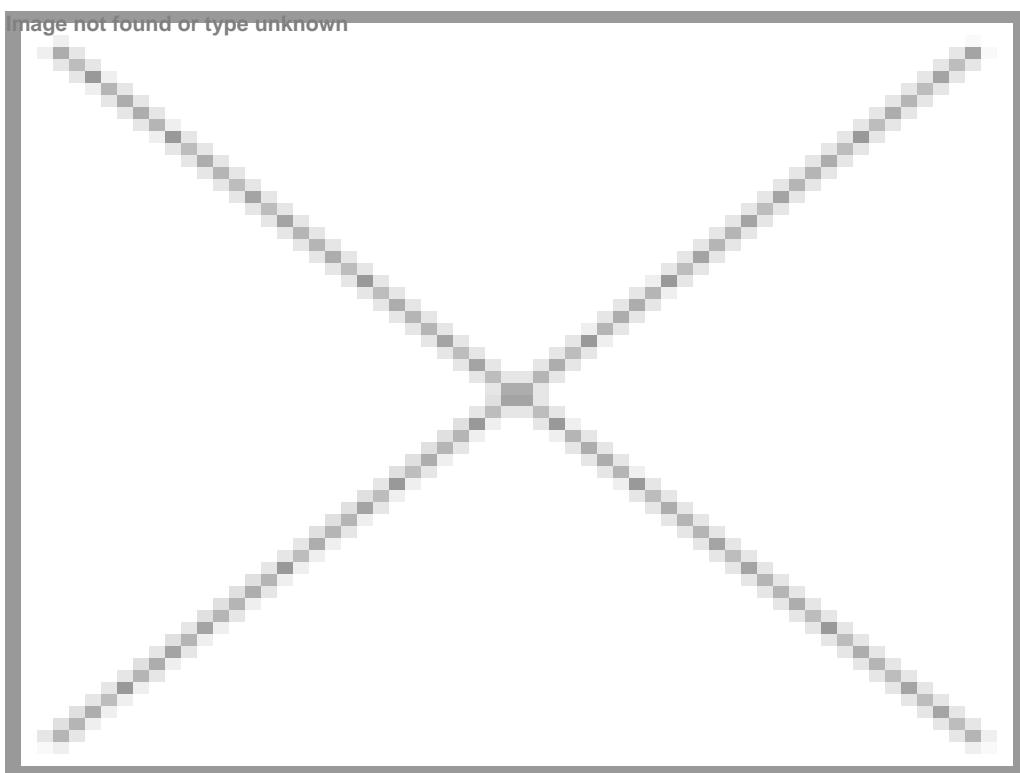


16 SEP 2023

UIPM 2023 PENTATHLON JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: UNTERBERGER (GER) AND ROCHAT (FRA) CREATE NEW WORLD ORDER

