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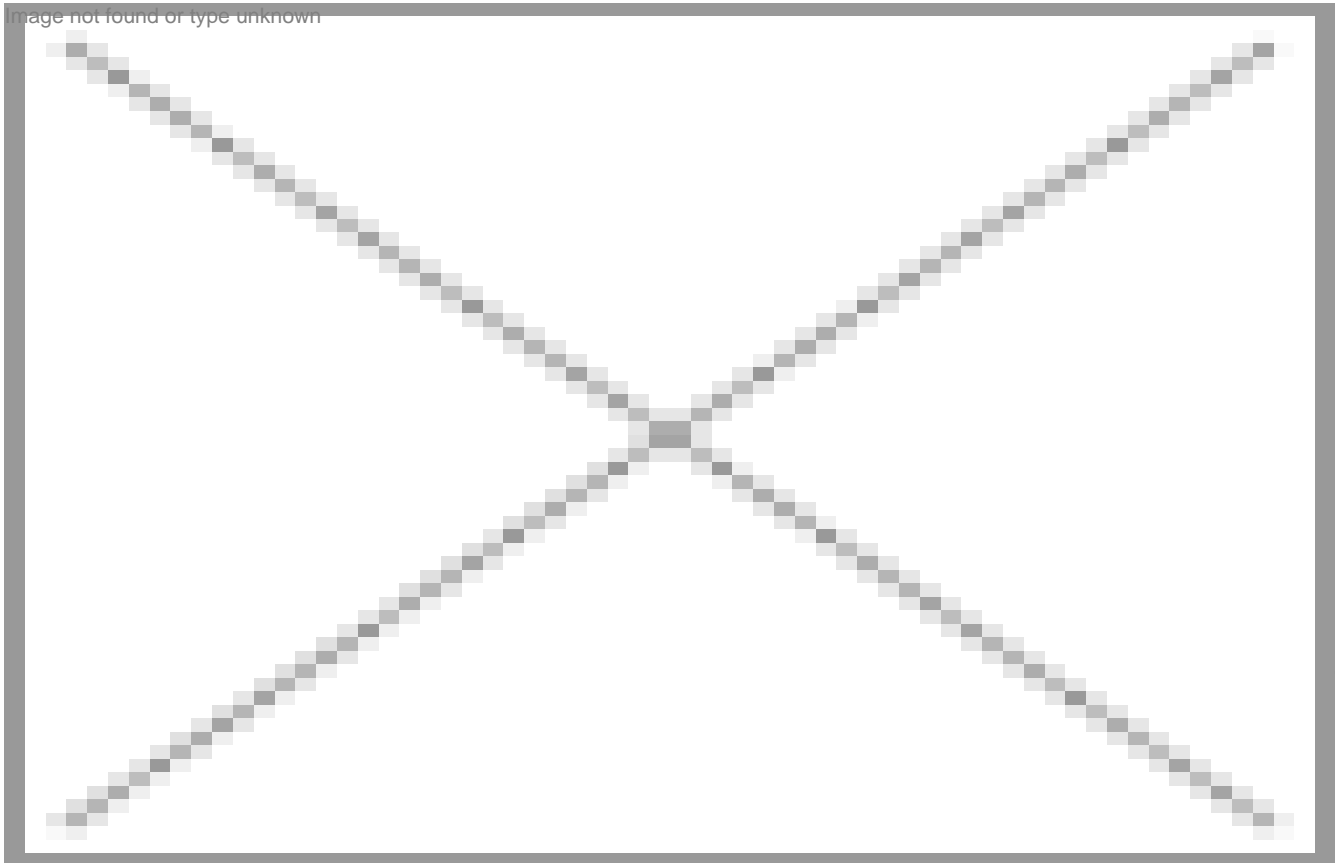
UIPM 2018 PENTATHLON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: BELARUS MAKE HISTORY IN PENTATHLON STADIUM WITH WOMEN'S RELAY GOLD

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Belarus became the first team to cross the line in a Pentathlon Stadium as **Iryna Prasiantsova** and **Anastasiya Prokopenko** claimed gold in the Women's Relay at the UIPM 2018 Pentathlon World Championships.

