Three participants in one household in Egypt prove that #LaserAllStars is a family affair as they celebrate their medals in the inaugural Finals, keeping UIPM TV commentator James Tzanoudakis and competition judge Ana Ruth Orellana on their toes as audiences tuned in from around the world.
National Federations adapt to ‘new normal’ as competitions resume

Starved of global competitions for most of 2020 by the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic, National Modern Pentathlon Federations have been carefully managing a return to sport in recent months.

In the UIPM Newsletter (September 2020 edition) we brought you news of a four-nation competition in Poland (2020 edition) we brought you news of a four-nation competition in Poland. Now several competitions have taken place in other countries, while others will now take place.

Meanwhile, organisers in many other countries have been working tirelessly to provide domestic competitions and training for athletes at all levels of the UIPM Sports Pyramid, while abiding by local health and safety guidelines designed to limit the spread of the virus. In this article we provide updates from seven National Federations across three continents.

AUSTRIA

In late July, a revival took place in Austria as two national competitions were held at the Kollund TopSport club in Gaal. The Austrian Biathle Championship came first on July 25, followed by the Austrian Biathle Championship on July 26. An NF spokesperson said "All athletes looked forward to the first competition of the year and were there with full commitment."

GUATEMALA

The roll-out of a Sports Activation Protocol has allowed the Guatemala NF to provide face-to-face training for prioritized athletes along with the virtual training that was already in place. Several Guatemala athletes including medalists from the 2019 Pan American Games took part in UIPM #LaserAllStars and the 2020 Virtual National Games in their own country on September 24-25.

BANGLADESH

When the Government gave the green light for limited sports training to resume from July 15, the Bangladesh NF reacted quickly and resumed Laser Run and Fencing training every Friday starting on July 30. Nineteen athletes in the Under 14, Under 18 and Senior (20+) age groups are training under the supervision of SM Zahirul Alam Rony (Laser Run) and Fayed Ahmed (Fencing).

UGER

Government restrictions meant that participation was restricted to those from the capital city Tashkent, but the newly-formed National Federation in Uzbekistan organized its first-ever Laser Run competitions for U13 and senior athletes at the Universal Jumping Club on August 29. Elena Osminkina and Muslim Izmaylov won the senior titles.

RUSSIA

After a New Pentathlon test event in Rostov, the NF staged the Russian National Championships in Moscow from August 29 to September 6, with a full quota of individual qualification and finals, relays and team classifications. Uliana Batalieva (RUS) and Alexander Lifanov (RUS) won the individual titles.

PHILIPPINES

As well as providing athletes and a video crew for UIPM 2020 #LaserAllStars, the Philippines NF resumed competition with a one-off ‘Triathle 2020’ event at New Omsific National High School Swimming Pool on September 5. There were three age categories (U12, U16 and U23) for male and female participants.

UIPM 2020 Pentathlon World Championships in Cancun (MEX) cancelled

The UIPM Executive Board voted to cancel the UIPM 2020 Pentathlon World Championships in Cancun (MEX).

"The whole world continues to struggle with the COVID-19 Coronavirus and sport is no exception. But we must remain strong and hopeful and focused on one outcome: that this will eventually pass. Our activities will return when the time is right.”

He said: “We announce this decision with heavy hearts. We will forever be grateful to our dedicated Modern Pentathlon community and their partners in Mexico for stepping in as hosts for the UIPM 2020 Pentathlon World Championships.

They made a supreme effort to organise this event, even after it was postponed. In the end, there were many merits in the proposal to host our flagship competition in Cancun in November and December, but unfortunately there were also many difficulties and concerns, resulting finally in the decision of the UIPM Executive Board to cancel."

The next UIPM competition will be the UIPM 2021 Junior World Championships in Alexandria (EGY) scheduled for February and March next year.
Many believe that the true mark of a champion in sport is the ability to succeed even on days that seem to be going badly.

So it was for Marie Oteiza of France when she chased her target of Tokyo 2020 Olympic qualification at the 2019 European Championships in Bath (GBR).

Halfway through the competition she was way off the pace, but she summoned the determination to finally cross the line in 10th position and snatch one of those coveted quota places for her country.

Oteiza (FRA), 26, has become a mature competitor at senior level in the four years since her team-mate Elodie Clouvel (FRA) won silver at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games.

She won a remarkable gold at the 2018 Olympic Games in Szekesfehervar (HUN) and quickly followed up with bronze at the UIPM 2018 Pentathlon World Cup gold medal in Sofia (BUL) in 2019.

In the latest Road to Tokyo interview she tells us how she became involved in Modern Pentathlon and the one that would make her happiest if she were able to win the ultimate accolade of Olympic gold.

Q: How did it feel in 2019 when you secured a qualification place for the Tokyo Olympics at the European Championships?

