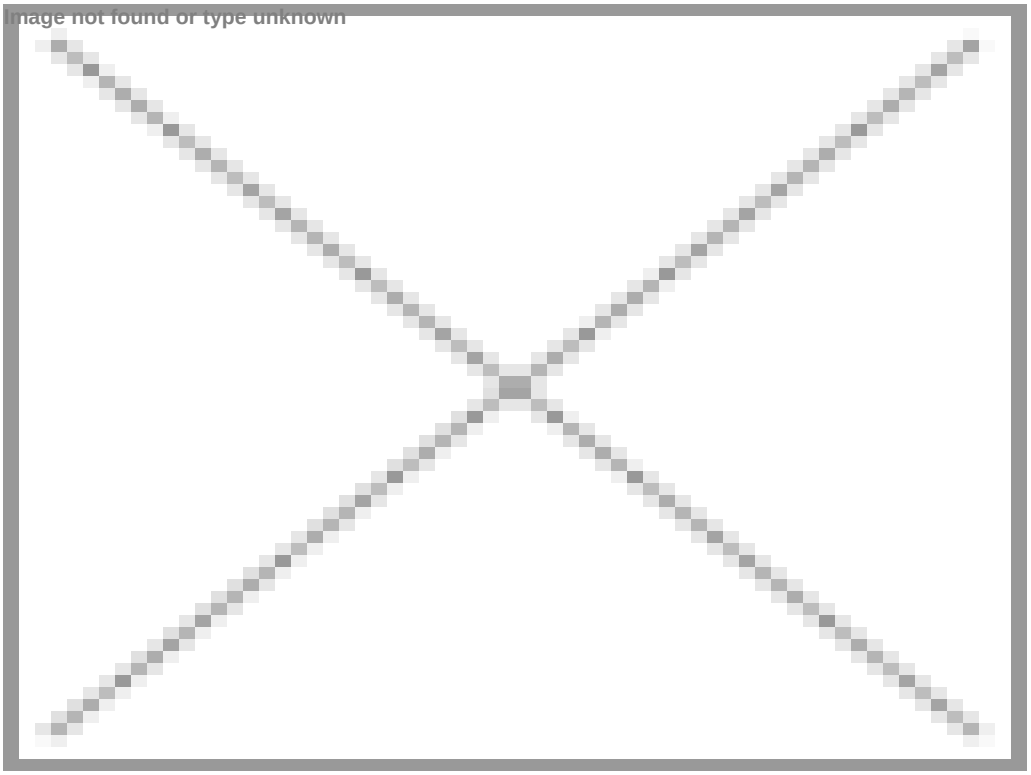
02 JUN 2024

YOU DON’T NEED A CRYSTAL BALL TO SEE THE FUTURE – JUST GET AROUND A TABLE



Halfway through Super Saturday at the UIPM Pentathlon World Cup Final in Ankara, we broke from the competition to gather round a table. And it had to be a big one.

Around 25 members of our community – comprising UIPM Executive Board (EB), National Federation (NF) representatives, athletes and coaches – joined staff members in the room for an open discussion related to the future structure of our events. It was a pragmatic, honest conversation about our direction of travel.

The round-table format as a direct means of conversation is hardly new or groundbreaking, but sometimes we forget how effective it can be when gathering multiple stakeholders.

So why did this meeting need to happen?

- The discussion was centred around various proposals, such as an increase in the number of competitions at more levels, shorter competition days and more athletes per NF being allowed to compete.
- While the EB will meet for formal discussions in Zhengzhou (CHN) during the UIPM 2024 Pentathlon and Laser Run World Championships, the opportunity on May 25 to engage with so many community representatives was perfectly timed.
- Opinions and views from different angles and perspectives were raised, which opened up some new aspects to build into longer-term planning beyond the 2024 EB Meeting and Congress.
- Personally, I felt it was inspiring, frank and constructive – a much-needed catch-up at a time when so many of us are travelling with the sport.

What were the main takeaways from the meeting?

- There is strong desire for an increase in the NF athlete quota for pentathlon competitions, and a future with Obstacle replacing Riding might facilitate this.
- We need to create more possibilities for athletes to access more competition levels, especially new athletes.
- A Junior World Cup was debated – it could also be a direct upgrade from youth competitions as already happened in some countries, or aligned to the Pentathlon Challenger that has been introduced at senior level with UIPM guidelines and standards.
- Modern Pentathlon competition accreditation fees could be adjusted to be payable by day or by event, rather than the current block of four days, and the approach of our Biathle-Triathle and Laser Run World Championships was recommended.
- Individual entry to some competitions was also discussed as a possibility that could reduce the cost burden on NFs.
- There was consideration of competition locations that could have a cost-saving impact, alongside the need to have World Cups in all continents.
- A new competition structure for the future was discussed, along with a proposal for shorter competition days.

Finally, there was debate about the pros and cons of A and B Finals replacing the current Semi-finals and Finals format in some competitions.

- The media team highlighted the importance of broadcasting and showcasing the Semi-finals, as this brings a lot of added value through diversity of nations and athletes.
- They also highlighted that Semi-finals help to build the narrative of the competition around the excitement of qualification.

All the aforementioned points need to be further studied and justified, but it was great to see so many open minds. Nobody was afraid to express their opinions, and there were no real rights and wrongs, it was more about different angles and trying to stand in others' shoes…

As the world governing body of a sports movement, we respect all cultures and procedural transparency in the interests of the best possible democracy. The right to speak constructively should be encouraged in the future, not least because it helps all of us to see more clearly…