

15 JUN 2024

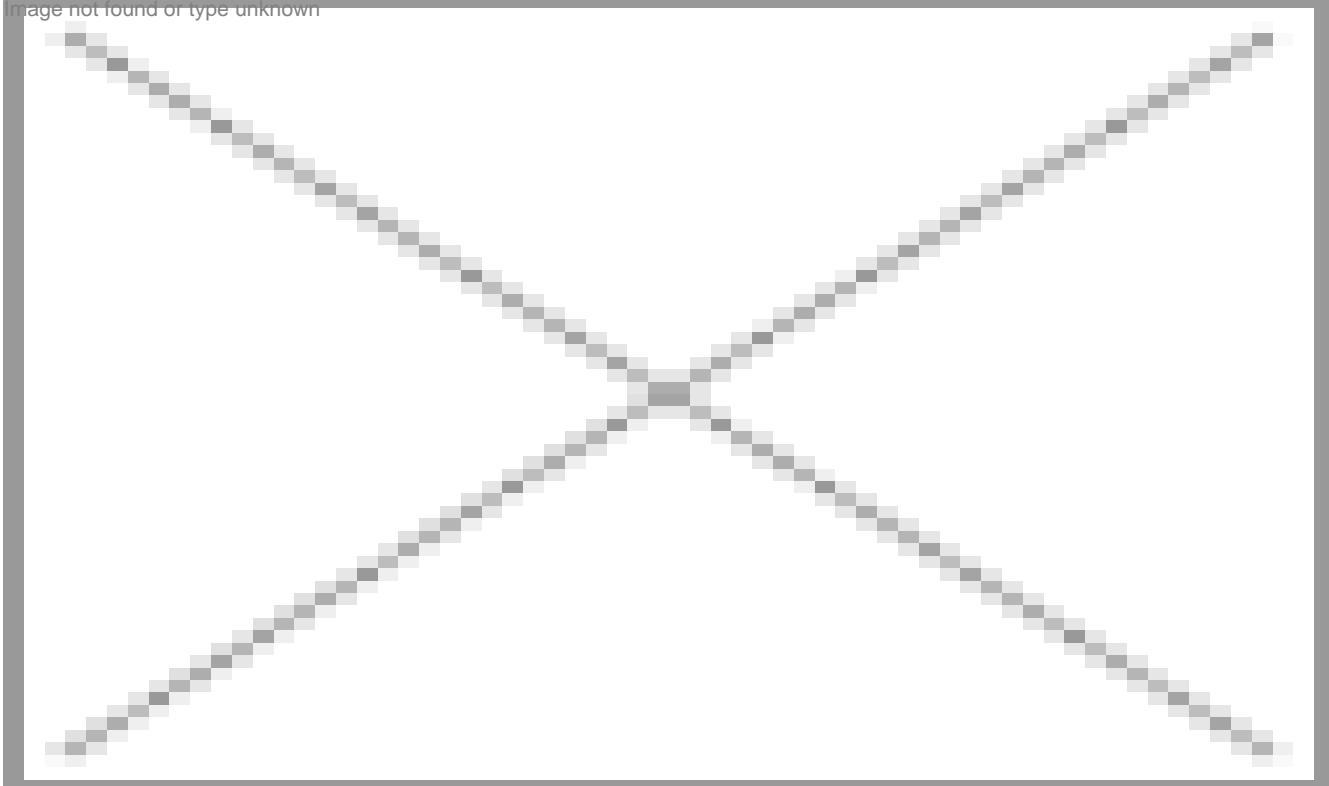
# UIPM 2024 PENTATHLON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: SEONG (KOR) AND BOHM (HUN) CELEBRATE FIRST WORLD TITLES



- Korean starlet, 21, holds off Guzi (HUN) during incredible sprint finish
- Hungarian hero, 23, breaks world record again as silver goes to Szep (HUN)
- Dominant nations also take bronze medals thanks to Erdos (HUN) and Jun (KOR)

**Seungmin Seong of Korea** and **Csaba Bohm of Hungary** savoured the joy of becoming individual world champions for the first time at the UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Championships.

It was a clear sign of the emergence of a new generation of Modern Pentathlon superstars as 21-year-old Seong (KOR) and 23-year-old Bohm (HUN) stood on top of the world with less than two months to go until the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.



Indeed, Bohm (HUN) is taking men's pentathlon to a whole new level having broken the overall world record for the second successive competition, extending his previous mark of 1,535 points to an incredible 1,551.

Seong (KOR), 21, confirmed her status as an emerging force after three silver medals in UIPM Pentathlon World Cups in 2023 and 2024. In becoming her country's first individual female world champion she enabled her team to continue their dominance of the competition after a double success in the Women's and Men's Relays earlier in the week.

