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UIPM 2024 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP ANKARA: BRYSON (GBR) AND SEO (KOR) RISE TO THE TOP

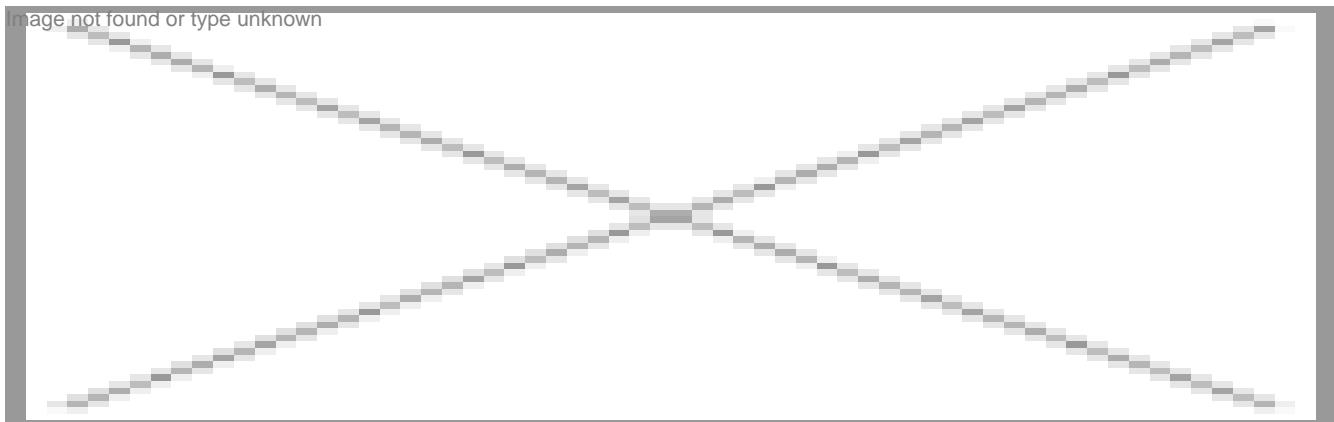


- Second World Cup gold for in-form British star in Women's Final
- Future looks bright as youngsters Seong (KOR) and Ismail (EGY) claim medals
- Maiden gold for Korean as Mohamed and Elgendi (EGY) make podium again

Kerenza Bryson of **Great Britain** and **Changwan Seo** of **Korea** led from the front to claim individual gold on Super Saturday at UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup Ankara.

In the Women's Final, 25-year-old Bryson (GBR) confirmed her status as one of the form athletes of Olympic year as she was joined on the podium by two next-generation starlets – 20-year **Seungmin Seong** (KOR) and 19-year-old **Malak Ismail** of **Egypt**.

The 1-2 was a repeat of UIPM 2023 Pentathlon World Cup Sofia, where Bryson (GBR) and Seong (KOR) won their first-ever World Cup medals. This time it was the turn of Ismail (EGY) to sample that feeling as the world U19 champion again proved her mettle in the senior ranks having already become African champion in 2023.



A dramatic Men's Final took place after some dramatic weather in the Turkish capital, but there was no stopping the rock-steady Seo (KOR) from winning his first individual gold after three top-four finishes in 2023.

Behind him, the top two from Pentathlon World Cup Cairo claimed back-to-back medals and this time **Moutaz Mohamed** (EGY) – another 19-year-old with the world at his feet – came out on top in the internal rivalry with Tokyo 2020 Olympic silver medallist **Ahmed Elgendi** (EGY).

Medallists' reaction

Women's champion Bryson (GBR) said: "I am on a run at the moment and I feel like it's just positive vibes all round. I'm really happy with how my prep is going this season.

"It couldn't really be going any better, to be honest, and I was really happy to start the Laser Run in 1st today because that's not comfortable for me. I'm not used to starting in 1st and I was definitely not in my safe space, so it was really good practice to deal with that pressure.

"It has been very gusty today on and off, and with the swim there was sand everywhere, and I had it just as I was coming into the range. I don't think it was the pressure and the mental side getting to me, it was just windy and I threw a few shots because of that, but luckily it stopped and for my other shoots it was nice and still.

"I've just got to stay confident in myself and trust in the process and my coaches and the programme. If I can keep going and trusting in myself it will keep going in the right direction for the Games.

"Nothing will quite beat the World Championships in Bath when I had all my family and friends there, but I'm really grateful that my mum and partner came out to see me. It was a shame my dad couldn't come – I'd love for him to have watched me getting gold but he's doing some really important work. But I had great support out here from my family and my amazing team."

