlete once their sports career is over? How can they survive financially after that? Many athletes attend college to help secure a longer-term future after their professional athletics career is over.

Nadim Nassif (2018): Factors Behind Lebanon's Difficulties Achieving Success at the Olympics, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, DOI: 10.1080/09523367.2018.1438412

Veerle De Bosscher, Simon Shibli, Hans Westerbeek, and Maarten Van Bottenburg (eds), *Successful Elite Sport Policies* (London: Meyer & Meyer Sport, 2015), 42-48.



- Training facilities: An essential and sometimes overlooked factor in training is the facilities available to the athletes. In Lebanon for instance, there are very few tracks and most of them are closed to the general public.
- Coaching and coach development: Another key ingredient for athletes to improve is the coaching science. An update in the education is a must, as coaching science is always evolving, and Lebanese coaches should stay up to date in this matter.
- (Inter)national competition: this is very similar to the 2nd point with emphasis on organizing such competitions, especially international ones with fresh faces and competition.
- Scientific research: having local coaches involved in the research is not only a bonus, but it will allow them to be part of the international coaching scene.

The third and final phase, Output, is only concerned with the degree to which an organization has achieved its goal, in other words the number of medals won in a major championship.

12.4. WISE

Reiche defined the WISE model in his book, "Success and Failure of Countries at the Olympic Games". In this model there are only four factors (Reiche, 2016):

- Women: By promoting women's elite program, there are better chances to win a medal in major championship.
- Institutionalization of the Olympic Sports: Setting up a centralized governmental sports system that offers athletes the proper structure to develop their skills is crucial to obtain results.
- Specialization in medal-promising sports: Focusing on sports with higher chances of winning medals is a commonly used method for countries to achieve success.
- Early planning, coaching, teaching, and specializing in sports that have been recently added to the Olympic program gives countries opting for this strategy an extra edge over rivals.

These two models were developed with Olympic sports in mind. Is there a way to profit from either or both models when looking at track and field exclusively? Is it possible to use some of their factors to improve the level of athletics in Lebanon?

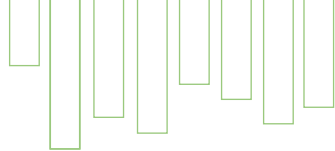
12.5. The case of athletics in Lebanon

Athletics is one of the oldest Olympic sports. It has a special place in the Olympic Games and is sometimes called the mother of all sports. It is an individual sport, so focusing on one promising athlete can lead to a medal at the Olympics or at the World Championship.

By studying the SPLISS model, financial support is an essential and vital factor. The second pillar, the governance and structure of the athletics body, is not a complicated task. In previous years, we had a national coach who oversaw the national team, following a system that was copied from some of the European countries, but this strategy has shown its weaknesses thus was discarded.

We have the option of adopting the American or the French strategies in this structure. The United States Track and Field (USATF) have opted to taking both the athletes and respective coaches during their selection to compete in tournaments. In this case, the team manager is the head coach who oversees all the administrative tasks, however the manager's duties do not interfere with the athletes' training sessions or programs.

Danyel Reiche, Success and Failure of Countries at the Olympic Games (London: Routledge, 2016), 78.



The French federation has a similar structure, but the head coach is called a technical director. They recently created "the elite athletes' unit" where they have one manager for this team of high-level athletes. Whether a head coach or an elite director, in both systems the selected athletes continue training with their coaches in their comfortable environment.

This is a simple structure that could easily be implemented in Lebanon.

The major problem in Lebanon is the lack of training facilities. With only two tracks open to the general public, clubs, coaches, and athletes suffer from a lack of accessibility to proper training grounds. The Federation could ask the persons in charge of the private facilities to open them for the national team or selected athletes or any formula that could help the athletes train and perform.

On another note, promoting athletics out of Beirut could help discover new talents in other regions. Some of our best athletes come from outside greater Beirut. Ali Awad and Ali Khazaal, to name a few, come from the Baalbek region, somewhat considered underprivileged in comparison to the capital and its surrounding areas. Both athletes, through their own hard work and determination, have broken several Lebanese records.

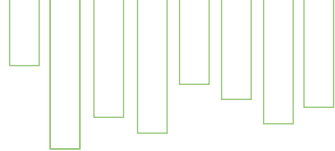
When it comes to coaching development, this pillar is an important element that the Federation can help with tremendously. Coaching seminars can be organized locally with national or international experts, but coaches must first be convinced that they will benefit from these courses. The main problem is that most trainers seem to resist collaborations and tend to feel that their own knowledge is saturated enough, so persuading them to update and develop their expertise proves to be a difficult and daunting task, especially if a course is carried on by a local expert rather than an international one.

Regarding women, concentrated efforts in developing a top tier female track and field squad in Lebanon can place us far ahead on the map in the Arab region. Seeing as to how this part of the world lacks support to women in sports, focusing on women in sports would place us at an advantage and thus propel us forward, therefore reaching a solid continental and then worldwide level of achievement.

For instance, when triple jump was added to the women's events, I immediately started training female athletes because I was aware that in a newly added event, chances to win a medal are very high. Unfortunately, the federation at that time didn't realize that opportunity and we lost the edge.

Athletics may be an individual sport. However, top athletes can improve with the help of their teammates. Creating a national team will encourage athletes to strive to be part of this elite group. Naturally, when choosing a team to represent the country internationally, the athletes with the highest performance would be chosen as the best of the best. Gaining personal financial support would also encourage athletes to train harder to join that team. This national team could be divided into several levels: national, regional, continental and world level, depending on the athlete's performance. There may be years where there would be no athletes that could compete on a worldwide level, but it is an incentive for all athletes in this elite group.

