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UIPM 2021 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP BUDAPEST: RECORD-BREAKING FRENCH (GBR) IN BIG WIN

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- World No.3 sets new Fencing world record on way to gold
- Silver medallist Muir (GBR) completes British one-two
- Venckauskaite (LTU) claims bronze after scorching Laser Run

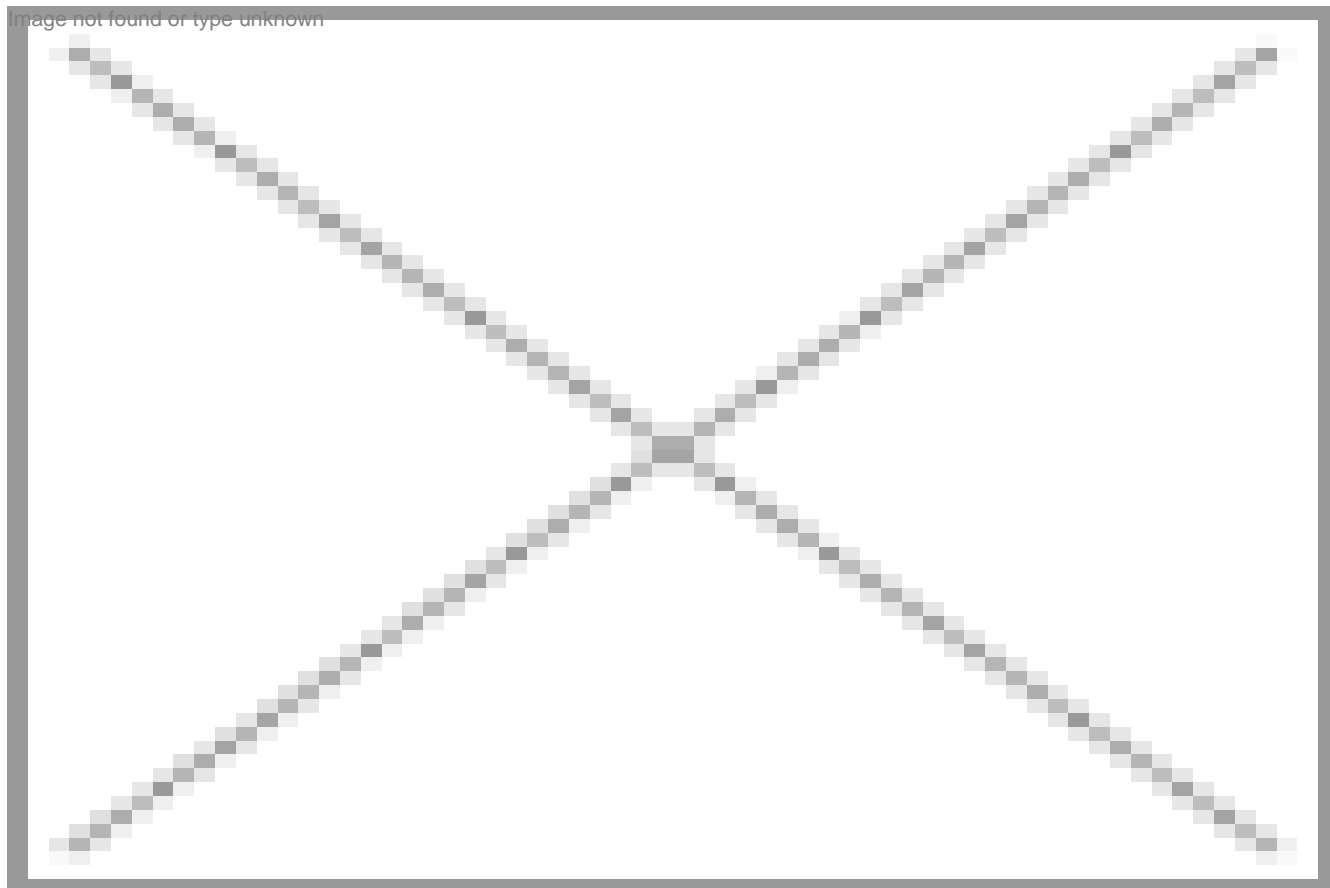
They hadn't competed or trained with any foreign athletes for 13 months, but it didn't stop **Great Britain** enjoying a remarkable season-opener at UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Budapest.

