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UIPM 2022 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP BUDAPEST: GOLDEN GLORY FOR GULYAS (HUN) AND VLACH (CZE)

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- New generation of champions thrills crowd on Super Saturday
- Italy celebrate double silver thanks to Micheli and Parisi
- Bronze medals for Abdelmaksoud (EGY) and Zillekens (GER)

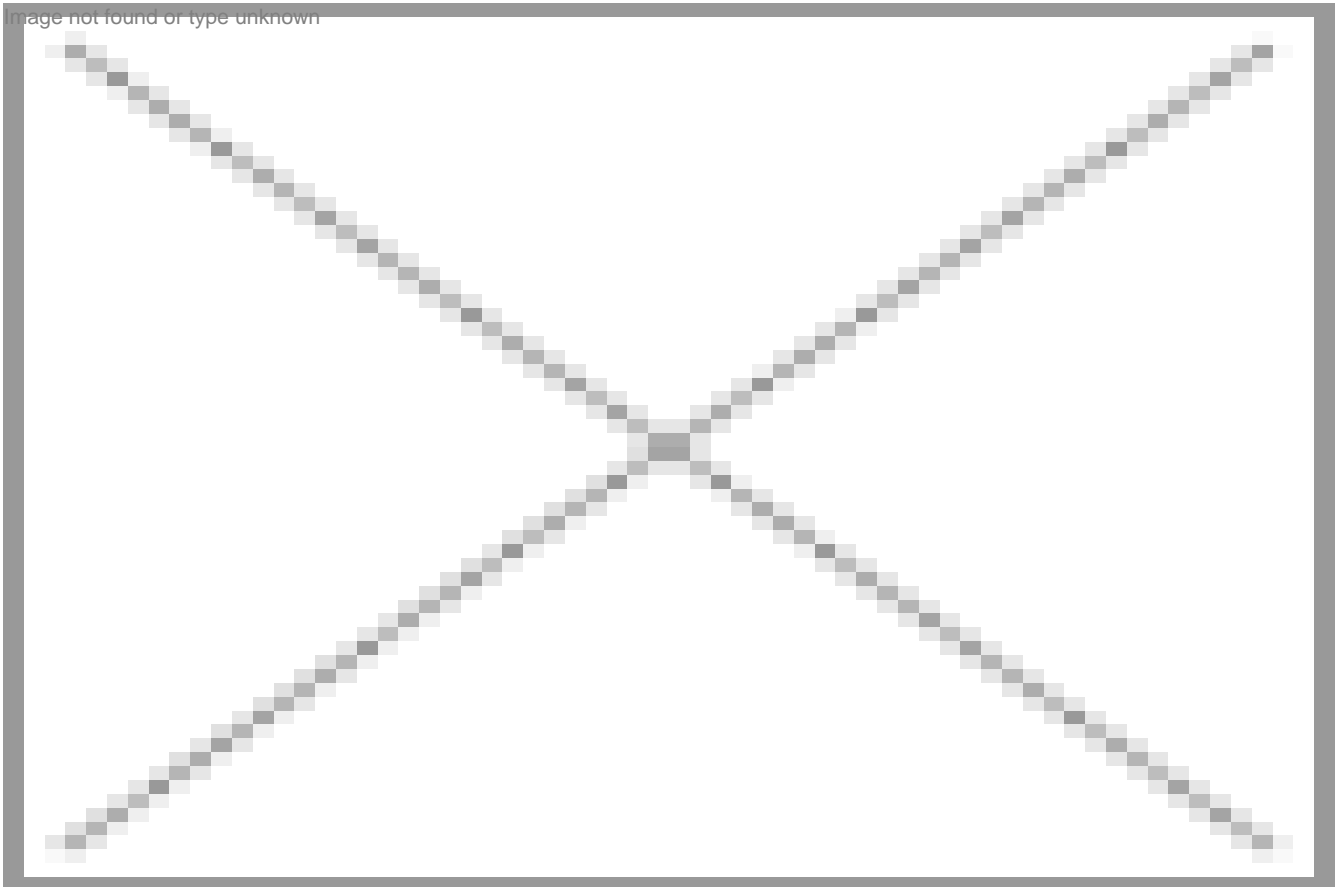
Two of the hottest talents in Modern Pentathlon thrilled a large crowd on a remarkable 'Super Saturday' at UIPM 2022 Pentathlon World Cup Budapest.

After a superb victory in the Men's Final by **Martin Vlach** of **Czech Republic**, **Michelle Gulyas** of **Hungary** sent her supporters into dreamland with a stylish triumph in the Women's Final.

Aged 24 and 21 respectively, Vlach (CZE) and Gulyas (HUN) represent the future of the sport and have already demonstrated a mastery of the new format designed to make Modern Pentathlon more dynamic and exciting for the Paris 2024 Olympic cycle.

In the Women's Final, Gulyas (HUN) progressed from 4th to 1st place in the Laser Run and

refused to let the rival who denied her gold last month at Pentathlon World Cup Cairo back into the race.



Elena Micheli of **Italy** surprised nobody with her late sprint for silver, but **Salma Abdelmaksoud** of **Egypt** caused more of a stir with an accomplished performance to secure bronze. The 2018 Youth Olympic Games gold medallist, 22, confirmed her potential with her first individual medal in the Pentathlon World Cup.