A: I was so happy, because it was a very difficult day for me. I started with a bad Swimming and a bad Fencing, which are supposed to be my strongest events. So to start the day this way and finish with it my qualification place for Tokyo was incredible.

Q: Can you remember watching the last Olympic Games in Rio in 2016? What were you thinking?

A: I was so happy, because it was a very difficult day for me. I started with a bad Swimming and a bad Fencing, which are supposed to be my strongest events. So to start the day this way and finish with it my qualification place for Tokyo was incredible.

Q: What do you think about the Olympics being postponed until 2022?

A: For me it’s an opportunity. I’m still a young pentathlete, so it means one more year to gain more experience.

Q: What has been the most challenging part of the pandemic?

A: The most challenging part of the pandemic was to not see all my training partners and friends. And now that we are all reunited we are all in a hurry to have a competition very soon.

Q: And what positive things have you seen?

A: This pandemic crisis made me realise one thing – we all need to change the way we live. We need to be more careful and respectful about our environment.

Q: When, and why, did you take up the Modern Pentathlon?

A: I started Pentathlon in 2008. I was a swimmer and I always wanted to

Road to Tokyo: Olympic Games Qualifiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haydy Morsy (EGY)</td>
<td>Sherif Nazeer (EGY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Asadauskaitė (LTU)</td>
<td>Joseph Choong (GBR)</td>
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<td>Mariana Arceo (MEX)</td>
<td>Charles Fernandez (USA)</td>
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<td>Samantha Schultz (USA)</td>
<td>Esteban Bustos (CHI)</td>
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<td>Leidis Laura Moya (CUB)</td>
<td>Sergio Villamayor (ARG)</td>
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<td>Ilda Chaves (BRA)</td>
<td>Lourdes Cuaspud (ECU)</td>
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<td>Kate French (GBR)</td>
<td>Amro Elgeziry (USA)</td>
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<td>Iryna Prasiantsova (BLR)</td>
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<td>Annika Schleu (GER)</td>
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<td>Natalya Coyle (IRL)</td>
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<td>Gintare Venckauskaite (LTU)</td>
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<td>Marie Oteiza (FRA)</td>
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<td>Adelina Ibatullina (RUS)</td>
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<td>Volha Silkina (BLR)</td>
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<td>Elena Micheli (ITA)</td>
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<td>Sehee Kim (KOR)</td>
<td>Jihun Lee (KOR)</td>
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<td>Natsumi Takamiya (JPN)</td>
<td>Shuai Luo (CHN)</td>
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<td>Alixe Fakhruddinova (UZB)</td>
<td>Pavel Ryzhenko (KAZ)</td>
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<td>Mingyu Chang (CHN)</td>
<td>Shohel Iwamoto (JPN)</td>
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<td>Elena Potapenko (KAZ)</td>
<td>Alexander Savkin (UZB)</td>
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<td>Marina Carrier (AUS)</td>
<td>Edward Feron (AUS)</td>
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• All athletes listed have secured a quota place for their country and their participation is subject to selection by their National Olympic Committee.
• All quota places listed will be protected in the revised Tokyo 2020 qualification process.
Shuai Luo (CHN) stays positive on long journey to dream destination

Shuai Luo, 23, is part of a new wave of pentathlon talent coming out of China and making an impact not just at continental but also world level.

Luo (CHN) enjoyed a breakthrough win at the 2017 Asia/Oceania Championships in Gotemba (JPN) and then won bronze at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta (INA).

His progress could be charted by a series of top-20 finishes on the UIPM Pentathlon World Cup circuit, culminating in the highlight of his career to date: a silver medal at the Asia/Oceania Championships and Olympic Qualifier in Wuhan (CHN) in November 2019. Luo (CHN) does not

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equestrian training has been greatly affected.

Q: What has been the most challenging part of the pandemic?
A: When I first stayed in the room, I couldn’t train normally and my weight started to increase. Obviously this has had a great impact on my recovery training, and there are also hidden dangers of injury. The lack of competition for a long time also poses a huge challenge to my concentration in training.

Q: And what positive things have you seen?
A: The pandemic is gradually being brought under control worldwide, and our lives are gradually returning to normal. I think this is the most positive aspect.

Q: When, and why, did you take up the Modern Pentathlon?

Luo (CHN) in action in the Fencing Bonus Round during the UIPM 2019 Pentathlon World Championships in Budapest (HUN)
A: I was very happy, it was the best day of 2019.

Q: If selected to represent Kazakhstan at Tokyo 2020 (in 2021), it will be your third Olympic Games. Will you do anything differently this time?
A: I have learnt a lot of new things.

Q: How do you feel when you think back to London 2012 and Rio 2016?
A: I feel the bitterness of defeat, I try not to recall it.