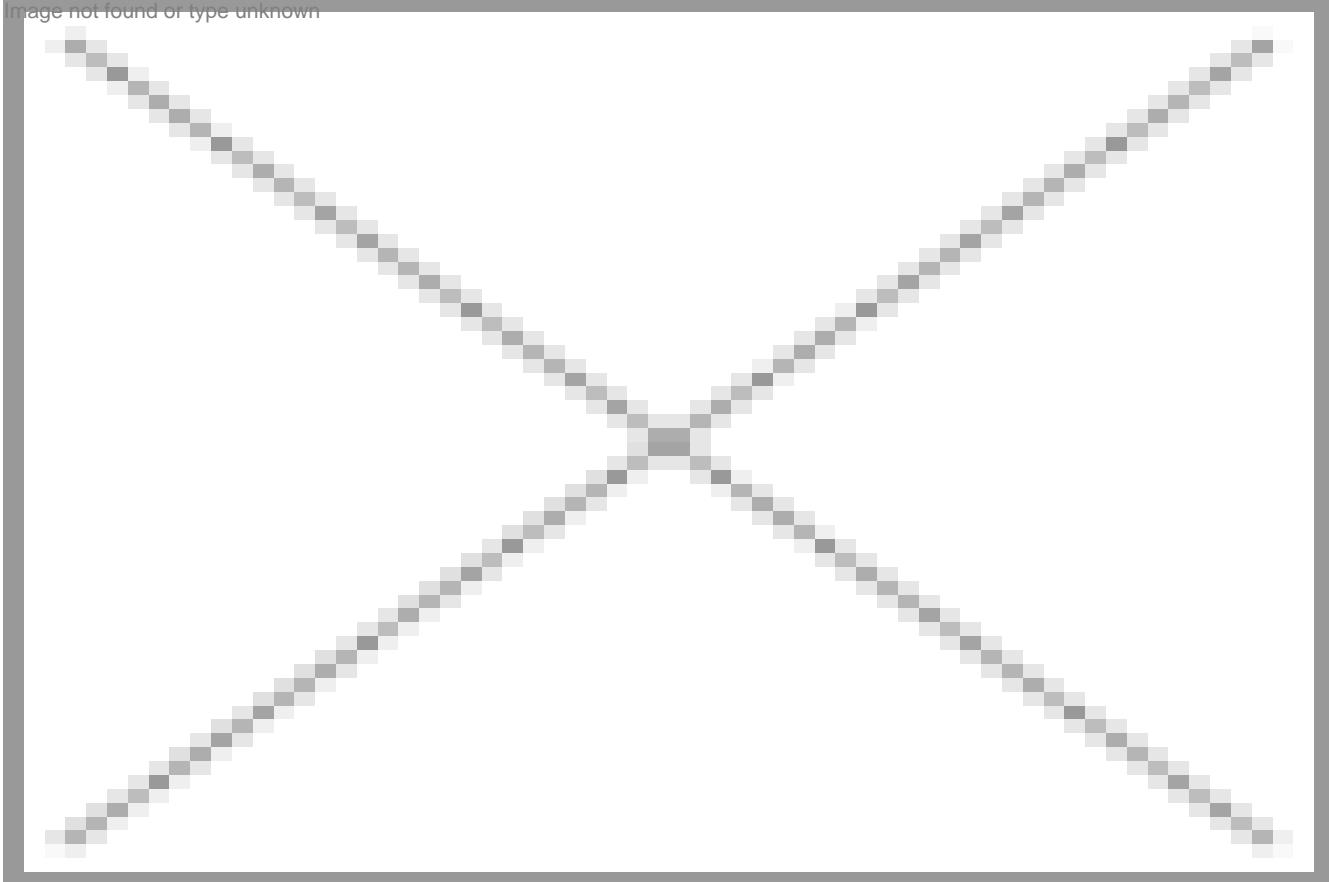


- Two gold and two bronze medals for France as Egypt claim Women's Team crown
- Host nation roars support for men's silver medallist Vagnorius (LTU)
- Pentathlon with new Obstacle discipline broadcast live for first time

Josefine Unterberger of **Germany** and **Mathis Rochat** of **France** broke new ground as the first world junior champions in the new-look Modern Pentathlon on Super Saturday.

On the penultimate day of UIPM 2023 Pentathlon Junior World Championships, France won three individual medals and there was a silver to cheer for a loud contingent of spectators from host nation **Lithuania**.

