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UIPM 2023 WORLD CUP BUDAPEST: SEO AND KIM (KOR) SPRINT TO MIXED RELAY GLORY



Sunwoo Kim and **Changwan Seo** combined to superb effect to give **Korea** Mixed Relay gold as a dramatic Sunday brought the curtain down on an unforgettable UIPM 2023 Pentathlon World Cup Budapest.

A day after world records had tumbled in the individual finals in the Hungarian capital, the third leg of the UIPM 2023 Pentathlon World Cup season still had more excitement in store. Korea (Kim/Seo) took home the honours after their closest pursuers **Mexico (Mariana Arceo & Manuel Padilla)** found misfortune at a crucial moment before settling for silver. The young **France** team of **Rebecca Castaudi** and **Jean-Baptiste Mourcia**, both former World Junior champions, raced through the field for bronze having started the Laser Run in seventh place, over 30 seconds back.

The drama arrived at the final shoot in the Laser Run when Seo (KOR) and Padilla (MEX) both departed the range neck and neck. However, Padilla got his feet tangled in a bag and could only watch as Seo (KOR) raced away to deliver Korea's second gold of the weekend.

Great Britain (Olivia Green & Henry Choong) had for a time held the lead during the climactic Laser Run but contented themselves with fourth place, narrowly ahead of **Germany (Annika Zillekens & Dominik Olejarz)** with **Egypt (Amira Kandil & Eslam Hamad)** in sixth.

Fittingly it was a compelling and international end to the third World Cup of the 2023 season with three different continents among the medals and a total of 14 teams from five continents bringing the curtain down on a brilliant week of action in Budapest.

Medallists' reaction

Gold medalist **Changwan Seo (KOR)** said: "It was a very hard competition today but a great [victory]. We got a little bit lucky in the Laser Run and we feel some sympathy for the Mexico team. But we are so happy. It's a good feeling." His teammate **Sunwoo Kim (KOR)** added: "In Korea we place a lot of importance on the team and have a lot of support. This is why we have a strong team."

Silver medalist **Manuel Padilla (MEX)** reflected on his misfortune on the final lap: "I don't know exactly what happened, I just started to run and felt something on my feet. When I looked down it was something like a bag between my feet so I stopped to take it out and lost the chance of gold. I'm a little bit frustrated but the good thing is that we have had three Relays this year and in each one we took a medal." His teammate **Mariana Arceo (MEX)** added: "I feel happy and sad but I am happy to have three medals in a World Cup this year!"

Bronze medalist **Jean-Baptiste Mourcia (FRA)** said: "Once we got to the Laser Run we knew we could make something of it because Rebecca is a fantastic runner and shooter. Me too! I think we made a good job. In front of us there were some people who maybe had a tough [time] shooting and we profited from this. We are very happy. His teammate **Rebecca Castaudi (FRA)** said "We are so happy. Thanks to our trainers and staff. Merci beaucoup!"

Riding

In keeping with a week of impressive performances on horseback, the Riding discipline saw the vast majority of teams put up high scores, ensuring things would remain tight at the top.

The **Japanese** duo of **Misaki Uchida** and **Ryo Matsumoto** were faultless and fast to rack up maximum points, the only team to do so. However there were many more who were close to perfect.

The teams from **Hungary (Sarolta Simon & Adam Marosi)**, France (Castaudi/Mourcia), Korea (Kim/Seo), Mexico (Arceo/Padilla) were at the head of the chasing pack and all put up scores of 290 or more. The early frontrunners in joint-first place were the duo from **Sweden (Marlena Jawaid & Daniel Steinbock)** who put it up to their co-leaders with a score of 291 only for Germany (Zillekens/Olejarz) to go one better with 292.

The **Chinese** team of **Yufei Bian** and **Yu Zhang** had the misfortune to be the only team eliminated

from the Riding but they would bounce back in impressive style.

