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UIPM 2023 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP ANKARA: SERAPINAITE (LTU) AND SHABAN (EGY) SAVOUR GOLD



- Second title for Serapinaite (LTU) as Shaban (EGY) secures his first
- Langrehr (GER) and Arceo (MEX) claim maiden individual medals
- Jun (KOR) and Elgendi (EGY) on podium as Choong (GBR) suffers Riding agony

Ieva Serapinaite of Lithuania and **Mohanad Shaban** of Egypt showed the value of consistency to take home the big prizes at UIPM 2023 Pentathlon World Cup Ankara.

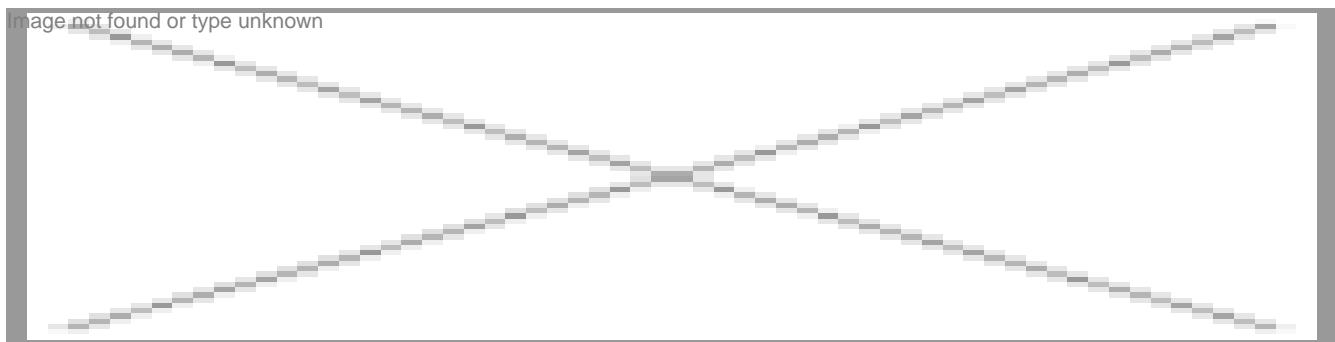
On a day when two of Modern Pentathlon's Olympic heroes suffered dramatic downfalls in Laser Run and Riding, 28-year-old Serapinaite (LTU) and 22-year-old Shaban (EGY) showed that they also have the champion temperament.

Serapinaite (LTU) started the Women's Final Laser Run behind France duo **Marie Oteiza** and **Elodie Clouvel** but seized her opportunity when each of them suffered a major malfunction on the shooting range.

For Serapinaite (LTU), heir apparent to the throne of two-time Olympic medallist Laura Asadauskaite (LTU), it was a second Pentathlon World Cup gold in consecutive years. To earn it she had to hold off a fierce challenge from two first-time medallists, **Rebecca Langrehr** of **Germany** (silver) and **Mariana Arceo** of **Mexico** (bronze).

In the afternoon, the drama continued as Olympic champion **Joseph Choong** of **Great Britain** suffered elimination in Riding. His fellow Tokyo 2020 medallists capitalised, with **Woongtae Jun** of **Korea** cruising to silver and **Ahmed Elgendi** (EGY) winning a hot contest for bronze.

However, neither of them could compete with the magisterial Shaban (EGY), who led from the front in Fencing for the second competition in a row and this time held on tightly to his hard-earned pole position.



Medallists' reaction

Women's champion Serapinaite (LTU) said: "I cannot believe that I won this World Cup, but last year I did that in Bulgaria so I thought 'why can't I win here?'".

"But it was really amazing because I don't remember ever moving from 3rd place to a higher place, but today I did that.

"I think today I prepared well mentally, because I know I cannot run faster than other girls. Today I just said to myself I had to focus on my shooting, because that is where I can be better than others.

"I did that much, much better than others and I think it helped me to win this medal."

Silver medallist Langrehr (GER) added: "I am feeling so grateful that finally the hard work pays off. Also I had a very difficult time since at the beginning of the year, my grandpa died, so this medal is for him. I'm so happy and I know he would be so proud, so this means the world to me.

"It's incredible and I don't know how to describe it, because so many emotions are inside me now."

Bronze medallist Arceo (MEX) said: "I am really happy, I want to cry because it's my first medal in a World Cup, and it's the first for the women's delegation of the Mexico team. Thank you so much to my coach Francisco Gallardo and Sergio Escalante and Aldo, and my family. And thank you so much to UIPM.

