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UIPM 2018 PENTATHLON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: FRIENDS REUNITED AS FRANCE WIN MEN'S RELAY GOLD

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Five years after they became junior world champions, **Valentin Belaud** and **Alexandre Henrard** teamed up again to claim gold for **France** in the Men's Relay at the UIPM 2018 Pentathlon World Championships.

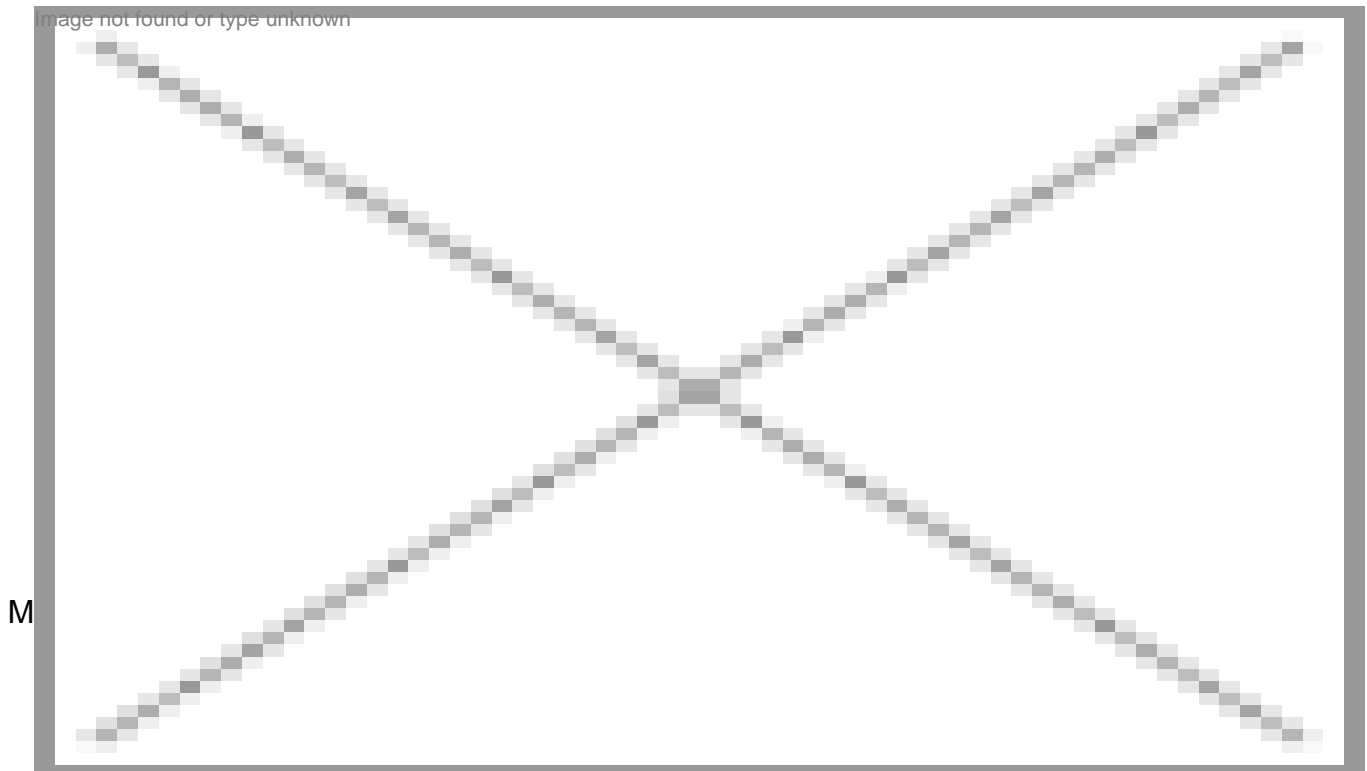
The two athletes have taken very divergent paths in UIPM Sports, with **Belaud** (FRA) becoming individual pentathlon world champion in 2016 and **Henrard** (FRA) winning multiple world titles in the development sports of Biathle, Triathle and Laser Run.

Today they combined to great effect to continue a golden season for **France**, who have enjoyed exceptional success throughout 2018 and will be aiming for more podium representation in the Mixed Relay and individual finals to come.

France (Henrard/Belaud) were almost denied gold by **Jan Kuf** and **Martin Vlach** of **Czech Republic**. **Vlach** (CZE) led at the start of the final lap of the Laser Run but was reined in by the strong-running **Belaud** (FRA), who eventually prevailed by a 5sec margin.

Bulgaria (**Todor Mihalev** / **Yavor Peshleevski**) were surprise bronze medallists, having started the Laser Run in 7th place, and their delight was clear as they stepped off the podium with their prizes.

