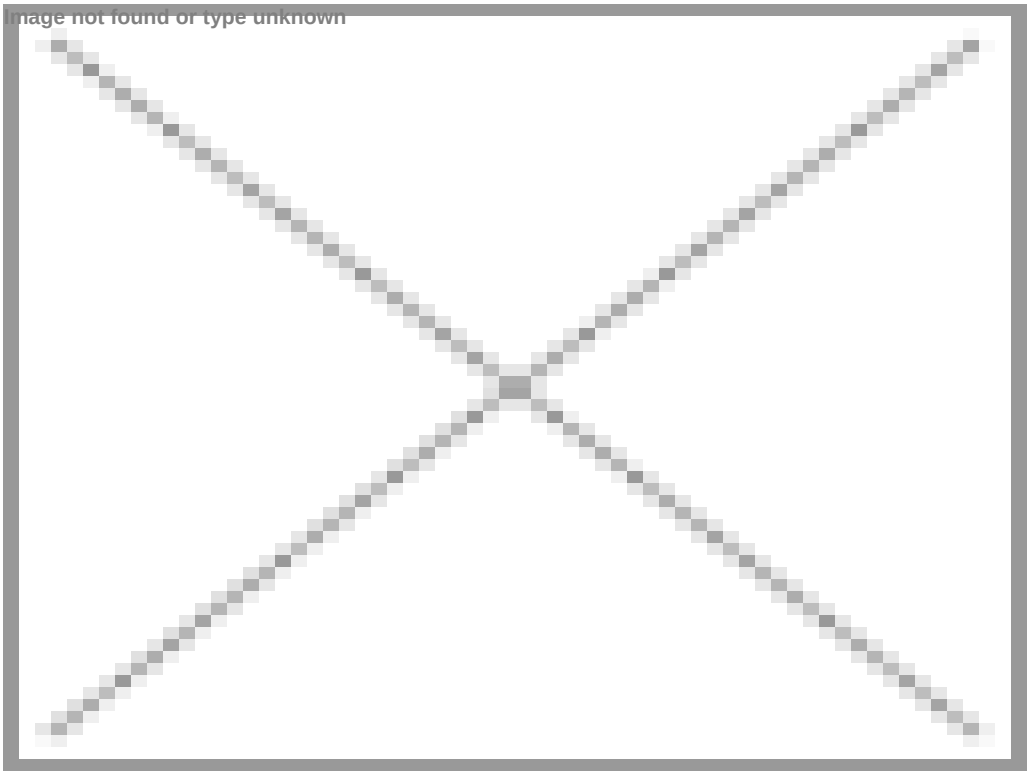
30 JUN 2024

UIPM 2024 PENTATHLON JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: SAZONOVA (AIN) AND MOHAMED (EGY) WIN FIRST JUNIOR GOLDS

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Individual Neutral Athlete **Viktoriia Sazonova** and **Moutaz Mohamed** of **Egypt** made lifetime memories in Alexandria, winning career first junior individual gold medals in the Junior World Championships.

Super Saturday had got off to a spectacular start as both **Sazonova (AIN)** and 13-year-old sensation **Farida Khalil of Egypt** smashed a pair of world records on their way to a duel at the top of the leaderboard of the Women's Final.

