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MODERN PENTATHLON AT PARIS 2024 OLYMPIC GAMES: ELGENDY (EGY), SATO (JPN) AND JUN (KOR) STAR IN MEN'S SEMI-FINALS



- Capacity crowds in ecstasy as Mourcia (FRA) and Prades (FRA) reach Final
- New Olympic records for Elgendi (EGY) and Vlach (CZE)
- Dramatic comebacks enable Bohm (HUN) and Choong (GBR) to progress

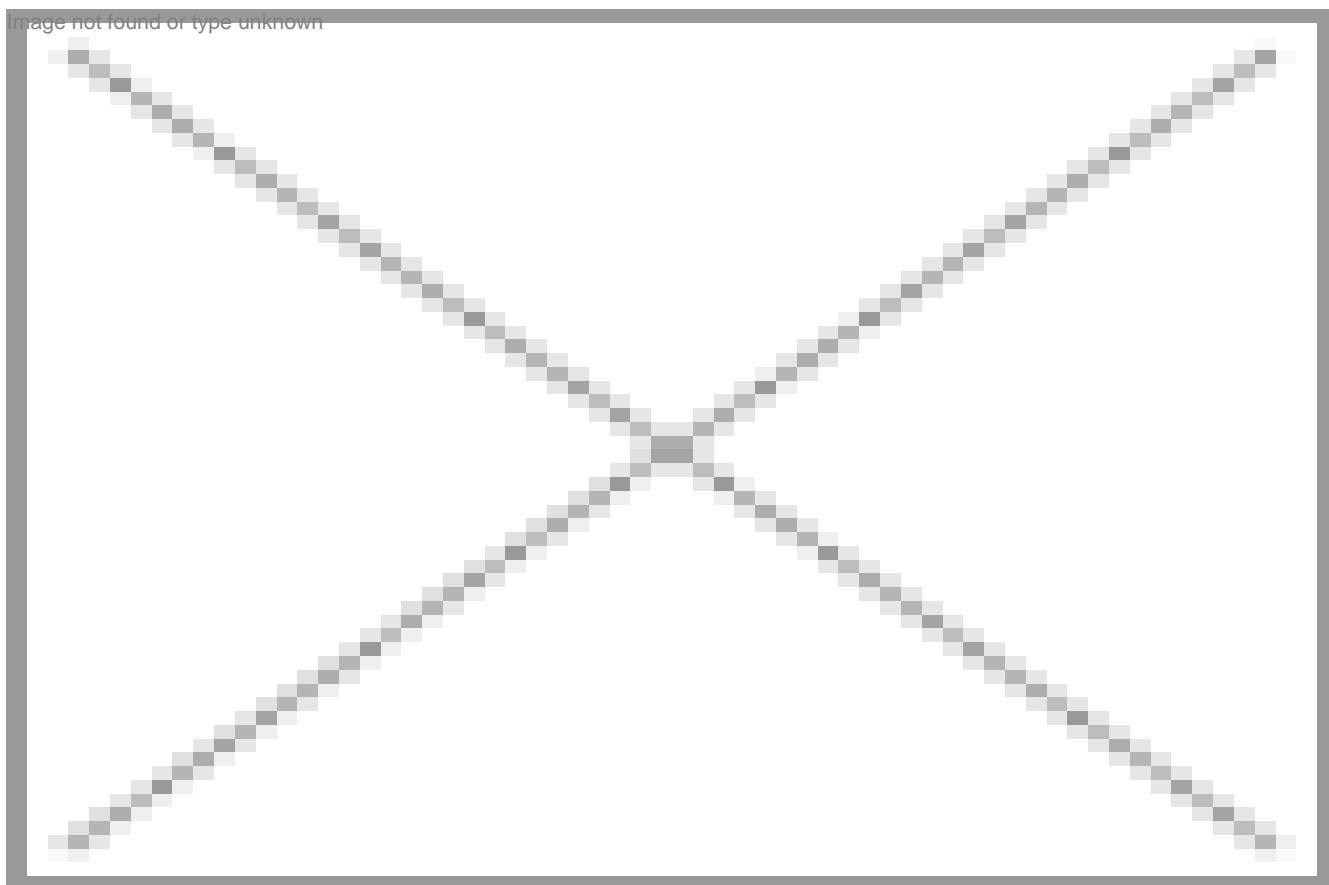
An exhilarating opening day of competition at the Palace of Versailles ended with 18 remarkable athletes reaching the Men's Final at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

