

28 NOV 2015

UIPM 2015 CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS: WOONGTAE JUN WINS THE GOLD

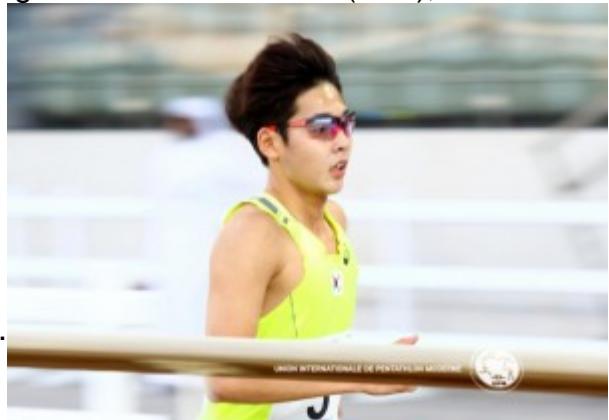


DOHA, QATAR, November 28, 2015 - The 2015 Modern Pentathlon season closed with a vision of the future as 20-year-old Woongtae Jun claimed the title of UIPM Champion of Champions after a captivating Men's Individual competition.

Jun, the World No.9 from Korea who won silver at the 2015 Junior World Championships in August, confirmed his burgeoning potential to compete for the big prizes at senior level by beating a strong field to gold at the Qatar Foundation Recreation Centre and Al Shaqab arena.

Jun (KOR) had already enjoyed a significant breakthrough in 2015 - he finished 2nd at the Asia/Oceania regional Olympic qualifying event in Beijing (CHN) and then, after an impressive UIPM World Cup series, came 7th in the final in Minsk (BLR).

He was pushed right to the wire in Doha today, and only confirmed his victory at the last shooting range of the Combined Event as he fought off the challenge of Justinas Kinderis (LTU), who



claimed silver, and bronze medallist Jinhwa Jung (KOR).

After receiving his gold medal, the modest Jun (KOR) was careful not to make too many bold predictions about his chances at the forthcoming 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

He said: "Today my Fencing and Swimming were very good points, but my Riding was a little bit bad - but then my Combined was very good so I am very happy.

"I am very young, and I am looking forward to the Olympic Games. My hope for next season is to train hard and make sure that my Riding can be as good as my Fencing and Swimming."

At the start of the day the leading Korean duo signalled their intent by dominating the Swimming.

It was Jung who completed his 200m in the fastest time (2:00.72) but Jun was only a fraction of a second slower in 2:01.13, with Omar El Geziry (EGY) third.

Kinderis (LTU) put a disappointing swim behind him by performing superbly on the piste. His fencing was out of the top drawer as he finished the Ranking Round with a record of 24-10 and then beat the 2nd-ranked fencer, Riccardo De Luca (ITA), in the final bout of the Bonus Round. Jun (KOR) protected his overall lead by finishing 3rd in the Fencing.

Things did not quite go to plan for the 20-year-old in the Riding event, however - he picked up 28 penalty points to finish in 13th place.

Five riders - Kinderis (LTU), Jun (KOR), Max Esposito (AUS), De Luca (ITA) and Ismael Hernandez Uscanga (MEX) - enjoyed perfect rounds, but it was El Geziry (EGY) who ended this stage in the overall lead, and he consequently started the Combined Event with a five-second advantage over the rest of the field.



With so many athletes setting off with minimal

handicaps - Kinderis (LTU), Jun and Jung (KOR) and De Luca (ITA) all started within 20 seconds

of the leader - it was never going to be easy for El Geziry (EGY) to protect his lead.

The Combined Event featured two superb performances from the Mexican duo, Ismael Hernandez Uscaga and Jorge Inzunza, both of whom made brave attempts to reach the podium - but ultimately the standard set by the front five was too high.

In the end El Geziry (EGY) was forced to accept 5th place as he was overtaken by Inzunza (MEX, 4th), Jung (KOR, 3rd), Kinderis (LTU, 2nd) and the triumphant winner Jun (KOR).

For Kinderis (LTU), ranked 39, such a solid performance left him with super-charged confidence as the 2016 Olympic Games looms on the horizon.

He said after receiving his silver medal: "This is the beginning of the season for me .

"Now I know I have to qualify for the Olympic Games and it's a really important season. In the past, I struggled sometimes for the motivation to compete, and in pentathlon you need that motivation.

"It's my work, my life, everything, and I have to prove I can do this for myself."

Dr Klaus Schormann, President of UIPM, reflected with satisfaction on proceedings after Qatar proved to be an exceptional host of the UIPM Champion of Champions for the second year.

He said: "As we have seen so many times, the positions - 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th place - have changed so many times, and there was drama today.

"For the spectators today, they see what it means and how you have to concentrate right to the



end, with the shooting, and never give up.

"So I think it was a great competition today, just like yesterday with the women, but this is a promotion for our sport in Qatar, in this city of Doha where we will run other competitions in future. All of us, including our athletes, will be very happy to return in future years for the Champion of Champions in Doha."

Doha has a contract to stage this event for two more years, in 2016 and 2017, and the Event Director Mohammed Al Naimi said: "Preparation for such a big event like this is huge behind the tent, and this feels like the result of a lot of hard work.

"Thank God, we tried to do our best and we have staged the best-organised competition for all participants - from the International Federations to the athletes.

"And today we saw the excitement. We saw it right up until the last moment of the competition, and we saw it with the smiles of the athletes. I can now relax a little bit after a lot of hard work and thank God that we have organised a successful competition.

"It has been a test for us, and next year we will get better and better."

Follow all the action of the UIPM at www.pentathlon.org, our updates through Facebook at www.facebook.com/modpen and Twitter at https://twitter.com/UIPM_HQ