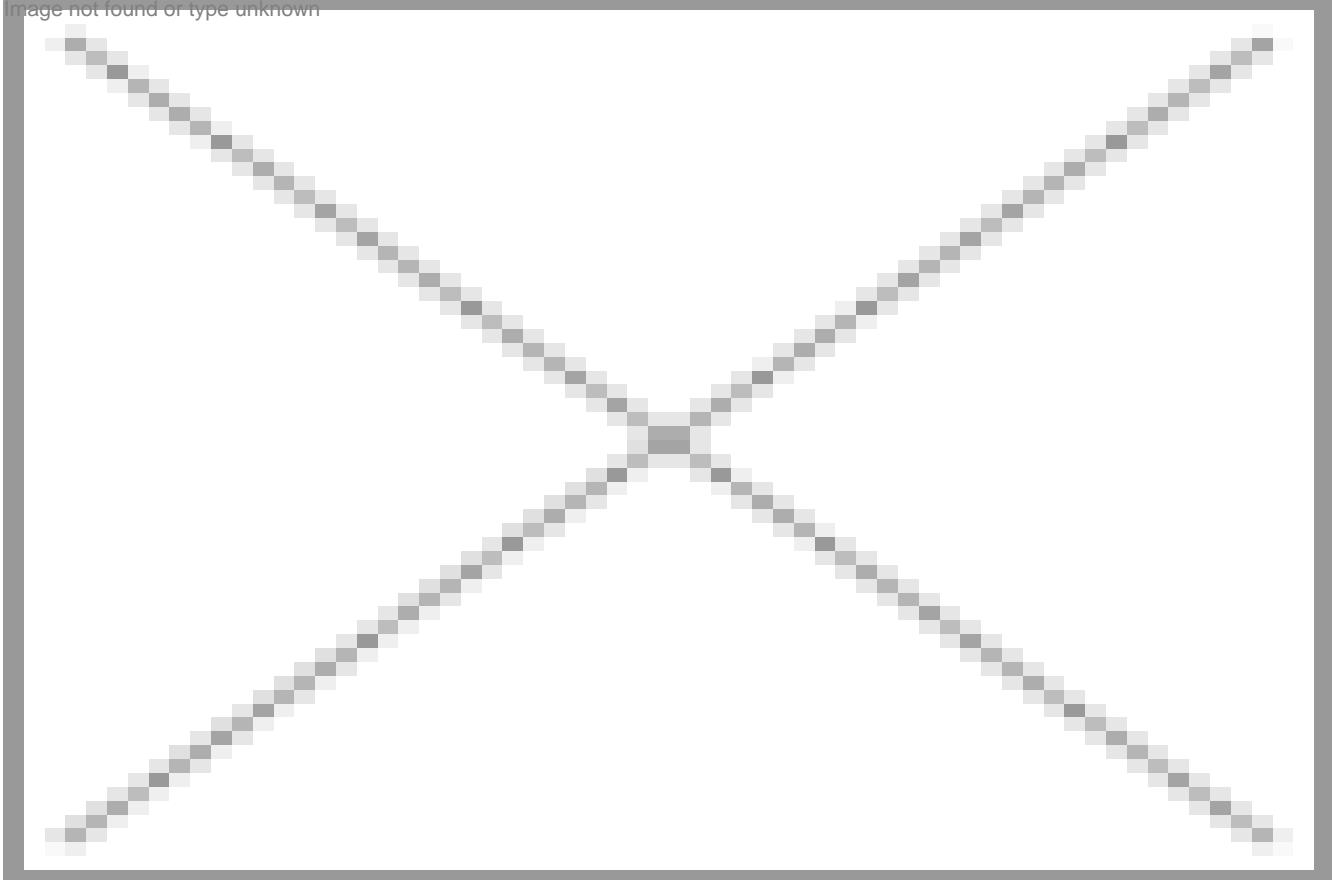
Another leading pentathlon team did their very best to deny her the glory. The Hungarians seem to be peaking at just the right time and **Blanka Guzi** (HUN) pushed Seong (KOR) right to the line after catching her on the final lap of Laser Run, the 25-year-old denied gold by barely a second after an epic sprint finish.

The drama wasn't over there – another sprint finish settled the race for bronze as 21-year-old **Rita Erdos** (HUN) completed a remarkable advance from 13th to pass an exhausted **Salma Abdelmaksoud** of **Egypt**, who fell to the ground just a few steps from the finish line and had to pick herself up to claim 4th place.

In the context of Paris 2024, all three women's medallists won a direct qualification quota place for the Olympic Games. As Hungary already had earned one place through **Michelle Gulyas** (HUN), selectors will have to decide which two of their three places to accept.

Not far from the medal contest, 38-year-old **Anastasiya Prokopenko** (AIN) showed that experience can still compete with youthful energy as she finished 5th, in a major boost to her hopes of Olympic qualification, followed by **Ilke Ozyuksel** of **Türkiye** in 6th.

