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YOG 2014 - PORTUGAL/UKRAINE MIXED-RELAY TEAM WINS THE GOLD IN THE LAST DAY



After a compelling day that added to the reputation of Modern Pentathlon's Mixed Relay as one of the most exciting new spectacles in Olympic sport, a partnership between Portugal and Ukraine claimed the final MP gold medal of an exceptional Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing, China.

Sharing the limelight on top of the podium were champions MARIA MIGUEIS TEIXEIRA (POR) & ANTON KUZNETSOV (UKR), who held off a persistent challenge from ANNA ZS. TOTH (Hungary) & RICARDO YAMIL VERA REYES (Mexico), the silver medalists, and from the bronze medalists AURORA TOGNETTI (Italy) & PARK GI-LUNG (Korea).

Teixeira & Kuznetsov had been consistent in Fencing, exceptional in Swimming and then highly composed in the Combined Event, which they entered in fourth place with a 17-second handicap against the leaders. Their victory came at the end of a day of tremendous competition that underlined the strength in depth that exists globally in elite Modern Pentathlon.

The Girls' Individual champion, ZHONG XIUTING (China), lined up with WILHELM PICON of

(Guatemala) while Boys' Individual gold medallist ALEKSANDR LIFANOV (Russia) teamed up with JOLANA HOJSAKOVA (Czech Republic).

And as the Fencing ranking round progressed at Nanjing's International Expo Centre, it became clear that Lifanov (RUS) was a contender for his second gold medal of the Games. It was a very close round-robin with few partnerships able to dominate, and Lifanov and Hojsakova finished in top spot with 34 victories and 12 defeats.

On to the Nanjing OSC Natatorium and HENRY CHOONG (Great Britain) once again proved his Swimming prowess. Racing 100 meters apiece, Choong and partner LAURE ROSET (France) were each the fastest in their field and accrued the most points with their overall time of 1:55.12.

There was only one other duo who broke the two-minute mark, and it was Teixeira (POR) and Kuznetsov (UKR) - 1:58.45.

Back in the Expo Centre for the final round of Fencing, yet again Lifanov (RUS) and Hojsakova (CZE) were the stand-out pair and their performance allowed them to go into the Combined Event in 1st place.

So, as 48 of the world's best young Modern Pentathletes gathered at the start line at the NJ OSC Modern Pentathlon Venue, Lifanov (RUS) and Hojsakova (CZE) were first to begin but with Toth & Reyes (HUN/MEX) only 7 seconds behind and another two couples 17 seconds behind - Teixeira & Kuznetsov (POR/UKR) and IRYNA PRASIANTOVA (Belarus) & ARTEM DROBOTOV (Kazakhstan).

As the tension took hold, only two of those four partnerships would end up standing on the podium.

Hojsakova & Lifanov (CZE/RUS) ended up 6th, while Prasantova & Drobotov (BLR/KAZ) were 8th in the final reckoning.

Toth & Reyes (HUN/MEX) maintained an excellent standard to claim the silver medal, while Tonetti & Park (ITA/KOR) came from behind to clinch bronze. But nobody was going to deny Teixeira & Kuznetsov (POR/UKR) the top prize as they moved past the leaders with nerveless conviction.

After receiving their medals, the winning pair attended the official Media Conference where they thanked their coaches and parents, adding:

"We are very happy about this result, it is fantastic. Achieving the gold medal is like a dream coming true."

At the end of four compelling days of competition in Nanjing, Dr Klaus Schormann, President of the Union International de Pentathlon Moderne, commented: "The mixed relay is a very important competition for UIPM and this was a perfect example. The event proved this point with an excellent environment, with high sportsmanship and top-level enthusiasm all round.

"I thank everyone involved – organizers, officials, volunteers and above all athletes and their high levels of performance – you are the new ambassadors of Modern Pentathlon."