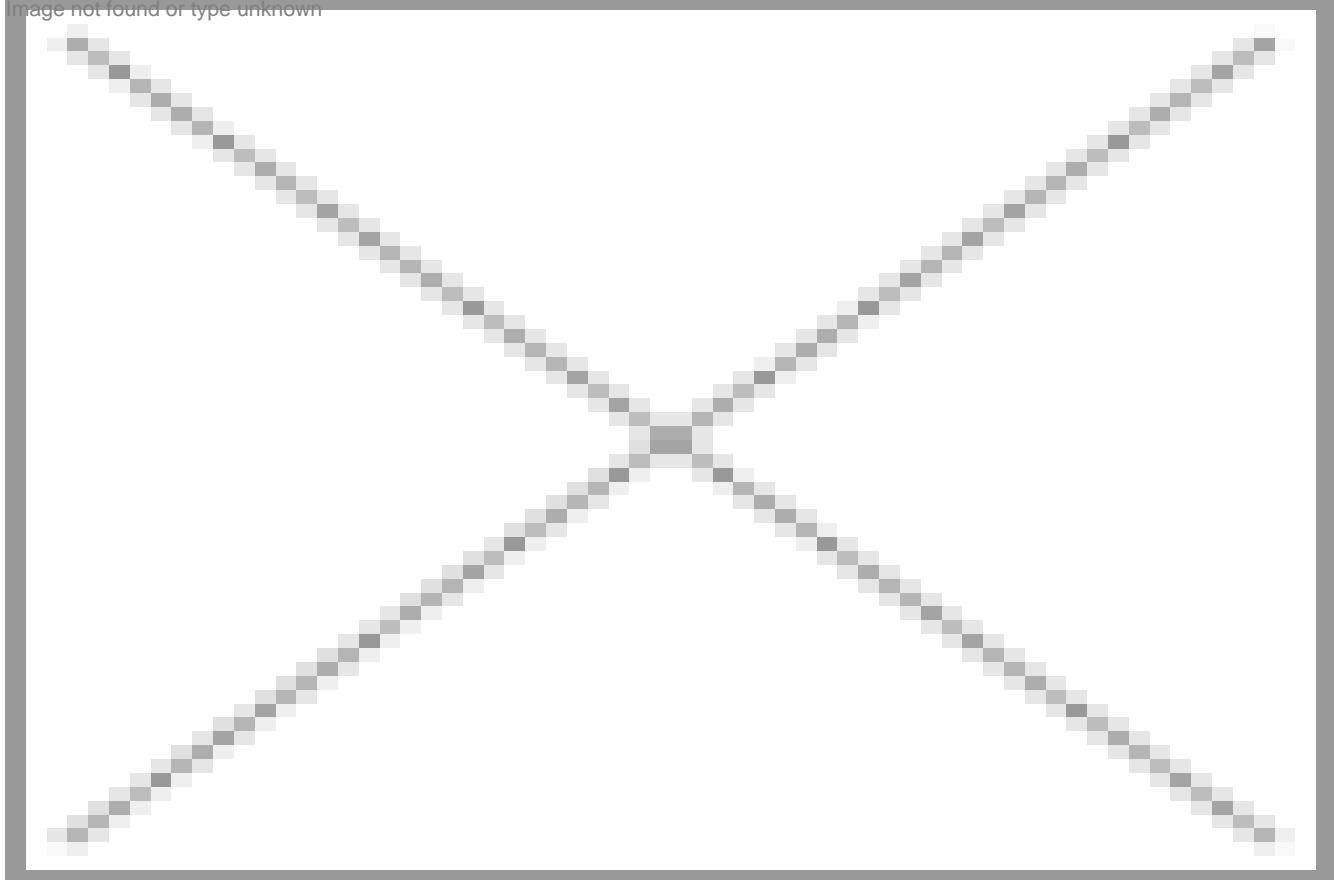
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With fans around the world watching live coverage of Modern Pentathlon with the integrated Obstacle discipline for the first time, it was a truly special occasion as the world's best Under 22 athletes showed how far they have already come in adjusting to the transformed sport.

Super Saturday in Druskininkai (LTU) got off to a pulsating start as Unterberger (GER) kicked in the final 300m of the Women's Final Laser Run to overtake **Katarzyna Debska of Poland**, forcing her to accept silver ahead of bronze medallist **Louison Cazaly of France**.

With four finishers in the top 10, **Egypt** took home the Women's Team gold medal, joined on the podium by Poland (silver) and Germany (bronze).



Later, Rochat (FRA) dominated the Men's Final having started 3rd, and his team-mate **Leo Bories** (FRA) fought hard for bronze behind local hero **Paulius Vagnorius** (LTU).

Having already won the Men's Relay with **Emilien Maire** (FRA), Rochat (FRA) took his personal gold-medal tally to three as France added the Men's Team gold, with silver going to **Great Britain** and **Ukraine** claiming bronze.

