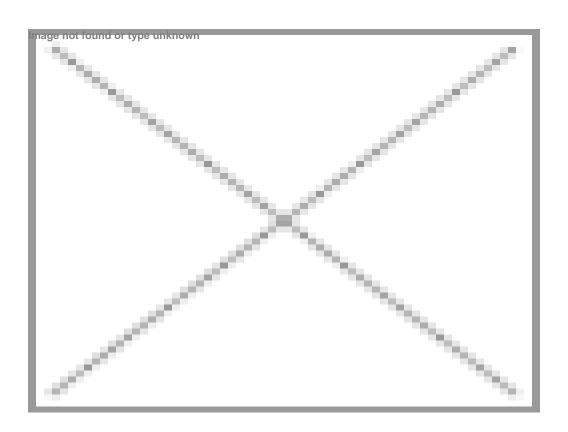


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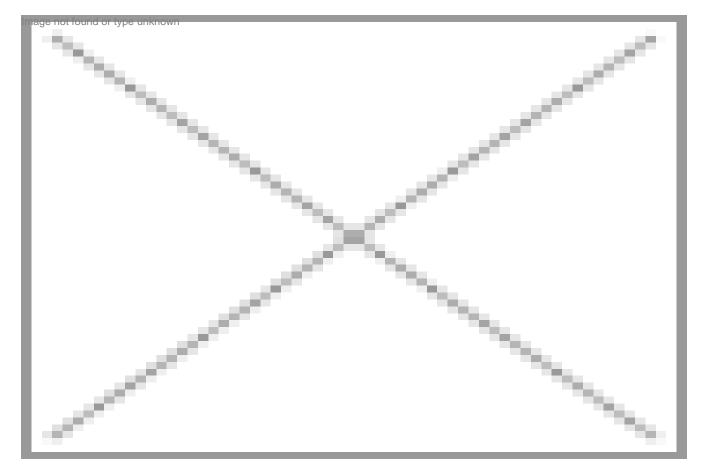
UIPM 2021 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP SOFIA (I): KAZAKHSTAN PICK OFF RIVALS IN MIXED RELAY



- Joy for Potapenko and Michshenko (KAZ) on final day
- Hard work earns silver for Klimiankova & Tsikhanau (Belarus)
- Kim & Seo (Korea) pip Moya & Ders (Cuba) to bronze

Elena Potapenko of **Kazakhstan** warmed up for what promises to be her second Olympic Games appearance by winning the Mixed Relay alongside **Vladislav Michshenko** at UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Sofia (I).

It was a dominant performance by Potapenko (KAZ), who finished 9th at Rio 2016 and secured a Tokyo 2020 quota place for her country at the 2019 Asian Championships, and her less experienced partner Michshenko (KAZ).



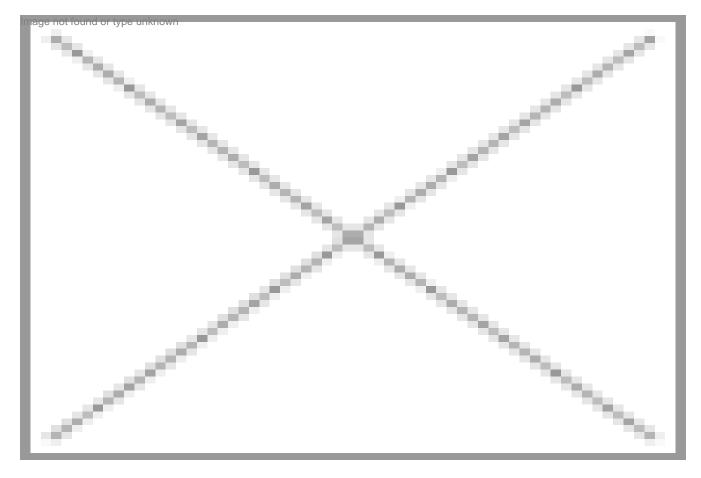
Competing against 18 rival pairs from around the world, the Kazakh duo finally won by 22sec from **Kseniya Klimiankova** and **Pavel Tsikhanau** of **Belarus**, who were joined on the podium by bronze medallists **Unju Kim** and **Changwan Seo** of **Korea**.

The medal ceremony would have been hard to watch for Leidis Laura Moya and Lester Ders of Cuba, who lost possession of silver at the final shoot and finally had to settle for 4th, ahead of Italy (Gloria Tocchi & Stefano Frezza) in 5th and Hungary (Kamilla Reti & Balazs Szep) in 6th.

Swimming

A very tight contest between two neighbouring nations ended in prominence in the pool for Russia (Maria Samoilova & Vladimir Chelmakin), whose time of 1:58.27 upstaged Ukraine (Iryna Boicheniuk & Oleksandr Tovkai) by just 0.1sec.

