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UIPM 2019 GLOBAL LASER RUN CITY TOUR: PRIDE AND DISBELIEF AS HISTORY IS MADE IN KABUL (AFG)

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For evidence of the global popularity and powerful symbolism of Laser Run, look no further than the first Global Laser Run City Tour to take place in Afghanistan.

In Kabul on June 27, more than 300 athletes made history with a competition that included the first Mixed Relay ever to take place on Afghan soil.

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Considering that all sport was prohibited during the Taliban regime and Afghanistan was banned by the International Olympic Committee from 1999 to 2002 due to discrimination against women, it was a truly symbolic moment.

The competition came in the wake of the first UIPM Coaches Certification Programme (CCP) Level 1 course in Kabul, which enabled three women to gain qualifications and get involved in the organisation of the June 27 event.

No Afghan woman has ever won an Olympic medal and women continue to find barriers restricting their participation in sport, with no guarantees about the future. But members of the pentathlon community are determined to take an inclusive approach to sport development.

Khoshal Sarwari, President of the Modern Pentathlon Federation of Afghanistan, said he was very happy that a dream had come true at the Kabul Police Academy with an international-standard UIPM Sports competition in a country that is still war-torn.

"I felt proud to see lots of girls taking part in this competition and for the first time we had a woman as shooting manager. This shows our efforts have resulted in a good outcome and we are going in the right direction."

Two of the youngest participants also expressed their satisfaction with the outcome.

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Mohammad Mahdi, 8, said: "I am very happy I took part in this competition and it felt to me that I was competing in an international competition. All my friends around were cheering for me and I feel so, so happy that I finished first."

Om-el Banan Azizi, winner of the girls' under-15 category, said: "I cannot believe I did it. It is only a few months since I started this sport in our school and I know about it, but today I won the competition! My school will be so proud of me."

The GLRCT was created in 2017 to provide an entry point to UIPM Sports for people of all ages in urban communities around the world.

Another 100 cities have been selected in 2019 as hosts of the GLRCT or the Biathle/Triathle National Tour. The full calendar can be viewed at the UIPM website, where you can also find more information on UIPM's various multi-discipline sports.

In September, the UIPM Laser Run World Championships will be incorporated into the Pentathlon World Championships for the first time in Budapest (HUN), where Laser Run is also on the programme for the 1st World Urban Games.

In December, Laser Run and Triathle will both feature for the first time in the 30th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games in the Philippines.

Have you liked the UIPM Laser Run page on Facebook yet?

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