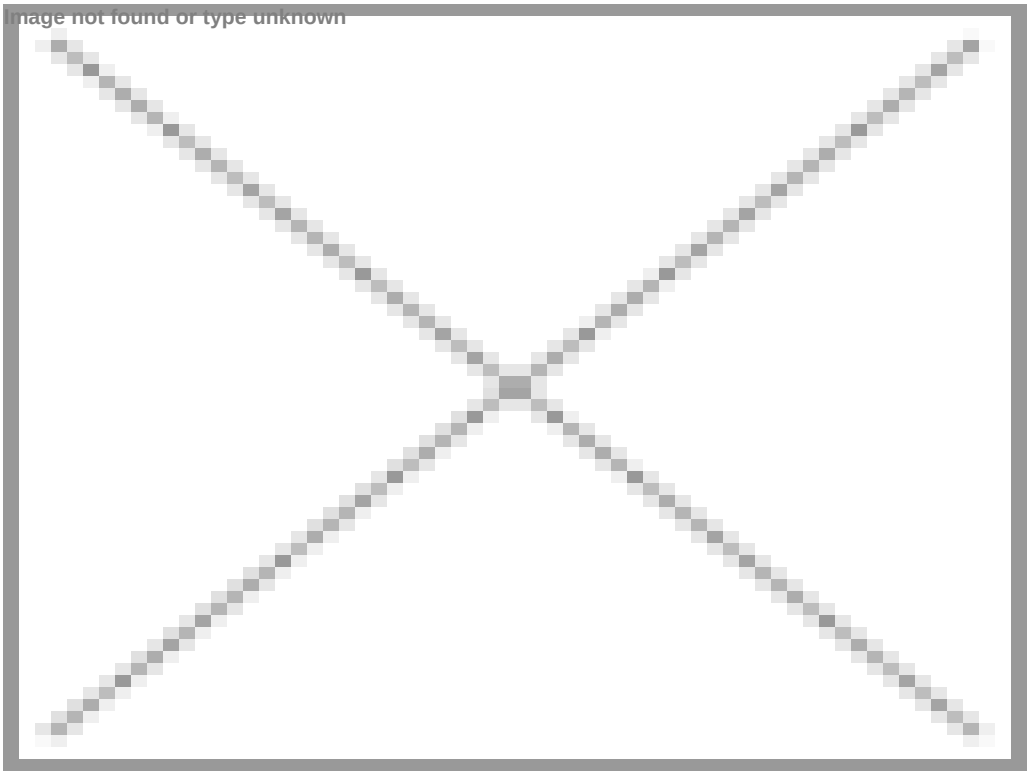
24 FEB 2025

PRESIDENT'S VIEW: ROB STULL ON FIRST THREE MONTHS AT THE HELM OF UIPM



I have been involved in sport for a long time, but I have never seen three months pass as quickly as the period since the UIPM Congress elected me to serve as the 7th President of this wonderful global community.

It is the honour of my life, and now it consumes my life – pretty much 24/7 except for a short break on the family farm for Christmas. There was no playbook for taking the helm of this international movement – how could there be, when nobody has been in this position since my predecessor Klaus Schormann became President in 1993? As you can imagine, those are big shoes to fill.

That year, 1993, Bill Clinton became President of the United States and Snoop Dogg released his first album. It was also the year the internet was opened to the public. Now Donald Trump is in the Oval Office, Snoop Dogg is gearing up to be the face of the LA28 Olympic Games and we rarely go minutes without being online in some capacity.

It has been a whirlwind, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

We hit the ground running in Riyadh, arranging an online media round table that took place just a few days after the elections that led to a dramatic overhaul of our Executive Board and Committees. There were many questions about my plans for the future of UIPM and Modern Pentathlon, some of which I could answer and some of which I couldn't, but it was well received and the coverage was great.

Then it was on to Guatemala for the first UIPM U15 Tetrathlon World Championships, and my first opportunity to represent the Union as President. We were delighted with the standard of competition and the reception we received from the local organisers was wonderful.

Also in December I was honoured to attend the Gala Awards of the Hungarian Modern Pentathlon Association, with 29 medallists on stage and Olympic champion Michelle Gulyas at the centre. This was a great opportunity to address our Hungarian community and meet with the federation leadership and senior government officials who are supporting HMPA initiatives. It's terrific to see one of the capitals of Pentathlon enjoying a very strong renaissance, returning to their rightful place in the Union.

After some rest and family time in the US, I hit the new year running with the LA28 Transition event for International Federation leaders hosted by the IOC in Lausanne. We learned about the extraordinary media reach of Paris 2024 and the LA28 Organising Committee delivered a much-anticipated report based on the fires that had recently ravaged parts of the city. It was a relief to hear them renew their commitment to the Games and the Olympic movement, with none of the venues damaged. Our talks with the LA28 team about potential venues are very much still live.

After that came the undoubted highlight of my tenure so far, the gathering in Nice and Monaco of our new Executive Board and five vital volunteer bodies – the Athletes, Business Affairs, Coaches, Medical and Technical Committees. Four days of intensive and intelligent discussions – and a great way to launch the 2025 season and the LA28 quad. The mantra of the meeting was 'athletes first'.

With 13 new members on the EB, my first meeting as President was a very fresh experience, and then we had two Joint Committee Meetings followed by the individual group sessions. I spent time in each of the rooms and was very impressed by the quality of the Chairs and Committee Members, and as a leadership team, Secretary General Shiny Fang and I provided some basic directions that they took and expanded.

It was all about prioritising – "tell us what you want to do and what budgetary impact each of those goals will have, and then decide which ones to pursue". We also discussed how the actions of one Committee will affect another. A successful competition and organisation has many moving parts that must be compatible with each other. This was an important experience and it was essential to the success of the meetings. It was a great exercise in cooperation and the Committee reports were clear, concise, actionable and cost-effective. Nobody ordered any helicopters! Having this meeting in Nice, close to UIPM Headquarters, meant a 20% reduction in cost compared to previous Joint Meetings.

After four days that truly energised the organisation, we parted with a palpable sense of excitement with everyone looking forward to a captivating season ahead.

And now we go to Cairo, where I will have the privilege of another first – attending a UIPM Pentathlon World Cup with a global remit, and not as NORCECA President or as the competition

announcer. Although you might not always hear my voice booming out across the field of play, a big part of my job now is communication, and no doubt I will have a lot of meetings and informal conversations. In fact, as UIPM President I spend an inordinate amount of time every day talking to people.

A lot of my conversations have been with potential organisers, with live dialogue continuing across four continents. It has been a combination of conversations within the existing community and looking for, and recruiting, individuals with certain skill sets to help us do things better worldwide. I'm interesting in innovation and AI and speaking to several potential technology partners. I want to find new revenue and reduce costs, as two key priorities. We have already been successful in attracting new organisers for future years.

So all eyes turn to Cairo, and the first chance for our senior athletes to sample Obstacle as part of Pentathlon, as well as the new elimination Fencing format. A whole new chapter for our sport, and one that I am certain will prove to be as challenging and as much fun as the last – perhaps even more fun.