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THREE-TIME WORLD CHAMPION AMÉLIE CAZÉ ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

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France's triple World Modern Pentathlon Champion Amélie Cazé has decided to bring the curtain down on her glittering career this week. The 29-year-old, who also claimed two European titles and appeared at three Olympic Games, had been one of the sport's leading lights ever since she burst onto the scene as a precocious talent to win silver medals at both the Junior World and Junior European Championships in 2003.

Although she started training again last year, following an extended break after London 2012, and came back to win the first event of the French National Circuit last month, she hangs up her epee, goggles, whip, pistol and running shoes to embark on the next chapter in her life.

"Now that I have made my decision, it feels like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders", she said. "It became harder and harder to stay motivated and to continue training day in day out. I was missing that spark. So I think this is the right time to retire."

"It is an emotional moment and I have some wonderful memories. Even though Modern Pentathlon

is a small sport, we are big family”, she added. “I will miss it.”

When asked about the best moments of her career, she explained, “Collecting my first World Championships medal in 2007 gave me such a wonderful feeling but claiming gold in 2009 must be the stand-out moment after it was the objective I had set myself after the disappointment of finishing ninth at the 2008 Beijing Olympics”.

2010 was also an exceptional year for Cazé as she did the double, scooping both the World and European titles along with a whole host of wins at various international competitions. She explained, “I changed my approach and methods to my training that year and really reaped the rewards”.

“I have to thank my coaches and the support they showed me throughout my career. I have a debt of gratitude to them”, she continued. Although, an Olympic medal eluded her on three occasions, she said, “I have no regrets”.

Amélie Cazé now gives way to the next generation of French athletes coming through the ranks, a team she feels “has really developed over the last couple of seasons, especially the men. They have realized they have great potential, and as a group they are challenging each other to get better and better. Recent results have shown that. The women are in the process of re-building but I am convinced their new coach (recently retired Jean Maxcence Berrou) will get the best out of them”.

With World Cup #1 getting under way next week and ushering in the 2014 Modern Pentathlon season, Cazé, who won the competition exactly nine years ago, remembered the feeling and the nerves she had before claiming the winner’s trophy. “The first competition gives you a great opportunity to see all your friends again and get your bearings for the new season. Winter training can be long and hard so getting back into the groove is vital. Doing well in the first major event of the year is a great way to put down a marker.”

She then went onto to encourage more young people to take up the sport, “Modern Pentathlon is like a family and the sport itself tests you to your very limit. It forges your character and I would tell anyone aspiring to get into it to not hesitate for one second.”

When quizzed if she would ever consider a coaching role, she said, “It has never really crossed my mind, but you should never say never!”

Now though, all she is focused on is enjoying a well-deserved break away from the sport and the pressure of training. “I am looking forward to relaxing and not thinking about too much. I am sure there will be opportunities for me.”

UIPM President Dr h. c. Klaus Schormann wished Cazé the very best for the future, stating, “She was an outstanding athlete with great spirit and a real will to win. She is a great example for others to follow and will always be a true champion.”

One thing is for sure, her spirit, competitiveness and true grit will sorely be missed and she will be go down in history as one of the great pentathletes of the modern era.