"I feel very strong, and I have been dieting, which is very complicated because I very much like eating! No sugar, but one medal is OK. See you in the next World Cup and tomorrow in the Mixed Relay."

Men's champion Shaban (EGY) said: "I'm so happy for my first World Cup gold. It's so emotional for me, it was such a hard competition."

"I was up against Joe Choong and Woongtae and Elgendi, the three medallists from the Olympics, so it was really hard. At the last World Cup my shooting was really bad, I went from 1st place to 4th, but this time I stayed in 1st and I'm the winner today."

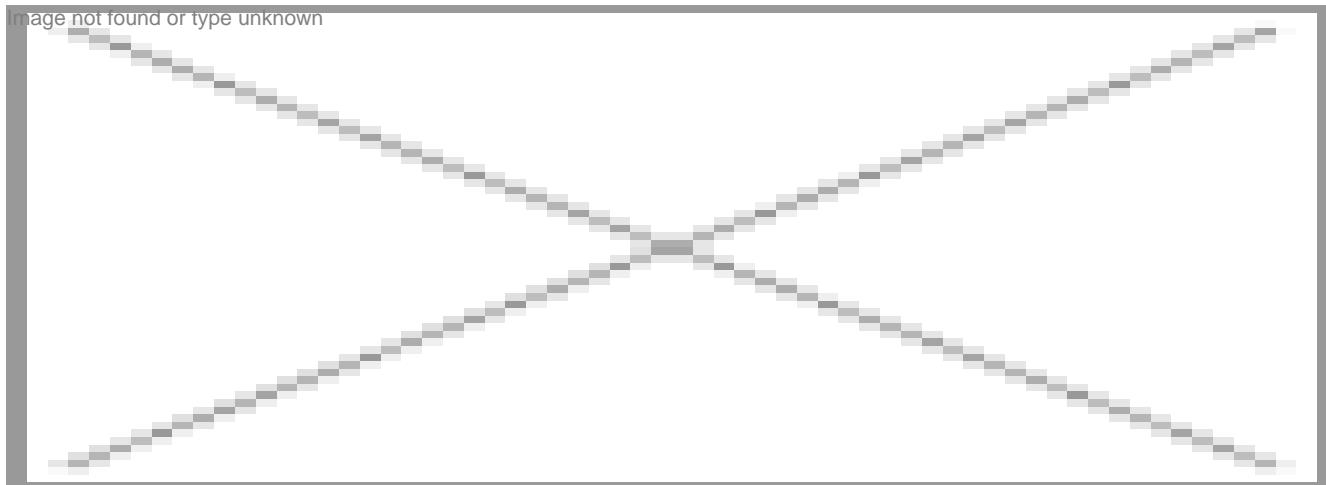
Silver medallist Jun (KOR) added: "Today was my first competition of the season and my body is at 80 per cent, so I'm very happy. In Ankara last year I won the World Cup Final so this is a good position to be in."

"After today we go home to Korea, and then to Hungary for Pentathlon World Cup Budapest. It was the first time I experienced a training camp at the start of the competition, so I was a little bit nervous but it was very good. I hope to have another good position in Budapest."

Bronze medallist Elgendi (EGY) said: "It's a great start to the season, with a gold in Cairo and a bronze here in Ankara. The competition was not going good in the Qualification and Semi-finals, and today before the Riding I didn't think I had the chance to lose any more points, but I lost 14."

"That didn't get me into competition for the gold medal, but with a good run and an average shoot I made the podium. I'm very happy to get this medal, and I hope to be better for the World Cup Final."

"I got an injury in the Fencing Ranking Round, when I was doing a lunge, it's not a tear but a hard spasm and we had to manage that in the Semi-finals and today. We decided that if I was in contention for a medal I would go for it, but if not, not to fight too hard. The most important thing is the next competition."



Women's Final

Riding

A serene morning in Ankara, featuring lots of composed and uneventful rides, was broken by an unexpected outcome at the end of the round that transformed the competition.

Numerous contenders strengthened their medal hopes with graceful performances, especially maximum scorers Oteiza (FRA) and Serapinaite (LTU).

Clouvel (FRA) remained in the top three with only one hiccup, while all four Great Britain competitors were among the top 10 Riding scorers, with Kerenza Bryson (GBR) alongside Arceo

(MEX) and **Haeun Jang** (KOR) on 293.

