

14 MAY 2022

# UIPM 2022 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP ALBENA: JUN (KOR) IN A WORLD OF HIS OWN



ALBENA, BULGARIA: May 14, 2022 – Gold medallists **Woongtae Jun** of **Korea** and **Ieva Serapinaite** of **Lithuania** shared the spoils on Super Saturday at UIPM 2022 Pentathlon World Cup Albena.

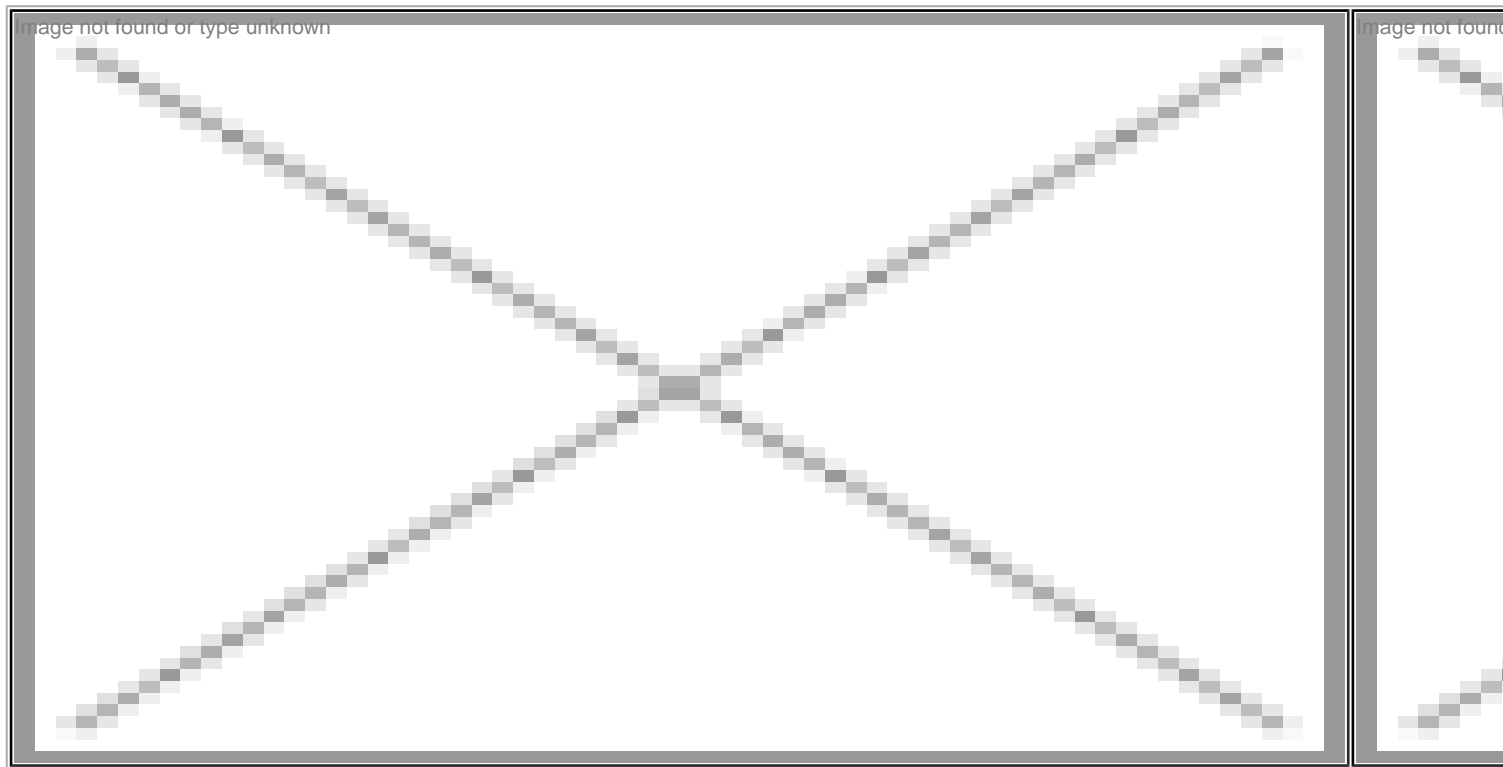
It was a day that neither athlete will ever forget, but May 14, 2022 will go down in Modern Pentathlon history because of an exceptional performance by Jun (KOR).