Having enjoyed a career high of winning the UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup Final just two weeks ago, the unflappable Bohm (HUN) completed the dream double with a performance that almost bordered on flawless.



With outstanding performances across all five disciplines, Bohm (HUN) crossed the finish line a staggering 27sec ahead of his team-mate **Balazs Szep** (HUN), who claimed a direct qualification quota place for this summer's Olympics.

There was a captivating battle for bronze that seemed to be heading in the direction of Africa thanks to the hard running of **Moutaz Mohamed** (EGY), but impeccable shooting from **Woongtae Jun** (KOR) enabled the Tokyo 2020 Olympic bronze medallist to claim a morale-boosting medal ahead of Paris 2024.

A solid performance enabled **Kamil Kasperekzak** of Poland to finish 5th, with **Shuai Luo** of China delighting the home crowd by completing the top six.

In a rare duopoly, both the Women's and Men's Team gold medals were won by Hungary with Korea collecting double silver. **Mexico** (women) and **Czechia** (men) claimed the bronze medals.

#### Medallists' reaction

Women's champion Seong (KOR) said: "This is my third time at the World Championships and my first time winning an individual gold medal, so I'm very happy and proud.

"Now I can go back to Korea and prepare for the Olympic Games.

"Blanka Guzi is one of the greatest Laser Runners and very strong. Before the Laser Run I knew she would compete. In the last lap we ran together and I knew she was tired, and I believed I could do it. I had the power to finish strongly."

Silver medallist Guzi (HUN) said: “I’m not disappointed after the finish, because I think I had a lack of energy and power. But my heart told me ‘go Blanka, you have to do it and you will do it’. I’m talking about the [Olympic] quota place – not the gold medal this time.

“I felt something special before the competition, in the morning. I could say that I had a strong belief in myself. It was my dream and it came true.

“The main thing of this day was to secure my [Olympic] place, and I could do it. It was the main task.”

Erdos (HUN) said: “It was a great race... I decided just to focus on myself and I did my best, and I will see what will happen.

“I hope I will make it [to Paris 2024] with this achievement, but I don’t know yet.”

Men’s champion Bohm (HUN) said: “It feels amazing and, yes, finally I can say I am officially in the Olympics. I made it, so that was the main goal and I’m super happy.

“I need to process this race, but the feeling was that I am helped; I am helped all day by God. Because I can’t figure out how I made this possible. Maybe it wasn’t me. I’m just so grateful.

“A lot of people helped me to achieve this, and in the last few laps they all came into my mind and I just wanted to thank them with this medal, because I’m so grateful to them.

“I am not thinking about Olympic medals or Olympic performances, I’m just happy that I qualified. It was a long journey. I need to sit down for a bit, get some days to rest and then start again to the Olympics.”

Silver medallist Szep (HUN) added: “Before the competition I was a little bit ill, so I did not have good preparation. I was very tired, and today I was sleeping, so I didn’t feel before the competition that I would get this good result.

