

26 MAY 2018

UIPM 2018 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP SOFIA: LANIGAN-O'KEEFFE (IRL) CHARGES TO VICTORY



Arthur Lanigan-O'Keeffe of **Ireland** has topped the podium many times as a Mixed Relay champion but today he won individual gold at a UIPM competition for the first time after an impressive performance at Pentathlon World Cup Sofia.

It continued a spectacular week for one of pentathlon's most progressive nations, coming 24 hours after **Natalya Coyle** (IRL) claimed her first individual medal with silver in the Women's Individual Final.

Lanigan-O'Keeffe and **Coyle** (IRL), who are boyfriend and girlfriend, have the chance to add another Pentathlon World Cup medal to their growing collection in the Mixed Relay which closes the competition tomorrow (May 27).

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There was a 14sec gap between gold and silver, and the identity of the silver medallist underlined the quality of the winning performance. It was **Jun Woongate** of **Korea**, the world No.1, who secured silver 5sec ahead of **Pierre Dejardin** of **France**.

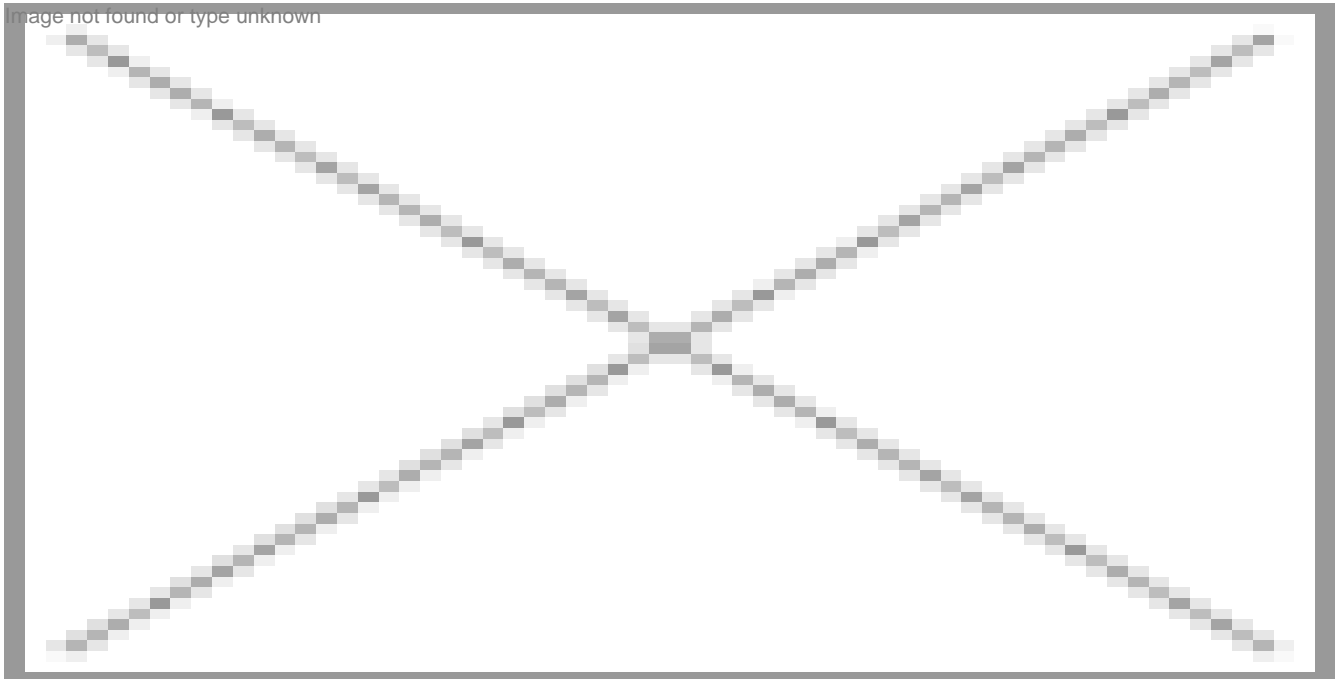
Lanigan-O'Keeffe (IRL), the 2015 European champion, said: "I was feeling pretty beaten up after the semi-final and I was worried my legs wouldn't hold up, but I'm delighted. It's a bit of an outer-body experience.

"To make things even better my girlfriend medalled yesterday and this is the first time we have won individual medals at the World Cup so it's a great result all round.

"As you can see I'm pretty red in the face but thankfully my body held up today. We've come through some hard times and now the results are starting to show.

