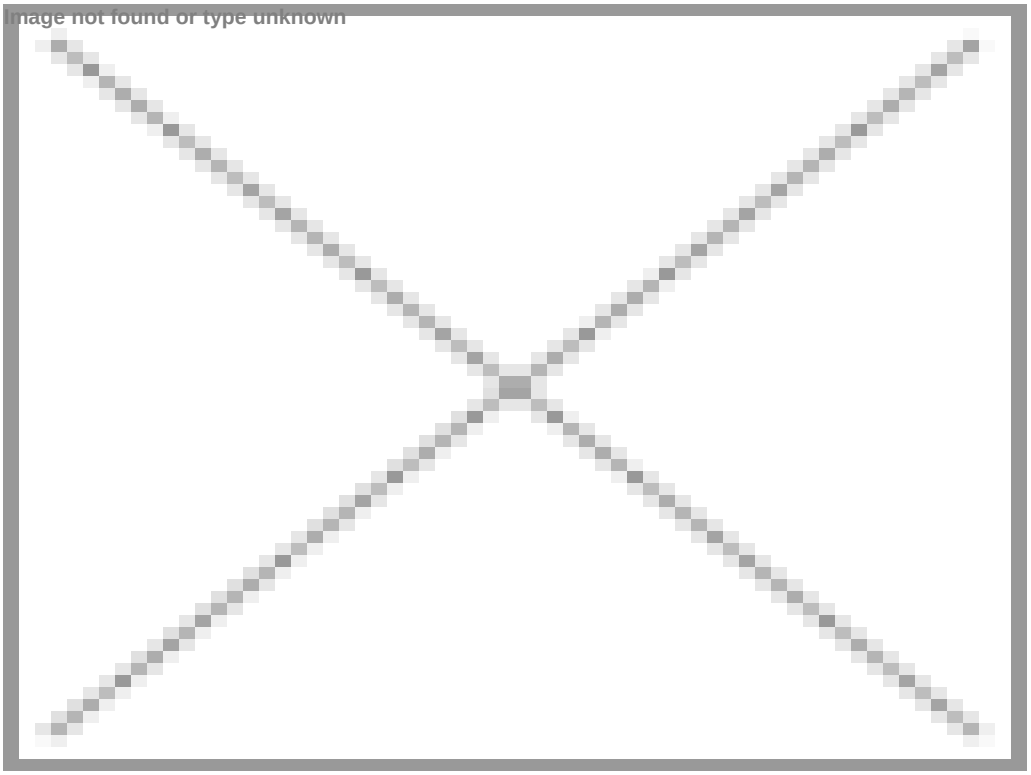
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UIPM 2015 LASER-RUN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: A SPECTACULAR INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD



Under a warm Pyrenean sun the new concept of Laser-Run today enjoyed a spectacular introduction to the world - as a sport for all.

The UIPM Laser-Run World Championships came into being in Perpignan, France with a stunning exhibition of the newest form of Modern Pentathlon as curious spectators watched in wonder.

Introduced in 2014, Laser-Run - which consists of only two of the five Modern Pentathlon elements, laser shooting and running - is designed to allow more athletes an entry point into the most demanding of Olympic sports.

The two-day competition accommodates participants of all levels, allowing some of the world's elite pentathletes to share a stage with their Youth and Masters counterparts and also many non-licensed athletes who are taking part in the 'Laser Run For All' initiative.

Today, 10 world titles were decided over an innovative course that saw competitors run through a

fountain in front of the Palais des Congres, and the French crowd was delighted to see athletes from the host nation win gold medals at Masters, Youth and Senior level.

The local success was especially pronounced at Senior level, with Alexandre Henrard heading up a French 1-2-3 to win Men's gold ahead of compatriots Christopher Patte and Valentin Belaud.

The Senior Women's title went to Anastasiya Prokopenko (Belarus) who was joined on the podium by Eevi Bengs (Finland) and Donna Vakalis (Canada) after a thrilling finish.

Julie Belhamri (France) picked up gold in the Junior Women's discipline while Peter Oosthuizen (South Africa) was a very dominant figure among the Junior Men.

At Youth A level, Andres Garza (Mexico) stood out among the male athletes and a vivid glimpse of the future of the sport was provided by 13-year-old Mariam Amer (Egypt) who fought off her Spanish rival Aroa Freije.

There was an Egyptian clean sweep in the Men's Youth B event with Mohamed Aboulfadl getting the gold, while Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Mixed Relay champion Maria Migueis Teixeira (Portugal) fought off a challenge from Maram Elshafei (Egypt) to prevail in the Women's Youth B.

The crowd twice roared French winners over the line at Masters level, as Cecilia Geppier and Jean-Christophe Perrier celebrated success, and the 'Laser Run For All' event was a fantastic success as athletes young and old mixed in the spirit of competition.

Dr Klaus Schormann, President of UIPM, said: "Today we have built up a historic milestone for the union. This Laser-Run World Championship in Perpignan was so important for us.

"We had so many nations competing and more than 200 athletes and it was an exciting day today with individual competitions in so many age categories, and I think everybody understands now that this is the best promotion of pentathlon to enlarge our development projects for developing countries and also developed countries.

"The nations have accepted this competition and we will see much more in the future. European Championships and other continental championships can be created.

"This World Championships in Perpignan is extraordinarily important for our UIPM movement and I would like to say to the world thank to everybody who supported this idea.

"I am very relaxed this evening and looking forward tomorrow to the Mixed Relay competitions."

Joel Bouzou, Vice-President of UIPM and President of the French Modern Pentathlon Federation (FFPM), said: "I am very happy. The competition is fantastic - it's fun, not only for the athletes but for the public, and we can see now that this concept gives UIPM fantastic potential for development.

"I'm sure we will have a lot of new athletes. Parents can enjoy it with their kids and it can help to develop citizenship within sport. At the same time it is fun, it is good for education, it is about physical exercise but also concentration and dealing with stress.

"I think we have a product that is fantastic for development and to create new pentathletes."