In front of a near-capacity crowd in the 16,000-seat Pentathlon Stadium, **France** athletes **Jean-Baptiste Mourcia** and **Valentin Prades** created a thunderous stir in the tribunes when they both qualified successfully from Semi-final A, won by **Ahmed Elgendi** of **Egypt** ahead of **Alexandre Dallenbach** of **Switzerland** and **Emiliano Hernandez** of **Mexico**.

Elgendi (EGY) and **Martin Vlach** of **Czechia** set new Olympic records for Overall and Laser Run respectively.

At the end of Semi-final B, **Taishu Sato** of **Japan** invited Tokyo 2020 Olympic bronze medallist **Woongtae Jun** of **Korea** to join him in crossing the finish line, as the Asian duo qualified comfortably followed by 2023 European champion **Giorgio Malan** of **Italy**.

It was also a day of comebacks, as world No.1, world champion and world record-holder **Csaba Bohm** of **Hungary** and Tokyo 2020 Olympic champion **Joseph Choong** of **Great Britain** overcame the setback of low scoring in the Fencing Ranking Round to reach the highly-anticipated Men's Final on Saturday evening.

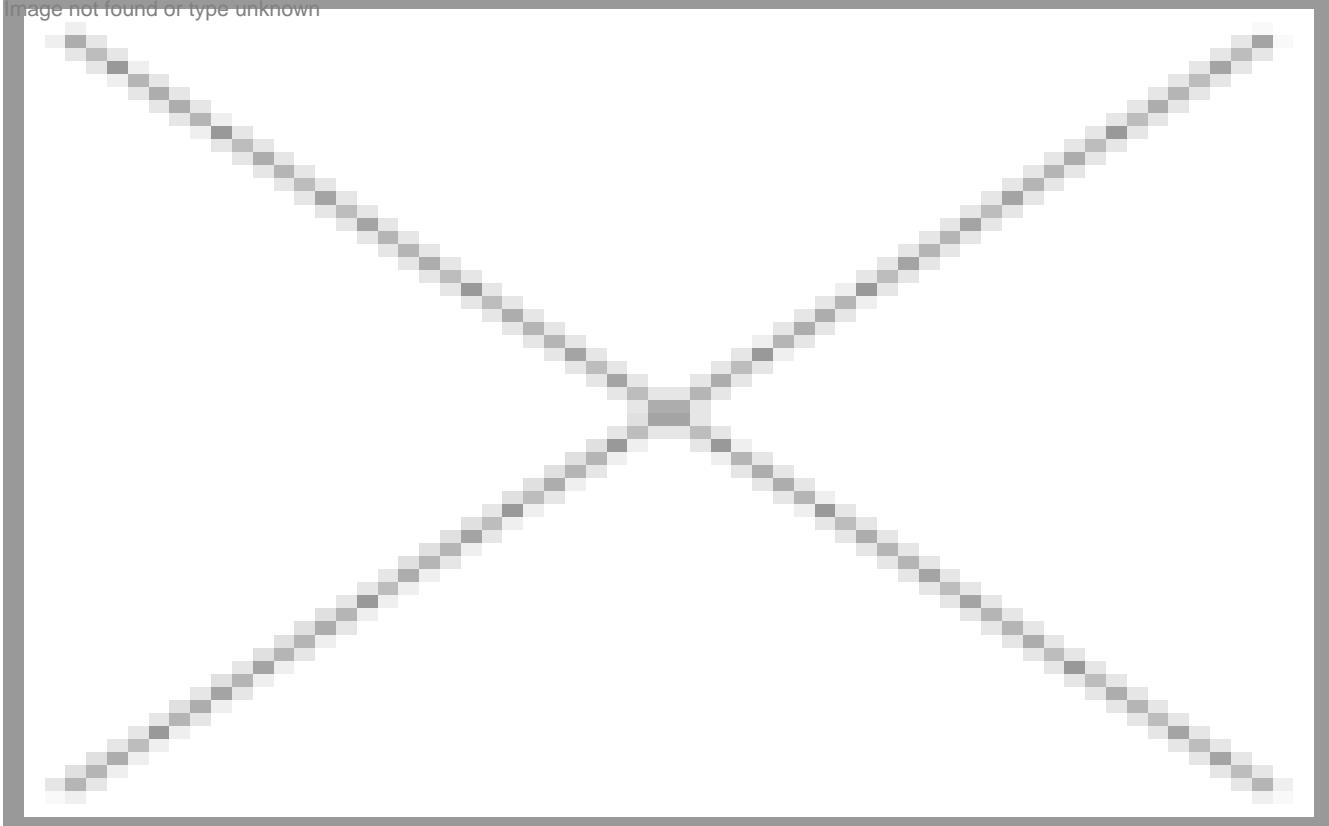


Semi-final A

Riding began with a perfect score of 300 for one Olympic debutant, **Georgiy Boroda-Dudochkin** of **Kazakhstan**, and a brave act of survival by **Phurit Yohuang**, who became the first-ever Olympic pentathlete from **Thailand**.

No athletes were eliminated in Riding and Elgendi (EGY) suffered the only refusal, leading to the loss of 33 points. Bohm (HUN) put himself back in contention after a disappointing Fencing Ranking Round and there were also 300 scores for Dallenbach (SUI), **Pavels Svecovs** of **Latvia**, **Fabian Liebig** (GER) and **Martin Vlach** of **Czechia**.

