

21 MAR 2015

UIPM 2015 WORLD CUP #2 - LAURA ASADAUSKAITE WINS THE GOLD

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CAIRO, 21 MARCH 2015 - Laura Asadauskaite (Lithuania) came from behind to earn a spectacular victory in the second leg of the 2015 UIPM World Cup series in Cairo, Egypt today.

As the reigning Olympic champion, Asadauskaite can never be dismissed as a threat and she proved her class by overcoming a 31-second handicap to win the Combined Event and consign Margaux Isaksen (USA) to her second consecutive World Cup silver medal.

Freyja Prentice (Great Britain) continued her country's prolific start to the 2015 series by snatching a bronze.

Isaksen had grasped the lead in the opening event - the Fencing Round Robin - and held on to it throughout the day, but in the end her Running and Shooting was not quite at the same high standard as her Fencing, Swimming and Riding and the London 2012 gold medallist fought back to secure a narrow victory.

Asadauskaite (LTU) had entered the Combined Event in 4th place, level with Alise Fakhrutdinova (Russia) 31 seconds behind the leader.

Isaksen held a 24-second advantage over her nearest contender, Marie Oteiza (France), who in turn set off six seconds before the woman in 3rd position, Oktawia Nowacka (Poland).
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However, the potential for drama of Modern Pentathlon at the highest level is such that nothing can be taken for granted in the Combined Event and the crowd in Cairo was increasingly thrilled as the top trio came under pressure.

Soon the podium looked very different as Oteiza (FRA) struggled at the first shooting range, and then Fakhrutdinova (RUS) began to fall out of contention. Meanwhile Prentice (GBR) was making up ground from her starting position of 7th.

At the second shooting range, Asadauskaite (LTU), Nowacka (POL) and Prentice (GBR) finished their five shots in close proximity and Prentice overtake Nowacka to move into bronze medal position.

The drama was not complete, however . . . the final shooting range contained one final twist as Asadauskaite (LTU) summoned all of her experience and composure to overtake the leader. Isaksen (USA) did not allow the setback to deny her the consolation of silver, and Prentice finished well to cross the line third.

Great Britain have now won three of the six Women's Individual medals in the 2015 series, after Samantha Murray won gold and Kate French bronze in Sarasota, USA.

Isaksen (USA) was also a prominent performer in the first leg of the series and she is now in a very strong position in the World Cup Finals qualifying stakes after two silver medals. She can also look ahead to the rest of the season knowing she has only been beaten by the reigning champions of the Olympic Games and UIPM World Championships.

"This was a very good day, a very good c

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and I am very happy. It was a very good fight between all athletes, especially at the last shooting." said Laura Asadauskaite (LTU) after receiving her gold medal.

Isaksen (USA) was fighting back tears as she reflected on finishing second again. She said: "Laura is a really incredible athlete, obviously - she won the Olympics. So I knew she was closing in, and at the last shot my nerves just got the better of me. I really freaked out.

"The season has started well for me. It's a good gauge of where I am, physically and mentally. I feel the same way as I did after Sarasota: I have a lot of work to do, and most of it is at the shooting range."

Isaksen had set the tone for a strong day on the Fencing piste, where she enjoyed 25 of her 34 bouts. There was one name missing from the Round Robin as Claudia Cesarini (Italy) was forced to withdraw due to injury.

In the pool, the fastest time was posted by Elodie Clouvel (France), who swam 2:08.99 and moved up to third place overall behind Isaksen (USA) and her compatriot Oteiza (FRA).

The Fencing Bonus Round saw Isaksen (USA) remain in pole position, but Fakhrutdinova (RUS) and Asadauskaite (LTU) each won five bouts to improve their overall position.

Eight riders claimed a maximum of 300 points on horseback, including Isaksen (USA), Oteiza (FRA), Nowacka (POL) and Asadauskaite (LTU).

The stage was thus set for a dramatic Combined Event, which ultimately came down to a test of psychological strength as much as physical fitness. Twenty-four hours earlier, two world records had been set in shooting during qualifying for the Men's Final and it was her composure with the Laser Gun that finally propelled Laura Asadauskaite to the top of the podium.

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Dr. Klaus Schormann, President of UIPM, was full of

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praise for the event organisers at the post-ceremony press conference.

Dr Schormann commented: "The World Cup in Egypt is always a special highlight in our movement. A World Cup in the continent of Africa has a political meaning and Cairo has for a long time been a strong pillar in our movement.

"There is always good organisation and logistics here, and today we saw great competition between great athletes. We had Asadauskaite and Isaksen one and two in the run-shoot, so we have all the assets here and we must say a big congratulations to Sharif Al-Erian, President of the Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Federation, and his organising team.

"I am looking forward to the Men's Individual Final tomorrow, but already we can say we have made the right decision to have the World Cup here in Egypt.

"In sport there is again a clear message for peace in the world, especially in this region where we have not so much peace around us."

The Men's Individual final follows on Sunday (March 22) before the Mix-Relay closes the programme on Monday (March 23).

Follow all the action of the this event at www.pentathlon.org, with on the hour updates through Facebook at www.facebook.com/modpen and Twitter at https://twitter.com/UIPM_HQ