

25 AUG 2014

YOG 2014 – RUSSIA TAKES THE GOLD IN THE BOYS INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION



In Modern Pentathlon, it's never over until it's over.

ALEXSANDR LIFANOV (Russia) today became Modern Pentathlon's Youth Olympic Games Champion, and he could hardly believe the dramatic turn of events that led to him standing on top of the podium.

Lifanov had been ranked as low as 16th in the Swimming discipline, registering a 200m freestyle time of 2:10.22 on a day when two of his rivals broke the two-minute mark. But after that, Lifanov never looked back. The 18-year-old was 3rd in the Fencing with a score of 295, allowing him to start the Combined Event in 4th place with a handicap of 16 seconds against the overall leader, GERGELY REGOS (Hungary).

At the end, it was the Russian's eye that won him gold more than his legs as he bested all the pentathletes in the laser shooting, with a time of 53.97 complementing a competitive running time of 11:07.32. In doing so he moved stealthily past his rivals, leaving Regos (HUN) to settle for silver and DOVYDAS VAIVADA (Lithuania) narrowly claiming bronze under pressure from 4th-placed SHEREIF NAZEIR (Egypt).

After receiving his gold medal at the NJ OSC Modern Pentathlon Venue, Lifanov (RUS) at the Press Conference was overcome with both surprise and pride.

"I was very disappointed with the result in the swimming. I trained a lot but was upset with my time," said Lifanov. "I never thought it could be possible to achieve the gold and I am very happy with this result. It is an incredible feeling - a dream come true.

"I want to say thanks to my trainer and my mother and father and to all my friends."

This morning's action at the NJ OSC Natatorium was a good indicator of the high-class action that was to follow. HENRY CHOONG (Great Britain, 1:57.21) and ANTON KUSNETSOV (Ukraine, 1:59.74) both delivered world-class performances to break the two-minute barrier and carry strong momentum into the Fencing.

At the NJ International Expo Centre, however, it became clearer who the main contenders for gold were going to be: Regos (HUN) was the last man standing, ahead of YAVOR PESHLEEVSKI (Bulgaria) and Lifanov (RUS).

Over to Nanjing's NJ OSC Modern Pentathlon Venue and the tension was incredible as Lifanov moved past the three adversaries who were standing between him and gold. Special mention must also go to MARTIN VLACH (Czech Republic) who managed the highest Combined Event score of the day, for an overall finish of 9th.

Choong (GBR) finished 11th overall, narrowly ahead of fellow swimming star Kuznetsov (UKR) in 12th.

Also, the fastest shooting seen in Pentathlon was achieved in the YOG Combined Event by Ricardo VERA REYES (MEX) with 7.2 seconds.

Dr Klaus Schormann, President of the Union International de Pentathlon Moderne, attended the today's Press Conference, where he commented: "This was the second day of Modern Pentathlon finals here in Nanjing and, like yesterday, it was a big success both for our movement at the Union International de Pentathlon Moderne and the Youth Olympic Games.

"Everything was well prepared, all of the athletes were happy that they could compete without interference from the weather, and everyone involved in the Modern Pentathlon society is very happy and very proud of how the athletes competed."

After one gold medal to China (Girls' Individual) and one to Russia (Boys' Individual), attention now turns to the Mixed Relay competition on Tuesday, where a third opportunity for medals awaits the world's best Junior Modern Pentathletes.

If the drama of the first two finals is anything to go by, it should be another thrilling event.