Silver medallist Seong (KOR) added: "It has been an amazing day. I feel my performances are good this season. In World Cup Cairo, the Final was a little bit bad but I tried to improve and I knew that my Laser Run could help me to win a medal today."

"I'm very happy and I will keep going. I am very young and my performance is good. I want to go to the Olympic Games."

Bronze medallist Ismail (EGY) said: "I'm feeling so happy, and this World Cup medal feels really different to the Youth World Championships in 2023 – the medal tastes different, definitely."

"It gets better and better. At the first World Cup I didn't do very well, I didn't qualify for the Semifinals due to some technical issues in my training. So now in the second World Cup, my performance has been so much better."

"I had a great battle with Salma, and also with Lucie from Czech Republic. I know she is a very good runner and we went in the last shoot together, but I did the last shoot very well and got out with Salma. I knew I had a strong finish and even though I was very tired, I knew I could do it and pushed really hard."

Men's champion Seo (KOR) said: "Here in Ankara I always get good scores, and thankfully it happened again in this competition. I always felt that my Fencing skills were a little bit understrength, but this time I got a good score in Fencing and that's why I was the best in the competition."

"There were a lot of the best athletes at my back, but I focused on myself only, and believed in myself that I could do it. This is how I ended the competition in 1st place."

"I have got a gold medal now, and that's what I couldn't get before. That's why I believe in myself much more now, and I will do my best in the rest of the competitions."

Silver medallist Mohamed (EGY) added: "It's very amazing to have two medals in a row. It feels really great. After my first medal I said to myself that I needed to be consistently on the podium, and once again I am in 2nd place and to share it with Ahmed again feels so good."

"I thought maybe at the last shooting series I could catch [Seo], but at the last shoot I got nervous again and didn't shoot very well. If there was another 300m I could have caught him but he is good."

"[Paris 2024] is a dream, I have been dreaming about it for four years. After Tokyo when Ahmed got the silver medal, I told myself that's my dream, I want to get an Olympic medal and make my family proud."

Bronze medallist Elgendi (EGY) said: "It was very exciting, very hard. In the Laser Run we were very close together. I'm very happy with bronze, and it tastes like gold because Fencing and two knockdowns in Riding. I'm satisfied and happy with the result, and I hope the season continues like the first two World Cups. Two medals in two World Cups is very great for me."

"I'm very happy for Moutaz, he is still young and still a junior and has a very good chance in the senior team. He got a silver medal in Cairo and a silver medal here. In both World Cups we have been fighting for these medals."

"In fact, all the Egyptian team is very strong and unfortunately only two of us will go to the Olympics, but we hope the two who go to the Olympics can achieve two medals."

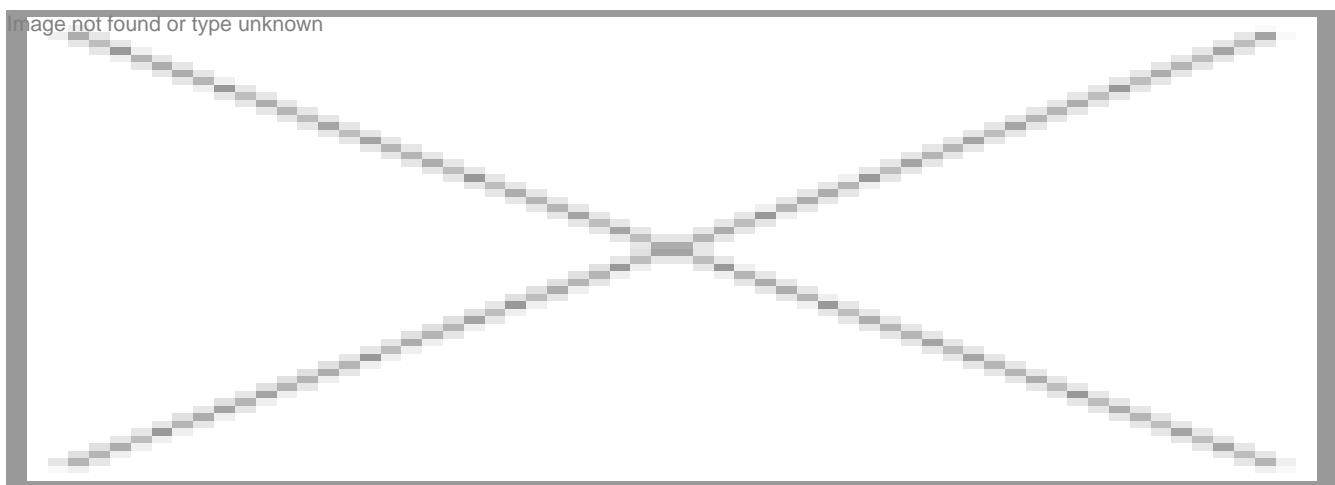
Women's Final

Riding

A high standard of Riding was on show, exemplified by the final rider of the round. Bryson (GBR) had to use all her equestrian skills to control a nervous horse that very nearly refused the sixth fence, only to complete the course without a blemish on the scoreboard.

