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UIPM 2018 MASTERS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: ERWIN STALDER (SUI) BIDS FAREWELL TO PENTATHLON AT 80

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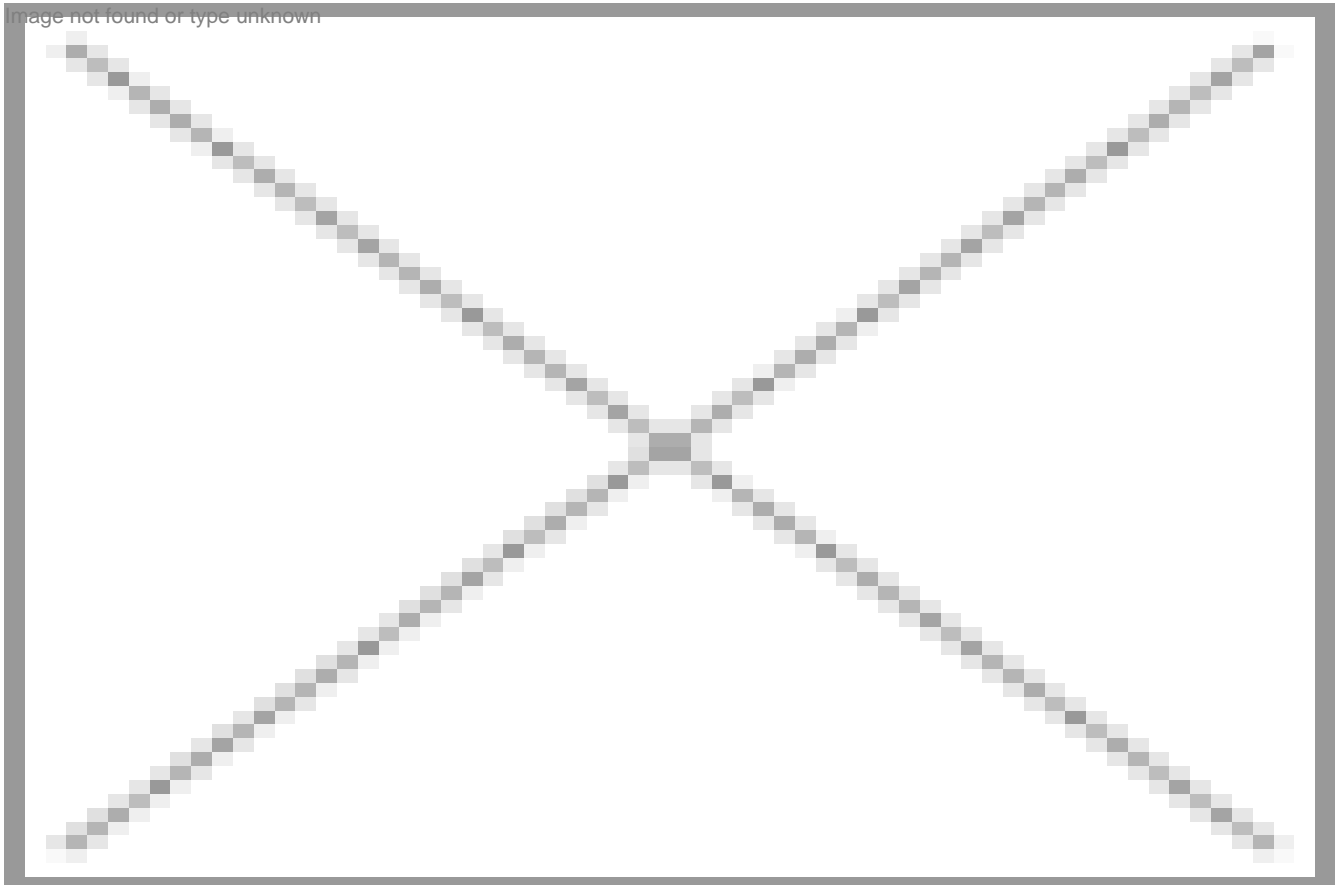


He celebrated his 80th birthday in May 2018, but Erwin Stalder of Switzerland did not see the passing of this landmark as a reason to urgently change his lifestyle.

Part of Erwin's lifestyle is Masters Pentathlon, so it followed that there was no reason for him not to travel to Halle in Germany to compete in the UIPM Masters World Championships, and he duly joined more than 130 athletes from 26 nations in this celebration of 'sport for life'.

Sixty years have passed since he first took up Modern Pentathlon as a sports-mad youngster serving his military service. Over the decades he has played the role of athlete, competition organiser, national administrator and UIPM judge.

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So

where did it all start? As Erwin explained in an interview with World Pentathlon in Halle, his journey began with a fascination and insatiable appetite for sport in all its many forms.

“It started with athletics, the 1500 metres, I was a goalkeeper in handball and I played football at left wing. In athletics I also ran cross-country and later I was engaged in water polo,” said Erwin.

“Of course, early in my life I learned to ski, downhill and cross-country, and I entered the military at 18 and I was boxing and then I became involved in a special Winter Games for Army people.