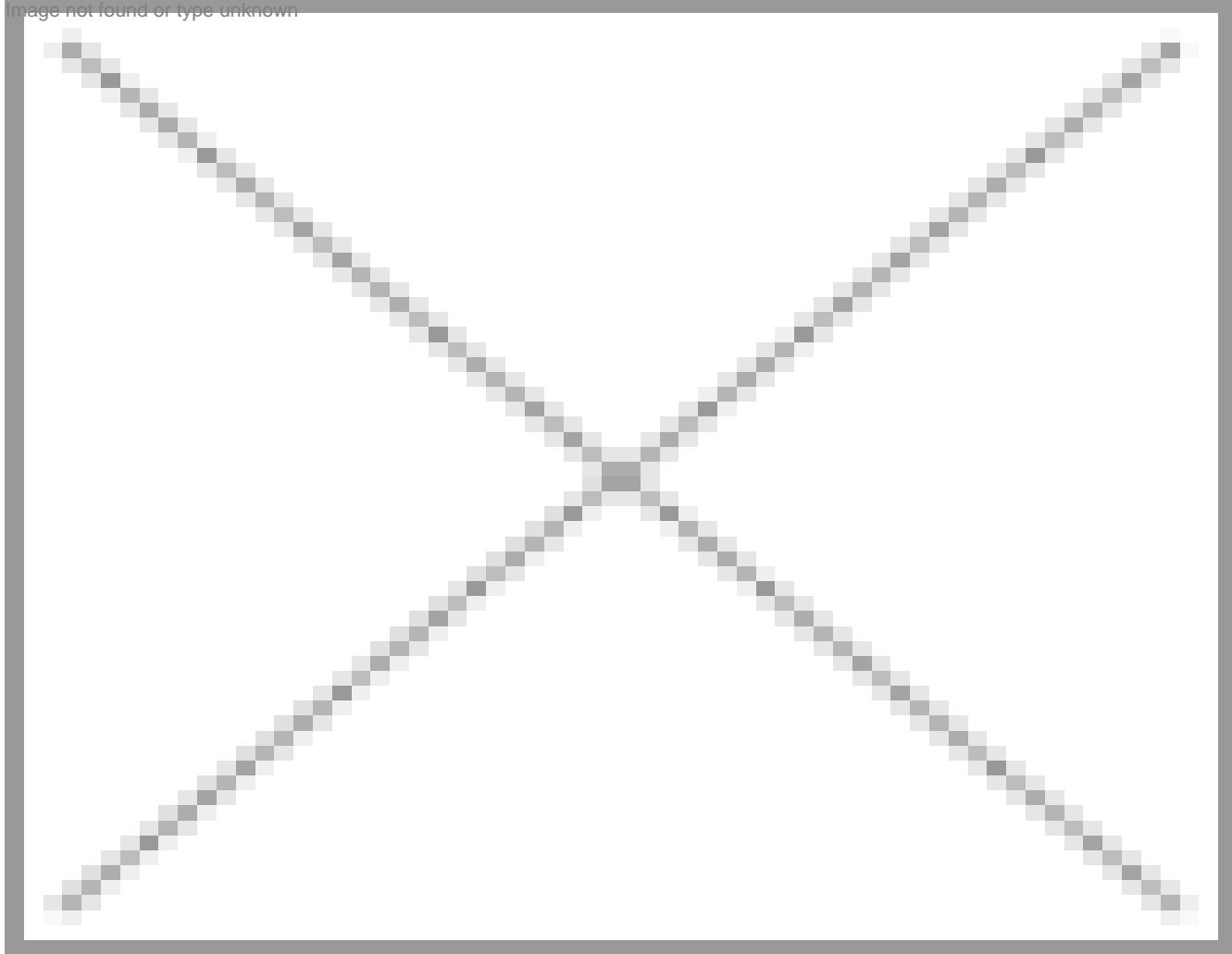
“It’s very good for me. In 2022 I was 3rd in the World Championships and now I am 2nd, I hope next year I will be the world champ.”

Bronze medallist Jun (KOR) said: “Today, the Laser Run was the most amazing race of my life. No misses in the shooting, and the weather was nice with very good conditions. I went step by step.

“Moutaz is a very good Laser Runner, but I focused on my own race and in the end, I had some power to reach the finish line and win the bronze medal.

“The Korea team with women and men is now in a very good place, and this was the last competition before the Paris Olympic Games. The time remaining is short, but we can try to train well in Korea and prepare for more good performances in Paris.”

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### Women's Final – Riding

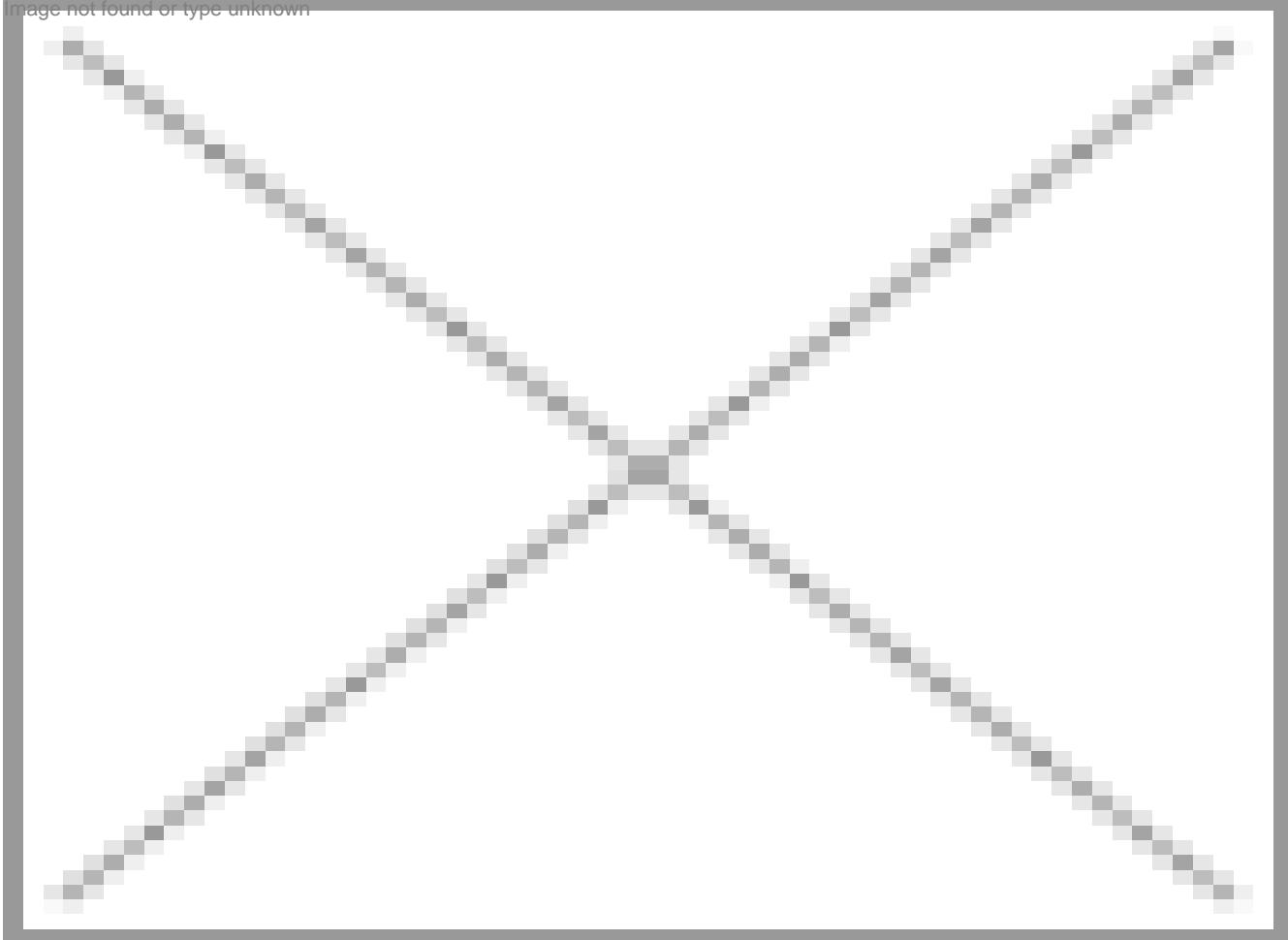
A really high standard of Riding led to minimal drama on a morning of blistering heat in Zhengzhou (CHN), with only elimination and four scores under 280. Gulyas (HUN) was the unfortunate rider who failed to progress in the competition, opening the door for team-mate Guzi (HUN) to stride into contention with one of only two perfect rides.

