

28 JUN 2022

NEW PENTATHLON DISCIPLINE TEST EVENT I: HISTORIC DAY OF DISCOVERY IN ANKARA (TUR)

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- Obstacle Discipline tested successfully and safely by athletes from five continents
- Joy of sport and exploration brings two sporting communities together
- 'It's a discipline that anyone can try and it's a lot of fun' – *Ninja Warrior* champion
- 'I really thought it was cool with a lot of diverse obstacles' – Chatellier (FRA)

Obstacle has arrived – and already some of the barriers in Modern Pentathlon have been removed.

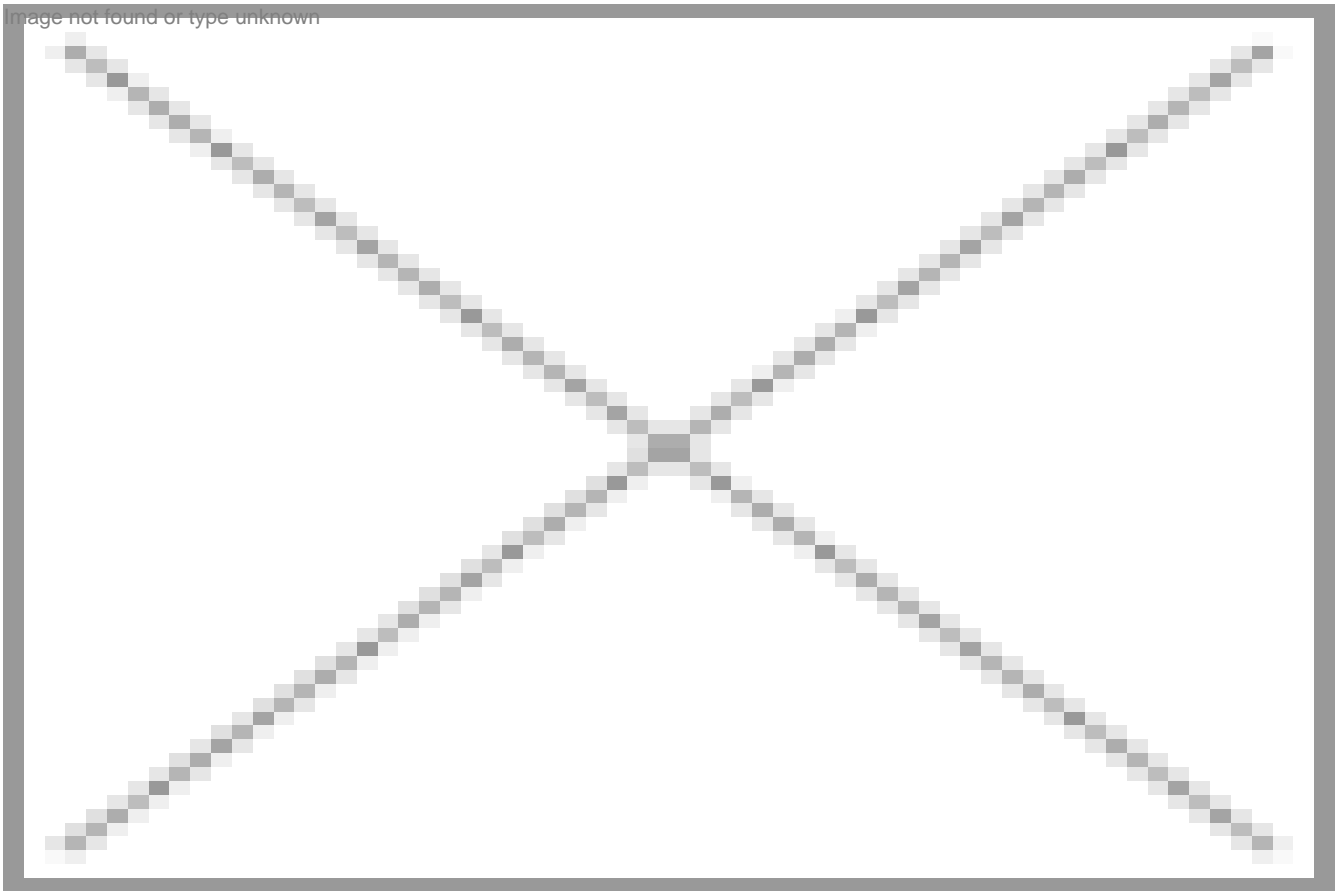
The 1st New Pentathlon Discipline Test Event was hailed as a success by a global group of senior and junior pentathletes and Obstacle specialists who had gathered in Ankara (TUR) to make history. The two athlete communities – representing five continents – mingled naturally on a day of smooth competition, discovery and mutual learning.