Sports in schools should be independent from elite sports. Scouting in schools can bring great athletes to the national team, but school championships should be a competition between schools and not clubs, as a student's school is their second home, so throwing, jumping, and running for it would be a big incentive to compete and succeed. It is only when athletes mature enough to fully understand the importance of training and competing that they can integrate themselves into an elite program or a club, depending on their level. World athletics recognized this, and thus it was not an innocent decision to go back to only two age categories: U20 and Open. U18, and what they used to call the "Youth" category was dropped out.



12.6. Final thoughts

The Lebanese Athletics Federation cannot be exclusively blamed for our sports' shortcomings when it comes to winning medals in major championships. Excellence in sports can only be achieved when the federation, clubs, and coaches collaborate to achieve greatness.

NAPLES was a very helpful tool to assess our national level. A definite conclusion is that one athlete can pull the national level up. So, taking care of a single athlete can do wonders for their event. As an example, the Lebanese levels soared to new heights when Christopher Saikalis threw 18 meters in the shotput event. Badri Obeid, the previous record holder had no other choice but to throw farther than his competitor. After dropping to 14.92m in 2016, he threw 16.13m when Saikalis was competing with him during the Lebanese championship; an improvement 1.21m from his previous best.

Noureddine Hadid improved all the sprint distances, 100m, 200m and the 400m thus, their **NAPLES** values went up.

In the women's category, Aziza Sbaity did the same with the 100m, as did Christel Saneh with the long jump.

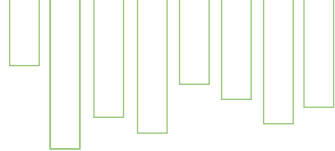
Being an individual sport, it is relatively easy for track and field clubs to focus their efforts on the most promising athletes, while making sure not to neglect the rest of their members. But as always, this is easier said than done! All of us that train the current generation of athletes might find truth in the Russian proverb: "A man is judged by his deeds, not his words."

Winning medals in our sport cannot be achieved without a clear policy. Our national governing body needs be aware of the importance of this aspect so that a unified decision can be made to develop athletics in Lebanon.

It is tough for one individual to make this political decision and delivering on the promise of potential comes down to intricate planning from the bottom up. The whole athletics family, from athletes, to coaches, to federation members and so forth, should work together towards this collective vision. So, let's work hand in hand to win medals for Lebanon in the near future!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



It is traditional to thank those who helped in the realization of a book. In this case, I know that this book would not have been possible without the precious help of some.

The *Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts* and the policy of its dean, André Bekhazi, to work on Lebanese problems and to help Lebanese research. Without this policy it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, to realize this project. Tokyo 2020One.

Laura Saliba and Patrick Fargialla, my precious collaborators of the first days, without you any statistical study would have been impossible. I owe you a lot. Thank you for volunteering your time to enter the results in our database and on our website.

Marise Nassour, a new collaborator of the Track and Field Society, who enters the results provided by the federation - which are in pdf format - in Excel format.

All the pictures I owe to Christel Saneh and Marise Nassour. When it is not Christel behind the camera, she is always the one we go to to finalize all the photos. You do a remarkable job Christel, and the "World Athletics" understood it. I take this opportunity to wish Christel good luck in her new career in Monaco. We will miss you on the field, even if you will be with us in spirit at all the meetings. Beside her outstanding work in photos, Christel is a Graphic Arts bachelor. One afternoon, she just sat in the coffee shop next to me and came up with this very nice layout for the book.

When I had the idea of determining the national level in an athletics event, I immediately understood the implication of mathematics. So I talked to my good friend Dr. Chafic Mokbel, Full Professor at the University of Balamand, who is not only a very competent engineer and an outstanding mathematician as well. So what could be more natural than to have him work on this project. NAPLES was born from an idea and mathematics equations.

The calculation of NAPLES for all the years of this Olympiad, 2016-2019, would not have been possible without the ungrateful, long and tiring work that Diala EL-Khazen has patiently done. Without your excel files, NAPLES would have been so much longer. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish Diala the best of luck in her studies of Sports Psychology which she is currently pursuing at California State University, Long Beach.

She has started a new master's degree in sports with the International Olympic Committee and despite her busy schedule, Aziza Sbaity found the time to edit my English text. Without you, Aziza, and your wise counsel, this book would not have been possible.

In the course of this book I discovered an athlete, Ashraf Abi-Said. He is quite shy at first and it takes time to know and appreciate him. This book allowed me to see him in a different light and I can say that I am lucky to have people like him by my side. His work on the conclusion shows his skills in the language of Shakespeare.

There are two friends who are always present when it comes to my work, Mario Hajjar and Tina Abi-Hachem. They both worked on the final layout and the edition of the eBook.

To my family which has always supported me unconditionally. Working with your continuous support has facilitated my research, which is often very long and can take up nights and even weekends.

I shall finish with my second family, my athletes and athletics. It is impossible for me to name all of you and I would not like to forget any of you. You have taught me a lot. It is true that during my long career as a coach, many of you have worked with me, for a period of time, and have given me a lot. Please be thanked here.

Athletics is my passion. It is true that it is frustrating sometimes, often I should say, but I know that I could not live without athletics in my life. My way of thanking athletics is to work to make it more and better known. I just hope to make that dream come true.

Cover photo: courtesy of Christel Saneh shot during the Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020.

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