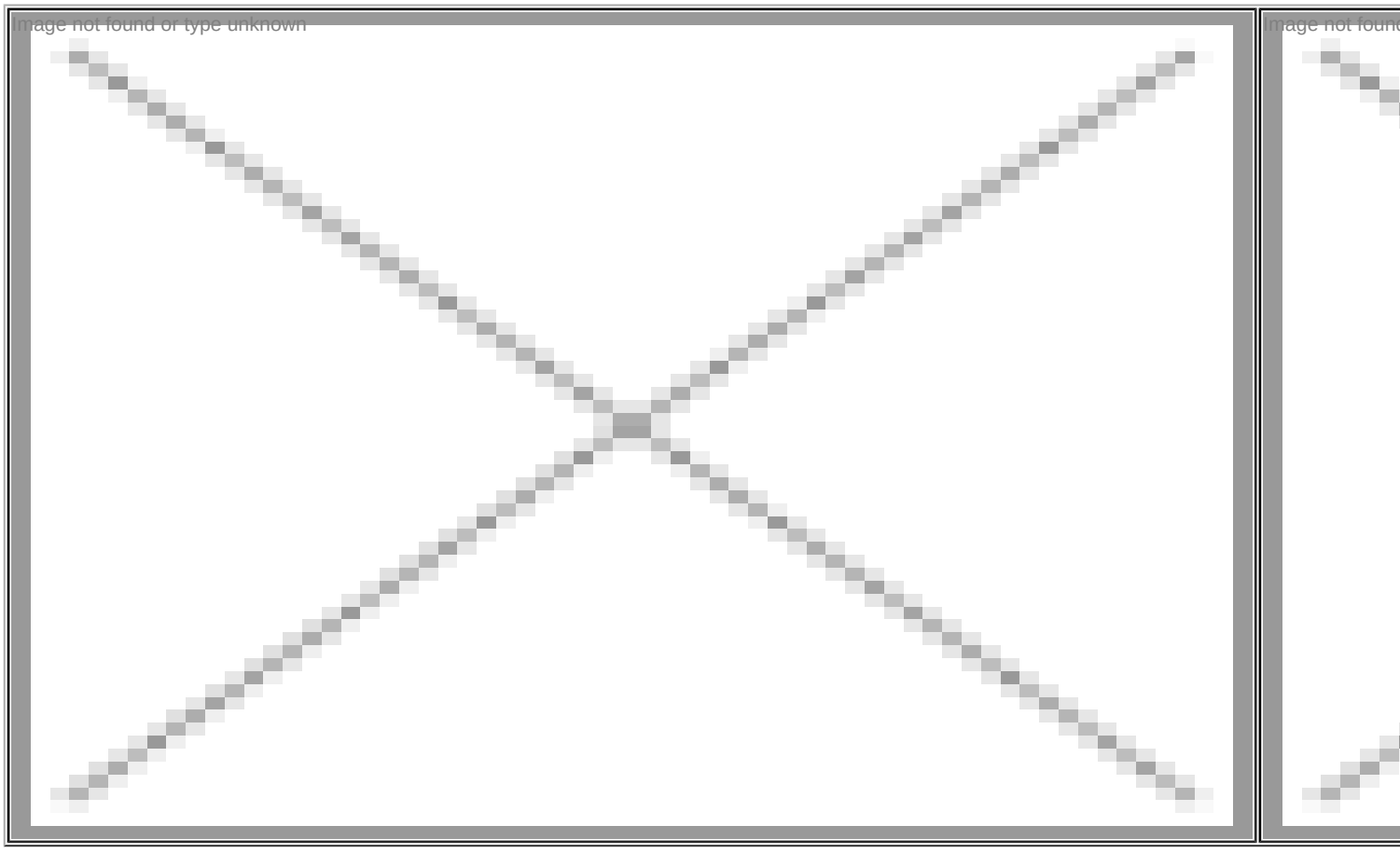
The Junior Fencing record fell when **Sazonova (AIN)** racked up 30 Victories while **Khalil (EGY)** smashed the Obstacle record on home soil and then became the youngest medallist in Junior World Championships history as she took bronze. Individual Neutral Athlete **Elizaveta Skudnyakova** held her nerves to secure silver behind her teammate.

France took home the Women's Team gold medal with three of their athletes finishing in the top 20 ahead of silver medallists **Switzerland** and bronze medallists **Poland.**

Like Sazonova, **Moutaz Mohamed (EGY)** had to break a world record to land the Men's gold medal - with a new overall mark of 1,544 points. The Egyptian won six bonus points in his second placed Fencing performance and reached the same position in the Swimming with Obstacle being his only discipline outside the top five. His teammates however **Mazen Shaban** and **Moustafa Abouamer of Egypt** both broke the obstacle world record on Saturday that was set in the week by **Kian O'Boyle of United States.**

Mohamed's consistency in the other two disciplines however gave him a platform to succeed in the Laser Run and he took it, overtaking the Swimming leader **Matteo Bovenzi of Italy** and **Abouamer (EGY)** early in the race to win his first individual junior gold in his home country of **Egypt**. **Roman Popov of Ukraine** delivered a remarkable Laser Run to snatch bronze on the podium.

Egypt's high performance in all events throughout the day gave them a comfortable Men's Team gold with silver medallists **Ukraine** and bronze medallists **Germany** behind.



