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MODERN PENTATHLON AT PARIS 2024 OLYMPIC GAMES: WOMEN'S FINAL REACTION



On a gloriously sunny Sunday afternoon in the historic surrounds of the Palace of Versailles a new Olympic Games champion was crowned in the Women's Final of Modern Pentathlon. Here is a rapid round-up of athlete reaction from the Mixed Zone after the Women's Final at Paris 2024:

Michelle Gulyas (HUN), gold medallist: "Amazing. I cannot even describe how happy about I am about this medal. Starting into the competition, I felt very strong, but I didn't even think about winning, and I thought, 'Okay, I will have a good competition. This year wasn't so strong for me, so I will do my best from all the disciplines, and then who knows what will be enough for the pentathlon gold medal?'

"I got my Olympic quota last year at the European Championships and since then, for my physical disciplines, it was all about the Olympics. So, we were trying to put the best form until the Olympics. It was tough to feel so bad in the competitions, because I was always a little bit tired. I

never really had that rest before the competition. So, this is the first competition where I came and I was very fit, I was relaxed, and I could do the competition.

"I had a very, very good horse. So, I can thank him a lot for making me 300 points today. It was my last Riding, so it was really emotional. It was nice finishing my horse-riding career with 300 points. So, I enjoyed it.

"During shooting, I was trying to focus only on myself. I was like '15,000 people, who cares?'. But of course, I cared about it because during running, it was helping me a lot. And because of the crowd, I always knew where Elodie was, because depending on which side she was running on, the crowd was so, so loud there, so I didn't even have to look back.

"I hope more little kids try Modern Pentathlon. Kids who are training at home, they see me struggling all year and now winning a gold medal, it will give them a little hope that even if they have tough times, they can still make very nice things at the end."



Elodie Clouvel (FRA), silver medallist: "It's amazing.

You know what I have been through this season. When I told you we would write a beautiful story in Paris, now it's true. And it's the story I wanted to tell, a story of resilience, courage, and that we should never give up even when we hit the bottom. One year ago I wanted to quit, today I am an Olympic medallist with two incredible athletes at the top level, with Michelle Gulyas and Seungmin Seong who is reigning world champion. It was really high level. I knew it was coming back behind me but I didn't let it go in the Laser Run, I was flying and it lifted me and the whole crowd lifted me. It was crazy.

"In the first shoot, my old demons came back. I was quite alone at the stand, I was slow to get into it, there was a bit of wind that distracted me, I was emotional. Afterwards I stopped thinking and just ran. I thought about Ahmed Elgendy [gold medallist in the Men's Final], I watched his Laser Run again, and I thought 'go now, do the same, go in the front'. But Michelle was exceptional today, I want to congratulate her. I'm already super happy.

"It's crazy. When I realised it, I was with my horse on the last jump, I literally flew with him through the whole course, he was amazing. I thank him, his name is Fly. He's a horse from Garde Républicaine. I thank him because today I was with him, he handled the pressure and there was a

lot of pressure because I was going last. It was completely silent. Marie [Oteiza] fell before, so I was emotional, we got scared. Then I reconnected to my horse and when we entered the arena, it was amazing. I didn't even feel I knocked a bar off, I was so much in the moment, with my horse. It was my last course, it was magic. I will never forget that horse.

"I cannot compare Olympic medals from Rio and Paris, but this one definitely has a special feel. It is the medal of resilience, perseverance, showing that you shouldn't give up. Today I felt like a queen in the Versailles Palace, cheered by the audience, I didn't get the French anthem but there were many flags around, the public cheering us.

"This is silver. But it's much more than a medal.

"I would have wanted the Olympic gold, of course. I started for that, going first. Ahmed Elgendy started first too. But in the shooting he was excellent. For me it was already incredible what I did in shooting today. I am so grateful for the road I walked, with little confidence in that discipline and all I went through this year. But I managed.

"I didn't say no, I will continue. I want to try the new Obstacle discipline, it is important to me. I will probably take a pause right now. I would like to build a family, have a baby... And we will have four years to prepare for next Olympics in 2028. this time it was only three, so it makes a big difference. But yes, I didn't say stop. I feel good in my body and in my mind. As I said the old Elodie is back, and I still want more. So what's coming will be beautiful."

Seungmin Seong (KOR), bronze medallist: "I am very excited. I thought that I would cry but I am not sad at all, I am really happy now. It was my first time competing in a Games in such a big venue with a large crowd. I am glad that enjoyed it and was able to finish it with this first medal.