Women's Final

The Fencing Ranking Round had been dominated by **Yeeun Kim** (KOR) with an exceptional 29V/6D, but the Bonus Round was owned by two athletes who bounded up the ladder with a sustained run of success.

First **Barbora Hartmanova** of **Czech Republic** scored seven victories for a 14-point boost, and then **Audrey Tchirikhtchian** (FRA) won the last five bouts to remain the last woman standing.

The importance of Obstacle in the destination of the medals was underlined by the performance of Unterberger (GER), who recovered from elimination in her Semi-final with an excellent time of 45.34sec. Demonstrating great upper-body strength, her time was bettered only by **Zeina Amer** (EGY), who scorched the course in 44.63.

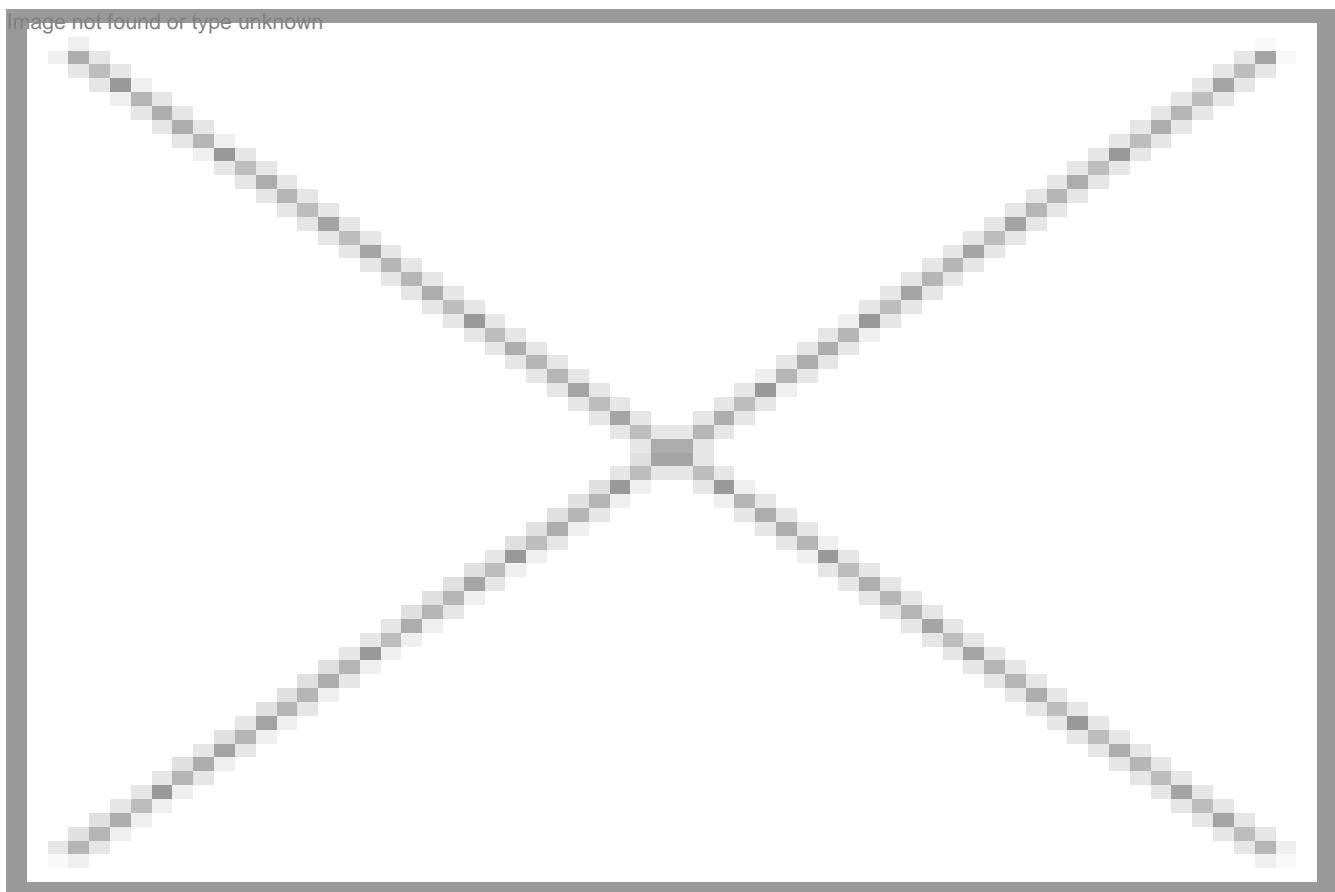
As athletes from around the world showed the importance of technique in manoeuvring the eight obstacles, local spectators cheered the performance of **Teja Pakinkyte** (LTU), who was 3rd-fastest in 47.71. The U17 world champions from 2023 and 2022, **Farida Khalil** (EGY) and **Sumin Shin** of **Korea**, also went under 50sec, showing the versatility that marks them out as contenders for future honours at senior level.