After setting a new Fencing world record, there was no stopping **Kate French** (GBR) from clinching her fourth Pentathlon World Cup gold medal but her team-mate **Joanna Muir** (GBR) also stood out from the field as she claimed silver – and **Francesca Summers** (GBR) completed a remarkable team effort by finishing 6th.

Gintare Venckauskaite of **Lithuania** completed a thrilling comeback to earn the bronze medal in the first elite Modern Pentathlon final since UIPM 2020 Pentathlon World Cup Cairo.

Muir (GBR) was the gold medallist that day and she strengthened her lead at the top of the UIPM Olympic World Rankings with today's result.

Behind the top three, **Marie Oteiza** of **France** finished strongly to place 4th and **Iryna Prasiantsova** of **Belarus** finished one place further back after performing consistently all day. In a sprint to the line, **Natalya Coyle** of **Ireland** came home 7th, one place ahead of **Uliana Batashova** of **Russia**.



Swimming

New season, same old pecking order in the pool as the prolific **Gulnaz Gubaydullina** (RUS) set the standard with a time of 2min 05.81sec. **Elena Micheli** of **Italy** was second-fastest in 2:07.61 while **Michelle Gulyas** of **Hungary** and Oteiza (FRA) also ducked under 2:10.

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Fencing

Any pentathlete who dominates Fencing knows they will be in a strong overall position, but it was difficult to see anyone catching French (GBR) after a truly unforgettable performance.

The world record of 280 points (30V/5D) for senior women had stood for nearly a decade, first set by **Xiaonan Zhang** of **China** at UIPM 2013 Pentathlon World Cup Palm Springs in USA and matched by **Lena Schoeneborn** of **Germany** in the UIPM 2015 Pentathlon World Championships in Berlin (GER).

Despite the high calibre of competition, with 17 of the world's top 20 women's pentathletes competing in the Hungarian capital, French (GBR) was almost unbeatable on the piste, winning an extraordinary 31 of her 35 bouts (31V/4D).

The catch-up effort was led by Prasiantsova (BLR, 27V/8D) and **Iryna Khokhlova** of **Ukraine** (26V/9D), while **Amira Kandil** of **Egypt** also performed superbly, scoring 25V/10D and winning four additional points in the Bonus Round to be the last woman standing.

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Riding

Two days after stunning her senior rivals with her performance in qualification, 13-year-old **Natsu Ohta** of **Japan** suffered a fall during the warm-up for Riding and withdrew (she later returned for the Laser Run and recorded the 12th-fastest time to finish 33rd overall).

There was only one perfect score of 300, performed by **Salma Abdelmaksoud** (EGY), but Muir and Summers (GBR) lifted themselves up the leaderboard with only three and five time penalties respectively. When French (GBR) dislodged two obstacles it gave the chasing pack some hope.

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Laser Run

Starting a slender 9sec ahead of Kandil (EGY), 15sec ahead of Prasiantsova (BLR) and 18sec ahead of Muir (GBR), French (GBR) was a picture of composure throughout, running confidently and shooting with patience and calm.

Finally she won by 15sec from Muir (GBR), who overtook Kandil (EGY) on the first lap and never looked back, leaving all the intrigue to surround the battle for bronze.

For much of the race it looked as if Prasiantsova (BLR) had the medal to lose, but there are always bolters in the field at this level. When the Belarussian registered a 10sec shoot at the final visit to the range, again it would have given her confidence but Venckauskaite (LTU) also made her five shots in 10sec and burst into 4th place with Oteiza (FRA) not far behind.