This was the second of two dramatic conclusions on an exceptional Finals day in the heart of Europe. Earlier, with a trademark lightning-fast Laser Run, first-time champion Vlach (CZE) moved up from 13th to 1st place almost effortlessly, leaving his rivals to argue over silver and bronze.

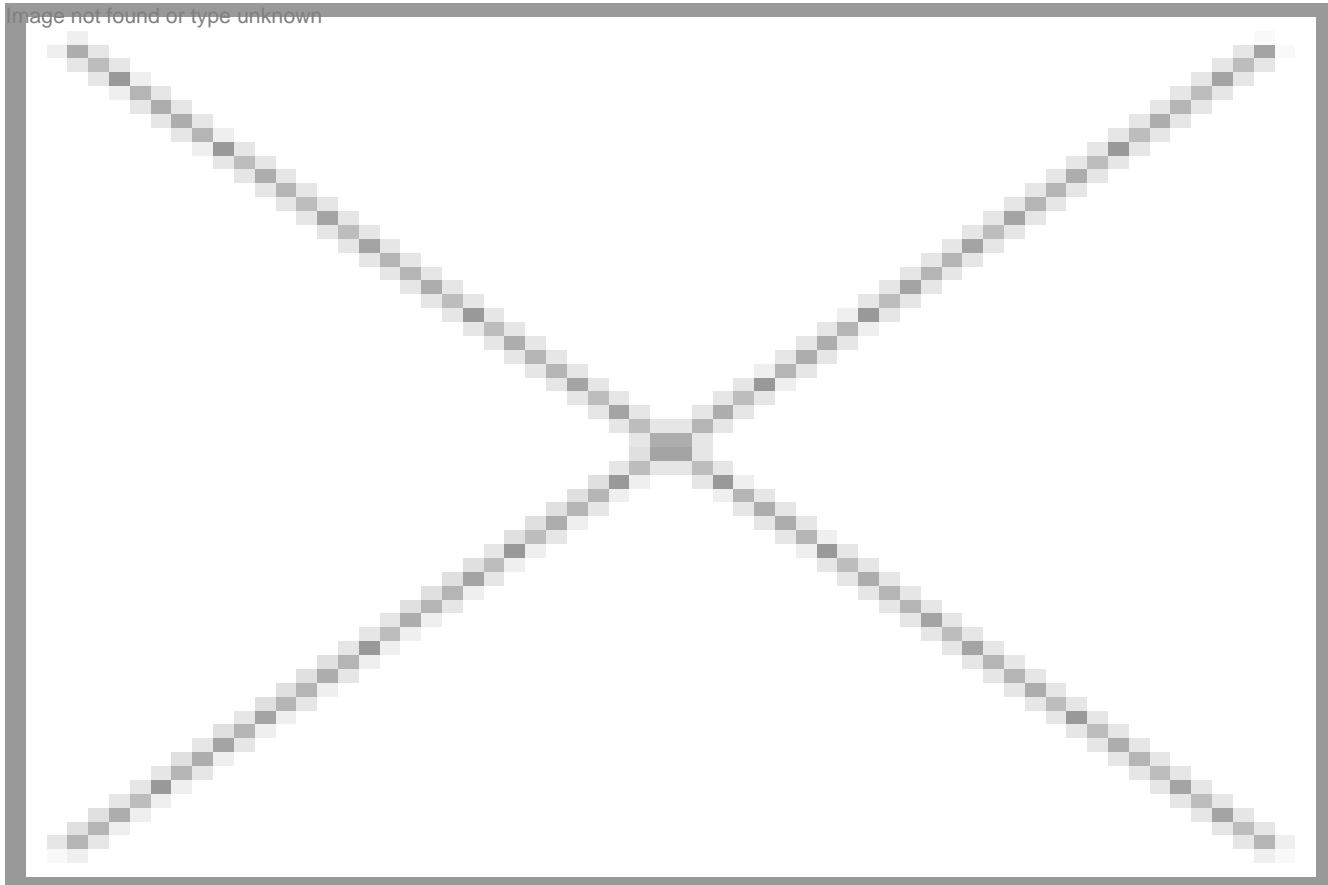
Giuseppe Parisi (ITA) – the oldest of the six medallists at 27 – held on for an impressive maiden silver, while **Christian Zillekens** of **Germany** performed strongly to secure bronze.

Men's Final

Riding

Vlach (CZE) and Zillekens (GER) put themselves firmly in the frame with perfect scores of 300 on horseback along with **Balazs Szep** (HUN) and **Marek Grycz** (CZE). With only one obstacle dislodged, **Marvin Dogue** (GER) and Hungary duo **Bence Viczian** and **Richard Bereczki** also kept the pressure on the leaders, and it proved too much for **Bence Demeter** (HUN) who had an uncharacteristically bad ride, suffering two refusals and conceding a damaging 57 penalty points.

