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UIPM 2023 PENTATHLON AND LASER RUN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: OFFICIATING PROGRAMME FOR RIDING DISCIPLINE GETS UNDERWAY

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With less than 100 days to go until the UIPM 2023 Pentathlon and Laser Run World Championships in Bath (GBR), the technical officials' recruitment and training programme has got underway.

Of the five disciplines, the officials' training course for Riding is arguably the most challenging to plan and deliver, requiring coordination of the trainee officials, athletes, horses and venue logistics.

The officiating programme for the World Championships is being led by Riding Director Eve

Staveley, in collaboration with UIPM and Pentathlon GB. Eve is an international showjumper and BSJA accredited coach who has also been riding coach to Pentathlon GB's Talent Pathway since 2020.

Commenting on the show-jumping element of Modern Pentathlon, Eve says: "The athletes have just 20 minutes before competing to learn as much as possible about the horse they have been allocated in the draw - they need to get inside the horse's head and develop a partnership. It requires confidence, braveness and quick decision-making to ensure they have the best ride possible."

The one-day training event was held at the West Wiltshire Equestrian Centre near Bath on Wednesday 24 May, delivering training at Levels 1 to 3. The volunteer officials had already completed a three-hour online learning programme earlier in the week.

This included the new regulations, agreed last year by the UIPM Riding Working Group, to further protect the welfare of horses. For example, the height of the jumps has been reduced from 1.20 metres to 1.10 metres, there are penalties for incorrect whip handling that could cause pain to the horse and riders face immediate elimination in the event of a fall.

Eve adds: "Horse welfare is very important, and we will be adhering very closely to the UIPM guidelines. All our horses will be medically vetted before the competition to check they are fit to jump.

"The judges and officials will also be on the lookout for any unsafe riding both during the 20-minute warm-up when athletes become familiar with their horses and in the main arena. We will be quick to intervene if a rider is clearly not getting on with their horse."

The officials on 24 May were briefed and assessed by UIPM Technical Committee Member Andrea Dell'Amore. They also participated in practical sessions to build technical knowledge and skill in their various officiating roles and familiarisation with the competition protocols and course plan, which is numbered one to ten and includes two doubles. The day ended with a one-hour exam which all nine officials passed.

Looking ahead to August when the World Championships will be held at the University of Bath, Eve added: "I'm very excited to be involved with the World Championships, it's such a prestigious competition and its status as an Olympic qualifier for Paris 2024 means it will attract the world's best athletes to Bath.

"I'm looking forward to playing my part in delivering a successful Riding event that will set the tone and contribute to the exciting build-up to the Modern Pentathlon competition at the Paris Olympics next year."

Visit www.wch2023.org for more information and to buy tickets for the UIPM 2023 Pentathlon and Laser Run World Championships.