Medallists' reaction

Men's champion Moutaz Mohamed (EGY) said: "It feels amazing that it's in my hometown, with my family here, with my coaches, friends, my dad, after China, everybody knows the story, he is

here. It was a surprise to see him so, it's a great feeling. I'm emotional again after the first time at World Cup 1 in Egypt when I got my silver medal. It feels great, I can't even describe it.

"When I lost the Olympic place by two points, it was very sad, very heartbreaking. I had to pick myself up, that's what champions do. I had just one week to train for the Obstacle. Last year at the Junior World Championships I took an elimination so, I had to make sure this time I don't take elimination. I've taken it step-by-step, day-by-day. Before the competition, I was about to withdraw because I couldn't continue the Obstacle course but with my family behind me, supporting me, my friends, my coaches, I made it."

"I've been bad in this situation before in the World Championships in China. I was about to make the Olympics, but I struggled with my second shoot. I was in the same situation, and I was like 'What are you going to do? Are you going to learn from missing out in the Olympics or are you going to pick yourself up and shoot well?'

Silver medallist Moustafa Abouamer (EGY) said: "In the qualifiers, I just wanted to complete the Obstacle course because I never had a time officially so, I was like 'What can I do? What's the best I can do?'. It turns out I did a new world record so; it was like a weird flex, but it was quickly broken in two hours. In the Finals, I just focused on doing the same again and I broke it again."

"I saved up a bit in the third and fourth lap because my shooting isn't the best. I was saving up so I could finish. I knew that someone would be on my tail eventually so, I gave it all my best at the end."

Bronze medallist Roman Popov (UKR) said: "This was very difficult competition. We had a training camp before but still it was difficult to compete. I did well today in the Swimming and Fencing but, the best discipline I did today was the shooting, and this helped me to win a bronze medal. This is my first individual medal in a Junior World Championships so I'm very happy."

"I was just focused on the shooting, the sight and not seeing everyone around. Just focusing and concentration."

Women's bronze medallist **Farida Khalil (EGY)** said: "I'm very happy with my performance. I wish to have gotten the gold medal, but it was a fantastic effort. I'm happy with this medal and hopefully, I'll get the gold in the future."

"I was trying to focus on my own performance, and not think too much about my opponent. The pressure got to me a bit. I'm still happy with this medal."

"After this medal, I know I'm confident in the fact that I can get a gold medal in the U17 and U19 World Championships."

Women's Final

Fencing

In a week when three men's world records fell, the women were not going to be outdone. **Sazonova (AIN)** took piste prowess to a new level in the Fencing Ranking Round, racking up a whopping 30 Victories which reaped 275 points and immediately put her in front of the field setting a new Junior world record in the process.