Q: What do you think about the Olympics being postponed to 2021?
A: I believe this is good news for me. I have time to improve some of the disciplines I am not good at.

Q: How have you been continuing to train during the Coronavirus crisis?
A: I worked out (practised, exercised) at home, and trained online with my coach.

Q: What has been the most challenging part of the pandemic?
A: The hardest thing was to get used to new rules and norms in life, and, of course, being unable to leave my home.

Q: And what positive things have you seen?
A: I was able to get busy with other things, not related to sports. There were other things to do outside of sports.

Q: When, and why, did you take up the Modern Pentathlon?
A: I grew up in Russia, in Ufa. My brother introduced me to Modern Pentathlon.

Q: What motivates you in training?
A: Winning motivates me.

Q: Describe yourself as an athlete in three words.
A: Calm, brave, hardy.

Q: Who are your role models in sport, and in life?
A: Andrejus Zadneprovskis.

Q: What is your ultimate ambition in Modern Pentathlon?
A: There is no doubt that winning the Olympic gold medal is my ultimate ambition. I am still young and I will continue to work towards this goal step by step.

Pavel Ilyashenko (KAZ) aims to benefit from extra year of preparation

Fifteen years after his early involvement in UIPM Sports as a youth athlete, Pavel Ilyashenko of Kazakhstan is feeling primed for a peak performance at the Olympic Games.

The accumulation of experience is never-ending and Ilyashenko (KAZ) not only has two Olympic Games (London 2012 and Rio 2016) and an impressive track record – world junior silver in 2011, Asian champion in 2013, bronze in the UIPM 2015 Pentathlon World Cup Final and UIPM 2018 Pentathlon World Cup Cairo – and in his favour.

He also has an extra year to prepare, because of the postponement of Tokyo 2020 to 2021, having already secured a quota qualification place for his country on account of finishing 4th at the 2019 Asia/Oceania Championships and Olympic Qualifier.

In this interview the Russia-born athlete talks about the unexpected change of pace brought about by the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic and how he has refused to let it interfere with his motivation.

Q: How did it feel in 2019 when you finished 4th at the Asia/Oceania Championships and a qualification place for the Tokyo Olympics?
A: I was very happy, it was the best day of 2019.

Q: If selected to represent Kazakhstan at Tokyo 2020 (in 2021), it will be your third Olympic Games. Will you do anything differently this time?
A: I have learnt a lot of new things.

Q: How do you feel when you think back to London 2012 and Rio 2016?
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Pavel Ilyashenko (KAZ) in action during the Mixed Relay

Ilyashenko (KAZ) is a competent rider after 15 years competing in Modern Pentathlon

A thumbs up from Ilyashenko (KAZ) ahead of his swim during UIPM Pentathlon World Cup Cairo
A truly global celebration as sharp shooters mark 3rd Pierre de Coubertin Pentathlon Day in style

Twenty-four athletes from five continents — including three from the same family — became the first UIPM Laser All Stars medallists after a thrilling day of virtual competition.

On the 3rd Pierre de Coubertin Pentathlon Day, September 9, Egypt topped the inaugural #LaserAllStars medal table with four gold medals along with two silver and two bronze, while Great Britain scooped seven medals including two golds.

There were also medals for athletes from established pentathlon nations Mexico, Russia and Guatemala as well as Ecuador, the Philippines, Afghanistan, Switzerland and Moldova.

It was a day when the first-ever global online laser shooting competition came to a conclusion.

It was also a day when UIPM’s worldwide community came together online with the annual #High5 social media campaign. And the fun vibes and friendly spirit were underlined by one family that produced three medallists competing in the same house.

In the first-ever #LaserAllStars medal play-off, Eman Mousa of Egypt won bronze in the Women’s 40+ Masters category. Later in the day, her son Ibrahim Al Desoky won Men’s Under 22 gold and he then watched as his elder brother Abdelrahman Mahmoud emerged triumphant in the Men’s Under 40 category.

The three family members came together to celebrate on the UIPM TV live stream at the end – a scene in keeping with the theme of the day.

A group of competitors in Egypt also gathered to compete in a club setting, some of them in direct competition with each other. This situation was replicated:

- in Guatemala, where Sofia Cabrera and Gabriela Fernandez faced off from adjacent tables
- in Afghanistan, where Ajmal Safi and Karim Nawid met in the semi-finals, Safi (AFG) winning an epic battle 4-3
- in Great Britain, where U15 competitors Zoe Spokes, Imogen Edwards Travis Moore and Toby Aberdeen all competed with each other from their homes.

Athletes confined to home competed in their living rooms, halls and back yards, all united by a sense of common purpose – to test their shooting abilities under pressure and enjoy competing together at a time when physical events are still so difficult to arrange.

