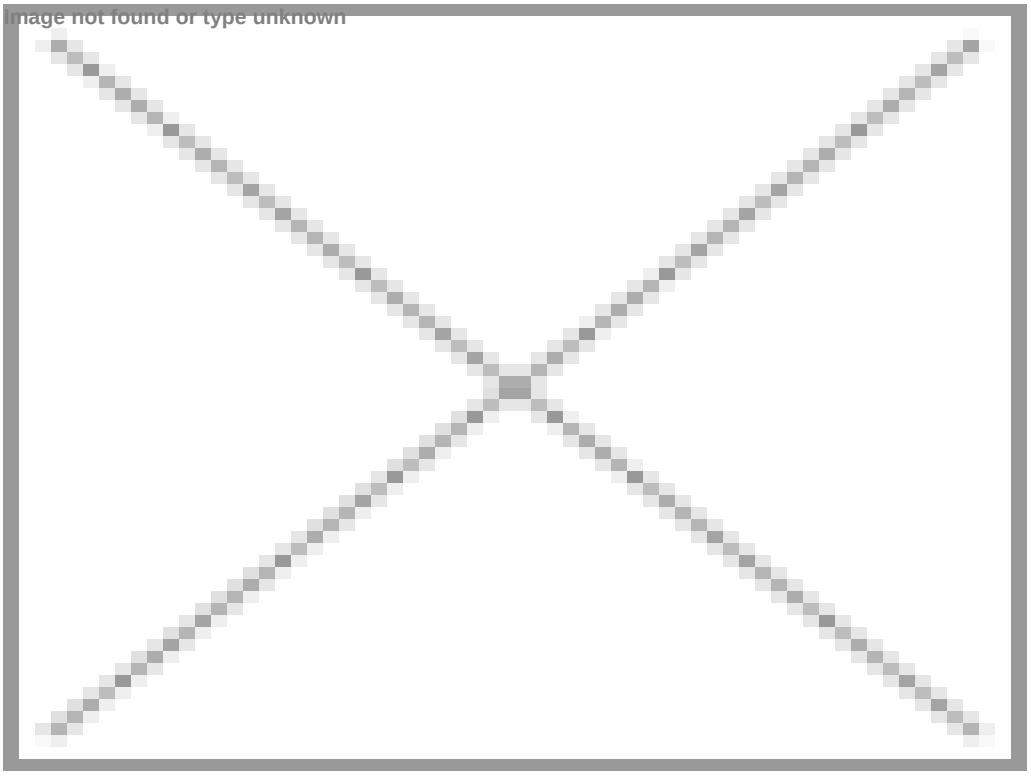
31 JUL 2017

UIPM U19 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: BEYOND THE PODIUM



There are only so many times in any given year that athletes from all six continents converge in one place.