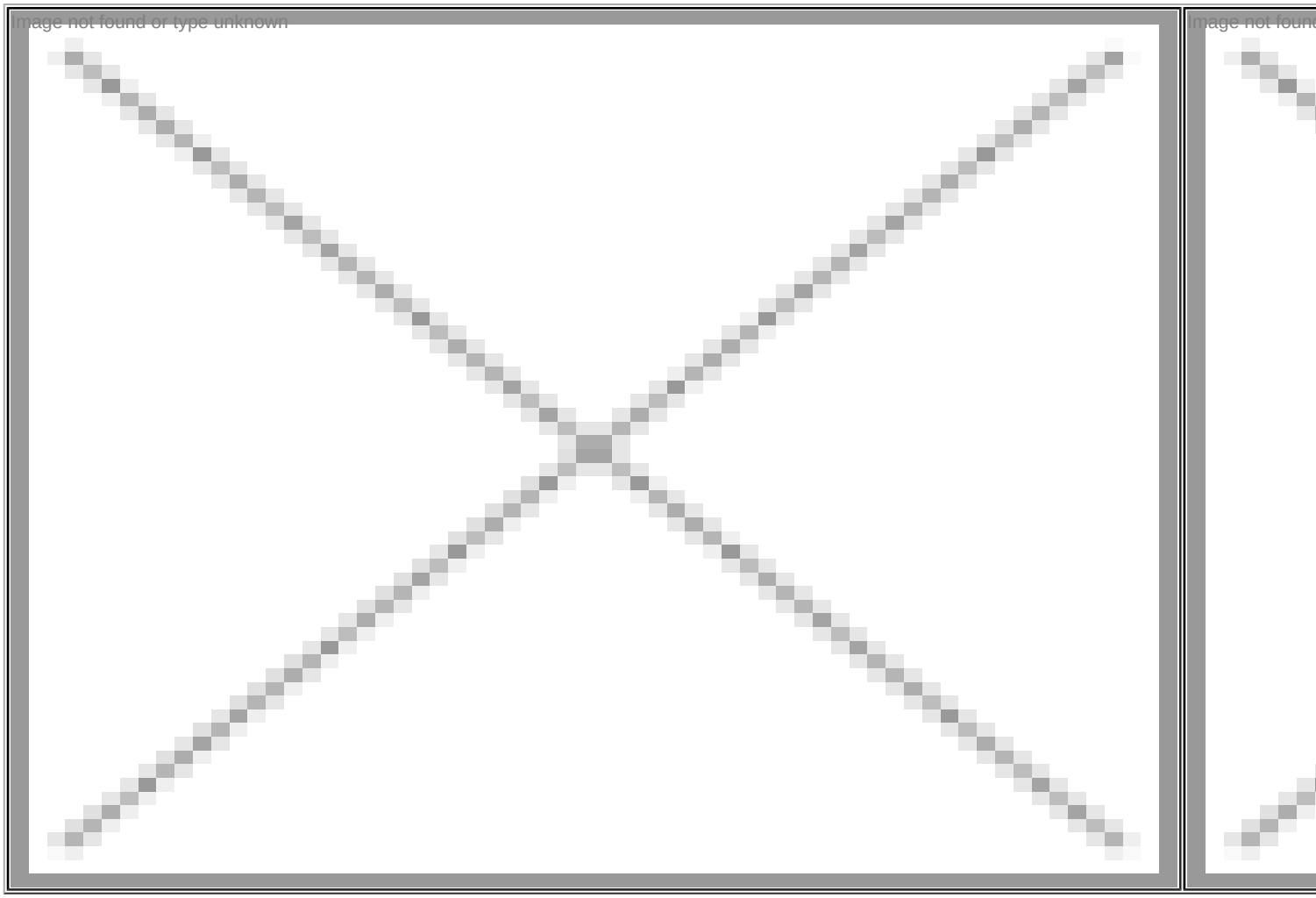
The only rival to come close was a fellow **AIN** athlete **Yana Soloveva** with 28 Victories while home

hopeful **Amira Kandil of Egypt** was third with 23 wins. As Saturday's action got underway with the Fencing Bonus Round, it was **Zeina Amer of Egypt** who made up the most ground picking up 10 extra points while **Coline Flavin of France** and **Jiayi Liu** of **China** both added four bonus victories. At the head of the field, **Sazonova (AIN)** added four more points to her already huge tally.

Obstacle

Having led all qualifiers with a blistering 00:34.80 on Wednesday, **Khalil (EGY)** somehow stepped up the pace again with medals on the line. Her time of 00:32:41 earned her 316 points and was fastest of all finalists by over four seconds. It also meant another new record in the books. Behind her **Malgorzata Karbownik of Poland** was in flying form too, traversing the challenging course in 00:36.92 with four others breaking the 40-second barrier.

Leader **Sazonova (AIN)** was among that cohort, clocking 00:37:61 which was third-fastest overall and cemented her commanding lead at the head of the field. The challenge of **Kandil (EGY)** came to an unfortunate end as she was one of three eliminated in the discipline.



Swimming

Skudnyakova (AIN) made her jump in the pool as she set a new personal best to lead all 36 competitors with a rapid time of 2:11:16. Behind her **Khalil (EGY)** was refusing to wilt and also touched the wall in a speedy 02:11:41. **Valentina Martinescu** of **Italy** turned in a stellar swim of 02:12:94 to jump up nine places and threaten the top 10.

But all eyes were still on **Sazonova (AIN)** who showed no nerves as she finished fifth-fastest in the pool in 02:16:83 ensuring she would head off with a huge lead in the Laser Run, gold and glory

