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UIPM WORLD CUP SERIES OPENER BEGINS IN ACAPULCO

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The resort of Acapulco on the Pacific coast of Mexico will from today be playing host to some of the world's best pentathletes in the much anticipated 2014 World Cup Series opener. With the first technical meeting and opening ceremony having taken place, the teams are now raring to go with the competition set to last from 26 February to 2 March at the Unidad Deportivo Acapulco. The action will get underway with the women's qualification on Wednesday and will come to a close with the Mixed Relay on Sunday.

With women's World No.1 and reigning World Champion Laura Asadauskaite of Lithuania not travelling to the competition, the onus will be on Ukraine's **Viktoria Tereshuk**, who won this event last year, to claim victory. She will have to contend though with a really strong line-up that includes some of the most prodigious talent on the planet. Her compatriot **Ganna Buriak**, who won two World Cup events last season, has really come of age and will pose a real threat.

London 2012 Bronze medallist **Yane Marques** of Brazil and USA's **Margaux Isaksen** both finished last season strongly with podium finishes at Champion of Champions and are two that will

gunning for glory versus the Ukrainian duo. Russian pair **Ekaterina Khurashkina** and **Donata Rimsaite** will be keen to show they mean business and **Zsafia Foldhazi** of Hungary has proved that she has the weapons in her arsenal to trouble the established order. It is guaranteed to be tight.

There are some fascinating stories further down in the draw with Israel's **Noah Berkman** making only her second ever appearance on the international circuit. The 24-year-old, who trains with 5 different coaches at five different clubs, one for each discipline, told us, "I am just happy to be here. It will be a great test for myself in only my second competition at the top level. I am looking forward to the season. We'll just see what happens".

In the men's draw, with the qualification stages taking place on Thursday 27 and the Final two days later, it is almost impossible to predict who will come out on top with so much talent on display. The Russians have brought the big guns in **Aleksander Lesun** and **Ilia Frolov** whilst Hungary will be represented by the electric **Adam Marosi** and **Peter Tibolya**.

There will be the intriguing battle between the top two ranked athletes, World Champion **Justinas Kinderis** of Lithuania and France's **Valentin Prades** to look out for with Great Britain having high hopes for **Jamie Cooke** and one of last season's big revelations **Joe Evans**. France of course also have Champion of Champions winner **Christopher Patte** and **Valentin Belaud** both looking to start their season with a bang. The quality on show will make for a tremendous competition.

Prades was relaxed on arrival, declaring, "It is great to start the season in Mexico. It's a great setting and although the hot and humid conditions can sometimes be difficult, I am feeling strong and cannot wait to start competing".

An impressive opening ceremony was attended by the Ambassador of Egypt Yasser Shaban, who will be cheering on representatives of his country during competition. Also enjoying the celebration was the Secretary General of the Mexican Olympic Committee Pedro Cuervo and Dr Lalu Corolian Traian, representing the Ministry of Sport, as well as several members of the Acapulco Municipality.

UIPM President Dr h. c. Klaus Schormann stated, "We are delighted that the World Cup #1 is happening in Acapulco. It will be wonderful opportunity to showcase our sport in a region that has really embraced our movement. Mexico has been a great driver in terms of development and it has introduced the sport to a whole new generation of young people. Being in Acapulco is a recognition of the tremendous work done by the Mexican Modern Pentathlon Federation in recent years."

You can stay up to date with all the news and views on the UIPM website www.pentathlon.org.

Competition schedule:

- Wednesday 26 February – Women's qualification
- Thursday 27 February – Men's qualification
- Friday 28 February – Women's Final
- Saturday 1 March – Men's Final
- Sunday 2 March – Mixed Relay

A World Cup Series for both men and women has been organised since 1990. Each year between 4 and 6 World Cup competitions are organised. At the end of these competitions there is a World Cup Final in which the best 36 male and female athletes participate. The athletes qualify for the Final via a league table (World Cup Standings) constructed from their three best World Cup

Competitions. Throughout the series prize money is available.

In 2014 there are 4 World Cup competitions followed by the World Cup Final:

- World Cup #1: Acapulco, Mexico - 26 February - 2 March 2014
- World Cup #2: Cairo, Egypt - 02-06 April 2014
- World Cup #3: Chengdu, China - 16-20 April 2014
- World Cup #4: Kecskemet, Hungary - 8-12 May 2014
- World Cup Final: Sarasota-Bradenton, USA - 06-08 June 2014