Michelle Gulyas (HUN) and Ahmed Elgendy (EGY) cross the finish line to kick off the season with gold medals at UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup Cairo.
Gulyas (HUN) and Elgendy (EGY) kick off Olympic year in golden fashion with Cairo triumphs

Michelle Gulyas of Hungary and Ahmed Elgendy of Egypt retained the titles they earned in 2023 to begin the season we have seen female and male competition of the Olympic year in golden fashion at UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup Cairo.

Gulyas (HUN) confirmed her early-season form with a serene victory, finishing 8sec ahead of silver medallist Sunwoo Kim of Korea and 14sec clear of bronze medallist Kerenza Bryson of Great Britain.

It was a fourth Pentathlon World Cup gold for the 23-year-old Hungarian sensation, who looks confident ahead of what is likely to be her second Olympic Games at Paris 2024. Later, Tokyo 2020 Olympic silver medallist Elgendy (EGY) won his home World Cup for the third time but only after resisting a remarkable burst from team-mate Moutaz Mohamed (EGY), who stole the lead for part of the Laser Run. African champion Elgendy (EGY), 24, finally prevailed by 2sec and was a dominant gold medal in Sunday's Mixed Relay with Kazakhstan breaking through for a superb silver medal and bronze going to Korea.

UIPM President Dr. Klaus Schormann said: “Here in Cairo, throughout the first competition of the Paris 2024 Olympic season we have seen female and male athletes who have been prepared at a high level.

“I must thank the Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Federation and the Minister for Sport, Asraf Sobhy, who met several times in these days. Congratulations to the Ministry of Sport and the Government of Egypt, as well as all sponsors and volunteers, as well as the media.”

“The support of the American University here in Cairo is always very welcome and we are very thankful for that. In the way our athletes have started the season, we can look forward to a very exciting World Cup season where all athletes want to achieve points for their ranking and to qualify for the World Cup Final in Ankara and the Olympic Games.”

Women’s champion Gulyas (HUN) said:

“It may have looked easy to you but it was very, very tough. There was a little temperature difference in the weather so it was difficult to run well, but I was trying to focus on my shooting so that I could keep my distance.

“I’m very, very happy, and my coaches are very happy that I’m back so everything is fine. I am a perfectionist, but I was very happy about my Riding because my horse was blind in one eye, so he was pushing a little to the left because of that. I’m getting there and of course I’m not in my best shape yet, because the main competitions are later in the year. But I’m on the right track and happy.”

Silver medallist Kim (KOR) added: “My horse riding was a strong point today and every other discipline went well. In Laser Run, I made some mistakes in shooting but my running was fine and that kept me in a good position.

“I started in a high position so I was nervous, but I was able to focus my mind with mind control. Running was good and I had enough focus to finish in a good position today.”

Bronze medallist Bryson (GBR) said: “I went in 4th and to be in the top five was a good sign. My running has come on a lot this year and since I moved to the national training centre in Bath.

“I feel lucky and really happy to be here, just super-happy with my performance. A medal is what I wanted so I achieved my target.”

Men’s champion Elgendy (EGY) said: “One year ago, I won this race and I am feeling the same emotions. One year ago, the whole race was intense and today it was like this too.

“I was feeling a little bit more confident in the last shoot, and I focused on that because I knew it was going to be a hard last lap. I’m so pleased to win the first World Cup of the season here in Egypt for a third time.”

Women’s champion Gulyas (HUN) said:

“Silver medallist Mohamed (EGY) fought back tears as he added: “It’s very special and I’m really proud. I have so much support and I’m very happy. I made a lot of effort and to be on the podium beside our No.1, with all his experience, it feels really good.

“The race was very hard, even back to Fencing on the first day in qualification when I had a bad fence, but then my Swimming was just enough to get me through because I have a great Laser Run. Today it was all perfect, I couldn’t ask for more.”

Bronze medallist Kasperczak (POL) said: “This competition was very crazy for me. My first Final in a World Cup and now my first medal, a bronze medal.”

Women’s Final Riding

An intriguing Riding event saw most of the podium favourites in the Women’s Final escape major damage. Gulyas (HUN) dislodged only one barrier, minimising the reduction of her overall lead as Sunwoo Kim (KOR), Bryson (GBR), Anna Maliszewska (POL), Ilker Ozyuksel of Türkiye and Elodie Clouvel of France all made a gain with a perfect score.

In her comeback competition, Tokyo 2020 Olympic champion Kate French (GBR) dropped 14 points to make it just a little harder to navigate a course to the podium. In the lower half of the field, London 2012 Olympic champion Laura Asadauskaite of Lithuania stayed
in contention with a 293, but there was disappointment for faller Mariana Arceo of Mexico and Salma Abdelmaksoud (EGY) as they suffered elimination.

