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UIPM JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: KIM SUNWOO (KOR) TOPS THE WORLD WITH JUNIOR CROWN IN CAIRO



CAIRO, EGPYT – After a day of warm sunshine, Kim Sunwoo of Korea conquered the field to claim the title of UIPM 2016 Junior World Champion in the Women's Individual Final.

With a convincing lead, Kim's victory demonstrated that the 14th place she obtained at the Rio 2016 Olympics Games last month has the potential to propel this 20-year-old Korean athlete to the podium at Tokyo 2020.

Kim (KOR) said after receiving her gold medal: "I still cannot believe it. It is my first medal even though I participated in so many international competitions this year. I am truly happy."

Earlier in the day, it was Salma Abdelmaksoud (EGY) who seemed to be taking the initiative in the Swimming pool. Cheered by the home crowd and with a strong swim, she was fastest with a time of 2:12.72 (302 points). This was an excellent start for the young Egyptian who saw the 2nd-ranked athlete Xaina Fralcova (RUS) finish almost three seconds behind (2:15.18, 295 points). Completing the top three was Han Songyi (KOR) in 2:15.78.

After this impressive start, in the Fencing Ranking Round event Abdelmaksoud (EGY) was not able to maintain the performance. It was Francesca Tognetti (ITA) accompanied by Sarolta Simon (HUN) who laid their cards on the table with 27 victories and 8 defeats each (262 points). Abdelmaksoud (EGY) dropped down the leaderboard to 32nd place after the first two events.

When the Fencing Bonus Round started, one athlete was determined to shake up the competition and move up the standings: Alexandra Bettinelli (GER) with 5 victories gathered the most bonus points. Kim (KOR), who had finished the ranking round 3rd, won the Fencing Bonus Round with three hits of pure dexterity to defeat rivals Sato (JPN), Simon (HUN) and Tognetti (ITA).

Inside the Cairo Equestrian Stadium the top performances on horseback were from the Guatemalan duo, Sophia Hernandez and Isabel Brand, as well as Elena Micheli (ITA), Charlie Follett (GBR) and Aurelija Tamasauskaite (LTU), who enjoyed clear rounds. Although not having a perfect ride, Kim (KOR) managed to get 9th position, which gave her enough advantage to stay on course for a medal.

When attention turned to the Combined Event the crowd could sense the title was destined to be decided by a battle between Kim (KOR) and Tognetti (ITA), who were separated by only 3 seconds and 33 seconds ahead of 3rd place. The dispute for 3rd also drew the attention of spectators as Volha Silkina (BLR) in third, Simon (HUN) in 4th and Sofia Serkina (RUS) in 5th had a gap of three second between them.

The order of 1st and 2nd places was maintained until the end of the Combined Event, but Serkina (RUS) moved into 3rd and never looked back. In spite of the assurance of the medalists, the Combined Event featured an extraordinary race by Tamasauskaite (LTU) who jumped from 28th place to finish 4th. Her 1st place in the Combined Event and a clear round in Riding tell a lot about the future of this extraordinary athlete.

In the team event it was Italy who stood on the top of the podium represented by Aurora Tognetti, Francesca Tognetti and Irene Prampolini. Hungary claimed silver thanks to Alexandra Boros, Anna ZS. Toth and Sarolta Simon. Bronze went to Germany (Anna Matthes, Rebecca Langrehr and Alexandra Bettinelli).

After a day of intense Modern Pentathlon competition, UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "First of all a very special statement to this young Lithuanian athlete who ran from the 28th place to arrive in 4th. I feel like we have another Laura Asadauskaite coming from Lithuania and all the spectators loved to see that. Unfortunately she was too far away to be able to go to the podium.

"The competition was strong and we also saw very good Riding performances today. We can tell that in the coming years our sport can count on very well prepared athletes. The Union is happy to see young fresh blood as a hope for the future. Tomorrow I am sure we will see the same at the Men's Individual Final.

"Overall the most impressive part was the Combined Event and it also shows the exciting potential of Laser-Run."

The championships continue with the Men's Individual Final on Saturday, September 17 and conclude with the Mixed Relay on Sunday, September 18. For live results visit the UIPM website.