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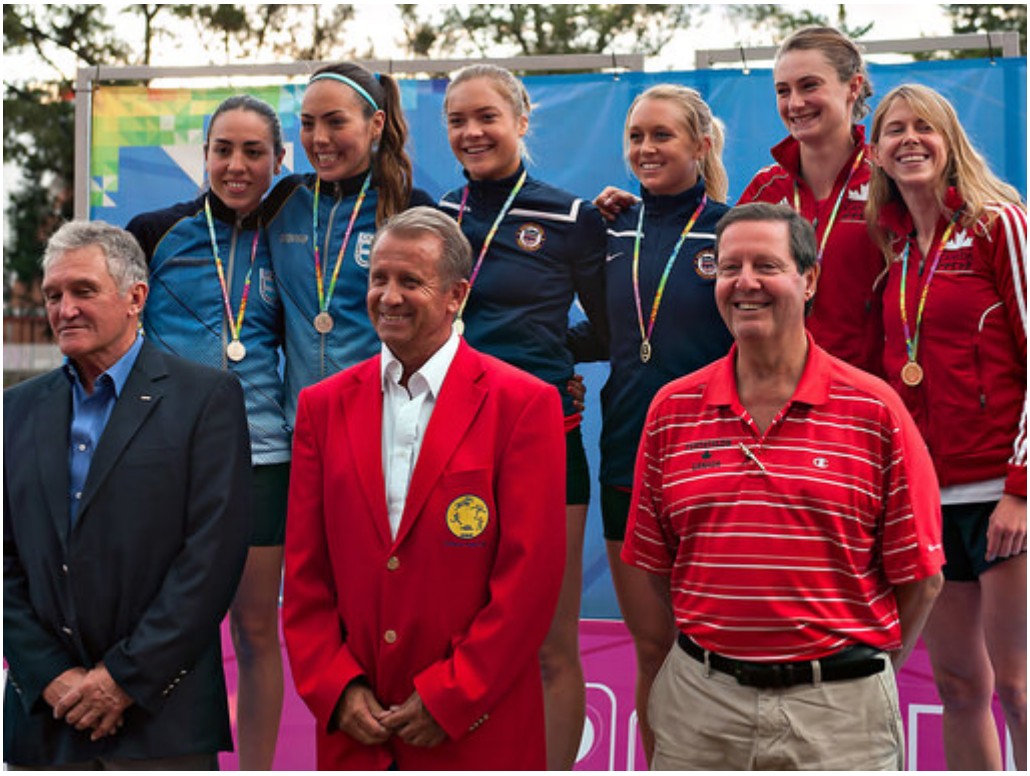
USA, CUBA AND CANADA WIN GOLDS IN PAN AMERICAN RELAYS



In a vey busy final day of the 2014 Pan American Championships in Mexico City three different nations won the gold medals in the modern pentathlon relays.

Americans Samantha Achterberg and Isabella Isaksen ran away with the victory with a total of 1367 points, after starting the combined event a few seconds behind the Canadians, wining the combined event with a time of 12.33. Argentine sisters Pamela and Ayelen Zapata also came from behind and were able to give their nation a historical silver medal by posting a solid 12.36 in the combined event.

Canadians Donna Vakalis and Mathea Stevens were able to hold on to the bronze medal. The pre competition favorites, Brazil, with Yane Marques and Larissa Lellys who led after three events, fell to a disappointing fourth in the combined event. Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba and Chile rounded off the top eight.

In the men's relay Pan American individual champion José Figueroa teamed up with Yaniel Velazquez to give Cuba their second gold medal with a total of 1509 points edging out the Guatemalan team of Charles Fernandez and Andrei Gheorghe by 6 seconds in an exciting

combined event in which the lead went back and forth between the two teams.

The USA finished third with Brendan Anderson and Dennis Bowsher totaling 1485 points while Mexicans Manuel Padilla and Saul Rivera, who won the combined event with a time of 10.53, finished fourth with 1473 points.

Argentina with Leandro Silva and Emmanuel Zapata won the fencing event with 266 points and the swimming event with a time of 1.53.96 but lost their lead in the combined event and finished in fifth place. Venezuela, Brasil and Canada followed in positions sixth, seventh and eighth.

The final event was the mixed relay and Canada won its first gold of the Championship with Melanie McCann and Joshua Riker-Fox. They won the fencing event with 286 points and never let go of the lead. The battle for the silver medal was between the USA and Mexico as they changed positions several times in the combined event. In the end the Mexican team of Tamara Vega and Ismael Hernandez won the combined event with a time of 11.21 and that allowed them to overtake Margaux Isaksen and Nathan Schrimsher and win by 5 seconds. Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Dominican Republic and Peru placed fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth respectively.

Once again the horses provided were up to the challenge as all three relays were carried out with 1 horse per team and almost all the top teams scored nearly perfect rounds.

The championship ended in a festive mode as the participants got together to celebrate.

Special recognition to PASO President Mario Vazquez Raña who brought the athletes to the event without any cost to their nations, to Horacio de la Vega, Director of the Sports Institute of Mexico City for providing most of the logistical support required for a top event and to the Mexican Modern Pentathlon Federation that was responsible for the competition. The UIPM Technical Delegates Janusz Peciak and Carlo Passiatore were also of great support and ensured that the conditions were fair for all teams.