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UIPM 2022 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP ALBENA: MAJESTIC MEXICO CLAIM GOLD IN MIXED RELAY



- Brilliant Laser Run powers Vega & Hernandez to victory
- Kim & Kim combine to grab another medal for Korea
- Turkey's Ozyuksel adds another bronze alongside Unal

Mexico made light of heavy rain to top a tri-continental Mixed Relay podium on the final day of UIPM 2022 Pentathlon World Cup Albena.

With a classic Laser Run sting, **Tamara Vega & Emiliano Hernandez** (MEX) harnessed some nerveless shooting to climb from 3rd to 1st and consign the **Korea** duo of **Sehee Kim & Soengjin Kim** to silver.

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The Kims' medal ended a prolific comeback in Bulgaria for Team Korea, fresh from the world record-breaking exploits of Woongtae Jun (KOR) in the Men's Final on Saturday.

In a four-pronged contest for bronze it was **Turkey** who hauled their way on to the podium with individual bronze medallist **Ilike Ozyuksel & Bugra Unal** keeping their nerve in the Laser Run to see off the challenge of **Germany (Janine Kohlmann & Dominik Olejarz)**.

Great Britain (Joanna Muir & Henry Choong) stole 5th place in the closing stages from **Spain (Andrea Gonzalez & Cristian Chamizo)**.

The gripping finale was a fitting end to a remarkable week of competition in Bulgaria as world records tumbled and the three gold medals on offer were claimed by three different continental representatives.

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Riding

Albena (BUL) had seen some particularly impressive performances on horseback with not a single competitor eliminated across the Men's and Women's Finals on Super Saturday.

That run didn't continue today, however, as the Riding discipline saw some hopes rise and others dashed entirely. On the back of a brilliant performance in the Fencing Ranking Round, **Japan (Misaki Uchida & Taishu Sato)** had come into Riding as the team to beat, only to fall from heroes to zeroes as they were eliminated.

The same fate befell **Egypt (Malak Ismail & Eslam Hamad)**, who had hoped to add a third consecutive Mixed Relay gold after the team's success in Cairo (EGY) and Budapest (HUN). Germany (Kohlmann & Olejarz) recorded the only perfect score as the competition was turned on its head.

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Fencing

Japan (Uchida & Sato) had enjoyed a prolific Fencing Ranking Round to jump to the head of the field with 21 victories, matched only by Korea (Kim & Kim).

In the Bonus Round it was Egypt (Ismail & Hamad) who added six more points to their tally while Mexico (Vega & Hernandez) also tacked on four more and **Poland** (**Natalia Hachulska** & **Maciej Dukielski**) grabbed two extra points.

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Swimming

As the action moved swiftly to the pool, things were finely balanced. Sensing that so much was still at play, the British team of Tokyo 2020 Olympian Muir and Choong, younger brother of Olympic champion Joseph, made their move. They powered through the water in a time of 1:54.03, 3sec faster than closest rivals Japan (Uchida & Sato) in 1:57.41.

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Laser Run

With just 12sec separating the top three, and another three nations within legitimate striking distance, the Laser Run promised to be action-packed from the very start.

Kim (KOR) set off with a 10sec lead over Kohlmann (GER), with Vega (MEX) a further 2sec back. Vega (MEX) got to work right away, moving up into 2nd place thanks to a brilliant first visit to the shooting range.

During the second visit, the frontrunners were again neck and neck as Kohlmann (GER) began to feel pressure from Ozyuksel (TUR). Solid shooting from Muir (GBR) and Gonzalez (ESP) kept things interesting.

The hard running of Vega (MEX) brought her to the front just in time for the changeover, her advance putting the gold medal very much in the grasp of Hernandez (MEX). He didn't blink as he ran hard and fast and turned in a poised exhibition of shooting at the range with Kim (KOR) beginning to feel the pace a little.

A brilliant final shoot put Hernandez (MEX) clear and he even had time for a fist-pump as he realised victory was in the bag.

The real action now was in the ferocious battle for third. Unal (TUR) was holding his nerve and his footing as the rain began to make an impact, Choong (GBR) losing his footing on the same corner as his brother had the previous day.

Olejarz (GER) fought gamely but couldn't catch Unal (TUR), who claimed bronze, while Choong (GBR) recovered remarkably well from his slip to snatch 5th on the line from Chamizo (ESP).

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Medallists' reaction

An ecstatic Vega (MEX) said: "I'm very happy. At the start I told Emiliano we can do this and step by step, we kept going and in the final we ran with a lot of courage, a lot of feelings.

"We're so happy. We are a great team, Mexico. All of us are so passionate. We all love this sport. We train and compete with all our hearts. So for us it's a great victory and we want some more. We will both see you in Paris!"

Hernandez (MEX) added: "First of all thanks to our family and friends and everyone who is here for all their support. Yes, it is an amazing day. Tamara ran an amazing final and she pushed me all the way and I just did what I could do. It's a pleasure to compete with her."

Silver medallist Sehee Kim (KOR) said: "Having competed in the Women's Final yesterday it was difficult today but competing with my partner is good.

"Fencing was a good performance and the Swimming went well. In the Laser Run the shooting was a little bit of a problem but it's okay. We are very happy."

Soengjin Kim (KOR) added: "Pentathlon can be a personal sport but for Korea it's very important that we compete as a team. Teamwork is important. I thank our team and coaches so much."

Bronze medalist Ozyuksel (TUR) said: "I'm very happy because it's the first time in my life that I have taken two medals in the same World Cup...or any competition. For that I am very happy. Bugra is so happy too because this is his second competition and second medal."

President's reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “We had nine teams on the start and in the end we had three different continents on the podium and it shows how global and worldwide we are developing the Mixed Relay.

“We have seen such joy and energy amongst the athletes, how much they enjoy being in a team event. Therefore the Mixed Relay at the end of this third World Cup of the season was a real highlight.

“We thank all the organizers for what they have achieved with all of us together – the athletes, the coaches, the trainers, the judges. And my thanks to the media for promoting our sport for the future. We look forward to the next World Cup in Ankara.”

Watch and follow

UIPM 2022 Pentathlon World Cup Albená has now concluded, but video highlights can be viewed at UIPM.TV and results 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 Turkey from June 7-12.

Rank	Team	Nation	MP Points
1	VEGA Tamara HERNANDEZ Emiliano KIM Sehee	MEX	1339
2	KIM Soengjin OZYUKSEL Ilke	KOR	1317
3	UNAL Bugra KOHLMANN Janine	TUR	1310
4	OLEJARZ Dominik MUIR Joanna	GER	1295
5	CHOONG Henry MEDINA GONZALEZ Andrea	GBR	1291
6	CHAMIZO Cristian ISMAIL Malak	ESP	1289
7	HAMAD Eslam UCHIDA Misaki	EGY	1191
8	SATO Taishu HACHULSKA Natalia	JPN	1054
9	DUKIELSKI Maciej	POL	1023