Almost 100 athletes from 19 countries registered to race, across six categories – four for pentathletes and two for Obstacle athletes. No injuries were reported except blistered hands for pentathletes unfamiliar with the demands of Obstacle racing.

- Download a video news release and photography from Test Event I

Apart from learning more about the physical demands of Obstacle Discipline and sharing in the joy of exploration, the participating pentathletes performed with competitive fire and amazing adaptability.

One pentathlete, **Tobias Hierl** of **Germany**, achieved a best time of 34sec that was faster than many of his Obstacle counterparts and less than 7sec slower than the day's best time of 27.42sec set by 2019 world champion **Dimitri Houles** of **France**.



Pentathlete reaction

Selen Gulel (TUR), women's junior champion

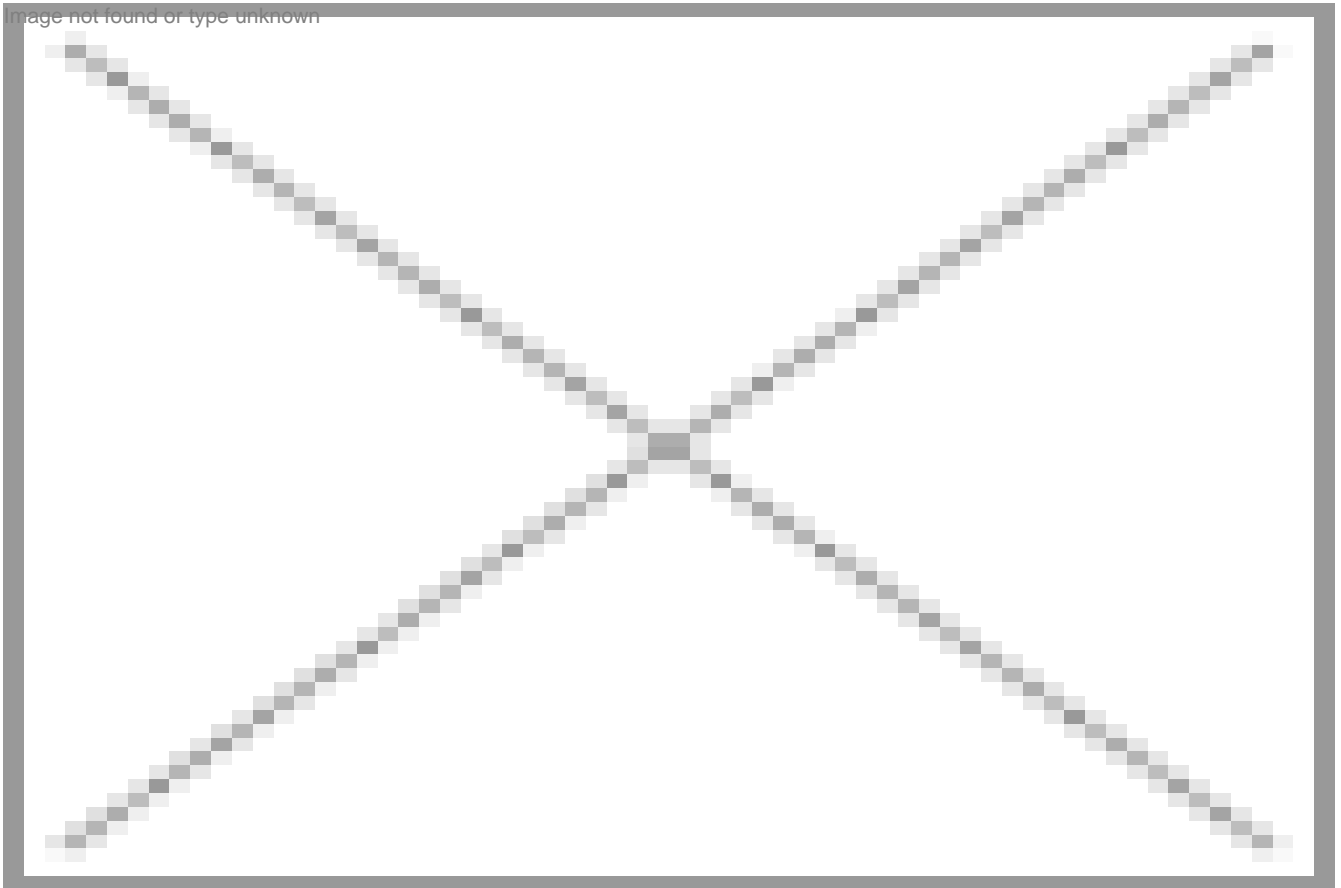
"I'm so happy to win a medal for my country in the first New 5th Discipline Test Event – especially the gold medal. It was hard and harsh and we tried our best.

