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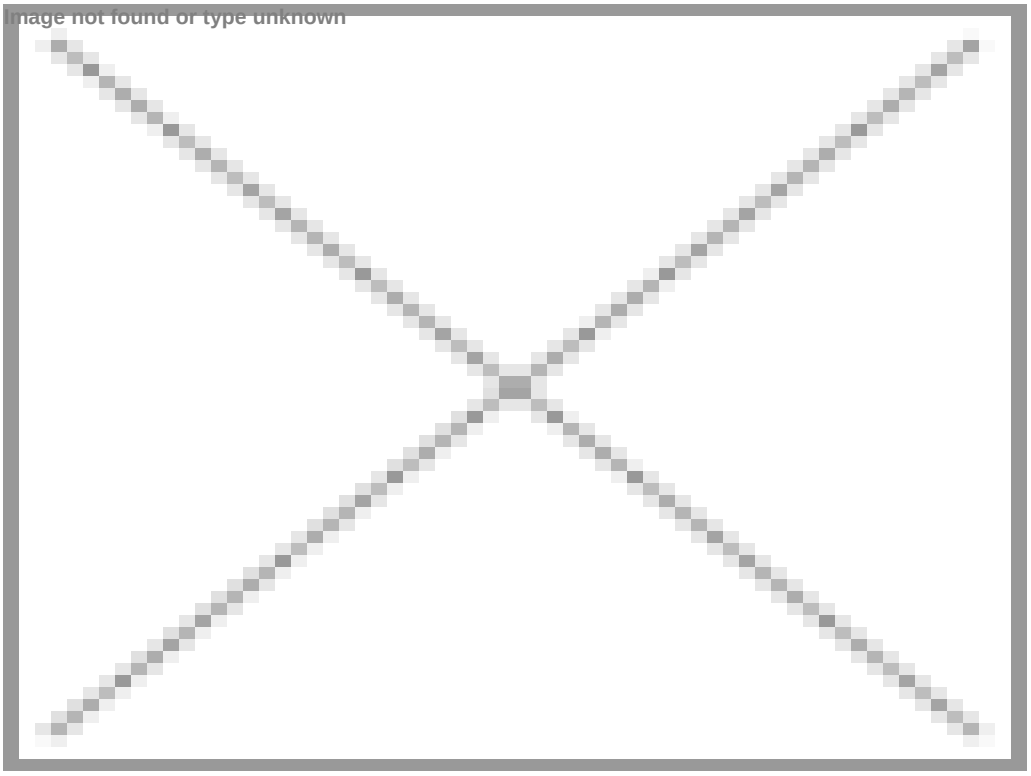
UIPM 2016 CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS: DOGUE DOUBLES UP FOR GERMANY



Patrick Dogue completed a memorable double for Germany by winning the men's gold medal at the UIPM Champion of Champions.

By topping the podium Dogue (GER) completed a season of excellent progress – he finished 2nd at the World Cup Final and 6th at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games – in a very similar pattern to Annika Schleu (GER), who retained her women's Champion of Champions crown 24 hours earlier.

The tall 24-year-old was solid rather than spectacular in Swimming and Fencing, but moved into contention with a flawless Riding performance and then took his opportunity from a starting position of 5th in the Combined Event to clinch gold.

It was a sign of the growing confidence of Dogue (GER) that he was able to fend off the challenge of world champion Valentin Belaud (FRA), who had to settle for silver. Robert Kasza (HUN) joined them on an all-European podium after winning the battle for bronze.

"It was a great experience,"said world No.10 Dogue. "I didn't train a lot since the Olympics and you can see my Swimming was not so good, but I had a very soild Fencing and I was very happy

about that, and then a clear round in Riding.

“The Riding course was very hard and we had a lot of refusals and knockdowns, so I was very happy with it. In 5th place for the Combined, I knew I could catch up because it was very close, and to get the gold medal in the end, I’m very happy.

“I knew Belaud was close to me but my Shooting coach is always telling me: ‘Focus on yourself.’ I’ve known him since we were teenagers and I know how good he is, so at the start of the race I was a little worried about him. I’m happy.

“The facilities here are outstanding and it’s a very well organised event.”

James Cooke (GBR) set the ball rolling with a typically fast swim of 2mins 03.85secs, ahead of Romain Gauthier (FRA, 2:04.67) and Jorge Inzunza (MEX, 2:05.64).

Nathan Schrimsher (USA) proved to be the man to beat on the Fencing piste as he enjoyed a final score of 23 victories and 13 defeats, ahead of Bence Demeter (HUN, 22V/14D) and Belaud (FRA, 22V/14D). But it was Yasser Hefny (EGY) who led the standings after two events, ahead of Cooke (GBR) and Schrimsher (USA).

The Riding was a tough experience for many competitors and only three managed a perfect score of 300. One was Dogue (GER), one was Belaud (FRA) and the other - to the delight of the home crowd and organisers - was first-time Champion of Champions entrant Khalid Al-Nuaimi (QAT).

The chances of Schrimsher (USA) making the podium were undermined when he incurred 42 penalty points, while Hefny (EGY) also lost the chance to be first on the start line for the Combined Event with his difficulties on horseback.

Cooke (GBR) went off first in the Run/Shoot but with only a tiny time advantage over Mikalai Hayanouski (BLR), Hefby (EGY), Demeter (HUN) and Dogue (GER). In truth any of those athletes could have ended up winning but it was the ones who started 5th (Dogue) and 8th (Belaud) who would ultimately contest the duel for gold.

Dogue (GER) took the initiative on the first 800m lap and moved away from Hefny (EGY) on the second lap, but he looked to be tiring as Belaud (FRA) made aggressive moves to catch him.

The final Shooting range was where Dogue (GER) effectively clinched gold, as he kept his composure and got out quickly enough to keep a manageable distance between himself and his French rival.

The realisation of victory was special for Dogue (GER), but this was not the final memorable moment of the 2016 UIPM season.

This occurred when all of the athletes gathered at the finish line to applaud the last finisher, Al-Nuaimi (QAT), across the line, before exchanging high fives and handshakes with the local hero.

It was a touching act of true sportsmanship, in the spirit of Modern Pentathlon’s founder Pierre de Coubertin.

“This was my first time taking part in the Champion of Champions, but I know I will compete in the future and next year I will target the top three,” said Al-Nuaimi (QAT).

Dr Klaus Schormann, UIPM President, said: “For a second day we have seen a very high level of competition with many Olympic athletes here.

“The combined ‘Laser-Run’ was again very exciting, and it’s good to hear the athletes reflecting that they like this Champion of Champions competition and are very willing to support it in future.

“What we have also learned in the last two days is that Qatar will be a future destination for high-level competitions, and also that young Qataris will feature in our competitions.

“Some of them were here as spectators, and one of them competed today and this is good for the Qataris and for our union. We can work for many, many years with the national federation.

“It’s a good way to finish the year for our union, to have a high-level competition but also from a sporting political perspective to see that we can develop our sport in this region, which has no existing tradition in Modern Pentathlon.”

The 2016 UIPM season is now over and the action will resume in Los Angeles (USA) with the first round of the 2017 UIPM World Cup from February 23-27.