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UIPM WORLD CUP #1: UIPM SEASON STARTS IN CAIRO



CAIRO - The 2016 Olympic Games are less than six months away and the world's leading Modern Pentathletes have gathered in Cairo, Egypt, for the first leg of the 2016 UIPM World Cup.

The five-day competition (February 24-28) will offer most of the athletes the first chance in 2016 to assess their form and fitness and - in many cases - to boost their prospects of qualifying for Rio 2016.

A total of 201 athletes have arrived in the ancient capital of Egypt ahead of the qualifying rounds, which take place on Feb 24/25, before the Women's Final (Feb 26), Men's Final (Feb 27) and the Mixed Relay (Feb 28).

Egypt has become one of Modern Pentathlon's global strongholds and the UIPM Family will be back in Cairo later this year for the 2016 UIPM Junior World Championships.

This week, all eyes will be focused on the sport's leading lights as the elite men and women compete for points to earn the right to be crowned UIPM World Cup champions at the Final in Sarasota (USA) in May.

Last year's overall winners, Riccardo De Luca (Italy) and Laura Asadauskaite (Lithuania) will have this season to defend their World Cup Series titles. Belarus are the reigning Mixed Relay champions.

In the clamour for the podium places in Cairo, there is the prospect of local success for spectators to cheer with four top-100-ranked Egyptian athletes taking part: Amro El Geziry (5), Omar El Geziry (36), Haydy Morsy (42) and Eslam Hamad (74).

Shiny Fang, Secretary General of UIPM, said at the opening press conference today: "It is an honour to be here in Cairo once again for the beginning of the 2016 UIPM World Cup. On behalf of our President, Dr Klaus Schormann, and the UIPM Executive Board, we would like to thank the Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Federation (EFMP) for all of its organizational efforts.

"Egypt has become an important place for UIPM with a lot of competitions in the pipeline including the 2016 Junior World Championships and the 2017 Senior World Championships - and at least one major competition per year until 2020.

"The Egyptian Federation is not only an important pillar on the competition side but also in terms of the development of our sport. And we expect to maintain this partnership for many years."

Sherif El-Erian - president of the EFMP, said: "This competition is extremely important for us and for the UIPM as this is one of the competitions that count for the qualification for Rio de Janeiro 2016, and we welcome all participants."

Eng. Khaled Abdel Aziz, Egyptian Minister of Youth and Sports, said: "We welcome all countries and participants, and I would like to special welcome Dr Schormann as a good friend of Egypt.

"This sport is the sport that finds the most complete athlete and we would like to praise the efforts of the Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Federation and UIPM in making Egypt one of the key venues for this Olympic sport.

"This event will provide 2000 touristic nights for Egyptian tourism. These kind of events are what we need in our country and offer proof that Egypt can organise world-class events."

Mamdouh El-Shehstawy, Executive Director of the Egyptian Olympic Committee, said: "We welcome all of our guests and especially Dr Schormann and UIPM who always support Egypt by entrusting us with their most important events.

"We would like to thank all the 201 athletes that will compete here, which is further proof that Egypt can host high-level international events."

Sameh Guemieh, President of the African MP Confederation, said: "I would like to warmly welcome all participating athletes and countries and give thanks to UIPM for supporting Egypt and Africa with the awarding of this event."