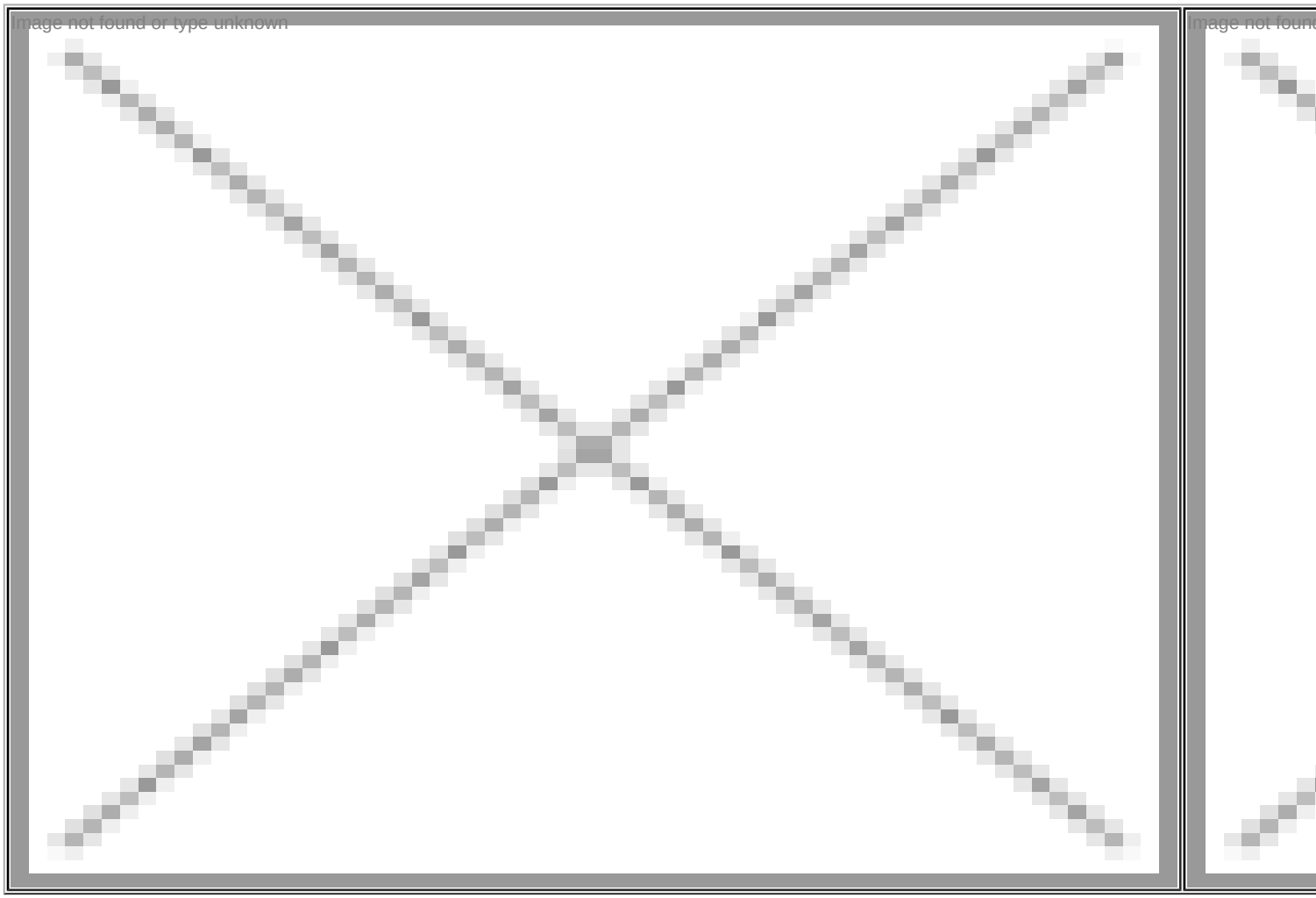
now very much in view.

Laser Run

With a 25-second lead on the entire field **Sazonova (AIN)** had the comfort of easing into her routine in the combined run-shoot with **Khalil (EGY)** the second athlete out, setting off to chase down the runaway leader. **Skudnyakova (AIN)** was a further 22 seconds back herself retaining a 15-second lead on those behind her.

But with plenty of pedigree such as **Louison Cazaly of France** and **Sumin Shin of Korea** back in seventh the battle for the extended podium would be fascinating. With such a commanding lead, it would take some serious struggles at the range for **Sazonova (AIN)** to lose the initiative, but she was mostly nerveless, shaking off a slightly slower first shoot to go sub 12-seconds on her second, **Khalil (EGY)** firing a rapid 9-second shoot to leave just the tiniest sliver of doubt. Behind them **Shin (KOR)** was proving her pedigree with some hard running, moving up a couple of places with **Cazaly (FRA)** also prominent.

