

10 SEP 2020

# A TRULY GLOBAL CELEBRATION AS #LASERALLSTARS CHAMPIONS MARK PENTATHLON DAY IN STYLE

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- Laser shooting showcase produces medallists from five continents
- Family affair in Egypt as mother and two sons share in success
- President Schormann hails showcase of Coubertin's Olympic values

Twenty-four athletes from five continents – including three from the same family – became the first UIPM Laser All Stars medallists after a thrilling day of virtual competition.

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On the 3rd Pierre de Coubertin Pentathlon Day, September 9, Egypt topped the inaugural #LaserAllStars medal table with four gold medals along with two silver and two bronze, while Great Britain scooped seven medals including two golds.

There were also medals for athletes from established pentathlon nations Mexico, Russia and Guatemala as well as Ecuador, the Philippines, Afghanistan, Switzerland and Moldova.

It was a day when the first-ever global online laser shooting competition came to a conclusion.

It was also a day when UIPM's worldwide community came together online with the annual #High5 social media campaign.

And the fun vibes and friendly spirit were underlined by one family that produced three medallists competing in the same house.

In the first-ever #LaserAllStars medal play-off, Eman Mousa of Egypt won bronze in the Women's 40+ Masters category. Later in the day, her son Ibrahim Al Desoky won Men's Under 22 gold and he then watched as his elder brother Abdelrahman Mahmoud emerged triumphant in the Men's Under 40 category.

The three family members came together to celebrate on the UIPM TV live stream at the end – a scene in keeping with the theme of the day.

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A group of competitors in Egypt also gathered to compete in a club setting, some of them in direct competition with each other. This situation was replicated:

- in Guatemala, where Sofia Cabrera and Gabriela Fernandez faced off from adjacent tables
- in Afghanistan, where Ajmal Safi and Karim Nawid met in the semi-finals, Safi (AFG) winning an epic battle 4-3
- in Great Britain, where U15 competitors Zoe Spokes, Imogen Edwards Travis Moore and Toby Aberdeen all competed with each other from their homes.

Athletes confined to home competed in their living rooms, halls and back yards, all united by a sense of common purpose – to test their shooting abilities under pressure and enjoy competing together at a time when physical events are still so difficult to arrange.

For almost four and a half hours the action was relayed live on UIPM TV, under the watchful eye of tireless commentator James Tzanoudakis and certified international UIPM judges Tunde Szeles (HUN) and Ana Ruth Orellana (GUA), for whom interventions were rare as most competitors' technology stood up to the test.

In fact, it was a historic day in terms of technological innovation. The laser shooting targets that recorded the participants' timing and registered their hits sent data directly to an online server which enabled the production team to create graphics for the audience to view in real time.

Clair Carman (GBR), Women's 40+ champion, said: "You underestimate how nervous you're going to feel because so many people are watching, and you make silly mistakes. But it was really exciting and thank you to everybody involved. It's absolutely fantastic that you can compete from home."

Silvia Ventura (MEX), Women's U22 champion, said: "I feel really proud to represent Mexico especially considering the difficult situation linked to COVID-19. I feel really happy and I would like to thank all of those who supported me for this result to happen."