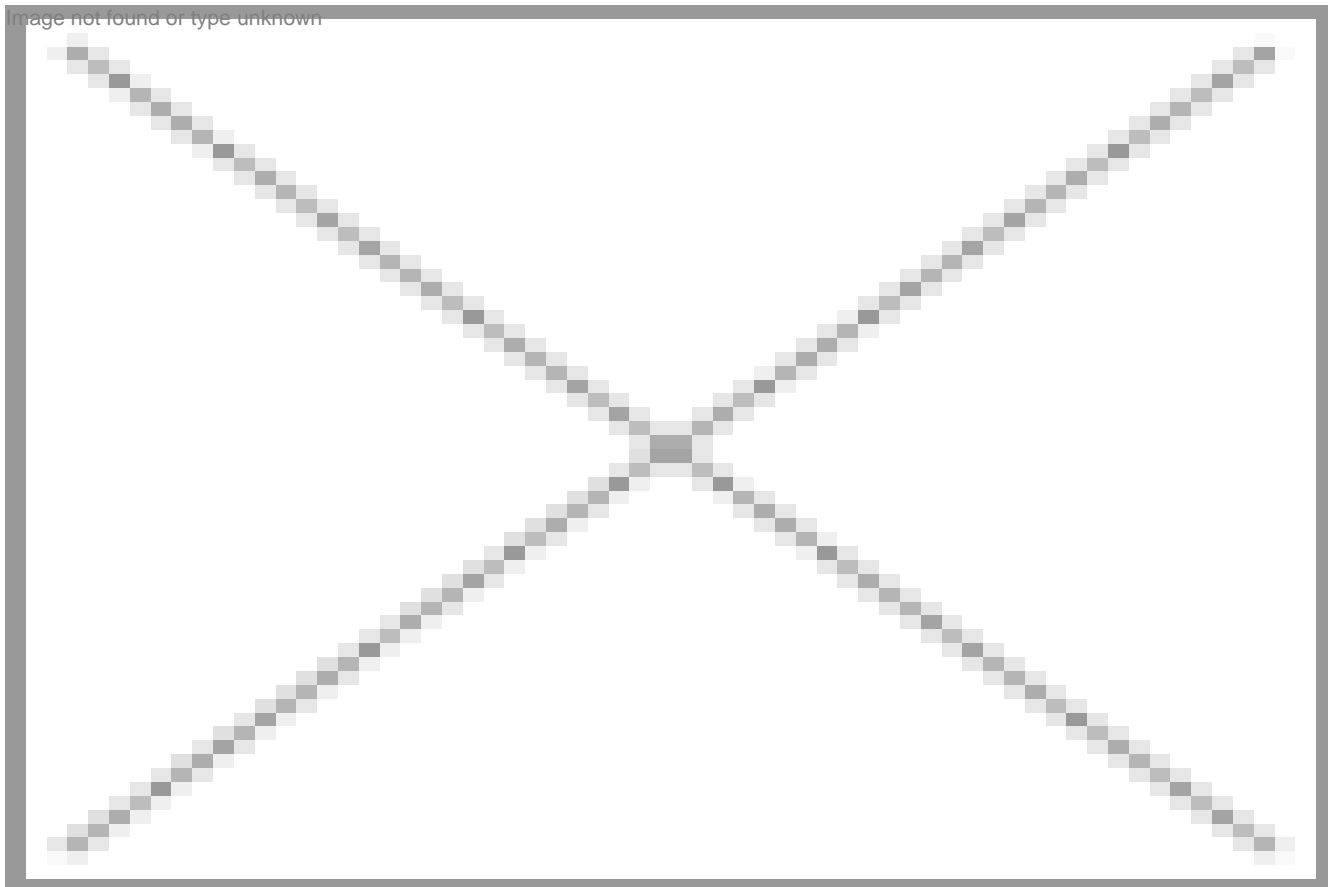
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Fencing

Having dominated the Ranking Round with a terrific score of 29V/6D, Demeter (HUN) was unable to add the extra four points available to the last fencer in the Bonus Round. He was beaten by **Taishu Sato** of **Japan**, who added eight points to his tally. The other star of the piste was Parisi (ITA), who scored a superb 28V/7D in the Ranking Round – five more victories than 3rd-ranked Sato (JPN).

