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UIPM 2016 WORLD CUP - DELIGHT FOR HOME CROWD AS EL GEZIRY SECURES THE GOLD

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CAIRO - A stunning home victory by Amro El Geziry (EGY) provided a dream come true for organisers and spectators at the first stage of the 2016 UIPM World Cup Series.

Cairo has become one of Modern Pentathlon's most important venues and El Geziry, World No.5, one of the sport's most consistent performers. His victory in the Men's Individual Final met with roars of approval from a large and supportive crowd in the Egyptian capital.

El Geziry (EGY) had never won a World Cup event before and even though he has enjoyed some very good results at this level in the past, his win was a source of some surprise as well as delight. In the past two years when Cairo hosted a World Cup, the local favourite finished 14th and 22nd.

Today, El Geziry (EGY) was never going to be denied and he prevailed with an extremely polished performance from start to finish. All of the drama took place behind the leader, where Adam Marosi (HUN) and Valentin Belaud (FRA) crossed the line together in pursuit of silver with the Hungarian doing just enough to consign his French rival to bronze.

There was nothing that could wipe the smile off the face of El Geziry as he accepted his gold medal to huge cheers.

He said: "I am so happy, no words could describe it. It's my first gold medal and it has happened in my home country. You can see the crowd... I'm just so happy.

"After my last shoot, when I only missed one, I thought 'that's it' because I knew nobody could make that time up on me. I was really confident that I would be OK.

"Everybody was cheering, and it was amazing. It was one of the best moments of my life."

Marosi (HUN) was still struggling for breath when he gave an interview in the minutes following his titanic battle with Belaud (FRA).

He said: "It was a very hard day, mainly during the Fencing when I was terrible until the last eight bouts, but then I won seven and only lost one and I think that was the key.

"I'm so happy because it is a long time since I was on the podium. The season is very, very long and I need more points for qualification for the Olympic Games - it's not enough that I am the leading Hungarian athlete."

Jun Woongtae (KOR) was as consistent as ever as he finished in 4th place, with Pierpaolo Petroni (ITA) and Valentin Prades (FRA) completing the top six. The winner's elder brother Omar El Geziry finished in 11th, one place lower than his result at the Cairo World Cup last year.

But this was destined to be Amro's day. He started as he meant to continue, taking a big lead in the Swimming with a fantastic time of 1:55.89. Only one other competitor ducked under two minutes: Hwang Woojin (KOR), who timed 1:59.26 with Michal Gralewski (POL) third in 2:00.37.

The leader continued his excellent form on the piste, enjoying 24 victories in his 35 bouts, a tally matched only by Petroni (ITA), who went on to win the Bonus Round.

El Geziry (EGY) was greeted by a large and noisy crowd in the Riding arena, and he did not let them down as one of the 21 riders who enjoyed a clean round. Thomas Toolis (GBR) and Patrick Dogue (GER) emerged from the sand with the highest Riding scores, but there was no disguising the identity of the man to catch heading into the Combined Event.

El Geziry (EGY) set off in the Run/Shoot with a huge time advantage of 34 seconds from 2nd-place Jun (KOR), and the cushion allowed him to keep control of any nerves and make sure nobody got close to him.

Dr Klaus Schormann, President of UIPM, said: "I think this was the best possible result for the Egyptian organisers, for the Federation President Sherif El-Erian and his team.

"Many times Amro El Geziry was in the leading position in competitions in the last year, and in the end other people have been on the podium. This time, the distance was enough for him and he had a good run and shoot, and everything was perfect.

“Also to see the second and third place, and how they fought so strongly, was excellent. With such a large audience here, today it was a great atmosphere. They pushed the leading athlete from Egypt to victory and it was a great competition day.

“The media attention from this World Cup here in the Arabic world will be much greater with such a winner.”

World Cup #1 closes with the Mixed Relay on Sunday, February 28. The Combined Event will be available on live stream at uipmtv.org with up-to-date results available at pentathlon.org.