

26 MAY 2019

UIPM 2019 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP PRAGUE: RETURN OF THE KING AS LESUN (RUS) SAVOURS GOLD

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Alexander Lesun of **Russia**, the most prolific pentathlete of his generation, is back.

The reigning Olympic champion and two-time world and European champion claimed his first individual Pentathlon World Cup gold medal since 2014 in Prague (CZE), announcing a timely return to form with opportunities to qualify for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games fast approaching.

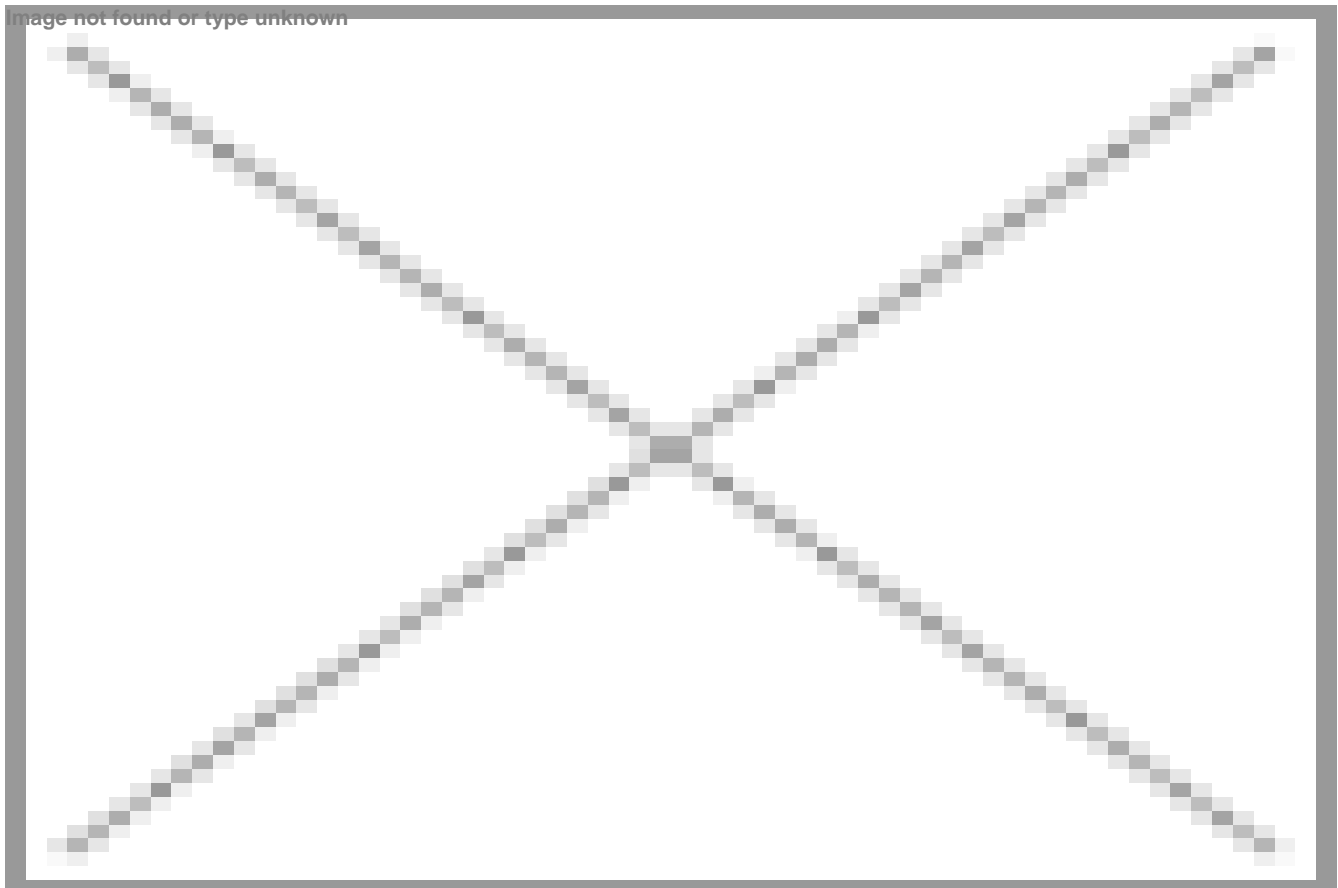
Lesun (RUS) was supreme on the Fencing piste and unflappable in the Riding arena, giving himself an imposing lead for an unaccompanied Laser Run that he negotiated with no obvious nerves.