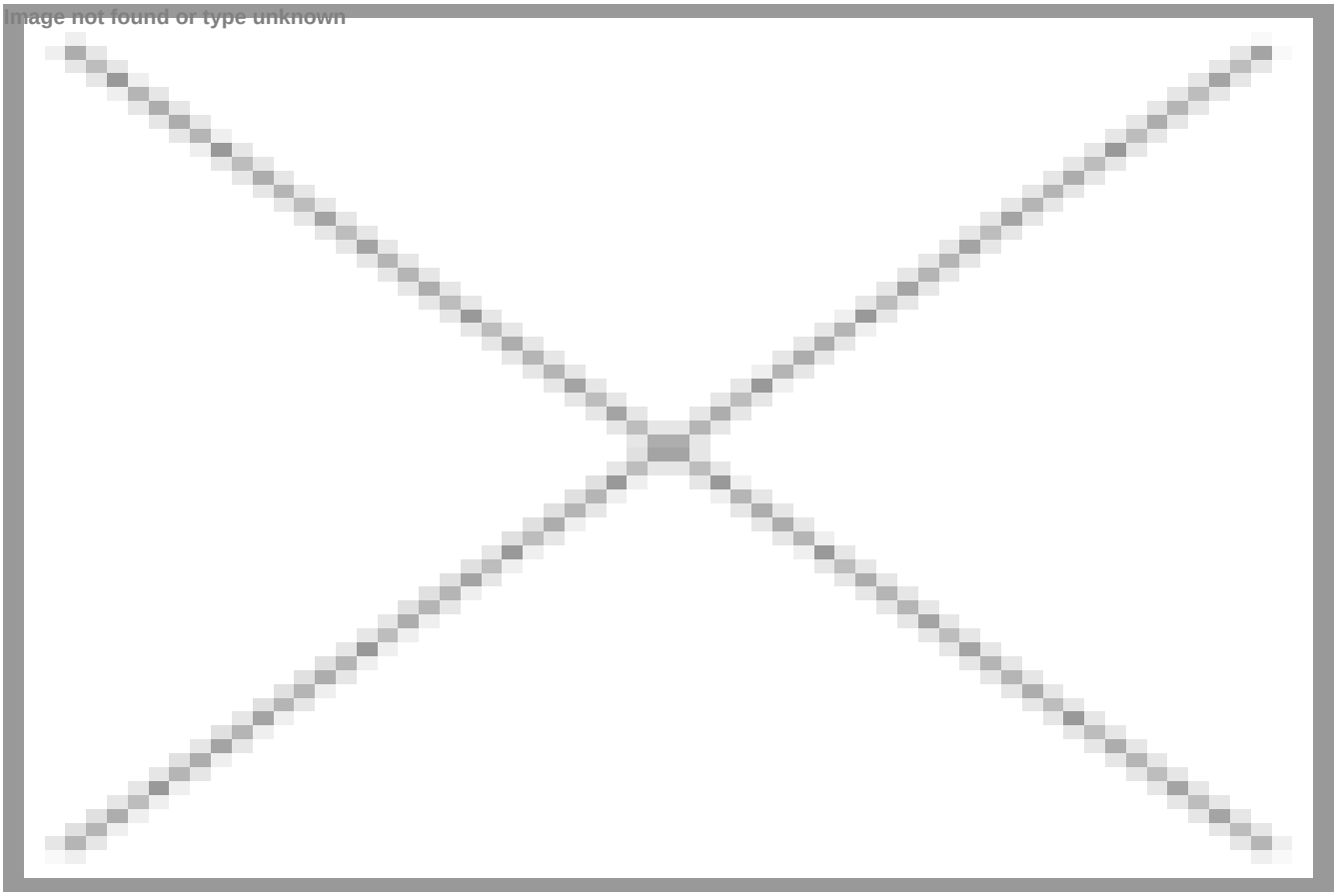
The 2017 UIPM U19 World Championships was one such happy occasion, as representatives of the six UIPM confederations - Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, NORCECA and South America – were sent to compete in one of UIPM's most important development competitions.

This underlined not only the growing importance placed on the Youth Olympic Games cycle – next year the world's best teenage pentathletes will take part in a YOG for the third time, in Buenos Aires – but also the success of the global development work taking place in so many countries.

During the course of the U19 World Championships in Prague (CZE), UIPM took the opportunity to go beyond the podium and speak to some of the coaches and officials about their progress, as well as their hopes and dreams for the future.

ARGENTINA

Norberto Soto and Rafael Acosta (coaches, Modern Pentathlon Federation of Argentina)



How important is the U19 World Championships to you?

It’s very important as we have a lot athletes competing. In addition, it allows our athletes to get more international experience for the future. The group, which trains in Buenos Aires, consists of 6 athletes, 4 « chicos » and 3 « chicas ».

How much has the Buenos Aires 2018 Youth Olympic Games motivated you to improve your pentathlon?

It’s huge, it’s really important, six or seven athletes are already pre-selected. One “chico” and one “chica” will represent the Argentina at the Youth Olympic Games in Modern Pentathlon.

How important is Modern Pentathlon in Argentina?

After the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, people started talking about this sport as we had athletes competing. Since Rio, a three-year project has been launched called ENARD in Buenos Aires at the national sport centre, which is dedicated to the 2018 Youth Olympic Games.

AUSTRALIA

Eszter Hortobagyi (team manager and Athens 2004 Olympian)

How do you feel pentathlon in Australia is developing?

Our group of youth athletes is really enthusiastic, excited for the Youth Olympic Games. More and

more people want to join the group. We had some training camps in Hungary with a group of four girls and three boys. It's hard to train for pentathlon in Australia.

We have two kids here, Georgia Ensbey and Keaan Van Venrooij, who only started competing eight weeks ago. They are good swimmers, Keaan had an amazing Fencing performance after only seven lessons (11V/8D). Their Shooting was OK after 20 lessons. They are very enthusiastic to be here.

How much have the achievements of Chloe and Max Esposito inspired you?

They are role models for the group. They came to visit our training camp in Canberra. The kids enjoyed seeing them training and talking to them, they are a very good source of inspiration.

Are more people in Australia aware of the sport since Chloe's Olympic gold?

There was big interest in Modern Pentathlon afterwards, a lot of emails received. The challenge is that it's difficult to train in Australia because it's such a big country and athletes are spread out across the country.

What do young athletes like about this sport?

They love pentathlon for the variety, the sport and the family.

Georgia Ensbey and Keean Van Venrooij, 2 kids competing from 8 weeks ago, former good swimmers, keann did an amazing fencing with only 7 lessons (11W 8D). Shooting was OK with 20 lessons. Very enthusiastic to be here.