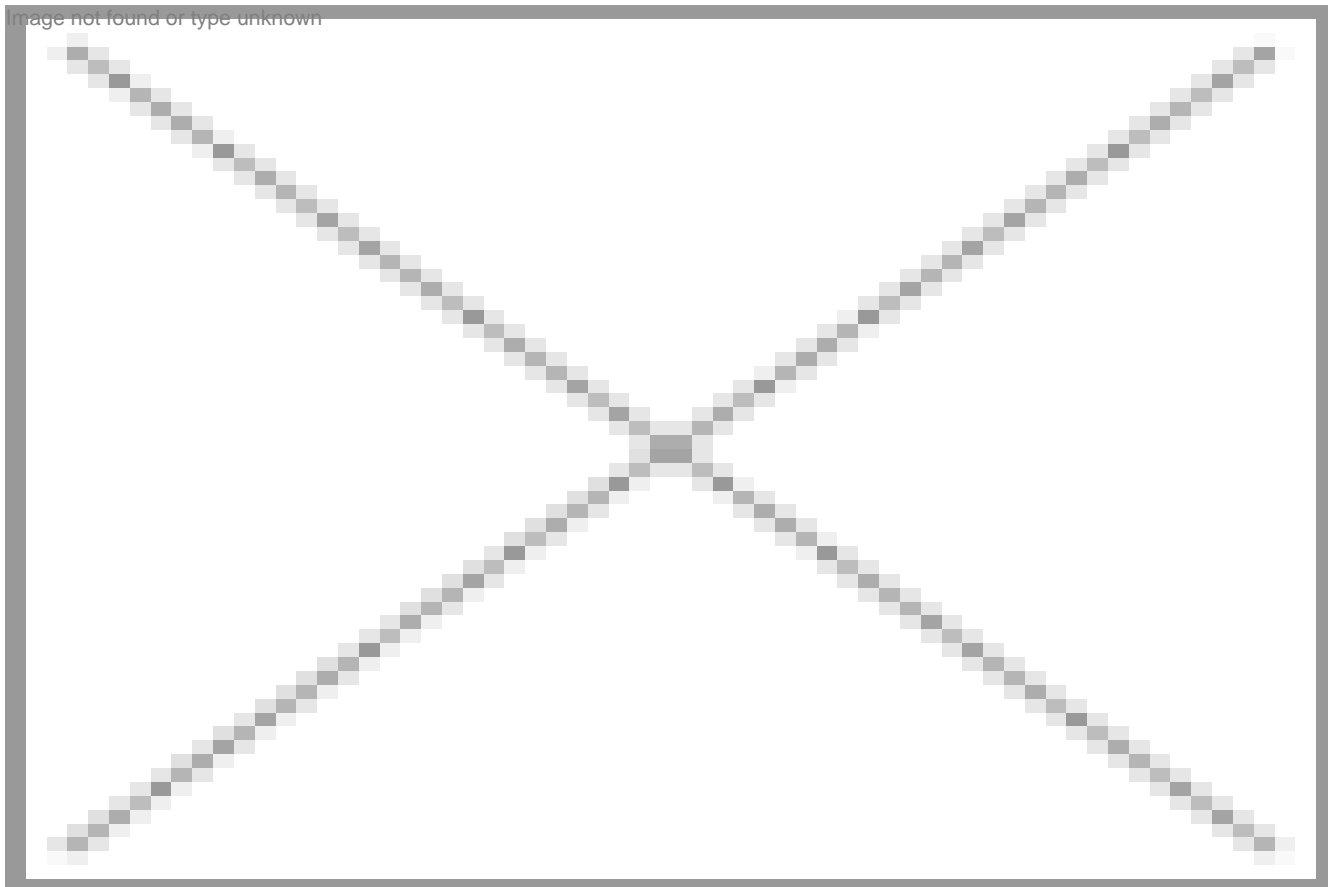
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Swimming

Two racers dipped under the 2min mark with the fastest swims of the day – **Matteo Cicinelli** (ITA, 1:59.03) and **Csaba Bohm** (HUN, 1:59.63). World champion **Adam Marosi** (HUN) kept himself in contention with a solid 2:00.65. The aquatic pedigree of the host nation was unmissable with all seven Hungarians ranking in the top nine.

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Laser Run

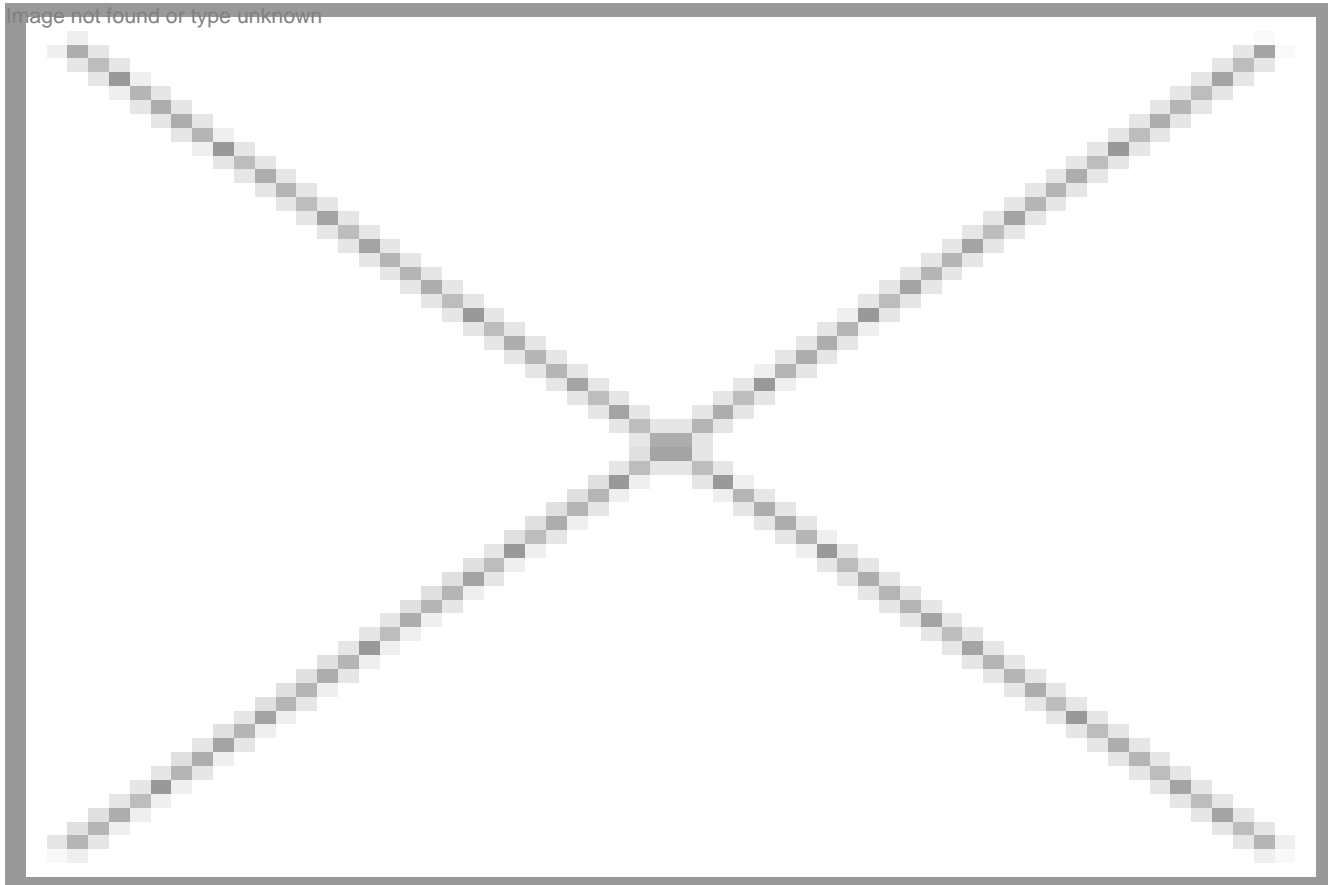
Having come from nowhere to finish 5th in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, the world had already borne witness to the exceptional Laser Run ability of Vlach (CZE), but this was the first time his scorching pace had resulted in an individual gold medal.

