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ROBERT KASZA AND SAROLTA KOVACS DELIGHT HOME CROWD WITH BUDAPEST INDOOR TITLES

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The first international meeting of the year saw several of the world's top pentathletes converge on the Hungarian capital to take part in the annual Budapest Indoors, and the action did not disappoint. It was great test for the competitors to find out where they were both physically and mentally as the start of the 2014 season. With 60 men and 60 women from 14 different nations all hungry for success and eager to make their mark early on, it was a thrilling couple of days which saw the hosts emerge victorious in both draws.

As tradition, the women took to the fencing pistes first with the men heading to the 8 lane 50m pool before switching. It was a fencing ultra-marathon with a total 3540 one-touch bouts across both genders taking place on 10 pistes over the course of 5 hours. A test of both skill, endurance and mental toughness for all participants. Victory in the women's fence went two Belarusians with **Tatsiana Yelizarova** and 21-year-old **Katsiaryna Arol**, the reigning Junior European Champion and one the deadliest athletes around with the epee, each battling to 45 victories and claiming 266 points. The new 2014 scoring system was implemented for this competition. **Melanie McCann** of Canada was third. The quickest swimmer in the men's event was Italy's **Fabio Poddighe** after he clocked a time of 2:02.48 in the pool as the Hungarian pair of **Robert Kasza** and **Adam Marosi** came second and third respectively. After that, **Raman Pinchuk's** 46 victories on the pistes saw

him win the fencing event as Kasza moved up to top the charts before the ride. Having looked in stunning form with his epee with 43 victories, Kasza was oozing confidence and looked pumped in front of his home crowd. Marosi, who had won the Hungarian National epee fencing championships in late 2013, was surprisingly below-par and came 22nd in the fence. The two fastest women in the water were Great Britain's 2012 Olympic silver medallist **Samantha Murray** and her compatriot **Alice Fitton**, with the former setting a time of 2:11.52 and moving up to first place after two disciplines. Third place in the pool went to Hungary's **Sarolta Kovacs**. The riding, which took place indoors, at one of the oldest clubs in Hungary, had a time limit of 1m05s and had 10 obstacles with one double and no triple. Emerging victorious from the equestrian event in the women's draw was Youth A World Champion **Ieva Serapinaite** from Lithuania with the 18-year-old looking assured around the course and making no mistake. 10 other riders had perfect scores with the organisers providing top quality horses. With just the combined to go, it was European Champion **Zsafia Foldhazi** who went into the lead and the Hungarian star would start the run/shoot event 1 second ahead of Ieva Serapinaite with Arol in third and McCann in fourth. With **Kasza** and **Pinchuk** both flawless in the men's riding, they would begin the final event three seconds apart with the Hungarian first of the two. Kasza made no mistake with his pistol, calm and confident, he was steady at the range and comfortably went on to win the title, setting the third fastest time around the course in the process. This bodes well for his season after a shoulder injury derailed his campaign last time around. Pinchuk had enough about him to defend his second place as he took silver whilst World No. 1 **Justinas Kinderis** from Lithuania made his way up from 7th on the starting grid to record an impressive time of 10:48.62 and claim the final podium place. Marosi was fourth overall with Poddighe coming fifth. A blistering time in the women's final event saw Hungary's **Sarolta Kovacs** leapfrog the front of the pack, after both Foldhazi and Serapinaite struggled in the first round of shooting at the range, and she held on to her lead on her way to recording the third fastest time overall and clinching top spot just ahead of Spain **Marta Garcia-Miguel** in second and Great Britain's **Kate French** in third. Arol ended her campaign in fourth and Foldhazi fifth. Away from the main action, Masters Pentathlete **Bob Noble** from Canada participated in his first UIPM competition one month shy of his 56th birthday whilst athlete numbers at the hotel were boosted by the presence of the Canadian Winter Olympic team with the speed skaters and ice hockey players getting in a few last practises before departing for the 2014 Sochi Games. The pentathletes will now be solely focused on preparations for the first event of the World Cup Series which begins in Acapuloc, Mexico, on 26 February.