Behind him, the drama was far more intense.

The Laser Run had begun with three Russians in the top four, and **Kirill Belyakov** (RUS) held firm in 2nd place for most of the race. But he was caught on the final straight of the last 800m lap by two fast-finishing rivals, leaving him without a medal.

Silver went to **Joseph Choong** of **Great Britain**, matching the result and the style of his performance at Pentathlon World Cup Sofia in April, while **Marvin Dogue** of **Germany** snatched bronze to pick up his first major medal.

MEDALLISTS' REACTION



Looking calm and relaxed as he awaited the medal ceremony, Lesun (RUS) said: “I fought hard today in my participation in the competition and I am satisfied with the venue, the horses and the course – everything. But I think I can work harder for future success.

“I’m looking forward to the European Championships, the World Cup Final and World Championships, and I want to congratulate the Russian team because we have come back to the medals.”

After getting his breath back from an immense effort in the Laser Run, silver medallist Choong (GBR) said: “I went into the final feeling pretty tired after three World Cups in a row, but I just found something.

“We have a huge fan club with so many of our parents out here, and I heard them, having put myself into medal contention. When I heard them I thought ‘I’m going to go for this’. I seem to be making a habit of overtaking Germans to get silver.

“All eight of the boys’ parents are out here and the support makes a massive difference. In the last

three World Cups we've had people on the podium so we are having a fantastic season, and it shows that everything is working back home.

"We had 10 parents out here and it made a big difference, so I can't imagine what it will be like to have hundreds of fans cheering us on at the European Championships in Bath."

First-time medallist Dogue (GER) was beaming with pride as he added: "It's an amazing feeling. I tried so often since I was a junior to get a medal, and I've been 4th and 5th so many times. It's my first time finishing 3rd in a major competition so it's great. The work pays off.

"In Sofia, Joe Choong defeated my team-mate Fabian [Liebig] on the last lap and when I saw him coming, I knew it was going to be tough so I decided that my best chance of winning a medal was to catch the Russian [Belyakov].

"My Swimming was good, my Fencing was good, my Riding was not the best but I'm not a great rider, and I was 6th at the start of the Laser Run. I just thought 'give everything and see what you get'.

"It was a very tough field but it's good preparation for next year and the Olympic qualification. I'm happy with my 3rd place."