"Obviously I am the bronze medallist and first medallist for Korea for women. But I am looking to the future to get the gold medal. That's my plan!

"All of my friends and my family came here to Paris, so I am really really glad that I won this medal for them. I will go home and buy them as much food as they want!"



Blanka Guzi (HUN), 4th place: "I imagined how 4th place can't be happy in such a big competition as the Olympic Games, but now I can imagine how in 4th you can also be happy. Because, okay, I won't get a medal but it's a huge achievement that I have. I am really thankful and grateful to be here and that my parents could be here is also a big thing. They had no negative impression for me in the crowd. They have had a good impact.

"Of course I will continue with Pentathlon. It's not a question. Because I would like to get a medal at the next Olympics. I have never tried Obstacle before. It's a really new thing for me and I haven't planned the future until this day, so I don't know how it will go, but I will continue."



Elena Micheli (ITA), 5th place: "I'm in one way happy but in another not satisfied at all, obviously, because of the 5th place and because of my shooting overall. On the first two series of shooting I compromised my situation so I wasn't even able to try for a medal. That's what I thought — in the last two years my shooting was really solid. It wasn't a problem for me but today something happened inside the shooting range. But I will think about it and work on it.

"It has been three tough years because I made many difficult choices and many people with me have done it. We trained alone, lonely for three years and that was difficult. I've been angry for three years. For many reasons that are difficult to explain now. I need to be thankful for the people who are by my side. I will definitely try for the next cycle for LA 2028."

Ilke Ozyuksel (TUR), 6th place: "It was better than the Semi-final, everything was perfect. I did what I could do. Almost every discipline was perfect, and I finished 6th place. That's good because I didn't start very well in Fencing and with that result, I'm so happy with 6th place. All the time I'm in 6th place, competing for medals. I believe one day I will take this medal and until that I don't want to stop.

"I will continue because I am so focused for an Olympic medal, and I saw today I can do everything. Again, I'm really happy. Of course I was wanting to be on the podium, but you know, only three places, many good athletes. They deserve it as well. I'm so happy for Michelle, Elodie and Seong."

Kerenza Bryson (GBR), 9th place: "It's mixed emotions. I'm really happy to be in the Olympics, to be able to call myself an Olympian. Top 10 really isn't too bad but obviously I wanted to come

away with a medal. Feeling a bit disappointed about how it all went, I couldn't put it together on the day and I had a few slip-ups through the whole day really, in the Riding and a bit in the Fencing as well.

"We experienced the crowd yesterday. I loved it. The energy is so positive, and I feel so supported. I was really looking forward to competing. It's been an amazing thing to be in front of a crowd this size, with so many Brits as well.

"Obviously Team GB wanted to come out here and get some medals. Joe and Kate are the reigning Olympic champions. And they are amazing athletes but the difficulty with Pentathlon is there's five things and you need to pull them all together on the day. So, there is an element of luck in that. Obviously, for all of us we're a bit disappointed but we move on and there's another cycle ahead.

"I'm going to take some time off and decompress and then I'll be thinking about that after a holiday."

Lucie Hlavackova (CZE), 10th place: "I feel grateful, first of all. It's really great to be part of the Olympic experience, this amazing experience. This venue is amazing. The stages were full today with 15,000 spectators which is awesome. Versailles is lovely to look at too so I'm grateful.

"Now I am going to take a break for a little bit, for a few weeks, and after that we will see what will happen. I will definitely continue with Pentathlon. I will see what the future brings.

"First of all, I definitely want to thank my coach. He was a huge part of this; I wouldn't have made it without him. Also my family, they are supporting all of the time. Last but not least my teachers, who helped me get through school until this moment, my final exam."

Malak Ismail (EGY), 12th place: "I'm very proud, very happy and very excited for the next four years to Los Angeles really.

"I hope I can be like the younger athletes now in Obstacle. They are more experienced now because they have been training Obstacle for I think more than two years. I haven't been training Obstacle for the past while. I hope I can join them in the training. The Obstacle training is very exciting, so I hope I can do as they're doing now.

"I'm very happy for Ahmed [Elgendy, men's gold medallist] and very happy for the whole Egyptian Modern Pentathlon community. We have a very strong federation. We organize everything very well. I'm very happy for his achievements."

Alice Sotero (ITA), 13th place: "Today was a beautiful day. The public is so great. This Olympics has been so different from Tokyo and I'm so glad to be here with my family and my boyfriend. It's a very beautiful day.

"I don't know what is in my future. I just want to rest with my family and have time to decide what the future will be — to try to go to Los Angeles or to stop and do something in my career, in coaching or something else."



