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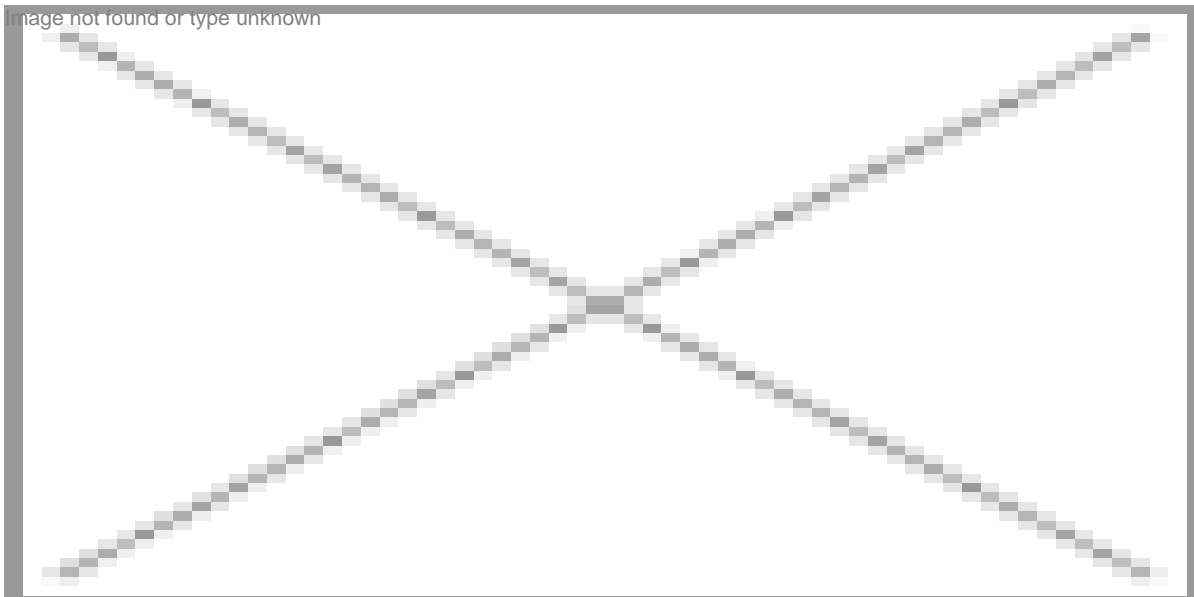
UIPM 2016 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS – KOREA STORMS TO GOLD IN RUSSIA

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Korea's leading men ramped up their Olympic preparations as they teamed up for victory in the Men's Relay at the 2016 UIPM World Championships.

Woongtae Jun and Woojin Hwang will be hoping to feature in the Men's Individual Event in Rio De Janeiro later this year but first they claimed gold in Moscow with a dominant performance.



Oleg Naumov

and Ilia Frolov (RUS) got the host nation on the board at the Olympic Stadium as they secured silver while the Pierre Dejardin and Alexandre Henrard stormed up the leaderboard in the Combined Event to snatch bronze for France out of the grasp of Latvia in an enthralling climax.

There was no doubting that this was above all Korea's day.

For Jun in particular, at 20 the younger of the pair by six years, it was another sign of his emerging class. He has broken into the top ten in the world rankings since claiming the UIPM Champion of Champions crown in Doha (QAT) late last year.

