

01 APR 2026

OBITUARY: DONGKOOK CHUNG (1961-2025)



There was a time when Modern Pentathlon in Korea was rather obscure, undeveloped and not particularly popular. Today the picture is very different.

For four decades, a man named Dongkook Chung devoted himself to the development of the sport. It is no coincidence that in 2021, the final year of his presence at the helm of the National Federation, Korea savoured its first taste of Olympic medal glory. Team Korea did it again in 2024.

The passing of “Mr Chung” on 22 March 2026, aged 64, has led to widespread mourning across the global Pentathlon family. His absence is already being felt particularly acutely in Korea.

Korean Pentathlon coach Youngchan Lee wrote on Instagram: “I am truly devastated by the loss of someone who was not only my teacher, but like family to me. It is hard to accept that I will no longer be able to see you, learn from you, or hear your voice again.

“You were such an important part of my life, and your guidance, kindness, and presence meant more to me than words can express. I will miss you deeply, and I will carry your teachings and love with me for the rest of my life. Rest in peace.”

Dongkook Chung, already a national-team fencer, began his Pentathlon career in 1982, after graduating with a Bachelor in Physical Education from Daegu University. Only six years later, the Seoul Olympics gave him a chance to demonstrate service off the field of play, fulfilling the role of Modern Pentathlon Fencing Competition Manager during his home Olympics.

In 1999, Chung became Secretary General of the Korean Modern Pentathlon Federation, a role he would hold for 22 years. In the last two years of that period, he doubled as a Director of the Korean Olympic Committee – a stint that culminated in Woongtae Jun winning men’s bronze at the rescheduled Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. Four years later, Seungmin Seong added a women’s bronze at Paris 2024.

In international Pentathlon circles, Chung was known universally as a Technical Official and Member of the UIPM Technical Committee – someone whose calm, positive, quiet authority led to him accumulating so much respect that he was elected as a UIPM Vice President at the 73rd UIPM Congress in November 2024.



Jorge Salas, President of the Pan American Modern Pentathlon Confederation, wrote: “Rest in peace, dear friend. We will always remember your kindness and your valuable service during your time as technical delegate and later as vice president of the UIPM.”

Klaus Schormann, who served as UIPM President throughout most of Chung’s time in the sport, added some moving personal memories: “I knew Dongkook for 41 years. I first time met him as a young man in Seoul during the Olympic Games. Many times after that, he came to Darmstadt with different athletes for training, and he would visit us for dinner. I knew him his whole career, and his first son was born when we were together in our house. He gave his son the nickname ‘Darmstadt’. Our families were very close.

“He was a great coach and a great organiser. In competitions across Asia he was a very effective Technical Delegate and later in the Olympic Games and he had so many roles and was giving so

many good seminars. He was a man of harmony who enjoyed nice atmosphere and good food.

“Together with Kuisung Choi, they were like a tandem going around developing the sport across Asia. He was a very special person who never put himself in the centre. He was polite and respectful. I have great memories with Dongkook. He would call me “father” and my wife, Karin, “mother”. We will miss him very much.”

The final word of this obituary goes to Sangkeong Yeo, Chung’s successor as KMPF Secretary General who now serves as Acting President of the Asian Modern Pentathlon Confederation. He said: “Vice President Chung was a person of warmth and openness, who, with his extensive knowledge and sincere attitude, offered great support and inspiration to many. He was not only a pillar of Korean modern pentathlon, but also a source of inspiration across Asia and the global community.

“As a member of the Korean modern pentathlon family, as Acting President of the Asian Confederation, and as a member of the UIPM Executive Board, I say with a heavy heart that we have lost not only a remarkable leader who shaped the course of our sport, but also a cherished friend.

“Although he has left us, the generosity and thoughtfulness he shared with the global modern pentathlon family will remain with us in countless ways.

“While it is said that life ultimately returns to nature, the suddenness of this loss brings a sorrow too deep for words. I will always carry the memory of someone who was like family, and at times like a dear friend, in a special place in my heart.

“May he now lay down all burdens and find eternal peace. He will be remembered – always.”