

03 SEP 2021

AN UNFORGETTABLE OLYMPICS FOR SO MANY REASONS: UIPM SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE

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Whatever memories stand out for you, I believe none of us will ever forget the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

It was the first Olympics where all five disciplines of Modern Pentathlon took place in one venue in one day – and what a venue! Our colleagues at the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee really excelled in turning a dream into reality inside Tokyo Stadium, and we will forever be grateful to them for their ceaseless commitment to the highest standards in the face of so much adversity.

In fact, the Pentathlon Stadium is now part of the furniture within the Olympic Games, and we look forward to working with Paris 2024 to create another stunning venue in Versailles.

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In the Modern Pentathlon movement we never forget our heritage, having been a core sport on the Olympic programme for 109 years, and sports historians will look back on the Tokyo 2020 competition as a story of landmarks.

We saw the first male and female medal double in Modern Pentathlon – and not only that but a double gold! Congratulations to Team GB, especially our new champions Kate and Joe, on an awesome performance that truly sets the standard for other nations to follow.

On the women's side, we saw two other athletes gain a hard-earned reward for many years of hard work – congratulations to Laura on winning Lithuania's only medal of the Games and to Sarolta for battling back from serious injury to get Hungary back on the Olympic podium.

While I was delighted for all four of those European athletes for getting the success they richly deserved, I believe members of our community in Africa and Asia might see a different face when they look back on these Games.

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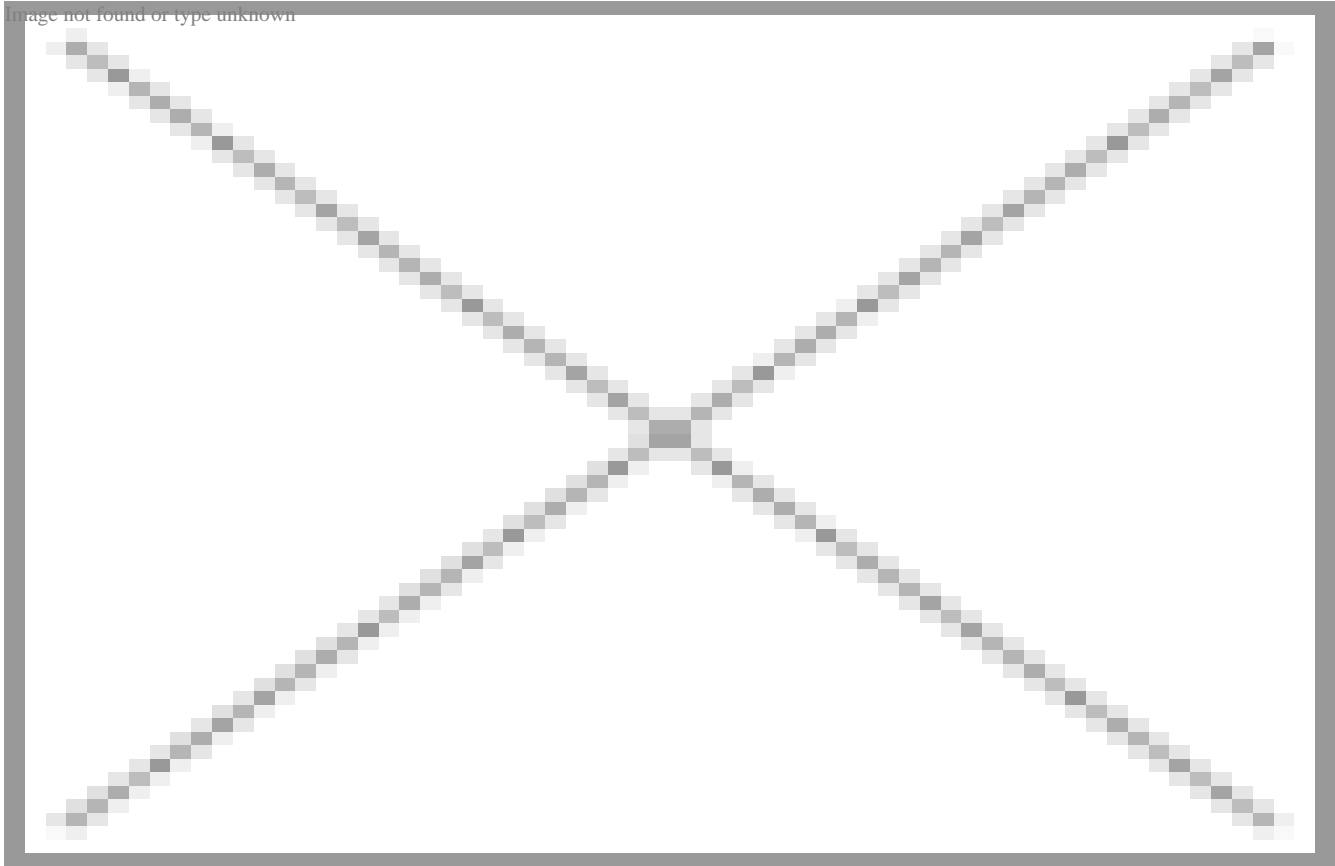
That's because, on the men's side, we saw Egypt and Korea win their first Modern Pentathlon medals after an incredible effort by so many people in those two countries. It's so exciting for our movement to see how a long-term commitment to development can pay off with success on the ultimate stage, and I am thrilled for Woongtae and even more so for Ahmed, the first African medallist in our sport and still only 21!

Three continents, three confederations represented on the podium ... nobody can claim now that this is not a global sport. But being global is something we always have to be mindful of, especially during the Olympics when the whole world is watching on TV and online.

Tokyo brought another reminder of that, especially with the Riding incidents that were beamed around the world and not always in a way that reflected positively on our sport. Elsewhere in UIPM communications you can read how we responded to the events of August 6, how we listened to the feedback and offers of support and expertise and how we are already deep in the process of reviewing (and potentially reforming) our sport.

As leader of the UIPM staff team in Tokyo, I have never been more proud to work with so many talented and professional people. I would also say like to say a special thanks to our outstanding technical officials who stuck to their task in sometimes challenging conditions, and to every single athlete, coach, team member, delegate and UIPM Executive Board Member who came to Tokyo and made the Modern Pentathlon competition such a special moment.

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Together as one global sporting family, we are already invested in the next tasks – completing the 2021 competition season, preparing for our first-ever virtual Congress in November and of course the 2022-24 cycle, which will write another exciting chapter in the history of Modern Pentathlon.

New format, same principle: to test the moral and physical qualities of the world's most versatile athletes. Just as Coubertin envisaged. We continue to evolve, and we continue to make history.