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UIPM 2015 WORLD CUP #2 - MEXICO TAKES THE GOLD IN THE MIXED-RELAY

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CAIRO, 23 MARCH 2015 -ISMAEL Hernandez-Uscanga and Tamara Vega provided the thrills on the final day of the second leg of the UIPM 2015 World Cup Series in Cairo as they took gold in the Mixed Relay for Mexico.

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The Mexican duo started and finished the day at the top of the leaderboard after another serving of live Modern Pentathlon action which again provided a superb Combined Event to round off three days of top class competition.

The narrowest margin of just five seconds separated the top three of Mexico, Ireland and Hungary - who finished on the podium in that order - going in to the final event which gave the Cairo crowd plenty to cheer about as the pentathletes battled it out in the decisive rounds of shooting and running.

It was Mexico who came out on top much to the delight of their athletes.

Hernandez Uscanga said : "I feel really excited and really happy for myself and my team mate because we had a great competition although there are still things we need to work on to make it

an even better competition. We will try to repeat this result in this year's world championships."

His teammate Tamara Vega added: "I am really happy because now we are seeing all these years of hard work we have put in come to fruition. This is the result I expected and I hope we can keep these results up this year, but with pentathlon you can be up and down so we have to remain strong."

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After losing out by just a second to the Mexican's at the line, Ireland's

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Arthur Lanigan O'Keeffe said: "Yes it was really close. I was happy with my run although my legs were tired from the Men's Final, but all round it was a really good performance by me and Natalya and next time we'll get that gold."

The Mexican duo of Hernandez Uscanga and Vega (MEX) made a strong start in the Fencing with 31 wins giving them the early lead overall.

Just one win behind earning them second spot were the Belarussian team of Katsiaryna Arol and Ilya Palazkov (BLR) while Tamara Alekszejev and Bence Harangozó (HUN) took third. Home favourites Haydy Morsy and Yasser Hefny (EGY) had an impressive start to take fourth place.

Into the pool and Europe came back into medal contention through Irish pairing Arthur Lanigan O'Keeffe and Natalya Coyle (IRL) who took first place in a time of 1:57.70. Their time was just three hundredths of a second faster than that of Italians Alice Sotero and Fabio Poddighe (ITA) so the two teams shared top billing for the event.

The result saw the Irish move into third place overall, however despite placing fifth and dropping into second overall, Mexico's Vega and Hernandez Uscanga (MEX) were still looking favourites at this point.

A fourth place finish from Alekszejev and Harangozó (HUN) saw the Hungarians move into pole position on the leaderboard.

That changed in the Riding arena where Ireland's Coyle and O'Keeffe (IRL) leapt into first place with a solid display, but they were kept in clear sight at this point by Hungary's Alekszejev and Harangozo (HUN) who had a near perfect event to leave them just one second behind the leaders going into the final Combined Event.

Mexican's Vega and Hernandez Uscanga (MEX) placed seventh in the Riding, but although that dropped them to third overall they were just five seconds behind the leader ahead of the grand finale of running and shooting.

The top three heading into the Combined Event were the three who made the podium, albeit in a different order.

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In the Women's leg, Coyle (IRL) had an incredibly slim start on her

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two rivals and managed to maintain her lead to the end of her leg. Behind her however Mexican Vega had overtaken her Hungarian counterpart.

It was then down to the men's leg where the enthralling battle between Hernandez Uscanga (MEX) and Lanigan O'Keeffe (IRL) captivated the crowd.

After an almighty tussle it was the Mexican who crossed the line first with the Irishman a second behind followed by Hungary's Harangozo.

Dark horse and surprise package of the day were the Australian family duo of Max and Chloe Esposito (AUS) who went from ninth to fourth overall with a gutsy display in the Combined Event.

Following on from yet another exciting Mixed Relay, UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann renewed calls for the IOC to include the event in future Olympic Programmes.

He said: "As we can see the Mixed Relay, as with the Individual Women Individual Men events, again we have a big fight in the Combined Event - Mexico in the lead then the Irish come in then in the last few metres the Mexican boy overcoming the Irish athlete. I think it is a big drama.

"The whole event was very well organised, there was a wonderful atmosphere inside the arena, great sportsmanship from the athletes and again they have shown that Mixed Relay is a competition that should be included in the Olympic Games.

"It is so exciting for the public, for the athletes and the nations and I think it will be studied more by IOC in our upcoming competitions and we will hopefully see it included for Tokyo.

"Thanks again to all the volunteers and all the people who have been deeply involved in this competition. The support we got from the Egyptian Minister of Sport and the Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Association was fantastic and we have to thank all the people, including the staff of our won union, who did great work here to make a very successful World Cup in the Individual

competitions and Mixed Relay.

"I am looking forward to the next competition in Rome in a few weeks time."

The UIPM World Cup Series continues from 9-13 April in Rome, Italy.

Follow all the action of the UIPM World Cup Series at www.pentathlon.org,
www.facebook.com/modpen and https://twitter.com/UIPM_HQ