**Fencing**

With a Ranking Round score of 26V/9D, Gulyas (HUN) did just enough to create a buffer between herself and the rest of the field, and she added the maximum four points in the Bonus Round by defeating Unju Kim (KOR, 25V/10D) in the final bout.

There was congestion in the pack behind Gulyas (HUN), with Marie Oteiza (FRA) and Sunwoo Kim (KOR) both managing 24 victories and four others – Bryson (GBR), Elzbieta Adomaityte (LTU), French (GBR) and Maliszewska (POL) – winning 23.

The only athlete to make a major gain in the Bonus Round was Alice Sotero of Italy, with four consecutive victories partly atoning for her Ranking Round score of 17V/18D. Two victories enabled Clouvel (FRA) to keep the top six in her line of sight.

**Swimming**

Two athletes playing catch-up – Sotero (ITA) and Clouvel (FRA) – made further ground with the fastests swims of 2min 13.88sec and 2:14.64. But Gulyas (HUN) refused to give too much away, conceding only seven points to Sotero (ITA) with the 4th-fastest time of 2:17.44.

**Laser Run**

Gulyas (HUN) set off with a 14sec lead from Sunwoo Kim (KOR), with Oteiza a further 3sec, Bryson (GBR) 12sec and Clouvel (FRA) 14sec back. Sotero (ITA) was the initial big mover, on the way to a tenacious finishing place of 5th.

Gulyas (HUN) was a little slow on her first visit to the range, but the second shoot was better and the third one (8sec) made it look all but certain that gold would be hers. Sunwoo (KOR) may not have had enough to catch the lead woman but she was very solid in keeping her distance from the battles taking shape behind her.

Oteiza (FRA) was the first to concede ground to the pack, and soon Maliszewska (POL) and Bryson (GBR) came into the podium equation. It was on the last visit to the range that Bryson (GBR) made the crucial break, starting the season with a third major medal after her exciting breakthrough in 2023.

The outstanding Laser Run of the Women’s Final belonged to Mariya Gnedtchik (AIN), who stormed around the course in 10:57.90.

**MEN’S FINAL**

**Riding**

Refusing to buckle to the pressure of defending his title on home soil, Elgendy (EGY) led the way with an immaculate ride to register 300 points along with Jean-Baptiste Mourcia (FRA), Kasperczak (POL) and teammates Balazs Szep (HUN) and Richard Bereczki (HUN), with Mohamed (EGY) only conceding one time penalty.
With so many eyes on the performance of French athletes ahead of Paris 2024, it was Christopher Patte (FRA) – a former gold medallist here – who had the responsibility of taking the last ride. And his chances of a repeat triumph came to a shuddering halt as a series of refusals led to the only elimination of the Final.

The star of the Bonus Round with five victories was Szep (HUN).

Swimming
Mohamed (EGY), the 2023 Under 19 world champion, showed once again that the Olympic medallist in his team was not going to cruise to the finish line. With a swim of 2:02.56 he outpaced Elgendy (EGY, 2:03.64) and Csaba Bohm (HUN, 2:04.12) to notch another 305 points.

Laser Run
Having started alongside Elgendy (EGY), Kasperczak (POL) briefly overtook the favourite after the first shoot, while Mohamed (EGY) shook off Charles Brown (GBR) and started to work on his 9sec deficit. That changed on the fourth 600m, as the teenager gave everything in pursuit of Elgendy (EGY) and turned the race into a duel.

The two-time winner used all his experience to stay calm, especially at the shooting range where his last three visits all lasted less than 8sec. An exceptional mastery of the technical and mental aspects of laser shooting allowed him to set off on the final lap with a 56sec cushion that proved to be just enough.

A pack containing Valentin Belaud (FRA), Dogue (GER) and Bohm (HUN) looked menacing, but none of them had the staying power to shoot well back-to-back, leading to the remarkable sight of two bespectacled Egyptians in their all-black outfits being roared around the course in a race for glory. Mourcia (FRA) was superb in Laser Run, with a time of 9:58 enabling him to finish an impressive 4th and put further pressure on the French Olympic team selectors.

Arceo and Carrillo (MEX) come from behind to claim gold in competitive Mixed Relay

Mariana Arceo and Duilio Carrillo came from behind to earn Mixed Relay gold for Mexico on the final day of UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup Cairo.

It was a satisfying moment for the Mexican team after a remarkable run of four silver medals in the 2023 regular season. Gold may have been elusive during that time but today it was claimed in style as Arceo and Carrillo (MEX) overturned a big deficit to deny Kazakhstan duo Lyudmila Yakovleva and Temirlan Abdraimov.