"It was good competing alongside my friends, and it was so much fun for me and so exciting. I was a little anxious at first but it was great, and I'm so happy and so grateful to UIPM for the opportunity."

Cedric Chatellier (FRA), men's junior champion

“I really thought the Obstacle Discipline was cool with a lot of diverse obstacles – it was very interesting. I liked it and I was quite successful. Sure, it’s quite tough on the hands and arms but with a little adaptation time, it will be fine.

“I think it’s a good move to have the Obstacle Discipline as the New 5th Discipline. I hope the IOC will see it’s a good initiative.”



Obstacle athlete reaction

Olivia Vivian (AUS), women’s champion

“The pentathletes I saw on the obstacle course today were incredible. To see the joy on their face, there is nothing like conquering an obstacle for the first time. And the improvement from the training session to the competition was already huge.

“What I see for the future with the Obstacle Discipline added is a lot more interest. Not just from the viewership, because it’s so exciting to watch side-by-side racing, but also a lot more interest from obstacle athletes.

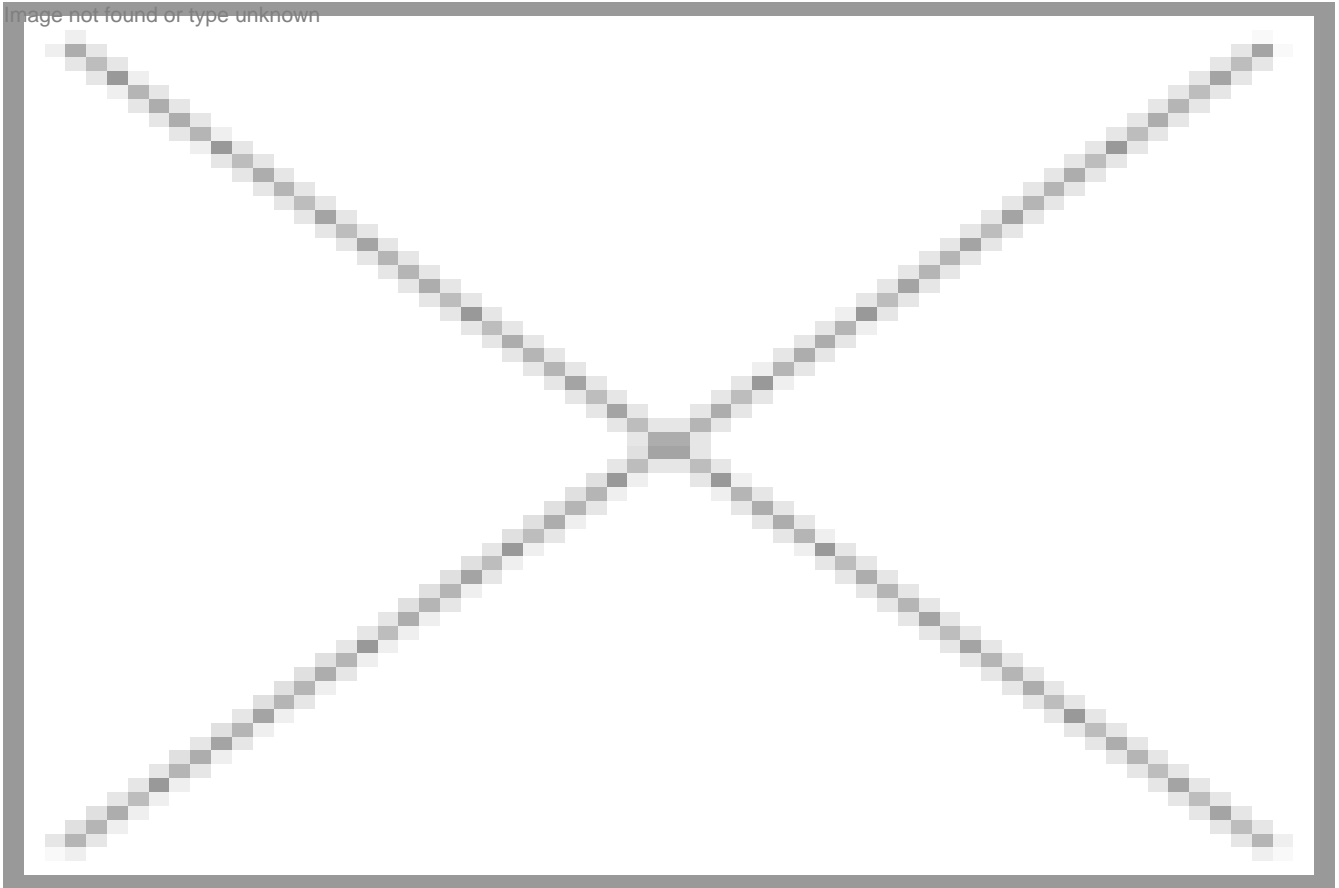
“It’s a discipline that anyone can try. It’s a lot cheaper than equestrian to try and to train, and it’s also a lot of fun. I think we’re going to get a lot of obstacle athletes wanting to try Modern Pentathlon as well.”

Dimitri Houles (FRA), men’s champion

"I'm very happy to be here and that our fellow pentathletes can try out the Obstacle Discipline and I'm very impressed by them taking on the obstacles.

"I think the Obstacle Discipline is a very good fit for the New 5th Discipline because it is dynamic, fast-paced and can increase the media interest. It is to be enjoyed by spectators and athletes alike.

"The Obstacle Discipline is going to create new skills for the pentathletes, especially to develop upper body strength."



How it worked

After a practice day (June 27) that gave many other athletes the chance to try the course, including Pan American champion **Mariana Arceo** of **Mexico**, all returning athletes were given at least two chances to race the bespoke course, built on site in collaboration with World Obstacle (FISO), Tokyo Broadcasting System Television (TBS) and Spartan Race.

