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Taormina, Isaksen, Bremer expected to receive Olympic bids

By Noah Trister, AP Sports Writer

Sheila Taormina received more good news Sunday when USA Pentathlon confirmed she is expected to receive a bid to Beijing Games in modern pentathlon - which would be make her the first woman to qualify in three Olympic sports.

Taormina's spot appeared safe after the conclusion of the world championship Saturday because of her position in various world rankings. On Sunday, she was one of three American women on a list of Olympic qualifiers released by the UIPM, the sport's world governing body.

Taormina won gold in 1996 as part of a swim relay and competed in the triathlon in 2000 and 2004.

Margaux Isaksen and Mickey Kelly were also on the list of female qualifiers released by the UIPM. Taormina and Isaksen are expected to receive the bids based on a tiebreaker. Eli Bremer was the only American man on the UIPM's list.

Taormina recently became incensed with U.S. modern pentathlon officials over their interpretation of the Olympic selection process, saying an April clarification was at odds with the way the process was initially understood.

"A preliminary look at those likely to receive nomination to the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team would be Bremer, Taormina and Isaksen," USA Pentathlon said in a release. "Taormina and Isaksen would receive the nomination over Kelly based on the fact that they are the two highest-ranked athletes in the tiebreaker system of the UIPM World Cup standing."

USA Pentathlon stopped short of officially nominating the athletes.

"The UIPM announcement today was in the form of a press release only," USA Pentathlon said. "USA Pentathlon is still awaiting the physical invitations."

The UIPM is expected to allocate additional Olympic invitations in two weeks. If Isaksen had been on the second list instead of Sunday's, Kelly would have been in line to join Taormina in Beijing instead of Isaksen.

But the UIPM released the names of 40 women and 38 men Sunday - more qualifiers than expected for the first group.

The Associated Press

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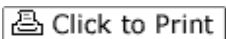
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