In total there were nine clear rounds, with **Kim Sunwoo** (KOR) only incurring one penalty point and only two athletes suffering damaging refusals.

Two nations achieved a rare 600-point maximum, as team-mates **Alice Sotero** (ITA) and **Alessandra Frezza** (ITA) and Ismail (EGY) and **Salma Abdelmaksoud** (EGY) went clear, the latter having to compose herself after windy conditions caused disruption on the course.



Fencing

The left-handed Bryson (GBR) surged to the top of the leaderboard in the Fencing Ranking Round with the highest score of her senior career, 27 victories and eight defeats.

There was a 20-point gap to the next-ranked athlete, Frezza (ITA, 23V/12D), while **Uliana Batashova** (AIN) stayed very much in contention in her comeback competition, scoring 22V/13D.

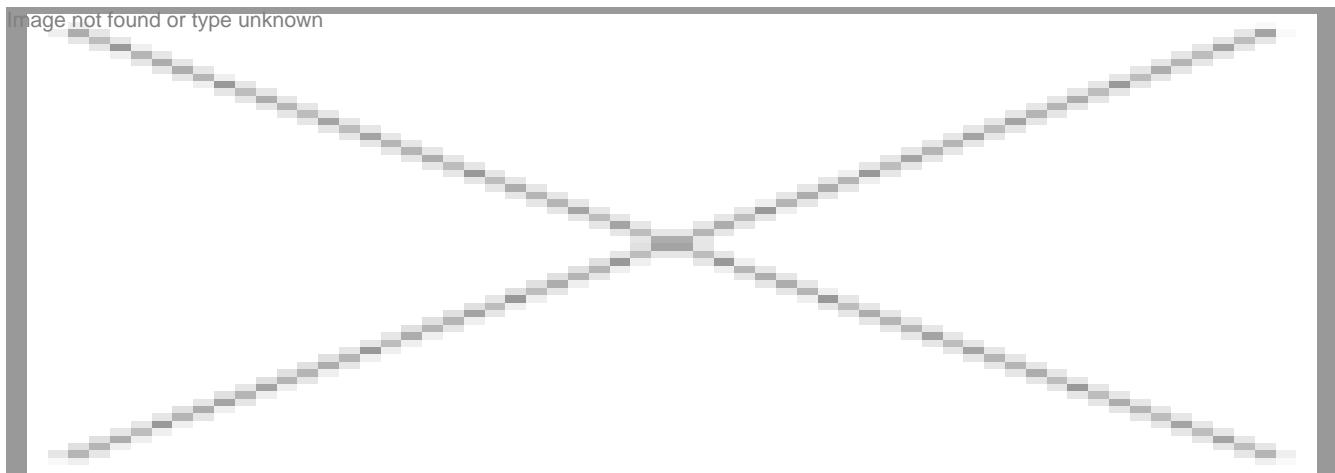
Marie Oteiza of **France** was the biggest mover of the Bonus Round, scoring three victories to improve her podium prospects and only beaten by Bryson (GBR), who notched the final bout to add another four points to her impressive tally.

Swimming

World No.1 Sotero (ITA) typically made gains in the pool, timing 2min 11.78sec to move from 10th to 6th and put pressure on the leaders. Seong (KOR) and Abdelmaksoud (EGY) timed under 2:16 to consolidate their positions.

As her weakest discipline, Swimming tends to be where Bryson (GBR) loses ground and so it proved as the field took their chance to catch up.

That said, the leader retained a solid overall advantage as the athletes exited the pool, with Oteiza (FRA) and Abdelmaksoud (EGY) trailing by 16 and 19 points respectively, followed closely by Kim (KOR), Frezza (ITA), Sotero (ITA) and Seong (KOR).



Laser Run

There was suspense early in the race as Bryson (GBR) took over 20sec to land her first five shots. However, Oteiza (FRA) failed to capitalise due to shooting problems of her own, and went down the leaderboard instead of up it.