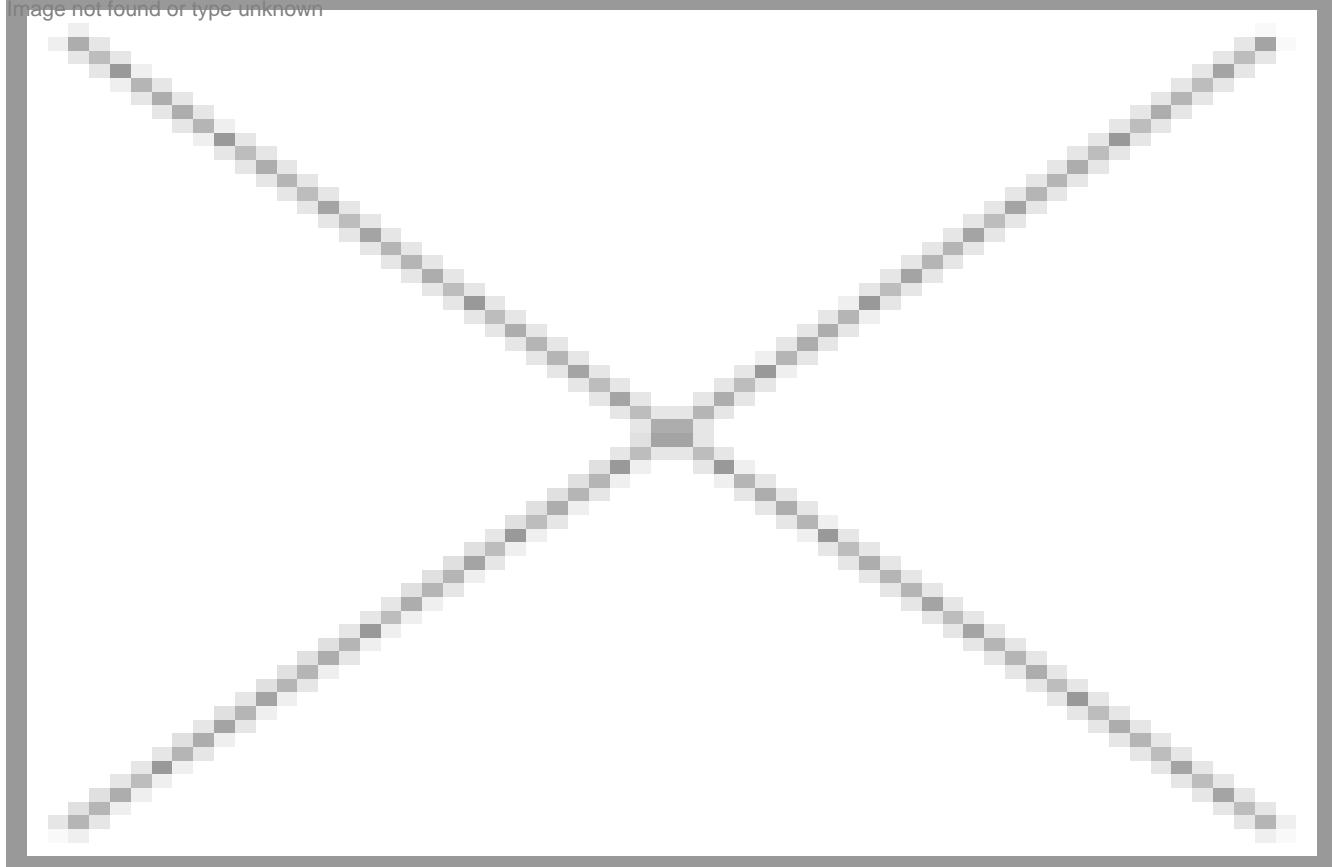
After yesterday's Fencing Ranking Round inside a packed North Paris Arena, the Bonus Round took place in a totally different environment in the grounds of the Palace of Versailles. And the atmosphere was even more charged with the venue almost full.



Bohm (HUN) was the first to achieve two wins, but then Mourcia (FRA) delighted the crowd by knocking the world No.1 off the piste. The stars of the Bonus Round were Hernandez (MEX) and Prades (FRA), each of whom claimed five scalps with the towering Frenchman going all the way to the last bout and defeating Elgendi (EGY) with another decisive lunge.

Swimming saw another burst of focused determination by world champion and world record-holder Bohm (HUN), who narrowly defeated Elgendi (EGY) in his heat in a time of 1min 59.76sec. Dallenbach (SUI) grabbed the top time of 1:58.28 and **Andres Torres** of **Ecuador** and **Matteo Cincinelli** (ITA) also broke 2min.

Svecovs (LAT) started Laser Run in pole position with Dallenbach (SUI) only 2secs behind. The chasing pack included Cincinelli (ITA), Prades (FRA) and Elgendi (EGY) with Bohm (HUN) now in 9th overall.



At the second shoot Mourcia (FRA) made a decisive move to push **Todor Mihalev** of **Bulgaria** out of the top nine, and that was the end of the drama as the leaders carefully protected their status.

