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UIPM 2020 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP SEASON POSTPONED UNTIL MAY DUE TO CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



The remainder of the UIPM 2020 Pentathlon World Cup season has been postponed until May due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The competition circuit kicked off in Cairo (EGY) in February but the remaining World Cup events in Sofia (BUL) and Budapest (HUN), as well as the World Cup Final in Seoul (KOR), will now be rescheduled in May and June if appropriate arrangements can be made.

There is currently no change to the schedule for the UIPM 2020 Pentathlon World Championships in Cancun (MEX), which was already relocated from its original venue of Xiamen (CHN) and is still due to take place from May 25-31.

The UIPM Executive Board convened yesterday via conference call and agreed on the proposed postponement, after which UIPM wrote to its National Federation members and global athlete community to update them on the disruption to the 2020 competition season and the proposed contingency plans.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic qualification process is currently unchanged except for the order of events and the impact on timings. UIPM has written to the Sport Department of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to request an extension of the qualification deadline from May 31 to June 30. Revised competition dates will be released as soon as they can be confirmed.

UIPM 1st Vice-President Juan Antonio Samaranch, also IOC Vice-President, added: "The position of the International Olympic Committee has been very firm: the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games will start on July 26 and there has been no indication from the health authorities that consideration should be given to cancelling the Games.

"On that basis, we need to do all we can to protect the Olympic qualification process in Modern Pentathlon so that all athletes can have a fair chance of fulfilling their dreams of taking part in Tokyo.

"We are all very aware of the developing international situation in relation to the Coronavirus outbreak and the difficulties it is causing for federations and athletes.

"Nobody can know what the situation will be in two or three months' time, so I am convinced that UIPM is doing the right thing in making this provisional decision about the 2020 season. We will be guided by the advice of the relevant health authorities at every stage."

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "I hope that the postponement of the UIPM 2020 Pentathlon World Cup season will give our entire global community some reassurance that we are doing everything possible to safeguard their health and protect the integrity of the qualification process for the Olympic Summer Games Tokyo 2020.

"I am grateful to the Local Organising Committees and National Federations in Bulgaria, Hungary and Korea, who have kept in close contact with us at all times about the changing situation in their countries. We have also been in constant communication with the IOC Sport Department and we are grateful for their assistance in evaluating the various options on the table.

"The decision of the UIPM Executive Board allows our staff and the wider community to start make contingency plans for the 2020 competition season to resume in May and June, coming to a natural conclusion in time for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

"In the coming weeks we will continue to work closely with all stakeholders, listening carefully to the advice of the relevant health authorities and monitoring the travel guidance issued by the various Governments, always remembering our responsibility to safeguard the health of our athletes and wider UIPM community.

"In making the decision to cancel all UIPM competition activity in March and April we hope to contribute in a significant way to the international effort to combat the spread of the virus."

Aya Medany, Chair of the UIPM Athletes Committee, said: "On behalf of our global athlete community, I welcome the decision from UIPM to postpone the 2020 competition season.

“We care about all athletes and their health, and the cancellation of events throughout March and April is the best way to protect them until we know more about the impact of this Coronavirus.

“All countries are taking a different approach to combating the spread of the virus and imposing different restrictions on travel and sporting events. We need to find ways to ensure the Olympic qualification process remains fair, and I believe this decision by the UIPM Executive Board is the first step to ensuring a level playing field in these challenging circumstances.”