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games bronze medallist broke two world records on his way to a comfortable victory in Bulgaria, raising the bar in Fencing (284 points) before setting a new overall mark of 1,537 points.

Almost a minute behind him, Olympic champion **Joseph Choong** of **Great Britain** won a gripping duel for silver with first-time Pentathlon World Cup medallist **Mohanad Shaban** of **Egypt**, despite slipping on the final lap.

Earlier in the day, Serapinaite (LTU), emerging from the shadow of two-time Olympic medallist Laura Asadauskaite (LTU), enjoyed a classy victory in the Women's Final and she wasn't the only first-time medallist on the podium.

Silver went to **Veronika Novotna** of **Czech Republic** after an exceptional Laser Run which saw her hold off the challenge of specialist **Ilke Ozyuksel** of **Turkey**.



## Women's Final

### **Riding**

With 17 of the 18 finalists scoring over 270, there was a high standard of Riding and this was underlined by two of the medal favourites, Serapinaite (LTU) and Ozyuksel (TUR) achieving perfect scores of 300.

There were another five unblemished rounds by team-mates **Olivia Green**, **Charlie Follett** and **Kerenza Bryson** (GBR), **Alise Fakhrutdinova** of **Uzbekistan** and **Francesca Tognetti** of **Italy**, and only one casualty – **Mayan Oliver** of **Mexico** who dropped 67 penalty points.

### **Fencing**

With a healthy cushion from the Ranking Round where she scored two more victories than anyone else (24V/11D), Serapinaite (LTU) could afford to drop the four-point opportunity on offer in the final bout of the Bonus Round. And so it transpired as **Sarolta Simon** of **Hungary** claimed the ultimate victory.

Both Simon (HUN) and Bryson (GBR) had put themselves in a strong position with 22V/13D in the Ranking Round, with a host of athletes including Rio 2016 Olympic silver medallist **Elodie Clouvel** of **France** lurking just behind.

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## Swimming

A noticeable gulf in class meant that Swimming was more influential than ever in determining the Laser Run start positions.

Clouvel (FRA) swam 2:09.81 for a score of 291 and a jump up to 2nd overall, while Serapinaite (LTU) put distance between herself and the chasing pack with 2:12.16 (286pts), almost 3sec quicker than 3rd-fastest **Tamara Vega** (MEX).

## Laser Run

All eyes were on Serapinaite (LTU), who didn't win selection for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics but may be her nation's great hope for the Paris 2024 Olympics. The 27-year-old started with a 23sec lead over Clouvel (FRA), whose medal bid soon crashed with a dreadful opening shoot.

