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VOYAGE TO PARIS 2024: PART VI



Leading off...

With less than a year to go, the focus is already on the impact of Paris and its Games Wide Open concept

The countdown is no longer measured in years but in months and even days. July 26 marked the official One Year To Go mark for the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in Paris and now that the world is counting down in more immediate measurements, the excitement is really rising.

The International Olympic Committee and local organisers in the French capital marked the key anniversary by reiterating just how historic next summer's global gathering will be.

Paris 2024 will represent a new era of the Olympic Games which the IOC believes will serve as a red, white and blue blueprint for the future of the event. Most pertinently, for the first time in history, quota places will be distributed equally: 50% female and 50% male. Of course Modern Pentathlon has been ahead of the curve with complete gender equity since the 2000 Games in Sydney.

One of the key factors in the Paris Games setting the agenda for Los Angeles, Brisbane and all that will follow is the Games Wide Open concept.

With a focus on inclusivity, Games Wide Open represents a push for unprecedented public access and engagement with an Olympics, not just as spectators but taking part on some of the venues too. For instance 20,024 participants will run the exact same marathon route as the Olympic athletes.

Paris will also see many of its most iconic monuments and tourist sites transformed into venues for the Games, the city itself becoming an open-air sports arena.

As the first Games to be planned in line with the Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms Paris is minimising construction, using 95% existing or temporary infrastructure. All energy used will be 100% renewable.

The countdown clock is only going one way now, as those athletes vying for priceless qualification places know all too well.

Either way, Paris will be ready for the world. The world should be ready for a wide open Games.

Paris Pointer

With exams now behind her, Gulyas (HUN) is eyeing a return to the podium after Paris place is secured.



With less than a year to go to the Olympic Games there is a new name atop the UIPM women's world rankings. Italy's Alice Sotero stormed to gold at the European Games in early July, securing

her country's second quota qualification place in Paris and vaulting to No.1 in the leaderboard of female pentathletes.

That was a position that Hungary's prolific Michelle Gulyas had made her own over the past 12 months and while it sounds ridiculous to say that she has had a quieter season so far in 2023, Gulyas herself is adamant she is ready to roar back to her very best.

Gulyas (HUN) also claimed a quota qualification spot for next summer's Olympics at the European Games in Krakow (POL) but did so while finishing 7th. That may represent an impressive position for most competitors but Gulyas (HUN) has made the podium her own for over a year now, finishing among the medals in nine-straight senior events from March 2022 to April 2023.

After taking silver at the UIPM 2022 Pentathlon World Championships in Alexandria (EGY), Gulyas is targeting another impressive showing at this year's event in Bath (GBR) from August 21-28. Another spot among the prizes could see the 22-year-old reclaim her No.1 ranking with trademark rapid speed.

"I'm very relieved about the [Olympic] qualification," Gulyas said. "I was a little bit sad about the full competition and how it turned out but my main goal was the qualification and that I could manage that so I'm happy about that.

"My season was tough because I had to finish university, I had the exams so I had to skip a few competitions before the European Championships. So I think it could be felt during the competition that I was still not mentally there. I'm hoping for something better for the World Championships.

"I will have a high altitude training camp before the World Championships and I hope that will help my physical disciplines so I'm really looking forward to that competition."

Numbers game

7,000,000-: With just under a year now until the spectacular opening ceremony along the Seine, Paris 2024 organisers have confirmed that ticket sales to the general public have already passed the 7 million mark! In total, there will be just over 10 million tickets available for the Games with 1 million of them costing just €24. Almost half of tickets sold to the general public cost €50 or less.

Qualification latest

After the European Games, 18 of the 72 quota places at Paris 2024 have now been claimed.

Women: Italy (2), Spain, Great Britain, Lithuania, France, Hungary, Germany and Czech Republic.
Men: Egypt, Italy, Great Britain, Hungary, France, Germany, Poland, Ukraine and Switzerland.

Now the focus immediately shifts to the remaining 54. Next up for grabs is three more places for both men and women at the UIPM 2023 Pentathlon World Championships in Bath (GBR) in August.

Full details can be found at uipmworld.org/olympic-games