For almost four and a half hours the action was relayed live on UIPM TV, under the watchful eye of tireless commentator James Tzanoudakis and certified international UIPM judges Tunde Szeles (HUN) and Ana Ruth Orellana (GUA), for whom interventions were rare as most competitors’ technology stood up to the test.

In fact, it was a historic day in terms of technological innovation. The laser shooting targets that recorded the participants’ timing and registered their hits sent data directly to an online server which enabled the production team to create graphics for the audience to view in real time.

Claire Carman (GBR), Women’s 40+ champion, said: “You underestimate how nervous you’re going to feel because so many people are watching, and you make silly mistakes. But it was really exciting and thank you to everybody involved. It’s absolutely fantastic that you can compete from home.”

Silvia Ventura (MEX), Women’s U22 champion, said: “I feel really proud to represent Mexico especially considering the difficult situation linked to COVID-19. I feel really happy and I would like to thank all of those who supported me for this result to happen.”

Valery Schukin (RUS), Men’s U15 champion, said: “It was very exciting whether the equipment, the gun or the internet would fail, doubly from the fact that I represented Russia alone today. I am very glad of the victory, the training was not in vain. Thank you all for your support, I’m happy!”

UIPM Laser All Stars was born out of a clear appetite for virtual competition among the global UIPM community since COVID-19 lockdown measures were introduced, and its creation followed the popular UIPM Laser Home Run event that first brought competitors together online in May 2020.
Janusz Peciak, UIPM Executive Board Member for Sport and 1976 Olympic champion, said: “It was wonderful to see so many athletes of all ages – from five different continents – take part in the first UIPM Laser All Stars. “Once again we have seen the dedication and love that people have for UIPM Sports and the desire to come together and test their abilities under pressure in a global competition online. In this difficult time of the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic, we were able to join together as a worldwide Modern Pentathlon movement to underline those values through the very special actions of our athletes, reminding the world that we are alive and communicating through online methods with many people in the Olympic movement. “My thanks go to all who participated in these days and especially today, in the 3rd UIPM Pierre de Coubertin Pentathlon Day.”

Viacheslav Malishev, UIPM Executive Board Member for Development, added: “I was very happy to see pentathletes taking part once again in celebrations of our special day on various social media. Each year we see our community growing, with an increasing number of countries participating in Modern Pentathlon and UIPM Sports not only in person but also online. Today was a great demonstration of the worldwide development of our movement.”

The #High5 campaign was created by the UIPM as part of the Pierre de Coubertin Pentathlon Day, as a symbol of commitment to preserving and building on the legacy of Coubertin. This social media activation is ongoing and the #High5 is recognised as a symbol of dedication. By raising and showing their ‘High 5’ anyone can demonstrate their own commitment to protect, promote and further develop Modern Pentathlon.
News from around the world

Modern Pentathlon on provisional list of sports for 3rd European Games in Krakow-Malopolska (POL)

The UIPM Sports community in Europe has a new competitive goal to work towards after Modern Pentathlon was named on the provisional sports programme for the 3rd European Games in Krakow-Malopolska (POL) in 2023.

A list of 23 sports were revealed during a meeting between the European Olympic Committees (EOC) and a delegation from Poland at the headquarters of the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) in Rome (ITA).

According to a report on the EOC website, Acting President Niels Nygaard said: “It was a highly productive meeting and we were very happy to see such a strong commitment from the Polish delegation. It was a great start, we have worked as a team and reached concrete results, setting a precise roadmap for the future. We look forward to continuing ahead in the same spirit.”

The report said that discussions centred around the European Olympic Committees (EOC) and a delegation from Poland at the headquarters of the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) in Rome (ITA).

The report said the preliminary list of 23 sports for the 2023 Games was subject to final negotiations with each of the European and International sports federations. A key criterium for selection was whether the sports will use the European Games as their continental championships and/or offer qualification for the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

The preliminary list comprises archery, artistic swimming, badminton, basketball 3x3, beach handball, breaking, canoe (slalom; sprint), cycling (mountain bike; road), fencing, gymnastics, judo, karate, modern pentathlon, mountain running, rugby sevens, shooting, ski jumping (summer), sport climbing, table tennis, triathlon, volleyball (beach volleyball; volleyball), weightlifting and wrestling.

Spyros Capralos, IOC Member and CoCom Chair both for the Baku 2015 and Minsk 2019 European Games, emphasised that the European Games are an integral part of the Olympic journey and “the inclusion of new sports in the programme will be an asset for the Games and for Poland”.

UIPM becomes member of Global Esports Federation

A year of breaking new ground and embracing digital technology has continued with the announcement of a partnership between UIPM and the Global Esports Federation (GEF).

