

02 AUG 2024

UIPM PARA SPORTS SPOTLIGHT: COMPELLING FIGHTS FOR GOLD ACROSS BIATHLE, TRIATHLE AND LASER RUN IN MADEIRA (POR)



The idyllic island surrounds of Madeira (POR) played host to a little piece of history as the first ever competition to provide a three-race option for Para athletes at European Championship level saw some exhilarating battles for gold.

Run in conjunction with the European Biathle-Triathle-Laser Run Championships, the event for athletes with impairments including physical, visual and intellectual saw Para Biathle, Para Triathle and Para Laser Run races take place across a range of classifications.

Taking place in Funchal, the capital city of the archipelago, the competition ran over three days from July 5-7. In Para Biathle, which encompassed a 400m run/push, 100m swim and another 400m run/push, gold in the PMP1 classification went to Hassiba Bouyoucef of France in the women's race, with Rachel Massey of Great Britain taking silver, and Omar Bouyoucef (FRA) in

the men's race. Much to the joy of locals, the host nation dominated both the PMP2 and PMP6 classifications with Jose Mendonca and Rodolfo Alves, respectively, claiming gold for Portugal.

Para Laser Run, which took place on July 6, saw an impressive field of 22 athletes taking part across five separate classifications. There was a hugely impressive performance from Massey (GBR) who clocked the second-fastest time of the year for female or male PMP1 athletes as she took gold ahead of Hassiba Bouyoucef (FRA) and Olivia Regnauld (FRA) who claimed bronze. Newcomer Rene Hesse of Germany took men's gold with silver going to Omar Bouyoucef (silver) and bronze to Neil Dewar (GBR).

In a weekend of captivating action, arguably the most compelling race was had for gold in PMP2 with compatriots Rio Boothe (GBR) and Matthew Dimbylow (GBR) playing cat and mouse before Dimbylow was victorious. Bronze went to Mendonca (POR). Alessandro Ragni took gold for Italy in the men's PMP6 classification with Harriet Dunn (GBR) narrowly ahead of Anna Maria Mencoboni (ITA) in the women's race. In PMP7, Owen Lee (GBR) celebrated his first victory as he edged Daniel Marques (POR) out for gold.

The competition closed with Para Triathlon, a 100m swim followed by three laps of 300m run/push plus shooting. With a gold apiece already, Massey (GBR) and Hassiba Bouyoucef (FRA) fought for a decisive second victory with Massey (GBR) winning by an impressive 37 seconds. Omar Bouyoucef (FRA) took the gold in the men's PMP1, closely filled by Hesse (GER) then Dewar (GBR). In the PMP2 classification Dimbylow (GBR) claimed gold with Great Britain also on top in PMP5 thanks to Ben Wilson (GBR). Ragni (ITA) took PMP6 honours while Lee (GBR) added a second gold in PMP7.

PMP5 world leading time was posted by GBR Jamie Gane with silver also going to GBR with Ben Wilson. PMP7 para laser run champion went Daniel Marques POR followed by GBR Owen Lee.

With great support from the Portuguese federation and local organising committee, the competition builds on a successful summer for the Para Pentathlon movement. The northern Spanish city of Oviedo recently held a ground-breaking new initiative for European para-athletes with the inaugural European Invitational Para Laser Run, a classification, training and time-trial event.

Andrew Collings, UIPM Para Pentathlon Commission Chair, said: "What a wonderful weekend we witnessed in Madeira where our Para athletes had such a valuable opportunity to compete across three different events. This was yet another clear demonstration of the inclusivity possibilities across the sport of Modern Pentathlon.

"Our sincere thanks go to the Portuguese federation as well as local organisers who were steadfast in their support of the Para movement."