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FRANCESCA GANDOLFO CROWNED ITALIAN CHAMPION



At the Italian Open Modern Pentathlon Championships in Rome this weekend, young Francesca Gandolfo excelled as she took an impressive gold in the senior women's draw. Nicolas Benedetti took the men's title.

In the fencing, an impressive haul of 23 victories on the pistes put her in command of the provisional standings with 274 points. Tactically astute and great with her defences, her skills with the epee were undeniable. In the 200m freestyle swim, a time of 2:15.60 added another 294 points to her total score as she held on to her lead in the standings. By now she was brimming with confidence and a third place overall in the equestrian event ensured she began the combined in pole position.

The conditions were difficult in the final event with heavy rain making the run/shoot course tricky for the competitors. Francesca Gandolfo however made no mistake as she finished first to claim her long awaited national title.

The President of her Pentathlon Club in Asti, Louis Giardullo was full of admiration for her, "It's

been a fantastic event! I'm very happy for Francesca, who had a troublesome year in 2013 with a knee injury and a slow rehabilitation. Her mental strength and her talent have allowed her to return to these levels in such a short time".

Silver went to Lavinia Bonessio whilst Alice Sotero took bronze. London 2012 stars Samantha Murray of Great Britain and Chloe Esposito of Australia with the former victorious in the open competition.

In the men's event, Nicolas Benedetti produced a master class in the combined event to win it ahead of defending champion Riccardo De Luca and Pier Paolo Petroni. Benedetti's time of 11:05:30 saw him beat De Lucca to the title.

In the Juniors, Gloria Tocchi was victorious in the women's draw with Guiseppe Mattia Parisi the best in the men.

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