Mingyu Zhang (CHN), 14th place: "I feel that I performed very well today and throughout the whole thing. Getting through the qualifiers and being able to be in a good position in the Final is really good. It's been a very good atmosphere and having my family cheering for me in the stands also made me very, very happy.

"I will try very hard for LA 2028, that is the goal. I will try very hard with Obstacle. I am starting from zero because it is a new thing, but I am going to try very hard at it."

Anna Zillekens (GER), 15th place: "Actually we hadn't heard anything, that anyone wasn't feeling well, yesterday. So we weren't expecting that something could happen. Of course you still think about this. I was in the Olympic Village, I was running this morning 8km because I thought it would be a good idea. Then at 9.20am, I got the call that I am able to compete because unfortunately the British girl is sick. I was on the way to see my family, didn't even have breakfast. So we jumped in the car here and I think at 10.49am I was on the horse [before the event started at 11am].

"Actually yesterday we were a little bit sad, so we decided not to go back to the village, so stayed here and watched the second Semi-final and then watched the Men's Final, so stayed until 8pm which was kind of exhausting. Fortunately I went to bed at an okay time.

"Of course this was a much better way to finish my career. My big goal was to show better horse riding and of course I just say I am not satisfied with the result overall, I'm not sure when was the last time that I lost so many places in the Laser Run but I am really happy with this finish because of the Riding. This is the best thing that could happen. It was a really nice horse and it was a really fun ride. All of the spectators... from this point on I said 'let's just enjoy the last competition of my

career', because sometimes as an athlete you forget to enjoy because you are in a tunnel. So when I felt there was not so much energy left in my legs I said 'just enjoy this'.

"I was hoping to have a chance a little bit, so maybe I felt much better than I thought. But when I jumped into the pool it was like 'hmmm, not really'. I felt very tired very quickly. Of course it was a little sad because I was training very hard and was in very good running shape coming here. There is a lot mentally for preparation and if this is missing, on this world stage, it is very difficult.

"I ran 11km today and I'm happy that I never did that before! But the stupid thing, that I would say, was not cooling down yesterday. If I had known [I would be called in] the day yesterday would have been totally different. Straight after we finished here I would go for a jog and maybe after we would go back to the German house to get some ice bathing and then to the Olympic Village to get some proper food. Maybe get some time in your bed and then you would plan your waking up, your breakfast and of course you would be here for the warming-up. This would be the thing that would make me mentally be important to be here, for the shooting.

"I arrived here at 10.40am, I think 10 minutes before I had to be on the horse. Of course it was good that I was available. We couldn't think about this but yesterday, maybe in the moment, we were just like 'oh it's done, maybe not done in the way we wanted to'. I was just happy that I could show up today because everyone was planning this competition for 18 finalists. I am happy that we had 18 finalists."

Laura Asadauskaite (LTU), 16th place: "I'm really proud that I got to these Olympic Games. I feel really well. It's all I dreamed about to be in my fifth Olympic Games. It's a huge amount.

"The crowd was quite amazing even though most of the crowd was cheering for the French girls, but we found it really great here. The atmosphere was kind of like the London Games when I was champion. I think after these Olympic Games I will continue. These could be my last Games, but I will continue."

Laura Heredia (ESP), 17th place: "Well, I am feeling very sad right now because I don't think that I deserved this final result. I didn't imagine that this could happen to me in this competition in the Final of the Olympic Games and well, I just wanted to enjoy the rest of the competition and I did my best in the Laser Run and I did my PB, so I am happy.

"From now on Pentathlon will change. The horse riding, we won't have it again. So I have to adapt with a new discipline, which I haven't tried yet, so we will see. I am an athlete who is always trying to do my best and work hard for what is coming next."



Marie Oteiza (FRA), 18th place: "It was complicated after the fall to get back into it. I still tried to finish and enjoy it. This incredible French crowd helped me to hang on until the end. I also saw Elodie was going for it, so I was trying to support her as much as possible when we were seeing each other during the race. It consoled my broken heart a little bit.

"The Swimming was hard, so I tried to do as much as I could in the Laser Run. The Riding went very well except for the first obstacle. He (the horse) had been afraid of something outside, that's why he refused to jump the first one. The rest went very well. Honestly, it's my fault. My turn on the first obstacle went a little outside, I didn't frame it so I came at an angle and that's it. It's my fault, the horse was really great.

"For now, it's holidays. I need to digest the Final and then of course, I plan to take my revenge at LA28."

