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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026: UIPM 1ST VICE PRESIDENT KITTY CHILLER REVEALS HER DRIVING FORCES AS A PENTATHLETE AND A LEADER



Looking back 45 years, what moment first made you believe you could break barriers in sport and beyond?

“Breaking barriers” was never something I purposefully set out to achieve. I have always had a huge passion for sport – not only in a competitive sense but also for how it can shape us holistically, as people, in life in general. I have been very fortunate that in the last 45 years, I have been able to follow my passion first as an athlete and then as a sports leader.

I have had many wonderful opportunities and experiences in that time, and yes some of those could be described as “breaking a barrier” (such as being the first-ever female Chef de Mission of

Australia's Olympic Team), but from my perspective they were all just due to me doing something that I love, being sport, and doing it to the very best of my ability.

I did not set out to climb any particular mountain, rather I just followed my passion and worked hard.

What does being the first elected female First Vice President of UIPM mean to you personally?

It is an immense honour and a responsibility that I do not take lightly. Not so long ago I was one of only three women in total on the UIPM Executive Board; now we have six females on the Board including two Continental Confederation Presidents and two Vice Presidents. This is incredible progress and shows that anyone, regardless of gender or nationality, can contribute at the highest level.

Being elected by my peers and colleagues on the EB as First Vice President, the first time a female has held this position, is another signal that our sport family welcomes and embraces everyone, and I hope that my election serves as inspiration to the many talented females we have in our sport – as athletes, coaches or administrators.

Working closely with my colleagues as First Vice President, I hope to continue to serve and give back as much as I can to a sport that has given me so much.

How has your athlete journey shaped you as a leader?

My athlete journey taught me many things, but probably above all else it taught me resilience, and also the importance of continuous development.

Facing challenges on the field of play, especially in a multi-disciplinary sport such as Modern Pentathlon, helped me develop skills and behaviours that have certainly influenced and assisted my career as a leader, including adaptability, self-reflection, a continuous yearning for improvement, and an attention to detail – all important skills for a high-performance athlete and vital qualities for effective leadership.

The discipline and commitment required as an athlete have certainly carried over into every aspect of my leadership style. Having been an athlete, every decision I now make as a leader is driven from that experience; ensuring that we as administrators and leaders have an athlete-centred and athlete-first approach to all that we do. And, importantly, never forgetting that the athlete is why we are all here.

What do you feel is most important to guide Pentathlon toward Los Angeles 2028 and Brisbane 2032?

Our sport of Modern Pentathlon has evolved enormously in the last few years. At times that has been difficult, but always it is for the right reasons – to ensure that we as a sport remain relevant in this new era of sport being a business, a brand, a product.

I believe that embracing innovation while staying true to the sport's traditions is crucial. We need to engage younger generations, foster inclusivity and accessibility, and build strong partnerships with communities and stakeholders.

Sustainability and relevance along with, of course, athlete wellbeing, should remain at the forefront as we prepare for these upcoming Games.

LA28 will be the first Olympic Games with our new discipline of Obstacle racing and how exciting will that be! Seeing our best athletes go head to head is incredibly exciting – not only in Obstacle, but in the Fencing Direct elimination, in Swimming and side by side during the pressure-cooker Laser Run event.

I cannot wait to see LA28 and then of course a 'Home Games' for me, in Brisbane 2032. That will be a very special moment for me, having competed in the first time that women were admitted to the Olympic programme for Modern Pentathlon in Sydney 2000. To see the Games, and Olympic-level Modern Pentathlon, back in Australia 32 years later will be very special!

What advice would you give to young women who want to follow in your footsteps — as athletes or leaders?

The world of sport is so much more progressive than it was even just a decade ago in respect of the opportunities for young women. The Olympic Games are now gender equal, we have a female IOC President, and there are so many wonderful role models across all sports out there to look up to.

My main advice, however, is to follow your own heart; work out what you are passionate about, what you care about and then work out how you can best contribute in that area, not only for your own lifetime, but for the generations to follow.

I would also encourage young athletes, men and women, to give back once their competitive days are over. Whether that be as a coach or an administrator – it is a very worthwhile and satisfying pursuit to give back to a sport that has provided you with so many experiences, achievements and friendships.

On International Women's Day, who are the women that inspire you most?

I will not name any one particular person here but rather say that any female who dares to dream, who puts in place a well-thought-out plan to achieve that dream, and who goes about pursuing it, regardless of the nay-sayers or the obstacles she encounters – to me that personifies inspiration.

Being vulnerable and brave enough to 'have a go' and to know that you have given your all regardless of the result. That is inspiring and it doesn't need to come from someone who is famous. Anyone is capable of dreaming and being inspirational.