

24 SEP 2023

19TH ASIAN GAMES: ZHANG (CHN) AND JUN (KOR) CELEBRATE GOLD AND PARIS 2024 OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION



- Women's and Men's Individual champions retain titles first won in 2018
- Thailand seals first Olympic Modern Pentathlon berth thanks to Yohuang (THA)
- Athletes from Japan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan also seal Paris 2024 places

Mingyu Zhang of **China** and **Woongtae Jun** of **Korea** retained their titles as Asian Games champions on a day when 10 pentathletes won direct qualification quota places at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Zhang (CHN) and Jun (KOR) both repeated their gold medals from the 18th edition of the multi-sport Games in Jakarta (INA) in 2018. And six of the 11 nations taking part in Modern Pentathlon left with quota places for Paris 2024, with **Japan**, **Kazakhstan** and **Uzbekistan** joining the Chinese and Koreans on the list and **Thailand** attaining an historic first Olympic qualification.

Zhang (CHN) came from behind in the Women's Final, overtaking **Sunwoo Kim** (KOR) and teammate **Bian Yufei** (CHN) to consign them to silver and bronze respectively. China won team gold

followed by Japan (silver) and Korea (bronze).

With a maximum of one Paris 2024 quota place per nation per gender, the following athletes clinched the five available spots in the Women's Final:

- **Mingyu Zhang** (CHN) – gold
- **Sunwoo Kim** (KOR) – silver
- **Misaki Uchida** (JPN) – 4th
- **Elena Potapenko** (KAZ) – 5th
- **Alise Fakhrutdinova** (UZB) – 7th

The comeback in the Men's Final was perhaps even more dramatic as Tokyo 2020 Olympic bronze medallist Jun (KOR) overcame a 32sec head start to finish 16sec clear of team-mate **Jihun Lee** (KOR), who held on to win silver ahead of bronze medallist **Shuhuan Li** (CHN) with **Jinhwa Jung** (KOR) finishing 4th. Korea won team gold with silver going to China and bronze to Japan.

The following athletes clinched the five available Paris 2024 quota places in the Men's Final:

- **Woongtae Jun** (KOR) – gold
- **Shuhuan Li** (CHN) – bronze
- **Taishu Sato** (JPN) – 6th
- **Georgiy Boroda-Dudochkin** (KAZ) – 10th
- **Phurit Yohuang** (THA) – 11th

Almost half (34) of the 72 places at Paris 2024 have now been allocated. The other nations taking part in Modern Pentathlon at the 19th Asian Games were India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Singapore.



Champions' reaction

Women's gold medallist Zhang (CHN) said: "I feel very good and I want to thank all my team and coaches and my family. We had some turnover but the result is good. I didn't think I could win, 100 per cent, but I tried my best to create the best result. I hope my result in Paris can be better than in Tokyo."

Men's gold medallist Jun (KOR) said: "I now have two individual gold medals from the Asian Games and a team gold. This is my last competition of the season and I'm very happy."

"I was pleased with the Laser Run, because I had a few problems in Fencing, and then it was a great race with Jihun. We are friends as well as competitors."

"I was very happy to catch the Paris 2024 Olympic place, and now I can prepare well this year and next year. I will try to improve on my 3rd place from Tokyo."

Women's Final

Bian (CHN) led the way in Fencing with 28V/8D in the Ranking Round and four additional points in the Bonus Round, winning the last bout against 2nd-ranked Kim (KOR, 26V/10D).

The Chinese performed superbly in Riding with Bian (CHN), Zhang (CHN) and **Xiuting Zhong** (CHN) each securing the maximum 300 points, with Kim (KOR) incurring only one time penalty. Potapenko (KAZ) also had a clear round.

Swimming was tight between the overall leaders as Uchida (JPN) made a significant gain, timing

2:07.80 with **Hana Shibata** (JPN) next-fastest with her time of 2:10.26.

Zhang (CHN) started the Laser Run in 3rd place, trailing Kim (KOR) by 14sec and Bian (CHN) by 30sec, but her impressive and decisive performance enabled her to overcome both rivals in a time of 11:57.58.



Men's Final

Lee (KOR) was on fire in Fencing, scoring 22V/6D in the Ranking Round and adding the four available bonus points to give himself a strong lead. His nearest rival on the piste was **Pavel Ilyashenko** (KAX), with 20V/8D. Lee (KOR) then aced Riding with a perfect score of 300, along with Jung (KOR) and **Yan Chen** (CHN).

In Swimming the gap was only partially reduced, as Lee (KOR) was 7th-fastest, but Jun (KOR) edged 10 points closer to his team-mate overall with a top time of 1:59.28.

It was hard to see anyone but Jun (KOR) challenging Lee (KOR) for gold, and so it proved as one of the sport's enduring superstars showed his compatriot how to manage pressure with a decisive 10:30.19. The only athlete to complete the course faster was Shuai Luo (CHN), who had been eliminated in Riding but bounced back with a 10:22.87.

Official reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "This was a great competition for all our Asian nations who qualified for this Asian Games with their National Olympic Committees' support. And we can see new faces and new blood coming to our sport society – I have seen this growth in the Asian Games since 1986 with great promotion for our sport across Asia.

“I have to thank the Asian Confederation, under the leadership of Mr Kim with all his colleagues, and a big thanks to the host country China for delivering in an unbelievable way with the facilities and volunteers and support of the Government and NOC.

“It is important to see the motivation of nations – we saw here Thailand reaching the Final for the first time and achieving Olympic qualification. The level of our sport is growing from Asian Games to Asian Games, and we are looking forward to the next one in Japan. My thanks go to all athletes and coaches who have prepared them in the best possible way.

“We are looking forward now to the next competitions in preparation for Paris 2024, where we still have Riding as one of our five disciplines before we move to Obstacle. We have an exciting new format for Paris and we wanted to modernise our sport and make it shorter and much more attractive – and the athletes have adapted.

“We will have a great presentation of our sport in Paris next year, and I am grateful to everybody who has voted at Congress to endorse the positive changes we have put in place.”

Asian Modern Pentathlon Confederation President Hyunjun Kim added: “Many thanks to the Chinese Federation for delivering this high-level, high-quality competition.

“The Asian Confederation is working very hard to have more member federations in our competitions and in our society, and I think we see here the results of that hard work. Also in the future, we expect to have more new federations because of the new Obstacle disciplines.

“First the National Federations must work to develop the sport in their countries, and then we as the Confederation are ready to support them to prepare athletes for competitions.”



Watch and follow

The next competition with direct qualification for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at stake is the 19th Pan American Games in Santiago (CHI) from October 21-27. Videos of the recent UIPM 2023 Pentathlon and Laser Run World Championships in Bath (GBR) can be watched at UIPM TV, where annual subscriptions cost €14.99.

All other events on the 2023 Modern Pentathlon and UIPM Sports competition calendar can be viewed [here](#).

[Click here](#) for a full explanation of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games Modern Pentathlon qualification process.

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