JAPAN

Capt Kazuhiro Hoshino (coach, office manager and biathle/triathle sub committee manager, Modern Pentathlon Association of Japan)

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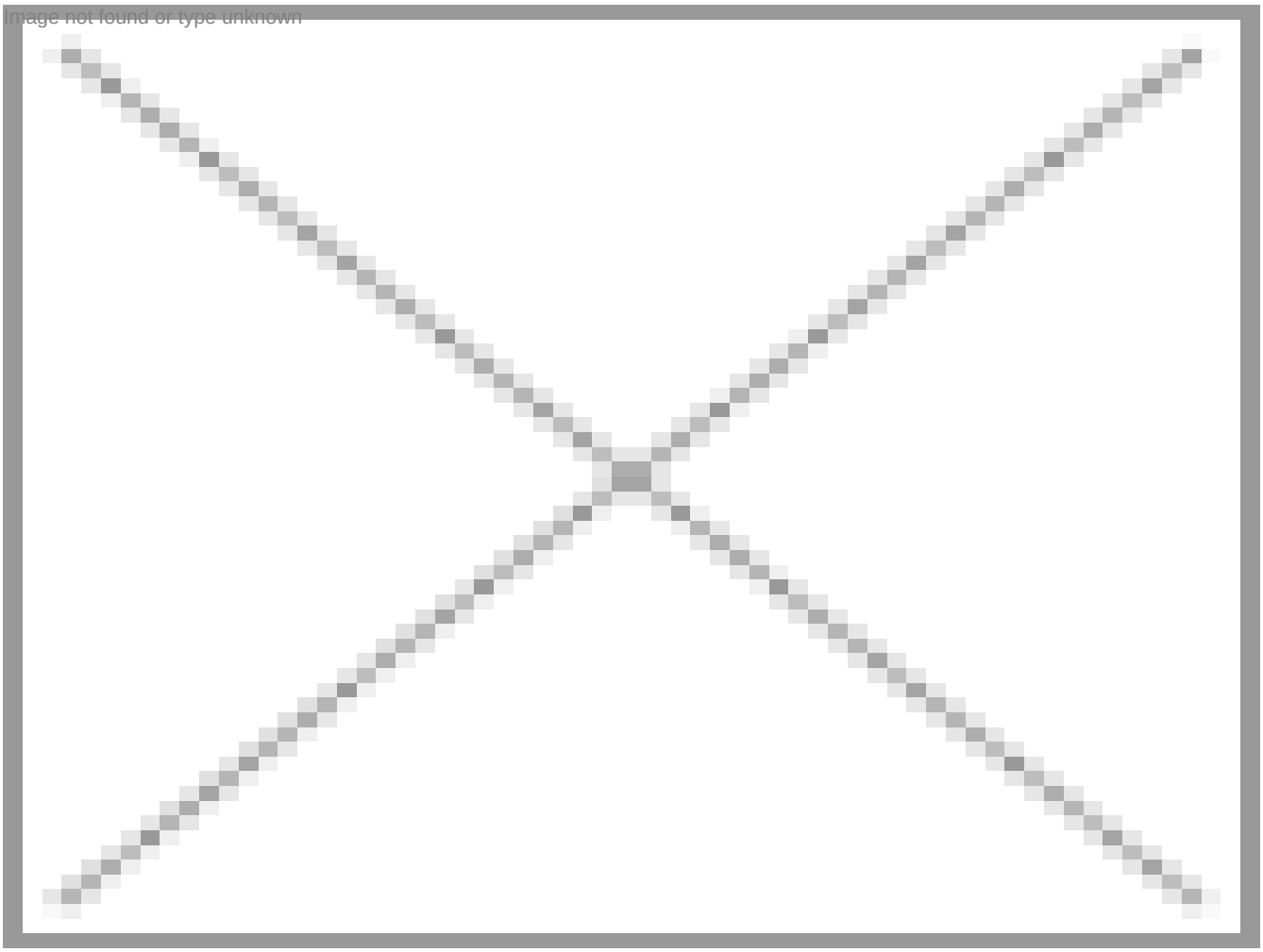

How important is the U19 World Championships?

It is very important that athletes gain competition experience for the future.

How much has the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games motivated you to develop pentathlon in Japan?

We hope our federation will strongly grow after the Olympic Gamess like Korea did after Seoul 1988. The Youth Olympic Games also very important for us to help develop the sport and get ready for 2020.

Can athletes have a career in Modern Pentathlon in Japan?

Now, not really but we hope that after 2020 we can think about professionalism. We have Mizuno as our sponsor and hope to attract more.