He had started the Laser Run 24sec behind leader Parisi (ITA), owing mainly to a poor fence (16V/15D), but by the second lap the young Czech was already in podium position, and with a 10sec shoot at the third visit to the range he leapt into a lead he was never going to relinquish.

Indeed, his time of 9:58.00 is easily the fastest recorded since the introduction of the new format (running now consists of five 600m laps) and will take some beating.

Steady shooting and running by Parisi (ITA) enabled the original to protect his own podium position, and 6th starter Zillekens (GER) also did enough to deny the marauding Hungarians a prize for their efforts. In a three-way sprint to the line, the experienced Demeter (HUN) finished 4th ahead of younger team-mates Bohm (HUN) and Bereczki (HUN).

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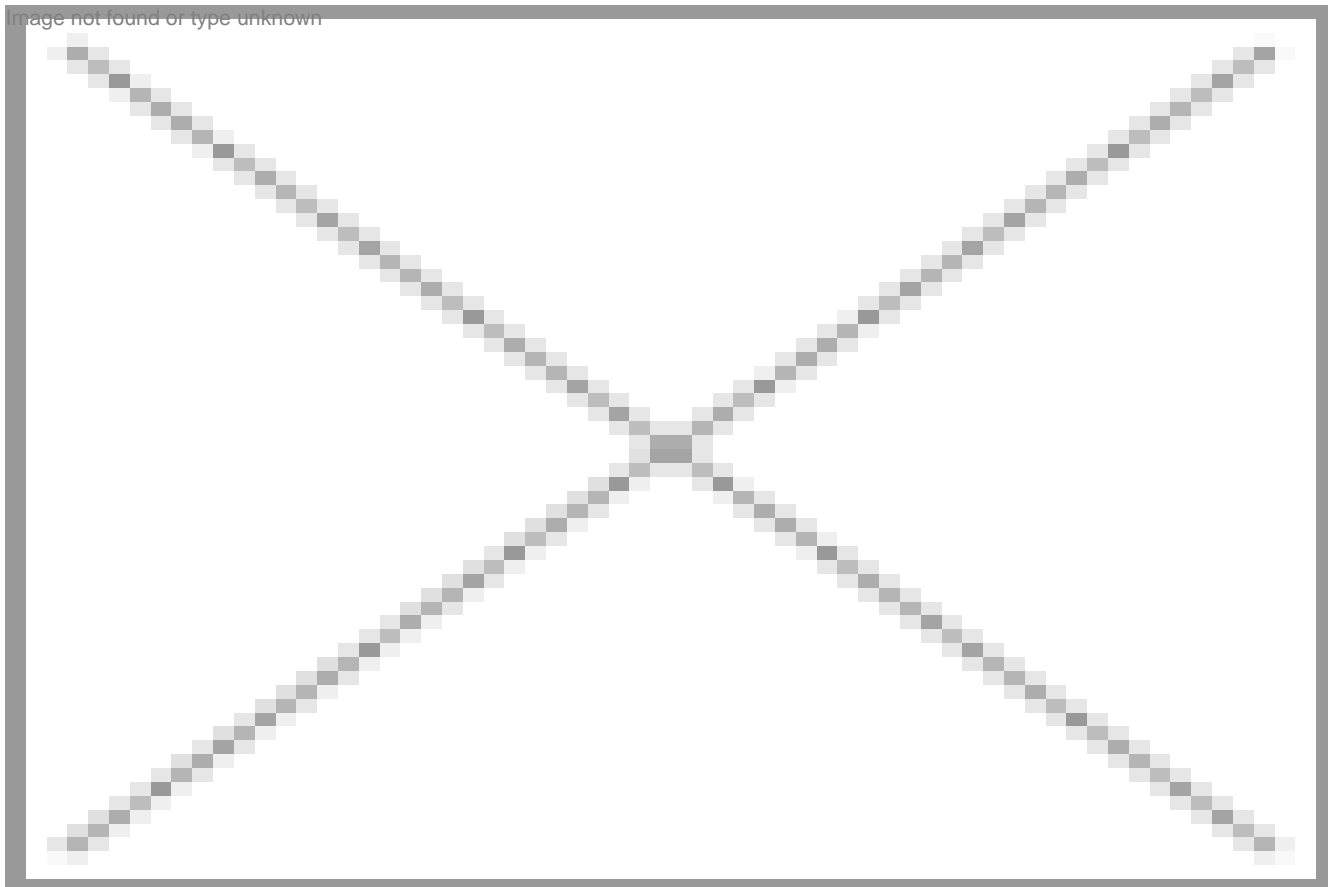


