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UIPM 2021 PENTATHLON JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: GOLD FOR COMEBACK QUEEN CASTAUDI (FRA)



- New world champion surges through field with sub-13min Laser Run
- European champion Rinaudo (ITA) takes silver after slip by Adomaityte (LTU)
- Janusz Peciak (POL) pays tribute to 'great talent' emerging ahead of Paris 2024

An exceptional Laser Run performance enabled **Rebecca Castaudi** of **France** to become the first individual junior world champion in two years.

Castaudi (FRA) left the field stunned as she rose from a starting position of 21st to overcome a 49sec deficit and clinch the gold medal on day five of the UIPM 2021 Pentathlon Junior World Championships.

One of the athletes she surged past was **Alice Rinaudo** of **Italy**, the European junior champion and former UIPM Under 19 world champion who seemed to have done everything right in claiming the title – until a dramatic Laser Run finale.

After unexpectedly losing her lead, there was another twist in the tale for Rinaudo (ITA) as she was overtaken by the rampaging **Elzbieta Adomaityte** of **Lithuania**, but her legs gave way in the final sprint, enabling Rinaudo (ITA) to win silver. Adomaityte (LTU) crawled across the line for a hard-earned bronze ahead of **Rita Erdos** of **Hungary**.

More than 250 athletes aged 21 and under are taking part in the last global competition before the rescheduled Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.



Medallists' reaction

Castaudi (FRA), who turned 20 last week, said: "I feel very, very good – I never felt so good in my life.

"It's an immense joy and satisfaction for me, I trained hard for this all year and this is the outcome so I am very happy today.

"The run was definitely my best discipline. I gave everything.

"I felt integrated quickly here in Egypt. I ate well, plus I am vegetarian and they adapted for me which is nice, I want to say thanks for that.

"I could adapt well to the heat, the climate and environment. And the people are kind. It is a great competition.

"I aim for Paris 2024. Next year I join INSEP, so it is really to aim for the Olympics, it makes me very happy and I am looking forward to it and training."

Rinaudo (ITA), 21, said: "It feels really amazing because, two weeks ago, I was European champion. I was so tired but I wanted to keep some energy for the Laser Run because I knew it

was the last competition of the year for me, and then I would go on holidays.

"I just told myself to concentrate and do what I could do. I think Laser Run was good and also my Fencing. It wasn't going so well, but I decided to take it point by point and fortunately it was very close between the athletes and I was able to keep my position.

"Of course I am aiming for Paris. This year I will watch the Tokyo Olympics at home and I will cheer for my team-mates [Elena Micheli and Alice Sotero] and support them."

Adomaityte (LTU), 19, said: "Coming back from European Championships a week ago, I was 3rd there and today I had a really nervous day at the Fencing. I managed to have a clear round in the Riding and I was so happy, and the only thing I was worried about was my shooting.

"The first shooting was bad and I dropped to 9th place, but I worked my way up again. In the last running lap I was 2nd and my brain was like 'oh my god, I'm going to finish 2nd' but my legs were like, 'no you're not'.

"I ran as fast as I could but then my legs just collapsed and I fell, and Alice was like 'hello, I'm here' and she finished 2nd, but I crawled across the line and I'm happy that I'm 3rd. That's my second medal this year.

"I'm so happy because COVID was last year and I worked with all my heart, and now we see the results.

"I was really scared about Egypt and the weather, but because of global warming we had very similar weather in Lithuania – 31 and humid! So that helped me to prepare.

"Of course I'm going to watch the Olympics and shout my voice out for Lithuania."



Swimming

Competing in her home country, the 2018 Youth Olympic Games champion rose to the occasion immediately as the Swimming was won by **Salma Abdelmaksoud** of **Egypt** in a time of 2:10.22. In close pursuit and also ducking under 2:11 were **Jiyoung Seo** of **Korea** and **Katsiaryna Etsina** of **Belarus**.



Fencing

Although it was incredibly tight between the top 10 athletes, the clear winner of the Fencing Ranking Round was Erdos (HUN), who scored 23V/12D.

Erdos (HUN) was beaten in the Bonus Round by Adomaityte (LTU), who added four bonus points after being one of eight athletes who scored 21V/14D. Abdelmaksoud (EGY) and Rinaudo (ITA) were also among that group.



Riding

A perfect score of 300 was just enough for Rinaudo (ITA) to sneak into the overall lead, one point ahead of Abdelmaksoud (EGY) who dislodged one obstacle.

There were also maximum scores for Adomaityte (LTU), **Eszter Kovacs** (HUN) and **Anhelina Dobrovolskaya** (BLR), while Castaudi (FRA) began to advance on the leaderboard thanks to a solid 295.