While silver was a breakthrough achievement for the young Kazakh duo, bronze went to a more familiar source as Seungmin Seong and Changwan Seo of Korea fought back for a podium place after a slow start.
It was a similar story for the host nation but Malak Ismail and Mohamed Elgendy of Egypt left themselves with too much to do and finished 4th.

Riding
Kazakhstan (Yakovleva/Abdraimov) took a grip on the competition with the most composed performance in Riding, with only one blemish on their way to a score of 293. Mexico (Arceo/Carrillo) also incurred only minimal damage with 12 points conceded, while Ayumu Saito and Sho Onishi of Japan also came through largely unscathed.

Fencing
Kazakhstan (Yakovleva/Abdraimov) performed best on the piste, claiming 21 victories in the Ranking Round and adding the maximum four points in the Bonus Round after winning the final bout against Mexico (Arceo/Carrillo), who scored 18 victories in the round robin and one in the showpiece.

Xiaoting Zhong and Linbin Zhang of China upstaged their neighbours Korea (Seong/Seo) with 16 victories compared to 14, as well as the Bonus Round bout between the two.

Swimming
The bronze-medal race gained intrigue as Korea (Seong/Seo) moved back into contention with the top time of 2min 01.05sec. This enables them to close within 12 overall points of China (Zhang/Zhong) and set up a five-way pack behind the top two heading into Laser Run.

Laser Run
The big move in Swimming paid off for Korea (Seong/Seo) as they made their way through the pack with the day’s best Laser Run time of 2.01.05. This enabled them to secure the bronze that was the best they could have expected after struggles in Riding and Fencing.

However, even more drama surrounded the quest for gold. Having started 24sec behind the leaders, Tokyo 2020 Olympians Arceo & Carrillo (Mexico) used all their experience to rein in Kazakhstan (Yakovleva/Abdraimov) and turn the race on its head to win gold by an impressive margin of 13sec.
Last week at a special ceremony at the palace put its most iconic horses front and centre again. The golden horses of Versailles have always played a central part to life from the very first days of the Chateau of Versailles.

This summer, when the former royal residence of King Louis XIV will provide arguably the most stunning and dramatic backdrops of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, the equine history of the grounds will again come to the fore.

As well as Modern Pentathlon, Versailles is also part of a special equine focus ahead of the Games, with an exhibition celebrating the history of horses at Versailles opening in July.

The sprawling stables opposite the Chateau were a constant hive of activity during its history. According to statistics, more than 2,000 horses at any one time were housed in the Royal Stables. The refresh is understandable given per cent of the preparatory work has now been completed with temporary grandstands which can accommodate 40,000. Numbers game

Across just 12 days from April 16-28 the UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup season will rapidly moved through its second and third instamtes. In the Turkish capital of Ankara (April 16-21) and then Budapest, Hungary (April 23-28), the world’s best and those looking to gatecrash the elite at the last minute can’t afford to waste their time. As Gulyas says, time to ‘run what you run’.

The golden horses of Versailles are ready to welcome Modern Pentathlon’s shining lights

Horses have always played a central part to life from the very first days of the Chateau of Versailles.

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As well as Modern Pentathlon, Versailles is playing host to all of the equestrian events at this summer’s Games and it is unclear as to the end of its Olympic makeover, the palace put its most iconic horses front and centre again.

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The iron woman: Meet Laura Asadauskaite

In the latest in our ‘Pentathlon Personalities’ series, Lithuania’s legendary champion on making Olympic history in Paris, parenthood and life beginning again at 40...

February 28 was a Wednesday this year. Just one more reason for Laura Asadauskaite to keep things low key. Her birthday had arrived just as the most demanding pre-season of her career was reaching its peak. In any case, the milestone was apparently not a major cause for celebration.

Asadauskaite was turning 40 but she is no normal 40-year-old. Then again, last year she was no normal 39-year-old, the year before that no normal 38-year-old. You get the picture. Asadauskaite has been extraordinary for so long now that it’s almost taken for granted. Her brilliance — and bloody determination — has been with Pentathlon so long that it’s part of the furniture.

When she lists the reasons why this year’s birthday was no extravagant celebration, you nod along. But deep down, you know the fact that it fell a week before the first UIPM Pentathlon World Cup of the season is probably why Asadauskaite didn’t go overboard. “When you think about it, it’s been so many years. It’s even hard to think about, hard to look at the passport,” smiles Asadauskaite. “Still, in your heart, you feel young, strong, and capable of anything. As you think, so it is.

“And yet, in reality, well, there’s this saying that you shouldn’t celebrate turning 40. So that’s why we celebrated very calmly, with family, had a peaceful meal with our favourite dishes. And training was from morning until evening. That weekend, we were already off to the World Cup in Cairo, so there wasn’t much opportunity to celebrate there either.”

