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USA's McPhail seals "bitter-sweet" victory on ISSF World Cup Final opening day

Michael McPhail won his second world cup title back to back at today's 50m Rifle Men Prone final, as the 2016 ISSF Rifle and Pistol World Cup Final kicked-off in Bologna, Italy. People's Republic of China's Pang Wei triumphed in the 50m Pistol Men event.

USA's Michael McPhail, 34, sealed the 2016 season by winning the 50m Rifle Prone Men final on the opening day of the ISSF Rifle and Pistol World Cup Final in Bologna, Italy, defending the title he had won in Munich (GER) one year ago.

His final score of 209.1 points turned out to be unreachable for Denmark's Torben Grimmel, the 2000 Olympic silver medalist who dominated this year's world cup series by winning three stages out of four. Grimmel scored 208.5 points, claiming Silver ahead of USA's Matthew Emmons, Bronze with 187.2 points.

"For me the 2016 season has been kind of bitter-sweet," McPhail said after today's podium ceremony. He had walked into Rio 2016 as one of the favorites, but then closed his Olympic match in 19th place. "It's good to win this title. But this is an Olympic year. At the Games, in Prone shooting, there's only one guy that's happy, for everybody else it's a disappointment. You train for *the one* match, and it doesn't really matter if you win everything else."

"Now I will get ready for the next year. I would like to shoot the ISSF World Cup in Munich in 2017, if I qualify. But after that I don't really have any major plan," concluded today's winner.

Serbia's Stevan Pletikovic, the Olympic Bronze medalist of Barcelona 1992, took the 4th place with 165.1 points, finishing ahead of Rio 2016 Bronze medal winner Kirill Grigoryan of the Russian Federation, who scored 144.3 points to close the final in 5th place.

Earlier this morning, Pang Wei of the People's Republic of China, 30, secured the first gold medal of this world cup final edition, as he won the 50m Pistol Men final.

The 50m Pistol Men World Cup title went to a Chinese athlete for the fifth consecutive time: Zhang Bowen had won it in 2015, Wang Zhiwei in 2014 and 2013, and Zhang Tian in 2012.

Pang, ranked 5th in the world, scored 190.6 points today, to beat India's 29-year old Jitu Rai by 1.8 points. Rai scored 188.8 points, finishing second place and collecting his first world cup final medal in career. Local hero Giuseppe Giordano of Italy, supported by the home crowd here in Bologna, pocketed the Bronze medal with a score of 170.3 points.

Pang, a 2008 Olympic Champion, arrived here in Bologna after shining at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, where he collected the 10m Air Pistol Bronze medal. And it's at the same 10m Air Pistol Men event that he will meet again Giordano and Rai on October 8th, at 5.15 PM (UTC+2).

The 2016 ISSF Rifle and Pistol World Cup Final in Bologna, Italy, continues tomorrow with two medal events, the 25m Pistol Women event and the 25m Rapid Fire Pistol Men, scheduled at 15.30 and 16.45 (UTC+2), respectively.

Editorial photos are available at https://www.flickr.com/photos/issf_shooting

Notes for the editors:

The International Shooting Sport Federation is the governing body of the Olympic Shooting events, and it has over 160 affiliated National Federations worldwide. Shooting is an Olympic sport since the very first edition of the modern Olympic Games, Athens 1896. Find out more about the International Shooting Sport Federation at www.issf-sports.org.

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