Having lurked in the background until now, **Malgorzata Karbownik** (POL) moved to the top of the leaderboard with an excellent swim of 2:11.12, slower only than the exceptional **Yuri Suzuki** of **Japan** (2:09.20), with **Valentina Martinescu** of **Italy** also catching the eye in 2:12.57.

This earned Karbownik (POL) the right to start first in Laser Run, but only 2sec ahead of Unterberger (GER) with Debska (POL), Cazaly (FRA), U19 world champion **Malak Ismail** (EGY) and Shin (KOR) all within 16sec and capable of influencing proceedings.

In the end it was a fairly steady Laser Run, with only Karbownik (POL) fading out of contention and Debska (POL) catching the eye with excellent shooting and a steady progression past Unterberger (GER) leading to the day's finest Laser Run time of 11:13.44. But Debska (POL) left the shooting range with only a 2sec lead, and the more physically imposing Unterberger (GER) executed her race strategy beautifully with a final kick to ultimately win by 5sec.

Cazaly (FRA) kept Ismail (EGY) at bay to claim bronze after consecutive gold medals at this competition by her team-mate Rebecca Castaudi (FRA) in 2021 and 2022. Shin (KOR) and Amer (EGY) completed the top six as Laser Run world champion **Elzbieta Adomaityte** (LTU) climbed from 19th to finish 7th.



Men's Final

James Hulme (GBR) carried a 15-point lead from the Fencing Ranking Round (26V/9D), but **Jan Toman** (CZE) won the last two bouts of the Bonus Round to close the gap by four. **Vladyslav Chekan** (UKR) also made the top three in Fencing with 22+1 victories, while **Jonas Kalaminskas** (LTU) was the top performer in the Bonus Round with five scalps.

After watching Obstacle specialist Kian O'Boyle of United States light up the Qualification round with a time of exactly 25sec, all 36 finalists did their best to emulate him and five managed to go