THAILAND

Anirut Posakrisna (Vice President, Thailand Modern Pentathlon Federation)

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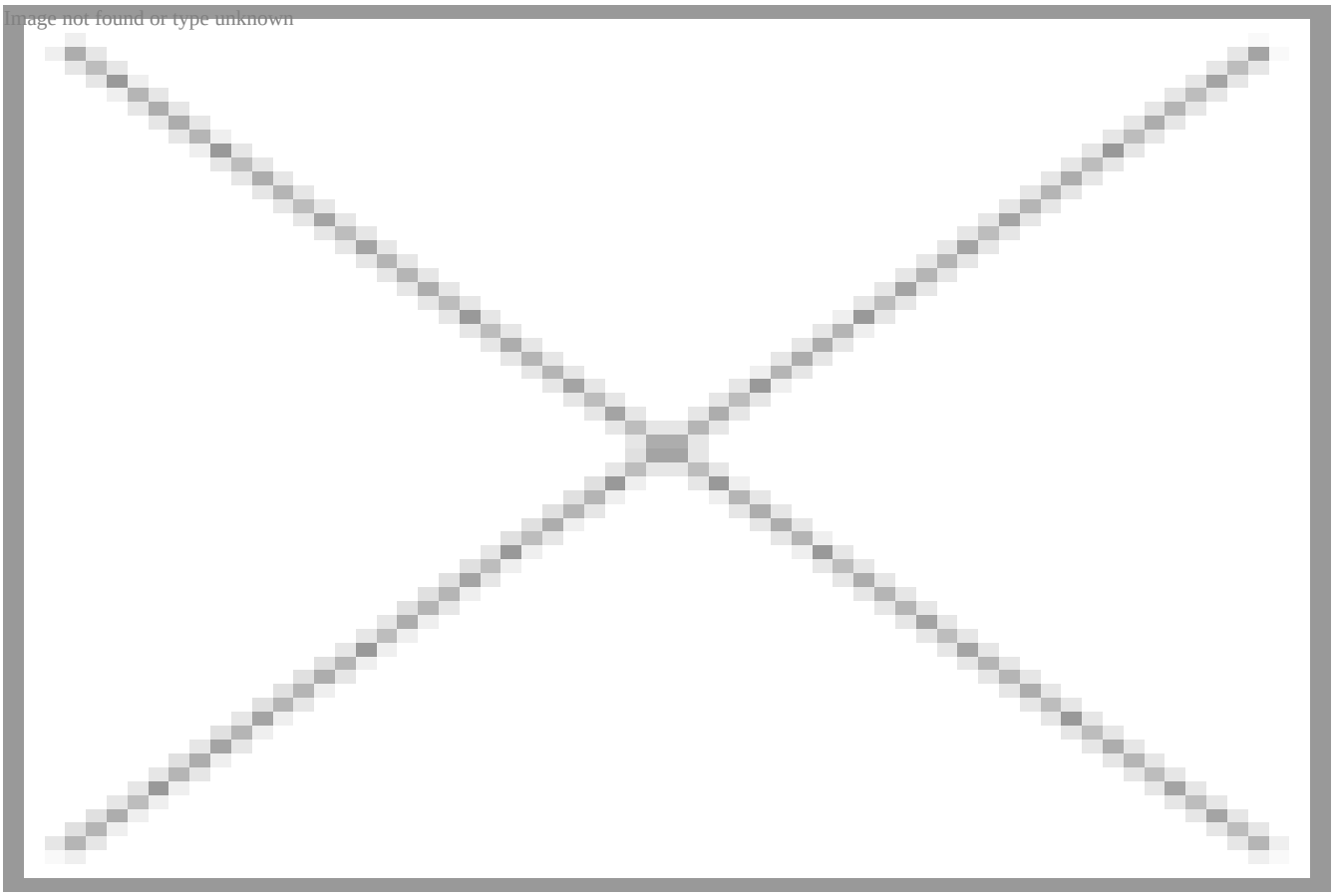

When did Modern Pentathlon start to develop in Thailand?

Development work began three years ago, and then the Thailand Modern Pentathlon Federation was founded six or seven months ago with the help of Bernhard Petruschinski from the UIPM Technical Committee.

Which UIPM sports have helped with this development?

Triathle has been the main development sport, as part of Beach sports. It was initiated during the 2014 Asian Games.

How many athletes are taking part in UIPM sports?

A total of 35 athletes, and Triathle is the most popular. Athletes are taking part in events across different provinces within Thailand, and UIPM Sports are taught in sporting schools across the country.

How important is it for athletes to take part in international competitions?

It is very important. It’s not easy for them as Thailand is very far from where most of the major competitions are held. For that reason, this trip has been very special for them and they have enjoyed the Fencing Bonus Round, which they had never participated in before. After getting home from Prague the athletes will participate in Laser-Run City Tours in Singapore and Thailand.

What are the ultimate goals/ambitions for Modern Pentathlon in Thailand?

For athletes to qualify for the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires and the Asian Games, and ultimately the 2024 Olympic Games.