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UIPM WORLD CUP III: STARS ALIGN IN HUNGARY

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- Olympic medallists Lesun (RUS) and Tymoshchenko (UKR) renew rivalry
- Kovacs (HUN) to defend territory against Clouvel (FRA) and French (GBR)
- Stellar line-up includes more than half of Rio 2016 field

The 2017 modern pentathlon season is poised to explode into action this week with more than half of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games field meeting in one of the sport's traditional strongholds.

Hungary has a proud record of producing winners both at home and abroad and much will be expected of local representatives including Sarolta Kovacs, the 2016 world champion, and Bence Demeter, winner of World Cup I in Los Angeles (USA) in February.

In the men's competition, the top six in the world rankings will all be competing in Kecskemét, where 2016 Olympic champion Alexander Lesun (RUS) renews his rivalry with Pavlo Tymoshchenko (UKR), winner of World Cup II in Cairo (EGY) in March.

Fierce competition will be provided by four other top-six athletes who topped the podium at major UIPM events in 2016: Valentin Belaud (FRA, World Championships), James Cooke (GBR, World

Cup Final), Valentin Prades (FRA, World Cup III) and Patrick Dogue (GER, Champion of Champions). Outside of that European matrix, yet more stiff competition will come from the likes of Jun Woongtae and Jung Jinhwa (KOR) and Omar Elgeziry (EGY).

On the women's side, Kovacs (HUN) will face serious pressure in her bid for home success from the likes of Rio 2016 silver medallist and world No.2 Elodie Clouvel (FRA), 2012 Olympic champion Laura Asadauskaite (LTU) and the in-form Kate French (GBR), who already has silver and gold to her name from this World Cup series.

Annika Schleu (GER), Kim Sunwoo (KOR) and Ilke Ozyuksel (TUR), a first-time medallist at World Cup II, are other names to look out for in a truly star-studded field numbering 15 female and 18 male athletes from last summer's Olympic Games.

Kecskemét hosted World Cup IV in 2016 when Cooke (GBR) and Anastasiya Prokopenko (BLR) were the gold medallists. In 2015, Belaud (FRA) and home favourite Zsolia Foldhazi (HUN) emerged on top of the World Cup podium here.

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "Kecskemét has been an important destination for flagship UIPM competitions for many years and Modern Pentathlon is an important pillar of the development of the city.

"We have already enjoyed two excellent World Cups in 2017 in Los Angeles and Cairo and now we are back in the traditional pentathlon stronghold of Europe.

"We know that the athletes at World Cup III will perform at a high level to gain world ranking points and entertain the spectators in a spirit of peace, friendship and harmony."

The first medals will be decided in the Women's Individual Final (May 6), followed by the Men's Individual Final (May 7) and Mixed Relay (May 8), with qualifying taking place on May 4-5.

The live stream of the competition and daily highlights packages from the finals will be available on UIPM TV and all results can be accessed on the UIPM website.

The 2017 UIPM World Cup circuit also visits Drzonkow (POL, May 26-28), before culminating with the World Cup Final in Vilnius (LTU, Jun 23-25) **which will be televised live on Eurosport.**