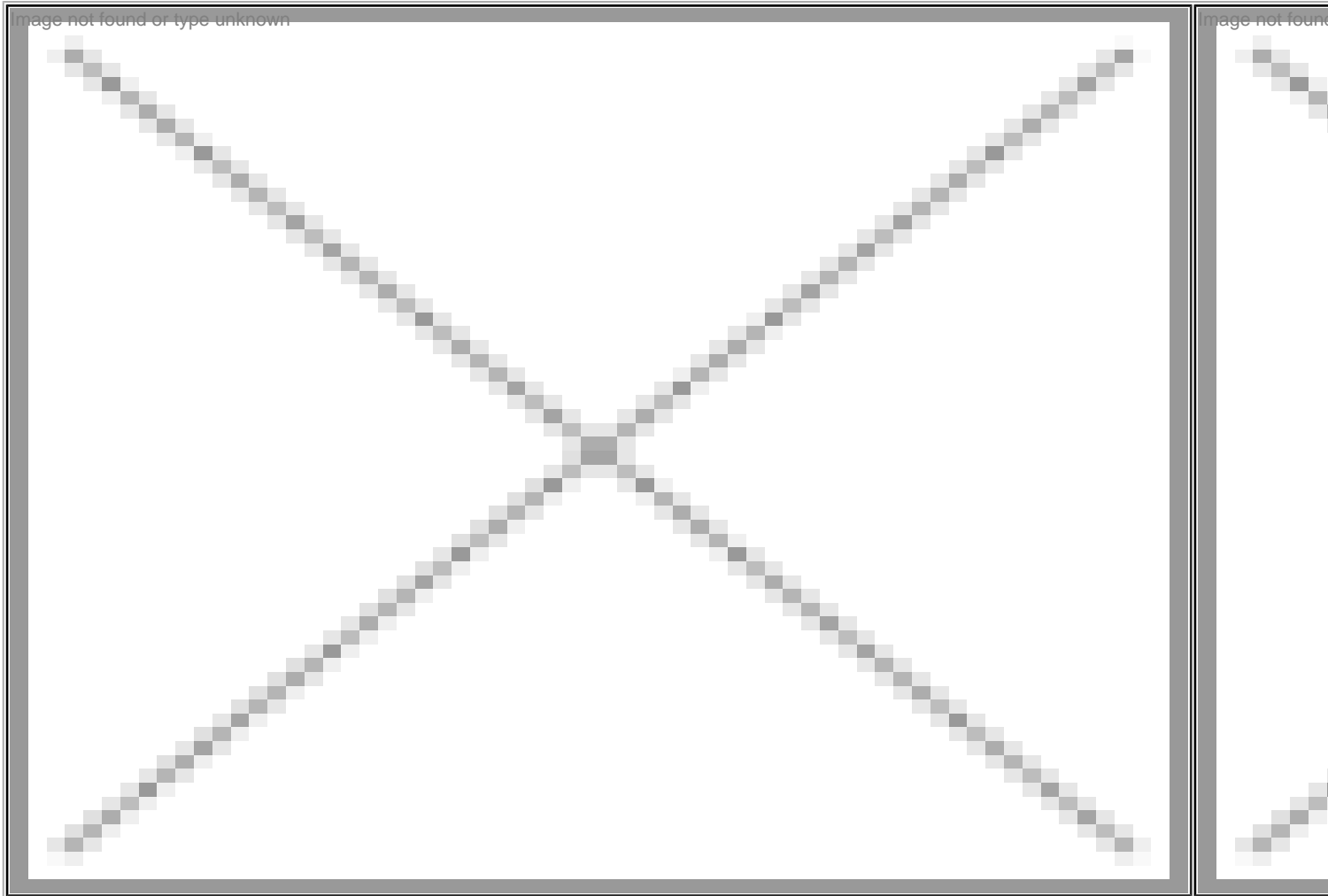
The big movers were former Laser Run world record-holder Ozyuksel (TUR) and, less predictably, 21-year-old Novotna (CZE), who sprang from 8th to 2nd after a fast opening lap and a brilliant shoot.

**Sunwoo Kim** (KOR) made a move up to 4th and was then displaced by **Rebecca Langrehr** of **Germany**, then finally **Blanka Guzi** (HUN), but none of them could disrupt the medal top trio.

Serapinaite (LTU) stayed calm throughout to win by a final margin of 8sec from the impressive Novotna (CZE), with Ozyuksel (TUR) a little beneath her usual pace but still doing enough to claim

her fifth Pentathlon World Cup medal.

The fastest time of the day was an excellent 11:28.10 by **Jessica Varley** (GBR), some 12sec faster than Novotna (CZE, 11:40.30)



## Men's Final

### **Riding**

The cream rose to the top with three of the top four finishers from Tokyo 2020 giving a masterclass in Riding. There were flawless rounds from Choong (GBR) and **Jinhwa Jung** (KOR), with Jun (KOR) only dislodging one obstacle.

There were also clear rounds for **Marek Grycz** (CZE), **Marvin Dogue** (GER) and **Balazs Szep** (HUN). Shaban (EGY) held his nerve with 293, but it was a damaging session for team-mates **Ahmed Hamed** (EGY, 257) and **Mohamed Elgendy** (EGY, 217), as well as **Jan Kuf** (CZE, 263).