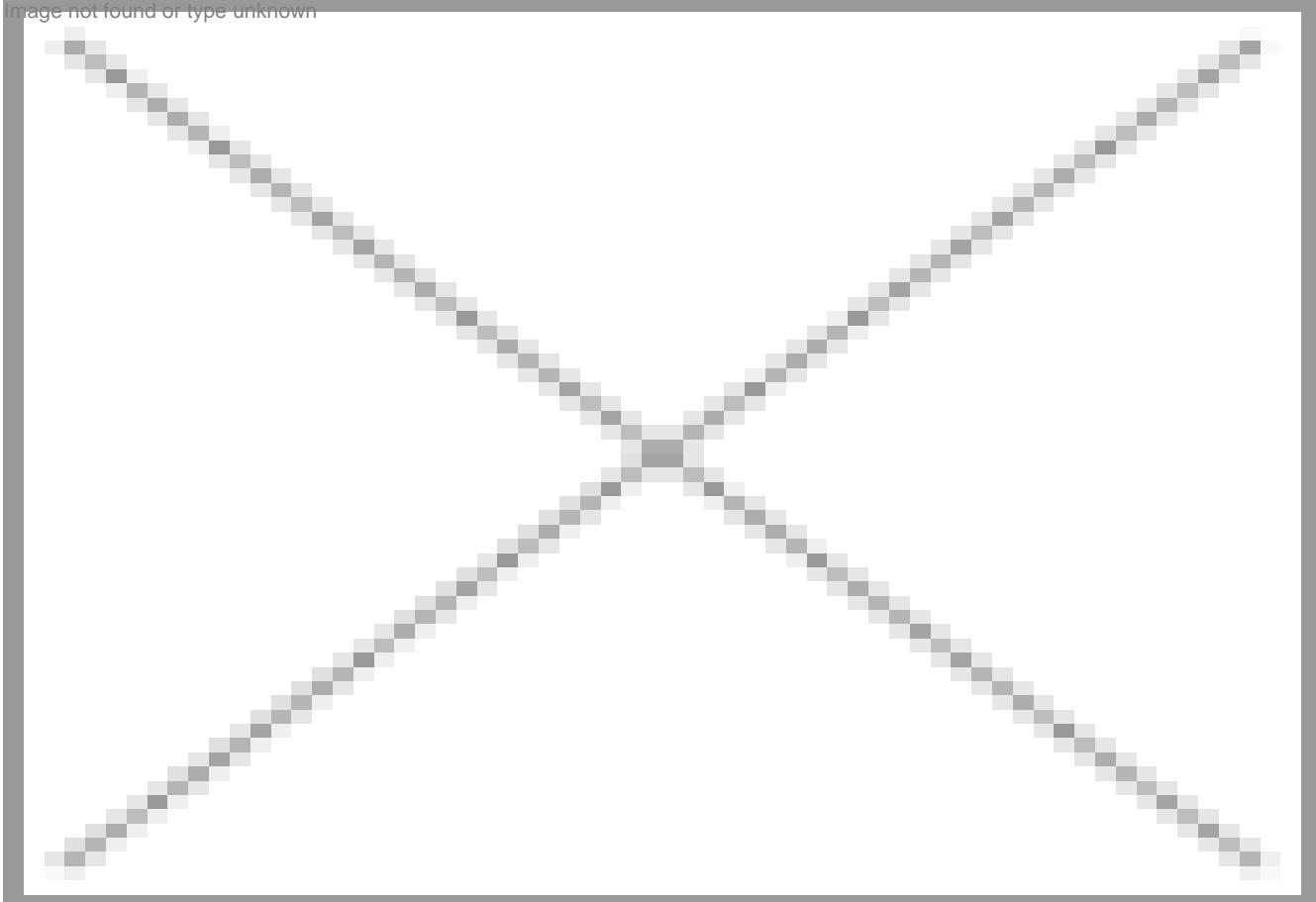
Vlach's new Olympic record time of 9:47.46 was only narrowly quicker than that of Mourcia (FRA), who timed 9:48.28, and **Shuai Luo** of **China** who also broke through the 10min barrier. A confident Elgendi (EGY) motored home to set a new bar for the Olympic record with a total of 1,516 points.

Semi-final B

Riding was less eventful in the second Semi-final, with most athletes incurring one or two knockdowns. There were perfect scores of 300 for five athletes – **Charles Brown** (GBR), Sato (JPN), **Changwan Seo** (KOR), **Lukasz Gutkowski** of **Poland**, **Vladyslav Chekan** of **Ukraine** and Seo (KOR).

