

14 APR 2021

# UIPM 2021 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP SOFIA (II): STAKES RISING FOR TOKYO 2020 HOPEFULS



- Last chance for pentathletes to qualify for Pentathlon World Cup Final
- Second part of double-header attracts 41 nations to Sofia (BUL)
- Update on COVID-19 infection prevention measures

With 100 days to go until the opening of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, the stakes are rising for the world's most versatile athletes aiming to compete in Modern Pentathlon at the rescheduled Games.

With qualification points on offer at UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Sofia (II), as well as opportunities to sharpen preparations for the Olympics, another large field of almost 200 athletes from 41 countries has gathered in Bulgaria with the aim of competing over the next four days (April 15-18).

## COVID-19 protocol

Like the two previous competitions this season, UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Sofia (II) is being run according to a set of COVID-19 protocols designed to prioritise the health and safety of all participants – athletes, coaches, technical officials and organisers.

All individuals intending to participate in Pentathlon World Cup Sofia (II) have submitted an antigen test, three of which have returned a positive result for COVID-19. Thirty-one close contacts of the three individuals have been identified, and all 34 individuals have been isolated and provided a PCR test. The results of the PCR tests are not yet available but none of the 34 individuals – 20 athletes and 14 coaches – will be permitted to participate in Pentathlon World Cup Sofia (II).

The protocols are applied to all aspects of the competition from inbound and outbound travel to accommodation and local transportation, with the intention of minimising risk of COVID-19 infections. Special publications including the *Event Organizers Infection Prevention Guidelines* and *Operational Vade Mecum* can be found at UIPM's COVID-19 information page.

## Ones to watch – Women

Having won three of the six medals on offer so far this season, **Great Britain** are again strongly represented by two athletes in the top five of the UIPM Olympic World Rankings (OWR). **Joanna Muir** and **Francesca Summers** will lead a women's team of four with world No.2 Kate French sitting this competition out.

Competition for two places at Tokyo 2020 is incredibly tight in **Belarus**, whose challenge will be led by Beijing 2008 Olympic bronze medallist and 2018 world champion **Anastasiya Prokopenko** and **Iryna Prasiantsova**, with 2019 world champion Volha Silkina absent.

Like Prokopenko (BLR), London 2012 Olympic champion **Laura Asadauskaite** of **Lithuania** finished in the top six at Pentathlon World Cup Sofia (I) and she will again be looking for a podium place alongside team-mates **Gintare Venckauskaite** and **Ieva Serapinaite**.

The 2017 world champion, **Gulnaz Gubaydullina** of **Russia**, and 2018 world silver medallist **Annika Schleu** of **Germany**, can also have high hopes of a prominent performance.



*The race to qualify for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics is hotting up for the leading women pentathletes*

### **Ones to watch – Men**

Competition has been wide open this season with six different nations winning medals – and all six medallists are in action again this week.

**Woongtae Jun** of **Korea** will be one of the favourites along with team-mates **Jihun Lee** and **Jinhwa Jung**, who are also rivals in Tokyo 2020 terms, while **Germany** have four high-ranked athletes competing for two coveted Olympic places – brothers **Patrick** and **Marvin Dogue**, **Fabian Liebig** and **Christian Zillekens**.

Others likely to be in the mix are world No.1 **Joseph Choong** (GBR) and 2018 world champion **James Cooke** (GBR), **Shuai Luo** of **China** and Rio 2016 Olympic silver medallist **Pavlo Tymoshchenko** of **Ukraine**.





*Korea athletes Jihun Lee (left) and Woongtae Jun should be in contention in Sofia (BUL)*

## Road to Tokyo

With 46 quota places for the Olympic Modern Pentathlon allocated so far, and 72 places in total up for grabs, there are still opportunities for many of the world's most versatile athletes to reach their coveted destination.

Six automatic quota places (three for women and three for men) will be on offer during the seasonal showpiece – the UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Championships – taking place in Cairo (EGY) in June.

Between now and then, athletes competing in Sofia (BUL) can earn points to qualify for the UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Final in Szekesfehervar (HUN) in May, where more qualification points for Tokyo 2020 will be available to the 72 participating athletes.

The athletes' standing in terms of Tokyo 2020 is charted in the OWR, which will determine most of the remaining places at the Games. Click to see the latest rankings for women and men.



*Belarus will be hoping for good results in the last competition of the regular UIPM Pentathlon World Cup season*

### **President's statement**

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann commented: "We had two successful competitions already in the UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup and it has been so encouraging to see a huge number of athletes from all around the world gathering and competing at a very high level.

"With 100 days to go until the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Summer Games Tokyo 2020, taking place in 2021, the athletes know that this is their time to shine and we are all looking forward to another exciting competition in the wonderful city of Sofia.

"Not only are the athletes performing at their best level, but so are the organisers who are working so hard to provide them with safe conditions in which to compete and realise their dreams on the road to Tokyo.

"The high level of organisation we already saw in Sofia during last week's Pentathlon World Cup has demonstrated that Bulgaria is a strong and reliable partner within our global movement. I am very grateful to the Bulgarian Modern Pentathlon Federation under the leadership of Andrey Kuzmanov for dealing with the complications of the pandemic in such a professional way.

"Once again the health and safety of all participants is our priority, as demonstrated by the strict infection prevention measures applied to those who have unfortunately tested positive for COVID-19. It is essential that we follow the advice of Governments and medical experts.

"I ask all athletes competing in Sofia this week to never forget their responsibilities and compete in

a spirit of fair play and respect, as envisaged by our founder Baron Pierre de Coubertin.”

## **Competition schedule**

UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Sofia (II) begins on Thursday, April 15 with qualification for the Women’s Final (Saturday, April 17). The action continues on Friday, April 16 with qualification for the Men’s Final (Sunday, April 18).

## **Watch and follow**

As of March 15, 2021, the majority of Modern Pentathlon content on UIPM TV (UIPMTV.org) became available only to subscribers. Live coverage of the Laser Run in each competition – together with highlights from earlier in the day – remains free to view.

Annual subscriptions will be priced at €29.99 with a special 50% discount (code: UIPM50%OFF) available throughout 2021, reducing the price to €14.95.

- [Sign up here](#) for your UIPM TV Yearly Pass or register for free content

Viewers who do not wish to subscribe can register their details on the site to access the free coverage, which will not be available anywhere else online. [More information.](#)

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