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UIPM 2021 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP FINAL: FRENCH (GBR) COMPLETES SEASON OF SUPREMACY



- World No.3 adds showpiece gold to medals won in regular season
- Schleu (GER) storms to silver as debutante Gulyas (HUN) claims bronze
- World record in Fencing Bonus Round for Langrehr (GER)

It started and finished with gold, sandwiched with silver. An extraordinary season for **Kate French** of **Great Britain** ended in victory at the UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Final.

Having won gold in Budapest (HUN) and silver in Sofia (BUL) during her previous appearances in this year's Pentathlon World Cup, world No.3 French (GBR) saved the best for last with a sumptuous victory in the showpiece competition.

Only 36 female and 36 male athletes earn the right to compete in the Pentathlon World Cup Final, which mirrors the competition structure of the upcoming Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.



World No.4 **Annika Schleu** of **Germany** showed her enduring class to claim silver – her first medal since the UIPM 2019 Pentathlon World Cup Final in Tokyo (JPN) – having obliterated the field from a starting place of 14th in Laser Run.

The emergence of **Mexico** athletes has been one of the features of the 2021 season and **Mayan Oliver** also aced the Laser Run to finish 4th, one place ahead of **Natalya Coyle** of **Ireland** with **Joanna Muir** (GBR) pipping **Alice Sotero** of **Italy** in a sprint to the finish line for 6th.

With only one remaining opportunity to gain Tokyo 2020 qualification points on offer at the UIPM 2021 Pentathlon and Laser Run World Championships in Cairo (EGY) in June, the athletes left nothing in their lungs in a frantic dash to the line.

Swimming

Rio 2016 Olympic silver medallist **Elodie Clouvel** of **France** consigned **Gulnaz Gubaydullina** of **Russia** to a rare defeat in the pool, timing 2:09.35 compared to her rival's 2:09.79 with Sotero (ITA) third-fastest in 2:11.58.



Fencing

The Fencing Ranking Round was held on May 13 and featured standout performances by **Amira Kandil** of **Egypt** and **Xiaonan Zhang** of **China**, with French (GBR) also scoring heavily.

Kandil (EGY) ensured she would be the last woman standing in the Bonus Round, defeating Zhang (CHN) in the final bout – but the star of the day in Fencing was an athlete who had started way back in the pack.

Rebecca Langrehr of **Germany** started the elimination ladder in 27th place, but she would occupy the piste for almost a third of the event, claiming an astonishing 13 victories.

It was a new world record for the Fencing Bonus Round and a stunning demonstration of how a fencer can improve their overall position by a significant margin. Standing tall with her left-handed double-thrust, Langrehr (GER) put together an amazing run finally ended by 2017 World Cup Final champion **Tamara Alekszejev** (HUN).



Riding

As throughout this season, there was a high standard of horse management as eight athletes scored the maximum 300 points, including overall leader Kandil (EGY), experienced duo Schleu (GER) and Clouvel (FRA), Oliver (MEX) and reigning world champion **Volha Silkina** of **Belarus**.

French (GBR) and Coyle (IRL) stayed on course with scores of 296, while at the other end of the scale there was elimination agony for Alekszejev (HUN) and **Laura Salminen** of **Finland**.



Laser Run

A lead of 25sec would have been unassailable in some competitions, but such was the quality of the chasing pack it never looked like Kandil (EGY) would have an untroubled experience in pole position.

With only 10sec separating the rest of the top 10, it was always going to be a thrilling Laser Run and the remarkable performances of Oliver (MEX, 11:34.61) and Schleu (GER, 11:38.58) demonstrated what can be achieved from the mid-part of the field.

French (GBR) has earned a reputation as the “ice queen” of Modern Pentathlon and it came as a surprise to nobody when she calmly wore down the lead of Kandil (EGY), who shot very well, in the first half of the race and then seized a lead that she was never likely to relinquish.

Fresh from her gold medal at the last Pentathlon World Cup in Sofia (BUL), Gulyas (HUN) seemed the most likely threat to French (GBR) alongside **Marie Oteiza** (FRA), but a sharp exit from the third visit to the shooting range saw Schleu (GER) propel herself into medal contention.

