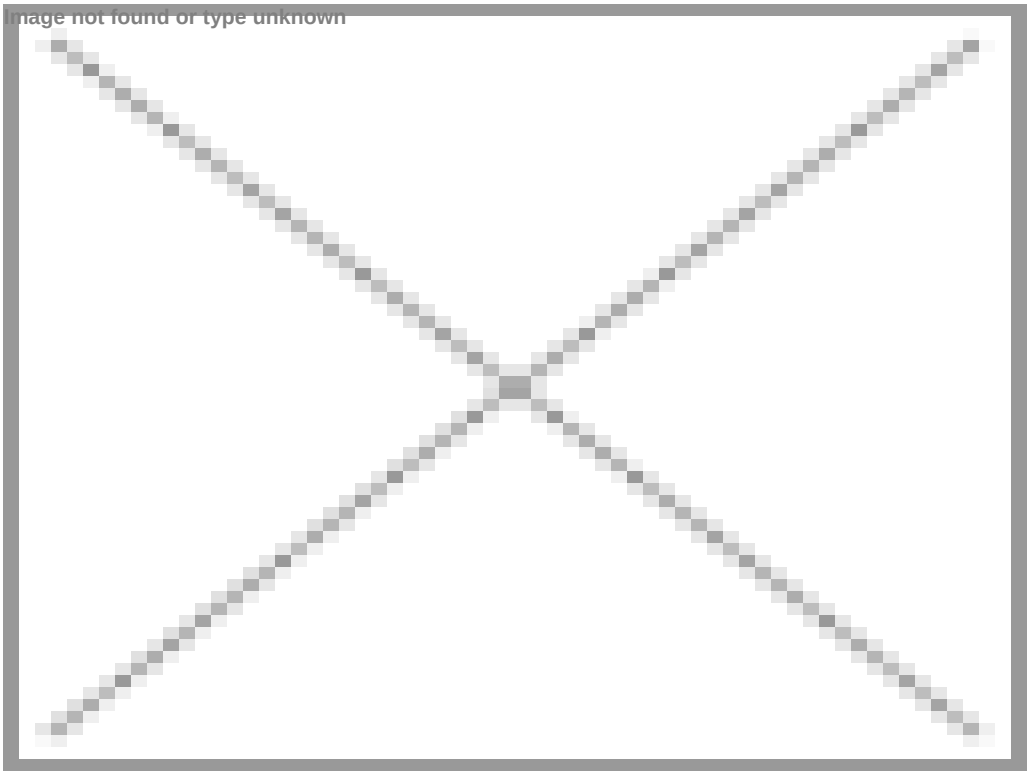
20 DEC 2023

UIPM SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE: LEARNING TO REMAIN OPEN, POSITIVE AND REASONABLE – NO MATTER WHAT!



Last month I shared some reflections on the state of global Olympic sport coming from the IOC Session, where we received good news about Modern Pentathlon looking ahead to LA28.

Now that we are at the end of this historic year, it feels like the right time to reflect on our journey from January. And what a journey!

It began with UIPM in a difficult place. To keep going with the journey metaphor, we knew our destination and had a route map and enough resources to get there, but we also knew we were carrying a complex load across an uncertain terrain.

I start my reflections on 2023 with three things that were causing me to feel concerned at the start of the year, before describing what I learned and what I loved about the 12 months of progress

and achievement that followed.

Three things that worried me:

- With many parts of our infrastructure already built for past years, newer elements needed to be brought up to speed and/or required to be started from scratch. And with service demands and standards rising more and more, I feared that the administration team could struggle or even be overwhelmed.
- In this 2021-2024 Olympic cycle it seemed we never stopped using the word “transition” to describe our sport and our organisation – the transition of a new 90-minute format in Modern Pentathlon from 2021/2022, the transition of selecting a new 5th discipline and testing it from 2022, and then in 2023 the transition of integrating Obstacle into our sport at youth and junior levels. There was added the pressure of needing to prepare for further progress in 2024 so that the format will be ready for our senior age group starting in 2025. Not to mention the ongoing transition of integrating FISO (World Obstacle) into UIPM.
- While we are on the way to fixing the rest of the Obstacle integration, it also became clear there would be a need for our Fencing discipline to be reconfigured with innovation to meet the expectations of the IOC and LA28, inevitably causing confusion and frustration that I worried would continue until things are totally settled.

One of my great wishes is that we can reach a place where we no longer use the word “transition” all the time, but it might take longer than we expected or wanted.

Three things I learned:

- I learned in 2023 to always remain open to talking about needs and requirements within the community, to make things understandable all the time.
- It’s important to be positive even during negative moments, and to share opinions no matter whether it feels good or bad to do so.
- It is not possible to please everyone all the time, but it is possible to explain to everyone, and to be reasonable.

There is no perfect scenario, but there are ways to find the best possible balance and solutions, as long as you never give up!

Three things I loved:

- I enjoyed receiving fair comments, encouragement and, especially, compliments for our teamwork.
- I also loved the understanding and cooperation that came from stakeholders and members.
- Seeing athletes happy. Although we didn’t see this as often as we would have liked, due to the recent environment and circumstances, still, athlete satisfaction is our motivation.

The happy faces of youth athletes felt like the reward of all our hard work, and I loved seeing that raw joy from young athletes…

And now that the year is almost over, we look ahead to 2024 and see challenges in front of us, but what else would you expect?

Three challenges I’m excited about:

- The new 90-minute format has been accepted by broadcasters after two years, but still there are things to adjust to better suit the needs of TV, and I’m looking forward to the further improvement of the product in 2024.
- More dynamic Obstacle events inside Modern Pentathlon competitions enabling youth and junior athletes to build on their experiences in 2023, and in 2024 we can expect to witness new world records!
- The integration of the Obstacle community, enhancing our sports base and enlarging the growth potential of the organisation, which I dearly wish will make a true and tangible difference in 2024.

Challenges always come with opportunities. At UIPM we choose to see big opportunities and to work together to overcome the challenges!