This, after all, is an Olympic year, which is an Asadauskaite kinda year. So of course, not the time for distractions. Paris 2024 looms over the entire world of elite Pentathlon yet you sense it looms and lingers longer over her. Simply put, she is Pentathlon’s iron woman. This summer’s Games will be the Lithuanian icon’s fifth. Debut in Beijing, golden glory in London, heartbreak in Rio de Janeiro, silver redemption in Tokyo. And now the City of Love with all of its romance and history but with plenty more history to be made.

Asadauskaite persists in discussing Paris as a hypothetical and highlights a selection process the Lithuanian federation must make. But we know she’ll be there and in the process will become the first female pentathlete in history to make it to a fifth Games. Just one man, Australian Peter Macken, achieved the feat and he did so almost 50 years ago. Look a little further at what a victory in Paris could mean: it would leave Asadauskaite as the most decorated pentathlete in history.

“Naturally, it’s much harder now than it used to be. But I’m 10-15 years younger. But I already have my Olympic plan developed, a four-year cycle,” she says. “I already know that I needed to take a break after the [Tokyo] Olympic Games. I know that afterwards there’s such a recovery period for me, so I mustn’t overdo it, and then there are still two years when I need to push myself to qualify for the [next] Olympics.

“About a gold medal, one must speak very cautiously. After all, our young athletes have grown significantly stronger now. Frankly speaking, I believe I definitely won’t be able to win the gold. I think it would require a stroke of very good luck for me. I mean, I must do everything perfectly, and these two strong competitors must somehow fail. They must have bad luck.

“I think I can fight for any medal in my best shape. But, as I said, it’s also about luck. And we know with horses, yes, it’s possible to fight for any medal. As for what will happen, nobody knows. And in reality, I feel that now it will be much harder than it probably was.”

What’s remarkable though is that Asadauskaite has made all of this look easy. Since making her post-Tokyo return in April 2023 she has finished inside the top 10 in every event and is ranked sixth in the world. Talk to any of the leading lights of the new generation she refers to and the respect from them is so clear — but so too is the fear. Her ability to hunt down leaders in the Laser Run is the stuff of legend. Hungary’s Michelle Gulyas spoke to UIPM News last month and said simply “if Laura is starting the Laser Run in fifth or sixth behind you, you’re in big trouble”.

“But what followed in Rio was a nightmare, when her chances were undone by elimination in the Riding discipline. ‘I thought, what should I do next? But it really touched me inside. That’s unfair. Fate is unfair, and why is fate like this?’

“I will repeat again that these girls are very strong, and I must say, competing with them right now is very difficult for me,” says Asadauskaite, who started the season with a 9th-place finish at UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup Cairo.

“Apparently, they are often on the podium, and I’m just a little short. But I know perfectly well what I need to do in which disciplines and how, and I will strive to do everything possible. Everything must come together. All of my physical and mental preparation must be there, and it will be decisive if it’s the Olympic Games.”

The Asadauskaite journey with the Olympics is a remarkable one. Of London 2012, she says “I realised my dream and I became that Olympic champion. Well, then, other dreams followed, the ones I wanted to fulfil, and they also came true.”

But what followed in Rio was a nightmare, when her chances were undone by elimination in the Riding discipline. “I thought, what should I do next? But it really touched me inside. That’s unfair. Fate is unfair, and why is fate like this?”

And so in Tokyo she challenged fate to a rematch. “I see that I have strength, and desire, and opportunity, and so, year after year, I came to Tokyo, and I managed to win a medal and prove that justice exists after all.”

At the arena and away from it she has proved so much. For 14 years she has balanced motherhood and elite sport and somehow made that look easy too. She and husband Andrejus Zadneprovskis, two-time Olympic medallist in Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008 and UIPM Executive Board Member for Media, welcomed daughter Adriana in 2010.

“Of course, this is a very difficult path — being a mother, raising children, and being a professional athlete,” she says. “I think it’s still better for you when these things are separate. We can’t devote 100% of our time to our children. We sacrifice our time, maybe even our attention. A medal has two sides.”

If not rude, it doesn’t feel quite right to discuss what retirement may eventually look like for Asadauskaite. She smiles and says “maybe not soon” before outlining goals in the sports space, coaching, mentoring, campaigning.

If she could pass on her mentality to the next generation, Lithuanian sport would receive huge rewards. Whatever about keeping the body going at the very top this long, how has Asadauskaite stayed so damn hungry? “Many people ask me this question, I’ve long thought about it. I’ve practically won everything possible. And for 30 years now I’ve been in sports, and it seems... Well, what pushes me to go on? Why am I here? Why do I still train? Still want to compete, participate, win medals?

‘And the only answer I find – it’s simply love for sports. There’s no other name for it, it’s just love.’

