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OLYMPIC DREAMS IN FOCUS AS BIG NAMES GATHER AT FRENCH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP IN PARIS (FRA)



Some of the biggest names in Modern Pentathlon brought the curtain down on 2023 in the city that will be the epicentre of their 2024 season: Paris (FRA).

The 2023 French Seniors Open Championships took place in France's National Institute of Sport, Expertise and Performance (INSEP) on the eastern outskirts of the French capital from December 16-18 with a star-studded field.

With the 2024 Olympic Games rapidly approaching, many of those taking part used the competition as a chance to acclimatise to the host city with many nations represented also holding training camps in Paris in the build-up with pre-season preparations ramping up worldwide.

In total, 16 nations from three continents took part with three of the current top six women in the world rankings — Kerenza Bryson (GBR), Rebecca Langrehr (GER) and Ilke Ozyuksel (TUR) competing. On the men's side it was no less competitive with reigning Olympic champion Joseph Choong (GB), world No.1 Mohanad Shaban (EGY) and No.3 Emiliano Hernandez (MEX) all taking

part.

As host nation of an Olympic Games for the first time in a century, French focus is very much on the summer too and all of the top senior French men and women were also in the field with the exception of the injured Marie Oteiza.



With a total of 46 women and 49 men taking part, the field was whittled down to 18 for both of Sunday's finals. Emma Whitaker (GBR) and Shaban (EGY) claimed gold in the Open competition while Jean-Baptiste Mourcia and Jessye Gomesse took the French Championship gold.

French women's champion Gomesse said: "The fact that this year there was such a big international field made it all the more satisfying. Many world-class athletes were present, which proves that my level has evolved with this result."

The event was attended by a number of dignitaries with H.E. Mr. Alaaeldin Zakaria Youssef Ibrahim, Egyptian Ambassador to France, an interested observer. Joel Bouzou OLY, President of the French Modern Pentathlon Federation and UIPM Vice-President, was also in attendance.

President Bouzou said: "It was a great pleasure and honour to welcome pentathletes and representatives of 16 nations in our open national championships both for women and men. It gave us the opportunity to offer to our foreign friends a special taste of what the Olympics in Paris 2024 will be."