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WORLD URBAN GAMES 2019: ‘LONG LIVE LASER RUN ... AND MODERN PENTATHLON!’



One of Hungary's last Olympic champions in Modern Pentathlon has hailed the emergence of Laser Run as a "great foundation of our sport" during the 2019 World Urban Games in Budapest (HUN).

Attila Miszer was part of the men's team who won Olympic gold in Seoul in 1988, since when Hungary has only produced two Olympic medallists.

The central European country remains a strong pillar of the UIPM sporting movement, however, and in the past two weeks it has hosted the first combined UIPM Pentathlon and Laser Run World Championships and the inaugural World Urban Games, featuring Laser Run as a showcase sport.

Attila Miszer has been central to the organisation of the latter event in his capacity as Sports Director of the 2019 World Urban Games. He is a huge advocate of UIPM's most popular development sport, which is rapidly increasing participation rates in UIPM Sports and helping to increase the number of athletes who take part in Pentathlon.

Speaking to pentathlon.org on the second day of competition in the multi-sport extravaganza, Attila Miszer said: "I think Laser Run is a great foundation for the future of our sport. As spectators here in Budapest could see, it can be organised wherever you want to – even in an office building with the shorter format.

"The targets and the pistols are absolutely secure and you can use it wherever you want to go. You can give it to people in parks, in urban environments and even buildings.

"That makes a Laser Run a very strong tool to reach out to people over the coming decades.

"Laser Run enables us to showcase and promote our stars. In our era, we could not have been stars except in Hungary, which is a Pentathlon-loving nation. That's why I think the Laser Run is an important marketing and promotional tool for us. Long live Laser Run ... and Modern Pentathlon!"

On the second day of competition, **Anastasiya Prokopenko** of **Belarus** and **Ahmed Elgendy** of **Egypt** again emerged as the best performers in the individual races.

Prokopenko (BLR), the 2018 Pentathlon world champion, kept the last two Laser Run world champions at bay, as **Jessica Varley** of **Great Britain** (2018) and **Kamilla Reti** of **Hungary** (2019) finished second and third respectively.

Varley (GBR) said: "I absolutely love the sprint format. My speed is definitely my strength so I really enjoy it, and the shooting is so much more important in this format than when it's full distance.

"Again, that's great for me, it's great practice and I've really enjoyed it so far."

The best performer in the men's event was once again Elgendy (EGY), who won the remarkable treble of Youth Olympic Games and UIPM junior and youth world titles in 2018.

He was pushed hard by second-placed **Yaraslau Radziuk** (BLR) and third-placed **Tom O'Brien** of **Ireland**, winner of two medals at the UIPM 2018 Laser Run World Championships in his home town of Dublin (IRL).

Radziuk (BLR) was also part of the top-performing Mixed Relay team for the second day in succession. Afterwards he talked about what he liked about the Sprint Laser Run format, which comprises four laps of 400m – half the distance of a standard Laser Run.

Radziuk (BLR) said: "It's quite interesting. I like the fact it's a short track so lots of people can come and watch us. I don't think Pentathlon is as famous as other sports like football and ice hockey but it's very nice.

"It doesn't matter if you are a very strong runner or a bad runner, if you shoot well you can win. It's possible for everyone and I think that's very good.

“My team is very strong, everyone knows [Prokopenko] and I’m trying to catch up with her. Tomorrow I have the Men’s Individual and Mixed Relay again and I will try my best to win.”

The action is taking place at Budapest’s Great Market Hall (Nagyvasartelep) and Laser Run is one of just eight sports on the programme for this inaugural global competition, run by the Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF).

Alongside the elite showcase on all three days there is a youth engagement programme with 840 pupils from 20 local schools (aged eight to 14) included in try-out sessions and invited on to the field of play to get a taste for UIPM’s urban sporting phenomenon.



UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “What we are witnessing at this 1st World Urban Games is really a great combination of different sports, and we see how much the athletes and spectators are loving our Laser Run format.

“Officials from GAISF are also enjoying it very much, and we always say that you can’t appreciate how exciting Laser Run is until you have seen it.

“We have had two very enjoyable days and we are looking forward to the third day – this is a great opportunity to promote our sport and to promote Laser Run and Modern Pentathlon.

“This has been a great step for us, and to see our high-ranked pentathletes competing in Laser Run will give an injection to all the others. They are having a lot of fun, and if you watch the level of Laser Run in future years you will see it go up and up and up.

“After the World Championships, you see how the coaches and trainers are still pushing the

athletes to take part in two competitions each day, and this is a new step. Laser Run was started by non-pentathletes and now pentathletes are joining us. That's another great achievement of this World Urban Games."

Laser Run was derived from the combined event that has become the climax of all Pentathlon competitions in recent years. The first UIPM Laser Run World Championships took place in Perpignan (FRA) in 2015 and the UIPM Global Laser Run City Tour was introduced in 2017 to make the sport more accessible to urban communities worldwide.

The other showcase sport on the World Urban Games programme is indoor rowing, while the six competition sports are BMX freestyle, roller freestyle, parkour, breaking, 3x3 basketball and flying disc freestyle. Visit the official website for more.