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SWIMMING

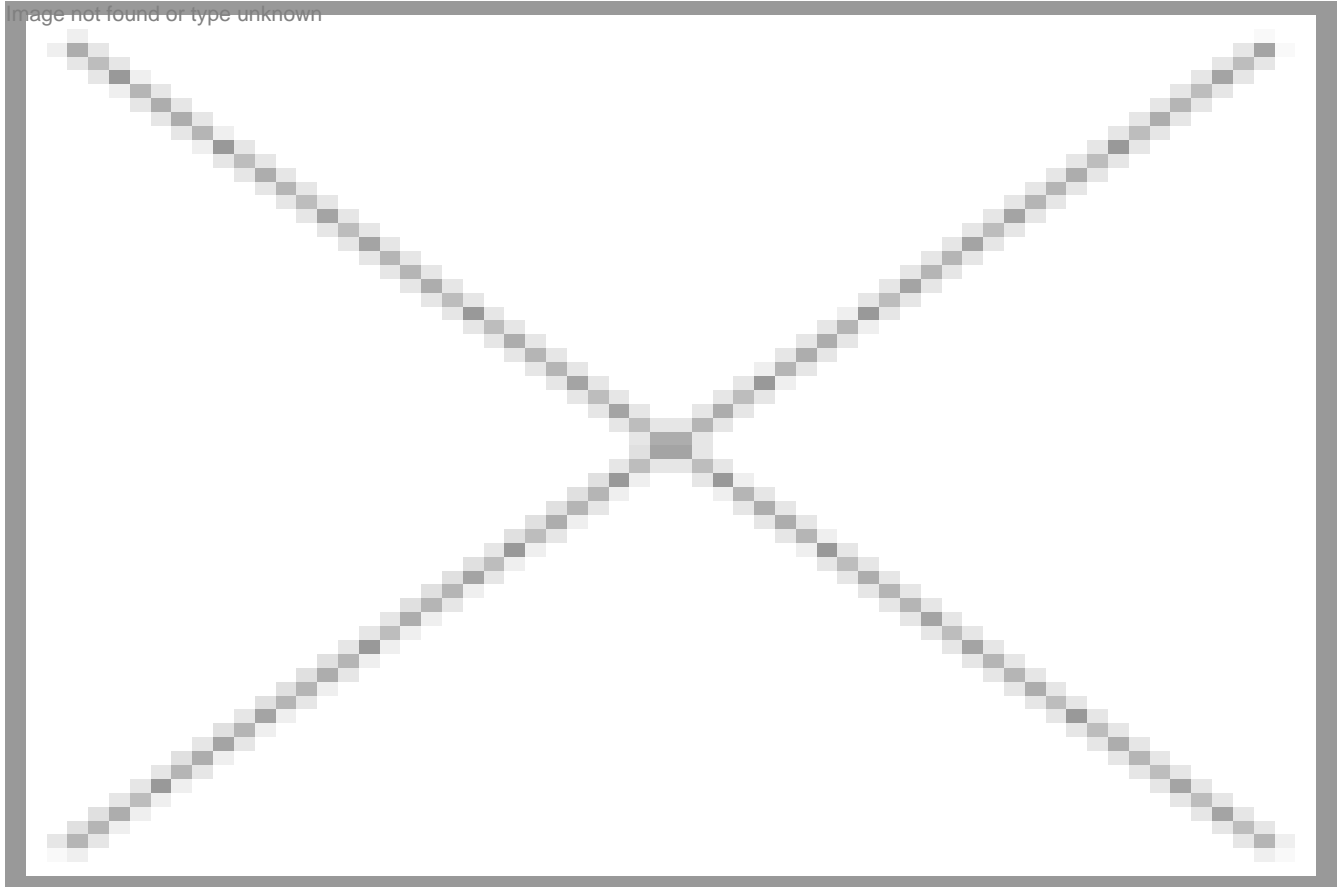
Amro Elgeziry of **United States** was quickest to complete the eight laps of the 25m pool in Prague (CZE), timing a:53.64. Behind him there was a familiar inter-team duel between world champion **Jamie Cooke** (GBR, 1:54.52) and Choong (GBR, 1:54.98).

FENCING

Everybody in elite pentathlon circles knows that when Lesun (RUS) fires on all cylinders on the Fencing piste, he is more than likely to end up on top of the podium.

So it p

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roved in Prague (CZE), just as it did in Rio three summers ago, as the 30-year-old put together an impressive string of 29 victories.

His team-mates also proved their ability to boss the field, as Belyakov (RUS) managed 25 wins and there were 21 for **Alexander Lifanov** (RUS), ranking him 4th in Fencing behind Dogue (GER), who scored 23 hits.

In the Bonus Round, local favourite **Jan Kuf** of **Czech Republic** made some headway with three additional points, while Lesun (RUS) defeated his compatriot Belyakov (RUS) in the final bout.