In fact, all the medallists were in a state of elation, and they all admitted that the experience of competing in the world's first Pentathlon Stadium was one of the reasons for their satisfaction.



Mexico City has become the first host city to provide the all-in-one venue that will experience its Olympic debut in Tokyo in 2020. The Pentathlon Stadium enables athletes to perform all five disciplines in one venue in the space of five hours, providing a better competition experience also for spectators, media, sponsors and VIPs.

Belaud (FRA) said: "It's a good start to the championships, and it was nice to compete with Alexandre for the first time since the Junior World Championships in 2013.

"Now we are seniors and today was very good, Alex had a great day and I would like to thank him. In the Laser Run he allowed me to take first place; the Czech man [Vlach] was very strong but in the last 800m I had him in my targets, and I was able to get to the line.

"With five sports in the same arena it's a very good atmosphere for the public, and it's very easy for us too."

Henrard (FRA) added: "There wasn't one discipline that stood out, we just did what we know to do and that's why we won today. Tomorrow I am looking forward to competing in the Mixed Relay with Emma Riff."

“The Pentathlon Stadium is awesome for us because we don’t have to travel between the different events, and for the people who come to see the competition it’s really great.”

Kuf (CZE) said: “We didn’t make any big mistakes, so that was the main reason for today’s medal, I guess. The venue is really nice, it’s great to have everything in one place, and the only difficult thing is the altitude.”

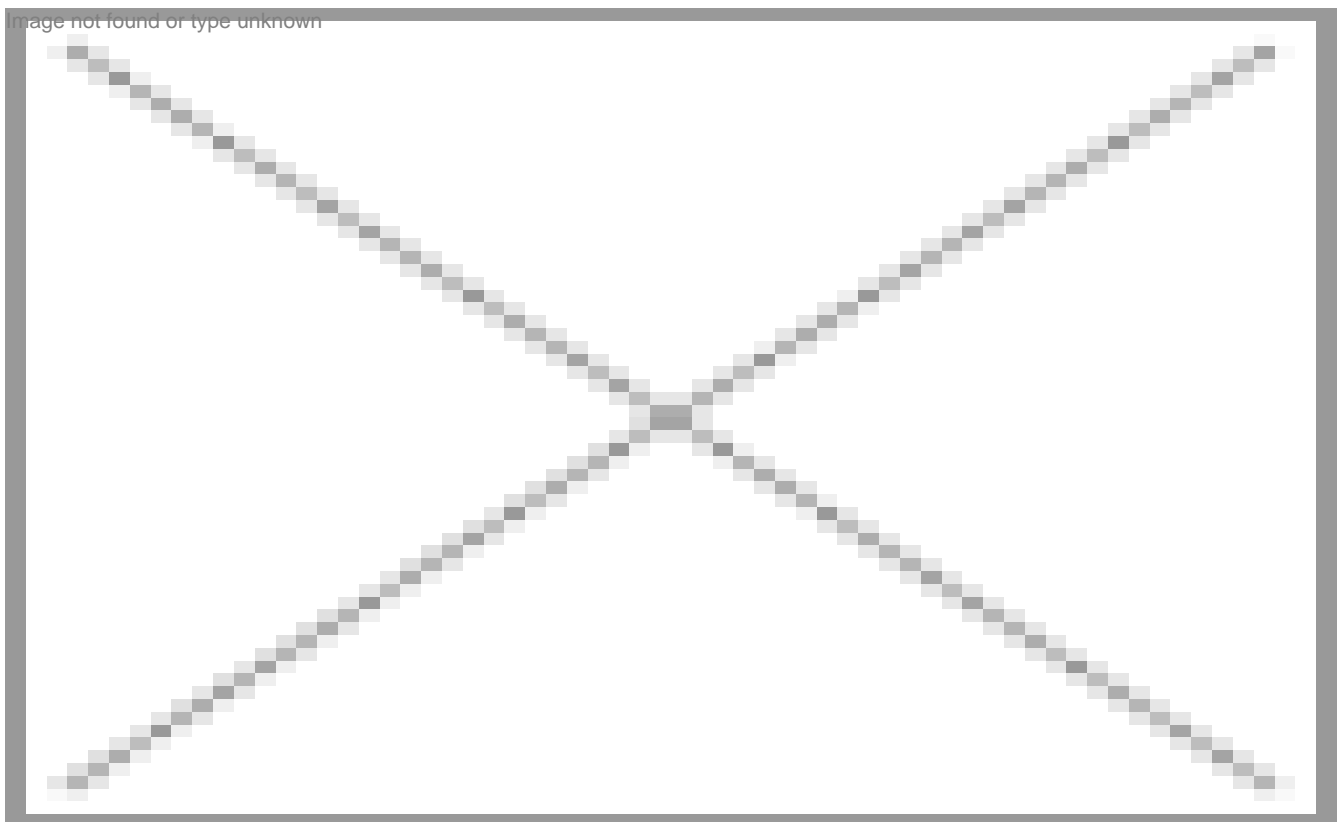
Vlach (CZE) added: “I focused on my Shooting, and that went well but I was up against Valentin Belaud, who is probably the best athlete in Modern Pentathlon.”

