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AFRICAN OLYMPIC QUALIFYERS – “IT’S AWESOME!”



CAIRO, EGYPT - The two African representatives for the Modern Pentathlon event at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games were decided in Cairo at the 2015 African Olympic Qualification Championships: Eslam Hamad and Haydy Morsy both from Egypt have booked their spots for Rio though not without strong competition from their team mates in an event which also welcomed new athletes onto the African stage from Mauritius, Madagascar and Burkina Faso.

The Egyptian women's team additionally welcomed back 3-time Olympian Aya Medany who recently came out of retirement, during which time she was a mentor for many women and girls in her country, and was awarded the 2014 IOC Women and Sport Trophy for Africa last December. Kenya and South Africa completed the entries for the women and men's events respectively.

With the championships starting in the afternoon to profit from cooler conditions, the swimming was the first event, and it was no surprise that Amro El Geziry, the current Olympic world record holder took control of the pool to win in a time of 1:55.5, nearly 6 seconds faster than his brother, Omar who took second place. For the Women Reem Yakout completed the 200m with the fastest time of 2:19.76, only one second ahead of Aya Medany but with Aya winning the Fencing event by a strong margin, she led after 2 events. In the Men's, Amro also won the Fencing event but only by

one victory ahead of his team mate Eslam Hamad.

Clear rounds in the riding for nearly all the women meant Aya Medany started the Combined Event 30 seconds ahead of Reem Yakout and nearly one minute ahead of Haydy Morsy, also from Egypt. It was a similar story in the Men's where despite Amro El Geziry achieving the only knock down of the Men's event, he kept his lead to start 26 seconds in front of Eslam Hamad with Omar 7 seconds behind him.

The final event combined an indoor shooting range and a floodlit cross country run course. The Women went first and Aya Medany was able to hold her own until the last lap where she was overtaken by 15 year-old Haydy Morsy who stormed across the finish line to take Gold medal and book her place in the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. Receiving many congratulations from her team mates and coaches, she had just enough time to comment 'Thank you' before being swept up by her family and friends.

In the Men's competition, Amro El Geziry kept his lead also to the 3rd lap but heavily pressured all the way by Eslam Hamad, he was overtaken by Eslam on the 4th shooting series. Eslam then pounded his way around the last 800m to take Africa's male qualification place for the Games. "It's awesome. I have not had such a good season, so this is amazing. I cannot describe how I am feeling now".