### **Fencing**

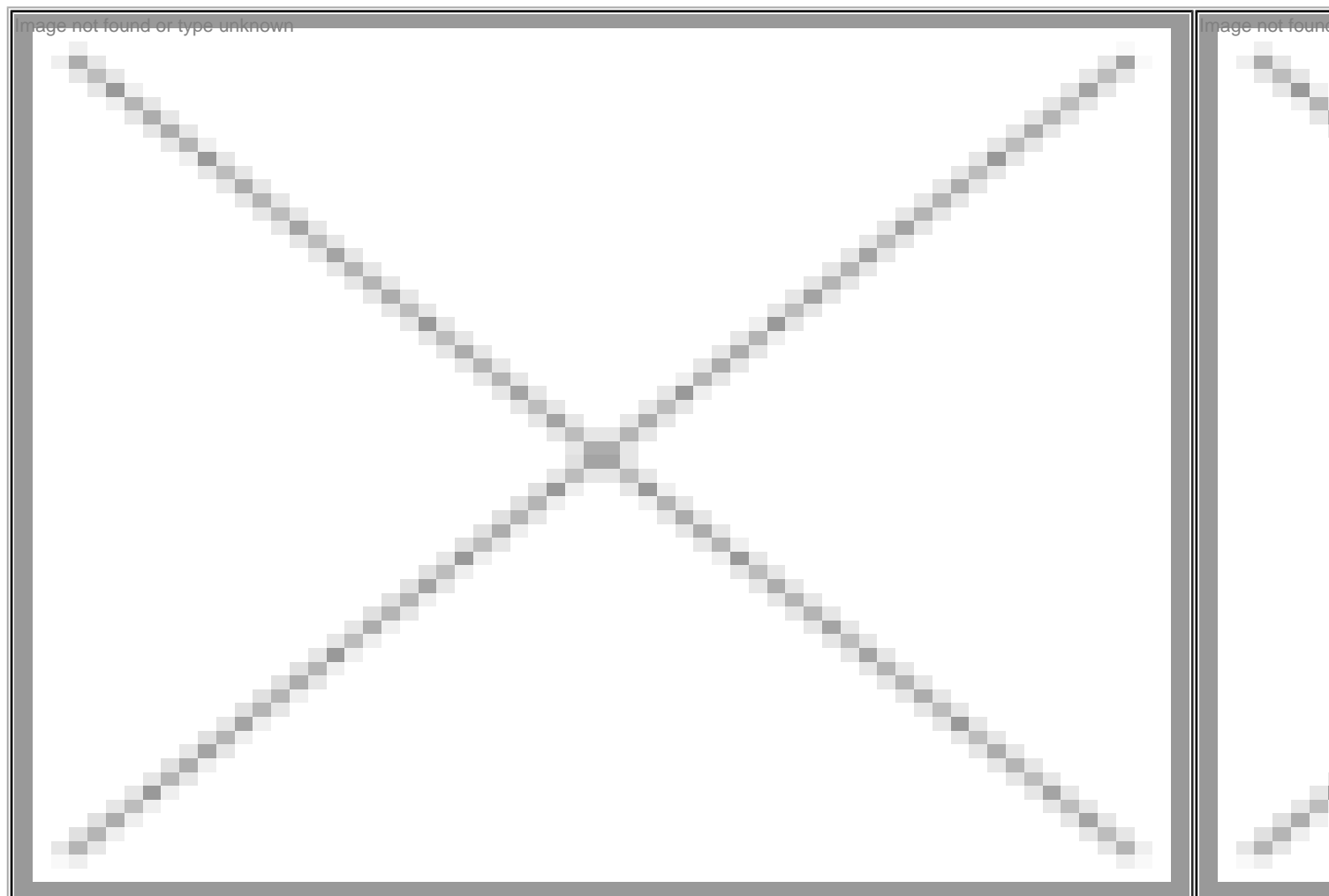
There are some days when a pentathlete owns the piste, making it very difficult for anyone else to threaten their claim on gold, and this was the day Jun (KOR) entered his name in the history books.

With a majestic 31V/4D from the Ranking Round, he was already on a par with the old world record held by Alexander Lesun of Russia since 2014. Winning the final bout of the Bonus Round

enabled Jun (KOR) to add four points for a total of 284 that sets the bar high for the remainder of the Paris 2024 cycle.

Knowing that they might be in a battle for silver, Shaban (EGY, 25V/9D) and Choong (GBR, 23V/12D) were both in the chasing pack along with **Duilio Carrillo** (MEX, 24V/11D) and **Christopher Patte** (FRA, 23V/12D).

However, the undoubted star of the Bonus Round was **Richard Berezki** (HUN), who won a remarkable eight bouts to achieve the highest-ever men's Bonus Round points score of 16.



## Swimming

As if merely to underline how comfortable he was in pole position, Jun (KOR) swam the day's fastest time, 2:01.49, with team-mate **Changwan Seo** (KOR) also dipping under 2:02. Berezki (HUN) continued to impress with the next-fastest time, with Choong (GBR) and Shaban (EGY) also demonstrating their cross-discipline consistency.

## Laser Run

Starting more than half a minute behind the leader, Shaban (EGY) and even Olympic champion Choong (GBR) knew this was unlikely to be their day but they thrilled the crowd with a needle battle for that coveted silver medal.

