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LANDMARK UIPM PARA CLASSIFIER EDUCATION COURSE IN CAIRO (EGY)



The magical Mediterranean backdrop of Port Said (EGY) not only helped illuminate the action at the UIPM 2024 Biathle/Triathlon World Championships. The blissful sunshine also added light to a special week for the Para Pentathlon community too.

This year, the host country also incorporated the UIPM Para Laser Run World Championships, adding to the excitement with significant growth and progress away from the competition too. UIPM, in collaboration with the Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Federation, successfully held the inaugural UIPM Para Classifier Education Course in Cairo (EGY) prior to both championships in Port Said and it proved a milestone gathering on multiple fronts.

This comprehensive three-day course aimed to enhance understanding and implementation of new classification rules among classifiers, reflecting UIPM's ongoing commitment to the development of para sports.

The course attracted classifiers from various countries, including Afghanistan, Iran, Türkiye, South Africa as well as the host nation, Egypt. Participants engaged in both theoretical and practical sessions, culminating in the awarding of Trainee Classifier Certification and International Classifier

Level 1 Certification. Over two days of practical training, more than 40 athletes with diverse disabilities underwent classification and re-classification, embodying the course's goal of fostering inclusion in Modern Pentathlon.

Dr. Roberto Nahon, UIPM Head of Classification, led the educational efforts, providing classifiers with essential knowledge and skills necessary for para classification. The program's design aligns with UIPM's broader vision to promote equitable participation in sports, ensuring all athletes have access to fair opportunities within the competitive framework.

The UIPM Para Commission plays a pivotal role in integrating para-athletes into the pentathlon community, fostering growth and inclusion in preparation for future Paralympic events. Its mission is to build awareness, improve classification procedures, and ultimately secure a meaningful representation of para-Modern Pentathlon within the Paralympic Games.

Reactions from attendees highlighted the course's significance. Jawid Khawar, a participant from Afghanistan, said: "This classification course helped me, and my fellow classifiers gain a deeper understanding of para classification. It is crucial for promoting para-athlete participation and enhancing the visibility of Pentathlon in the Paralympic Games. Sport is a fundamental human right, and everyone should have the opportunity to participate without barriers. We learned how to classify disabilities accurately, ensuring fairness in Para Modern Pentathlon."

Khaled Hamdy, a distinguished Para Laser Run and Biathle Triathle World Champion, also attended for reclassification. He emphasized the importance of specificity in classification: "I am encouraged by the improvements in UIPM para classification standards. This specificity helps me compete against athletes with comparable disabilities, making the competition more equitable. My initial classification took place in Bath prior to the UIPM 2023 Para Laser Run World Championships, and with the updated UIPM rules, I experienced a reclassification that better reflects these specific needs."

UIPM Vice President Sharif Elerian, who is also President of the Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Federation, said: "I am thrilled that UIPM is taking substantial steps towards para pentathlon, and we are proud to host such a vital course here in Egypt. Para sports are an integral part of Modern Pentathlon, and I am confident that as we promote these programs, para-athletes will find their place in our sport."

Dr. Roberto Nahon, UIPM Head of Classification said: "The UIPM Para Classifier Education Course marks a significant stride toward inclusivity in Modern Pentathlon, reinforcing the commitment to empowering para athletes worldwide. With continued efforts and collaboration, UIPM aims to secure a prominent role for para Modern Pentathlon in future Paralympic events. My sincere thanks to all who helped make this event happen and to all who took part."