Peshleevski (BUL) said: “It’s amazing to get a senior medal, once in a lifetime. I would say our best event today was the Laser Run. We were calm in the Shooting and with a strong run we reached the podium.

“The Pentathlon Stadium is amazing, and if we didn’t have this stadium here we probably wouldn’t have reached the podium. Everything is in one place, we can rest between the disciplines and concentrate. It’s a great venue.”

Belarus followed up strongly on their victory in the Women’s Relay as **Yaraslau Radziuk** and **Ilya Palazkov** finished 4th, one place ahead of **China** duo **Zhang Yu** and **Luo Shuai**.

Russia (**Oleg Naumov** / **Egor Puchkarevskiy**) finished sixth having started the Laser Run 1sec off the lead.



Swimming

There was little to separate the fastest swimmers as **Russia** (Naumov/Puchkarevskiy) and **Japan** (**Taishu Sato** / **Hikaru Shimano**) each timed narrowly under 1min 50sec and claimed 331 points. **China** (Zhang/Luo) were next fastest with 1:50.66 for 329 points.

Fencing

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Russia were prominent on the piste, too, as Naumov and Puchkarevskiy claimed 23V/11D in the Ranking Round and added two points in the Bonus Round.

Ukraine (**Dmytro Baliuk** / **Dmytro Kirpulyanskyy**) scored 22V/12D while **Kazakhstan** (**Pavel Ilyashenko** / **Vladislav Michshenko**) and **Czech Republic** (Kuf/Vlach) were only one victory behind them in a tightly contested competition.

Riding

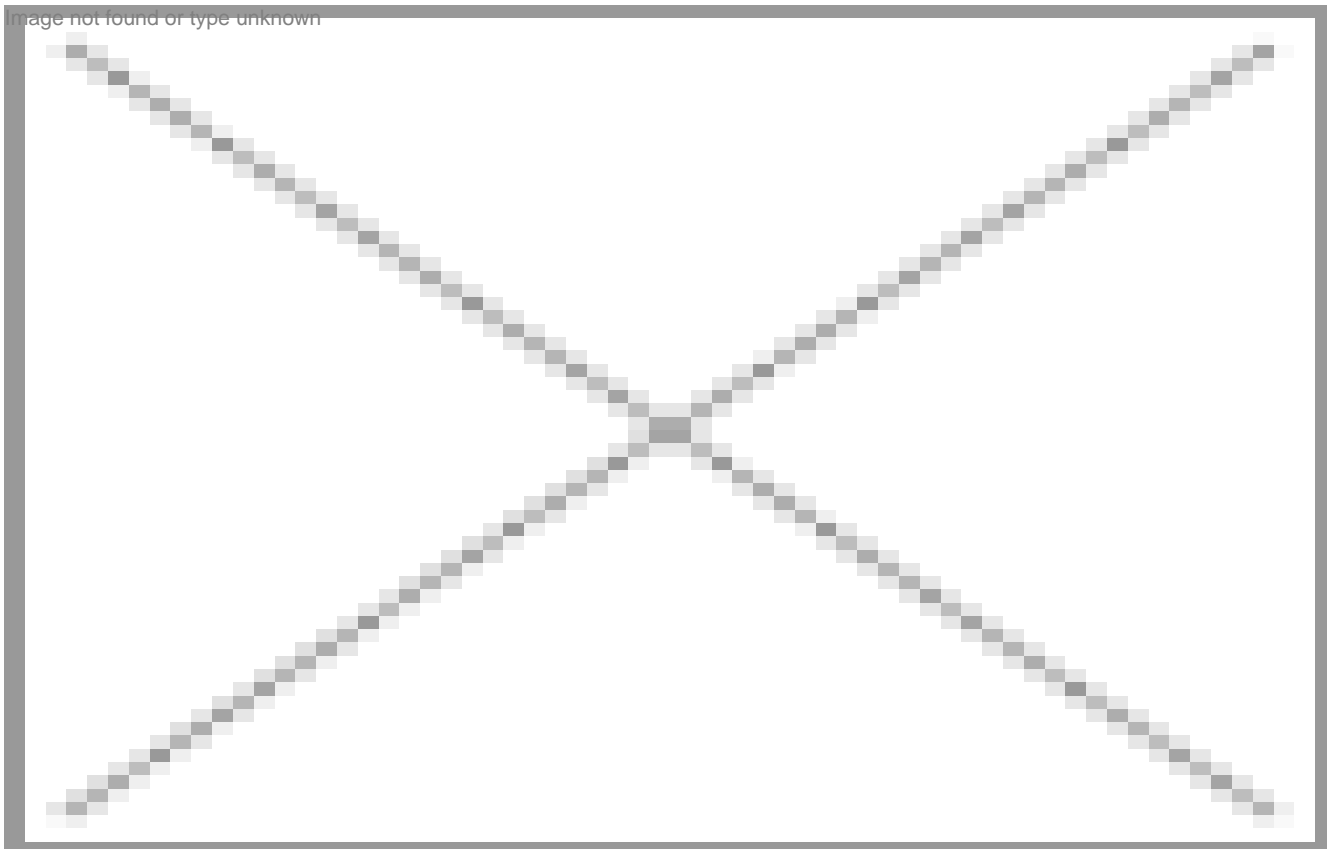
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Once again, there was very little to separate the leading protagonists and 10 of the 18 relay teams scored between 291 and 293 out of a possible 300 points.

