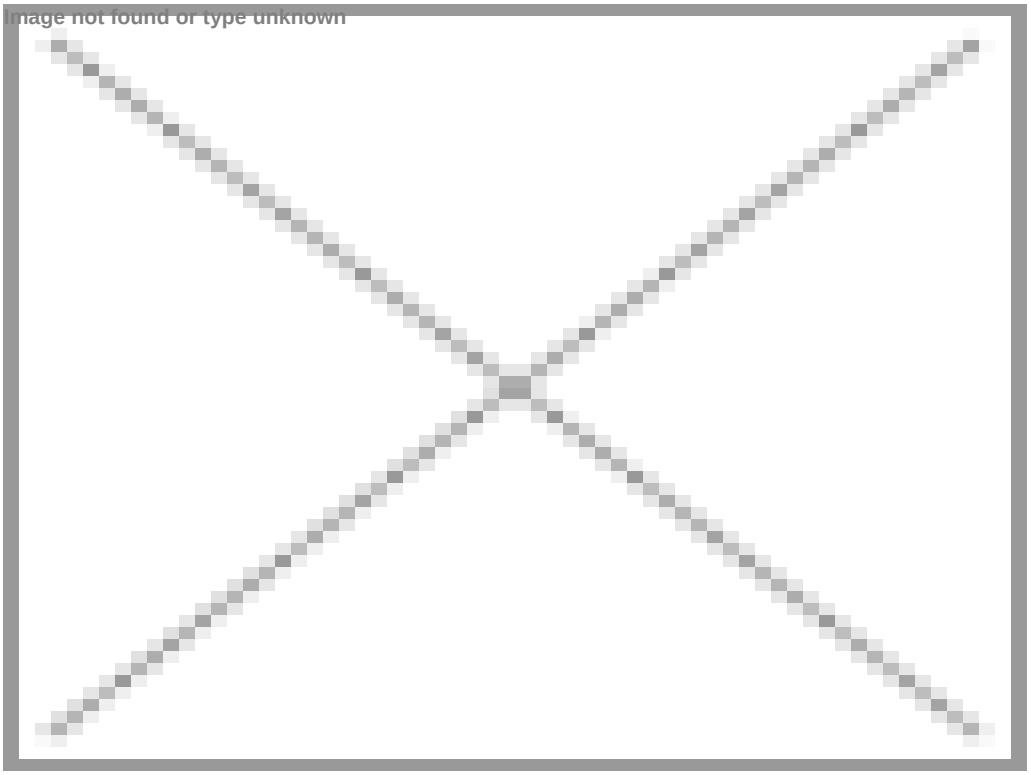
26 SEP 2015

UIPM 2015 LASER-RUN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: THE FUTURE HAS NEVER SHONE MORE BRIGHTLY



For any budding Olympian, the journey from grassroots to the ‘Greatest Show on Earth’ is a long one. But Modern Pentathlon is a sport in continuous evolution, and this weekend will demonstrate that the path to the top is becoming smoother all the time. The inaugural Laser-Run World Championships (September 26/27) in Perpignan, France will demonstrate the growing global popularity of UIPM’s latest initiative designed to make Modern Pentathlon accessible to all.

To become the complete Modern Pentathlete you need to practise on a trained show-jumping horse and a series of obstacles, a laser pistol and electronic targets, a fencing sword and appropriate facilities where you can run and swim. Of course, you also need supreme athleticism, a competitive streak and a zealous commitment to training.

Laser-Run, which consists only of shooting and running, makes it easier to become the ultimate athlete. Introduced in 2014, it strips out some of the complex requirements of the sport and allows more athletes around the world an entry point.

UIPM, which is made up of national federations from every corner of the world, wants to build a bridge over the economic and social barriers of sport. Laser-Run is a combined initiative in development and social mobility, and the concept has been tested in all varieties of weather conditions and in diverse environments including cross-country, track and field, beach, and indoor.

This version of our sport enables all athletes to overcome difficulties in terms of access to new technologies, systems and equipment which might otherwise block or complicate their entry into Modern Pentathlon. The inaugural UIPM Laser-Run World Championships are being held at the Perpignan Convention Centre and this will be the first global demonstration of the popularity of our new initiative.

There is an Elite Division for UIPM-licensed athletes, divided into five age categories, all wearing their national uniforms. There is an Olympic Division for athletes not licensed by UIPM but who participate over Olympic-level distances, without age distinction. There is also a Laser Run for All, for non-licensed participants divided into four age categories and competing over shorter distances.

The initial results of the Laser-Run project have been outstanding with the numbers of athletes in initial events surpassing expectations. Twenty nations are participating in the first World Championships.

The ’plug and play’ nature of Laser-Run, which makes it easy to set up, combined with the uniqueness of the concept has facilitated its rapid growth for the last 10 months. UIPM will use this worldwide as a first step to the traditional approach to Modern Pentathlon that until now has seen swimming and running as the basic discipline to introduce athletes to the sport. Laser-Run distances are set according to UIPM regulations in terms of age groups and are based on the Combined Event now used as final stage for all UIPM events worldwide.

Special care has been taken by UIPM to ensure the sustainability of the Laser-Run project. In addition to the support which will continue to be provided by UIPM and the various national federations and LOCs, the model using regional, qualifying competitions leading to a World Championships which is supported by the local tourism and convention entities provides an economic reward in the form of tourism for organizers. This economic benefit will ensure the long-term success of the initiative.

One of UIPM’s core objectives is to make Modern Pentathlon a sport for all. Laser-Run will play a big part in helping us achieve this… and today it’s all eyes on the south of France.