

06 MAY 2017

UIPM 2017 WORLD CUP III: ASADAUSKAITE (LTU) RETURNS TO WINNING WAYS

Image not found or type unknown



- Former Olympic champion comes from behind to win gold at World Cup III
- Home favourite Kovacs (HUN) holds on to bronze after losing Laser-Run lead
- First World Cup medal for silver starlet Gubaydullina (RUS)

Any time Laura Asadauskaite enters the Laser-Run stage of a pentathlon with the leader in her sights, that woman is going to come under serious pressure.

So it proved during the Women's Final at World Cup III when Asadauskaite (LTU) made light work of a 43-second deficit to deny Sarolta Kovacs (HUN) victory in front of her home crowd.

The result was a superb gold medal for Asadauskaite (LTU), her first podium finish of the 2017 season and 9th individual gold of her World Cup career, thanks to a lightning-fast Laser-Run (11:52.49).

This was even quicker than her incredible performance at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, where

the Lithuanian - out of medal contention due to an elimination in Riding - timed 12:01.01.

Now 33, the 2012 Olympic champion is clearly as strong as ever, especially in the heat of Laser-Run competition where nerves and stamina tend to separate the great from the good.

"It was a very good day, a very lucky day," said Asadauskaite (LTU). "Everything went well and I am very happy.

"Swimming was good, fencing was good and riding was good. Sarolta had a big lead at the start of Laser-Run but I always know that my running and shooting will be strong. I am very happy today."

Another strong Laser-Run performance came from Gulnaz Gubaydullina (RUS), who also overtook Kovacs (HUN) at the 3rd shoot and kept enough in reserve to claim an excellent silver, her first World Cup medal.

Gubaydullina (RUS) has made a name for herself as one of the quickest swimmers in pentathlon and she duly set the pace in the pool with a standout time of 2:07.88. Kovacs (HUN, 2:10.56) was her nearest challenger.

Ekaterina Khuraskina (RUS) proved to be the best fencer of the day, as she claimed 26V/8D and added an extra point in the final Bonus Round bout by defeating Kovacs (HUN, 24/10).

All of the leading women stayed in contention during a high-class exhibition of riding. Ayumu Saito (JAP) was the only rider to claim a perfect score of 300 but 15 athletes conceded eight penalties or fewer, including Kovacs (HUN, 298), Gubaydullina (RUS, 296) and Asadauskaite (LTU, 292).

That meant Kovacs (HUN) began the Laser-Run with a 33-second lead over Gubaydullina (RUS), with Asadauskaite (LTU) lurking 10 seconds further back.

Immediately the former Olympic champion made inroads, starting with a 10-second shoot, and it was at the 3rd range that Kovacs (HUN) stalled and was ruthlessly left behind.

With exceptional shooting Gubaydullina (RUS) moved into the lead, but within 100 metres of the 3rd lap came the decisive move from Asadauskaite (LTU). The Lithuanian used all her experience to chew up the green grass of the Kecskemét course and take the tape.

Two of the most consistent performers of recent times, Annika Schleu (GER) and Kate French (GBR), also made the top six and there was a second Russian prize winner, Khuraskina (RUS), in 5th.

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "This women's final was a great success, especially with the fantastic horses. The athletes also performed at a much higher level than the first two World Cups this season, and the organisation by the Hungarians has been excellent.

"It is not a surprise to see Laura, our 2012 Olympic champion who did not have luck on her side in Rio, back competing and on top of the podium."

The Men's Individual Final follows tomorrow (May 7) before World Cup III closes with the Mixed Relay (May 8).

Live stream of the finals is available on UIPM TV according to the schedule below.

Image not found or type unknown

