27 MAR 2014

RECENTLY RETIRED PENTATHLETE AMÉLIE CAZÉ TO BE YOG ATHLETE ROLE MODEL IN NANJING

After announcing her retirement from competition earlier this year, UIPM are pleased to announce that France's triple World Champion will take on an ambassadorial role with the International Federation and will be an Athlete Role Model (ARM) at this summer's Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing, China.

The 29-year-old French legend will be mentoring young athletes and will be participating in the Culture and Education Program (CEP).

Cazé told us, “It was a real honour to have been put forward for the role. It gives me an opportunity to look back upon my career and to see the path I embarked upon 20 years ago! I think that during my time as a youth and junior athlete I would have loved to be able to exchange ideas with older and more experienced athletes. Being an ARM gives me the chance to share and pass on my knowledge to the next generation coming through.”

“The advice I would give to those participating in the YOG is that although it is viewed like a very important moment in one’s life, they should live it to the full and enjoy themselves. If they commit themselves 100% to this moment in their life, they will be able to take away from it so much, learn so many things that will be hugely beneficial for the rest of their careers.

With the YOG also being a cultural experience for these young athletes, she believed that Modern Pentathlon was a strong educational tool that teaches “humility above all, with the multi-discipline aspect of the sport ensuring that everyone remains grounded with competition always being extremely hard to predict. There is a lot of respect between the athletes as a result of facing each other in several events. You can face someone in one discipline and be dominant but then not at all in another. Another big factor is the respect that is given to the horses. At the highest levels of Modern Pentathlon, we learn about the values of hard work, dedication, perseverance and mental toughness which are essential tools to achieve success”

On the concept of the YOG, she added, “I met several athletes who took part in the first edition in Singapore in 2010 and they all told me what a wonderful experience it had been for them. How it had given them the foundations to go on and perform at major competitions afterwards. It is also a great way to get a taste of what it would be like to be part of the Olympic Games”.

She warned though of putting these young athletes under too much pressure, “coaches need to put this competition into context because it is only the results of the Olympic Games that really count, the YOG should remain a competition that is formative and educational.

2010 Youth Olympic Games silver medallist Zsofia Foldhazi from Hungary, currently ranked World No.8, had originally been nominated for the role, however with the Modern Pentathlon Senior World Championships beginning less than a week after Nanjing, she felt she could not fulfil this role to her fullest considering all her sporting commitments.

Selected by the 28 International Federations whose sports will feature at Nanjing 2014, many other legendary names from the world of sport, including Olympic and world champions, will take on the challenge of being athlete role models (see full list).

In Nanjing, they will play a key role in supporting, mentoring and offering advice to the 3,800 young athletes who will be participating in the Games.

The ARMs will be accessible to the athletes both in the Youth Olympic Village and during a series of educational activities and workshops that will focus on areas such as skills development, how to lead healthy lifestyles, environment and social responsibility and Olympism.

Athletes at the Youth Olympic Games will get to engage in conversations with the ARMs throughout the Games. They will be behind the scenes during competition and will also be available for informal chats in the ARM lounge that will be open to all participants. The athletes can also learn valuable lessons from the ARMs during “Chat with Champions” sessions, which will also

be accessible to people around the world on the IOC's digital platforms. Fans of the YOG, meanwhile, will have the opportunity to put their questions directly to the ARMs during informal chat sessions on the IOC's social media channels.

The main goal behind making the ARMs as accessible as possible is so they can share their experiences and inspire the young athletes to be the best they can be both on and off the field of play.

Claudia Bokel, Chair of the IOC Athletes' Commission and Olympic silver medallist in fencing, said: "The Athlete Role Model programme is a really unique element of the Youth Olympic Games. The ARMs have so much valuable information to pass on to the younger generation. They will really inspire and empower the athletes long after the Games conclude to not only be great 'Youth Olympians', but to share the skills and values learnt at the YOG with their communities and peers."