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2015 UIPM WORLD CUP FINAL - BELARUS WINS IN THE MIX RELAY



MINSK, BELARUS - Ilya Palazkov and Katsiaryna Arol (BLR) have been crowned the new Mix Relay World Cup Winners.

The Belarusian duo made home advantage count as they dominated the first event of the Finals in the 2015 UIPM World Cup Series in Minsk, Belarus.

A strong win in the Fencing saw them shoot straight to the top of the leaderboard and they remained there throughout the end of the first day of competition.

A jubilant Palazkov said: "We were very happy to have such a strong start to the competition and continue that to finish so strongly too. It is wonderful to be the World Cup Series Winner.

"They say that your home is your castle and we are very happy to win here in our home of Belarus. Our country have provided excellent facilities and we are very thankful for it. We would also like to thank our family and all the fans for their support."

Finishing just behind the Belarusians were Irish duo Arthur Lanigan O'Keefe and Natalya Coyle

(IRL). "My horse didn't go as well as I thought it would, but everything else went like a dream for us," said Coyle. "You've got to be happy with silver, it's our third one this year so yes I guess we're happy enough with that."

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"I love the Mix Relay and it was nice to have it ahead of

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the Men's and Women's Finals this weekend and give our legs a wee run out."

Lanigan O'Keefe added: "I had a bit of a hitch in the first Shooting round where I ran into Natalya's range and had to run back in to mine, so I knew after that that Palazkov was quite far in front of me. I ran as hard as I could, but it wasn't enough in the end."

Palazkov and Arol (BLR) led the way from the start after the Fencing with 26 wins out of 10. Sitting just behind them were Arthur Lanigan-O'Keefe and Natalya Coyle (IRL) with just two victories less.

Russian's Ilya Shugarov and Ekaterina Khuraskina (RUS) were third with 23.

Into the pool, and a time of 1:56.95 for Lanigan-O'Keefe and Coyle (IRL) saw them take first place in the Swimming event, keeping them sitting second overall.

Korea's Woongtae Jun and Mina Jeong (KOR) finished just 0.05 seconds behind the Irish to move into third place in the overall classifications.

A sixth place finish for Belarussians Palazkov and Arol (BLR) kept them at the top of the leaderboard heading in to the Riding Arena.

A clear round saw Mexicans Alvaro Sandoval and Mayan Oliver (MEX) take first place, but despite finishing sixth in the Riding it was Palazkov and Arol (BLR) who continued to dominate the leaderboard maintaining their grip on first place.

That gave the Belarussians a sizeable 28 second head start for the Combined Event over Russian duo Shugarov and Khuraskina (RUS), who moved up to second overall after three events, and Ireland's Lanigan-O'Keefe and Coyle (IRL) who now sat third.

The Combined Event played out as expected with Palazkov (BLR) the first male to cross the line, building on a strong start from his female team mate Arol (BLR).

A strong run from Lanigan O'Keefe (IRL) saw the Irish finish second to take silver with Jun (KOR)
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grabbing bronze from the Russians.

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After an exciting first day of competition at the WCF, UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "The Minsk Organising Committee have given us first class facilities, the organisation has been first class. The Opening Ceremony was a wonderful showpiece and an exciting presentation of the country showing sport and culture coming in the Coubertin way.

"The fact that the winner today was Belarus will give us a big push and attraction for the weekend event. The sun is shining on us, there is a great atmosphere and it was great to see a lot of children cheering with us.

"For the UIPM it was the right decision to come to Minsk for the World Cup Final and I think all my colleagues will agree that this is somewhere we would come again. We are all looking forward to the two individual finals over the weekend."

The next event at the WCF is the Men's Individual on Saturday. Follow all the action of this UIPM 2015 World Cup Final with our live results and live streaming of the Men's Individual Competition at www.pentathlon.org, our updates through Facebook at www.facebook.com/modpen and Twitter at https://twitter.com/UIPM_HQ