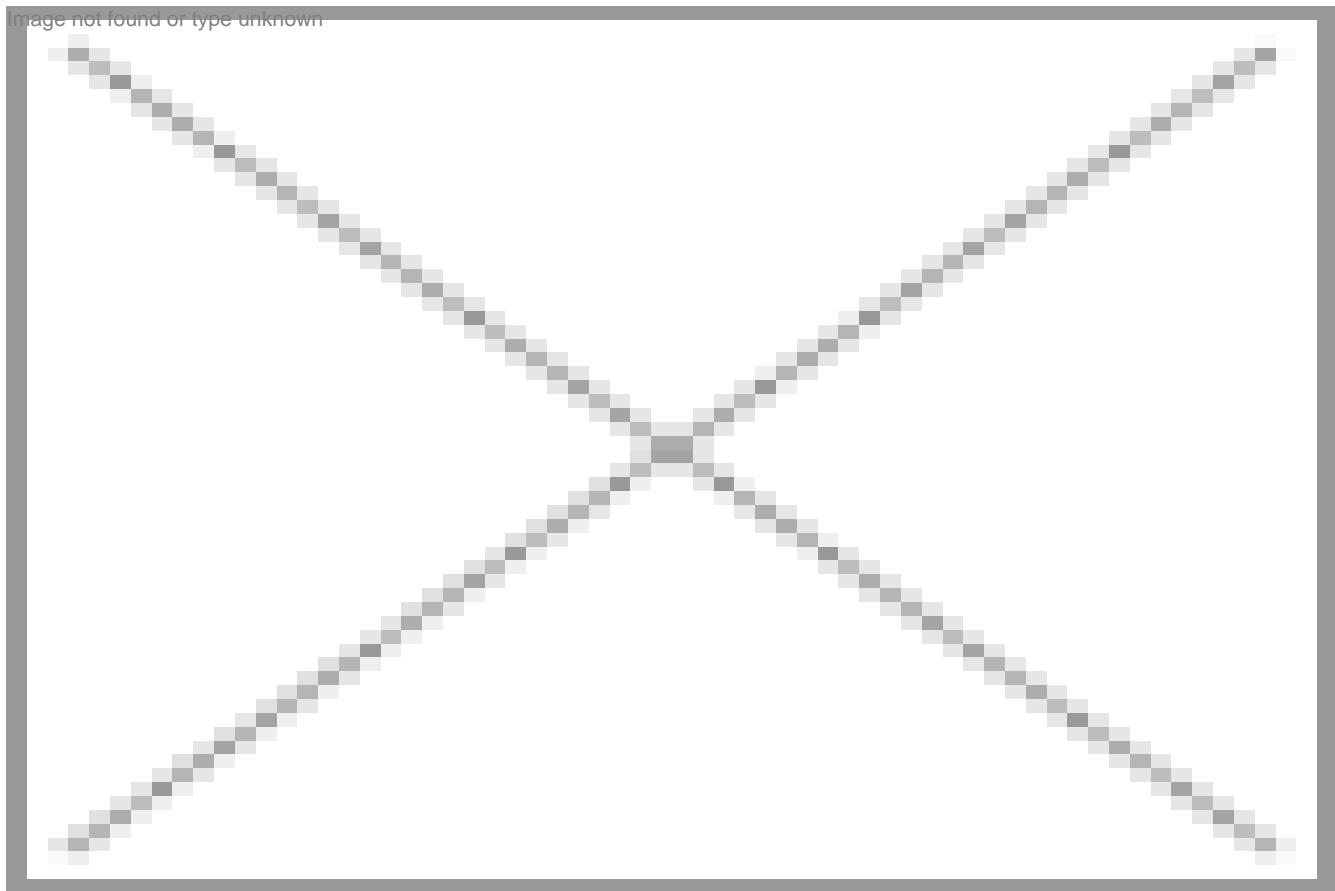
under 30sec. **Lukasz Zawada** (POL) was the top racer with 26.53, closely followed by Vagnorius (LTU), **Connor Chow** of Canada, Rochat (FRA) and Kalaminskas (LTU).

On to the Swimming pool and **Matteo Bovenzi** (ITA) was untouchable in a near-world record time of 1:50.80, ahead of **Mohamed Ibrahim** (EGY) in 1:56.15, but another big mover was Rochat (FRA), whose time of 1:57.45 propelled him to 3rd overall.

Chekan (UKR) started Laser Run with a 6sec lead but with a lot of congestion behind him, it was never going to be easy to defend his lead and Rochat (FRA) left him behind at the first shoot, and controlled the race with consummate professionalism thereafter.

Bories (FRA) always shaped as a podium contender and Hulme (GBR) was never far away, but initially Ibrahim (EGY) looked like he was destined for silver until his stamina deserted him – and Vagnorius (LTU) took full advantage as he rifled through the field with slick shooting and powerful running.

The British team's silver medal owed much to Hulme (GBR) but it was also thanks to exceptional Laser Runs by **Ross Charlton** (GBR, 9:47.62) and **Charles Brown** (GBR, 9:52.37), who had been one of the medal favourites until he struggled on the Obstacle course.



Medallists' reaction

Women's gold medallist **Josefine Unterberger** (GER) said: "It feels amazing because I am still Under 19, probably, and at the European Junior Championships I already won silver, but then here my Fencing was pretty bad, so I'm so happy that I had the chance to compete here and this is the outcome.