"I'll dust off my legs, get into the plunge pool and get ready for tomorrow's Mixed Relay because we mean business."

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was another day of success for **Jun (KOR)**, who will be the man to beat at next month's Pentathlon World Cup Final in Astana (KAZ). The world No.1 started the Laser-Run in 3rd place but had too much ground to make up on Lanigan-**O'Keeffe (IRL)**.

Jun (KOR) said: "I'm really glad I won second place, really happy about the result but I didn't really enjoy the process today. I'm looking forward to the World Cup Final."

The surprise face on the podium was **Dejardin (FRA)**, who started the Laser-Run in 12th place but surged through the field to comfortably claim bronze.

Dejardin (FRA) said: "I made very good shots today and I had a great feeling about my running. The conditions were perfect, good weather and the circuit was nice, I'm very grateful to my coach."

Swimming

Jun (KOR) and **Lanigan-O'Keeffe (IRL)** immediately made their intentions clear in the pool with times of 2:01.83 and 2:01.92 respectively. But they were some way adrift of **James Cooke** of **Great Britain** (1:59.21).

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Fencing

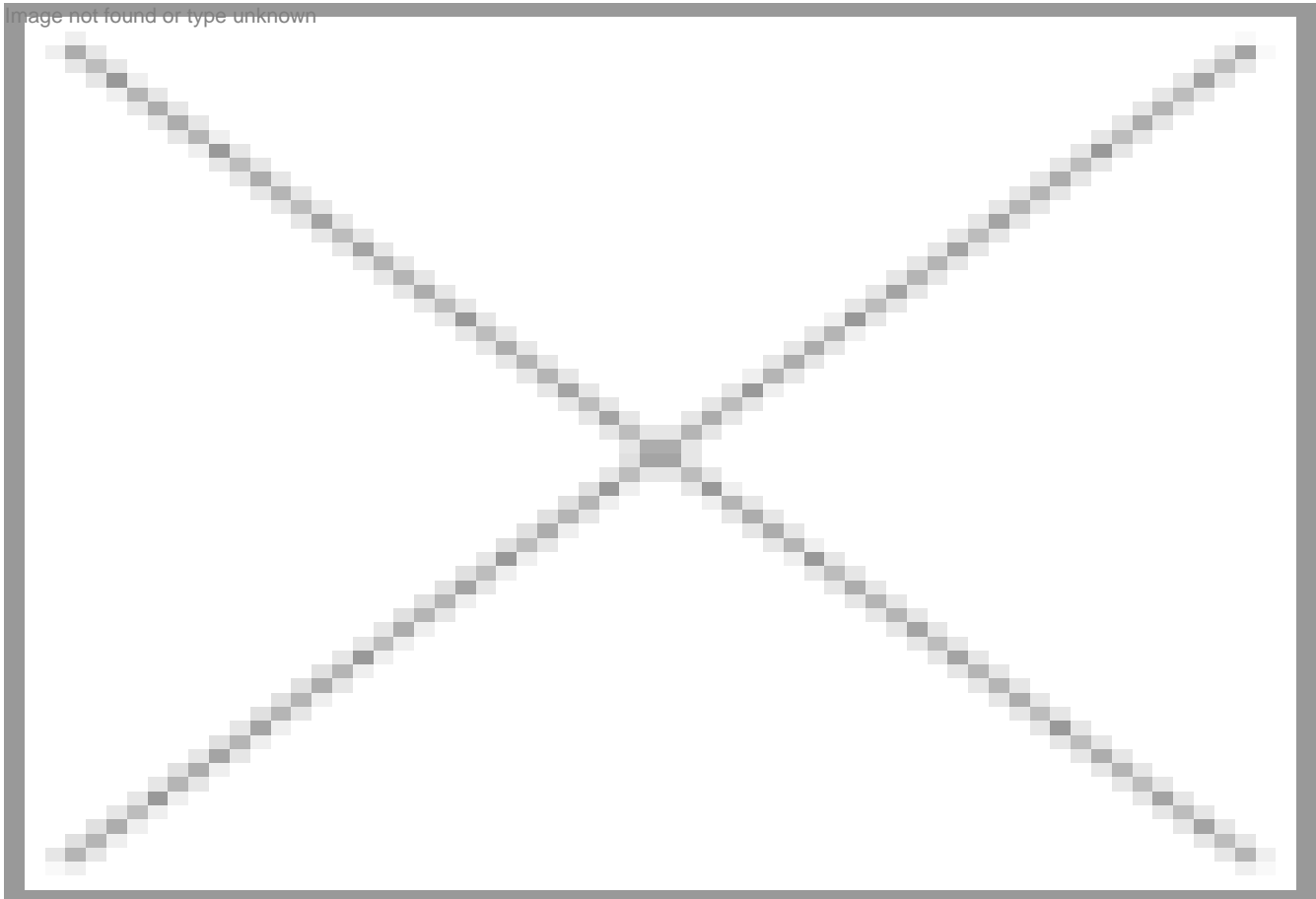
Competition was tight on the piste with **Lanigan-O'Keeffe (IRL)** emerging as the main man with 23V/12D in the Ranking Round plus two points in the Bonus Round.