RIDING

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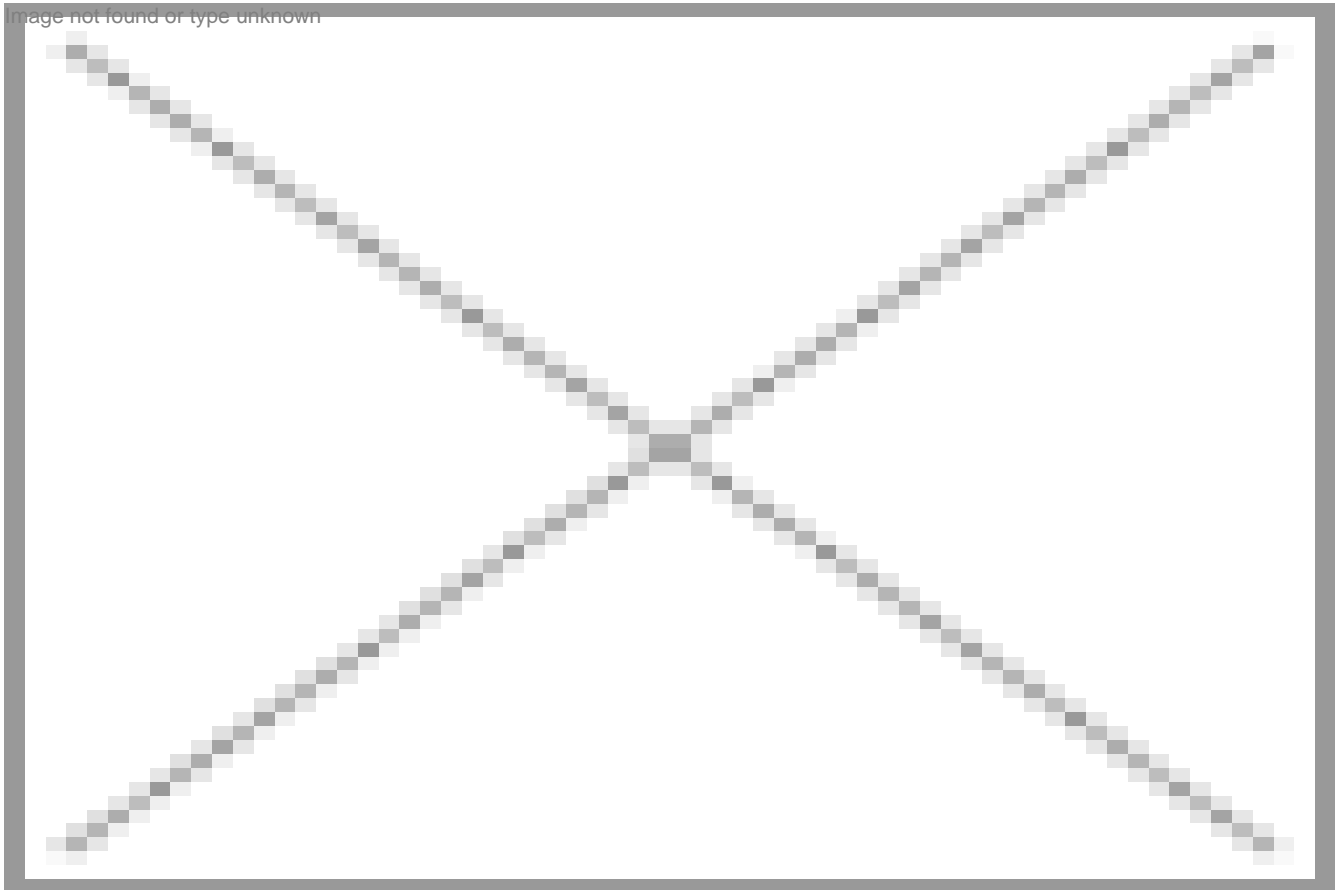
Scoring was generally high in the Riding arena, with only Elgeziry (USA) fading out of contention as he picked up 40 penalty points.

There were perfect scores of 300 for Rio 2016 Olympic silver medallist **Pavlo Tymoshchenko** of **Ukraine** and **Sebastian Stasiak** of **Poland**, while another eight athletes incurred only minor time penalties, with **Martin Bilko** (CZE) delighting the crowd with a score of 299.

The high scoring did nothing to distract Belyakov (RUS) and Lesun (RUS), who were a picture of composure as they each completed the course unscathed with only four points lost in time penalties. That gave the duo a big lead in the gold and silver medal positions at the start of the Laser Run.

