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UIPM 2016 WORLD CUP #4 - ANASTASIYA PROKOPENKO STORMS IN HUNGARY



After placing 35th in Swimming, 7th in Fencing and 17th in Riding, nobody expected Anastasiya Prokopenko (Belarus) to be a podium contender at the fourth round of the 2016 UIPM World Cup.

Twelve astonishing minutes later, she was heading for the top step.

Prokopenko (BLR) is known for her running and shooting abilities but this was a truly miraculous turnaround. She began the Combined Event 48 seconds behind the leader and finished it with

several seconds to spare as the winner.



The 30-year-old mother of two has been a contender for Modern Pentathlon's most prestigious prizes for many years, and with two top-six finishes at the Olympic Games she is an athlete who should never be written off. But she even surprised herself with this gold medal success, ahead of Hungarian home favourite Zsolt Foldhazi (silver) and French starlet Julie Belhamri (bronze).

"It's amazing, because three days ago in Budapest my coach said to me: 'Anastasiya, go to the World Cup and treat it like a training event for the World Cup Final.' And I said: 'No problem.'"

"After the finish line, I could not believe I had finished in first place. It has been a fantastic day."

The day's action began in the pool, where Samantha Murray (GBR) prevailed in a thrilling race against two Hungarians, Sarolta Kovacs and Foldhazi. The world No.4 Foldhazi summoned a great finish and very nearly caught both of the leaders, who had been the fastest qualifiers.

In the end it was Murray (GBR) who touched the wall first with only a 0.09sec advantage over Foldhazi (HUN) and 0.57sec over Kovacs (HUN).

China, searching for its first World Cup success of 2016, began to assert itself in the Fencing arena. Xiaonan Zhang was the top performer on the piste with 24 victories, even though she lost the final bout of the Bonus Round to Elena Rublevska of Latvia.

Zhang (CHN) entered the Riding in 2nd place overall, one place ahead of compatriot Qian Chen. The former world champion fell out of contention with an error-strewn round, as did overall leader Tamara Alekseyev (HUN). Alekseyev (HUN) and Chen (CHN) each incurred 43 penalty points, allowing the consistent Zhang (CHN) to start the Combined Event with a 16-second advantage in 1st place.



The leader made such serene progress at the start it

seemed inevitable that the most exciting battle would be for silver. However, after nine quickfire hits Zhang (CHN) took nearly 20 seconds to land her final shot at the second range and the chasing pack closed in.

First it was Belhamri (FRA) who got her nose in front after the third range, but Zhang (CHN)

refused to give up and a pack of five including Murray (GBR), Kate French (GBR) and Foldhazi (HUN) advanced together to the final shoot.

There, while attention was focused on which of the five leaders would hold her nerve, Prokopenko (BLR) stunned everybody by arriving and firing off five instant hits to bolt into the lead.

An astonishing 48-second swing had taken place between Prokopenko (BLR) and Zhang (CHN), and the experienced campaigner in the Belarus baseball cap knew she had the stamina to hold off her rivals.

As Belhamri (FRA) tired, last year's winner Foldhazi (HUN) moved into silver-medal position. Belhamri clung on to bronze as Zhang (CHN) showed resilience to hang on to 4th in a sprint for the line with Marie Otieza (FRA) and Annika Schleu (GER). Great Britain took 7th-9th places through Freyja Prentice, French and Murray, who suffered a late fade-out after a strong day.

Dr Klaus Schormann, President of UIPM, said: "At this 4th World Cup in Kecskemet we saw a drama like no other we have seen this season. For the athlete placed 19th to finish in 1st place



was something that nobody expected.

"The facilities were great, the horses were great and the whole competition was in perfect harmony and on a very high level. All the preparation is going very well for the World Cup Final in Sarasota, so I can only say congratulations to the athletes who have given everything and competed to the very last moment, and to the Organizing Committee, and we look forward now to tomorrow's Men's Final.

"This was a great showcase for Modern Pentathlon."

The Men's Individual Final takes place tomorrow (Sunday, April 17) before the Mixed Relay closes proceedings on Monday, April 18.

All of the Finals at World Cup #4 are available to watch via live stream from 1700 CET at UIPM's new online TV channel uipmtv.org. For up-to-date results of all competitions go to pentathlon.org.

2016 UIPM World Cup #4, Kecskemét, Hungary
Women's Final Final Standings

- 1 PROKOPENKO Anastasiya BLR 1352
- 2 FOLDHAZI Zsafia HUN 1342
- 3 BELHAMRI Julie FRA 1339

4 ZHANG Xiaonan CHN 1333
5 OTEIZA Marie FRA 1333
6 SCHLEU Annika GER 1332
7 PRENTICE Freyja GBR 1329
8 FRENCH Kate GBR 1329
9 MURRAY Samantha GBR 1328
10 CHEN Qian CHN 1324
11 KOVACS Sarolta HUN 1312
12 LIANG Wanxia CHN 1310
13 PERMYKINA Valeriya UKR 1305
14 AROL Katsiaryna BLR 1298
15 SERKINA Sofia RUS 1292
16 TOGNETTI Aurora ITA 1289
17 ISAKSEN Isabella USA 1287
18 ALEKSZEJEV Tamara HUN 1286
19 COYLE Natalya IRL 1283
20 SHIMAZU Rena JPN 1279
21 JEONG Mina KOR 1278
22 KIM Sunwoo KOR 1277
23 KOHLMANN Janine GER 1275
24 MALISZEWSKA Anna POL 1272
25 BURIK Anna RUS 1272
26 RUBLEVSKA Elena LAT 1263
27 ACHTERBERG Samantha USA 1254
28 VENCKAUSKAITE Gintare LTU 1252
29 SAVCHENKO Anna RUS 1250
30 VAKALIS Donna CAN 1236
31 MICHELI Elena ITA 1216
32 BOROS Alexandra HUN 1207
33 ZHONG XIUTING CHN 1192
34 VEGA Tamara MEX 1173
35 SUMMERS Francesca GBR 493
36 KHOKHLOVA IRYNA ARG 488