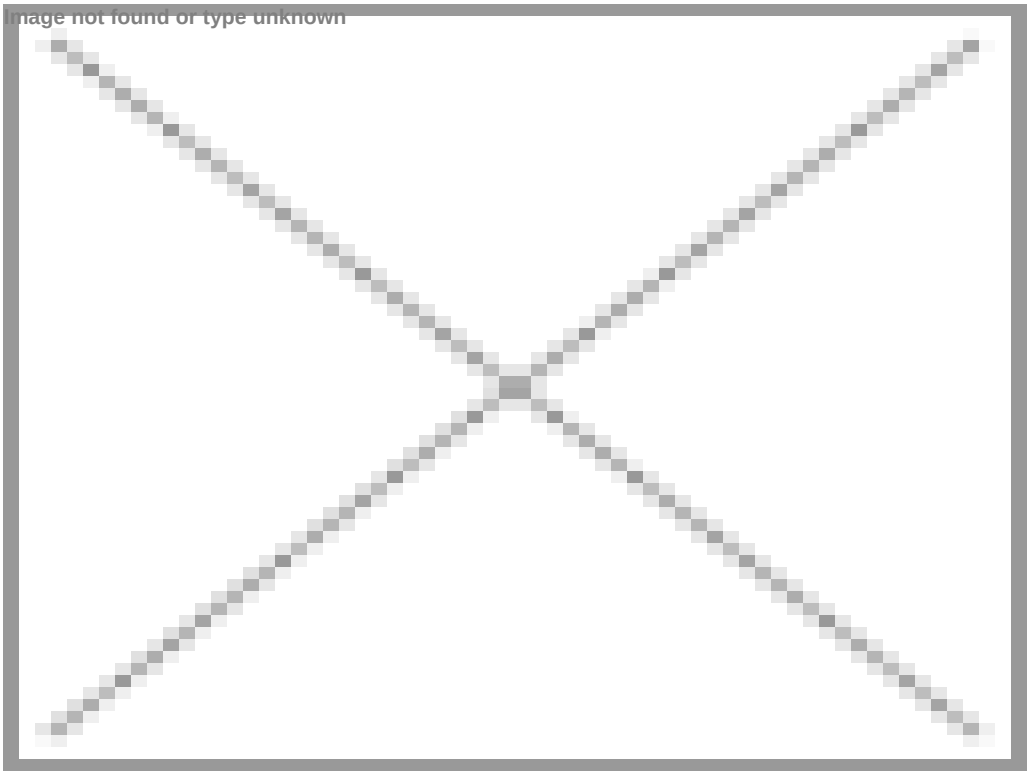
04 JUL 2024

UIPM SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE: A NEW ERA BEGINS!



For two and a half years now, our community has been struggling with an emotional conflict – confronted with the reality of saying farewell to horses after 11 decades of equestrian association in Modern Pentathlon.

This transitional chapter is now coming to a close, with Zhengzhou having recently hosted the last major UIPM competition to feature Riding. And the emotional attachment to Riding is still powerful, as I could see when watching a feature about pentathletes on China's main TV channel, CCTV.

But I used the word 'conflict' deliberately, because there is a conflict between the emotion that has made people long for something even before it's gone, and the opposite feeling – savouring the joy of something new even when it is only in the early stages of development.

Look through the pages of this newsletter; they are packed with joy. Scan the photographs taken across all competitions and can see the pleasure it gives athletes to compete in Modern Pentathlon, Laser Run and other UIPM Sports, not only on the glamorous international stage but inside their own local communities too.

So as we enter the new era, the smiles on these pages are in the forefront of my mind. And there is a lot to be positive about.

- The UIPM 2024 Pentathlon Junior World Championships in Alexandria (EGY) demonstrated the magnetism of the new Pentathlon format with Obstacle, with an increase in athletes compared with the previous one, and it all started on day one when 20 nations competed in the Men's Relay.

- During the UIPM Executive Board meeting in Zhengzhou, it was really pleasing to see that there were new bidding National Federations. Within this positive trend we witness step by step the way our new-look sport opens the door for a lot of counties to host events that they previously could not, although it is still a learning process for all of us about how we can maximum the new Modern Pentathlon's impact through its upgraded accessibility.

- Yes, on one side we have been dealing with the hard truth that only a handful of organisers were able to host full Pentathlon events with horses, but on another side, excitingly, the new Pentathlon is attracting a lot of new cities and countries.

- Somehow, the Pentathlon Stadium in Zhengzhou felt like the beginning of the end – but it also gave a glimpse of the future. The competition was set to Games standard with incredible investment, but more importantly, it demonstrated the faith that the organisers and city government have in our sport, that they absolutely see value in investing for the future!

- So, a higher standard of competition is what we are aiming for. Meanwhile, strengthening the sport's value and the impact of our events are the key to achieve in the coming years, and we believe the result will come piece by piece…

- It's true that in terms of audience numbers and events conditions, in some areas like competition structure, we still have a lot of room for improvement having started to reform later than other sports… but the base of everything is highly dependent on the number of participants. And we totally recognise that our sport has to "compete" not only with other sports, but also with all the shorter attentions of new audiences to attract them to our digital platforms.

- Innovation is key, and a lot of new initiatives related to the new Obstacle discipline have been launched in the past two years; more will come, and we want to be solid to realise them one by one.

- Now that the focus of so many has turned to Paris 2024, we are not forgetting that our second competition year for under-age groups implementing the new Pentathlon is still ongoing, and afterwards, we will have an upgraded clearer picture to evaluate next steps…

- So yes, to be continued… meanwhile let’s first accomplish a successful and historically significant Olympic Games, with a packed stadium set to enjoy a Modern Pentathlon competition that has already been beautifully streamlined for audience appeal, as we say an appropriate emotional farewell to our beloved horses.

See you in Paris!