After a vote of approval by the Executive Board, UIPM joins World Karate and the International Canoe Federation in bringing GEF’s International Federation (IF) membership to eight, reflecting the growing convergence of sport, esports and virtual sport – powered by innovative technology.

GEF President Chris Chan said: “The addition of new International Federation members is testament to the vital work the Global Esports Federation has put in to develop the community and facilitating the convergence of esports, sport, technology and innovation.”

“We anticipate greater collaboration among our members and partners in developing initiatives that are in service to the esports community through our #worldconnected platform.”

In addition to becoming a member of the GEF, UIPM and the other IF members join the International Federations Advisory Council (IFAC), established to supplement the GEF’s knowledge capacity and scale for the benefits and potential of the future of esports. For more information on the GEF visit globalsports.org.

UiPM Sports athletes offered scholarships to enrol in World Academy of Sports

Pentathletes from all member federations of UIPM have been invited to apply for scholarships with the World Academy of Sports (WAoS).

Opportunities have been offered to thousands of athletes to gain an online qualification with the global sports institution after a memorandum of understanding signed between WAoS and UIPM. The news follows the selection of Sondos Aboubakr (EGY) for a scholarship to enrol on the Master of Sport Administration course at the Russian International Olympic University in Sochi (RUS).

The WAoS scholarships fit into two categories: Online Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) and Online Athlete Certificate.

One 100% scholarship worth £3,500

Lukasz Gutkowski and Oktawia Nowacka (POL) will hope to compete on home soil in 2023
Absolute Fencing’s competition system is put to the test in the California sunshine during UIPM 2018 Pentathlon World Cup Los Angeles

The deadline for applications to the PGCert must have an existing proficiency certification. They must also have an English language level of 6.5, with 6.0 in the written test, in the IELTS system or an equivalent proficiency certification.

The provision of such educational scholarships is part of UIPM’s commitment to the athletes through the Athletes Centered Programme (ACP). WAoS offers a fully online educational pathway from high school to Postgraduate education.

Our sport is closely linked to the academic world and focused strongly on education. Many pentathletes have achieved high success in their careers based on qualifications obtained alongside their sporting commitments and their intellectual capacity. I strongly encourage all eligible athletes to apply for this wonderful opportunity.”

All applications to the WAoS scholarship scheme must be submitted by a UIPM National Federation (NF). Interested NFs should send a note of interest to operations@pentathlon.org.

UIPM and Absolute Fencing Gear extend partnership to 2024

UIPM has extended its partnership with Absolute Fencing Gear to 2024. The new agreement, which covers the Paris 2024 Olympic Games cycle, serves to ensure that athletes in global and continental Modern Pentathlon competitions will continue to benefit from world-class fencing equipment and apparel.

In 2016, Absolute Fencing was awarded ‘Best Contribution’ in the UIPM Annual Awards in recognition of its contribution to the development of the sport, and entered into an agreement with UIPM covering the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games cycle.

Now the partnership has been extended for another four years, reflecting the importance of Absolute Fencing Gear – a leading global manufacturer and supplier of high-quality and affordable fencing equipment and apparel, based in New Jersey (USA) – as a valued partner.

Dr Klaus Schormann, UIPM President, said: “I am delighted to confirm that our agreement with Absolute Fencing has been extended to 2024. “Fencing has been a cornerstone of our sport ever since it was founded by the Baron Pierre de Coubertin and introduced to the Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912. But the evolution of this discipline as part of Modern Pentathlon has been interesting to follow.

“Fencing Bonus Round has provided a new showcase for the discipline to all people who have been watching our sport since 2015, with a very special presentation at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. “We have come a long way with Absolute Fencing, and now we look forward to future possibilities hand in hand with a trusted partner and friend of our sporting movement.”

Gary Lu, Absolute Fencing Gear CEO, added: “Absolute Fencing is honoured to continue our partnership with UIPM, presenting our traditional world-class fencing gear as well as new, highly visual and exciting technology to further engage audiences.

“We are proud to extend our relationship to 2024 and collaborate with UIPM as we work through this challenging time for Olympic and world sports, under the leadership of President Dr Klaus Schormann and Secretary General Shiny Fang.

“Our dedication and commitment remain with UIPM as we look towards a mutually successful future.”

Uldis Putnins (1954-2020)

The UIPM Sports community in Latvia and around the world is mourning the loss of Uldis Putnins, a two-time world junior champion, revered coach and administrator in Modern Pentathlon.

Uldis first won the world junior crown in 1974 and retained it in 1975, inspiring a love for competition that led the athlete to devote most of his life to sport and the development of new generations of pentathletes.

Uldis trained pentathletes not only in Latvia, but also in Germany. From 1991 to 1993 he took part in administrative work as Secretary General of the Latvian Modern Pentathlon Federation (LMPF). In 1992 in Barcelona (ESP), he served as senior coach to the first Latvian Modern Pentathlon team to take part in the Olympic Games in Barcelona.

