

U.S. Women's Epee Team Wins First Ever World Cup Title in Dubai

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World Cup Champions Courtney Hurley, Kat Holmes, Kelley Hurley and Natalie Vie celebrate on the finals strip with Coach Andrey Geva. Photo Credit: Augusto Bizzi / FIE

(Colorado Springs, Colo.) – The U.S. Women's Epee Team has reached the podium at the Olympic Games, won team medals on the World Cup circuit and claimed nearly every Pan American team title since 2009.

Individually, the squad's members hold Grand Prix, World Cup and Pan American medals.

But the program has been eluded by the World Cup gold, winning three bronze and one silver medal during the past six years.

That would change on Sunday as the eighth-ranked Americans upset the top two teams in the world on the way to earning their position on the top of the podium at the Dubai World Cup.

London Olympic bronze medalists Kelley and Courtney Hurley (San Antonio, Texas) combined with their Rio Olympic teammate Kat Holmes (Washington, D.C.) and 2018 Senior World team member Natalie Vie (Phoenix, Ariz.) to make history in women's epee.

The path to gold wouldn't be easy, however, and the matches would be filled with one nail-biting moment after another as each went down to the final minute.

Fencing Germany in the table of 16, Courtney Hurley led the squad in touches, scoring seven of the first 12 touches for the Americans who led the match, 12-9 after eight bouts with the first three being scoreless.

Competing in her first season as anchor, Holmes found herself in overtime with a tied score at 16, but held on to win the bout, 17-16, and move on to the quarter-finals.

Next, Team USA would fence top-ranked China, the 2017 Senior World silver medalists. The Americans shifted to a more offensive strategy, winning or tying six of the first eight bouts to give Holmes a four-touch margin to work with at 33-29. Holmes opened with three unanswered singles against Sheng Lin in the first 90 seconds to take the lead to 36-29 before Lin picked up her first score of the bout. Holmes continued to pull away and secured a 41-33 win for Team USA.

Fencing in the semifinals for the second time this season, the Americans took on France to see who would make the gold medal final. France came out with an early lead, controlling the match, 16-9, after the first four bouts, but the Americans were determined not to give up as they began picking off their opponents, Holmes won the fifth bout against Coraline Vitalis, 4-2, and Kelley Hurley won the sixth against Auriane Mallo, 4-1. Fencing for the first time on Sunday, Vie outscored Laurence Epee, 6-3, to give Team USA its first lead of the match at 23-22. Kelley Hurley took her second win of the match in the eighth, defeating Marie-Florence Candassamy, 5-4. With a 28-26 lead and a total of 35 points up for grabs, Holmes fenced Mallo in the anchor leg. Just over a minute into the bout, Mallo tied the score at 30, but Holmes quickly regained the lead with a single and retained a 32-33 lead going into the last minute. The remaining touches flew furiously with Holmes outscoring Mallo, 4-2, in the final 15 seconds alone to secure the victory at 42-36.

In the finals, the Americans split bouts with Russia, the World No. 2, at four each with Courtney Hurley leading the squad with a +6 indicator to give Team USA a 21-19 lead. In the anchor bout, World No. 7 Violetta Kolobova (RUS) tied Holmes at 24 and scored the single she would need to gain a lead that she retained throughout the final minute. With the Russians leading, 28-27, Holmes singled with four seconds on the clock to tie the score at 28 and send the bout to overtime in a scene

reminiscent of the semifinals at the Barcelona World Cup where Russia won a heartbreaking match on priority.

Again, the match would come down to whomever could score the first touch and Holmes made sure it was hers, attacking quickly and taking the single to give the U.S. Women's Epee Team its first ever World Cup title.

"Each member of the team contributed to this victory. So many times we were so close to make that final touch, but something was missing. This time, the right strategy, discipline and positive team dynamic brought us gold," said Head Coach Andrey Geva (Houston, Texas).

In the individual competition on Saturday, Kelley Hurley, Holmes and Kasia Nixon (Los Angeles, Calif.) each earned top-32 results.

Exempt from pools, the elder Hurley defeated 2015 NCAA Champion Isis Washington (Parsippany, N.J.), 15-13, in the table of 64. The loss came after a 4-2 finish in pools for Washington and a pair of preliminary table wins on Friday. Hurley fenced Sheng Lin (CHN) for the first time in an individual bout since 2015 in the table of 32, but lost the bout, 15-10, to the 2018 Budapest Grand Prix medalist.

Nixon, a silver medalist at the 2017 Junior Worlds, went 5-1 in pools and defeated Erika Takahashi (JPN), 15-7, to qualify for the table of 64.

On Saturday, Nixon bested Anna Mroszczak (POL), 15-7, before a 15-11 loss to No. 2 seed Pauline Brunner (SUI).

Holmes finished the pool rounds at 4-2 on Friday and defeated a pair of Germans to make the second day, besting Anna Hornischer and Gala Hess by 15-11 and 15-5 margins, respectively.

In the 64, Holmes won her opening bout, 15-9, to A-Lam Shin. Her table of 32 came down to overtime against two-time Asian Champion Injeong Choi (KOR), but she fell short, dropping the bout, 13-12. Choi went on to win bronze.

Four U.S. fencers earned top-64 results, including Washington, Vie, Courtney Hurley and Anna van Brummen (Houston, Texas).

Van Brummen and Courtney Hurley both advanced directly to pools, finishing the rounds at 6-0 and 5-1, respectively.

In the table of 64, both athletes fell short of advancing with van Brummen falling to Mallo, 15-11, and Hurley dropping her bout to Josephine Jacques Andre Coquin (FRA), 15-9.

Vie went 4-2 in pools before coming up with preliminary table wins and held her next two opponents to single digits scores with victories over Veronika Rojkova (UZB), 15-9, and Anna Hornischer (GER), 15-6.

In the table of 64, Vie lost to Giulia Rizzi, 15-12.

Click [here](#) to view complete results.

Top eight and U.S. results are as follows:

Dubai Women's Team Epee World Cup

1. USA
2. Russia
3. Italy
4. France
5. Korea
6. Hong Kong
7. Poland
8. China

Dubai Women's Individual Epee World Cup

1. Yiwen Sun (CHN)
2. Laurence Epee (FRA)
3. Injeong Choi (KOR)
3. Violetta Kolobova (RUS)
5. Emese Szasz-Kovacs (HUN)
6. Mingye Zhu (CHN)
7. Giulia Rizzi (ITA)
8. Coraline Vitalis (FRA)

19. Kelley Hurley (San Antonio, Texas)
24. Kasia Nixon (Los Angeles, Calif.)
29. Kat Holmes (Washington, D.C.)
40. Anna van Brummen (Houston, Texas)
42. Courtney Hurley (San Antonio, Texas)
55. Isis Washington (Parsippany, N.J.)
57. Natalie Vie (Phoenix, Ariz.)
101. Francesca Bassa (Houston, Texas)
142. Amanda Pirkowski (Longwood, Fla.)
159. Victoria Mo (Irvine, Calif.)