Women's Final

Riding

As in the Men's Final, there were four unblemished scorecards and the members of the 300-point club on this occasion were Italy team-mates Micheli and **Beatrice Mercuri**, **Olivia Green** of **Great Britain** and **Ieva Serapinaite** of **Lithuania**. **Sive Brassil** of **Ireland** dropped only one time penalty while **Marie Oteiza** of **France** gave little away and Gulyas (HUN) escaped any major damage with 286.

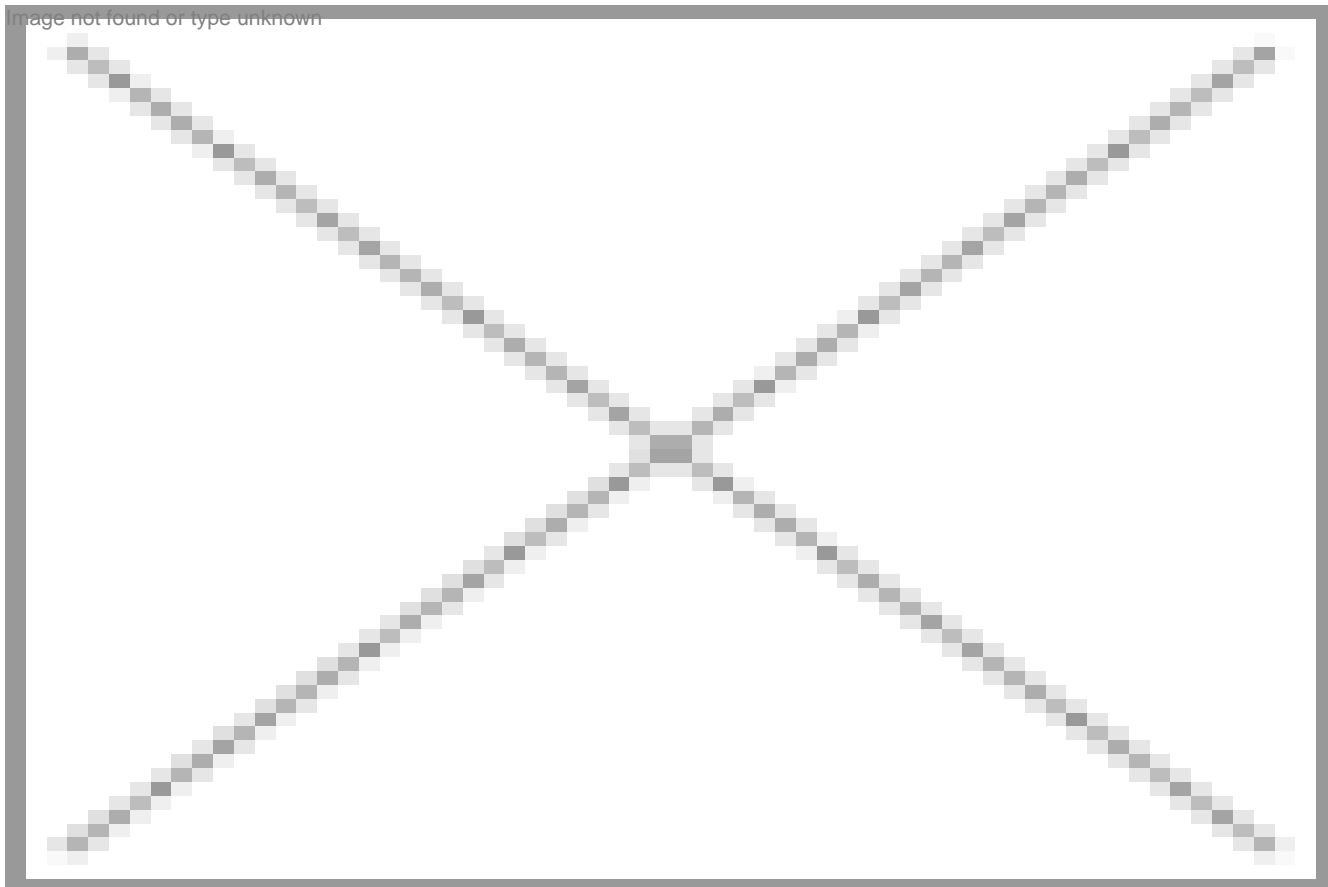
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Fencing

