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ALEXANDER LESUN (RUS) WINS 2016 OLYMPIC MODERN PENTATHLON GOLD



Alexander Lesun (RUS) is the 2016 Olympic Modern Pentathlon champion after setting a new Olympic record of 1479 points with a consistently strong and unflappable performance throughout the Men's event.

Lesun (RUS) went into the Combined Event with a nine-second lead and ended up winning by seven seconds from silver medallist Pavlo Tymoshchenko (UKR). Ismael Hernandez Uscanga (MEX) won a sprint to the line to claim bronze ahead of 4th-placed Valentin Prades (FRA) and 5th-placed Riccardo de Luca (ITA).



If the race for bronze was dramatic, Lesun's progress to the

finish line was relatively serene. Joseph Choong (GBR) stayed with him for the first two laps but after he became tied up at the second Shoot, it was Tymoshchenko (UKR) who became the hunter. But even though he kept the pressure on the leader at the final Shoot, Lesun (RUS) had enough stamina this time to hold off his rival and looked over his shoulder before entering the final bend. He even had time to wave to the crowd as he took the tape for the crowning glory of his glittering career.

Lesun (RUS) is a two-time world champion and also has three world silver medals and one bronze, plus multiple World Cup podium finishes - but this was the 28-year-old's first Olympic medal. He finished 4th at London 2012. He can also be proud to have restored the strong record of Russia in this event. Lesun's country has won four of the last five men's gold medals.

Invited afterwards to comment on his victory, Lesun (RUS) said: "I already set records before in fencing [on Thursday] and I just did my job.

"I was really upset [after London 2012] but I tried to calm down and that was the main thing."

Tymoshchenko (UKR) too had never previously won an Olympic medal, but he built on his achievement of being world champion in 2015 and shrugged off a serious injury to get himself in contention for the ultimate prize, from which he was separated by only seven seconds.

"For Ukraine and modern pentathlon it's great," said Tymoshchenko (UKR). "It's not so easy to train in Ukraine and finally I could do it [win a medal] in my third Olympic Games.

"I came here not just to participate, I came here for a medal. There was some pressure because last year I achieved my best result by winning the world title. I wanted to repeat that in an Olympic Games."

As for Hernandez Uscanga (MEX), his medal was a major breakthrough for Modern Pentathlon in the North/Central America region. He will be a national hero when he returns home, as this was only Mexico's fourth medal at the 2016 Games.

"My entire life has passed in front of my eyes," said Hernandez Uscanga (MEX). "Those times I have failed, the victories I had; everything that I went through along these years to not let this chance go away."

"I had two things in mind. The first was that it would be the competition of my life and second that I could get an historical result for Mexico. I knew I had nothing to lose, and too much to win."

"I knew show jumping was a decisive event and I had to do the best I could because in the Combined Event I would be in my territory to dominate the race."

Modern Pentathlon once again brought the Olympic Games to a dramatic conclusion with that heroic dash for bronze. Hernandez Uscanga (MEX) maintained his poise as an exhausted Prades (FRA) desperately tried in vain to catch him, and the Mexican's expression of disbelief and delirium after crossing the line lit up the arena.

"We can say that this men's final today was a great success," said Dr Klaus Schormann, President of UIPM. "The rain could not spoil the atmosphere, and in the Riding we had a few accidents but this was not linked to the horses, it was really athletes making mistakes."

"The Running was really exciting. Okay, Lesun was far away from the others and nobody could catch him after such great Shooting, but then to see how the places changed, it really showed how many athletes we have who are capable of finishing on the podium."

"The Mexican Hernandez Uscanga won bronze, and this for us is so important. The Ukrainian Tymoshchenko won the world title last year but then broke his leg and it was a great comeback for him to win the silver medal."

"The right athletes won, and also we saw the younger generation coming through. It was great to see the brother of the Olympic champion finishing in the top 10 - and he will have at least two more Olympic Games. The young generation is showing up, and this underlines that the sport now has a platform where we can develop the structure in much more detail now."

"We should celebrate along with all the volunteers and the organising committee involved because we have acted here as a great team, and I think we have contributed something towards the success of this Olympic Games."

"The spread of countries and continents that we saw winning medals clearly shows that Modern Pentathlon is a global sport. It's not only strong in Europe as it used to be."

For Lesun (RUS) it was a triumph built on exceptional skill in the Fencing arena. His Olympic record score of 268 gave him a demonstrable advantage over his rivals who knew they would be playing catch-up unless the leader had a major setback in Riding. As it turned out, the 21 penalty points he incurred on horseback was not sufficient to derail him and he accepted the challenge of leading from the front with great assurance and aplomb. A worthy champion, the latest in a line of Russian pentathlon kings.

Full results available [here](#)