Just when it seemed like there would be no eliminations on the first day of Riding, European champion **Oleksandr Tovkai** (UKR) suffered two refusals at fence three and, having done the hard work in reassuring his horse, had one final refusal that brought his Olympic challenge to an end.

Having seemed despondent after a disappointing Fencing Ranking Round yesterday, Tokyo 2020 Olympic champion Choong (GBR) made the most of the Bonus Round by chalking up four victories to add points to his overall score.



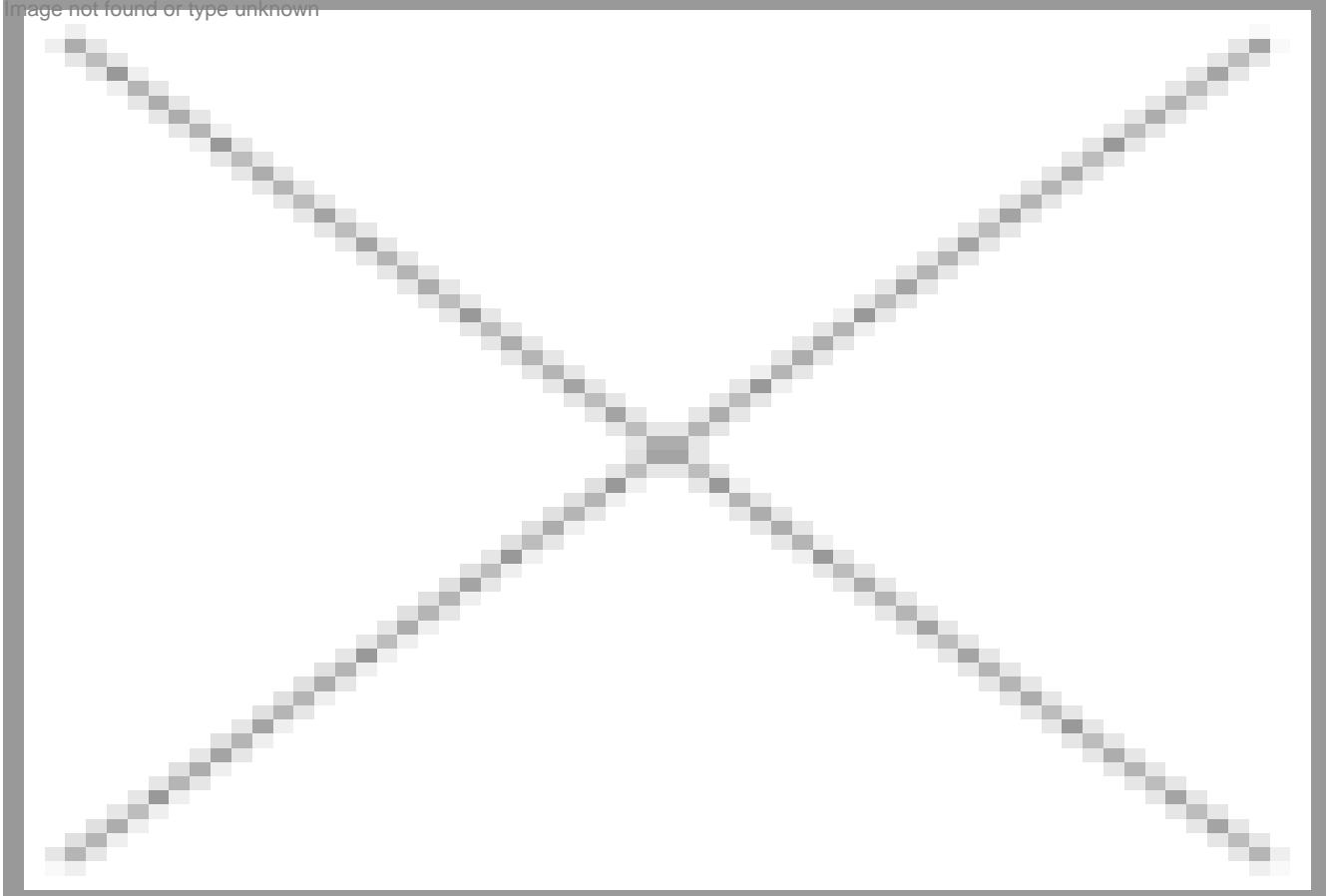
The other big mover was **Marvin Dogue** of **Germany**, who also scored four wins. Tovkai (UKR) defeated Jun (KOR) in the final bout to add four points to his total.