The emergence of Egypt's women as major contenders was confirmed not only by Abdelmaksoud, who scored 24V/11D in the Ranking Round but by top fencer **Amira Kandil** (26V/9D), who added four points in the Bonus Round to end the run of Gulyas (HUN) – the home favourite racked up four wins to add eight points to her overall score. Oteiza (FRA) also performed strongly in the Ranking Round with 25V/10D.

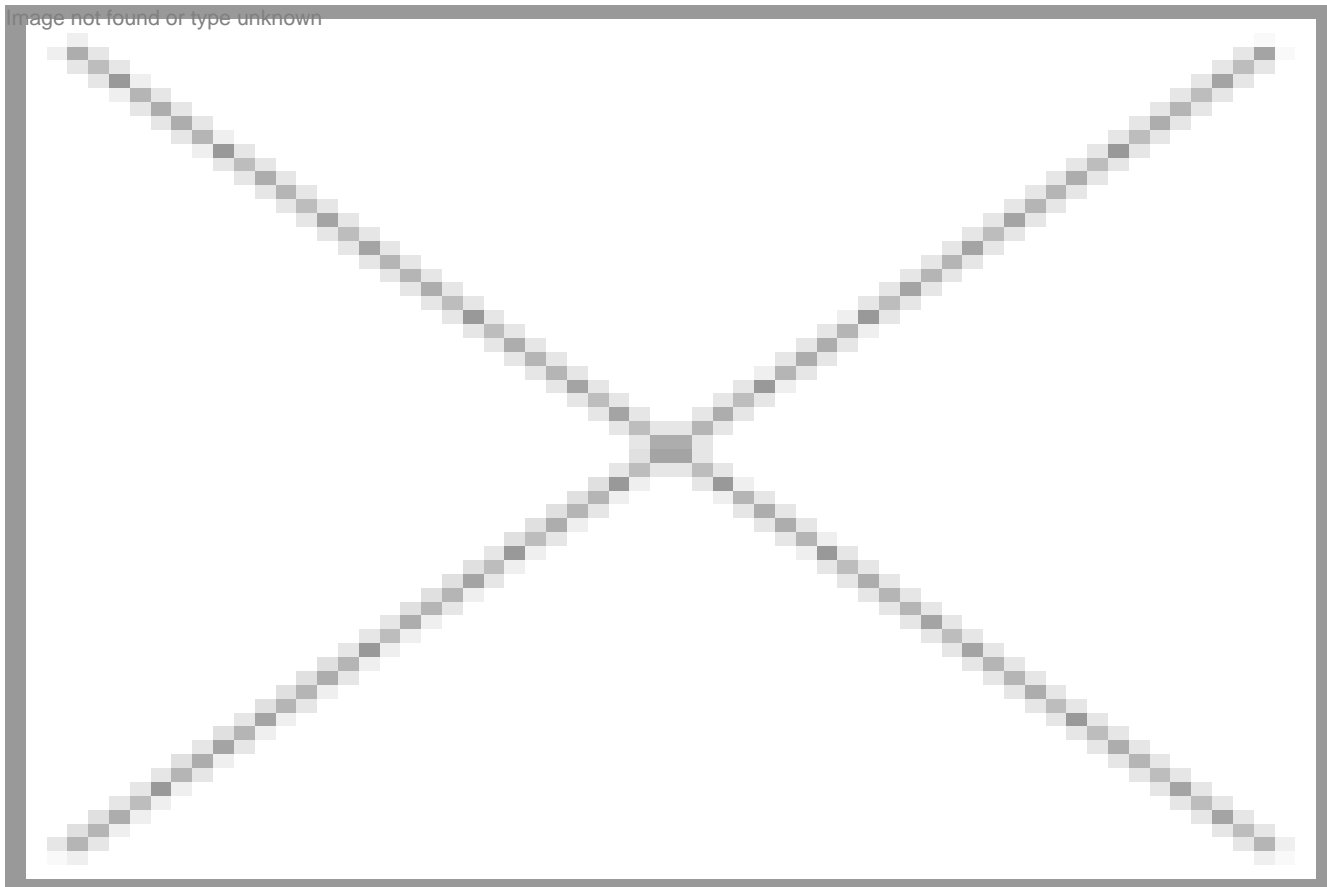
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Swimming

Knowing that every point could help her win the latest instalment of her rivalry with Gulyas (HUN), Micheli (ITA) topped the standings with a swim of 2:08.19, marginally quicker than Misaki Uchida (JPN, 2:08.32) who also scored 294. But Gulyas (HUN) and Abdelmaksoud (EGY) were not far off this standard and each took 290 points into the finale.