LMPF President Jānis Liepins paid a fulsome tribute to his compatriot. He said: “We have lost a Modern Pentathlon sports specialist, a professional, a promoter of sports and active lifestyle, a competent coach for young athletes and a very smart and good colleague. We express our deepest regret to relatives, friends and colleagues of Uldis Putnins.”

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann and Absolute Fencing Gear CEO Gary Lu, whose company has signed up to provide fencing equipment and apparel throughout the Paris 2024 Olympic cycle, extend partnership to 2024.

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LMPF President Jānis Liepins paid a fulsome tribute to his compatriot. He said: “We have lost a Modern Pentathlon sports specialist, a professional, a promoter of sports and active lifestyle, a competent coach for young athletes and a very smart and good colleague. We express our deepest regret to relatives, friends and colleagues of Uldis Putnins.”

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann and Absolute Fencing Gear CEO Gary Lu, whose company has signed up to provide fencing equipment and apparel throughout the Paris 2024 Olympic cycle, extend partnership to 2024.
The fifth instalment of a new series looking at the growth of UIPM’s most popular development sport since its launch in 2015.

The NORCECA Modern Pentathlon Confederation covers North America, Central America and the Caribbean – a vast region that is home to almost 600 million people with almost limitless potential for sports development.

As Laser Run is designed as a plug-and-play concept that can be made accessible to any urban community in the world through the Global Laser Run City Tour (GLRCT), the possibilities for growth of UIPM Sports in the region are extensive.

The unexpected disruptions of 2020 may have put the entire sporting world on pause, but Laser Run will be a catalyst for growth when restrictions on mass-participation sport ease.

In the fifth part of the Laser Run Spotlight series, we speak to senior office-bearers from National Federations in Guatemala and United States to find out what their strategic priorities will be when initiatives like the GLRCT resume.

Why Biathle/Triathle crossover is key

Jorge Rodriguez (Executive Committee Member, Guatemala National Modern Pentathlon Association)

Q: Guatemala was one of the first countries to join the GLRCT. What was the initial purpose and have you achieved your goals and results?

A: Initially the objective was to provide an opportunity in Guatemala for all athletes to participate in an international event under the organization of the UIPM. The objective was fulfilled with the participation of athletes from various locations in the country.

A cross-section of athletes of mixed ages and genders sets off from the start line during a Global Laser Run City Tour in Guatemala.

Col John Russell OLY (1920–2020)

The extraordinary life of Colonel John Russell OLY, UIPM Medal of Honor winner, has come to an end.

Col Russell, who was presented with one of the UIPM’s highest honours in February 2020, died at his home in Texas on September 30. He was 100 years, seven months and 28 days old.

America’s oldest Olympic medalist served as a coach and mentor to generations of pentathletes from many nations, having been appointed to run the US Modern Pentathlon Training Centre at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas in 1956.

As a show jumper he competed in his first Olympic Games at London 1948 and enjoyed one of the highlights of his distinguished career when winning bronze at Helsinki 1952 on Democrat.

He also won the Aga Khan Trophy, the Prix de Nations and the Hamburg Trophy, and in 2001 he was inducted into the Show Jumping Hall of Fame.

As a soldier he served under the legendary General George Patton – an Olympic pentathlete who competed for the US at Stockholm 1912 – in World War II, earning a Bronze Star and Purple Heart for wounds he received at Cassino.

John Russell learned to ride on his family’s dairy farm in Pennsylvania at the age of five and got his first pony at seven, embarking on a lifelong quest in equestrian sport.

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A bunch start sees a sprint to the shooting range during a GLRCT event in Guatemala

A two-fold journey to mass participation
Dan Browne (National Team Coach, USA Pentathlon)

Q: How does your NF see Laser Run activities in USA this year during the pandemic?
A: We have been limited in our Laser Run events in USA this year during the pandemic. Virtual/hybrid competitions are an avenue to pursue that connectedness that is missing because of the global pandemic. We can encourage participants in the United States by continuing to promote at the UIPM level the opportunities that exist out there to ‘virtually’ compete at these events.

Q: What do you think about the future of virtual and hybrid competitions such as UIPM #LaserHomeRun and #LaserAllStars? How can we encourage participants from USA?
A: There’s no question that as long as the threat of COVID exists, there needs to be opportunities for athletes within the Pentathlon family to compete.

Q: For a big country with so many potential participants in Laser Run competitions, what is your plan to attract more participants in future?
A: The plan is two-fold. First, to continue to pursue identifying locations throughout the United States that would like to host GLRCT events. Secondly, to work with the various club systems throughout the United States in order to support their efforts to host Laser Run competitions and bring more people into the sport.