The City of Love, fittingly, awaits.
UIPM News round-up

Athlete prize money for major UIPM competitions boosted by increase of almost 20% During its meeting on March 7, the UIPM Executive Board agreed to sanction an almost 20% increase in prize money for athletes competing in UIPM competitions with immediate effect.
The UIPM Athletes Committee issued a statement that read: “The Athletes Committee is really excited to announce … there will be an almost 20% increase in total prize money in the 2024 season starting from World Cup 1 (Cairo).”

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann commented: “In the Executive Board meeting we discussed the request of the Athletes Committee and the Chair, Yasser Hefny, presented clear arguments that the EB supported. “Athletes are the focal point of our Union and we always need to give them as much support as possible. I hope this increase in prize money sends a clear message that athletes have the full support of the EB and the movement, and we are happy that the Board voted unanimously for this increase in prize money.”

UIPM announces revival of Masters World Championships with Gyomro (HUN) awarded 2024 edition The UIPM Executive Board met on March 7 and agreed on some key decisions, including the revival of the UIPM Masters World Championships with the 2024 edition awarded to Gyomro in Hungary.

The city, 35km from the capital Budapest, will stage the return of the UIPM Masters World Championships from September 13-15, 2024.
Gyomro (HUN) hosted the European Masters Championships in 2019, not long before the COVID-19 pandemic brought Modern Pentathlon’s international Masters movement to a halt.

After an abortive attempt by Finland to host the global gathering of pentathletes aged 35+ in 2022, the Hungarian Modern Pentathlon Association (HMPA) entered a bid that was accepted by the UIPM EB — and they will now host the last Masters World Championships to feature Riding alongside Fencing, Swimming and Laser Run.

The news comes after France held the first Masters competition to include the new Obstacle discipline in Bompas (FRA), and after Chisinau (MDA) held a successful Open European Masters Championships that signalled the revival of the movement in November 2023.

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “After a fallow period in the history of the UIPM Masters World Championships, we are more than happy that the Hungarian Modern Pentathlon Association offered to organise the competition in September 2024 so that our Masters have not only their local and open regional events but also a global competition to prepare for. “My congratulations go to the global Masters movement and to the Hungarian federation, and I wish everybody good luck and a smooth preparation for the World Championships in September, and also the elections.”

In accordance with the UIPM Election Rules, elections for the new UIPM Masters Committee will take place during the UIPM 2024 Masters World Championships.

UIPM announces revival of Masters World Championships with Gyomro (HUN) awarded 2024 edition

The 2024 edition of the UIPM Masters World Championships will be held in Gyomro (HUN) and will be the last to feature the Riding discipline.
The Obstacle Laser Run (OLR) follows UIPM’s successful Global Laser Run City Tour and the Biathle-Triathle National Tour initiatives.

Not only is OLR seen as a potentially grassroots level initiative, responsible for development at coaches and the National Federations, as well as a format that is highly flexible for added to the UIPM Sports Pyramid.

The addition of Obstacle discipline to the UIPM Statutes and Competition Rules in November 2022 enabled the creation of new multi-sport formats.

The OLR World Tour will not only offer new entry points to UIPM Sports and pathways to the Olympic sport of Modern Pentathlon, it will become a potential solution for continental and regional events where elite Pentathlon is less established, such as the Southeast Asian Games – the next iteration of which is in 2025.

The OLRWT bidding process will open for NFs that are not yet able to host full Pentathlon events due to their stage of development. As a first step, the OLRWT will target countries that already have or recently acquired Obstacle competition equipment, giving athletes and organizers a chance to create a competitive opportunity in their own country.

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “The FISU 2024 World University Championships Modern Pentathlon – starting in Kaunas (LTU) in 2024 – and CISIM Modern Pentathlon Military World Championships.

UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cups Ankara & Budapest: Two additional athletes approved to compete as neutrals

One pentathlete who holds a Belarus passport, and one who holds a Russia passport, have been approved to participate in a neutral capacity in UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup Ankara (April 16–21) and UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup Budapest (April 23–28).

This follows the granting of neutral status to 12 athletes who hold Belarus passports announced on 29 February.

On behalf of the Executive Board I look forward to seeing the development of the new Obstacle Laser Run World Tour, giving people of all ages new opportunities to compete in our movement in every corner of the world.”

The approval was granted by UIPM’s Independent Panel, which was set up in May 2023 after UIPM created a pathway for individual athletes with Belarus or Russia passports to return to UIPM Sports competitions on a neutral basis.

The members of the Panel researched and discussed the credentials of each individual application based on eligibility criteria set by UIPM, in cooperation with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and in line with the United Nations in terms of the protection of individuals’ rights.