LASER RUN

With a 19sec lead over Belyakov (RUS) and a further 27sec separating him from 3rd-placed **Gustav Gustenau** of **Austria**, Lesun (RUS) lost almost 10sec to his nearest rival at the opening shoot, but after that he never had cause to look over his shoulder.



Immediately the athletes who started in 4th and 6th, Choong (GBR) and Dogue (GER) respectively, seized the initiative in the race for bronze, playing the long game in gradual pursuit of Belyakov (RUS) in the hope he might fade.

That is exactly what happened on the final lap, as Choong (GBR) summoned the same strength that propelled him to silver in Sofia (BUL), and the long legs of Dogue (GER) had just enough to get him past Belyakov (RUS) on the final straight, bringing a terrific race to a dramatic conclusion.

Behind them, world No.1 **Valentin Prades** of **France** emulated the 5th position achieved by top-ranked Marie Oteiza (FRA) 24 hours earlier, while Tymoshchenko (UKR) completed the top six, followed home by two top-four athletes – local favourite Kuf (CZE) and **Arthur Lanigan-O’Keeffe** of **Ireland**.

The best Laser Run performance came from **Martin Vlach** (CZE), who finished 13th thanks to his time of 10:30.88, narrowly quicker than Prades (FRA, 10:39.76) and **Brice Loubet** (FRA, 10:39.15).

PRESIDENT’S REACTION

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “This Men’s Final was one of the best finals we have seen in recent years, and you saw the way the athletes gave all their energy from the 1st to the 10th places.

“This is the Pentathlon World Cup where they performed as strongly as possible for the Pentathlon World Cup Final in Tokyo, and today was again based on super riding. It was really enjoyable for the spectators and you could see their enthusiasm, and then later for the Laser Run.

“I congratulate the athletes for what they have delivered today, giving us exciting moments, and

once again thank you to the organising committee, who did great work to prepare the best conditions that we need for the athletes.

“This was a great last test before Tokyo, and we are looking forward to seeing the best athletes competing there based on their rankings.”

WATCH AND FOLLOW

Pentathlon World Cup Prague concludes tomorrow (May 27) with the Mixed Relay. Live stream is available on UIPM TV and up-to-date results of all competitions are available at the UIPM website.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35
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Rank	Name	Nation	MP Points
1	LESUN Aleksander	RUS	1489
	CHOONG Joseph	GBR	1481
	DOGUE Marvin Faly	GER	1480
	BELYAKOV Kirill	RUS	1478
	PRADES Valentin	FRA	1465
	TYMOSHCHENKO Pavlo	UKR	1460
	KUF Jan	CZE	1456
	LANIGAN-O KEEFFE Arthur	IRL	1455
	LIFANOV Alexander	RUS	1452
	STASIAK Sebastian	POL	1451
	RASHAD Sherif	EGY	1450
	COOKE James	GBR	1449
	VLACH Martin	CZE	1449
	GUSTENAU Gustav	AUT	1444
	LIEBIG Fabian	GER	1442
	BARANOV Serge	RUS	1437
	JUN Woongtae	KOR	1437
	DOGUE Patrick	GER	1437
	NOBIS Alexander	GER	1435
	TOOLIS Thomas	GBR	1432
	DEJARDIN Pierre	FRA	1427
	NAKONECHNYI Ruslan	LAT	1425
	KINDL David	CZE	1423
	ZHANG Linbin	CHN	1422
	LUO Shuai	CHN	1421
	MICOZZI Gianluca	ITA	1420
	MICHSHENKO Vladislav	KAZ	1418
	BILKO Martin	CZE	1414
	LOUBET Brice	FRA	1410
	REGOS Gergely	HUN	1408
	ELGEZIRY Amro	USA	1406
	KIM Soengjin	KOR	1402
	COLASANTI Daniele	ITA	1382
	BUSTOS Esteban	CHI	1368
	SWIDERSKI Jaroslaw	POL	1363

