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UIPM 2019 PENTATHLON AND LASER RUN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: THE SECOND COMING OF BELAUD (FRA)



- World champion from 2016 reclaims crown after scorching Laser Run
- Belaud (FRA) and bronze medallist Jun (KOR) qualify for Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games
- Choong (GBR) snatches silver as Korea claim impressive team gold

Valentin Belaud of France has had a frustrating three years since becoming world champion in 2016, but it all washed away as he crossed the line at Kincsem Park.

As Rio 2016 Olympic silver medallist Elodie Clouvel danced with joy above the finish line, her boyfriend Belaud (FRA) stood on top of the world for the second time, securing qualification for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games in the process.

Jun Woongtae of Korea also seized the prize of Olympic qualification as he won the bronze medal, and it would have been silver if not for the incredible finishing speed of an athlete who has truly come of age this season.

Joseph Choong of Great Britain already had his Olympic place, subject to the UIPM qualification criteria [link], after winning gold at the UIPM 2019 Pentathlon World Cup Final. He also finished 4th at the European Championships, and his trademark sprint was too much in the end for the impressive Jun (KOR).

Behind them, Lee Jihun (KOR) finished 4th and contributed to a team gold medal for Korea, while Robert Kasza of Hungary claimed 5th place and Rio 2016 Olympic silver medallist Pavlo Tymoshchenko of Ukraine completed the top six.

Kasza (HUN) was joined on the podium by Adam Marosi (HUN) and Bence Demeter (HUN) as the host nation celebrated team silver, and Choong (GBR) claimed bronze alongside 2018 world champion Jamie Cooke (GBR) and Tom Toolis (GBR).



MEDALLISTS' REACTION

Belaud (FRA) said after receiving his gold medal: "My friend told me before the Laser Run, 'you have four 800m runs and four shooting series, it's your job', and I'm so happy I did it.

"My girlfriend, Elodie Clouvel, didn't win yesterday and today I won this for her.

"My third shoot was great, and I'm so grateful for the public support. In Hungary we have a great atmosphere. I'm also thankful to the French people who came here."

Silver medallist Choong (GBR) said: "If you had told me anyone would have a season like this, let alone me, I wouldn't have believed you. I can't believe I've finished top five in every competition and won medals at the World Cup Final, the European and World Championships.

"Even though it's the end of the season I'm feeling really fit. I eased off a little in the semi-finals to be fresh for today. My second shoot was getting me down a bit, but I had enough left to claim

silver."

Jun (KOR) added: "My goal was to claim the ticket for Tokyo and that's what I did, so that's why I'm so happy today.

"I wanted to win silver and it was a bit disappointing when [Choong] came past me at the end. I will beat him next time."

SWIMMING

Having already secured an Olympic qualification place with his stunning win in the UIPM 2019 Pentathlon World Cup Final, Choong (GBR) is in the form of his life and he proved it again with a superb swim in the temporary pool within Budapest's Pentathlon Arena.

Choong (GBR) hit the wall in 1min 55.19sec, defeating his compatriot Cooke (GBR) by 0.84sec and with a big margin to the next-fastest swimmer, Marek Grycz of Czech Republic, who ducked under 2min with 1:59.81.



FENCING

An awesome performance in the Fencing Ranking Round by Lee (KOR) enabled him to take a convincing lead. His 26V/9D stood out with three more victories than his compatriot Jung Jinhwa (KOR) and Belaud (FRA), while Ilya Palazkov (BLR) scored 22V/13D.

In the Bonus Round, Vladislav Sukharev of Kazakhstan scored five victories and there were three apiece for Kasza (HUN) and Tymoshchenko (UKR).

Belaud (FRA) added two scalps and Lee (KOR) was the last man standing after adding two points to his overall score.



RIDING

The standard was high in the Pentathlon Arena, at least until some of the leaders mounted their horses. It was a painful experience for the Korean athletes in first and second place, as Jung (KOR) conceded 36 penalty points and Lee (KOR) dropped 35, relegating both back into the pack.

Six riders were able to celebrate a perfect score of 300, with two others achieving a clear round. Kasza (HUN) and Demeter (HUN) stimulated the home crowd into a frenzy as they achieved the maximum score, along with Fabian Liebig of Germany, Danil Kalimullin of Russia and Pavel Tsikhanau (BLR).

Somehow, despite a nervous and at times static performance, Belaud (FRA) also joined the 300 club, earning himself the overall lead.



LASER RUN

Belaud (FRA) started ahead of Choong (GBR) but only by a 2sec margin. The two leaders had a 14sec cushion over the chasing pack consisting of Lee and Jun (KOR), Kasza and Marosi (HUN), with Justinas Kinderis of Lithuania and Palazkov (BLR) very close behind them.

Choong (GBR) immediately made up the deficit at the first visit to the range, and the top two left together – whereupon Belaud (FRA) showed his rival a clean pair of heels. He quickly stretched away from Choong (GBR) and steadily increased his lead on each 800m lap, confirming his composure with a 7sec third shoot. A cool head and steady hand at the final shoot enabled him to enjoy a victory lap on the final circuit, wrapping himself in the French flag.

The Korean men have had a quiet 2019 season, seldom featuring at the business end of UIPM competitions, but today was the day they came out of their shell and it was Jun (KOR) who best controlled his nerves with an excellent Laser Run.

He bolted past Choong (GBR) at the second shoot, then continued to extend his lead, only to find that the World Cup Final champion had not misplaced his trademark fast finish. Choong (GBR) muscled past another victim on the final bend to earn a satisfying silver.



PRESIDENT'S REACTION

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “What an exciting day we had in the Men’s Final at the UIPM 2019 Pentathlon World Championships here in Budapest.

“The 2016 world champion is our champion again, with such a step ahead of the others in the Laser Run. He was good in all disciplines and we have big respect for an athlete who can win two world titles in a short time.

“Also we saw a great performance by the Korean team and many others, and then we saw everybody else running as fast as possible to catch extra ranking points for the Olympic qualification.

“The competition was not affected by the rain, we had a great audience and it truly felt like the

Olympic Games today. It was a super atmosphere and our Honorary President was so impressed with the presentation of the athletes.

“Also our 1st Vice President Juan Antonio Samaranch, who is also the IOC Vice President, he said: ‘What a great sport we are presenting to the Olympic Family.’”

WATCH AND FOLLOW

The Pentathlon World Championships is being televised live or ‘as live’ in 144 countries, with a total of 133 hours of coverage secured by TV networks. This amounts to a total potential reach of 431 million homes.

Check out which TV network is showing the UIPM 2019 Pentathlon World Championships in your country!

On each finals day you can watch a live stream of the Fencing Bonus Round, Riding, Laser Run and the medal ceremony on UIPM TV and YouTube, with no geographical restrictions. The Laser Run and medal ceremony can also be watched live on Facebook.

Follow World Pentathlon on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for additional content, and visit the UIPM website or download the “UIPM Central” app to keep track of results.

COMPETITION SCHEDULE

The UIPM 2019 Pentathlon World Championships is running from September 2-8 and concludes on Sunday, September 8 with the Mixed Relay. There will also be a celebration on the final day to mark the 2nd Pierre de Coubertin Pentathlon Day.

The UIPM Laser Run World Championships is also taking place from September 6-8. Visit the UIPM website for a report from day two (Men’s Finals).

Tickets can be bought at the official event website.