Alexander Lifanov of **Russia** also managed 23V/12D while **Lee Jihun (KOR)** reprised the form of his gold-medal performance at Pentathlon World Cup Los Angeles with 22V/13D.

The **Dogue** brothers from **Germany**, **Marvin** and **Patrick**, each scored 20V/15D and added two bonus points, while **Jun (KOR)** also stayed in the hunt with the same score in the Ranking Round.

Riding

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A

series of high-class performances on horseback enabled a number of athletes to get back into contention. There were perfect scores of 300 for **Riccardo de Luca** of **Italy**, **Thomas Toolis** (**GBR**), **Lifanov** (**RUS**) and **Ondrej Polivka** of **Poland**.

Lanigan-O'Keeffe (**IRL**) protected his overall lead with a clean round (297) while **Jun** (**KOR**) was 1sec quicker and scored 298.

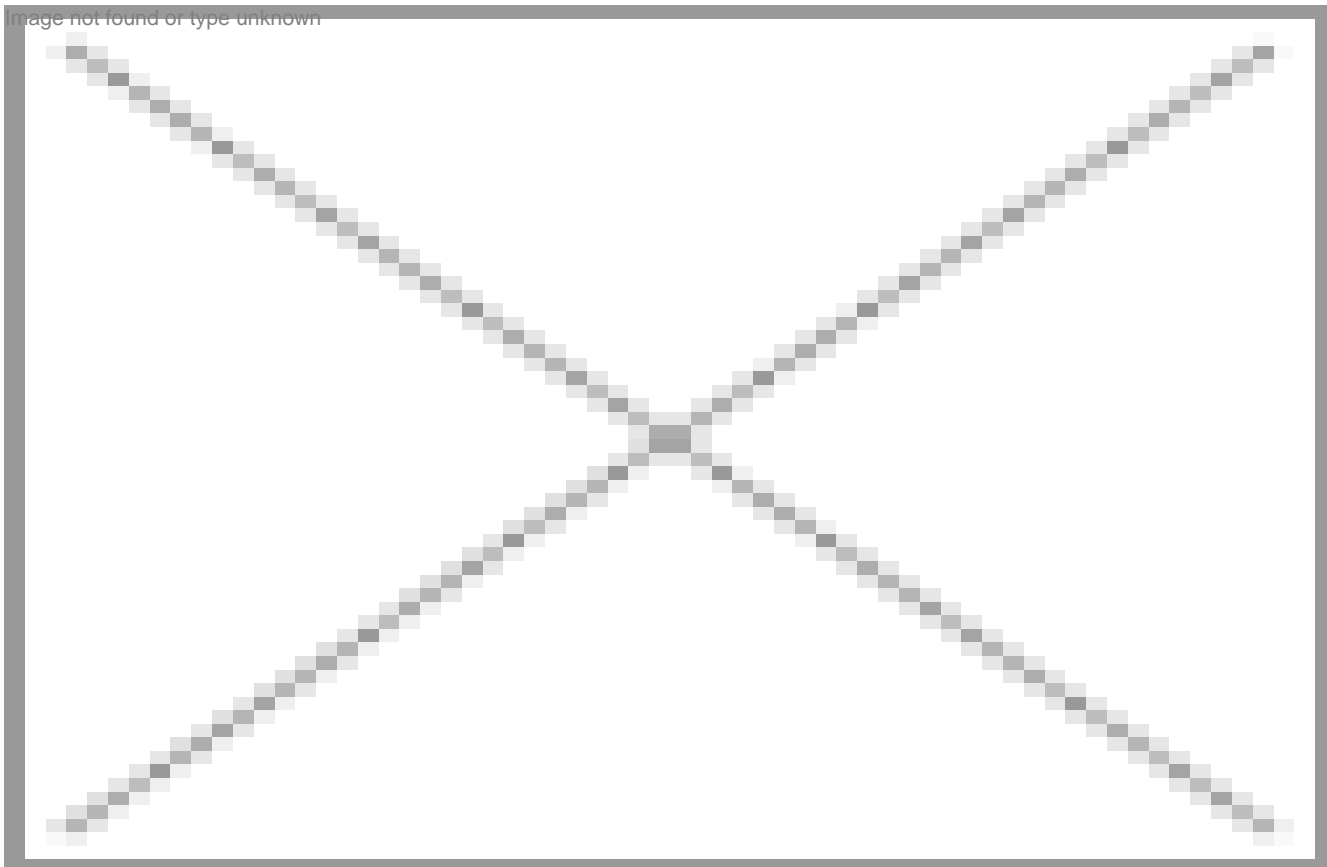
Laser-Run

Lanigan-O'Keeffe (**IRL**) started 11sec ahead of **Lee** (**KOR**) and 17ec ahead of **Lifanov** (**RUS**), but the duo in 2nd and 3rd immediately came under pressure from **Jun** (**KOR**), who moved into silver-medal position by the halfway point.

Lee (**KOR**) looked likely to be a podium contender but he faded and it was **Ilya Palazkov** of **Belarus** who fronted up the chasing pack in 4th.

Lanigan-O'Keeffe (**IRL**), who finished 8th at the Rio 2016 Olympics, knew he had a robust lead throughout and never panicked. On the last two visits to the shooting range he was in and out before **Jun** (**KOR**) picked up his pistol.

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The

big change in the podium equation came at the third shoot, where a number of athletes entered with bronze in their sights and it was **Dejardin (FRA)** who leapfrogged the rest with a superb shoot.

There was no further drama but the race to the line was intense as athletes burst their lungs in pursuit of the points they needed to qualify for the Pentathlon World Cup Final. **Brice Loubet (FRA)** ran the fastest Laser-Run of the day (10:43.18) with **Dejardin (FRA)** not far behind (10:46.65).

