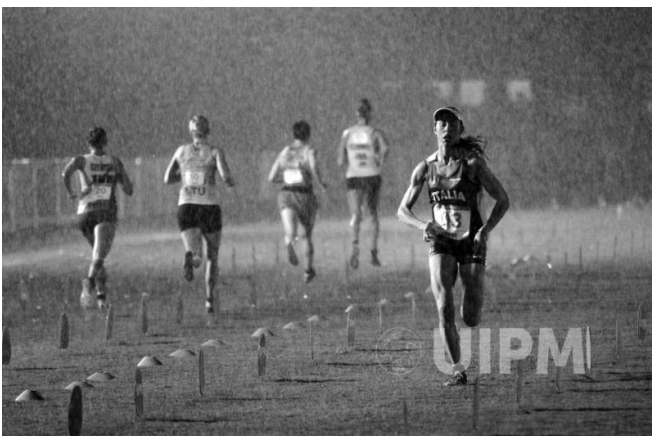


13 MAR 2016

UIPM 2016 WORLD CUP #2 - CESARINI WINS IN THE RAIN



Claudia Cesarini conquered a tropical downpour and dozens of higher-ranked pentathletes to secure Women's Individual gold in the second instalment of the UIPM 2016 World Cup series.



The world No.57 from Italy will perhaps not be one

of the favourites to win Olympic gold when the leading ladies of Modern Pentathlon return to Rio in August, but she reigned supreme in the rain tonight as the first medals were decided in this official

Olympic Test Event.

Cesarini, who trails behind three of her Italian compatriots in the UIPM World Rankings, clearly has a liking for the big stage: the venues and format for this final mirrored what the athletes will experience at the Olympic Games itself. It was very much a dress rehearsal and she rose to the challenge in style.

"It's a dream, and I can't believe it," said Cesarini (ITA), who will receive her gold medal alongside the other medallists this morning.

"I had a pain in my stomach throughout the qualification, and I was afraid I would not be able to run, but I had a lot of help from the Brazilian physiotherapist."

One experience the athletes will not want to experience in August is the torrential rain that soaked them - and the grass surface at the Deodoro Stadium - during the closing Combined Event.

After a day of warm sunshine, the rain arrived just before the beginning of the run/shoot and grew heavier and heavier during the event.



Yane Marques (BRA) was first to start the Combined

Event after a consistent final performance, but there was never any suggestion of the home heroine running away with it. She enjoyed a lead of only 6 seconds over Qian Chen (CHN), with Cesarini (ITA) a mere 8 seconds behind the Brazilian.

The final outcome showed how it is possible for a good pentathlete to put one bad event behind them, even at this elite level.

Cesarini was 30th fastest in the Swimming, but she built on her winning performance in the previous day's Fencing Ranking Round by beating Donata Rimsaite (RUS) in the decisive bout of the Bonus Round, held on a magnificent raised piste at Deodoro Park.

She followed that up with a strong performance in Riding, finishing 6th, to allow her to start the Combined Event in podium contention. And the Italian moved convincingly past Qian (CHN) and Marques (BRA), keeping her composure in the dramatic weather conditions.

Cesarini (ITA) must have known that most of the best pentathletes in the world were chasing her but she never stuttered, and with great defiance fought off a strong challenge by World Cup #1 winner Lena Schoeneborn (GER), who advanced from 9th to 2nd to win silver.

Donata Rimsaite (RUS) finished 3th to join her Italian and German foes on the podium, denying Zsofia Foldhazi (HUN) a medal. There was a great result for Ilke Ozyuksel (TUR), who advanced from a starting position of 20th to finish 5th, but Marques (BRA) could only manage to come home in 9th.

Earlier in the day, before the dramatic and rain-soaked conclusion, it was Elodie Clouvel (FRA)

who seemed to be taking the initiative with a strong swim on the back of her good showing in the Fencing Ranking Round.



Clouvel (FRA) led the overall standings going into

the Riding after a swim of 2:08.95, which was bettered only by Gulnaz Gubaydullina (RUS) in 2:07.71.

Inside the Deodoro Stadium itself, there was a very dominant performance on horseback by the Asian contingent. Rena Shimazu (JPN), Qian Chen (CHN), Sunwoo Kim (KOR) and Xiaonan Zhang (CHN) were the four athletes who enjoyed a clear round, with four competitors failing to record a score.

"It was an exciting day but it finished with an awful thunderstorm, which was a pity for the athletes," said Dr Klaus Schormann, President of UIPM. "They gave their best all day on what will be the facilities for the Olympic Games.

"We can say that this was a successful Olympic Test Event, with the best athletes again at the front."

World Cup #2 continues tomorrow with the conclusion of the Men's Individual Final that began this morning with the Fencing Ranking Round, before the Mixed Relay closes proceedings on Monday.

Starting at 18:30 local time (21:30 GMT), the Combined Event of each final at World Cup #2 is available to watch on live stream at UIPM's new online TV channel uipmtv.org. For up-to-date results of all competitions go to pentathlon.org.