18 MAR 2015

UIPM 2015 WORLD CUP #2 - CAIRO RECEIVES THE SECOND STAGE OF THE 2015 UIPM WORLD CUP SERIES

CAIRO, EGY, 18 MARCH 2015: AFTER the success of the first round in Sarasota, USA, the second stage of the 2015 UIPM World Cup series begins on Thursday, 19 March in Cairo, Egypt, where organisers are promising a spectacular festival of top-class Modern Pentathlon.

The Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Federation formally opened World Cup #2 on Tuesday at a packed press conference in the Sonesta Hotel in Cairo. The qualifying rounds take place on Thursday and Friday with the finals following on Saturday, Sunday and Monday with the participation of 190 athletes from 28 countries.

All of the world's best pentathletes are locked in a race to accumulate qualification points for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, and all eyes in Cairo will be fixed on Amro El Geziry, the Egyptian who currently occupies the No.5 position in the Men's Individual World Rankings and who finished 4th in World Cup #1 last month.

If El Geziry (EGY) is to give his home crowd the victory they crave, he will have to fend off stiff competition from a star-studded Men's Individual field including James Cooke (GBR) who won gold in Sarasota, and the reigning World Champion Aleksander Lesun (RUS).

In the Women's Individual event, the race for gold is very much open after Great Britain decided to rest Samantha Murray, the gold medallist in Sarasota and reigning World Champion.

UIPM Secretary General Shiny Fang used the press conference - which was also attended by several of the most important figures in Egyptian sport - to praise the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for their hard work in preparing a world-class event and said it would be the first of many to take place in Egypt, the jewel in the crown of the burgeoning African modern pentathlon movement, in the coming years.

"In 2014, we were here in Egypt for World Cup #2 and were pleased with its success. We are happy to be back again in 2015," said Ms Fang.

"The World Cup events are very important this year as they are qualifying events for the Olympic Games in 2016. This makes this year's series so strong as athletes need to compete hard to collect points in order to make it to Rio next summer."

Earlier in th

e day Ms Fang had joined Egypt's Youth and Sports Minister, Eng. Khaled Abdel-Aziz, to inaugurate the new Modern Pentathlon venue at the Cairo International Stadium Complex. The new hall is dedicated to fencing and laser shooting.

Ms Fang commented: "I was delighted with the inauguration of the new venues this morning which make Egypt the centre of development to our sport in the continent and the region. In the coming two years, Egypt will host several major UIPM events including World Cup #1 and the World Youth Championships."

Eng. Abdel-Aziz said he was pleased to see the mainstream Egyptian media beginning to show interest in progressive Olympic sports such as Modern Pentathlon, and said he was optimistic that

his country could win an Olympic medal in Rio next summer.

"In London 2012, Egypt won two Olympic medals, one of which came in fencing, which is one of the five Modern Pentathlon sports," he commented. "We are working on preparing our pentathletes so we can see one of them stepping on to the podium in Rio next year."

The press conference featured addresses by Hisham Hatab, the Acting President of the Egyptian National Olympic Committee, and Sharif Al-Erian, President of the Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Federation (EFMP).

There were also represe ntations from Coca-Cola, which is sponsoring the event for the second year in a row, the Egyptian Tourism Authority and Egypt Travel, who have worked with the EFMP to introduce a sports tourism strategy to bring more prestigious sports events to Egypt.

Ms Fang thanked the local and international media for attending in such great numbers. "Sport needs media and we think that media also needs sport," she said. We also thank the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the National Olympic Committee for supporting modern pentathlon."

The press conference concluded with a presentation from Egypt's most successful female pentathlete and IOC Trophy winner, Aya Medany. The three-time Olympian, who retired last year, launched a new project aimed at encouraging more women to become involved in sport in Egypt.

Follow all the action of the this event at www.pentathlon.org, with on the hour updates through Facebook at www.facebook.com/modpen and Twitter at https://twitter.com/UIPM_HQ.