"The first two rounds of Laser Run were not that fast and I didn't go all out, and then the last two rounds I was on her back and I saved some energy for the last metres. I stayed on her back and

when we went to the track, I kicked all out.

“Obstacle is definitely a difficult challenge because in the Semi-final, I fell two times and was eliminated. I was a bit too hectic and today I slowed it down and managed quite a good time. But it's definitely still a hard discipline and we have to do a lot of training.”

Silver medallist **Kataryzna Debska (POL)** said: “I am very, very happy. It was a tough race and I ran very fast to the end.”

Bronze medallist Louison Cazaly (FRA) said: “On the finish line, I already realised what it meant, because it was a big, big work all the years with my coach and my training centre. It was an incredible race today because the girls in front of me were very good in shooting and I had to shoot very well, too.

“On other days, I didn't have my best shooting but today it was a World Championships and I was good in shooting, with a very big last round. I'm really glad with this performance today.

“Until today, Obstacle was very hard because we don't have all the same obstacles in France, but we tried again and again all week and today I learned my obstacles by heart, and I passed. I felt very good at the end of Obstacle.”

Men's champion Mathis Rochat (FRA) said: “It's unbelievable for me. All the things I have been through this year, with a new environment, new coaches, everything – and it worked so well because now I am world champion. I'm so grateful to everybody.

“I watched the senior World Championships and I watched an unbelievable race from Joe Choong, and he managed his pace only to focus very well on the shooting. Just before the Laser Run, I saw all the images of this and I thought 'OK, that's what I have to do'.

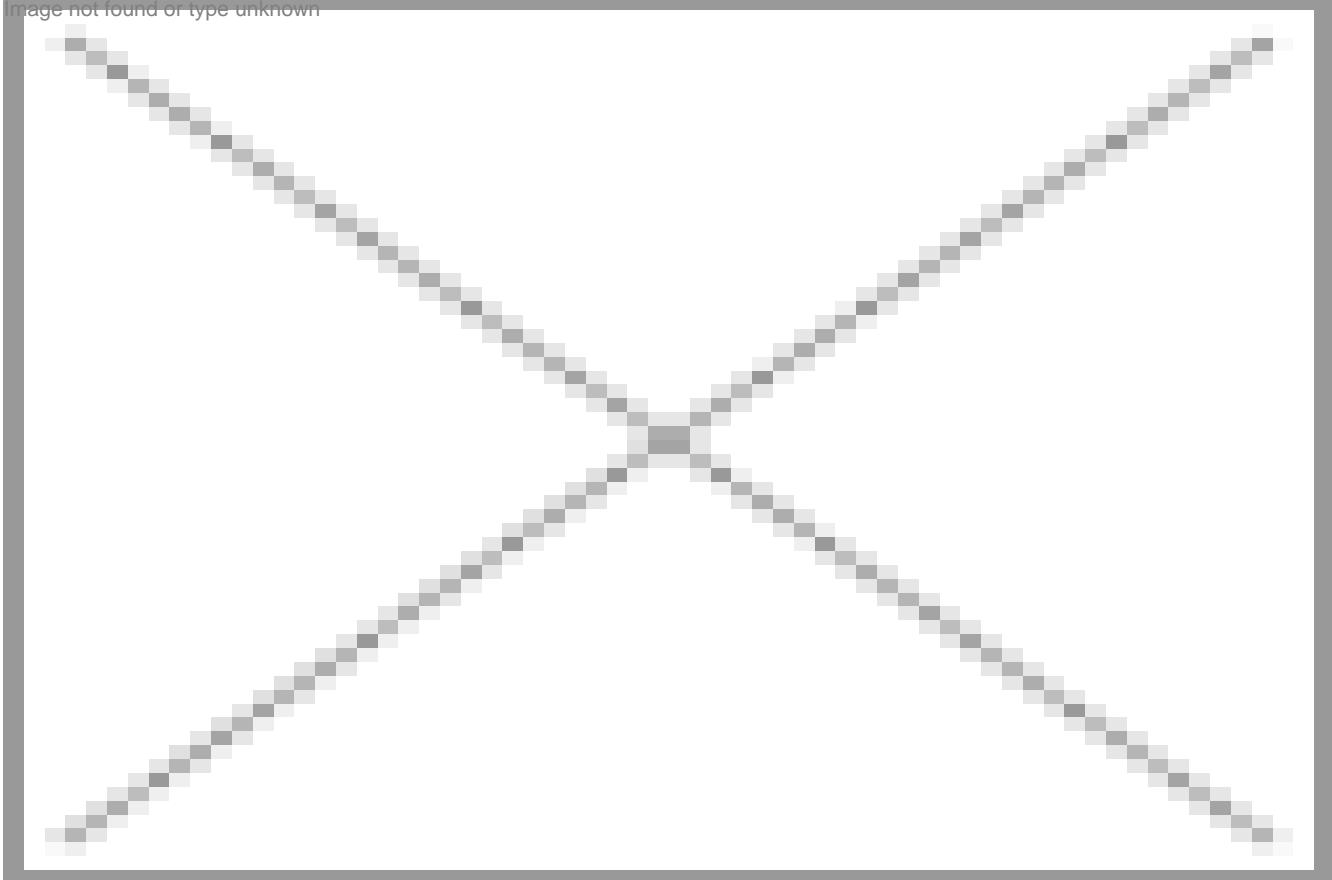
“I am a good runner with good pace, so I don't have to agitate myself. Next year I will be a senior and I think I will need a lot of confidence for the future, to manage to follow the best athletes in the world. It's thrilling for me to think about next year.”

