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UIPM 2019 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP CAIRO: BATASHOVA (RUS) OPENS SEASON IN STYLE



Uliana Batashova of **Russia** opened the season in the perfect style by winning her first UIPM Pentathlon World Cup gold medal.

A dramatic Laser Run saw **Batashova** (RUS) advance gradually from 4th to 1st place as the early leaders became stuck on the shooting range.

Sarolta Kovacs of **Hungary** had started the Laser Run in pole position but was immediately overtaken by **Elodie Clouvel** of **France**, who then froze on the third shoot and saw her hopes of a second consecutive gold medal in Cairo disappear.

In the end, **Batashova** (RUS) and silver medallist **Natalya Coyle** of **Ireland** kept their composure and grasped the opportunity to create a perfect springboard for the season with gold and silver respectively.

Behind them, **Kovacs** (HUN) narrowly clung on to bronze ahead of **Clouvel** (FRA), who finished

one place ahead of 2018 world champion **Anastasiya Prokopenko** of **Belarus**, with **Francesca Summers** of **Great Britain** finishing 6th.

It was a timely success for **Batashova** (RUS), who soared up the rankings in 2018 with bronze at World Cup Sofia, 5th place in the World Cup Final and 5th in the UIPM Pentathlon World Championships.

Medallists' reaction

Batashova (RUS) said: "I feel amazing after winning today. It was a good, it went absolutely great with no mistakes, and it was really super for me.

"I am absolutely confident for the next races now, really confident."

Silver was no less sweet for 28-year-old **Coyle** (IRL), who also had a breakthrough season as an individual athlete in 2018 with silver at World Cup Sofia and 4th place in the World Cup Final.

Coyle (IRL) said: "It feels fantastic – I'm absolutely delighted to come away with silver. It's my second major individual medal so what a way to start the season.

"I thought it was a good day. I was a second slower in the pool, but my fencing was good and I rode a clear round. I think everybody had a bit of a nightmare on the shooting range so I was absolutely delighted to come away with second.



"I'm really over the moon with it. It's great to see

that a good winter training has paid off and my major focus is the European Championships, where I'm aiming to get a qualifying position for Tokyo. That's the big aim for this year."

There was also another medal for the 2016 world champion, **Kovacs** (HUN), who said: "I'm so happy with my medal. It was a hard day but it was my first competition in five months and every event went so well.

"Every event was good except my shooting, which was not so good. In the end I am happy but the season is long and I have to work hard for the European and World Championships.

"It gave me a lot of confidence. My next competition will be World Cup Szekesfehervar and that's my home town so I want to be on the podium again."

Swimming

Typically, **Gulnaz Gubaydullina** (RUS) was quickest in the pool with a time of 2min 09.87sec, ahead of **Clouvel** (FRA) in 2:11.19 and **Kovacs** (HUN) in 2:11.25.



Fencing

The latter two athletes stamped their authority on the competition in the Fencing arena, where **Kovacs** (HUN) topped the standings with 26V/9D, one more than Rio 2016 Olympic silver medallist **Clouvel** (FRA) and two more than **Iryna Khokhlova** of **Argentina**.

Clouvel (FRA) and **Kovacs** (HUN) both added to their scores in a tightly-contested Bonus Round.



Riding

The first ride of the new season was a masterclass, as 11 athletes managed a perfect round and none was eliminated. **Kovacs** (HUN), **Coyle** (IRL) and **Batashova** (RUS) all kept themselves in contention for the overall win with an unblemished score of 300, while **Clouvel** (FRA) and **Prokopenko** (BLR) dropped just seven penalty points apiece.

Laser Run



Kovacs (HUN) started with a 14sec cushion but

did not settle on the range and was overtaken by a confident-looking **Clouvel** (FRA), no doubt recalling her success here 12 months ago.

At the second shoot, **Batashova** (RUS) was the big mover as she overtook **Coyle** (IRL) and moved on to the shoulder of **Kovacs** (HUN) in 2nd. But when **Clouvel** (FRA) froze at the third shoot, taking 43sec to hit her five targets, it was **Kovacs** (HUN) who initially profited.

However, the 2016 world champion was unable to push home the advantage and she was consigned to bronze when **Batashova** (RUS) and **Coyle** (IRL) finished strongly, **Batashova** (RUS) winning by an impressive 11sec in the end.

President's reaction

UIPM President **Dr Klaus Schormann** said: "The first Pentathlon World Cup of the 2019 season on the way to Tokyo 2020 has featured great performances from the women after a long period of training in the winter.

"It's very important for the athletes to get qualifying points for the World Cup Final, which will be a test event for Tokyo and where there is an opportunity to qualify for the Olympic Games.

"Also at the end we saw the true drama of our sport, with places changing, which is very exciting for the spectators and also some athletes who have shown that they never give up.

"Congratulations to all the women and their trainers for what they have achieved after a long training session, and it was a good start to the season for our Union here in Cairo."

Watch and follow

The Platinum Club is hosting Pentathlon World Cup Cairo, which continues tomorrow (Saturday, March 2) with the Men's Individual Final and concludes on Sunday, March 3 with the Mixed Relay.

Live stream is available on UIPM TV and up-to-date results of all competitions are available at the UIPM website.