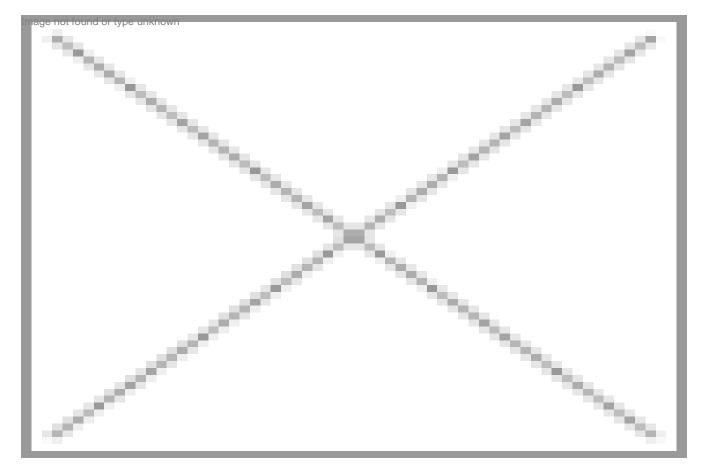
There was some satisfaction for the host nation as **Bulgaria** (**Svetla Zgurova** & **Denis Kolev**) recorded the third-fastest time (2:01.00), a fraction of a second ahead of **Guatemala** (**Sofia Cabrera** & **Charles Fernandez**).



Fencing

They would finally win the competition by 22 points and this could be strongly attributed to the fact that Kazakhstan (Potapenko/Michshenko) were the best by far on the piste, scoring 26V/10D and adding two points in the Bonus Round to notch up 26 more points than their nearest rivals.

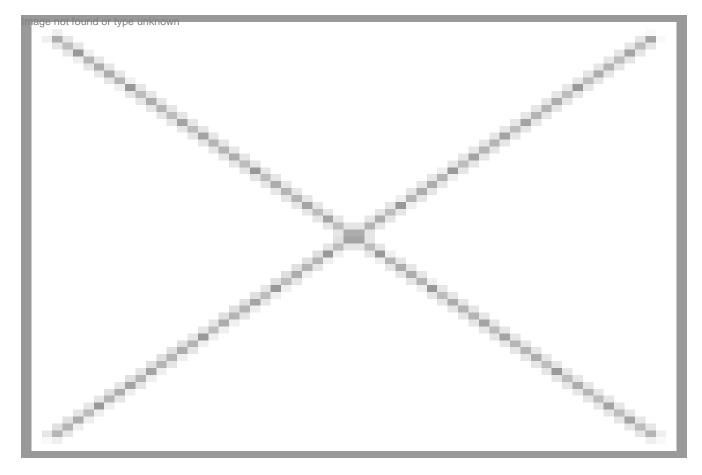
Ukraine (Boicheniuk/Tovkai) managed 22 victories, one more than a clutch of nations on 21 – **Egypt** (**Haydy Morsy & Ahmed Elgendy**), Cuba (Moya/Ders), Italy (Tocchi/Frezza) and **Switzerland** (**Anna Jurt & Maxence Hofer**).



Riding

Kazakhstan (Potapenko/Michshenko) could afford to concede a little ground on horseback and they did just that, conceding 17 penalty points after watching their rivals cut away at the overall deficit.

There were superbly composed performances by Cuba (Moya/Ders), who scored 294, and Belarus (Klimiankova/Tsikhanau), who managed a perfect 300. That gave those two countries a surge of optimism as they embarked on the Laser Run 21sec and 27sec respectively behind the leaders.



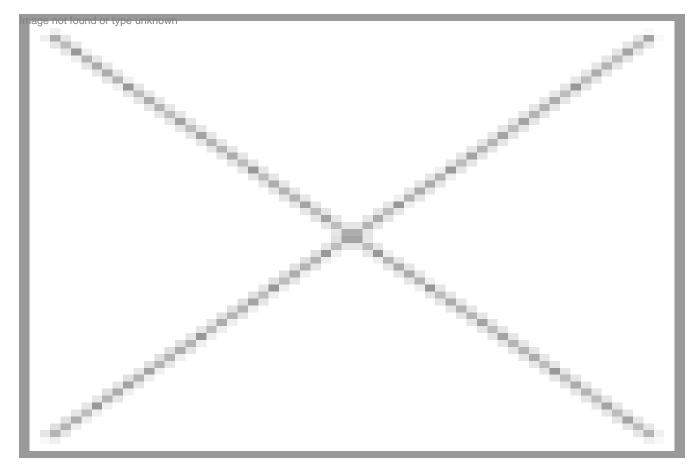
Laser Run

Great champions make winning look easy, and Kazakhstan (Potapenko/Michshenko) betrayed no sign of nerves as they moved serenely through the shooting series, improving with every visit as they got their times down from 15sec to 9sec during the course of the Laser Run.

That meant the leaders could pace their running laps economically without any threat from the chasing pack, leaving all the drama behind them.