They were neck and neck throughout, arriving together for each shoot, but Shaban (EGY) had the

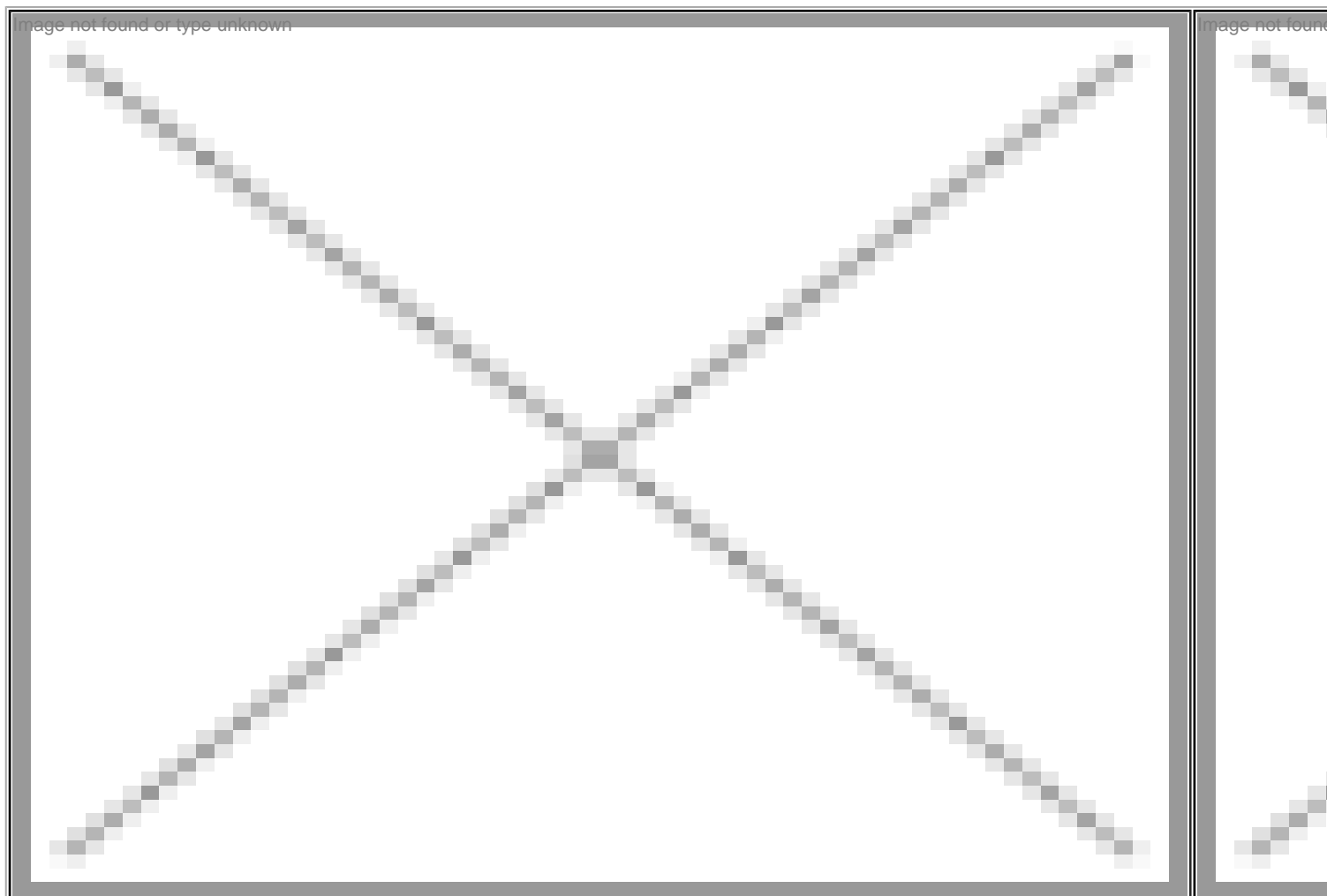
edge on his rival in the range, only to find Choong (GBR) edging past him on each lap. This pattern continued until Choong (GBR) lost his footing with less than 200m to go, but he immediately sprang to his feet and muscled past his 21-year-old adversary.

By now, Jun (KOR) had effortlessly sailed around the 600m course, winning by an astonishing 36sec to mark himself as the man to beat with the season's showpiece events coming up.

