

01 JUL 2023

## 3RD EUROPEAN GAMES: SOTERO AND MALAN LEAD ITALIAN CHARGE TO PARIS 2024 OLYMPIC GAMES



- Sotero (ITA) wins women's gold ahead of Heredia (ESP) and Green (GBR)
- Men's champion Malan (ITA) joined on podium by Choong (GBR) and Bohm (HUN)
- Czech Republic, France, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Switzerland and Ukraine also claim Olympic places

KRAKOW, POLAND: July 1, 2023 – Sixteen athletes have earned their countries direct qualification quota places at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games with outstanding performances at the 3rd European Games.

On the penultimate day of the multi-sport Games in Krakow-Malopolska (POL), eight women and eight men competed for the third time in the competition and it was team-mates **Alice Sotero** and **Giorgio Malan** of Italy who were crowned new European champions after topping the standings.

World-record breaker Sotero (ITA) won the Women's Final ahead of silver medallist **Laura Heredia** of **Spain** and **Olivia Green** of **Great Britain**, who claimed bronze.

The women's medallists were joined by the following five athletes in attaining a direct Olympic qualification quota place for their country:

- **Laura Asadauskaite** of **Lithuania**
- **Marie Oteiza** of **France**
- **Michelle Gulyas** of **Hungary**
- **Annika Zillekens** of **Germany**
- **Lucie Hlavackova** of **Czech Republic**

Sotero (ITA), who finished 4th at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, was at the top of her game for most of the event, winning the Fencing Ranking and Bonus Rounds as well as Swimming, and scoring 293 in Riding.

She was rewarded with a new overall Modern Pentathlon world record of 1,443 points, with Heredia (ESP) – who could become the first Spanish woman to compete in an Olympic Modern Pentathlon next year – and Green (GBR) also exceeding the previous record of 1,424 held by **Blanka Guzi** (HUN).

A new world Laser Run record was set in the Women's Semi-finals by Guzi (HUN), who posted an exceptional time of 10min 48.90sec. The previous record held by **Gintare Venckauskaite** (LTU) was also bettered in the Final by team-mate Asadauskaite (10:50.10), Venckauskaite herself (10:54.40) and Green (GBR, 10:57.40).



*From left to right: Laura Heredia (ESP), Alice Sotero (ITA) and Olivia Green (GBR)*

*Photo credit: Krakow Małopolska 2023 3rd European Games Organising Committee*

Later, Malan (ITA) was the shock winner of the Men's Final after destroying a packed field to achieve an eventually comfortable victory over Tokyo 2020 Olympic champion **Joseph Choong** (GBR), who won silver as **Csaba Bohm** (HUN) picked up bronze. Malan (ITA) even tied the current world record of 1,534 points set by Woongtae Jun of Korea earlier this season.

The three medallists were joined by the following five athletes in attaining a direct Olympic qualification quota place for their country:

- **Valentin Prades** of **France**
- **Marvin Dogue** of **Germany**
- **Lukasz Gutkowski** of **Poland**
- **Oleksandr Tovkai** of **Ukraine**
- **Alexandre Dallenbach** of **Switzerland**

A total of 18 Paris 2024 direct quota qualification places have now been achieved, after the earlier success of **Elena Micheli** (ITA) and **Mohanad Shaban** of **Egypt** at the UIPM 2023 Pentathlon World Cup Final in Ankara (TUR).

As the action came to an end in Krakow (POL), Germany won Women's Team gold with silver and bronze going to Lithuania and Hungary respectively. Great Britain took the Men's Team gold and there were medals for France (silver) and Italy (bronze).

Earlier in the week, Czech Republic (**Karolina Krenkova** and **Martin Vlach**) won the Mixed Relay, with Hungary (**Kamilla Reti** and **Mihaly Koleszar**) winning silver and Great Britain (**Jessica Varley** & **Samuel Curry**) winning bronze.



*From left to right: Joseph Choong (GBR), Giorgio Malan (ITA) and Csaba Bohm (HUN)*

*Photo credit: Filip Komorous*

### Champions' reaction

Women's gold medallist Sotero (ITA) said: "There were so many times I could get a medal, I think the last one was in 2019, so to win gold here in front of my family and coaches, it's very funny and beautiful.

"I think the conditions were similar to an Olympic Games, so we could try to feel like we were competing as Olympians here. I think I need to focus more on Fencing and Shooting, which were the most important disciplines for me here.

"I think it's the first time a woman and man from the same team won the gold medal at this level of competition, so it's beautiful for us, and good for future competitions like this.

"I am happy with how I came back after the pregnancy, and now I qualified for Paris and I will try my best there. I hope something will happen different to Tokyo."

Men's champion Malan (ITA) said: "My running is good, and I tried to go at my pace. My focus was on shooting, because sometimes my shooting is not so good. Today it was good enough, and I'm



super happy.

“My focus has been really on Paris these past two years. So I can’t really think about what will happen after Riding is replaced. Ask me after Paris.”



*Earlier in the week, Czech Republic (Karolina Krenkova and Martin Vlach) won the Mixed Relay*

*Photo credit: Filip Komorous*

#### UIPM President's reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “First of all, let me say thank you that we were allowed to have Modern Pentathlon in the programme of the European Games, with the Olympic qualification for eight women and eight men. It was excellent promotion for our sport to be seen together with other sports like we have in the Olympic Games.

“Everything that was prepared for this competition was at a high level, also the horses were the best horses of the season, and both men and women performed in such a way that I’m very proud of. This is a message to the world.

“The Spanish athlete, it was a surprise that she was able to get on the podium, also the Italians winning two times, there is a dynamic of different countries producing athletes who can win. The athletes were so focused, but also fair, in the competitions, I must say thank you to all the coaches for the way they prepared their athletes for this very important qualification competition for Paris 2024.

“We are so united in our movement, and that makes me very proud, and I am thankful to all the

referees and volunteers who made it happen. Congratulations to the Organising Committee, and to the European Olympic Committees President Spyros Capralos and his team, and to the people of Poland who supported this European Games and especially the Modern Pentathlon competition, which I am sure they enjoyed very much.”

#### Watch and follow

The 3rd European Games has now concluded and results and other content can be found at the event website.

The next competition with Paris 2024 Olympic qualification places at stake will be the UIPM 2023 Pentathlon and Laser Run World Championships in Bath (GBR). All other events on the 2023 Modern Pentathlon and UIPM Sports competition calendar can be viewed [here](#).