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The

opening day of the championships was a landmark day for the sport, with an all-in-one venue enabling athletes to perform their five disciplines in one venue in the space of five hours, providing a better competition experience also for spectators, media, sponsors and VIPs.

The new concept immediately won praise from world No.6 **Prokopenko** (BLR), who said: "It's an amazing place for us because you can do everything in one place, and you can rest between events."

Belarus (Prasiantsova / Prokopenko) performed consistently all day and when they lined up for the Laser Run only 8sec behind leaders **Yang Soojin** and **Choi Juhye** of **Korea**, it was clear they would make a strong push for gold.

In the end they won by an impressive margin of 17sec ahead of silver medallists **Ronja Steinborn** and **Annika Schleu** of **Germany**, with **Sofia Cabrera** and **Sophia Hernandez** of **Guatemala** a further 11sec behind and picking up bronze.

Prasiantsova (BLR) said: "I feel incredible, it's an amazing feeling because we are world champions. It was not an easy day but we stuck together and managed to achieve everything we could."

Schleu (GER) had won gold in this event two years running with the 2008 Olympic champion, Lena Schoeneborn, at her side. She said: "It was quite a good start, it was my first time without Lena but Ronja is my training partner and team-mate anyway.

"Fencing was quite good, Swimming was really fast, we had a few problems in Riding with two bad decisions, but Laser Run is one of our best disciplines and we were able to show this, so we are happy."

Steinborn (GER) added: “I think it’s quite hard because of the altitude, but we have some time to rest before the individual event. We had three weeks of altitude training at a camp in France before coming here, so we hope we are prepared.”

Guatemala (Cabrera / Hernandez) claimed a bronze medal to add to the gold they won at the UIPM 2018 Pentathlon Junior World Championships only a few weeks ago in Kladno, Czech Republic.

Hernandez (GUA) said: “In the Laser Run we just smashed it. We had a lot of confidence in our training. But we didn’t come here expecting to win or anything, we just wanted to have fun and enjoy it, do the best way we can, and that’s what happened.”

Behind the top three, **China** (**Bian Yufei** / **Zhang Xiaonan**) held on the 4th place they had occupied throughout the Laser Run, but **Hungary** (**Blanka Guzi** / **Michelle Gulyas**) moved up to 5th as they finished ahead of 6th-placed **Korea** (Yang/Choi).

Hosts Mexico finished 8th thanks to a strong comeback by **Karol Gonzalez** and **Catherine Mayran Oliver**.

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Swimming

Russia (**Liudmila Tebekina** / **Svetlana Lebedeva**) set a blistering pace in the pool as they crept under 2min with a time of 1:59.98, way ahead of **Hungary** (Guzi/Gulyas) in 2:04.63 and **China** (Bian/Zhang) in 2:05.06.

Fencing

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Korea (Yang/Choi) shaded top spot in the Ranking Round with an impressive return of 33V/15D, two victories more than **Russia** (Tebekina/Lebedeva) with **China** (Bian/Zhang) close behind on 30V/18D.

Belarus (Prasiantsova / Prokopenko) also performed very well with 29V/19D and they showed excellent opportunism to claim four points in the Bonus Round to inch up the leaderboard.

Riding

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Russia (Tebekina/Lebedeva) came unstuck on horseback, suffering elimination, while **France** (Manon Barbaza