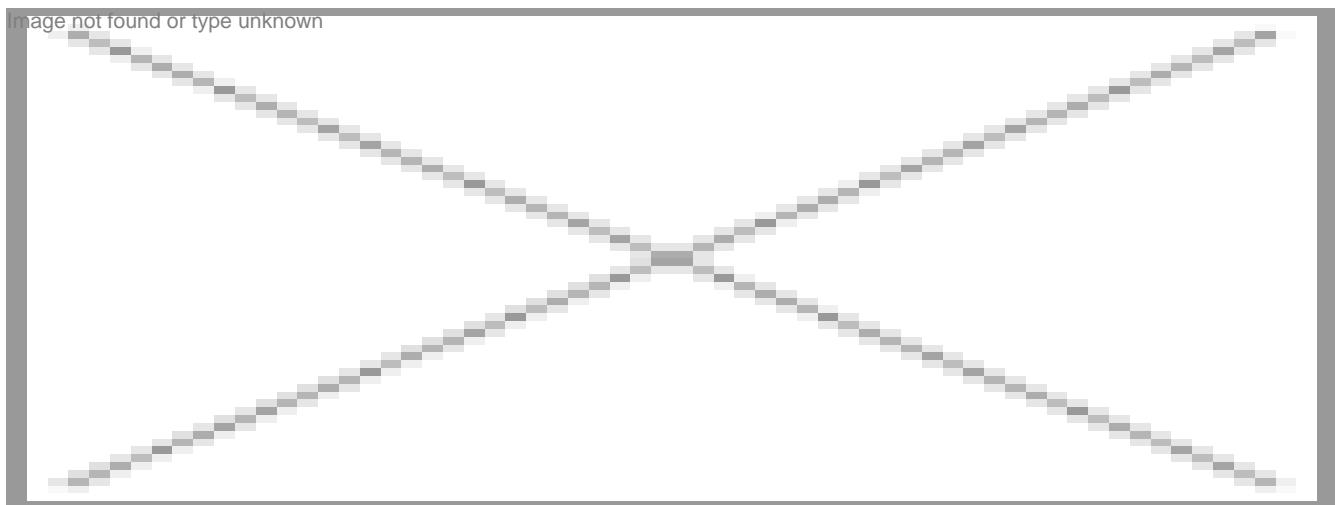
In the last of the 18 rides, **Kamilla Reti** of **Hungary**, who had carried a 15-point lead from the Fencing Ranking Round, was unable to calm her horse and had to accept elimination after three refusals. She was not the only medal contender to suffer this fate, as it also befell **Alice Sotero** of **Italy**.

It was also a tough round for **Egypt**, as **Malak Ismail** was eliminated after a fall and **Salma Abdelmaksoud** incurred 41 penalty points.

Fencing

Attacking the body at speed, **Jang** (KOR) dominated the Fencing Bonus Round with five victories for an overall gain of 10 points, which lifted her briefly to 4th place. Langrehr (GER) ended her run and notched another two wins to put pressure on the top three of Oteiza (FRA), Serapinaite (LTU) and Clouvel (FRA).

The importance of the Fencing Ranking Round was underlined in the make-up of the leaderboard after two disciplines, as Oteiza (FRA), Serapinaite (LTU) and Clouvel (FRA) all managed 21 victories, only overshadowed by Reti (HUN) who scored 24V/11D.



Swimming

In trademark style, Rio 2016 Olympic silver medallist Clouvel (FRA) advanced on the leaderboard with her prowess in the pool, although not as much as she may have liked. A top swim of 2min 11.28sec enabled her to move 3pts closer to Oteiza (FRA, 2:12.95) and 3pts ahead of Serapinaite (LTU).

Outside of the podium equation, **Seungmin Seong** (KOR) and Abdelmaksoud (EGY) were the next-fastest swimmers, both ducking under the 2:15 mark.

