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WORLD CUP #2 CAIRO: WOMEN'S COMPETITION UNDERWAY

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As the Modern Pentathlon World Cup Series returns to African soil this week, with Egypt hosting the second leg of the competition from 2-6 April in Cairo, we give you the lowdown on which women to look out for during the competition. Some star-studded names and some fledgling talent have arrived in the Egyptian capital to fight for early season honours in what will surely be a top-class event.

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The Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Federation has worked extremely hard to put this event together and many of the top athletes have replied present with the sport guaranteed to take centre stage when the action gets underway at the Police Academy today.

All eyes will be on the Olympic Champion and World No.1 **Laura Asadauskaite** who makes her first appearance since winning the World title in Chinese Taipei last summer in this women's draw,

which begins with the qualification stages today and culminates with the Final on Friday. Known as being slow starter, the experienced Lithuanian faces stiff competition from a quality field of athletes. There are many pretenders to her crown.

Leading the charges will be Russia, who have travelled with their strongest squad, which includes **Donata Rimsaite**, **Ekaterina Khuraskina** and **Gulnaz Gubaydullina**, so you can expect at least one or more of these three to be collecting prize money come the end of the competition.

London 2012 bronze medallist **Yane Marques** of Brazil had a fine end of season last year as she took silver at the Worlds and a deserved second place at Champion of Champions in Doha. The experienced 30-year-old has looked extremely strong as well as focused and she will be keen to get one over Asadauskaite in Cairo.

American star **Margaux Isaksen** has all the tools in her arsenal to be dominant, strong in all disciplines, lapses in concentration can hinder her but when she is on it she is simply irresistible.

The Ukrainians will be counting once again on the poise and power of their awesome foursome **Viktoria Tereshuk**, **Ganna Buriak**, **Iryna Khokhlova** and the fledgling **Anastasia Spas** to come up with the goods. Tereshuk and Buriak both took two World Cup Series titles last season and having been really consistent elsewhere, will be keen to add to that tally in 2014.

Elodie Clouvel is the sole French representative amongst the women and is almost a shoe-in to dominate the swimming events with the British team not having travelled to Cairo. If she qualifies for the Final and does well in the riding event, she has a good shout of claiming honours.

China have come to Egypt in force and the pack will have to be wary of the threat posed by the talented **Wei Wang**. The 21-year-old came third at World Cup #3 and second at the Asian Championships last year. **Xiaonan Zhang** broke the fencing World record in Palm Springs and the former boxer is a fierce competitor so also has to be watched.

With victory at the Acapulco Open last month and coming off the back of a her podium at Champion of Champions in November, Poland's **Oktawia Nowacka** has been hugely impressive in the last six month so 2008 Beijing Olympic Champion **Lena Schoneborn** is coming back into form and leads a solid a German team that can also rely on fit-again **Janine Kohlmann**. Italy's **Gloria Tocchi** has proved time and time again that she can mix it with the best and her compatriot **Claudia Cesarini** is calmness personified so these four cannot be discounted either. Mexico's **Tamara Vega** has added maturity to her game and looks ready to break into the top 10 this year.

There will be 2 qualification groups tomorrow with Group 'A' starting proceedings with the fencing at 8.30 and Group 'B' starting with the swim at 10.00 before swapping venues to bring the day to a close with the combined run/shoot event at 16.00. 36 will then have booked their places for the Friday's Final.

You can follow all the live results on www.pentathlon.org

Full schedule:

- Wednesday 2 April – Women's Qualification
- Thursday 3 April – Men's Qualification
- Friday 4 April – Women's Final
- Saturday 5 April – Men's Final
- Sunday 6 April – Mixed Relay