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UIPM 2023 U19 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: GOLDEN GLORY FOR ISMAIL (EGY) AND CLERGEAU (FRA) IN ISTANBUL (TUR)

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- World No.22 Ismail (EGY) justifies her stature with brilliant Laser Run in Women's final
- Clergeau (FRA) digs deep to rise to Men's gold and helps secure Team gold too
- Three continents are represented among the medals at historic championships

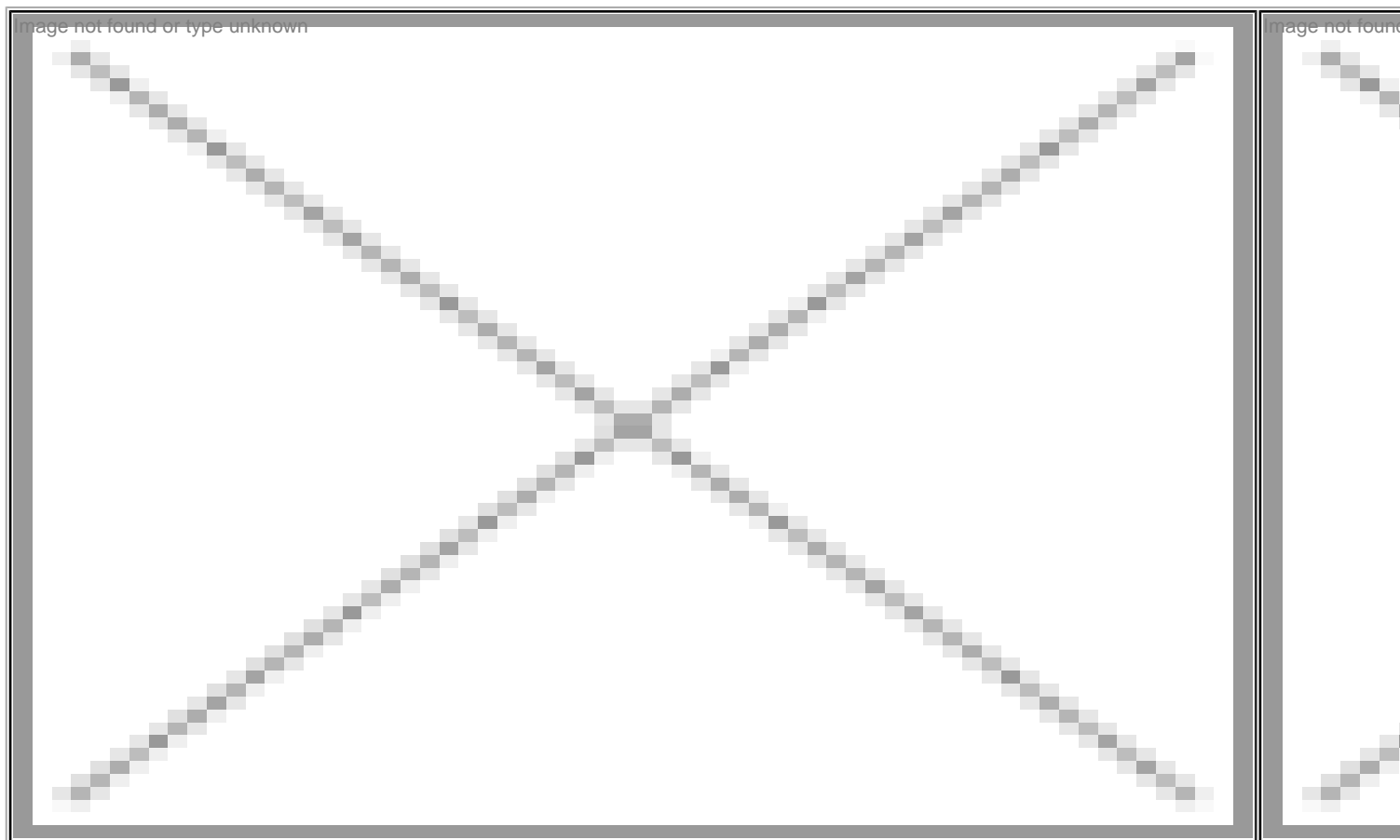
It was another gold-laden Super Saturday for **Egypt** and **France** as both the Women's and Men's finals at the UIPM 2023 U19 World Championships served up drama aplenty in Istanbul (TUR)

Malak Ismail gave further signal of **Egypt's** golden generation of emerging talent as she claimed Women's gold with a superb all-round performance. Ismail (EGY) carried a huge lead into the Laser Run but almost saw victory disappear as **Sumin Shin** of **Korea** stormed to silver. Bronze

went to **Zora Zeman** of **Hungary**. Team gold also went to Egypt with Hungary taking silver and **France** bronze.