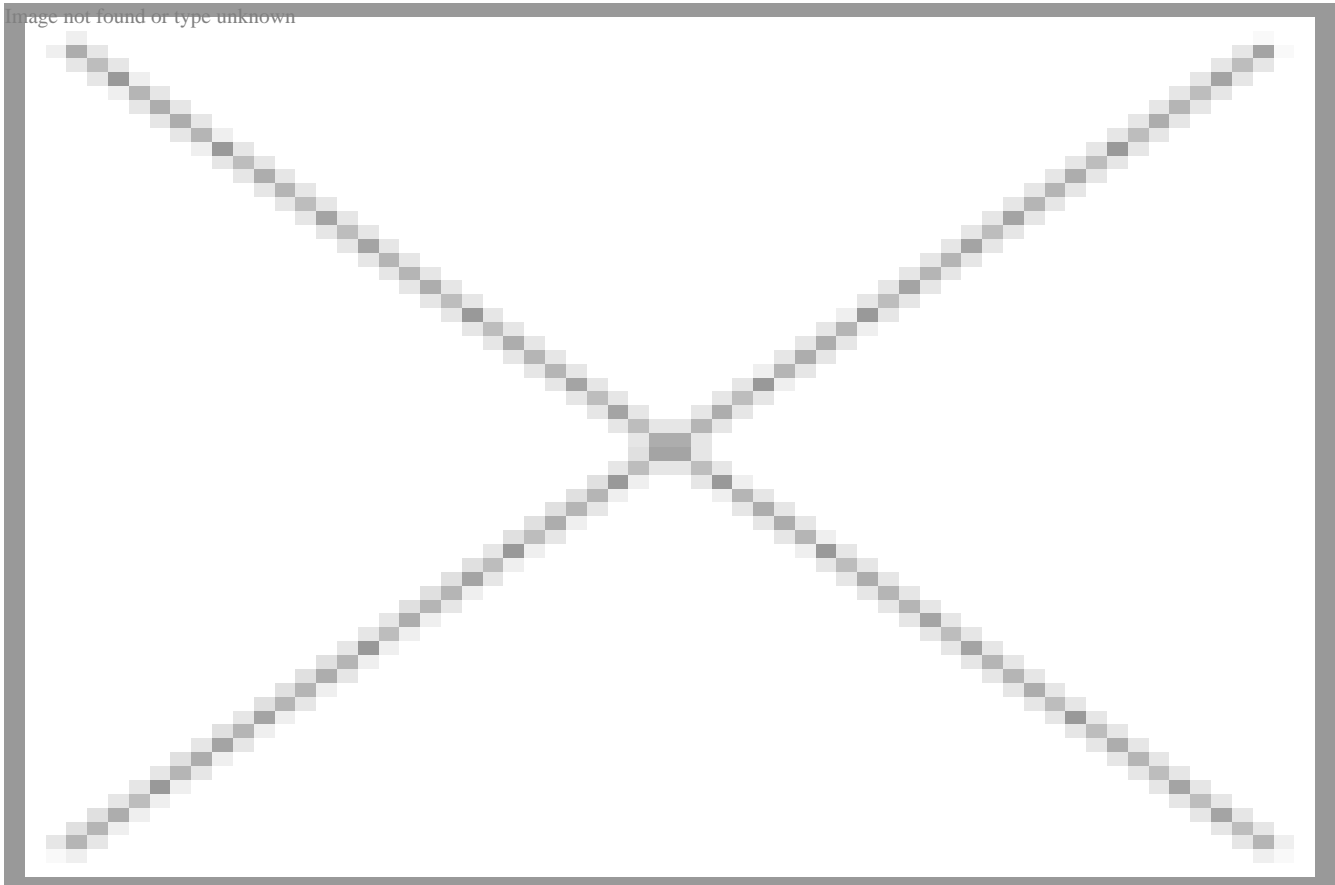
“One of the Corporals in my unit said to me, ‘if you can do the winter pentathlon, you can do the summer pentathlon’, and I said OK. This was 1958.

“I like diverse sporting activities – I also did orienteering – and Modern Pentathlon is good for me because I am also a rider. I have experience with horses so I had a certain affinity with pentathlon. I like all of the sports.

“The benefit of sport is that you have good physical activity as well as social competence in society. It’s a vital part of your life.”

The growing Masters movement plays a major role in the UIPM Sports movement, completing a competition pathway that enables participants to stay involved throughout their lifetime.

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It is

all thanks to pioneering individuals like Erwin who have the vision and dedication to help people get more out of their own sporting journeys.

“I started as a co-founder of the Old Boys club in Switzerland, to have friendly competitions for older athletes. We called it Old Boys but it was very open, with no age groups. The movement grew bigger and bigger, there were Austrians and Hungarians who were active, and we got together in Germany in the 1980s as 25 people who founded Masters Pentathlon,” he said.

“The movement continued to grow and grow, and then we started the European and World Championships. We always competed on a very friendly basis, and we had this idea that we would lead the Masters closer to the National Federations and the International Federation – that was the only way we could grow.

“I have been an athlete, an organiser and a judge, and so I think I have the right to say what I think is a good way to run the sport and what leads, in my opinion, a little bit the wrong way.

“I hope everybody goes home from Halle with a good feeling from a really beautiful competition, and I hope the development of the Masters movement will continue with a little bit more support from UIPM.”