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UIPM SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE: A GOLD MEDAL FOR SPORT ... AND SPORTING GESTURES



Photo: Hungarian NOC

The Paris 2024 Olympic Games created many unforgettable moments, across all sports, for thousands of athletes and officials as well as spectators and audiences.

I'm not talking here about the incredible moments of *athletic endeavour*, which were well documented by all media. I'm talking about the magical *sporting gestures* that reminded us all about the values that make the Olympic movement special.

In the Modern Pentathlon competitions, there were touching and encouraging moments right from the start of preparations and throughout the events, even extending to the first and last-placed athletes crossing the finishing line.

We saw one athlete pausing to allow her French rival and one other athlete to cross the finish line first in their Semi-final, sharing the moment of acclaim from a crowd of 15,000. Anyone lucky

enough to be part of this crowd would have appreciated the way they waited for the last finisher in each Laser Run and gave them a special round of applause.

I was impressed by one social media post that our communication team shared afterwards, which tells everything...



The success of the Modern Pentathlon competition in Paris with its excitement and continuous drama didn't come by accident. It was a result of years of innovation and implementation, and years of hard training by the athletes, especially in their willingness to adapt to the new 90-minute format in the past three seasons.

The competition was extremely tough and fierce, and there could only be one champion, as in all other Olympic events. But this never came at a cost of sportsmanship. Instead, sending compliments and congratulations was something pentathletes demonstrated to both competitors and spectators, typified by the memory of two French athletes encouraging fans to cheer for the Egyptian gold medallist after the Men's Final on August 10.

The Olympic spirit was visible outside of the field of play, too. We were all touched by the story of the shooting gold medallist from Guatemala, Adriana Ruano, who chose to work at the Modern Pentathlon as one of Paris 2024's 45,000 volunteers.

Our sport was created by the modern Olympics' founder, who wanted to identify the complete athlete. He achieved that, not only in those old times but also into the current century, but it's important to reflect that the term 'complete' applies to much more than physical or athletic aspects.

In 2014, we created one UIPM slogan, "More than A Sport", with the exact intention to express pentathlon's all-round skills and spirit as well as its inclusiveness. Ten years later, with the inclusion of Obstacle disciplines and sports, the message is further enhanced for all our existing participants and audiences.

Moreover, we embrace more and more youths from all corners of the world, regardless of their culture, religion and economic conditions. This is all a result of increased sports accessibility and attractiveness based on non-stop improvements and innovations that have been adopted by the whole pentathlon community!

So after unforgettable moments and respectful acts on and off the field of play in Paris, can we retain this inclusiveness and generosity in future editions of the Games, as well as UIPM competitions, events and the forthcoming election Congress? I certainly hope and believe so...

Photo: Hungarian NOC