All successful applicants have received approval of their neutral status and are eligible to compete in the second and third events of the UIPM 2024 season. Any applications for future competitions will be considered in the same way.

In making this announcement, UIPM also reiterates its absolute support for athletes and other members of the Modern Pentathlon community in Ukraine who have suffered so much since the invasion of their country by Russia, supported by Belarus.
Pentathlon TV product has a bright future with OBS guiding our evolution

I am excited to bring you all an update on some pivotal developments in the evolution of our Modern Pentathlon TV product. But first it is important to set the context of the historic relationship with one of UIPM’s key stakeholders.

The partnership between UIPM and Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS) has always been cordial, respectful and productive – and a little complex, at times. This is inevitable when you consider the number of changes that have taken place in the Olympic Pentathlon since the 1990s, and the driving forces behind those changes.

In terms of TV and media, the driving forces behind those changes are the evolving audience, the development of technology, the growing role of social media, and a desire to attract new audiences when Pentathlon – even more important that we try to attract new audiences when Pentathlon – has always been cordial, respectful and productive. 

I recall one difficult moment during the 2012-2016 Olympic cycle, when OBS produced a video consisting entirely of the worst mishaps suffered by athletes in the Riding element of Modern Pentathlon over the years. It was upsetting for our community to be subjected to this kind of ‘blooper reel’, and I wrote a letter to the OBS CEO expressing our dissatisfaction, to which they responded with an explanation detailing the number of clicks and views on the video, which they felt was indicative of a positive response from audiences. When our mission is to attract new audiences to our sport, it is hard to argue with such logic.

OBS, as the name suggests, are masters of the art of Olympic broadcasting and we listen to their feedback, even when it hurts. In 2014, an OBS team visited our Pentathlon World Cup in Rome (ITA), when we were testing the new Fencing Bonus Round. Their chief content manager used the word “disconnected” to describe the status of our sport and the sequence of disciplines at that moment, which provided us with a clear direction of travel.

After Rio 2016, where Pentathlon for the first time had four disciplines (only missing Swimming) in one Olympic venue, a more connected sport was built around the concept of a Pentathlon Stadium with a 1 sport / 5 discipline / 5 hours programme. The vision of 5-in-1 was realised in Tokyo, a huge improvement. While this more compact and more understandable concept was well received by broadcasters, it was obvious that a five-hour duration continued to limit the number of networks that would televise an entire Pentathlon live on air.

Another more TV-friendly product was born at the end of 2021 with the new 90-minute format, which debuted in the 2022 season with a Semi-Final/Final format that immediately intensified the competition. Every ‘taker’ of our TV show was finally able to show an entire Pentathlon without cutting out a single discipline.

During those first two years of experience, the 90-minute product improved a lot, and in 2024 so far, our number of TV broadcasters has increased and the feedback has become more and more positive.

And now we look ahead to the Los Angeles 2028 cycle and the most radical transformation so far! The new TV product took further shape during a constructive meeting with a comprehensive OBS programming team and senior leadership in their Madrid headquarters on March 12.

One of their many intelligent suggestions was to start our event in LA with Obstacle, marking the dawn of a new era and introducing Pentathlon with a series of short and thrilling head-to-head races to grab the attention of new audiences.

Next comes the new Fencing with single-elimination format, followed by an innovative change to Swimming with athletes starting according to an overall time handicap – something that had already been discussed at times within our community.

The detail has to be worked out by our internal experts, and there are various options and ways to do this, but a Swimming handicap means more relevant races, which means viewers continue to follow the overall storyline without switching off. And then we finish with our dramatic Laser Run as per the status quo.

Everything suggested by OBS is subject to a democratic process, culminating in the need for approval by UIPM Congress. But so far, so good. The results of this OBS meeting, when reported back to the Executive Board, earned unanimous support. The IOC is also aligned to OBS in pushing for a more exciting and presentable Pentathlon TV product in LA28.

So what are the next steps? Once the testing of the new Fencing format is complete, relevant procedures will be followed in order to present to Congress the necessary adjustments, keeping in mind the need to minimise impact on athletes’ training and ensure maximum accessibility for National Federations to develop the sport.

Having come on a long shared journey with OBS, in this meeting I was amazed by their vision and pragmatic way of thinking and doing. This is based on real and profound Olympic broadcasting and distribution experience, as well as a flexibility in understanding our sport’s charm and complexity, while respecting that the benefits to athletes should outweigh any adjustments that may be inconvenient or disruptive.

We are enjoying working with the OBS team and appreciate their guidance and patience to believe in our sport’s future growth potential, along with all of our innovations and improvements.
29.02.2024: CISM meeting

On the last day of February, UIPM President Dr. Klaus Schormann had an online call with former pentathlete Col Nilton Rolim, who was recently elected as President of the International Military Sports Council (CISM).