The other 300 scorer was **Mingyu Zhang** (CHN), giving local spectators something to cheer, while Seong (KOR), Ozyuksel (TUR), Abdelmaksoud (EGY) and Prokopenko (AIN) were among those who emerged relatively unscathed with only one knockdown.

### Fencing

The standout fencer was undoubtedly **Marlena Jawaid** of **Sweden**, who gave herself a cushion with an impressive 25 victories – two more than Seong (KOR) and **Unju Kim** (KOR).

Importantly, Seong (KOR) was the last woman standing in the Bonus Round after three consecutive successes. The biggest mover was Prokopenko (AIN), a former world champion and Beijing 2008 Olympic bronze medallist who was clearly intent on grasping her opportunity to qualify for Paris 2024.



## Swimming

She may have fallen out of contention in Riding but Gulyas (HUN) took the opportunity to swim full pelt and was rewarded with a standout time of 2:09.45, but once again Seong (KOR) showed her all-round ability by joining Abdelmaksoud (EGY) in going under 2:13, with Guzi (HUN) only 1sec slower than them.

It all meant that Seong (KOR) would start the Laser Run with an 11sec advantage over Abdelmaksoud (EGY) and Jawaid (SWE), with Guzi (HUN) starting 32sec off the pace alongside Tokyo 2020 Olympic champion **Kate French** of **Great Britain**.

## Laser Run

She may have started with an 18sec shoot, but Seong (KOR) refused to let that faze her and she kept her foot on the accelerator throughout an enthralling race.

