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UIPM 2015 WORLD CUP FINAL - LAURA ASADAUSKAITE TO DEFEND HER OLYMPIC TITLE



MINSK, BELARUS - Laura Asadauskaite (LTU) will defend her Olympic title at the Olympic Games in Rio next summer after being crowned Women's Individual World Cup Winner at the 2015 UIPM World Cup Final here in Minsk, Belarus. The Lithuanian was always in a strong position during the event, but it was in the final Combined Event where her experience and class counted and she easily overcame a seven second handicap to cross the line finish securing Gold and her seat on the plane to next summer's Olympic spectacle. She said: "I am very happy today, it is a great day. My Fencing and Swimming were very good although in the Riding I made one small mistake. I didn't feel 100% in the Combined Event, but I am very happy to win and to know I am going to Rio next summer. "As defending Olympic champion it is an honour to be able to go back and defend my title and I can now prepare for that." Italy's Gloria Tocchi (ITA) who was never out of the top two for the Women's competition, took Silver. "I'm really happy with this result. I love this country. It's my first Senior medal and even if I knew that the Gold medal was impossible for me I'm really satisfied" Australian Chloe Esposito (AUS) who has already qualified for Rio 2016, had a strong Combined Event to take the Bronze: "I'm so happy it's difficult to explain it. I had a hard year last

year and this is my first year coming back into World Cup's since being injured. "I finished in the top ten in my first two competitions of the World Cup Series and I was happy with that, but to come to the World Cup Final and get a bronze medal makes me really happy."



Canada's Melanie McCann (CAN) and Italian's Gloria

Tocchi (ITA) made a good start to the Women's Individual Final with 25 wins apiece to lead the overall classification after the first event of Fencing. With one win less - of 24 - the reigning Olympic Champion and much-fancied Laura Asadauskaite (LTU), sat in third place as the Women headed to the pool. A fifth place finish in the Swimming, in a time of 2:13.29, saw Brazilian Yane Marques (BRA) move from fourth to first on the overall leaderboard. Tocchi (IRL) remained second overall posting a time of 2:18.41 while Asadauskaite (LTU) ensured she stayed well in contention in third spot overall with a swim of 2:19.17. The Swimming event was won by France's Elodie Clouvel (FRA) in 2:06.93 to move her into fifth place on the leaderboard while previous leader McCann (CAN) placed 26th in a time of 2:21.95 to drop to fourth. Next up was a visit to the Riding Arena where Clouvel (FRA) had another outstanding display with a clear round to take first place - and move her up to second place on the Leaderboard. That meant Clouvel only had a very reachable five second handicap to make up on leader Tocchi (ITA), whose 15th place finish in the Riding was enough to give her pole position, going into the Combined Event. There was also a clear Riding round from American Margaux Isaksen (USA) which saw her edge her way up the leaderboard to seventh - and starting just 25 seconds behind Tocchi for the Combined Event. Pre-competition favourite Asadauskaite (LTU) remained third, giving herself just a seven second handicap behind overall leader Tocchi (ITA), heading into what was certain to be another thrill a minute final event of Running and Shooting. Previous leaders from earlier events, McCann (CAN) and Marques (BRA), were also still very much in contention sitting fifth and sixth with the



Combined Event looming.

A great start in the first loop

of Running and Shooting for Asadauskaite (LTU) saw the Lithuanian quickly catch leader Tocchi (ITA) early on and she kept a hold of the lead from that point to cross the line first, the Italian finishing just behind her. The race for third, and bronze, was where the real drama lay. Hungary's Zsolia Foldhazi (HUN) left the final shooting range in third and looked to have the bronze in the bag. However, a fantastic run from Australian Chloe Esposito (AUS) saw her pass the Hungarian and pip her for third. After yet another dramatic day on the Modern Pentathlon field, UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "This was a great World Cup Final and Women's Individual event with the winner the defending Olympic champion from 2012. During the award ceremony, Evgenij Kliosov, Laura Asadauskaite coach was awarded with the Coaches Award of the Women's

Competition. "Laura was so far ahead of the others in first place, but we had a dramatic run at the end for all the other places, it was so exciting. "We have been so lucky again with the weather, the overall conditions and the fantastic facilities. In addition to that we must thank the judges, the officials and the volunteers and everyone who has made such a success of this World Cup Final. "We now look forward to the World Championships and we wish to extend a huge thank you to the Local Organising Committee, the National Federation, the Government and the people of Minsk and Belarus for what has been a wonderful Finals." Follow all the action of UIPM events at www.pentathlon.org, updates through Facebook at www.facebook.com/modpen and Twitter at https://twitter.com/UIPM_HQ