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GOLDEN MEMORIES: LENA SCHOENEBOERN (GER) ON THE DAY HER STAR WAS BORN AT BEIJING 2008



In the latter years of her career she was a dominant figure, a mature and uncompromising athlete, a born winner who had straddled the sport of Modern Pentathlon for a decade.

Remembering Lena Schoeneborn at her peak, as the athlete who won eight UIPM Pentathlon World Cups including two World Cup Finals, as a world and European champion whose medal collection would be almost too heavy to take on a plane as hand luggage, it is easy to forget that her crowning glory came early in her career.

Entering her first Olympic Games in Beijing (CHN), there were not too many expectations surrounding the 22-year-old Germany athlete – least of all from Lena herself. In the third part of the Golden Memories series, UIPM invites one of Modern Pentathlon's most decorated and admired champions to reflect on an Olympic gold that came as a sweet surprise – and took a long time to sink in.

Q: Beijing 2008 was your first Olympic Games, you were only 22 and you hadn't yet won a gold medal at senior level. What were your expectations?

A: To qualify for the Olympic Games was my priority. I came 4th at the European Championships in 2007 to earn a direct continental qualification spot. That is why I knew early I had reached the goal of competing at the Olympics.

For the competition in Beijing itself, I only aimed for personal bests in each event. During my whole career that is what my coach had taught me for all competitions. Beside this personal focus, my coaches were confident that I could make it to the top due to my silver medal at the UIPM World Championships in 2007. From outside the pentathlon world, there were no expectations, quite in contrast to my other Olympic Games in London and Rio.