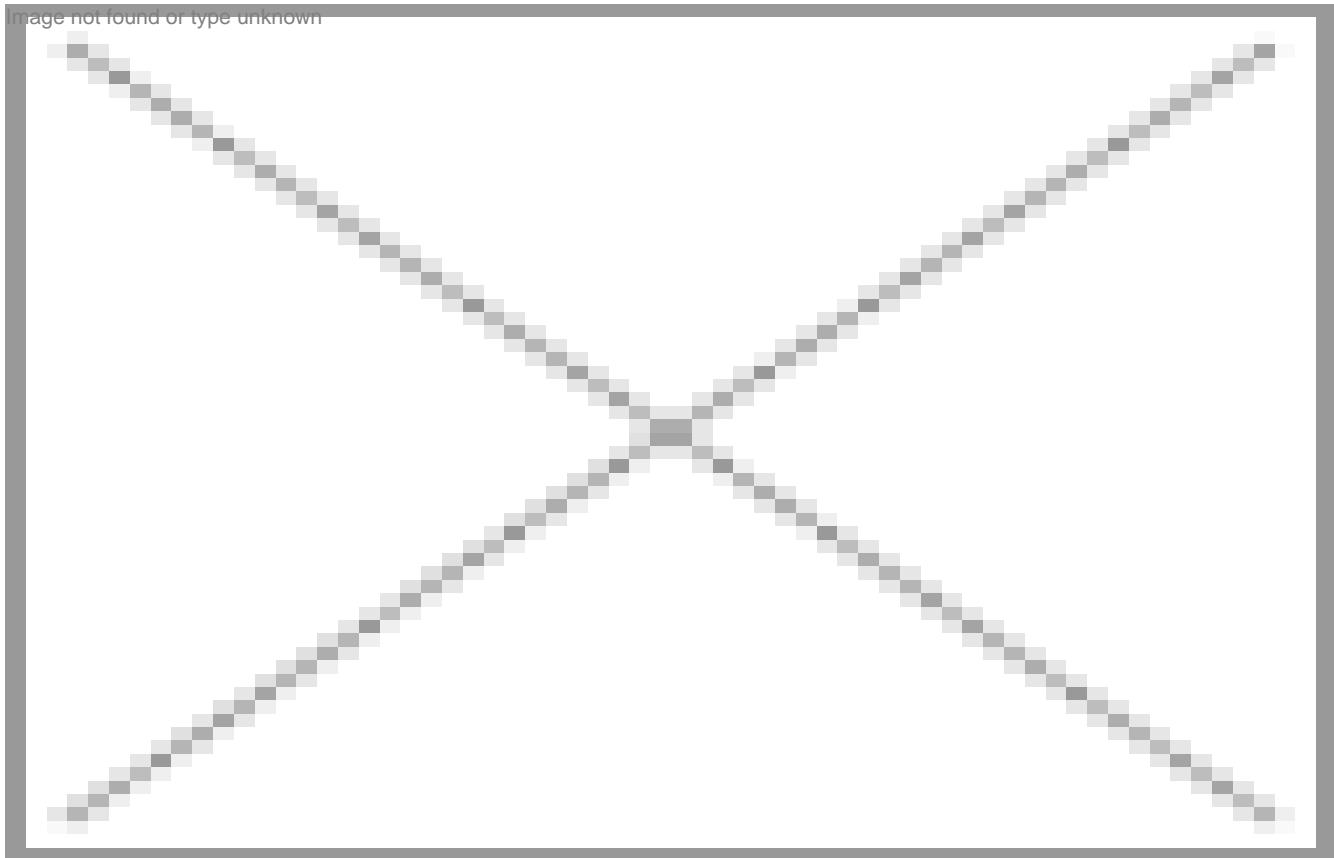
The big movers were Guzi (HUN) and Erdos (HUN), as the only two who completed the course in less than 11min, and the time of 10:45 of Erdos (HUN) was truly extraordinary in the conditions.

Lap by lap, she slashed her way through the field until pacing her final 600m perfectly to rob a medal from the ever-consistent Abdelmaksoud (EGY).

Ahead of her, Guzi (HUN) took confidence from her recent victory in Pentathlon World Cup Sofia, knowing that she had the ability to prise the lead away from Seong (KOR). And she did so, briefly, having shot brilliantly to set up a classic final lap. But Seong (KOR) stubbornly fought back, giving

herself space in the final 200-300m.

Somehow Guzi (HUN) was not yet done, and she gave everything in a final dash to the line, and an exhausted Seong (KOR) seemed to stop on the line as she touched the tape only an instant before Guzi (HUN) hurtled across the line.



### Men's Final – Riding

In a sharp contrast to the Women's Final, numerous male athletes struggled to control their horses under the glare of a hot Zhengzhou sun. In fact, only the rider who went first – **Myles Pillage** (GBR) – had enjoyed a clear round when it came to the turn of the competition leaders.