Silver medallist Paulius Vagnorius (LTU) said: “The feeling was incredible. The crowd was unusual for a Lithuanian competition and it really excited me.

“From the start, I put the pedal to the metal, as you say. I tried to keep a high and steady pace, and it turned out I could keep it. It worked out.”

Bronze medallist Leo Bories (FRA) said: “Today is a good day for me. In the Laser Run I wanted to go up step by step, and it was very good for me.

“It's good for my team because every day is not simple. I finished 4th in the European Juniors and I started No.1 in the Laser Run. Step by step I want to improve my shooting, which is not my speciality.”



UIPM reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “Here in Lithuania we are hosting the first UIPM Junior Pentathlon World Championships including Obstacle in place of Riding. Athletes had to focus on a different kind of preparation and we could see how they had concentrated on being ready for the new discipline.

“They really showed up with a high performance, and those who have not yet had enough training will see how they can catch up in future. I thank all coaches and trainers and everyone in the local organising committee – but the athletes are at the centre of our sport and they brought a very high performance today through all the disciplines.

“The best athletes won, and although we saw a little bit of dominance from European nations, the Egyptians also won a gold medal and the Asian athletes were not far away. We also had athletes from Ecuador and Canada performing well, and so it was a global presentation of our sport.

“From watching athletes who already competed in the UIPM U19 and U17 Pentathlon World Championships, we can see what the change in our sport means to them. It is another kind of dynamic, another kind of excitement. I really believe in what we are doing, based on the experience of the Youth World Championships and now the Juniors. The athletes are doing a great job of promoting this new format around the world.”

UIPM Athletes Committee Chair Yasser Hefny OLY said: “The UIPM 2023 Junior Pentathlon World Championships is a very special event. It’s the first time this age group has competed in a world-level Pentathlon with Obstacle.

"I can confidently say that the change made to the sport is paying off. The athletes here have been having fun and competition has been intense. We also witnessed athletes from a variety of countries in the Finals, such as Canada and Ecuador.

"Finally, I would like to thank the Lithuanian Modern Pentathlon Federation for the fantastic hosting and professional organisation of this competition."

Watch and follow

The UIPM 2023 Pentathlon Junior World Championships runs from September 12-17, concluding with the Mixed Relay on Sunday September 17.

The Mixed Relay can be watched live on UIPM TV where annual subscriptions cost €14.99. This is the first Modern Pentathlon competition with the integrated Obstacle discipline to be broadcast live.

Visit the UIPM website or download UIPM Central from your app store to keep track of live results. Follow World Pentathlon on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok or X for additional content.

