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UIPM 2018 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP KECSKEMÉT: DOMINANT JUN (KOR) TAKES THIRD GOLD MEDAL



- Rising star, 22, builds on 2016 and 2017 World Cup glory
- Palazkov (BLR) enjoys career high with solid silver
- Demeter (HUN) delights home crowd with dramatic bronze

Jun Woongtae of **Korea** confirmed his status as one of the Modern Pentathlon's most consistent winners as he claimed his third Pentathlon World Cup gold medal with a dominant performance.



The 22-year-old built on his World Cup victories

in Rio de Janeiro (BRA) in 2016 and Drzonkow (POL) in 2017 with another spectacular success in the Men's Individual Final of the third instalment of the 2018 series in Hungary.

The gold medal showed impressive progression from **Jun (KOR)** after he finished 10th in Pentathlon World Cup Cairo and 5th in Pentathlon World Cup Los Angeles.

Behind him, another 22-year-old enjoyed the best result of his career as **Ilya Palazkov of Belarus** made his way through the Laser-Run field from a starting position of 6th.

The real drama was reserved for the battle for bronze, which was won by **Bence Demeter of Hungary** to the delight of the home crowd. The outcome was harsh on **Jean Baptiste Mourcia of France**, whose superb Laser-Run brought him within a split-second of the podium.



"Today I am very, very happy – it was an

amazing race," said the victorious **Jun (KOR)**. "I managed to improve my Fencing, Swimming and Riding a little bit and it was a great day overall for Team Korea.

"Conditions were very nice, the weather and the venue, everything was perfect."

Bronze medallist **Demeter (HUN)** added: "Before the competition my goal was to stand on the podium again in my home town so I am very satisfied with my performance.

"After Swimming I didn't think I could reach the podium and my Fencing was not so good, but a clear round in Riding helped me and after that, the last lap of Laser-Run was very hard for me but I managed to win a sprint against Mourcia so I'm very happy."

Mourcia (FRA) had to settle for 4th and **Joe Choong of Great Britain** finished 5th ahead of **Lee Jihun (KOR)**, **Pavlo Tymoshenko of Ukraine** (7th) and **Arthur Lanigan-O'Keeffe of Ireland** (8th).



Swimming

Jun (KOR) was in contention from the start as he completed his 200m swim in 2:01.84, a time beaten only by **Lanigan-O'Keeffe (IRL, 2:01.18)** and the outstanding **Jamie Cooke (GBR)** whose time of 1:58.39 gave him a solid advantage.

Fencing

The all-round ability of **Jun (KOR)** shone through again on the piste as he shared top honours with **Alexander Nobis of Germany**, each of them scoring 23V/12D in the Ranking Round.

After the exceptional performance of **Kim Sunwoo** in the Women's Final, **Korea's** strength in Fencing was also demonstrated by **Lee**, who was only one victory behind the top duo. But there was no doubting the star of the Bonus Round, as **Choong (GBR)** stormed to four victories including the scalp of both **Jun (KOR)** and **Lee (KOR)**.

Riding

Only three athletes managed a perfect round, and the highlight was the performance of **Bence Demeter (HUN)**, who moved back into podium contention and raised the hopes of the local crowd. The other flawless performers were **Simon Casse (FRA)** and **Tymoshchenko (UKR)**.



That said, another four athletes dropped

only a single point, and a score of 299 allowed **Lanigan-O'Keeffe (IRL)** to move into 2nd position overall. **Jun (KOR)** made sure he would start the Laser-Run with a solid lead after conceding only seven penalties.

Laser-Run

Jun (KOR) set off with a lead of 10sec from **Choong (GBR)** and 15sec from **Lanigan-O’Keeffe (IRL)**, with **Bence Demeter (HUN)** and **Lee (KOR)** among the chasing pack within 25sec.

If the leader had any nerves, he didn’t reveal them to his rivals, and the race became something of a procession as he quickly grew his lead over the stuttering **Choong (GBR)** and **Lanigan-O’Keeffe (IRL)**.

It was **Lee (KOR)** who emerged as the main threat to his compatriot in the first two laps, before other contenders began to move through the ranks.

At the final shooting range, **Jun (KOR)** took his time to deliver his five shots and then stepped nonchalantly out of the range, knowing he had enough to win comfortably. But the drama was growing behind him, and **Palazkov (BLR)** and **Mourcia (FRA)** were the next two athletes to embark on their final lap.

Palazkov (BLR), who won Mixed Relay gold in the 2015 World Cup Final in front of a home crowd in Minsk (BLR), proved he had plenty of stamina in reserve and made sure nobody could deny him silver.



Mourcia (FRA), on his way to an

exceptional Laser-Run time of 11:07.60, looked as if he had the bronze medal wrapped up and it took a huge surge on the final straight from the local hero, **Bence Demeter (HUN)**, to pinch that last place on the podium.

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “Our athletes are already performing at a high level, one year from the Olympic qualification year, and I’m very happy to have heard the spectators enjoying what they saw today.

“We had a young Korean athlete, Jun, who had a comfortable lead but you could see that the competition was intense for all the places behind him.

“We saw a very young French athlete finishing 4th and this competition gives us great hope for the future. Thanks to the Hungarian organising committee and to our great athletes, and we have seen a real showcase for Riding here in Kecskemet.

“I’m sure the Mixed Relay tomorrow will give us another highlight and send a message to the IOC to focus more on our ambitions to include a relay competition in future Olympic Games.

“The Mixed Relay has a high priority on the sporting side of our movement. It has been part of the Youth Olympic Games since 2010 and we have developed the Mixed Relay worldwide at a high

level after we introduced the concept 15 years ago.”

The action at Pentathlon World Cup Kecskemét concludes on Monday, May 7 with the Mixed Relay. Live stream of the Laser-Run is available on UIPM TV and up-to-date results of all competitions are available at the UIPM website.