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "It was a fantastic final and we saw a lot of athletes chasing hard for a top-six place, creating a lot of drama.

"What I have to underline is that this Pentathlon World Cup has given us the best quality of horses and shown that the athletes are performing better with the horses and showing the importance of the Riding element of Modern Pentathlon.

"We are delighted to be here in Sofia and my congratulations go to the volunteers and everyone involved."

Andrey Kuzmanov, President of the Bulgarian Modern Pentathlon Federation, said: "The competition was very good, like all the days of this Pentathlon World Cup, and the athletes are getting better and better.

"We are looking forward to the Mixed Relay tomorrow with 13 of the top nations taking part."

Pentathlon World Cup Sofia concludes on 27 May with the Mixed Relay.

Live stream of the Laser-Run is available on UIPM TV and you can find up-to-date results at the UIPM website.

Rank	Name	Nation	MP Points
1	LANIGAN-O KEEFFE Arthur	IRL	1468
2	JUN Woongtae	KOR	1454
3	DEJARDIN Pierre	FRA	1449

4	LIFANOV Alexander	RUS	1445
5	DOGUE Marvin Faly	GER	1442
6	DOGUE Patrick	GER	1437
7	REGOS Gergely	HUN	1435
8	PALAZKOV Ilya	BLR	1431
9	LOUBET Brice	FRA	1431
10	DE LUCA Riccardo	ITA	1424
11	KASZA Robert	HUN	1419
12	HAMAD Eslam	EGY	1415
13	SAVKIN Alexander	RUS	1414
14	BELYAKOV Kirill	RUS	1414
15	BELAUD Valentin	FRA	1413
16	SANDOVAL Alvaro	MEX	1412
17	KINDERIS Justinas	LTU	1409
18	LEE Jihun	KOR	1407
19	ZHANG Linbin	CHN	1403
20	SANDTEN Matthias	GER	1401
21	NOBIS Alexander	GER	1401
22	KRASTANOV Dimitar	BUL	1398
23	SEO Changwan	KOR	1397
24	TOOLIS Thomas	GBR	1396
25	COOKE James	GBR	1389
26	KASYANIK Kirill	BLR	1378
27	POLIVKA Ondrej	CZE	1371
28	HARANGOZO Bence	HUN	1369
29	PARISI Giuseppe Mattia	ITA	1367
30	CURRY Samuel	GBR	1359
31	ONO Tomoyuki	JPN	1355
32	SVECOVS Pavels	LAT	1343
33	JUNG Jinhwa	KOR	1327
34	PAVLYUK Denys	UKR	1315
35	TSIKHANAU Pavel	BLR	1314
36	ELGENDY Ahmed	EGY	501