Like her compatriot Laura Asadauskaite (LTU), Venckauskaite (LTU) is one of the best Laser Runners in the business and she duly hunted her target down and crossed the line with a cry of joy, 6sec ahead of Oteiza (FRA).

Medallists' reaction

French (GBR) said: "I wasn't very happy with my semi-final performance so I'm glad I was able to turn it around.

"I also messed up a little in Riding today but I turned it around in the end. I was secretly hoping that my team-mates would not be far away and it was great to see Jo cross the line behind me and then Francesca finished 6th, so it's been an amazing day."

Reflecting on her world record in Fencing, French (GBR) added: "I can't believe it. I was stressing

a little bit in the last few bouts but I managed to hold it together."

Muir (GBR) added: "I don't think it has quite sunk in yet. I had no idea how it would go as we haven't competed in so long.

"Training has been going very well but I had no idea what other competitors had been doing because we hadn't been on any training camps or anything. It was really tough today, especially the Fencing, because of that.

"It's just a rollercoaster of emotions. It wasn't easy. The boys go tomorrow and they've been training well too and are in good shape, so I'm sure they will do really well."

UIPM President's reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "Today we had our first UIPM Pentathlon World Cup since Cairo in February 2020 and it was a very important day for our women athletes who are trying to collect points for the UIPM Olympic World Ranking.

"Thanks to the Hungarian organisers with all their knowledge and their input, we were able to have a great competition based on very well-prepared horses. Finally we had a winning team from Great Britain but everybody who has been competing here through the qualification and the final gave their best.

"Again, thank you for the high performance of all our athletes under excellent conditions, and I'm more than surprised to see the high level they are performing and presenting after such a long time. Thanks to their coaches and also to the National Federations for the input they are giving our Union.

"I'm sure tomorrow we will also have a very exciting Men's Final day."

Watch and follow

UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Budapest continues tomorrow (March 27) with the Men's Final and concludes with the Mixed Relay on Sunday (March 28).

A live stream of the Men's Final will be available on UIPM TV, while results of all competitions are available at the UIPM website and the 'UIPM Central' app.

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Rank	Name	Nation	MP Points
1	FRENCH Kate	GBR	1403
2	MUIR Joanna	GBR	1388
3	VENCKAUSKAITE Gintare	LTU	1362
4	OTEIZA Marie	FRA	1356
5	PRASIANTSOVA Iryna	BLR	1351
6	SUMMERS Francesca	GBR	1350
7	COYLE Natalya	IRL	1346
8	BATASHOVA Uliana	RUS	1345

9	ABDELMAKSOUD Salma	EGY	1341
10	PROKOPENKO Anastasiya	BLR	1336
11	KANDIL Amira	EGY	1326
12	GULYAS Michelle	HUN	1325
13	JURT Anna	SUI	1322
14	SILKINA Volha	BLR	1320
15	GUBAYDULLINA Gulnaz	RUS	1319
16	OZYUKSEL Ilke	TUR	1313
17	POTAPENKO Elena	KAZ	1308
18	BRASSIL Sive	IRL	1307
19	OLIVER Mayan	MEX	1305
20	DAVIS Jessica	USA	1302
21	CLOUVEL Elodie	FRA	1296
22	KOVACS Sarolta	HUN	1290
23	ALEKSZEJEV Tamara	HUN	1279
24	LANGREHR Rebecca	GER	1277
25	HERNANDEZ Sophia	GUA	1272
26	GUZI Blanka	HUN	1264
27	HEREDIA Laura	ESP	1256
28	ARCEO Mariana	MEX	1255
29	RAJNOCH Barbora	CZE	1222
30	SHIMAZU Rena	JPN	1219
31	VEGA Tamara	MEX	1195
32	MICHELI Elena	ITA	1066
33	OHTA Natsu	JPN	1042
34	KHOKHLOVA Iryna	UKR	1027
35	OLIVER Catherine Mayran	MEX	943
36	YAMANAKA Shino	JPN	941