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UIPM 2021 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP SOFIA (II): GOLDEN GULYAS (HUN) SAVOURS FIRST WIN



SOFIA, BULGARIA: April 17, 2021 – **Michelle Gulyas** of **Hungary** surged to a remarkable, rain-soaked gold medal at UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Sofia (II), making up four places in the Laser Run and winning comfortably.

The victory continued an impressive breakthrough season for the 21-year-old, who won the season-opening Hungarian Open Indoor Championships and is now fighting hard for a Tokyo 2020 Olympic qualification place with the likes of **Tamara Alekszejev** (HUN), who finished 6th today.

The last women's event of the regular season saw Gulyas (HUN) joined on the podium by an athlete who began competing in Modern Pentathlon a year before she was born, as well as a fellow first-time medallist.

Francesca Summers became the third woman from **Great Britain** to win an individual Pentathlon World Cup medal this season and it was remarkable to see her overtake the legendary **Anastasiya Prokopenko** of **Belarus** on the final lap to earn silver, with team-mate **Joanna Muir**

(GBR) gritting her teeth to finish 4th.

Prokopenko (BLR), who became world champion in 2018 a decade after her performance at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games earned her a retrospective bronze medal, bulleted through the field in typical style to move from 16th to the podium, proving once again that age is no barrier at 36.

Mexico athletes have competed strongly this season and **Mayan Oliver** came home in 5th place, with **Gulnaz Gubaydullina** of **Russia** (7th) and **Ilke Ozyuksel** of **Turkey** (8th) completing the top eight.

The drama of the Laser Run caused a profound reversal of the leaderboard, as the two athletes who had started first – **Adelina Ibatullina** (RUS) and **Xiaonan Zhang** of **China** - finished 11th and 10th respectively.

Swimming

Gubaydullina (RUS) set the standard in the pool as she does so often, timing 2:10.08 to win clearly from nearest rivals **Rena Shimazu** of **Japan** (2:13.81) and Gulyas (HUN, 2:14.09).



Fencing

Two athletes stood out head and shoulders over the rest on the piste, as Ibatullina (RUS) and Zhang (CHN) each scored a remarkable 27V/8D.

Ibatullina (RUS), the 2019 world junior champion who secured a Tokyo 2020 quota place at the European Championships the same year, added two points to her overall score by winning the final bout in the Bonus Round.

Behind them, Alekszejev (HUN) moved into a strong position with 24V/11D, the same scoreline as **Sunwoo Kim of Korea**.



Riding

A remarkably high standard of riding was evident as 10 athletes scored the maximum 300 points, including Laser Run specialists like Prokopenko (BLR) and Ozyuksel (TUR).

Muir (GBR) moved up the leaderboard with a clean round, while Summers (GBR) dropped just two penalty points to stay just ahead of her team-mate overall. Oliver (MEX) also scored 298 to stay in contention, and Ibatullina (RUS, 293) extended her lead over Zhang (CHN, 286) to give herself a 20sec head start in Laser Run.



Laser Run

The first half of the race went serenely for 22-year-old Ibatullina (RUS), who shot decisively, but it was one of those days when the hunger of the chasing pack was to prove more powerful than the composure of the leaders.

With Gulyas (HUN), Muir and Summers (GBR) and Oliver (MEX) making immediate moves within the top 10, it was only a matter of time before the front-runners felt their presence, although Alekszejev (HUN) had a terrible day with her laser shooting and that opened the door somewhat wider for the chasers.

The third lap was when most of the big moves took place: Gulyas (HUN) overpowered Zhang (CHN) and soon reined in the tiring Ibatullina (RUS) to take control.

In the final lap, Prokopenko (BLR) bolted out of the range and into the silver-medal position but Summers (GBR) was quickly on her shoulder and ensured the women of Great Britain kept up their remarkable record of medal success in this Tokyo 2020 qualification journey, final winning their duel by 2sec to finish 8sec behind the champion.