There were only two exceptions to the high standard of horsemanship as misfortune visited **Egypt** (**Ahmed Hamed** / **Sherif Rashad**), who conceded 67 penalty points, and **Korea** (**Kim Soengjin** / **Lee Woojin**), whose elimination ended their hopes of securing a third successive gold medal in this event.

Laser Run

Competition having been so tight all day, there was a lot of congestion at the start line. **Ukraine** (Baliuk/ Kirpulyanskyy) started first, albeit only 1sec ahead of **Russia** (Naumov/Puchkarevskiy), with **France** (Henrard/Belaud) and **Czech Republic** (Kuf/Vlach) only a matter of seconds behind them.



Henrard (FRA) took the lead in the early stages but was accompanied closely by **Kuf** (CZE), and their duel developed into a two-horse race for gold.

After the final visit to the shooting range, **Vlach** (CZE) embarked on the final lap in the lead, but **Belaud** (FRA) summoned the spirit of Moscow 2016 – when he chased down Alexander Lesun (RUS) to win the individual world title – to catch up with and overtake his rival.

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “The second day of the UIPM 2018 Pentathlon World Championships brought us an exciting final where we saw France and Czech Republic running for the gold medal and there was another historic moment for our movement when Bulgaria won their first medal at the World Championships for more than 30 years.

“Congratulations to these three teams but also to all the athletes who competed so well today. This Pentathlon Stadium is a fantastic motivation for our athletes and we had a wonderful crowd here in Mexico today.

“The first two days of relays have shown the true meaning of team spirit, and it is very important that we support team events in Modern Pentathlon. We are all looking forward to the Mixed Relay and to the 1st Pierre de Coubertin Pentathlon Day.”

The UIPM 2018 Pentathlon World Championships run until September 13 and continue tomorrow (September 9) with the Mixed Relay, which will be an extra-special occasion as it coincides with the 1st Pierre de Coubertin #PentathlonDay.

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.

Rank	Team	Nation	MP Points
1	BELAUD Valentin HENRARD Alexandre	FRA	1518

2	KUF Jan VLACH Martin	CZE	1513
3	MIHALEV Todor PESHLEEVSKI Yavor	BUL	1482
4	PALAZKOV Ilya RADZIUUK Yaraslau	BLR	1475
5	LUO Shuai ZHANG Yu	CHN	1470
6	PUCHKAREVSKIY Egor NAUMOV Oleg	RUS	1462
7	BALIUK Dmytro KIRPULYANSKY Dmytro	UKR	1459
8	MICHSHENKO Vladislav ILYASHENKO Pavel	KAZ	1452
9	LAWRYNOWICZ Daniel GUTKOWSKI Lukasz	POL	1436
10	SATO Taishu SHIMANO Hikaru	JPN	1432
11	SANDTEN Matthias LIEBIG Fabian	GER	1426
12	HERNANDEZ Emiliano INZUNZA Jorge	MEX	1420
13	ARMANAZQUI Manuel LIMA Vicente	ARG	1409
14	HARANGOZO Bence BRUCKMANN Gergo	HUN	1401
15	SEQUERA Berengerth SEQUERA Engelberth	VEN	1311
16	KIM Soengjin LEE Woo Jin	KOR	1151
17	LEYVA Jeffrey MELGAREJO Nello Bernaola	PER	948
18	RASHAD Sherif HAMED Ahmed	EGY	775