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# ‘WHAT’S COMING WILL BE BEAUTIFUL’ ... PARIS 2024 OLYMPIANS LOOK TOWARDS LA28



- Post-Games interviews find vast majority of elite athletes open to new era
- Veterans such as Asadauskaite (LTU) and Clouvel (FRA) plan to continue
- Yasser Hefny OLY thanks athletes for “immensely heartening” interviews

The immense success of Modern Pentathlon at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and the sport’s exciting future were reflected in the views of dozens of elite athletes expressed immediately after their Olympic quests ended.

More than 63,000 spectators were drawn to the Olympic Modern Pentathlon from August 8-11 as **Elodie Clouvel** of **France** poignantly signalled the end of an era with the last-ever horse ride. Crowds were thrilled by the drama of the 90-minute showcase of five disciplines as **Michelle Gulyas** of **Hungary** and **Ahmed Elgendy** of **Egypt** became the new Olympic champions.

For some of the 72 competing Olympians, the switch from Riding to Obstacle that must now be negotiated may have felt like a challenge too far, leading to the conclusion that it would be fitting to

bow out on a high in the grounds of the Palace of Versailles.

However, the consensus of athlete views in the immediate aftermath of the epic competition told a very different story.

UIPM's media team interviewed more than half of the participating athletes at some point during the competition in Paris (FRA), and 28 of them spoke about their future plans.

Only two of the 28 – **Annika Zillekens** of **Germany** and **Jessica Savner** of **United States** – indicated that they had competed for the last time. For Zillekens (GER), to finish with a smooth ride in the Women's Final was a cathartic finale, three years after her painful ordeal at Tokyo 2020.

All the other 26 – including Tokyo 2020 Olympic champion **Joseph Choong** of **Great Britain** and double Olympic medallists Clouvel (FRA) and 40-year-old **Laura Asadauskaite** of **Lithuania** – stated that they planned to continue their Modern Pentathlon careers, at least for part of the LA28 cycle.

This apparent retention of talent comes as another welcome boost to the sport, which is already cultivating a new generation of heroes who have been competing in the new format with Obstacle at world level for the past two years.



### Paris 2024 Olympians' reaction

Below are a few samples of athlete comments about the future given in the immediate aftermath of their Semi-final and Final appearances in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The full list can be found [here](#).

"I want to try the new Obstacle discipline, it is important to me. I will probably take a pause right now. I would like to build a family, have a baby. But yes, I didn't say stop. I feel good in my body

and in my mind. As I said, the old Elodie is back, and I still want more. So what's coming will be beautiful." – **Elodie Clouvel (FRA), silver medal in Women's Final**

"Obviously I am the bronze medallist and first medallist for Korea for women. But I am looking to the future to get the gold medal. That's my plan!" – **Seungmin Seong (KOR) , bronze medal in Women's Final**

"Of course I will continue with Pentathlon. It's not a question. Because I would like to get a medal at the next Olympics. I have never tried Obstacle before. It's a really new thing for me and I haven't planned the future until this day so I don't know how it will go but I will continue." – **Blanka Guzi (HUN), 4th in Women's Final**

"I will definitely try for the next cycle for LA 2028." – **Elena Micheli (ITA), 5th in Women's Final**

"I feel really well. It's all I dreamed about to be in my fifth Olympic Games. I think after these Olympic Games I will continue. These could be my last Games, but I will continue." – **Laura Asadauskaite (LTU), 16th in Women's Final**

"Let me say that I am planning to be at Los Angeles 2028, maybe it will be the last try for me. As you know I have a shoulder injury after Tokyo so it will be a little risky with Obstacle but I am looking forward to Los Angeles 2028." – **Ahmed Elgendy (EGY), gold medal in Men's Final**

"I think now a nice couple of months' holiday to work out what I want head-wise. I think I will carry on for another year at least and then it's very likely I'll call it a day after that. I'd like to end on a more positive note than that." – **Joseph Choong (GBR), 9th in Men's Final**

"Now, I will have two months' rest and then I will continue." – **Balazs Szep (HUN), 10th in Men's Final**

"I have tasted what it is like to be in an Olympic competition. So I am definitely going to continue and try to win a medal next time." – **Jean-Baptiste Mourcia (FRA), 11th place in Men's Final**

"I just finished junior years last year and already have competed with Obstacle race back to the Junior World Championships. I'm a guy who was OK and maybe even good with changing the horse to the obstacle because of the horse draw. Obstacle in this moment is much better because it's all in your hands." – **Vladyslav Chekan (UKR), 11th in Men's Semi-final B**



#### Athletes Committee reaction

**Yasser Hefny OLY, UIPM Athletes Committee Chair**, said: “Athletes in Modern Pentathlon have been through a very difficult process of adjustment, with the ongoing transformation of the sport causing a mass re-evaluation of personal motivation.

“While the change was undoubtedly needed in order to preserve our Olympic status, it hasn’t been easy for anyone, and the physical process of transition is only beginning now for many senior athletes who focused on training for Riding to fulfil their dreams of competing in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

“For that reason, it was immensely heartening to read in the athlete interviews from Paris that so many of our Olympians are ready to undertake a new challenge and join us on the journey into a bold new era.

“Paris 2024 was an incredible moment for our sport, and without seeking to compare the two, LA28 has the potential to also be incredible. Obstacle offers an exciting and accessible dimension, not only for new audiences and new athletes from every country in the world, but also for the community of elite athletes who made our sport shine so brightly in Paris. I can’t wait to see them on the obstacle course when the 2028 Olympic cycle begins.”

#### President’s reaction

**UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann** said: “I spoke to many coaches in Paris and learned that the athletes were really concentrating on this Olympic Games and had enormous motivation to fulfil this challenge and ride together with horses one more time.

“From what I have seen so far and learned from younger athletes, they are excited in the coming seasons to compete in Obstacle; they want to learn what it means to have the recognition of being involved in the Olympic Games. And now that the senior athletes have realised the dream of competing in Paris, it is clear that many will move to the next challenge. Our pentathletes are the most versatile in the world and we have an exciting future to offer them.

“Modern Pentathlon is a great multisport that will have a new format with five compact disciplines in LA28, which will also be a great challenge in World Cups and all World Championships including youth competitions. Meanwhile others are coming from outside the sport, they are very interested in the future with more athletes from Africa and Asia competing, and we learned during receptions in Paris that interest in our sport has never been greater.

“From speaking to IOC Members from African nations, I know they are very interested to see more African athletes competing in our competitions. It is the same for Asian and Pan American nations. We will have a more inclusive movement now, with a truly global community and a wonderful global community that is attractive and accessible to all.”