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UIPM 2017 WORLD CUP II: FANTASTIC FRENCH (GBR) IS GOLDEN GIRL IN EGYPT



- Briton turns World Cup silver into gold with Cairo masterclass
- Ozyuksel wins Turkey's first World Cup medal
- Sotero denies Tocchi in all-Italian battle for bronze

Kate French of Great Britain was an emphatic winner of the Women's Individual gold medal at UIPM 2017 World Cup II.

The 26-year-old, who finished 6th at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, celebrated her first World Cup success only four weeks after winning silver at World Cup I in Los Angeles (USA).

Behind the winner there were many interesting plot lines, as Ilke Ozyuksel (TUR) shrugged off her Laser-Run starting rank of 19th to storm through the field and claim silver - Turkey's first-ever UIPM World Cup medal - and Alice Sotero (ITA) won an epic battle with her compatriot Gloria Tocchi to secure bronze.



World champion Sarolta Kovacs (HUN) finished 5th and Julie Belhamri (FRA) rounded up the prize winners in 6th to ensure there was some French representation on the podium - other than the name of the champion, of course.

The assured nature of her victory suggested that French (GBR) promises to be the latest in a long line of world-class British women pentathletes, following in the footsteps of Stephanie Cook, Kate Allenby, Heather Fell and Samantha Murray who have won Olympic medals since the women's competition began in 2000.

French (GBR) said of her performance: "My Fencing went really well and I got a massive PB [personal best] today, which gave me a head start. I've started to drink coffee in the morning of an event which wakes me up. But seriously, I think I was just really relaxed today.

"I think I'm just a more experienced athlete now. Rio gave me experience and confidence and now I'm just really enjoying it."



Honours in the pool went to the Olympic record-holder in Swimming, Gulnaz Gubaydullina (RUS), who won the fastest heat in 2:08.56. Kovacs (HUN) was typically quick in 2:11.00 and there was early reason for cheer among the home crowd as Salma Abdelmaksoud (EGY) hit the wall in 2:11.52.

Just as Pavlo Tymoshchenko (UKR) had dominated the piste 24 hours earlier, there was one outstanding fencer on show and it was French (GBR), who finished the Ranking Round with an exceptional 29V/6D and defeated Haydy Morsy (EGY) in the final bout of the Bonus Round.

Morsy (EGY) also set herself up for a strong performance in front of her home crowd with 23V/12D and three victories in the Bonus Round

French (GBR) maintained her lead through the Riding discipline, but not without conceding some ground. A total of 14 penalty points allowed her to go into the Laser-Run with a cushion of 17 seconds over Sotero (ITA), with Kovacs (HUN) and Ieva Serapinaite (LTU) a further three seconds adrift.

Kovacs (HUN) was one of eight riders to enjoy a maximum score, while Morsy (EGY) and Elodie Clouvel (FRA) lost ground and the much-fancied Annika Schleu (GER) suffered elimination

Due to the quality of the athlete in the lead, the Laser-Run was very much a procession as French (GBR) held her nerve on the range and looked typically strong on the 4x800m course.



Sotero (ITA) held 2nd position for much of the race only to find Ozyuksel (TUR) flash past her on the penultimate lap. Sotero (ITA) was then overtaken by Tocchi (ITA) at the final Shooting series, but showed great tenacity to hang on the shoulder of her compatriot and overtake her to grasp the prize of bronze.

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "Today was an important competition, with a lot of countries sending young athletes and you could see that some of them have to learn more about certain disciplines, especially Riding.

"We saw an excellent presentation of our sport, and now the Egyptian federation has to work very hard on preparations for the World Championships in Cairo in August.

"I wish all the athletes who are taking part in the Mixed Relay tomorrow a successful competition."

World Cup II in Cairo closes tomorrow (March 26) with the Mixed Relay. Live stream is available on UIPM TV from 6.30pm local time (4.30pm GMT). For up-to-date results visit the UIPM website.

Women's final results (Top 18):

Athletes	Points
1 - Kate French (GBR)	1356
2 - Ilke Ozyuksel (TUR)	1326
3 - Alice Sotero (ITA)	1313
4 - Gloria Tocchi (ITA)	1306
5 - Sarolta Kovacs (HUN)	1301
6 - Julie Belhamri (FRA)	1299
7 - Anastasiya Prokopenko (BLR)	1295
8 - Haydy Morsy (EGY)	1293
9 - Ieva Serapinaite (LTU)	1288
10 - Valeriya Permikyna (UKR)	1286
11 - Gulnaz Gubaydullina (RUS)	1283

12 - Joanna Muir (GBR)	1280
13 - Iryna Prasiantsova (BLR)	1279
14 - Irene Prampolini (ITA)	1279
15 - Tatsiana Khaldoba (BLR)	1275
16 - Mariam Amer (EGY)	1274
17 - Uliana Batashova (RUS)	1270
18 - Tamara Alekszejev (HUN)	1262