The only person who kept any visible pressure on Bryson (GBR) was Seong (KOR), who moved up to the silver medal position on the second 600m lap and held on to it with great conviction. But once Bryson (GBR) found her composure on the range, there was no stopping her and Seong (KOR) arrived at each shoot to find the leader already off and running. She finally won gold by an incredible margin of 26sec.

All the intrigue surrounded the battle for bronze, with Frezza (ITA), Batashova (AIN) and **Lucie Hlavackova of Czech Republic** getting involved at different times.

At the final shoot, it looked like being a duel between two Egyptians as Abdelmaksoud (EGY) and Ismail (EGY) left the range together. But the precocious Ismail (EGY), having started 9th, proved to have too much stamina for the chasing pack and crossed for a joyous maiden bronze medal 3sec ahead of 4th-placed Hlavackova (CZE).

The best Laser Run time of the day belonged to **Mariya Gneditchik** (AIN), who gained a remarkable 10 places with her 11:11.70.

Men's Final

Riding

The serenity of the Women's Final Riding was not quite matched when the men entered the arena after a delay due to bad weather. There were a lot more refusals resulting in four eliminations affecting athletes who may have been medal contenders, not least the final rider, **Patrick Dogue of Germany**.

Experienced rider Dogue (GER) seemed to have overcome a double refusal early in his round, only for his horse to refuse the ninth fence, resulting in elimination. This followed the exit of three

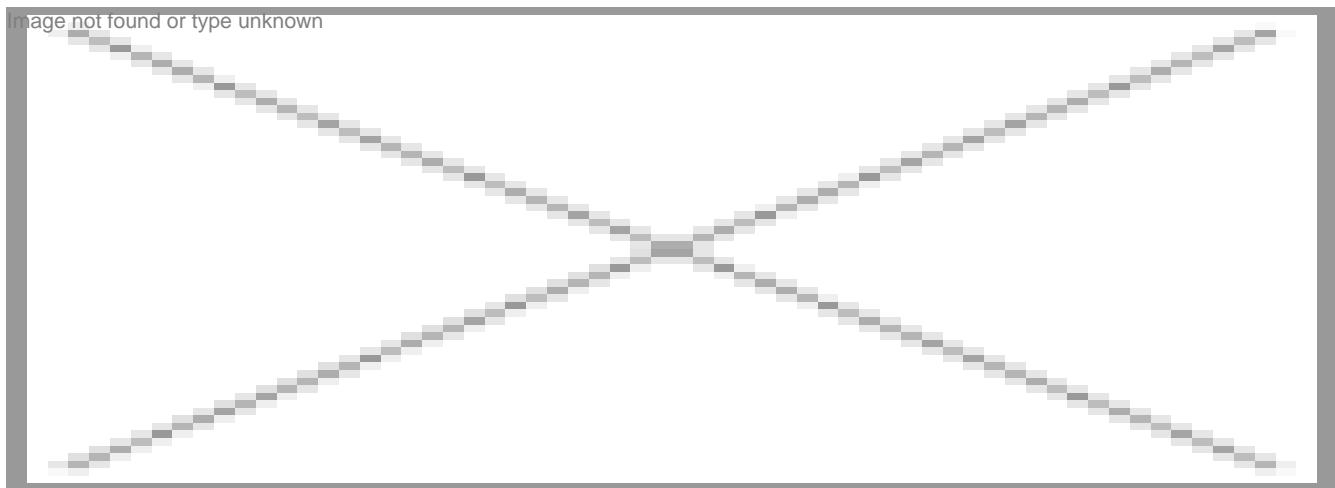
others, including world No.2 **Mohanad Shaban** (EGY) who sustained injuries in a fall that left him unable to continue in the competition.

At the other end of the spectrum, there were six maximum scores with Hernandez (MEX), Vlach (CZE), **Pavlo Tymoshchenko** of Ukraine and Mohamed (EGY) among those with flawless rounds.

Fencing

An imperious performance in the Ranking Round by 32-year-old Dogue (GER), rolling back the years with a 27V/8D that was on a different level to every other competitor except Seo (KOR), who scored 25V/10D with a host of athletes on 21V/14D.

Elgendi (EGY) was the early mover in the Bonus Round, mastering slippery conditions to add eight points to his total with four successive wins, but **Matteo Cincinelli** (ITA) went two better with an impressive run of six. Finally Seo (KOR) consolidated his overall lead by winning the final two bouts.



