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EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2019: CLASSY COOKE (GBR) LEADS EIGHT ATHLETES TO TOKYO 2020



- World champion adds European crown and secures Olympic qualification
- World No.1 Prades (FRA) settles for silver as Vlach (CZE) takes bronze
- Gutkowski (POL), Demeter (HUN), Kinderis (LTU), Lifanov (RUS) and Dogue (GER) also qualify



The

line-up for the men's Modern Pentathlon at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games is almost half-complete after eight more athletes secured their places during an ultra-competitive European Championships final.

World champion **Jamie Cooke** of **Great Britain** led the way, winning gold in front of a supportive home crowd at his training base of the University of Bath.

Cooke (GBR) was followed home by last year's champion and world No.1 **Valentin Prades** of **France**

, and the two rivals were joined on the podium by 22-year-old **Martin Vlach** of the **Czech Republic**

All three can now look forward to Tokyo without the worry of qualification, as can five other athletes who finished in the top 11 in Bath: **Lukasz Gutkowski** of **Poland**, **Bence Demeter** of **Hungary**, **Justinas Kinderis** of **Lithuania**, **Alexander Lifanov** of **Russia** and **Patrick Dogue** of **Germany**.

Fifteen of the 36 participants in the men's pentathlon in Tokyo have now been confirmed, with 21 opportunities remaining. The next opportunity to qualify will be the UIPM 2019 Pentathlon World Championships in September in Budapest, where three more places will be at stake.

Cooke (GBR) said: "It's been pretty much a perfect day for me. The world is slightly upside down with my scoresheet today but I'm really, really pleased with it.

"The Fencing for me was a highlight – everything came together on the day and I couldn't lose a hit, it was almost comical at one point.

"In the Laser Run I made myself slightly nervous with my second shoot, but I ran well so I'm really pleased. It's amazing to win here in Bath, the volunteers and everyone have been incredible."

Prades (FRA), whose silver medal matched the result he achieved when this competition was held in Bath (GBR) in 2015, said: "It is clearly a place for silver for me! Jamie was so strong today and was too far from me but I will get my revenge at the World Championships next month.

"The principle objective of today was to get my Olympic ticket so I am very happy."



Vlach (CZE), who recorded easily the best Laser Run time (10:31.92), said: "I started with a good fencing discipline, especially for me, because I had more victories than defeats, 19 against 16.

“After that, I just focused and tried not to make any mistakes. The riding was okay, then I focused a lot on the shooting and it went good.”

This week’s European qualifiers will join 10 athletes from North, South and Central America and two from Africa, as well as the UIPM Pentathlon World Cup winners, on the list for Tokyo – according to the UIPM qualification process.

Three of the top 10 finishers today were not eligible for Olympic qualification: Pentathlon World Cup champion Joseph Choong (GBR), Jan Kuf (CZE) and Valentin Belaud (FRA). The latter duo suffered from the high finish of their team-mates Vlach (CZE) and Prades (FRA).

Great Britain continued a very successful championships by adding team gold to the individual title won by Cooke (GBR).

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “We had a great, great competition here at the European Championships today. As we know, this is a qualification event for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, so every coach and trainer prepared their athletes at the highest level.

“The organisation has been excellent, with perfect horses, and now we have eight nations that can see the result of their investment in athletes, who are now on the way to Tokyo 2020.

“I wish the ladies similar success tomorrow. This is such a great competition and the European Confederation can be very happy, and we as a Union are very glad to see how strongly the European countries are competing.”

The six-day European Championships conclude tomorrow (August 11) with the women’s final where there will be another eight places in the Tokyo 2020 Pentathlon at stake.

Check out the live stream at BBC Sport and follow @PentathlonGB on Twitter for updates.