They discussed the future of Modern Pentathlon within the CISM Movement and how Col Rolim wants to include Modern Pentathlon with the new Obstacle discipline in the CISM World Games, potentially with the Obstacle Laser Run (OLR) format.

Furthermore, Col Rolim proposed President Dr. Schormann the idea to have the CISM Modern Pentathlon Military World Championships in Caldas da Rainha (POR) this year combined with the UIPM U17 World Championships. Dr. Schormann agreed to this idea and they also spoke about future CISM World Championships with Spain and Hungary as potential hosting nations.

Furthermore, they will review and update the Memorandum of Understanding signed between UIPM and CISM in 2021 in the coming weeks.

06.03. – 10.03.2024: Cairo, EGY

UIPM President Dr. Schormann attended the first major competition of the 2024 Olympic season, UIPM Pentathlon World Cup Cairo, while also taking part in sport-political functions.

President Dr. Schormann attended the Sport Expo together with Egypt’s Minister for Youth & Sport, Dr. Asdrab Sabhy, Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Federation (EMPF) President Sharif Elarian OLY and World Olympians and French Modern Pentathlon Federation (FFPM) President Joel Bouzou OLY.

The Sport Expo allows all sectors to present commercial products and cutting-edge services that will serve the sports industry for years to come.

Outside of such official commitments, the UIPM President met also with various National Federation (NF) leaders during the competition, further discussing strategies to develop the sport in their countries and establish a solid base for future competitions.

Two of the NF officials he met were Joseph Collins Ssemmanda (Secretary General, Uganda Modern Pentathlon Federation) and Ismalia Lingany (President, Mali Modern Pentathlon Federation).

For Uganda and Mali, UIPM Pentathlon World Cup Cairo provided an opportunity for athletes to compete in a Category A competition in their own continent of Africa. Forty-five nations were represented in Cairo (EGY), a mark of the increasing accessibility and diversity of Modern Pentathlon.

The newly-installed Kuwait Modern Pentathlon Federation also had athletes starting in the Mixed Relay at the last day of the competition. President Dr. Schormann had the chance to speak to the Deputy Ambassador of Kuwait, who had attended the competition to cheer the Kuwaiti athletes.

President Dr. Schormann expressed his pride that new federations at an early stage of development had the initiative to attend World Cups to gain experience and learn from other nations, connect with the UIPM society, discover how others train and build up friendship through sport – which has the power to connect people across borders.

On March 7 President Dr. Schormann chaired the UIPM Executive Board meeting, which took place in a hybrid format as there was a big attendance of Board Members in Cairo (EGY).

The President’s Report included the CISM World Championships, the latest situation with neutral athletes holding Russia and Belarus passports, the integration of Obstacle and the new UIPM Art & Sport Contest.

Pentathlon World Cup Cairo was the first UIPM competition where athletes from Belarus were granted access to compete with individual neutral athlete
(AIN) status having gone through the rigorous checks of an independent panel.

Furthermore, the EB discussed how NF can better merge with the Obstacle society in their country and the next steps to integrate Obstacle into Modern Pentathlon.

With Paris 2024 looming in one of the world’s most important historical and cultural cities, President Dr Schormann – a long-serving member of the IOC Commission for Culture & Olympic Heritage – proposed the introduction of an Art & Sport Contest lasting from April until June, enabling professional and amateur artists among the Modern Pentathlon community to create work representing the Olympic Games, Modern Pentathlon or the sport’s founder, Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

After the Finals on Saturday, the President was joined by Joel Bouzou OLY and UIPM Athletes Committee Chair Yasser Hefny OLY in attending the Egypt Athletes Forum.

The Forum gathers Olympians, athletes, sports authorities, National Olympic Committees, athlete commissions, Ministry of Youth and Sports, International Federations and other key stakeholders in the sports industry. Its purpose is to build up a community of Egyptian champions, highlight their success, understand their struggles, support them in their careers and help them make history by encouraging them in international competitions.

The theme for this year’s Forum was The Road To Paris, with a panel topic of Sport Diplomacy.
Meetings with the United Arab Emirates National Olympic Committee, Ministry for Education, Sport Council and UAE Modern Pentathlon Federation started with the NOC Secretary General HE Faris Mohamed Al-Tawah, President Dr Schormann and the NOC SG spoke about the future possibilities for Modern Pentathlon within UAE as well as historic competitions organised some years ago.

Dr Schormann then met HE Dr Ahmed Belhoul Al Falasi, Minister of Education and Chairman of the General Authority of Sport, at the NOC headquarters. The meeting was attended by HE Ghanim Mubarak Rashid Al Harek (Director-General of the General Authority of Sport), HE Sheikh Suhail Bin Butti Al Maktoum (Executive Director of the Sports Development Sector at the Authority), and HE Dr Huda Al Matrooshi (UAEMPF President).