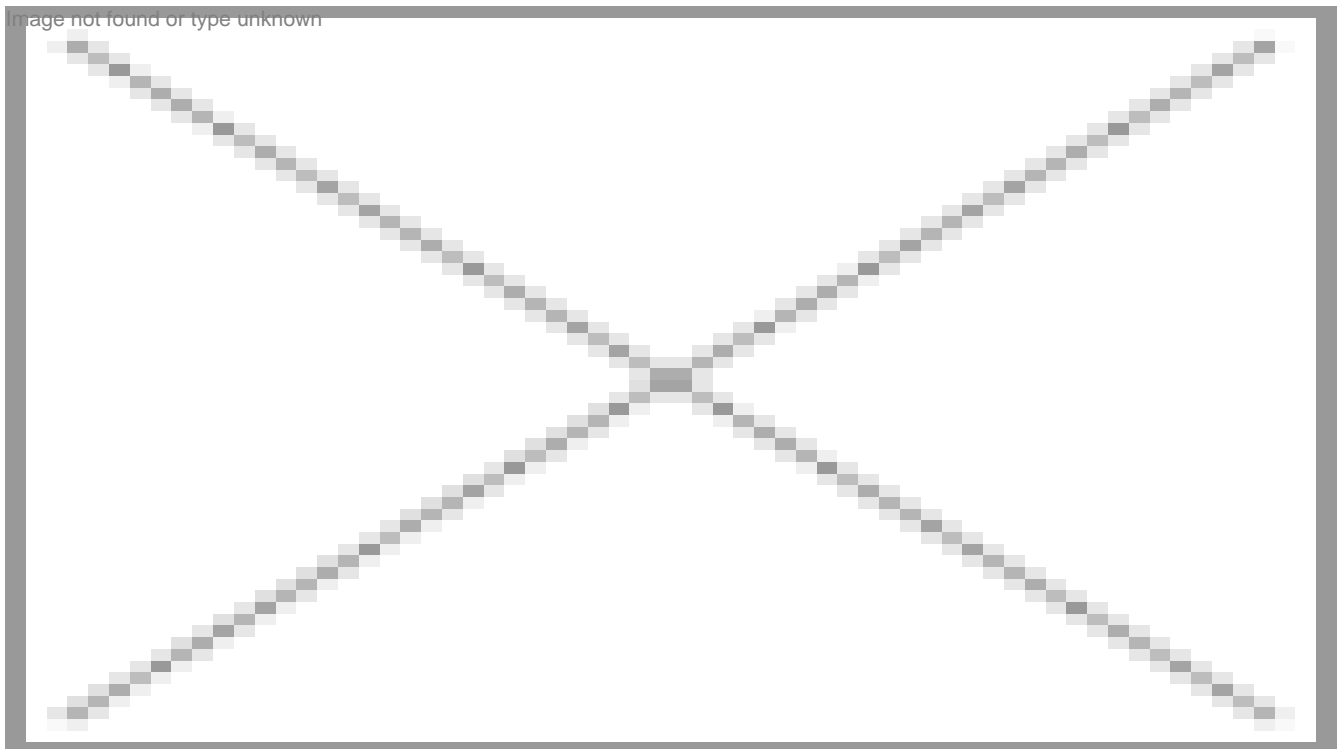
Valery Schukin (RUS), Men's U15 champion, said: "It was very exciting whether the equipment, the gun or the internet would fail, doubly from the fact that I represented Russia alone today. I am

very glad of the victory, the training was not in vain. Thank you all for your support, I'm happy!"

UIPM Laser All Stars was born out of a clear appetite for virtual competition among the global UIPM community since COVID-19 lockdown measures were introduced, and its creation followed the popular UIPM Laser Home Run event that first brought competitors together online in May 2020.

Janusz Peciak, UIPM Executive Board Member for Sport and 1976 Olympic champion, said: "It was wonderful to see so many athletes of all ages – from five different continents – take part in the first UIPM Laser All Stars.

"Once again we have seen the dedication and love that people have for UIPM Sports and the desire to come together and test their abilities under pressure in a global competition online."



The prevailing spirit of fair play was highly appropriate on an annual day created by UIPM in 2018 to remember and honour the man who founded Modern Pentathlon and introduced it to the Olympic Games at Stockholm 1912.

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "This is the third time we celebrated the Pierre de Coubertin Pentathlon Day, remembering the founder not only of our sporting movement but of the Olympic values that we seek to embody.

"In this difficult time of the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic, we were able to join together as a worldwide Modern Pentathlon movement to underline those values through the very special actions of our athletes, reminding the world that we are alive and communicating through online methods with many people in the Olympic movement.

"My thanks go to all who participated in these days and especially today, in the 3rd UIPM Pierre de Coubertin Pentathlon Day."

Viacheslav Malishev, UIPM Executive Board Member for Development, added: “I was very happy to see pentathletes taking part once again in celebrations of our special day on various social media.

“Each year we see our community growing, with an increasing number of countries participating in Modern Pentathlon and UIPM Sports not only in person but also online. Today was a great demonstration of the worldwide development of our movement at a time when so many people in all countries are struggling due to the impact of COVID-19.”

The #High5 campaign was created by the UIPM as part of the Pierre de Coubertin Pentathlon Day, as a symbol of commitment to preserving and building on the legacy of Coubertin.

This social media activation is ongoing and the #High5 is recognised as a symbol of dedication. By raising and showing their ‘High 5’ anyone can demonstrate their own commitment to protect, promote and further develop Modern Pentathlon.

Catch up with the conversation about #LaserAllStars on social media and visit the dedicated page on the UIPM website for results and other information.

