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UIPM 2019 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP SZEKESFEHERVAR: HUNGARY HOSTS CLASH OF THE TITANS

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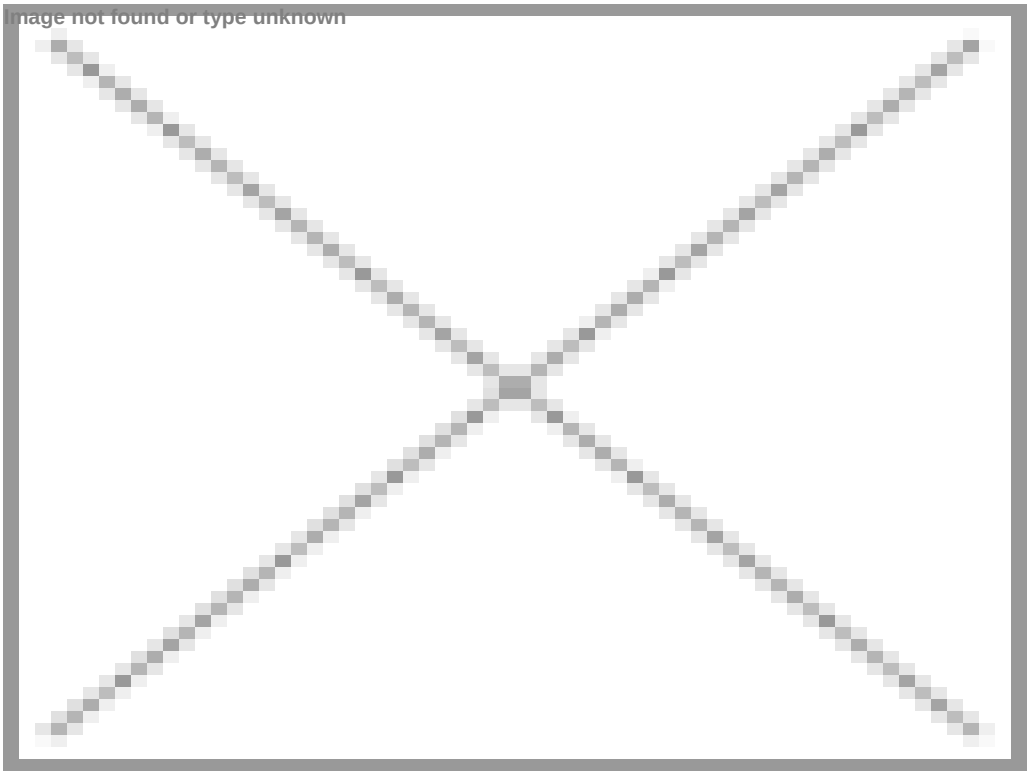

It takes a special competition to draw the very best pentathletes in the world to one place at one time.

This rare occurrence will materialise this week in Hungary, where 15 of the 16 top-ranked male pentathletes – as well as the reigning Olympic and world champions – are on the start list for UIPM Pentathlon World Cup Szekesfehervar (May 1-5).

As the world's most versatile athletes continue their campaign to qualify for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, this is clearly not the time for injuries, dips in form or complex performance schedules to keep the gladiators of pentathlon apart.

It is time for statements to be made, and it is not only in the men's event where the outcome will be surrounded by intrigue.

In this heartland of pentathlon, the Hungarians are always notoriously hard to beat and the host nation will be intent on maintaining their record of winning medals on home soil.

ONES TO WATCH

Jamie Cooke of **Great Britain**, who won the world title in the most dramatic style imaginable at the UIPM 2018 Pentathlon World Championships in Mexico City (MEX), will be reunited with the man he defeated on the finish line – world No.2 **Valentin Prades** of **France**.

The two rivals will have plenty of auspicious company.

The world No.1, **Jun Woongtae** of **Korea**, once again teams up with his compatriot, 2017 world champion **Jung Jinhwa** (10), and they are joined by all but one of the athletes ranked between them – **Arthur Lanigan-O'Keeffe** (3) of **Ireland**, **Jan Kuf** (4) of **Czech Republic**, **Ilya Palazkov** (5) of **Belarus**, **Patrick Dogue** (6) of **Germany**, **Joseph Choong** (7, GBR) and **Pavlo Tymoshchenko** (8) of **Ukraine**.

Tymoshchenko (UKR) will also be reunited with an old foe – the man who beat him to Olympic gold in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, **Alexander Lesun** of **Russia**.

Hungary will also have high hopes of a podium finish, with perennial contenders such as **Bence Demeter** (13), **Adam Marosi**, **Robert Kasza** and the up-and-coming **Gergely Regos** (15). Indeed, Demeter (HUN) won individual silver and bronze at UIPM Pentathlon World Cup Kecskemet in the past two years – and he also claimed Mixed Relay gold in both events alongside **Sarolta Kovacs**.

Such is the consistency of Hungary's performance in home events, world No.3 Kovacs (HUN) also finished 5th in the Women's Final last year having won bronze the year before. She will be joined in the medal quest this year by **Tamara Alekszejev** (HUN, 18), UIPM Pentathlon World Cup Final winner in 2017.

Their main competition is likely to come from within the borders of Europe, from the likes of world silver medallist **Annika Schleu** (7, GER) and **Kate French** (9, GBR).

Other superstars to look out for include the London 2012 Olympic champion **Laura Asadauskaite** of **Lithuania** , who returned to the podium with silver at Pentathlon World Cup Sofia last month, and Rio 2016 silver medallist **Elodie Clouvel** (13, FRA).

ROAD TO TOKYO

Qualification for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games will be firmly on the minds of all participants on the start line in Sofia (BUL).

For the majority, the UIPM 2019 Pentathlon World Cup Final in Tokyo (JPN) in June offers the first chance to seal the Olympic dream, and a good performance this week in Szekesfehervar will put them in a strong position to qualify for the Final with Pentathlon World Cup Prague (May 21-26) still to come.

Find out more about the Tokyo 2020 qualifying process.

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann commented: "Every time we arrive in Hungary, we know we are in the heartland of pentathlon. Not only has this country produced many male and female champions of the past and present, the Hungarian federation (HMPA) has organised many successful UIPM competitions and events and is a trusted partner of UIPM.

"Later this year, in September, Budapest will host the first-ever unified UIPM Pentathlon and Laser Run World Championships at Kincsem Park. After that, the 1st World Urban Games will also take place in Budapest, and our popular development sport of Laser Run will be included in the programme as a showcase sport.

"At the highest level of our sporting pyramid, we are going to see pentathlon at its best throughout this year, as athletes from all countries plot their journey in Tokyo and aim to achieve peak performance.

“Behind the scenes we will continue to develop and grow our sport through projects like the Pentathlon Stadium and the Mixed Relay, which we are targeting for inclusion in the Olympic Games Paris 2024.”

COMPETITION SCHEDULE

UIPM 2019 Pentathlon World Cup Szekesfehervar begins on Wednesday, May 1 with qualification for the Women’s Individual Final (Friday, May 3). The action continues on Thursday, May 2 with qualification for the Men’s Individual Final (Saturday, May 4). The Mixed Relay closes the competition on Sunday, May 5.

WATCH AND FOLLOW

During each finals day you can watch a live stream of the Fencing Bonus Round, Riding, Laser Run and the medal ceremony on UIPM TV and YouTube, with no geographical restrictions. The Laser Run and medal ceremony can also be watched live on Facebook.

Follow World Pentathlon on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram throughout the Pentathlon World Cup series for additional content, and visit the UIPM website or download the “UIPM Central” app to keep track of results.