

29 MAY 2017

UIPM 2017 WORLD CUP IV: IRELAND A CLASS APART IN MIXED RELAY

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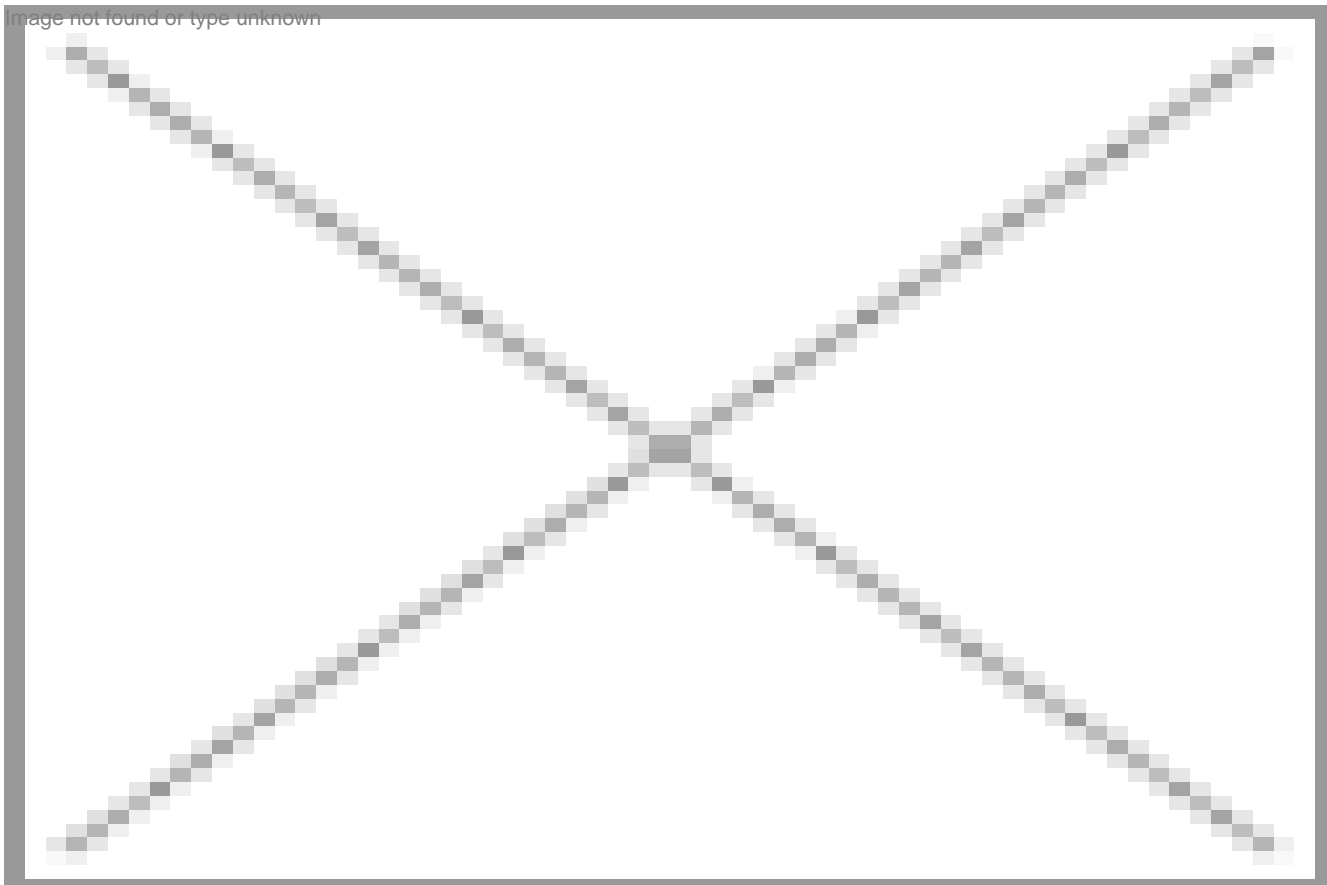


- Coyle and Lanigan-O'Keeffe (IRL) leave field behind
- Germany take silver and Kazakhstan bronze
- Tributes paid to Polish hosts as World Cup regular season ends

Ireland produced another classy demonstration of Mixed Relay tactics as they won gold at World Cup IV with plenty of time to spare.

Natalya Coyle and Arthur Lanigan-O'Keeffe (IRL), both of whom finished in the top 10 in individual events at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, were taking part in their first Mixed Relay of the 2017 UIPM season but there was no evidence of rust.

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Irish duo, who have a fine record in the Mixed Relay, went second-quickest in Swimming behind Japan (Rena Shimazu & Hikaru Shimano; 1:56.51), and then led from the front in the Fencing Ranking Round, scoring an impressive 30V/14D.

Korea (Kim Sunwoo & Seo Changwan) enjoyed the best of the Fencing Bonus Round, picking off Germany (Annika Schleu & Christian Zillekens), Poland (Natalia Dominiak & Szymon Staskiewicz) and Ireland (Coyle/Lanigan-O’Keeffe) to gain three extra points.

Ireland did not have their best day on horseback, surrendering 30 penalty points as Hungary (Karolina Palkovics & Norbert Horvath) led the way with a score of 296. But nothing could prevent them from both starting and finishing the Laser-Run out in front.

Setting out 15 seconds ahead of host nation Poland (Dominiak/Staskiewicz), 22 ahead of Korea (Kim/Seo) and 28 ahead of Germany (Schleu/Zillekens), Ireland never gave the chasing pack a chance.

“We started off the day well and then we had a really good fence, and we didn’t have a great ride so it was lucky we were in a good position. It was a really good day,” said Coyle (IRL).

“I think it’s great when you work together as pentathletes,” said Lanigan-O’Keeffe (IRL). “Myself and Natalya have a good relationship and when one of us is struggling we pick each other up. It makes it a little easier to stay focused.”

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Behind them there was an intriguing battle for silver and bronze. Germany had looked comfortable until the final shooting series, when Korea threatened to catch them. It was Kazakhstan (Elena Potapenko & Pavel Ilyashenko) who ended up putting pressure on Germany, and then Korea made life difficult for Kazakhstan, but in the end there were no twists in the tale.

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "The Mixed Relay is a very important team competition for our movement and our union.

"I'm really happy that we again had nations competing from all around the world, and our Asian athletes from Korea, Japan and Kazakhstan performed extremely well as they did in the individual events.

"We are looking forward to the decision of the IOC Executive Board in July when they will decide if our Mixed Relay will be included in the 2020 Olympic Games, as is our wish. The Mixed Relay has already been included in the Youth Olympic Games since 2010.

"I would like to say a special thanks to our organisers this week in Poland, who always put on a wonderful competition for our athletes."

The 2017 UIPM World Cup season concludes with the World Cup Final in Vilnius (LTU) on June 23-25 – and all three days of action will be televised live on Eurosport. Stay tuned to the UIPM website for more information in the build-up to Vilnius 2017.