Choong (GBR) continued to perform well by winning his Swimming heat in the best time of the Semi-final, 1:58.71. **Andres Fernandez** of **Guatemala**, Malan (ITA) and Jun (KOR) also broke the 2min barrier.

It meant that team-mates Jun (KOR) and Seo (KOR) started Laser Run jointly in the lead, with Sato (JPN) just 1sec behind. There was a high calibre of athlete throughout the top nine, but Choong (GBR) and **Shuhuan Li** (CHN) were only 2sec behind 9th-placed Chekan (UKR).

On the first two laps of an intriguing Laser Run, Choong (GBR) made no major gains but a lightning second shoot enabled him to move from 11th to 8th and push Chekan (UKR) into the elimination zone.

At the third shoot it was Shaban (EGY) who fell back to 10th as Li (CHN) moved up, but Shaban (EGY) didn't make any further mistakes and grabbed 9th place back before holding off a brave final lap from Brown (GBR).



Athlete reaction

More than 20 interviews from athletes who competed today can be read in the [News section](#) of the UIPM website.

President's reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "After a successful Fencing Ranking Round yesterday with a big audience and an excellent, excellent atmosphere which created really exciting moments for our Olympic athletes, it continued this morning when we had a full stadium with so much support for athletes of all nationalities.

"For sure the French had more support than others, but there was such a wonderful atmosphere and it is a great challenge for the athletes to compete in such conditions. Here in Versailles we are creating a special new part of our heritage, 130 years since Pierre de Coubertin created the modern Olympic movement and 100 years after the last Olympic Games in Paris.

"I am so excited at how the athletes have accepted the changes in our format, and we must highlight the super, super horses provided here in Paris. I thank all the people in the organising committee who have been involved in selecting horses that are fitting to our sport and for preparing and training the horses.

"This is a wonderful moment for our sport and we know that millions of people will be watching around the world via the media and learning about our sport in its traditional format with the horses. I must say that the world will see an even better presentation for our sport in the future with our new Obstacle discipline taking us to a new level of accessibility and appeal for younger generations.

"In today's Semi-finals we saw wonderful determination from our athletes, especially those who were not in the top nine initially and had to fight very hard to reach the Final. Tomorrow is going to be another unforgettable day with the Women's Semi-finals followed by the Men's Final."

The 18 athletes who qualified for the Men's Final are:

Rank	Name	Nation	Points
1	ELGENDY Ahmed	EGY	1516
2	SATO Taishu	JPN	1515
3	JUN Woongtae	KOR	1515
4	MALAN Giorgio	ITA	1511
5	DALLENBACH Alexandre	SUI	1510
6	HERNANDEZ Emiliano	MEX	1509
7	CICINELLI Matteo	ITA	1508
8	SVECOVS Pavels	LAT	1506
9	GUTKOWSKI Lukasz	POL	1505
10	LIEBIG Fabian	GER	1504
11	MOURCIA Jean-Baptiste	FRA	1504
12	SEO Changwan	KOR	1503
13	DOGUE Marvin Faly	GER	1503
14	BOHM Csaba	HUN	1501
15	PRADES Valentin	FRA	1500
16	SZEP Balazs	HUN	1499
17	CHOONG Joseph	GBR	1497
18	SHABAN Mohanad	EGY	1497