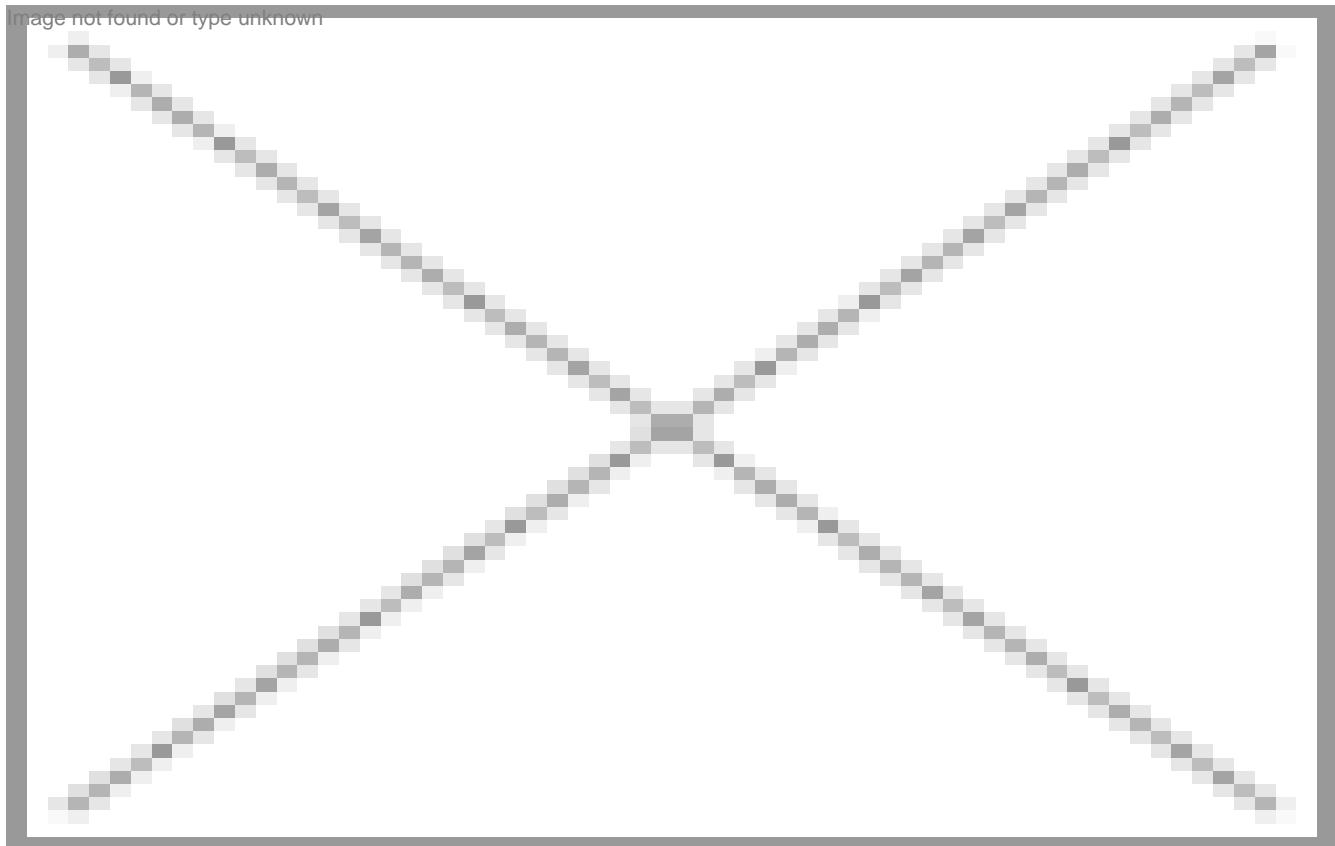
First Kasperekzak (POL) and Szep (HUN) kept their nerve with only one knockdown apiece, and then Bohm (HUN) showed his absolute champion quality with a perfect 300 – replicated by **Martin Vlach** (CZE) in the final ride.

A nasty fall resulted in elimination for **Fabian Liebig** of **Germany**, while **France** duo **Valentin Belaud** and **Jean-Baptiste Mourcia** lost control of their horses and incurred terminal damage to their medal hopes, as did **Bence Demeter** (HUN) and **Changwan Seo** (KOR) – while **Marek Grycz** (CZE) failed to start.

### Fencing

After the elimination of top-scoring fencer **Maksim Maruk** (AIN) in the Semi-finals, Bohm (HUN) carried the best score of 22V/12D from the Fencing Ranking Round, but Szep (HUN) gave his compatriot no reason to get carried away with his own excellent score of 21V/13D. When the pair met in the last bout of the Bonus Round, it was telling that Bohm (HUN) won the two available points to move a little further ahead.

Others who performed strongly in the Ranking Round were **Soengjin Kim** (KOR), Kasperczak (POL) and Grycz (CZE), each scoring 20 victories. Mohamed (EGY) took the most out of a tight Bonus Round, adding six points with three touches.



## Swimming

Pillage (GBR) typically set the standard in the pool with an impressive 1min 57.38sec, but Mohamed (EGY) conceded only one point to the top swimmer by also going under 1:58.

Jun (KOR) and Bohm (HUN) also made the top five, while Szep (HUN) lost 8sec to Bohm (HUN), enabling him to start Laser Run with a 9sec advantage, with Kasperczak (POL) going out 3rd.

