UIPM

COMPETITION OPENING AND CLOSING CEREMONY
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These ceremonies are important for all stakeholders including media and special attention needs to be paid to appropriate protocol.

The opening and closing ceremonies should set the tone for an event and mark its opening and completion in an appropriate manner.

These ceremonies allow the host country and city to welcome and farewell athletes, officials, guests, spectators, volunteers and media. They also provide opportunities for the display of national or local identity and creativity.

It is important to recognise that the opening ceremony gives a first impression of the level of organisation of the event.

All participants and/or representatives are expected and requested to attend both the opening and closing ceremonies.

The opening ceremony should be held either on the evening before the start of the competition or at the beginning of the first day of the competition.

Close contact should be kept between the organisers and the UIPM at all stages of the development of ideas and themes for the ceremonies, especially if the organisers intend to create something elaborate or unusual.

The closing ceremony requires special planning when developing the concept. Too often in the past there have been no spectators present at this important function. Organisers should pursue a concept that makes it as attractive as possible for athletes, media, spectators, staff and others to remain until the end.

Athletes of each participating country may either assemble in the venue in advance of the opening ceremony, or parade into the venue, depending on the plan and venue situation.

Dignitaries, UIPM representatives and VIP guests should be seated at the front of the venue.

Suitable music should be played and tested beforehand, also to signal that the ceremony is about to begin.

The Master of Ceremonies (MC) or announcer begins the Opening/Closing Ceremony by introducing the dignitaries/VIPs and announcing the list of participating countries.

The MC then invites the following speakers:

i. **Principal guest/dignitary** who should welcome the athletes and spectators; and
ii. **UIPM representative** who should thank the LOC/NF/NOC and sponsors and declare the competition open/close.
At the start of each UIPM major competition, every athlete promises to play fair and obey all of the UIPM Rules and Regulations. One athlete from the host country takes this oath at the Opening Ceremonies on behalf of all athletes: “In the name of all competitors, I promise that we shall take part in this (competition name), respecting and abiding by the rules that govern UIPM, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams”

The duration of the whole ceremony must not exceed 45 minutes for World Cups and World Championships except there are performances arranged in the theater or other comfortable place for athletes and spectators to sit down. It should be shorter for other events.

The opening ceremony may be conducted in a town or market square or other suitable location in the host town or city so that it attracts the local population and enhances their identification with the event.

The concept of the ceremony should not place undue demands on competing athletes at second day. They must not be required to stand for a long time in either the assembly area or the arena. They must also have the opportunity to watch the greater part, if not all, of the ceremony.

**OPENING CEREMONY PROTOCOL**

A well-designed opening ceremony should combine elements of national/local identity and an artistic/cultural presentation with official protocol (sequence, flags, anthem, speeches etc).

The protocol can be summarized as follows:

- Entrance of the delegations in their approved uniforms (athletes, team officials)
- Welcome speech by the Chair of the LOC/NF (maximum 3 minutes).
- Speech of the Head of State or local authorities or his or her representative.
- One athlete from the host country takes the oath on behalf of all athletes.
- Speech of the UIPM President or representative (maximum 3 minutes) and opening of the UIPM event.
- Hoisting of the UIPM flag while music is played
- Certain performance if possible based on the plan of the ceremony and other relevant hospitality events.
**CLOSING CEREMONY PROTOCOL**

The medal ceremony and closing ceremony can be combined, but if the LOC is hosting a closing dinner of farewell party, short speeches may be delivered during the dinner.

The precise arrangements should be agreed by the LOC with UIPM in advance.

Though a less formal occasion than the opening ceremony, the closing ceremony of an event especially for World Championships does have a specific protocol sequence (flags, anthem, speeches etc) that must be observed. (For World Cups and other events, it could be adjusted in a more relaxed and simpler way according to the location and the plan of the ceremony.)

This can be summarised as follows:

- The MC announces that the closing ceremony is about to begin.
- All the athletes assemble at the front of the venue.
- Entrance of the delegations - athletes, team officials - in their approved uniforms.

The MC then invites the following speakers:

- A representative of the LOC/NF to make a short speech (e.g. congratulate athletes, thank volunteers, staff, and sponsors, etc).
- A representative of either a sponsor or the host governing body to make a short speech (e.g. congratulate the LOC; make some relevant local remarks).
- A UIPM representative to close the competition (thank volunteers, athlete assistants and LOC, declare competition closed).
- Lowering of the UIPM flag while music is played.
- Handover of the UIPM flag to the representative of the host town or city of the next edition of the particular event.
- Departure of delegations.

The remainder of the ceremony is a moment of relief and joy for the participants mixed with the emotion of farewell but also looks forward to the next event.

It is also a forum to thank the athletes for their performances, the organisers for their efforts and the spectators for their support.