They discussed key ways to enhance cooperation and the Union’s future plans to develop the Olympic sport in the UAE. They also explored opportunities for the UAE to host Modern Pentathlon competitions, aiming to boost the UAE’s sports competitiveness and status by welcoming the replacement of Riding with the more urban sport of Obstacle Walking.

In addition, the UIPM President also had a chance to meet with the Sharjah Sports Council, which manages all sports competitions in Dubai and supports the UAEMPF.

Its Chairman, HE Issa Hilal Al-Hazami, spoke about the good experience they had so far with the UAEMPF and with UIPM, based on the previous staging of two Biathle & Triathle World Championships in Dubai (UAE).

President Dr Schormann was supported in meetings by UIPM Senior Technology and IT Manager, Tamer Samy, and Executive Assistant Lena Nussbaumer.

14.03. – 15.03.2024: Madrid, ESP

President Dr Schormann met with Carlos Jimenez del Castillo, President of the Spanish Modern Pentathlon Federation, Secretary General Jaime Gonzalez Almaraz and Dr Vlachstav Malishev, UIPM Executive Board Member for Development.

Discussions centred around the future strategies of the Spanish NF and avenues for integrating the Spanish Obstacle Society into the existing framework.
While UIPM provided guidelines for this integration process, it was acknowledged that each nation and federation face unique circumstances requiring tailored approaches.

Furthermore, they discussed the possibility of hosting the CISM 2025 Modern Pentathlon Military World Championships, due to their close cooperation with the Army in Spain.

Additionally, Dr Schormann provided insights into the ongoing situation involving neutral athletes from Belarus and Russia, along with updates on UIPM’s successful organisation of the season-opening UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup Cairo.

Furthermore, the group discussed ways to enhance competitiveness within the sport, exploring strategies aimed at advancing Modern Pentathlon in Spain and ensuring that athletes receive the support to thrive on the international stage.

Highlighting the success story of athletes like Laura Heredia, who secured a Paris 2024 direct qualification quota place for Spain at the 2023 European Games in Krakow (POL), served as inspiration for other athletes.

On March 15, UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann met with 1st Vice President Juan Antonio Samaranch (also IOC Vice President) at his office in Madrid. They shared updates on UIPM activities leading up to Paris 2024 and beyond.

19.03.2024: London, GBR

Before the competition season gains full momentum and with the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympic Games, President Dr Schormann travelled to London for an in-person meeting with Jon Tibbs (CEO) and his JTA agency colleagues Justin Shea and Nick Dawes, along with UIPM Executive Assistant Lena Nussbaumer.

Discussions centred around strategic communication plans tailored for the

Paris 2024 Olympics, aiming to leverage Dr Schormann’s presidency to effectively showcase Modern Pentathlon.

Delving into the communication strategies, the group explored ways to effectively convey the unique aspects of the sport, especially its historical significance intertwined with equestrianism, while emphasising the need for adaptation to resonate with future generations.

Upcoming competitions, as well as Sport Accord and other international sports events, will be used as platforms for President Dr Schormann to represent the sport to maximise positive media coverage.

In essence, the meeting served as a pivotal moment to refine communication strategies, strengthen partnerships and align efforts towards effectively positioning Modern Pentathlon on the global stage, not only for the upcoming Olympics but also for the future.

25.03. – 26.03.2024: Darmstadt, GER

UIPM President Dr. Klaus Schormann met with experienced former L’Equipe journalist Alain Lunzenfichter and UIPM EB Member Martin Dawe to discuss the historical book project.

The comprehensive book will encompass various facets of Modern Pentathlon history, including profiles of all Olympic champions, a Hall of Fame section, anecdotes about pivotal figures such as Baron Pierre de Coubertin, and other significant contributors to the Modern Pentathlon Movement.

Additionally, there will be a dedicated section for artwork, featuring pieces by renowned artists, alongside showcasing the sport’s innovative path over the past 112 years.
### Pentathlon World Rankings

The PWR is updated live at www.pentathlon.org after each competition. PWR as at April 1, 2024

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The latest UIPM World Rankings, World Cup Rankings and Olympic Games Rankings are all available at www.pentathlon.org

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**Baron Pierre de Coubertin**

“The Modern Pentathlon event would test a man’s moral qualities as much as his physical resources and skills, producing thereby the ideal, complete athlete.”

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**UIPM HEADQUARTERS**

Stade Louis II – Entrée C
19 avenue des Castelans, MC-98000 Monaco
Tel. +377 97 77 85 55 | Fax +377 97 77 85 50
E-mail: uipm@pentathlon.org

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www.pentathlon.org

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