It was hard not to feel for Moya (CUB), who successfully protected her starting position of 2nd, and her hard-running partner Ders (CUB), who fought to earn the position back from Tsikhanau (BLR) during the third lap, only to get stuck on the range for 25sec at the final shoot and leave himself too much to do.

The most impressive Laser Run came from Korea (Kim/Seo), who had started in 7th place but chewed up a 35sec deficit behind Cuba (Moya/Ders) to snatch bronze.



Medallists' reaction

Gold medallist Potapenko (KAZ) said: "It was comfortable, but today is a great day for our country.

"I was nervous regardless of the lead - 21sec or 1sec - but we just did our work, we stayed confident and we enjoyed it."

Silver medallist Tsikhanau (BLR) said: "It's a very good day because our start was not lucky, especially Fencing, but Modern Pentathlon is so interesting and there can be many changes in one day.

"We worked hard in Riding and Laser Run, and we went up from 3rd to 2nd so it's a very good day."

Bronze medallist Kim (KOR) said: "It was an unbelievable race and I'm very happy. It's a nice day and we have a great feeling."

To their credit, the 4th-placed Cubans were also happy to be interviewed after receiving their certificates alongside the medallists.

Two-time Pan American champion and 2010 Youth Olympic Games gold medallist Moya (CUB) said: "I am very happy because even though I couldn't prepare myself easily because of COVID, and last week [Pentathlon World Cup Budapest] wasn't so great for me either, but today we succeeded in every event and I feel it was wonderful.

"It feels good that we already qualified to the [Tokyo 2020 Olympic] Games and this competition was preparation for the Games and we hope to get other good results to be able to take part in the Pentathlon World Cup Final.

"We know that we have to improve in all the disciplines but the good thing is that we know which

disciplines to work on specifically."

UIPM Secretary General's reaction

UIPM Secretary General Shiny Fang said: "Today we saw a lot of young, talented athletes in the Mixed Relay from 19 different countries.

"To have a top six on the podium from three continents, including Cuba, the Mixed Relay simply gives more countries opportunities to compete with gender equality and harmony.

"Competing with joy and respect, that's the Mixed Relay; encouraging and motivating your teammate is the spirit and the most valuable part of the game.

"Why is the Modern Pentathlon Mixed Relay not yet in the Olympic Games programme? Well, maybe not for 2024, but it will only add value for future Games if the opportunity will come."

Watch and follow

UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Sofia (I) has now concluded but the action continues next week with UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Sofia (II) from April 15-18.

Live streaming of all finals is available on UIPM TV, while all competition results are available at the UIPM website and the 'UIPM Central' app.

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| RankName | | NationMP Points | |
|----------|---------------------|-----------------|------|
| 1 | JUN Woongtae | KOR | 1457 |
| 2 | KASZA Robert | HUN | 1455 |
| 3 | PALAZKOV Ilya | BLR | 1451 |
| 4 | LUO Shuai | CHN | 1448 |
| 5 | LIEBIG Fabian | GER | 1446 |
| 6 | TOOLIS Thomas | GBR | 1443 |
| 7 | VLACH Martin | CZE | 1438 |
| 8 | DOGUE Patrick | GER | 1434 |
| 9 | DOGUE Marvin Faly | GER | 1433 |
| 10 | MAROSI Adam | HUN | 1432 |
| 11 | JUNG Jinhwa | KOR | 1430 |
| 12 | PRADES Valentin | FRA | 1424 |
| 13 | PADILLA Manuel | MEX | 1422 |
| 14 | KARDOS Bence | HUN | 1421 |
| 15 | CHOONG Joseph | GBR | 1420 |
| 16 | CURRY Samuel | GBR | 1419 |
| 17 | TYMOSHCHENKO Pavlo | UKR | 1417 |
| 18 | ZILLEKENS Christian | GER | 1416 |
| | | | |

| 19 | HAMED Ahmed | EGY | 1412 |
|----|------------------------|------|------|
| 20 | FERNANDEZ Charles | GUA | 1411 |
| 21 | SEO Changwan | KOR | 1409 |
| 22 | LANIGAN-O'KEEFFE Arthu | rIRL | 1404 |
| 23 | SANDOVAL Alvaro | MEX | 1398 |
| 24 | ZVEDENIUK Pavlo | UKR | 1393 |
| 25 | HAMAD Eslam | EGY | 1389 |
| 26 | UNAL Bugra | TUR | 1387 |
| 27 | KUZNETSOV Maxim | RUS | 1386 |
| 28 | CARRILLO Duilio | MEX | 1384 |
| 29 | SEWILAM Alyeldin | EGY | 1378 |
| 30 | LEE Jihun | KOR | 1366 |
| 31 | KUF Jan | CZE | 1359 |
| 32 | PAVLYUK Denys | UKR | 1356 |
| 33 | VAIVADA Dovidas | LTU | 1350 |
| 34 | GUTKOWSKI Lukasz | POL | 1332 |
| 35 | HAN Jiahao | CHN | 1331 |
| 36 | SUKHAREV Vladislav | KAZ | 1322 |