Once **Sazonova (AIN)** made her final shoot it was a slow trot towards her coronation, a flapping bib proving no issue as she took gold. On the final visit to the range, the efforts of the week finally caught up with **Khalil (EGY)** as she turned in her slowest shoot, taking 23 seconds to find five green lights. With **Skudnyakova (AIN)** lighting it up in nine seconds, the silver swung her way with **Khalil (EGY)**, the youngest ever World Junior Championship podium finisher, settling for bronze.



Men’s Final

Fencing

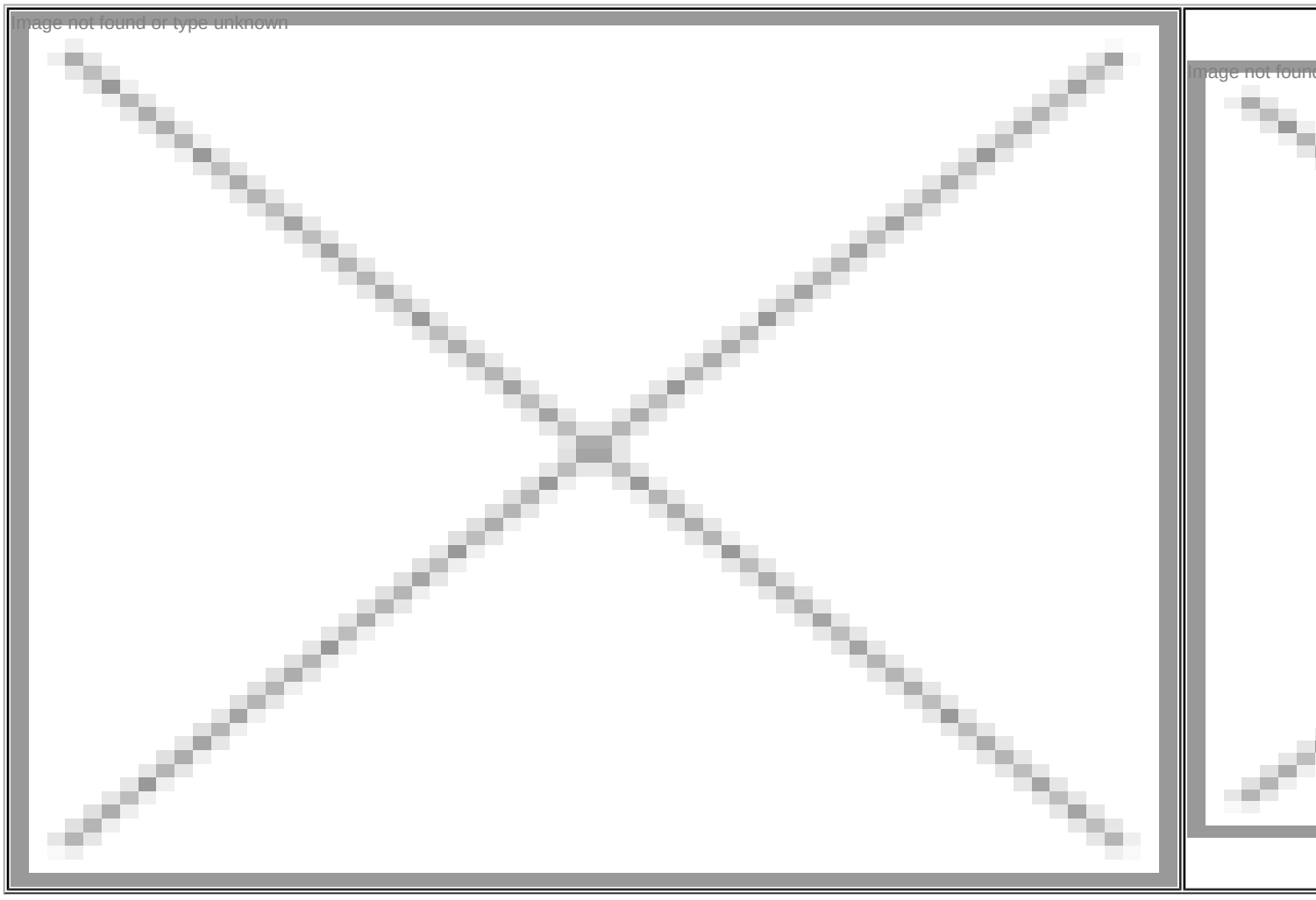
Fencing was one of the disciplines with no world records broken this week in the Men's but **Tim Leh of Germany** wasn't bothered. **Leh (GER)** collected 23 victories and 240 points along with four bonus points. He defeated **Moutaz Mohamed (EGY)** to dampen the home crowd's spirits in Alexandria. **Mohamed** picked up 21 victories and 230 points, plus six bonus points in the Fencing Bonus Round to get second place ahead of third placed **Moustafa Abouamer (EGY).**

