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UIPM 2018 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP FINAL ASTANA: FIND OUT WHO IS COMPETING

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If she is going to retain her crown, **Tamara Alekszejev** of **Hungary** will have to overcome four women who have won the most coveted prizes in the sport in the past two years at the UIPM 2018 Pentathlon World Cup Final.

Alekszejev (HUN) has been one of the top performers on the circuit since her breakthrough victory in this event in Vilnius (LTU) 12 months ago, and currently sits at No.3 in the world rankings.

However, the entry list for the Women's Final at Astana 2018 on June 22 contains a stunning array of the world's top talent, including Rio 2016 Olympic champion **Chloe Esposito** of **Australia** and silver medallist **Elodie Clouvel** of **France**.

Reigning champion **Alekszejev** (HUN) will also be up against her compatriot, 2016 world champion **Sarolta Kovacs** (HUN), and the woman who succeeded her as the top performer on the planet in 2017, current world No.1 **Gulnaz Gubaydullina** of **Russia**.

Competition is sure be fierce from the chasing pack, too, in the shape of world No.2 **Anastasiya Prokopenko** of **Belarus**, two-time world junior champion **Kim Sunwoo** of **Korea**, in-form **Natalya Coyle** of **Ireland** and Laser-Run specialist **Ilke Ozyuksel** of **Turkey**.

In the Men's Final on June 23, Rio 2016 Olympic champion **Alexander Lesun** of **Russia** may have had a quiet season in 2018 but he is a proven performer on the big occasion and should not be overlooked from podium predictions.

Korea can be confident of featuring in the medal race as they are represented by 2017 world champion **Jung Jinhwa**, Pentathlon World Cup Los Angeles winner **Lee Jihun** and world No.2 **Jun Woongtae**, who has been the star of the circuit this year with a gold and silver medal in the European legs on the back of a 5th-placed finish in Los Angeles.

Watch out too for perennial contenders such as **Pavlo Tymoshchenko** of **Ukraine** and three 2018 Pentathlon World Cup medallists from **France** – **Valentin Belaud**, **Christopher Patte** and **Jean-Baptiste Mourcia** – as they fly the flag in the absence of 2017 winner Valentin Prades.

Arthur Lanigan-O'Keeffe of **Ireland** and **Bence Demeter** of **Hungary** will also be in with a chance after strong performances in recent weeks.

Host nation **Kazakhstan** will be represented by world No.19 **Elena Potapenko** and **Ardak Akhidullayeva** in the Women's Final and world No.21 **Pavel Ilyashenko** and **Vladislav Sukharev** in the Men's Final.

Ireland will be hoping for a third consecutive success in the Mixed Relay on June 24, especially if **Coyle** and **Lanigan-O'Keeffe** are fully fit after the individual events.

UIPM 2018 Pentathlon World Cup takes place from June 22-24 in Astana (KAZ). A live stream will be available each day on UIPM TV with up-to-date results available at the UIPM website.