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UIPM 2020 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP CAIRO: MUIR (GBR) WINS THRILLING WOMEN'S FINAL



- First-time World Cup medallist pips Batashova (RUS) in sprint for line
- Bronze for Gubaydullina (RUS) as Sotero (ITA) and Oteiza (FRA) suffer Laser Run freeze
- World champion Silkina (BLR) eliminated in Riding after dominating Fencing

A thrilling Women's Final was settled in the final moments of the Laser Run when **Joanna Muir** of **Great Britain** held off a challenge from last year's winner to take gold at 2020 UIPM Pentathlon World Cup Cairo.

Uliana Batashova of **Russia** had briefly overtaken her rival on the final lap, aiming to retain the gold medal she won in the Egyptian capital 12 months ago, but Muir (GBR) settled an incredible duel by summoning all her stamina to cross the line first.

It was the 25-year-old's first individual Pentathlon World Cup medal and her success demonstrated the importance of form: she also won gold at the Budapest Indoor International recently.

Both events count towards qualification for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, so Muir (GBR) is making a strong claim for selection after Kate French (GBR) secured their country's first of two available quota places in 2019.

Behind the top two, the importance of Olympic qualification ranking points was underlined by the intensity of the battle. **Gulnaz Gubaydullina** (RUS) came back strongly to claim bronze ahead of **Ilke Ozyuksek** of **Turkey**, who finished 4th with a typically strong Laser Run after the initial leaders, **Marie Oteiza** of **France** and **Alice Sotero** of **Italy**, became stuck on the range at the third and fourth shoots respectively.

Sotero (ITA) finished 5th as **Janine Kohlmann** of **Germany** claimed the final place on the podium.



MEDALLISTS' REACTION

New champion **Muir** (GBR) was a picture of elation as she prepared to receive her gold medal. She said: "It hasn't sunk in yet, I can't quite believe it, to be honest.

"I had a good fence and my swim was OK, but in the Riding my stirrup snapped halfway round and I couldn't believe it - I thought 'the one day when I fence well and I am going to come off my horse'. I was so relieved to get round.

"In the Laser Run there were lots of quick runners round about me and I tried to stick with them, and not kill myself too early. It could have been anyone's race.

"I can't believe it. It feels amazing."

Silver and bronze medallists Batashova and Gubaydullina (RUS) also expressed delight at their performances.

Batashova (RUS) said: "I'm very happy, I feel perfect. It's good news for my Olympic ranking."

Gubaydullina (RUS) added: "I'm happy. Today was a hard day but I think it wasn't bad. I don't know what my coach will say, but I think it was good!"

SWIMMING

Gubaydullina (RUS) began yet another season by setting the pace in the pool, touching first in 2mins 10.98secs. Sotero (ITA) was next-fastest in 2:12.33, with Rio 2016 Olympic silver medallist Elodie Clouvel (FRA) not much slower in 2:13.92.



FENCING

World champion **Volha Silkina** of **Belarus** picked up where she left off in September 2019 in Budapest (HUN), demonstrating superb poise on the piste for a dominant score of 28V/7D.

Kohlmann (GER) also had an excellent day with the epee in hand, scoring 24V/11D, with Oteiza

(FRA) and Batashova (RUS) joined by **Tamara Alekszejev** of **Hungary** and **Natalya Coyle** of **Ireland** on 22V/13D.

Oteiza (FRA) picked up four additional points in the Bonus Round but was denied by Silkina (BLR) in the final bout on the showpiece piste.



RIDING

A dramatic round saw a number of potential medal contenders fall out of contention.

Alekszejev (HUN), Coyle (IRL) and Annika Schleu (GER) each incurred more than 50 penalty points, and it was a disastrous round for Belarus, as overall leader Silkina joined Iryna Prasiantsova (BLR) in suffering elimination while 2018 world champion Anastasiya Prokopenko (BLR) also dropped major points.

At the other end of the spectrum, there were clean rounds and scores of 300 for six athletes including Gubaydullina (RUS), while Sotero (ITA) scored 298 to give herself the honour of starting the Laser Run first.



LASER RUN

For the first two laps, Sotero (ITA) and Oteiza (FRA) kept each other in such close company at the front that it began to feel like a two-horse race, with Batashova (RUS) and Muir (GBR) seeming destined to battle for bronze.

However, Oteiza (FRA) succumbed to the pressure with a 32sec shoot, and then Sotero (ITA) also became stuck on the range ahead of the final lap, knowing that Muir (GBR) and Batashova (RUS) had caught up with her.

A classic duel ensued, and the top two played cat and mouse as they re-entered the stadium, with Batashova (RUS) making the first move on the curved circuit before Muir (GBR) proved ultimately to have the greater stamina, narrowly outpacing her rival in the last 200m.



PRESIDENT'S REACTION

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "This first Pentathlon World Cup in Cairo in the Olympic season 2020 has a high importance for all athletes on the way to the Olympic Summer Games Tokyo 2020.

"The Women's Final today has shown that all athletes are well prepared for the season. We had great performances in all disciplines and a very exciting Laser Run finish.

"The organisation of the competition has been at a high level and a lot of media are following the competition. We look forward to another dramatic day tomorrow in the Men's Final and on Sunday in the Mixed Relay."

WATCH AND FOLLOW

UIPM 2020 Pentathlon World Cup Cairo continues tomorrow (February 29) with the Men's Final and concludes with the Mixed Relay on Sunday (March 1).

A live stream of the Men's Final will be available on UIPM TV and YouTube, with no geographical restrictions, and on Facebook from 6pm CET. Up-to-date results of all competitions are available at the UIPM website.

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.

Rank	Name	Nation	MP Points
1	MUIR Joanna	GBR	1361
2	BATASHOVA Uliana	RUS	1361
3	GUBAYDULLINA Gulnaz	RUS	1349

4	OZYUKSEL Ilke	TUR	1342
5	SOTERO Alice	ITA	1338
6	KOHLMANN Janine	GER	1337
7	OTEIZA Marie	FRA	1335
8	OLIVER Mayan	MEX	1326
9	SUMMERS Francesca	GBR	1320
10	SHIMAZU Rena	JPN	1312
11	CLOUVEL Elodie	FRA	1311
12	POTAPENKO Elena	KAZ	1306
13	VENCKAUSKAITE Gintare	LTU	1303
14	VEGA Tamara	MEX	1303
15	MALISZEWSKA Anna	POL	1302
16	BRASSIL Sive	IRL	1301
17	SALMINEN Laura	FIN	1292
18	GUZI Blanka	HUN	1287
19	STEINBORN Ronja	GER	1286
20	ABDELMAKSOUD Salma	EGY	1283
21	DOMINIAK Natalia	POL	1282
22	KIM Sunwoo	KOR	1280
23	FRALTSOVA Kseniia	RUS	1279
24	SCHLEU Annika	GER	1278
25	PROKOPENKO Anastasiya	BLR	1275
26	PERMYKINA Valeriya	UKR	1252
27	ALEKSZEJEV Tamara	HUN	1248
28	TAKAMIYA Natsumi	JPN	1219
29	JURT Anna	SUI	1214
30	COYLE Natalya	IRL	1213
31	SILKINA Volha	BLR	1054
32	PRASIANTSOVA Iryna	BLR	1001
33	LANGREHR Rebecca	GER	982
34	IBATULLINA Adelina	RUS	977
35	BETTINELLI Alexandra	ARG	943
36	KIM Sehee	KOR	707