Gulyas (HUN) has had a brilliant breakthrough season but as her legs tired on the final lap, the more experienced Schleu (GER) seized her opportunity to turn bronze into silver.



Medallists' reaction

French (GBR) said: "It has been a long process to get to this point so I'm really happy. It was definitely a tough day and I can't say I felt amazing today, so that makes me even happier to come away with gold.

"I always go into the Laser Run thinking about my performance and aiming to pick people off. I think it was the third lap when I caught [Amira Kandil of Egypt].

"I'm heading in the right direction and hope to keep training hard and aiming for gold in Tokyo."

Schleu (GER) said: "I'm so happy, I never expected to be so strong. I was thinking about top six but then I started running and suddenly I was in 4th and I took my chance.

"I think we're nearly there in preparation for Tokyo. I never thought about a medal - that's 100% true - because the girls were so strong, but I overtook so many people at the third shoot because the sun was so deep. To finish in 2nd place, I'm overwhelmed."

Gulyas (HUN) said: "It's an incredible feeling, it's my first World Cup Final and to get on the podium is incredible.

"I think the audience were cheering me to make the podium so I was very happy. I'm proud of my country and hope they are proud of me too.

"I had a really good day, I had some issues with shooting but I had time to fix it so I think it's going to be really good this year.

"I'm still doing Junior World Championships this year and it's much more difficult at this level, of course, especially in Fencing and Laser Run."

UIPM President's reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "We had a very exciting finish here at the Women's UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Final in Szekesfehervar. The Egyptian lady was in front for a long time but she was caught up by the excellent Laser Run combination of athletes from many different countries.

"The whole day was so exciting, with excellent performances in Riding based on good horses but also from the athletes. We also saw a new record of 13 victories in the Fencing Bonus Round from the German lady.

"We have to say that this World Cup Final was really a highlight of the World Cup season and therefore congratulations to all the athletes on their placings, and thank you to the organisers who did a wonderful job in preparation to make all participants feel safe and confident.

"We are looking forward to the men's final tomorrow and I'm sure we will see a high level of performance again."

Watch and follow

The UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Final continues tomorrow (May 15) with the completion of the men's event, with the Mixed Relay to follow on May 16.

Television coverage is available in 141 countries – find out which networks are broadcasting the action in your country.

Live streaming is available on UIPM TV, while results of all competitions are available at the UIPM website and the 'UIPM Central' app.

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Rank	Name	Nation	MP Points
1	FRENCH Kate	GBR	1384
2	SCHLEU Annika	GER	1378
3	GULYAS Michelle	HUN	1376
4	OLIVER Mayan	MEX	1375
5	COYLE Natalya	IRL	1373
6	MUIR Joanna	GBR	1371
7	SOTERO Alice	ITA	1371
8	SUMMERS Francesca	GBR	1370
9	PROKOPENKO Anastasiya	BLR	1367
10	KANDIL Amira	EGY	1355
11	ASADAUSKAITE Laura	LTU	1353
12	CLOUVEL Elodie	FRA	1349
13	OTEIZA Marie	FRA	1344
14	ARCEO Mariana	MEX	1343
15	VENCKAUSKAITE Gintare	LTU	1342
16	SERAPINAITE Ieva	LTU	1341

17	SILKINA Volha	BLR	1340
18	SHIMAZU Rena	JPN	1336
19	PRASIANTSOVA Iryna	BLR	1336
20	ZHANG Xiaonan	CHN	1331
21	GUZI Blanka	HUN	1322
22	OZYUKSEL Ilke	TUR	1322
23	GUBAYDULLINA Gulnaz	RUS	1321
24	MICHELI Elena	ITA	1311
25	BRASSIL Sive	IRL	1309
26	ABDELMAKSOUUD Salma	EGY	1300
27	HEREDIA Laura	ESP	1298
28	MALISZEWSKA Anna	POL	1295
29	KOHLMANN Janine	GER	1293
30	VEGA Tamara	MEX	1290
31	LANGREHR Rebecca	GER	1288
32	JURT Anna	SUI	1257
33	HERNANDEZ Sophia	GUA	1241
34	BATASHOVA Uliana	RUS	1182
35	ALEKSZEJEV Tamara	HUN	1041
36	SALMINEN Laura	FIN	1023