Great Britain's James Hulme and Individual Neutral Athlete **Uladzislau Zhartun** shot up the Fencing leaderboard the most though, both collecting 12 bonus points. **Attila Marschall of Hungary** too put in a good shift, getting 10 bonus points.

Obstacle

Farida Khalil (EGY) broke the Women's Obstacle world record earlier on Saturday and two of her compatriots did the same in the Men's. **Kian O'Boyle's (USA)** newly set World Record from qualification this week was broken first by **Mazen Shaban (EGY)** with a time of 23.79 in front of an animated home crowd in Alexandria.

Shaban's record lasted only a matter of minutes however as his teammate **Moustafa Abouamer (EGY)** skipped the first spinning wheel and two handles to better it by over a second, setting the new Junior world record at 22.51. In a discipline that has only been in play for a year, the improving quality was on show as 16 athletes got a sub 30 second time including **France's Diego Lavillat** in third who got 25.27.



Swimming

Matteo Bovenzi (ITA) broke the Junior Swimming world record in the Men's Qualifications earlier this week but could not do the same in the Finals. The Italian's time was still far superior however than his fellow athletes on Saturday with a time of 1:50.45 shooting his way up the leaderboard to first.

Bovenzi's dominance in the pool was expected and it showed. **Moutaz Mohamed (EGY)** was closest in second, finishing in 1:58.86, nearly an eight second gap, with **Poland's Maciej Klimek** the only other athlete to swim below two minutes in 1:59.44.