Medallists' reaction

Gulyas (HUN) said: "It's my first World Cup medal and I'm really happy. I tried to focus on myself and my own performance and I did my best and it worked out.

"It's been tough to have two competitions in two weeks, and I also competed in Budapest, but last week I was tense and I managed to raise my performance, so I'm really happy."

Summers (GBR) said: "I'm over the moon. I had a lot left on that last lap and I just went for it - I'm so happy. It was a day of ups and downs but that's Modern Pentathlon, and I can't tell you how happy I am right now.

"There were some tough corners on the course and it was really slippery from the Riding, but luckily I'm small and I was able to nip round them and that helped me today.

"[Prokopenko] had me in the last World Cup, she just beat me, and I got her back today so I'm really happy."

Prokopenko (BLR) said: "I'm happy because my coaches said my shooting was not good in the last two World Cups in Budapest and Sofia, and today I was very, very good at shooting and I'm happy because I just ran, ran, ran.

"Maybe I'm third because I'm old! But it's true: I've been in Modern Pentathlon for 21 years and it's hard. But I am strong and it's my life. See you at the World Cup Final!"

UIPM President's reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "The second Pentathlon World Cup Women's Final in

Sofia in a short time took place in very difficult weather conditions with an enormous amount of rain.

“Thanks to the excellent preparation of the athletes and the excellent organisation with super horses, we really had an excellent presentation of our sport.

“We could see that the athletes are focusing first of all to be qualified for the World Cup Final in four weeks in Szekesfehervar, and I’m sure we will see the same high performance on the men’s side.

“It was a very exciting, challenging finish and we have shown again through the presentation of our sport what it means to be an Olympic sport.”

Watch and follow

UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Sofia (II) concludes tomorrow (April 18) with the Men's Final. Live streaming is available on UIPM TV, while results of all competitions are available at the UIPM website and the 'UIPM Central' app.

The women athletes have two remaining opportunities to qualify for the rescheduled Tokyo 2020 Olympics: the UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Final in Szekesfehervar (HUN) in May and the UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Championships in Cairo (EGY) in June.

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Rank	Name	Nation	MP Points
1	GULYAS Michelle	HUN	1353
2	SUMMERS Francesca	GBR	1345
3	PROKOPENKO Anastasiya	BLR	1343
4	MUIR Joanna	GBR	1340
5	OLIVER Mayan	MEX	1337
6	ALEKSZEJEV Tamara	HUN	1334
7	GUBAYDULLINA Gulnaz	RUS	1332
8	OZYUKSEL Ilke	TUR	1330
9	MALISZEWSKA Anna	POL	1330
10	ZHANG Xiaonan	CHN	1329
11	IBATULLINA Adelina	RUS	1320
12	SCHLEU Annika	GER	1315
13	SERAPINAITE Ieva	LTU	1308
14	BATASHOVA Uliana	RUS	1299
15	VENCKAUSKAITE Gintare	LTU	1293
16	KIM Sunwoo	KOR	1292
17	GUZI Blanka	HUN	1284
18	NOVOTNA Veronika	CZE	1280
19	ARCEO Mariana	MEX	1278
20	YAMANAKA Shino	JPN	1275
21	LANGREHR Rebecca	GER	1274
22	POTAPENKO Elena	KAZ	1270
23	VARLEY Jessica	GBR	1268
24	KIM Unju	KOR	1263
25	HERNANDEZ Sophia	GUA	1262
26	KOHLMANN Janine	GER	1256

27	JURT Anna	SUI	1245
28	ABDELMAKSOUND Salma	EGY	1245
29	NOWACKA Oktawia	POL	1239
30	SHIMAZU Rena	JPN	1231
31	RIFF Lisa	FRA	1231
32	KANDIL Amira	EGY	1223
33	SIMON Sarolta	HUN	1214
34	SALMINEN Laura	FIN	1188
35	HEREDIA Laura	ESP	1183
36	KLIMIANKOVA Kseniya	BLR	476