Q: What were the main positive outcomes from GLRCT in USA in 2019? Did it bring some more interest to Biathle/Triathle?
A: Through exposing individuals that participated in the GLRCT events we were able to drive some of those participants more closely into the Modern Pentathlon family. One example of how promoting Laser Run through the GLRCT events increased participation of Pentathlon activities in the US can be seen in the establishment of the Wolfpack Pentathlon Club in San Jose, California. Kirt Irverson saw the excitement of the event and took it to the next level in establishing his club.

Q: Have there been any local Laser Run events in USA this year during the pandemic?
A: We have been limited in our Laser Run activities because of the COVID-19 crisis that has affected the world. Our emphasis right now is focused on the virtual Laser Run framework.

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Veteran pentathlete Yasser Hefny (EGY) oversees a Para Laser Run shooting session.

Yasser Hefny (EGY) in awe of para athletes as he embarks on coaching role.

Yasser Hefny (EGY) has seen a lot in 16 years competing in Modern Pentathlon. But just when he had seen it all, he became acquainted with the most inspirational athletes in the UIPM Sports movement and felt like a rookie just starting out.

Yasser Hefny (EGY) recently volunteered to take over as shooting coach to Egypt's UIPM Para Sports team. In this interview, he takes up the story, describing all the emotions he has felt since undertaking this important role.

Q: What signs of progress have you seen in the UIPM Para Sports movement?
A: I have been following the UIPM movement and plans regarding Para Pentathlon and I think they are doing a great job. Advising and supporting the National Federations to have a Para programme and organizing competitions for them… and most importantly the hard work the UIPM is doing to include Para Pentathlon in the Paralympics.

Q: What are the main challenges when coaching a para athlete?
A: There are several challenges I was facing in the beginning but I'm getting better, for example:
• Building the trust between me and the athlete wasn't so easy because the shooting coach who was working with them before me was very experienced in shooting and also in dealing with athletes.
• Choosing my words carefully when giving instructions.
• I have to be very patient and friendly; also I should find a way to make the training look more like a game but also give the right instructions and correct the technique. It's very hard to maintain this balance but I think I'm doing good, the para athletes are improving and having fun.

Q: How did you get involved with coaching athletes in UIPM Para Sports?
A: Honestly I didn't plan it, I was attending the board meeting of the Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Federation as the head of the Athletes Committee... and one of the topics was about the shooting coach who can't work with the para team any more because their training is during his days off. I don't blame him, he is old and he deserves some rest!
Without thinking I was like, 'I have nothing on these days of the week and I can do it voluntarily and see if I will be able to continue', and it felt great to draw a smile on those faces. I got addicted and I decided I will commit some time to work with the Para team.

Q: How do you feel about having this opportunity?
A: In the beginning I had this feeling that I'm the guy who saved the situation – I was proud and walking tall... but after the first workout everything changed. I felt something like I needed these people more than they need me!
I was learning from them a lot of things – their amazing ability to adapt, their positive attitude, their strong willpower... honestly they are the real superheroes.

Q: And what are the most rewarding aspects?
A: I would say inner peace and, as I mentioned before, I learn from them how to be patient and positive. For example, I'm suffering from a bad chronic back injury and a lot of times I would be like 'why me? Why did you do that to me? I don't deserve it!'
But then I look at those super athletes and how they can compete and train with all the problems they are facing mentally and physically. And I will be like 'shame on me to be that weak and negative', and my thoughts directly change to 'I'm the guy who saved the situation – I'm recovering from my injury and I'm still fighting to catch up with our strong young Egyptian athletes in the road to Tokyo. To be honest, it's hard to beat those strong team-mates, but still not impossible. I have been through harder situations before and things went well. I guess after the 2021 season I will totally shift my career from athlete to full-time coach.

Q: How do you feel about having this opportunity?
A: As I mentioned in the first question it was a coincidence, a great one. My goal as para laser-shooting team coach is to make them smile and always be excited for the next workout. If I can achieve this formula it will be way easier to implement the shooting programme and I believe they will definitely improve as long as they are having fun.

Actually I didn't retire yet as an athlete, I'm recovering from my injury and I'm still fighting to catch up with our strong young Egyptian athletes in the road to Tokyo. To be honest, it's hard to beat those strong team-mates, but still not impossible. I have been through harder situations before and things went well. I guess after the 2021 season I will totally shift my career from athlete to full-time coach.

Q: Why is it so important for a National Federation like the EMPF to have a para programme?
A: In my opinion every federation must have a para programme because those athletes deserve to have a normal life, they didn't choose to be disabled or handicapped. The least we can do for them is give them a chance to enjoy the sport and maybe compete... also it's the least we can do for their parents who put in a crazy effort to help those athletes keep going.

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To find out more about opportunities in UIPM Para Sports contact para@pentathlon.org.
Tell us your Pentathlon stories!