Laser Run

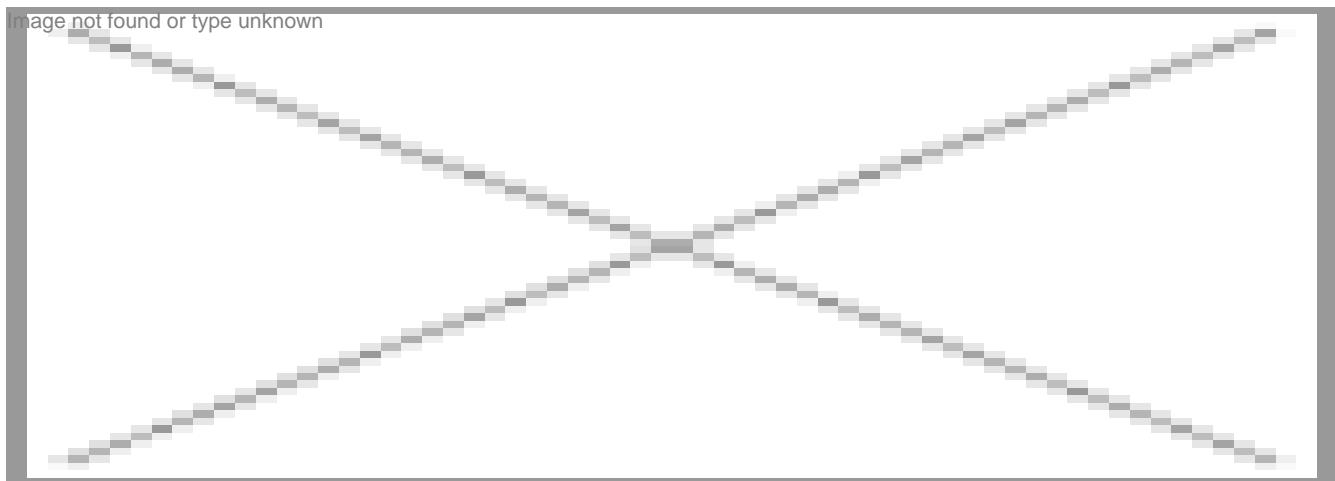
Starting 4sec ahead of her nearest rival, Clouvel (FRA), and 29sec ahead of 4th-placed Langrehr (GER), a medal was there for the taking for Oteiza (FRA). Even after losing her lead to Serapinaite (LTU) on the second shoot, she reclaimed it on the fourth run, only to be overcome by nerves on

the final shoot.

Four athletes entered the range simultaneously for this decisive shoot and Oteiza (FRA) was the only one who left empty-handed after a 32sec ordeal trying to fire her five shots. It was the second time in the race that a French athlete had fallen out of contention with one bad laser delivery, as Clouvel (FRA) had opened with a 29sec shoot that left her with too much to do.

As a result of the first two starters falling away, others realised that their perseverance was paying off. None more so than Serapinaite (LTU), who shot brilliantly throughout the race and paced herself well to finish 2sec ahead of Langrehr (GER) and 6sec ahead of Arceo (MEX).

Behind the top three, **Laura Heredia** of **Spain** moved up from 13th to 4th with an electric 11:15.70 Laser Run, the fastest of the day by 20sec. Langrehr (GER), Arceo (MEX), **Kerenza Bryson** (GBR) and **Alessandra Frezza** (ITA) also timed under 11:45 to finish 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 8th respectively.



Men's Final

Riding

As the last rider, Shaban (EGY) waited for his turn as the Olympic champion was eliminated with his horse refusing to jump, while two-time world champion Valentin Belaud (FRA) incurred 50 penalty points. Elgendi (EGY) also dislodged two obstacles during his round.

Undeterred, Shaban (EGY) rode superbly to claim the maximum 300 points and retain his overall supremacy on the leaderboard. And he was far from the only athlete to show a mastery of Riding.