Fencing

Having seen Germany (Zillekens/Olejarz) and Sweden (Jawaid/Steinbock) dominate the Fencing Ranking Round, the home favourites of Simon and Marosi gave Hungarian fans a spectacular show on the piste in the Fencing Bonus Round.

They racked up 18 bonus points to move up the field but weren't alone in finding joy in the Bonus Round as the **Estonian** team of **Johanna Maria Jogisu** and **Carl Robert Kallaste** added six points to their tally.

Swimming

The pool prowess of the Great British pairing of Green and Choong was all too apparent as they blazed to the fastest time in the Swimming discipline, clocking 1:54.86 to win the second heat.

But at the head of proceedings Sweden (Jawaid/Steinbock) were again proving they belonged as they won the final heat in the day's second-fastest time 01:56.22 to ensure they would be out in front in the Laser Run.

In the first heat China (Bian/Zhang) had turned in their own stellar swim which proved to be third-fastest overall, clocking 01:56.56. A rare false start penalty cost the **Brazil** team of **Isabela Abreu** and **Danilo Fagundes**.

Laser Run

With the Sunday rains which had been forecast for Budapest finally arriving in the minutes before the climactic Laser Run, the slick conditions were potentially going to be a factor in deciding where the medals would go.

Their pool exploits ensured Sweden (Jawaid/Steinbock) had an 11-second head start on Mexico (Arceo/Padilla), with Germany (Zillekens/Olejarz), Britain (Green/Choong), Korea (Kim/Seo) and Hungary (Simon/Marosi) all within 25 seconds and striking distance. France (Castaudi/Mourcia) were a spot further back but would prove well capable of closing the gap too.

By the time the women reached the shooting range for the first time, things had tightened up dramatically. Zillekens (GER), competing in a UIPM event for the first time since 2021, had taken the lead with Green (GBR) in hot pursuit and Jawaid gamely trying to keep Sweden involved.

With just three seconds separating the first five in the field now, Kim (KOR) grabbed the lead at the second shoot with Arceo (MEX) also accurate at the range. But the lead was changing hands at a rapid rate and at the changeover it was Green who sent Great Britain teammate Choong off first, pursued by Seo (KOR) and Padilla (MEX).

Experience would prove key as the pursuers overtook Choong (GBR) on the first shoot with Mourcia continuing France's remarkable climb up the leaderboard too.

The final shoot shaped to be crucial and when both Seo (KOR) and Padilla (MEX) put up five

green lights almost simultaneously it looked like a sprint finish was on the cards. That's when disaster struck for Padilla (MEX) as he got his feet caught in a bag at the range and lost almost six seconds untangling himself.

As it was, Seo (KOR) scorched ahead and may well have been impossible to overtake. Padilla (MEX) battled gamely to secure his third-successive Team Relay silver and Mourcia (FRA) roared home for a stellar bronze ahead of Choong (GBR). Olejarz (GER) came in fifth, narrowly ahead of Hamad (EGY) who finished strongly.

President's reaction

UIPM President Dr. Klaus Schormann said: "When you look across this UIPM Pentathlon World Cup season, this was the strongest field for the Mixed Relay so far — and it showed.

"It really pleases me to see so many nations nominating their strongest athletes and we were rewarded with a brilliant competition today

"The organisation and selection and presentation of the horses here in Budapest in particular has been excellent.

"There was some misfortune for Mexico at the end today but when you see the reaction and spirit and how much the athletes enjoy competing as a team, it reinforces my belief that team spirit is needed in our sport. I'm sure we will see similar in Sofia.

"We have a long tradition of coming to Budapest and seeing volunteers and people involved who are former athletes themselves, world champions, Olympic champions.

"There is always such strong support here from the Hungarian Modern Pentathlon society and from high-level representatives from government and sport and business. I thank them all for a fantastic week."

Watch and follow

UIPM 2023 Pentathlon World Cup Budapest 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 2023 Pentathlon World Cup Sofia, taking place in the capital city of Bulgaria from May 9-14 with the UIPM 2023 Pentathlon World Cup Final taking place in Ankara (TUR) at the end of May.