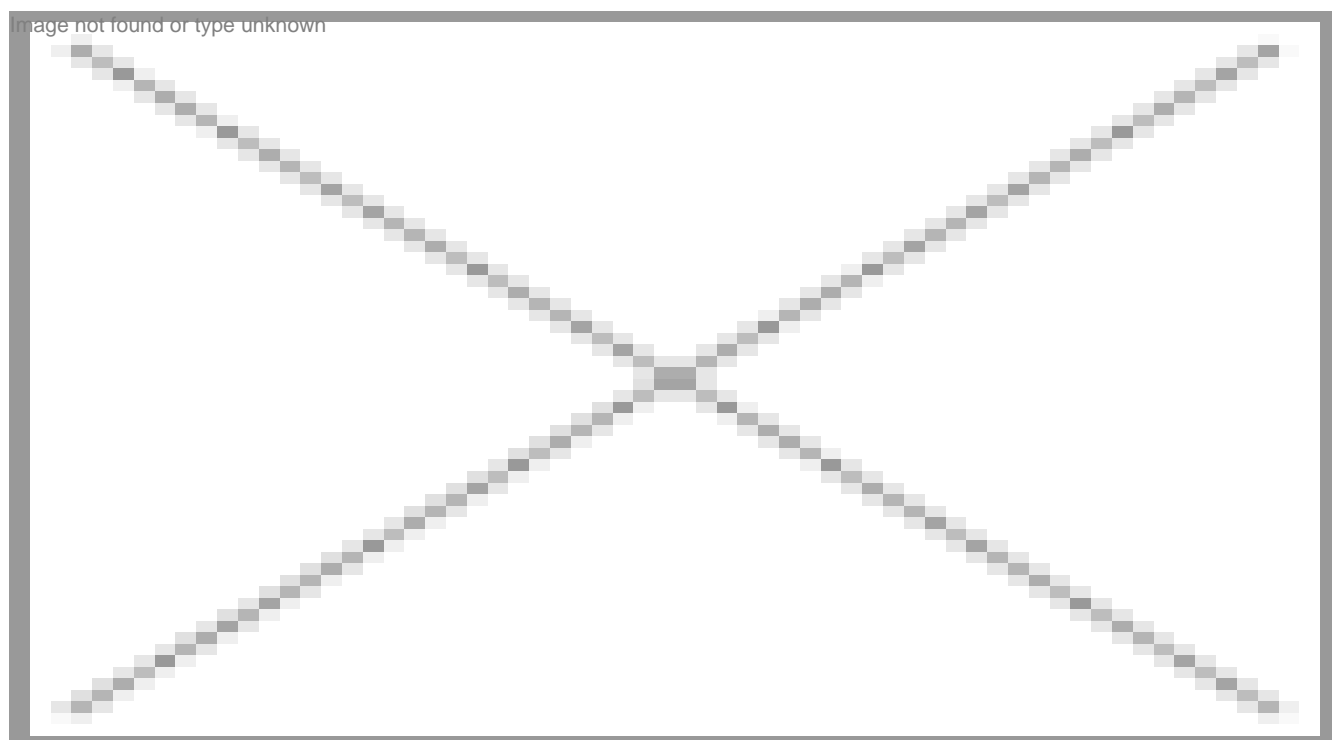
/ **Julie Belhamri**) were unable to start.

That left the door open for the other nations pushing for prominence but **Belarus** and **Korea** (279), **Germany** (276) and **China** (273) all suffered significant damage, opening up the field completely.

It was **Guatemala** (Cabrera/Hernandez) who took most advantage with an almost performance score of 299. **Mexico** (Gonzalez/Oliver) and **Argentina** (**Pamela Zapata** / **Ayelen Zapata**) also fared well in Riding with scores of 293.

Laser Run

Although **Korea** (Yang/Choi) and **China** (Bian/Zhang) started first, they were quickly overtaken by the three nations that would end up on the podium. And when **Prasiantsova** (BLR) handed over to **Prokopenko** (BLR) in pole position, there was little doubt that one of the world's best Laser Runners would finish the job.



Behind them, **Guatemala** (Cabrera/Hernandez) pushed **Germany** (Steinborn/Schleu) hard but ultimately it was two-time champion **Schleu** (GER) who took ownership of silver.

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "This was the first time in history where we have used a Pentathlon Stadium, where all five disciplines can be presented in one venue. It is a historic milestone for our union.

"We saw two European nations on the top of the podium but to see Guatemala in 3rd place is fantastic, and we saw how all the nations presented themselves today and enjoyed the historic occasion of the first Pentathlon Stadium.

"I wish all the best for the men tomorrow and hope they can also compete at a high level of performance, as the women did today. I would like to thank the organisers for preparing this wonderful stadium for an exciting Women's Relay."

The UIPM 2018 Pentathlon World Championships runs until September 13 and continues tomorrow (September 8) with the Men's Relay, where Korea will be the team to beat after winning

gold in 2016 and 2017.

Up-to-date results will be available at the UIPM website throughout the championships. And don't forget to tune in to UIPM's social media activity on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.