We’ve all heard the story, right? The one about the 19th century cavalry officer whose ability to swim, ride, run, shoot and fight with a sword inspired Baron Pierre de Coubertin to create the Modern Pentathlon.

Five unique disciplines combined to provide the ultimate test of moral qualities as much as physical resources and skills, producing thereby the ideal, complete athlete.

A sport designed to create the all-round hero of the Olympic Games, referred to as Victor Ludorum in the Ancient Games after the introduction of Pentathlon in Olympia in 708BC.

We all know this story, and it is a timeless reminder of the origin of our beloved sport, but it’s not enough on its own. Modern Pentathlon has already evolved too much to be confined by this definition alone. And we need to keep evolving to protect our future.

That is why I am asking you, members of the global community who are the heartbeat of our sport, for help as we prepare for another Olympic Games.

What are your favourite Pentathlon stories?

What captures your imagination when you consider our sport? What makes it unique?

Who are the heroes of Pentathlon, and why? Are they real or imaginary?

Let’s make it a competition. Send us your Pentathlon stories and you could win a special prize. There are no gold, silver or bronze medals at stake, but there will be a UIPM jury put in place to identify the best stories and reward the authors of the stories that truly encapsulate the glory of our sport.

And why are we doing this? We are looking for good stories to help promote our sport, our competitions and our athletes.

The UIPM President, Dr Klaus Schormann, has issued a message of hope to the global UIPM Sports community as the sporting world continues to struggle against the COVID-19 Coronavirus.

Dear Modern Pentathlon Family, athletes, coaches, officials, parents and supporters,

We have all been faced with the COVID-19 Coronavirus since March 2020. This disease pandemic is affecting all our lives worldwide and we have to find the best ways to protect our health and the health of others.

We must never give up looking forward in a positive mood to a better future as soon as possible. Together with the International Olympic Committee, all International Federations of Olympic Sports are respecting the advice of the World Health Organization and the advice of our governments.

Step by step, we have to keep moving carefully towards normality in our daily activities and in the sport activities that we provide for athletes and other participants under the best health conditions.

In this September 2020 edition of the UIPM Newsletter, you will see that many National Federations have been able to resume some activities.

Our goal should be to come together again for training, competitions and meetings while respecting the measures put in place to limit the spread of the virus.

At this difficult time, it is paramount that we use all means of communication to share the message that we are all in this situation together. We are not lost.
08.09.2020: Darmstadt, GER

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann had a video conference with Olympic and world champion Attila Mizsér (HUN). They discussed various marketing issues and ways in which Modern Pentathlon can achieve new partnerships with companies through connecting sport and business societies.

Attila Mizsér’s proposals include a financial income for Modern Pentathlon, a future for athletes after their sporting career and an employee’s lifestyle.

10.09.2020: Berlin, GER

President Dr Schormann took part in the third meeting of the German Olympic Committee (DOSB) Taskforce and the Ministry of the Interior as an expert in international relations in sport, politics and business. They discussed the international sport movement based on the economic and political situations in all continents and the future of the Olympic Summer and Winter Games linked to human rights, peace through sport, education and integration through sport: the power and influence of sport in modern society.

16.09.2020: Berlin, GER

The UIPM President was invited by the German Government to attend a meeting of the Commission of Sport with members of all parliamentary factions.

The agenda covered international sport activities and focused especially...
on the Olympic movement based on the postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games (now taking place in 2021), good governance, anti-doping issues, human rights, corruption, athletes’ rights, actions during the pandemic and youth development through worldwide sport.

Among the invited guests were Josef Fendt (President of the International Luge Federation), Ingo Weiss (Treasurer of the International Basketball Federation), Christian Sachs (Head of Office at the DOSB), Prof Dr Gudrun Doll-Tepper (Vice-President of the DOSB), Thomas Konietzko (Vice-President of the International Canoe Federation) and Dr Thomas Weikert (President of the International Table Tennis Federation).

19.09.2020: Bensheim, GER
President Dr Schormann attended an open Laser Run competition and met all of the youth participants. It was the latest in a number of UIPM Sports events organised to encourage participation at grassroots level in Germany.

25.09.2020: Munich, GER
Dr Klaus Schormann took part in a meeting of Sport A (agency for ARD/ZDF) and Sport TV as one of the three TV council members to discuss national and international competitions during the pandemic.

Among the matters discussed were the financial consequences of COVID-19 for sponsors and broadcasters; online competitions and new possibilities for sport federations and clubs to resume normal sporting activities with limited spectators; and how to protect the rights of sponsors through TV presentations of competitions in this difficult time.

Steph Cook (GBR) becomes Modern Pentathlon’s first female Olympic champion on October 1, 2000 in Sydney (AUS)

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