By refusing to take his foot off the pedal he even set a new overall Modern Pentathlon world record of 1,537 points, again nudging the great Lesun (RUS) off his 2014 pedestal, albeit with the new rules invalidating any comparison of the two performances.

In the end, pressure was applied on Choong (GBR) Shaban (EGY) by the rapid-running Szep (HUN), who came home 4th ahead of Patte (FRA) and Changwan (KOR).

Szep (HUN) registered the day's 3rd-fastest Laser Run (10:18.80), slower only than Patte (FRA, 10:16.50) and 19-year-old Elgendy (EGY, 10:14.30), who is following in the footsteps of his brother Ahmed who won a sensational Olympic silver in Tokyo (JPN) last summer.



### **Medallists' reaction**

Women's gold medallist Serapinaite (LTU) said: "I just tried to focus today on my shooting, because we saw in the last couple of days that shooting was so bad. Today I was thinking I had to be calm and had to focus on that, and I did it.

“This is amazing because it’s first time I am on the top of the podium and it’s my first medal in the World Cup. I’m really glad that I am here and could compete and win this competition.

“I am thinking this is my first step and it’s like training towards the most important competitions like World Championships and European Championships. I’m really happy that I could do this and my results are better and better.”

Silver medallist Novotna (CZE) said: “I’m really happy about my shooting because I’m not always shooting well and today it was better. I was trying to catch leva but I started really fast running so I was a little bit tired and it was too far. But it’s amazing.”

Bronze medallist Ozyuksel (TUR) added: “I’m so happy because this is not my best performance, I just started training and testing the new format, and in the competition something bit my foot.

“It was so painful and swollen, so I’m very happy with the medal.

“I’m very excited to perform for the first time in my country in front of my people, my family and friends, and they will cheer for me. It’s so exciting for me and I’m waiting for that.”

Men’s gold medallist Jun (KOR) said: “I’m very happy because it was a very good performance to start the season. Competitions in Bulgaria always go well for me, I really appreciate Bulgaria!

“Changing the rules is difficult ... but thank you very much to the Modern Pentathlon family. Since the Olympic Games there have been fast changes and we tried [to adapt] ... and since the Olympic Games I have some new sponsors and I’m very happy.”

Silver medallist Choong (GBR) said: “I tried to control the race all the way round once I caught up to [Shaban], but I managed to lose 3sec on a shoot which made it more difficult. At that last U-turn I slipped over, but luckily I had enough left.

“I know I’m not at peak fitness right now, I took a lot of time off after Tokyo, so I wanted to control it and make the shooting as easy as possible, because that’s the first thing that goes.

“This competition wasn’t what my brother Henry wanted, he wants to make the Semi-finals again and hopefully make the Final, because getting that Riding experience is really important.”

Bronze medallist Shaban (EGY) said: “Choong has a very good finish and when we began the race I knew it would be a good race, but I couldn’t imagine that I would be with him in the last 100 metres.

“It’s very good for me, I am only 22 years old and he is an Olympian, so it’s good for me. It’s the first step towards being an Olympian in Paris 2024.”

### **President’s reaction**

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “After the UIPM Pentathlon World Cups in Cairo and Budapest, we moved on to Albena. This is a wonderful city for tourism, and what has been provided by the Bulgarian Modern Pentathlon Federation is an excellent, super facility with everything compact together and horses, as we know, always excellent.

“The organisation was exactly what we need and what the athletes need, to have a field of play with fairness. But this day was not only about good organisation – it was about performance, and

this is always the perfect combination.

“Both Finals today were very exciting, especially for the second and third places and all the other places – it was a great demonstration of our sport with the new format, where athletes have to perform three times in the Qualification, the Semi-final and the Final.

“Physically and mentally, it’s something new for the athletes but after this season I’m sure they will analyse all they have learned and with their coaches they will prepare in a new, specific way for the season 2023.

“We are looking forward to the next Pentathlon World Cup in Ankara, followed by the Pentathlon World Cup Final and the test event for the New 5th Discipline that will replace Riding.

“Thanks to the media, thanks to the volunteers and thanks, on top, on the athlete side. I also have to underline that the Athletes Committee is represented here and they are focusing with us on the future, also after Paris 2024. I am very satisfied and happy and looking forward to the Mixed Relay tomorrow. All the best to everybody taking part.”

### **Watch and follow**

UIPM 2022 Pentathlon World Cup Alvena concludes with the Mixed Relay on Sunday, May 15. 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 Ankara, taking place in Bulgaria from June 7-12.