Laser Run

Setting off with only 1sec between them, Rinaudo (ITA) and Abdelmaksoud (EGY) shared the early initiative but Rinaudo (ITA) moved clear after the second shoot with **Jessye Gomesse** (FRA) and Erdos (HUN) in quick pursuit.

Just when it seemed like Rinaudo (ITA) might be able to consolidate her lead, she found an unexpected rival on her shoulder. Castaudi (FRA) had laced through the field without hesitation and showed exceptional conviction to continue advancing all the way to the front of the field.

After shaking off another surge by team-mate Gomesse (FRA), Castaudi (FRA) reached the final shoot in the lead with Rinaudo (ITA) and Erdos (HUN) in the other podium positions, and the leader once again shot with nerveless poise to set off on a victory lap.

In the end she finished 12sec ahead of silver medallist Rinaudo (ITA), who had lost her position to Adomaityte (LTU) until the sprinter's collapse in front of the finish line.

Although nobody could compete with the champion's Laser Run time of 12:58, there was also a noticeable performance from **Anna Jurt** of **Switzerland**, who moved up 21 places with her time of 13:29.

UIPM reaction

Janusz Peciak OLY, UIPM Executive Board Member for Sport and 1976 Olympic champion, said: "I was very pleased with the organisation and also the level of this competition. Today's Women's Final was very exciting; Rebecca Castaudi started more than 40sec behind the leader and she won with fantastic running.

"It was also very exciting on the finish line because we didn't know until the final stages who would win. A lot of these athletes will probably feature in the Olympic Games in Paris 2024 – I can see a lot of great talent.

"Also I would like to say thank you to the organisers who keep these athletes very safe, with great organisation."

Watch and follow

The UIPM 2021 Junior World Championships in Alexandria (EGY) runs from July 12-18 and continues on Saturday, July 17 with the Men's Final before concluding on Sunday, July 18 with the Mixed Relay.

Visit the UIPM website or download "UIPM Central" from your app store to keep track of live results throughout the competition.

Follow World Pentathlon on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, VK or Weibo throughout the season for additional content.

| Rank | Name | Nation | MP Points |
|------|---------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| 1 | CASTAUDI Rebecca | FRA | 1280 |
| 2 | RINAUDO ALICE | ITA | 1268 |
| 3 | ADOMAITYTE Elzbieta | LTU | 1265 |
| 4 | ERDOS Rita | HUN | 1259 |
| 5 | JURT Anna | SUI | 1243 |
| 6 | GOMESSE JESSYE | FRA | 1236 |
| 7 | ETSINA Katsiaryna | BLR | 1233 |
| 8 | NOVIKOVA Viktoriia | RUS | 1230 |
| 9 | MERCURI Beatrice | ITA | 1226 |
| 10 | NOVOTNA Veronika | CZE | 1221 |
| 11 | EGLOFF Lea | SUI | 1217 |
| 12 | ABDELMAKSoud Salma | EGY | 1213 |
| 13 | PYDYSZEWSKA Ewa | POL | 1211 |
| 14 | KANDIL Amira | EGY | 1210 |
| 15 | KOVACS Eszter | HUN | 1207 |
| 16 | MEDINA GONZÁLEZ Andrea | ESP | 1203 |
| 17 | PAULA SOPHIA VALENCIA FRANCOGUA | | 1196 |
| 18 | SAMOILOVA Maria | RUS | 1192 |
| 19 | JAWAID Marlina | SWE | 1192 |
| 20 | ISMAIL MALAK | EGY | 1190 |
| 21 | YAKOVLEVA Lyudmila | KAZ | 1187 |
| 22 | BREITNER Hanna | HUN | 1182 |
| 23 | NIEDZIALKOWSKA Daria | POL | 1182 |
| 24 | SUKORA Katjarina | BLR | 1176 |

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|----|-------------------------|-----|------|
| 25 | OLIVER Catherine Mayran | MEX | 1166 |
| 26 | KLUNNIKOVA OLHA | UKR | 1166 |
| 27 | DOBROVOLSKAYA Anhelina | BLR | 1145 |
| 28 | VAN DER MERWE Alida | RSA | 1137 |
| 29 | SEO Jiyoung | KOR | 1137 |
| 30 | POLAT Yaren Nur | TUR | 1118 |
| 31 | MEZA Cecilia | MEX | 1113 |
| 32 | MIRELES Melissa | MEX | 1084 |
| 33 | KREJCI Katerina | LAT | 959 |
| 34 | FERNANDEZ DONDA Esther | GER | 929 |
| 35 | SOLOVEVA Yana | RUS | 741 |
| 36 | REBOISSON Clémence | FRA | 457 |