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Laser Run

With Micheli (ITA) in 6th place 20sec behind leader Kandil (EGY), it looked as if there were six contenders for three medals and so it proved as the athletes ranked 4th to 6th overtook the top three to claim the prizes.

World No.1 Gulyas (HUN) made advances on the first lap to arrive at the range in the company of the top two, and a 13sec shoot enabled her to move into the lead to the delight of the home crowd.

Only once during the subsequent race did Gulyas (HUN) give her rivals any encouragement, with a hesitant shoot at the third visit to the range that Micheli (ITA) fully exploited. However, the Pentathlon World Cup Cairo gold medallist jumped the gun on a 22sec final shoot, allowing the leader to gallop away.

With Oteiza (FRA) and Serapinaite (LTU) falling back, only three athletes were now in contention and Micheli (ITA) finally managed to rein in the impressive Abdelmaksoud (EGY), catching her in the final strides to maintain the gold/silver exchange that she and Gulyas (HUN) began in the season-opener.

Medallists' reaction

Men's gold medallist Vlach (CZE) said: "Everything began in the Fencing Ranking Round where I started pretty good but in the second half of the competition, everything went downstairs.

"I finished with 16 victories, which doesn't seem to be enough for the leading positions, but today everything changed pretty fast. Before the Riding I was losing more than a minute to the leading positions but a few people made mistakes and before the Running, I was 24sec behind and I knew

it was possible to win with this handicap.

“Luckily today my shooting went well and everything was all right. I think I need a little bit more time to process everything, because actually this is my first individual victory in my career.

“I had some very good races and I won gold with Marek Grycz in the Men's Relay of the Junior World Championships, and maybe this is better but I can't compare them.”

Silver medallist Parisi (ITA) said: “I'm a little bit tired after four days. I was a little bit angry after the Riding because I had a refusal at the last. I don't know how I finished 2nd but it's great, I'm so happy.

“Shooting in the Laser Run is all about patience and technique. To win my first World Cup medal is an incredible feeling and I don't know how to define it, it's a really good day.”

Bronze medallist Zillekens (GER) said: “It was a fantastic race, of course. The time between athletes was very short, especially at the beginning, so everything was possible. I had fantastic running today.

“At the shooting range there was so much pressure. When you shoot one time with 15sec you are directly in the middle of the standings, so we had to be very focused today on the shooting range.”

After greeting her ecstatic family and friends on a lap of honour, women's gold medallist Gulyas (HUN) said: “The gold medal is very special but it was even more special because it was in front of a home crowd. Lots of friends and family members and coaches were here and they helped me so much during the competition.

“Otherwise it was a really exciting competition because Elena was coming from the pack and it was a really exciting battle between us again. We are doing amazing, I think.

“During the physical activities, for example Swimming and Running, the crowd helped a lot, but during the technical disciplines like Shooting I was trying to close out the crowd and focus on myself. I'm happy I could handle it and they really helped me.

“I'm hoping that Elena and I will meet in the next World Cup again, it will be so exciting. I'm really happy with this year and happy with the huge improvement in my disciplines.”

Silver medallist Micheli (ITA) said: “I'm really happy because it confirms what I'm doing right now with my staff and I'd like to thank all my staff, my society, the *Carabinieri* who are getting me here and got me in Cairo.

“I said in Cairo that me and Michelle were starting to take turns with the win, and we did it! We actually grew up together and we are still growing, and I'm happy for her and happy for me, and I'm enjoying this new format even if it's quite fast and quite tiring.

“We know our sport, and anything can happen at the shooting range, and that led us to some unexpected running. There was some distance between myself and Salma, and I said to myself ‘maybe I can do it’ and I did it, so I'm happy.”

Bronze medallist Abdelmaksoud (EGY) added: “My Fencing at this World Cup was the best of my career, although everyone from Egypt impressed in the Fencing! Then the Riding was also good because I made a little mistake but it was fine. Swimming was perfect and then I ended up with a bronze medal in the Laser Run.

“My plan was not to focus on anyone, and that’s what shooting is all about, and I wanted to finish as fast as I could and that’s what I did.”

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President’s reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “In the morning we had a very exciting Men’s Final and the same in the afternoon for the Women’s Final.

“For the host country it’s fantastic that they won 1st place and you could see in the Laser Run, like in the morning for the men, the positions changed at different times.

“Also, it’s wonderful to see that all athletes in the places behind always gave their best to achieve points for the UIPM Pentathlon World Cup Final. There were so many spectators here giving great support to the host country and creating a wonderful atmosphere on a glory day here in Budapest.

“We are looking forward tomorrow to a great Mixed Relay, and we are focusing too on UIPM Pentathlon World Cup Albená very soon. Thanks again to our organisers, sponsors, media people and volunteers and I wish all athletes competing tomorrow a great Mixed Relay competition.”

Watch and follow

UIPM 2022 Pentathlon World Cup Budapest concludes with the Mixed Relay on Sunday, May 1. Live coverage is available on UIPM TV and up-to-date results competitions can be found at the UIPM website and via the UIPM Central app.

The next competition on the calendar is UIPM 2022 Pentathlon World Cup Albena, taking place in Bulgaria from May 10-15.