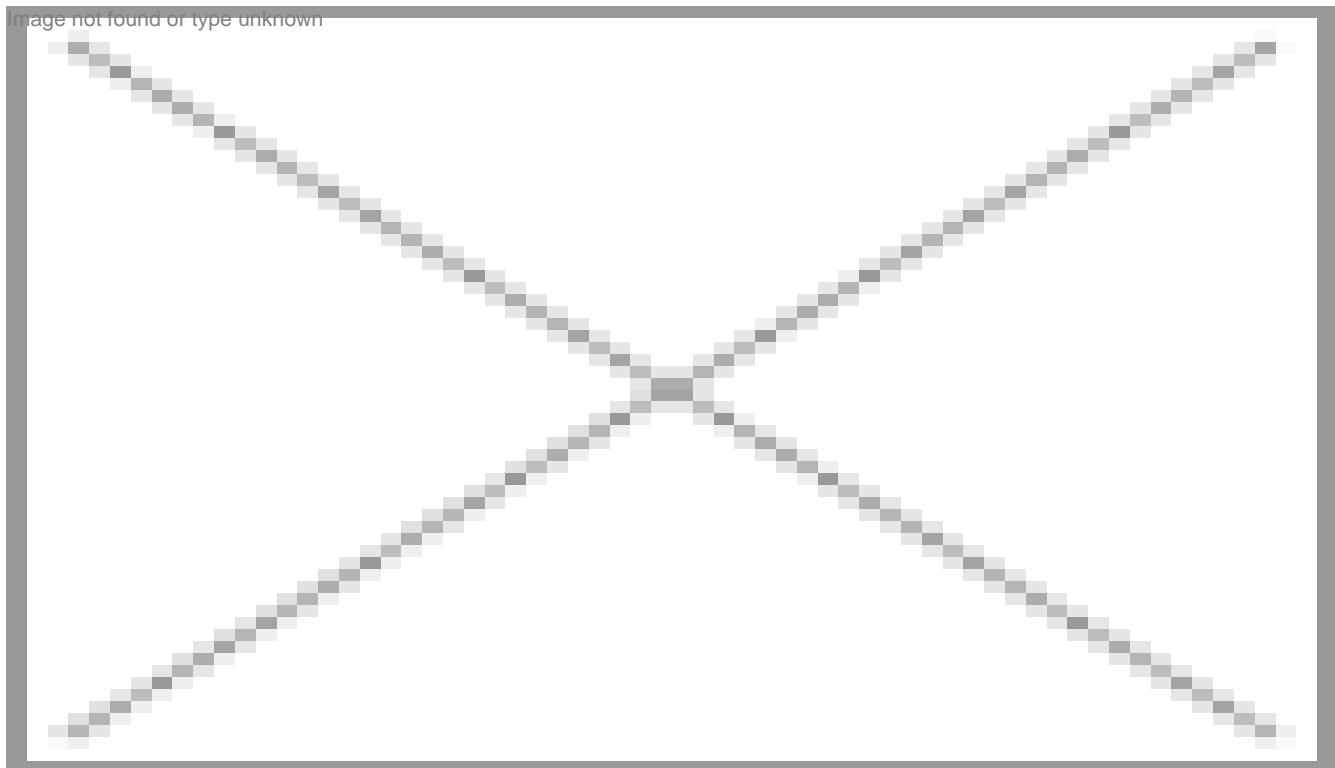
## Laser Run

A winner of two Pentathlon World Cup silver medals earlier in the season, Mohamed (EGY) burst out of the blocks and moved up from 5th to 3rd in each of the first three running laps, pegged back only by his own erratic shooting.

Apart from the nerveless Hungarians who protected their gold and silver positions with no significant alarm, the star of the shooting range was the legendary Jun (KOR), who made up crucial ground at every visit to the range with his unerring 7sec delivery.

Seeing a chance to seize his first individual medal of the season, the multiple World Cup winner raced out of the fourth shoot ahead of a misfiring Mohamed (EGY) and kicked for home impressively in the last 600m, serving a reminder of his class ahead of the Olympics.

Indeed, his Laser Run time of 9:53.44 was bettered only by Mourcia (FRA), who timed 9:48.26 to finish 11th. The imperious Bohm (HUN) continued to perform at an elevated level as he and Vlach (CZE) also broke the 10min mark.



#### President's reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "The Women's and Men's Finals in the UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Championships was the last chance for athletes to qualify for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games – and both competitions took place in excellent facilities like the athletes will experience at the Olympic Games.

"The preparation of horses was excellent, and you could see in the morning that the ladies had to cope with very hot conditions. Especially in Laser Run, we could see how often the places changed and how close the winners were in the Women's Final, and in the bronze-medal race in the Men's Final.

"The Finals were dominated by the Korean and Hungarian athletes, but in all athletes we saw the mentality never to give up. Olympic places were on the last line and this is a historic World Championships as the last one with horses. I am so happy to see what the athletes achieved through the Qualifications, Semi-finals and Finals.

"When athletes want so much to be on top, we see nerves and sometimes the result is not what they expected, but we always speak about winners, and after a long 2024 season we could see so many athletes winning medals and placements that they worked so hard for.

“The whole atmosphere around this competition, thanks to the organisers and the volunteers, is really like a rehearsal for the Olympics for them. Now we look forward to a great expression in the Mixed Relay tomorrow.”

### Watch and follow

The UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Championships concludes tomorrow (June 16) with the Mixed Relay. Live stream is available on UIPM TV. All competition results and reports are available at the UIPM website and via the UIPM Central app.