Swimming

Myles Pillage (GBR) set the standard in the pool with a 1:59.11, edging himself into the overall top six, while there was nothing to separate team-mates Cincinelli (ITA) and European champion **Giorgio Malan** (ITA) as they both went under 2:02.

Another solid performance by 6th-fastest Seo (KOR) enabled him to build an overall lead of 23sec for the decisive Laser Run, with Mohamed (EGY) positioned narrowly ahead of Tymoshchenko (UKR) and Cincinelli (ITA).

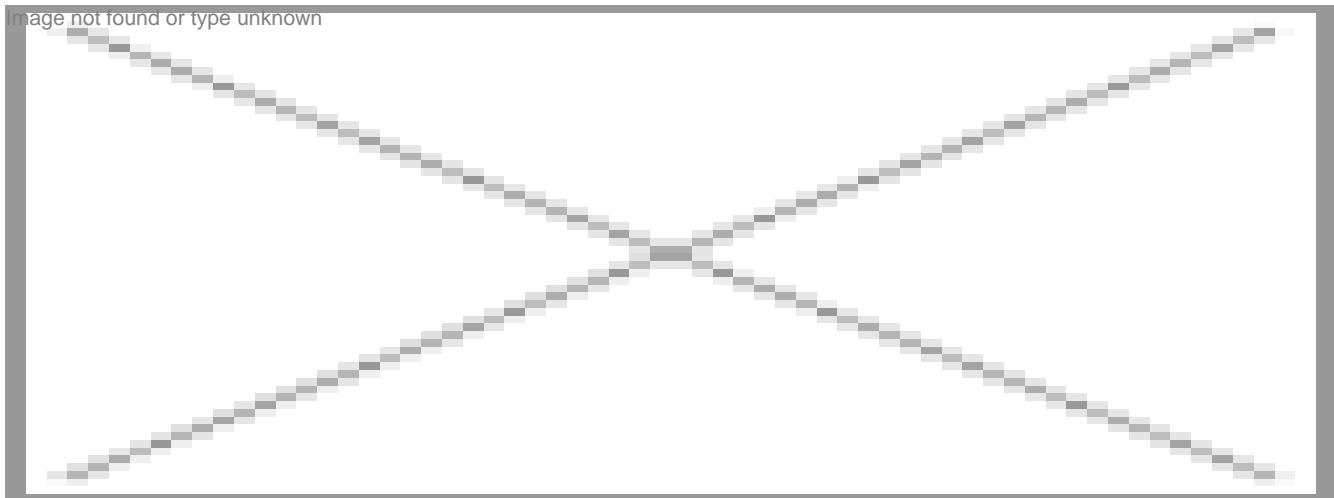
Laser Run

Like Bryson (KOR) earlier, Seo (KOR) had a big lead to defend and if his one faulty shoot (at the second visit to the range) caused him concern, but he didn't show it. Looking physically and mentally strong, an efficient Laser Run enabled him to cross that line in the premier spot for the first time.

Aged 19, Mohamed (EGY) proved that his career-first medal in Cairo (EGY) last month was no fluke, and nor was it due to home advantage. He shot brilliantly and withstood the pressure applied by his advancing team-mate Elgendi (EGY), who won an intriguing duel with Cincinelli (ITA) only

when he stretched away on the final run.

Typically it was **Martin Vlach** (CZE) who set the best Laser Run time of the day, 10:18.80 enabling him to finish 5th ahead of **Taishu Sato** of Japan.



President's reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "In the Women's Final we saw three different continents on the podium, and the athletes presented a level of performance that shows they have been preparing really well for the Olympic Games Paris 2024. It was a very strong competition starting from the Semi-finals.

"What we saw from the organising committee, preparing the horses on top level and the whole facility, has shown what it means to have all disciplines close together, so I thank the organisers and all nations and coaches who prepared athletes in a very professional way.

"In the afternoon, we had a strong thunderstorm but luckily, it stopped and the conditions were fair. We had a very strong competition and the Egyptians again were very well prepared with two athletes making the podium.

"But it was also clear to see how well the Koreans are preparing their athletes, with a male champion and female silver medallist today. We also saw a Japanese athlete in 6th place, underlining that Asia is always strong and performing well in the Olympic year. Now we look forward to the Mixed Relay tomorrow."

Watch and follow

UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup Ankara concludes tomorrow (April 21) with the Mixed Relay.

Live stream is available on UIPM TV and all competition results are available at the UIPM website and via the UIPM Central app.

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