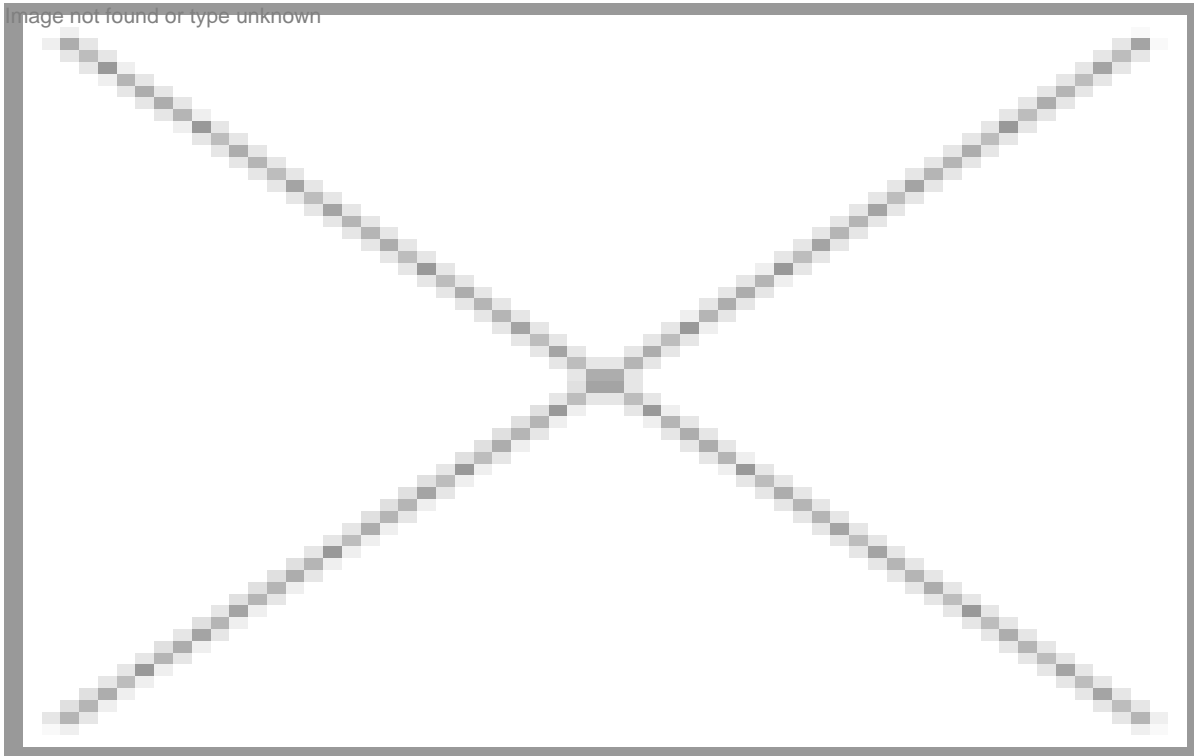
Second in the pool, Korea dominated the Fencing, survived a slight blip on horseback and never looked troubled in the Combined, in spite of Russia's best efforts. Having agonisingly missed out on a medal on the opening day when their women's pairing went from first to fourth in the Combined Event, the hosts were happy to enjoy some podium time.

But the most joy was reserved for Hwang and Jun. The latter may have a burgeoning reputation but as the junior member of this team, he was particularly happy to match the efforts of his close compatriot.

"Today, together, the partnerships were very good," he said. "In the first event, the Swimming, the time was very good. For the Fencing, he [Hwang] is a brother so it was very good to be able to follow him. That was a very good bonus point. The Riding was a little bit more different but in the Combined, the next group was very far back.

"So it was a little bit easy, running away. But this is just the first part of the Games and personally these are a very important Games. It is a very happy, fantastic day."

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Great Britain

would struggle to sustain their challenge throughout the day, but Joseph Evans and Thomas Toolis were in blistering form in the pool, winning the Swimming in a time of 1.49.62. The Koreans gave signal of their intentions by claiming second, just 15 hundredths of a second behind the British duo. Latvia (Pavels Svecovs/Ruslan Nakonechnyi) finished third, just ahead of Poland (Maciej Baranowski and Remigiusz Golis).

From there on, the Koreans were dominant, storming to victory in the Fencing, racking up 24 victories and just 8 defeats to take command of the Ranking Round ahead of Kazakhstan (Igor Sozinov and Denis Tyurin) in second and Latvia in third. However the hosts battled back from fourth in the rankings to make it to the final bout of the Bonus Round before the Koreans again came out on top.

