

UNION INTERNATIONALE DE PENTATHLON MODERNE



JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Cairo, 12 July 2008 – The 2008 Junior World Championships in Cairo came to a close today with an amazing men's relay competition. Like yesterday in the women's relay 15 teams took part and fought for the medals and the world champion title. At the end of a head to head confront between Italy and Poland from the very first event, the day ended with the stunning win of the Italian team who took the Junior Relay World Title for the third year in a row after the victories in Shanghai 2006 and Caldas de Rahina 2007.

To win the gold Pierpaolo Petroni, Federico Giancamilli and Lorenzo Certelli obtained the impressive score of 5756 pentathlon points, which is actually one of the highest performance ever registered, especially in a juniors competition.

The shooting event opened the day with an outstanding result from the Italian team with an astonishing 284/300 targets points, which is one of the best, if not the best ever result in shooting at an official UIPM sanctioned competition.

The individual silver medallist of two days ago, Petroni shot 8 tens and 2 nines out of the ten shots scoring 98/100 target points, Certelli 94/100 and Giancamilli 92/100. Italy won the event with 1312 pentathlon points and decisively took the lead, keeping the Polish team (275/300) on 108 points and French team with 272/300 at bay.

The fencing hall hosted the 45 pentathletes for their second event of the day; 42 bouts to fence for each athlete and 14 teams to face. The air became warmer as the competition started and the hall had to support the intensity of the fight for the winning hit and the noisy support of the crowd cheering their favourite teams.

At the end the best team was Belarus with 84 victories out of the 126 total bouts (968 pentathlon points) which allowed them to climb up the rank from fourth to third place with 2100 points after two events. Poland maintained their second position overall having achieved 944 points in the fencing, while the Italian team had a non-enthusiastic performance finishing with 69 victories (836 pentathlon points) but fortunately for the "Azzurri", the big lead gained with their incredible shooting result let them keep the lead even if tied to Poland at quota 2148 points. After a very disappointing shooting, Hungary took third place in fencing thanks to a strong performance that gave them 912 points allowing them to gain ground in the ranking up to 8th temporary position.

In the swimming pool, Poland took the lead from Italy, with the third fastest performance of 2'54"39 in the 3x100 metres race. Italy swam 2'56"24 and followed the Polish team by 20 points behind in the classification after 3 events (3376). The fastest swimmers were the Russian's with a time of 2'51"57, while Hungary continued to re-post finishing seventh overall, with the 2nd best swimming of the day (2'54"33).

As the competitors saddled-up in the riding arena, it was clear that the fight for the gold was a limited affair between Italy and Poland. With only four knock downs Poland received 1136 points, while the Italians made a total of five mistakes on the obstacles achieving 1120 points. Russia with only one error won the event with 1184 points followed by the Egyptian team (1168) and USA (1152).



After four events the lead of Poland upon Italy increased to 36 points equal to 9 seconds in the running, certainly a good advantage but not enough to make the leaders sure of winning. In the first leg of the race, Michal Kacer tried to contain the brave efforts of Lorenzo Certelli attempting to catch him; the Polish athlete seemed to make it but in the last 300 metres, the Italian increased his pace until he overtook the opponent right inside the transition area where Federico Giancamilli and Krzysztof Staszak were ready to continue the challenge over their own 1500 metres. Initially the two competitors seemed to run together till the end of their leg, but after a while Giancamilli gained ground metre by metre till giving Pierpaolo Petroni a big lead of 10" in the last leg of race. The third Polish athlete, Staskiewiwick tried in vain to close the gap and approach the leader but only

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gaining three to four seconds to Petroni. The Italian ran safely into the finish line and the gold medal with the hug of his two team mates and his coach (and father) Roberto (former 1984 Olympian pentathlete).

The silver medal went to Poland (5716) while the bronze was obtained by Russia (5616) thanks to an impressive performance in the run (12'48"23 and 1288 points) which was the best time; the second and the third place in running went to Italy (12'56"95) and to Hungary (12'58"76).

Report by: Stefano Giommoni, Athlete's Committee Chair