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ZHANG AND RIMSAITE DOMINATE WOMEN'S QUALIFICATION GROUPS AT WORLD CUP #3



The Pierre de Coubertin Modern Pentathlon Stadium in Chengdu, China, was treated to real spectacle today as the Women battled it out in the qualification phases.

Group A got the action underway in the fence and as expected, it was the Chinese contingent that made its mark with world record holder **Xioanan Zhang** winning the first discipline of the day on her way to taking the overall victory. In Group B, continuing her fine form from Cairo, Russia's **Donata Rimsaite**'s speed made the difference in the combined as she crossed the finish line first to win.

36 Women have now qualified for the Friday's Final.

Starting on the pistes, Group A was a really tight affair but the expertise of Zhang with the epee made the difference as last season's surprise package got the victories she needed to take first place and 257 valuable points. Her solid time in the pool gave then her the advantage she needed

in the run/shoot and she ended her day comfortably ahead of her pursuers.

Ekaterina Kuraskina of Russia finished second overall in that group with Great Britain's **Kate French** in third. Wei Wang of China came in fourth with Adele Stern of France making up the top five. Annika Schleu of Germany and five other athletes finished in a bunch in sixth.

Korea's **Min Ji Choi**, who had earlier recorded the fastest time in the water, ended her day in 19th position whilst **Arina Jienbalanova** of Kazakhstan, the quickest around the combined course, was 14th.

An all-star cast in Group B got the competition started with the swim where **Xiaoyu Shao** piped Great Britain's **Samantha Murray** to first place with a blistering time of 2:10.71, as Italy's **Alice Sotero** was third.

In the fence, Belarusian starlet **Katsiaryna Arol** was at her very best as her silky skills gave her 23 victories and top spot. Rimsaite was making all her experience count as she came second ahead of China's **Wanxia Liang**, who was level with Poland's **Oktawia Nowacka**, Sotero and Murray.

Although Arol began the combined first, she could not match the pace of Rimsaite as the Russian excelled in the run/shoot. Rimsaite glided across the course and shot confidently to win by 6 seconds, ahead of Nowacka in second and Hungary's **Zsafia Foldhazi** in third.

China's **Yian Bufei** and Hungarian Indoor Champion **Sarolta Kovacs** were fourth and fifth respectively. Murray came in 14th.

Full results

The Women will now take a day of rest before their Final on Friday with the men taking centre stage tomorrow in their qualification groups.