Etienne Clergeau gave France its own golden moment in the Men's Final as he dug deep and triumphed in an energy-sapping Laser Run, making up over 30 seconds and climbing from a starting position of sixth to top the podium. Behind him **Hungary** toasted a medal double with **Botond Tamas** winning silver after a blistering Laser Run and compatriot **Zalan Jasso** bronze. That was more than enough to ensure a Men's Team medal for Hungary too as they took bronze with **Egypt** combining for silver and gold again going to France.

With three continents sharing the women's podium, the truly global appeal of Pentathlon was again on show. Athletes from 35 nations are competing in the Turkish capital this week in what is a historic U19 World Championships. Thanks to the integration of Obstacle, next-generation athletes are now pursuing world titles in the new sequence of Fencing/Obstacle/Swimming/Laser Run that will be adopted at all levels of Modern Pentathlon after the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.



Women's Final

Ismail (EGY) had bounced back from a rocky start in Friday's Fencing Ranking Round to ultimately dominate proceedings, taking a 10-point lead on **Coline Flavin** of **France** into the Fencing Bonus Round. There Ismail (EGY) added four points to her tally while **Korea's Yuri Kim** moved up the leaderboard by adding six points to her total. The Bonus Round's most impressive performance came from **Katarzyna Debska** of **Poland** who picked up a whopping six victories.

Having recorded the fastest Obstacle time in Qualification, **Alexandra Fernandes** of **Czech Republic** underlined her expertise in the new discipline by shaving over a second off her time, finishing fastest in 0:33.87. Seven others broke the 40-second mark while leader Ismail (EGY) shaved five seconds off her own Qualification time with 0:41.20 with Zeman (HUN) a sliver behind her in 0:41.23.

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As the action moved to the Swimming discipline, **Great Britain's** pedigree in the pool was underlined by **Eva Marsh** who was fastest of all 36 finalists in a blistering time of 2:17.63 but both Ismail (EGY) and compatriot **Farida Khalil** of **Egypt**, recently crowned UIPM 2023 U17 world champion, were in hot pursuit, finished second and third-fastest respectively. The consistent performance of Shin (KOR) continued as she finished ninth-fastest in 2:22.81.

Ismail (EGY) however remained out in front and began the Laser Run with a whopping 27-second cushion over Shin (KOR) with Flavin (FRA) and **Lili Gyarmati** of **Hungary** the only other athlete within 40 seconds of the leader. However as Ismail (EGY) surprisingly displayed some nerves on the range, Shin (KOR) began to hunt her down with the pair arriving at the final shoot neck and neck. Meanwhile Hungary's reputation in the combined discipline was being underlined by both **Blanka Bauer** and Zeman who were slicing through the field. Ismail (EGY) dug deep and showed her reserves to race back in front and cling on for a memorable gold. Shin (KOR) took silver after shaving 21 seconds off the gap between the rivals while Zeman (HUN) claimed bronze narrowly ahead of **Ralitsa Miteva** of **Bulgaria**. Flavin (FRA) was fifth with Khalil (EGY) sixth.

Men's Final

Hanse Cho of **Korea** and **Quinn Schulz** of **Canada** had been inseparable in jumping to the head of the field in the Fencing Ranking Round as both racked up 27 victories. It was Cho (KOR) who was able to add two more to his tally in Saturday's Fencing Bonus Round to move into an early outright lead. Compatriot **Juchan Lee** of **Korea** added six points to his tally with victories very evenly spread around the early top 10. In a sign of the remarkable consistency that was to come Clergeau (FRA) sat in fourth place after picking up two wins in the Bonus Round.

