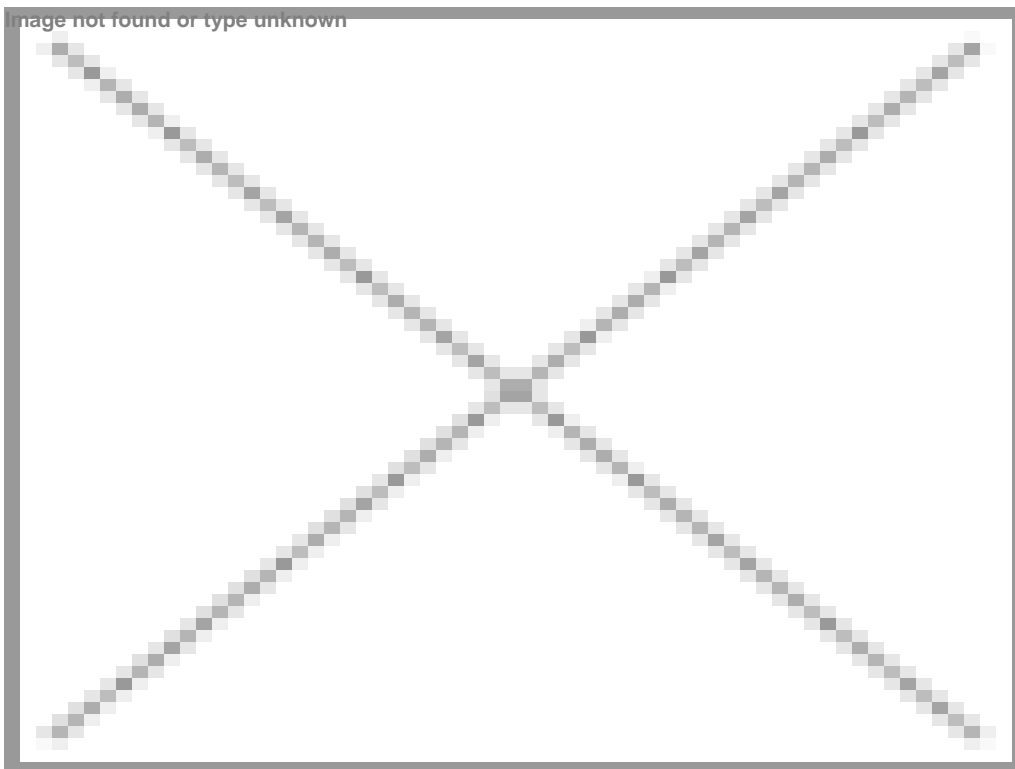


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WORLD URBAN GAMES 2019: PROKOPENKO (BLR) AND ELGENDY (EGY) LIGHT UP OPENING DAY



Two of the world's leading pentathletes showed their Laser Run prowess by performing best in the individual races on day one of the 1st World Urban Games (September 13-15).

Laser Run, UIPM's most popular development sport which has grown in popularity across all continents since it was launched as a standalone sport in 2015, encapsulated the spirit of this competition on its debut as a showcase sport, and the Sprint Laser Run format thrilled observers.

Although a non-medal event, certificates were handed out to the leading performers and it was **Anastasiya Prokopenko** of **Belarus** and **Ahmed Elgendy** of **Egypt** who took the spoils on the first of three days of racing.

Prokopenko (BLR), the 2018 Pentathlon world champion, emerged on top in a thrilling battle with second-placed **Ilke Ozyuksel** of **Turkey** as third place went to the 2018 Laser Run world champion, **Jessica Varley** of **Great Britain**.

Blanka Guzi of **Hungary** had been the early leader, and she made up for her disappointment at finishing outside the top three by winning the Mixed Relay alongside **Yaraslau Radziuk** (BLR).

In second place was the 2019 Laser Run world champion **Kamilla Reti** (HUN), partnered with Elgendy (EGY), while Ozyuksel (TUR) and **Balint Katona** (HUN) finished third.

Women's individual best performer Prokopenko (BLR) said: "I have good emotions because the weather was very good and all the people here had a lot of fun, lots of happy faces.

"It was a very good atmosphere and I can't believe it, because Ilke and Guzi were so fast. Maybe it was just my day, it's good. I prepared hard and I feel strong."

Best performer in the men's event was Elgendy (EGY), the 2018 Youth Olympic Games gold medallist, with local favourite **Gergely Regos** (HUN) finishing second and **Sergio Villamayor** of **Argentina** coming third after leading throughout the first two laps of the 400m circuit.

Elgendy (EGY) said: "Of course I'm very happy and very proud to represent Egypt at the first edition of the World Urban Games here in Hungary.

"It's a nice competition and very well organised and I'm so happy to win this certificate today after competing with the fastest Laser Runners in the world.

"When I discovered that the Sprint Laser Run format would be 400m rather than 800m, I was a little bit less motivated because I don't like speed races. I prefer the longer distance because it gives me an advantage.

"We don't train to run at this speed, but today it was amazing! The last shooting series was fast for me, 6sec I think, and I moved into first place and it was great for me."

The action took place at Budapest's Great Market Hall (Nagyvasartelep) and Laser Run is one of just eight sports on the programme for this inaugural global competition, run by the Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF).

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Alongside the elite showcase on all three days there is a youth engagement programme with 840 pupils from 20 local schools (aged eight to 14) included in try-out sessions and invited on to the field of play to get a taste for UIPM's most popular development sport.

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "We have had a wonderful opening day here in Budapest at the 1st World Urban Games.

"Laser Run is a sub-sport of Modern Pentathlon and is on the programme as a showcase sport. We had international athletes and Hungarian athletes and they really enjoyed the competition, in the individual races and the Mixed Relay where there were international combinations.

"The IOC Sport Director Kit McConnell, the GAISF President Raffaele Chiulli and the World Urban Games CEO, our Seoul 1988 Olympic Modern Pentathlon champion Attila Mizser, could see what we are doing in urban sport and Laser Run truly belongs to urban sports.

"I must say thank you to the Hungarian Modern Pentathlon Association helping us again after the UIPM 2019 Pentathlon and Laser Run World Championships last week, and thanks to the athletes for everything they did in these days.

"This is a great presentation to the international sporting world, joining other urban sports, and we are so happy to be involved. The representatives from GAISF can see that they have made a great decision. We will work hard to be included as a competition sport in the next World Urban Games in two years' time."

Laser Run was derived from the combined event that has become the climax of all Pentathlon competitions in recent years. The first UIPM Laser Run World Championships took place in Perpignan (FRA) in 2015 and the UIPM Global Laser Run City Tour was introduced in 2017 to make the sport more accessible to urban communities worldwide.

The other showcase sport on the World Urban Games programme is indoor rowing, while the six competition sports are BMX freestyle, roller freestyle, parkour, breaking, 3x3 basketball and flying disc freestyle. Visit the official website for more.