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WOMEN'S MODERN PENTATHLON AT RIO 2016: 'AN INCREDIBLE FEELING'



Until today Modern Pentathlon was one of the few Olympic sports where success had eluded Australia.

Now, not only does Australia have an Olympic medallist, it has a bona fide superstar in the shape of Chloe Esposito, a true sporting all-rounder in the grand tradition of one of Australia's most cherished sports, cricket.

Esposito's victory was an extraordinary end to an extraordinary day. On her face there was a mixture of elation and exhaustion when she faced the press wearing her Olympic gold medal.

"This year wasn't the best year, I didn't get to compete in any World Cups or other championships," reflected Esposito (AUS), who had been struggling with an Achilles injury. "It wasn't the best preparation for Rio, so at the beginning of the year I wasn't in the best spirits.

"Then, three months ago, everything changed: the injury got better and training was going well, and everything just fell into place.

"My coach, who is also my father Daniel, tells me the same thing before every competition. For

each event I have a task, and if I do those tasks, then in my mind I have won. Today was a day when everything came together."

Elodie Clouvel has experienced that feeling more often than her Australian counterpart. The French woman was a silver medallist at the recent World Championships in Moscow. But her latest major achievement - silver at the Olympic Games - reminded her of a success that came early in her career.

"I actually started Modern Pentathlon not too long ago, and to reach the stage of winning medals like this is amazing," said Clouvel (FRA).

"Rio is a city I will always carry in my heart because I won my first World Championship medal here in 2012, when I had only been doing this sport for two years.

"I'm very happy to be here and to share this victory with Chloe Esposito, as she was there on the podium in Rio in 2012 as well. I also want to congratulate Oktawia for an awesome accomplishment.

"I'm so happy to be sharing this moment with these girls and it's an incredible feeling."

Oktawia Nowacka (POL) had led for most of the competition but despite being overtaken in the latter stages of the Combined Event, she summoned the stamina she needed to claim bronze.

"It is an incredible feeling, after all my hard work," said Nowacka (POL). "I have achieved my dream, and I am really happy to be here."

Dr Klaus Schormann, President of UIPM, commented: "I congratulate the three medallists and all of the athletes who have given everything with their performances today.

"We had a wonderful stadium and a great response from the Brazilian public, who already yesterday were coming in great numbers to watch the Fencing Ranking Round and to cheer for their pentathletes. There was great and colourful support from other countries too.

"We are all very touched by the success of this competition and we are happy to have presented our sport as a modern and dynamic sport.

"Today was the first time we had staged Bonus Fencing in the Olympic Games, a new step which allows more interaction with our athletes in Fencing, and we will have another special presentation in Tokyo with the temporary pool contained within the Pentathlon Stadium allowing five sports to take place in one venue in one day.

"Rio has been a milestone and we have already created a legacy here from previous championships we have held in the city. I congratulate all the team who have been involved and especially the athletes who are the centrepiece of our sport."

The men's competition resumes on Saturday, August 20 at 12pm local time.