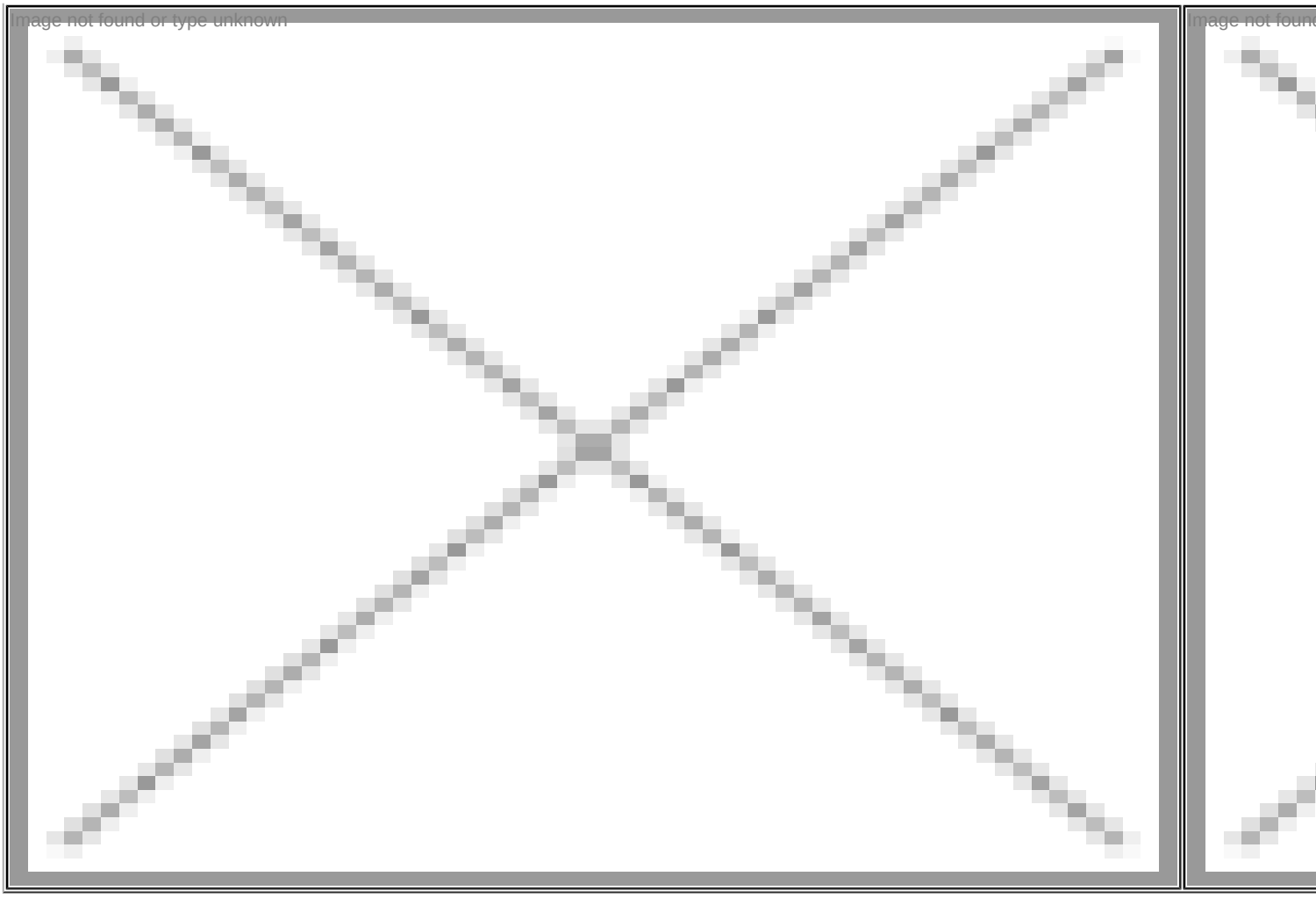
Laser-run

The Laser Run was always going to be a race decided by small margins. **Matteo Bovenzi's (ITA)** startling performance in Swimming put him in pole position but only by a second ahead of **Moustafa Abouamer (EGY)** who far exceeded the Italian in Fencing and Obstacle. The two other Egyptian athletes competing, **Moutaz Mohamed (EGY)** and former Obstacle world record holder **Mazen Shaban (EGY),** weren't too far behind either with **Abouamer (EGY)** only having a six second head start. With four Egyptians in the top five for Laser Run, medals for the host nation were always high in probability.

The deciding moment that determined the gold medallist happened early in the first lap. **Mohamed (EGY),** unable to qualify for the Paris 2024 Olympics after the World Championships, overtook **Bovenzi (ITA)** and **Abouamer (EGY)** and gradually pulled away from the pair, helped by completing his first shoot in six seconds. Despite being much slower in the second and third shoots, **Mohamed (EGY)** kept up his pace to finish first in 10:17.57 with 1544 points overall and win his maiden Men's individual Junior World Championship gold in front of the loud and proud Egyptian crowd.

The exciting action happened in the racing pack behind **Mohamed (EGY)** though. **Abouamer (EGY)** ran most of the race in second after being slower than his teammate in the first shoot but was nearly pipped to the silver by **Roman Popov (UKR).** The Ukrainian began the Laser Run 16 seconds behind **Abouamer** but made up ground drastically in the running department.

After powering past **Bovenzi (ITA)** in the third lap, **Popov (UKR)** went into the final shoot just seconds by **Abouamer (EGY)**. Fortunately for the Egyptian, he made his fifth successful laser hit just in time before **Popov (UKR)** and strode away to complete the **Egypt** one-two in 10:27.99 with 1530 points altogether. The wait for bronze winner **Popov's (UKR)** first individual gold medal at Junior level goes on.



UIPM reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “We saw two wonderful Finals today at the UIPM 2024 Pentathlon Junior World Championships here in Alexandria.

“For the second time this competition is taking place with Obstacle as a new discipline in place of Riding, and we saw records broken in Obstacle and in the overall Modern Pentathlon score.

“Despite the high temperatures, our junior athletes performed with so much energy. They are clearly enjoying racing the Obstacle course and this shows we are on the right track with the future of our sport on the way to Los Angeles 2028.

“Thank you to the Minister of Sport and Education and other supporters in the Egyptian government, as well as the National Olympic Committee and the National Federation and all of their wonderful volunteers.

“We always feel welcome here at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, and my thanks go to the Academy President, and everybody involved. Now we look forward to the Mixed Relay tomorrow and an exciting conclusion to this highly successful competition.”

Watch and follow

The UIPM 2024 Pentathlon Junior World Championships runs from June 25-30, concluding with

the Mixed Relay on Sunday June 30.

The Mixed Relay can be watched live on UIPM TV where annual subscriptions cost €14.99.

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.

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