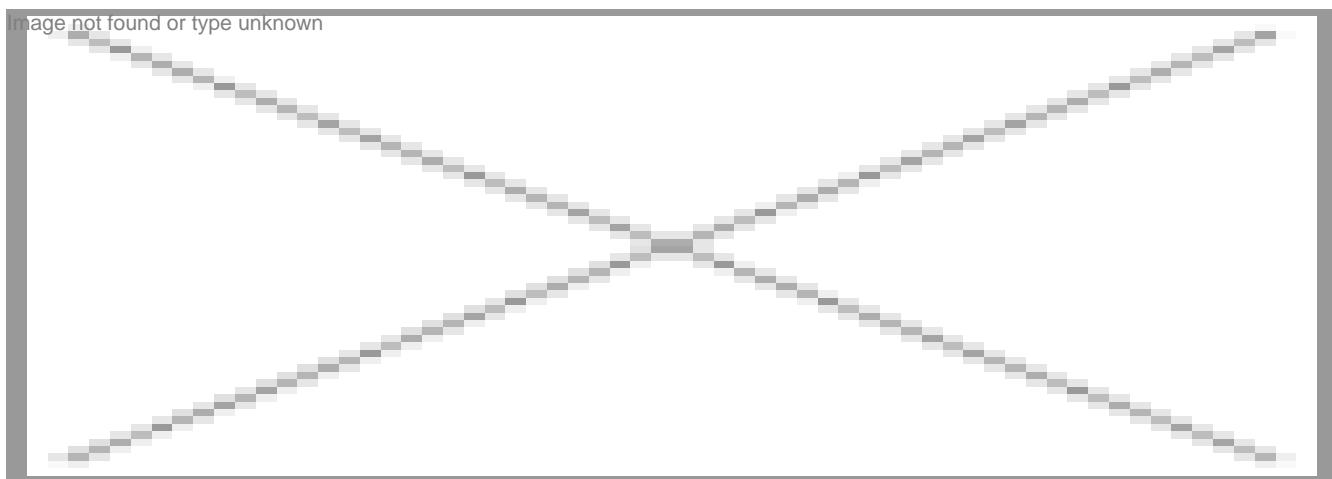
Jun (KOR) also scored a perfect 300 along with **Pierre Dejardin** (FRA) and **Woojin Park** (KOR), while **Dallenbach** (SUI) and **Myles Pillage** (GBR) stayed in contention with only seven points dropped.

Fencing

Carrying forward a 10-point lead from the Ranking Round, Shaban (EGY) continued to look unflappable as he claimed the four available points for winning the last bout of the Bonus Round against **Bence Demeter** (HUN), one of four athletes who had scored 23V/12D compared to the leader's 25V/10D.

Changwan Seo (KOR) and **Jan Kuf** of **Czech Republic** also managed three victories apiece in

the Bonus Round.



Swimming

With a standard-setting swim of 1:56.43, **Myles Pillage** (GBR) took the mantle inherited from Choong (GBR) and moved into 5th position overall.

Elgendi (EGY) clawed back a handful of points from the leaders with a time of 1:58.96, while **Alexandre Dallenbach** of **Switzerland** also ducked under the 2min mark. But there wasn't much in it, with Jun (KOR) and Shaban (EGY) within a couple of seconds.

Laser Run

Shaban (EGY) led things off 12sec ahead of Jun (KOR), who started more than 20sec ahead of his compatriots Park (KOR) and Seo (KOR). And the top two were never threatened.

The battle for bronze was much more intense, with Elgendi (EGY) making an immediate move from 6th to 4th and then moving past Park (KOR) into the podium position with a 6sec shoot. He bore the pressure well throughout the race, holding off the muscular threat of Seo (KOR) and the ominous presence of **Martin Vlach** (CZE), who had advanced all the way from 14th to 5th by the fourth circuit.

Up front, Shaban (EGY) did not rush and when he finished the last of four steady shoots in 11sec, Jun (KOR) followed up with a 10sec delivery but left the range almost casually, knowing the champion had done enough to earn his coveted career-first gold.

Apart from the peerless Vlach (CZE, 10:07.40), Dejardin (FRA) ran an excellent 10:26 to finish 6th, while **Manuel Padilla** (MEX) ended a good day for his team on a high with a superb 10:17.

President's reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "Today we saw two wonderful Pentathlon World Cup individual finals in this beautiful Pentathlon Arena, which can host all five disciplines albeit today we could not host the Swimming here because of the low water temperature.

"In the Women's Final Laser Run, positions changed again and again, with athletes running to be on the podium. This Final was so great and I must say also that the athlete from Spain performed

very well to finish just behind the top three.

"The afternoon final showed once again the great performance of our athletes, who were clearly well prepared, and excellent horses helped. We had exciting moments in all five disciplines.

"This World Cup, like the last one in Cairo, has been arranged at a high level and the athletes are really burning to qualify for the World Cup Final, showing up with all their energy and never giving up.

"I can only say thanks to the organising committee and the National Federation, and all those sponsors and supporters that are involved, and the volunteers, thank you for providing a platform for this competition to happen.

"We keep in mind the disaster of the earthquake in Türkiye some months ago, so to still have a big World Cup here in Ankara is a real compliment to the State and to all the supervisors of this Pentathlon World Cup.

"The Men's Final concluded a great day and we are looking forward to the Mixed Relay tomorrow."

Watch and follow

UIPM 2023 Pentathlon World Cup Ankara concludes with the Mixed Relay on Sunday, April 16. 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 2023 Pentathlon World Cup Budapest, taking place in the capital city of Hungary from April 25-30.