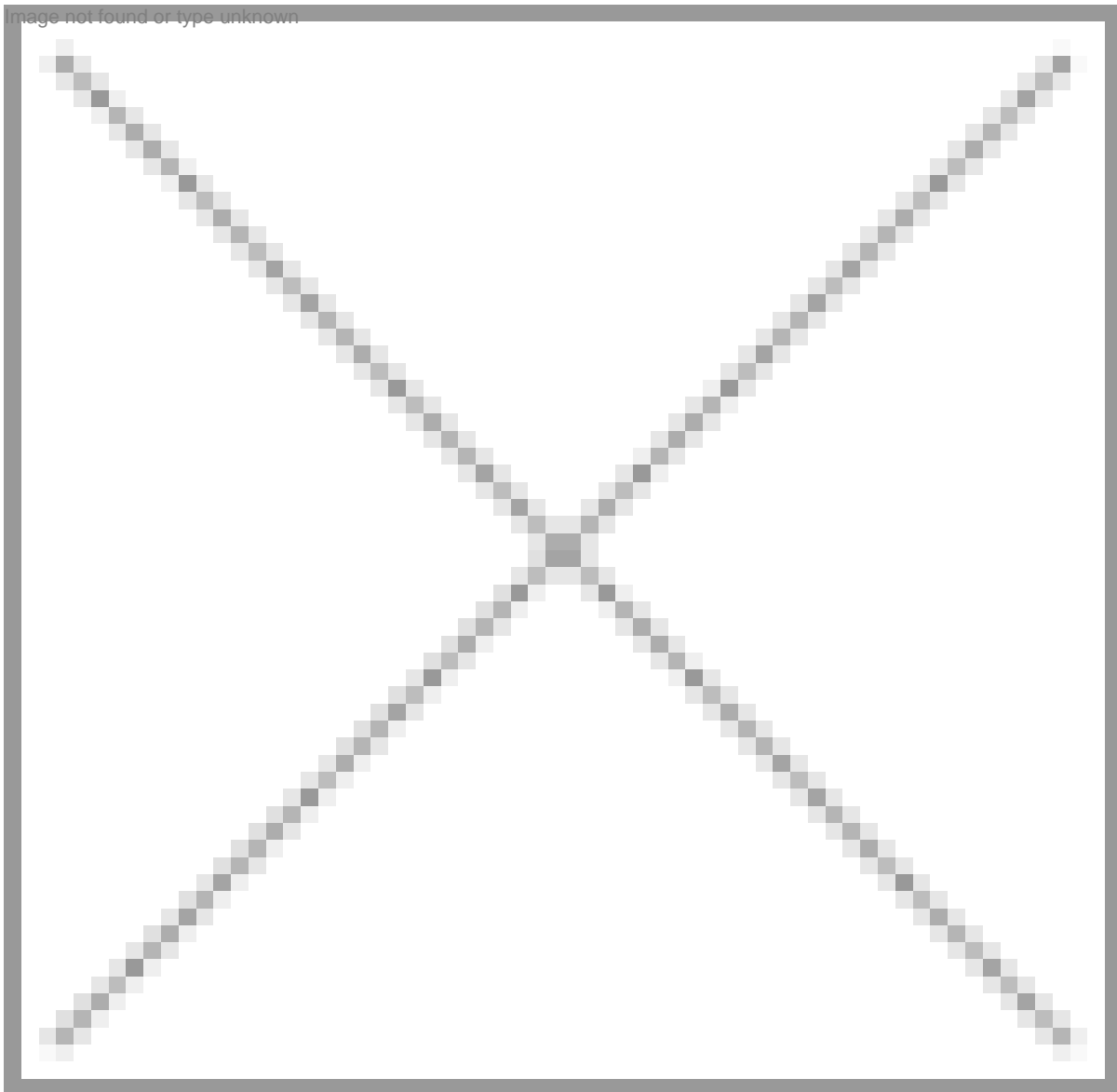
That consistency left Korea (Jun/Hwang) well out in front after two Events on 637 points with Latvia, Kazakhstan and Russia playing catch-up.

The hosts made their move on horseback as Russia were one of just three teams to rack up maximum points in the Riding Event. Hungary (Istvan Malits/Kristian Strobl) and Belarus (Pavel Tsikhanau/Kirill Kasyanik) were also flawless over the fences.

While Korea racked up 21 penalties, their sixth-place ranking in the Riding ensured they would enjoy a healthy 40-second lead over the hosts in the Combined. Latvia, who could only secure 11th place in the Riding, were a further 12 seconds back, taking off ahead of Belarus.

But with medals on the line, the middle of the field, from fourth to France seventh, were separated by just six seconds. As Korea and Russia comfortably clinched the top two spots, the fight for bronze is where the drama grew.

With so many countries vying for the final step on the podium, it was the sterling efforts of Dejardin and Henrard of France which proved to be just enough as they bettered Latvia on the last shoot.



UIPM

President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “The men’s relay competition with 17 countries was on a high level. It was excellent to see an Asian country, like Korea, winning. They have been strong in the last year in the development of young athletes.

“It was a very exciting final and I’m sure with the Russians winning their first medal here at home, that’s very important for the atmosphere for the organisers. Everyone has enjoyed this competition. The Relay competition we keep as a very important team competition for the future.”

Automatic qualification for the 2016 Olympic Games is available for the top three finishers in the men’s and women’s individual events this week.

The action continues tomorrow with qualifying for the individual finals which begin on Friday, May 27 when the women go first followed by the men’s final on Saturday, May 28. Action concludes on Sunday, May 29 with the Mixed Relay.

The Combined Event of all finals is available to watch via live stream at UIPMTV.org while a full results service is available at pentathlon.org.

2016 UIPM World Championships, Moscow, Berlin
Men’s-Relay Competition Standings:

1 KOREA 1563

- 2 RUSSIA 1550
- 3 FRANCE 1524
- 4 LATVIA 1514
- 5 BELARUS 1512
- 6 HUNGARY 1506
- 7 UKRAINE 1500
- 8 CZECH REPUBLIC 1489
- 9 GREAT BRITAIN 1488
- 10 KAZAKHSTAN 1482
- 11 ITALY 1476
- 12 ARGENTINA 1424
- 13 POLAND 1415
- 14 GERMANY 1227
- 15 MEXICO 1221
- 16 UNITED STATES 1169
- 17 SOUTH AFRICA 1142