The Obstacle discipline once again proved an exhilarating addition to a major global championship as six of the 36 finalists went sub-30 seconds. **Denis Agavriloaie** of **Italy** was fastest of all in 0:25.13 and there was joy for the host nation with **Erkan Altunay** of **Türkiye** less than a second behind. The competition remained wide open when early leaders Cho (KOR), Schulz (CAN) and Clergeau (FRA) all placed in the bottom quarter of Obstacle.

Arguably the day's most stunning display came in the pool when **Matteo Bovenzi** of **Italy** stormed to a remarkable time of 1:57.68, fully seven seconds quicker than second-fastest **Bartosz Szmytke** of **Poland**. Clergeau (FRA) stayed on the tails of the leaders with the eighth-quickest time.

That pool performance rocketed Bovenzi (ITA) into a commanding lead ahead of the decisive Laser Run, enjoying a 25-second advantage on the field with Schulz (CAN) behind him and Jasso (HUN) setting off fourth. Another six competitors including Clergeau (FRA) were within 40 seconds of the leader. The sense that the medals had yet to be truly decided was confirmed in a brilliant Laser Run that saw multiple lead changes. Remarkably having started in 13th position, Botond (HUN) propelled himself into contention alongside teammate Jasso (HUN). However it was Clergeau (FRA) who stormed to the front and didn't relent, winning by 12 seconds from the Hungarian duo with **Mohamed Sherif** of **Egypt** fourth, Bovenzi (ITA) fifth and **Nojus Chmieliauskas** of **Lithuania** sixth.

Champions' Reaction

Women's gold medalist Ismail (EGY) said: "Today was really amazing. Yesterday I started the Fencing and didn't go well in the first part with two victories and seven defeats. I was very bad. Then I got really good in the last 26 matches, I just lost two. It was very nice to do that."

"I was a little nervous about Obstacle because I didn't compete in Obstacle before. In the qualifications I got 46 seconds and was so proud. Today I got my nerves out of the way and got 41 seconds. I started the Laser Run in the first position, 27 seconds ahead of the second one. The shooting was not great for me but the running, because I was running alone, was okay. The last lap, me and the Korean girl got on the range with each other but I know I have a very strong finish. I tried to save in the first 300 metres and I got after her and in the last 200m got into the gold medal."

"I think the Obstacle is good, it's amazing to compete on. It's good to see so many young athletes now and they're happy with the Obstacle discipline. It's an adventure game!"

"I'm trying to qualify for the Paris 2024 Olympics. It's a dream for me but I hope to do it and then go to the Los Angeles Olympics after that!"

Men's gold medalist Clergeau (FRA) said: "I am very happy, it's amazing! I can't find the words. I came to have fun and to do the best I could and I find myself with two gold medals and it's not over because I will compete tomorrow in the Mixed Relay. These are sensations that one can't put into words."

"When I crossed the line, I felt so proud and a little surprised that the athlete in second didn't follow me because I shot very well. On my 3rd shoot I had 5/5 and I left 2nd after the Italian and I told myself that all I had to do was to hang on and try to come back in front of him little by little. On my last shoot, everything went well, I left the shooting range first and ran like crazy. I saw that after 100m I already had a 50m lead on the second-place so I kept on running, looked over my shoulder, saw nobody but kept on sprinting for the team ranking."

"The Obstacle discipline is new this year and we could train as the federation found a way to train so we came well prepared. I did a mistake on the rings and it cost me 10 seconds (20 points) but I focused and caught up. I have a good feeling about the Obstacle discipline and I think it will be interesting."

UIPM Reaction

UIPM President Dr. Klaus Schormann said: "What an exciting day we just witnessed during the Individual Finals for women and men at the UIPM 2023 U19 World Championships. All week we could see how well the athletes have prepared."

"The integration of Obstacle into Modern Pentathlon is a big challenge for the Union, and a big challenge for the athletes and the coaches who had a short time to prepare for this. But we have to say the atmosphere is really something special."

“Athletes are competing in a spirit of friendship that we will see throughout their future careers in the years to come.”

Watch and follow

The UIPM 2023 U19 World Championships conclude on Sunday, July 30 with the Mixed Relay bringing the curtain down on a superb week of competition in Istanbul (TUR).

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