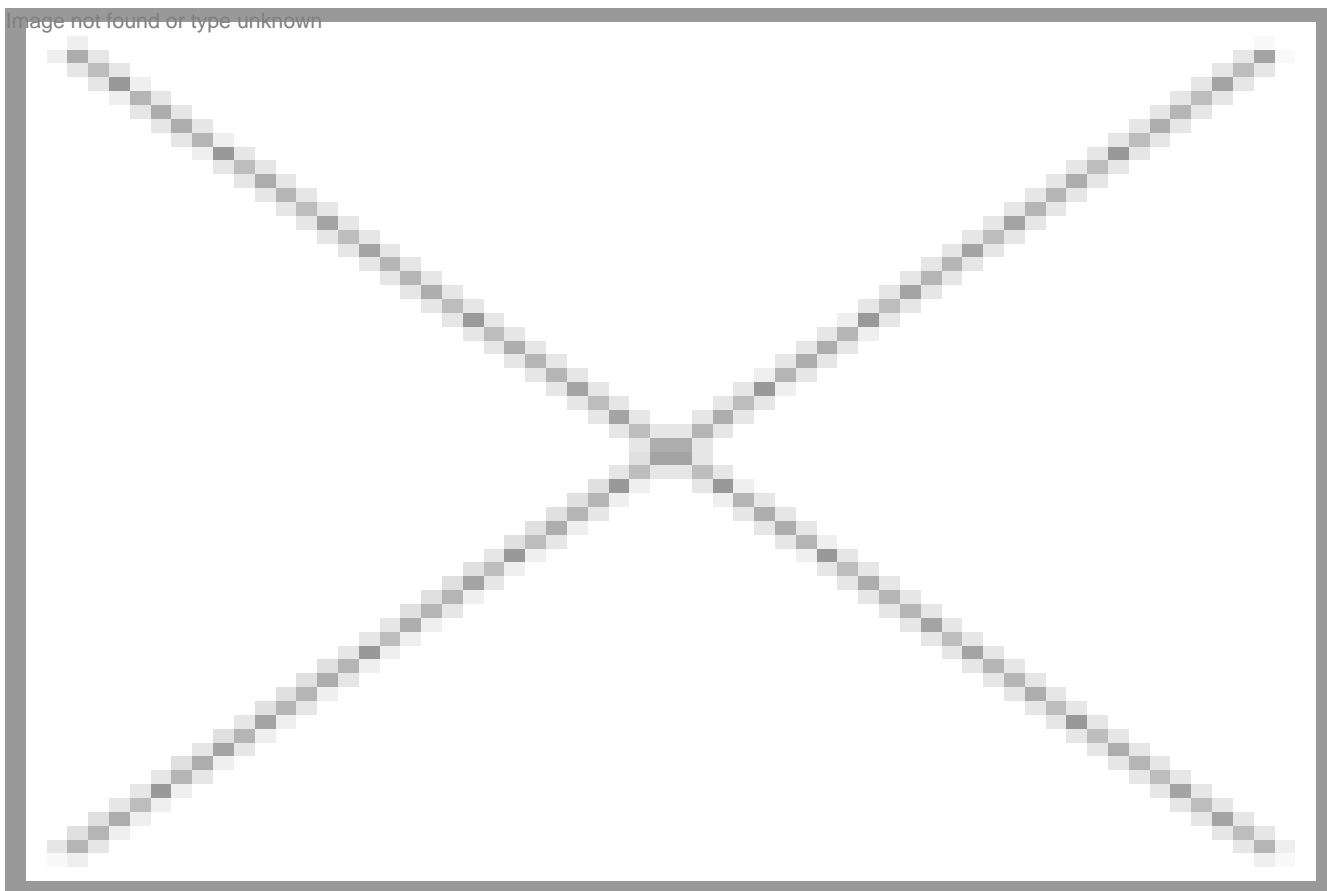
Some elite pentathletes such as the **Egypt** and **Korea** teams – including Tokyo 2020 Olympic bronze medallist **Woongtae Jun** and 4th-placed **Jinhwa Jung** – took part in the qualification round but didn't manage to reach the medal races.

The course was comprised of the following nine obstacles:

1. Rope Swing
2. A-Frame
3. Beater
4. Over-Under-Through
5. Wheels
6. Hurdle

7. Rings
8. Balance Beams
9. Tsunami Wall

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Podium summary

The senior women's title was won by top-50-ranked pentathlete **Sophia Hernandez** of **Guatemala**, who prevailed in a gold-medal race against **Jessica Sutton** of **Great Britain**. The bronze medal went to **Ludovica Montecchia** of **Italy**.

The hugely impressive Hierl (GER) won the senior men's category after defeating **Andres Torres** of **Ecuador** in the gold-medal race, with **Robin Schmidt** (GER) picking up bronze.

The junior champions were Gulel (TUR) and Chatellier (FRA), with the other medals won by athletes from Guatemala, Germany, Turkey and **South Africa**.

There were separate categories for Obstacle athletes, and it was no surprise to see *Ninja Warrior* grand finalist **Olivia Vivian** of **Australia** – a former Olympic gymnast – win the women's final against **Katarzyna Jonaczyk** of **Poland**, with bronze going to **Ibtisam Gardabou** of **Belgium**.

The men's final was won by the unstoppable Houles (FRA) and he was joined on the podium by silver medallist **Steve Trachsel** of **Switzerland** and **James Burton** (GBR), who claimed bronze.

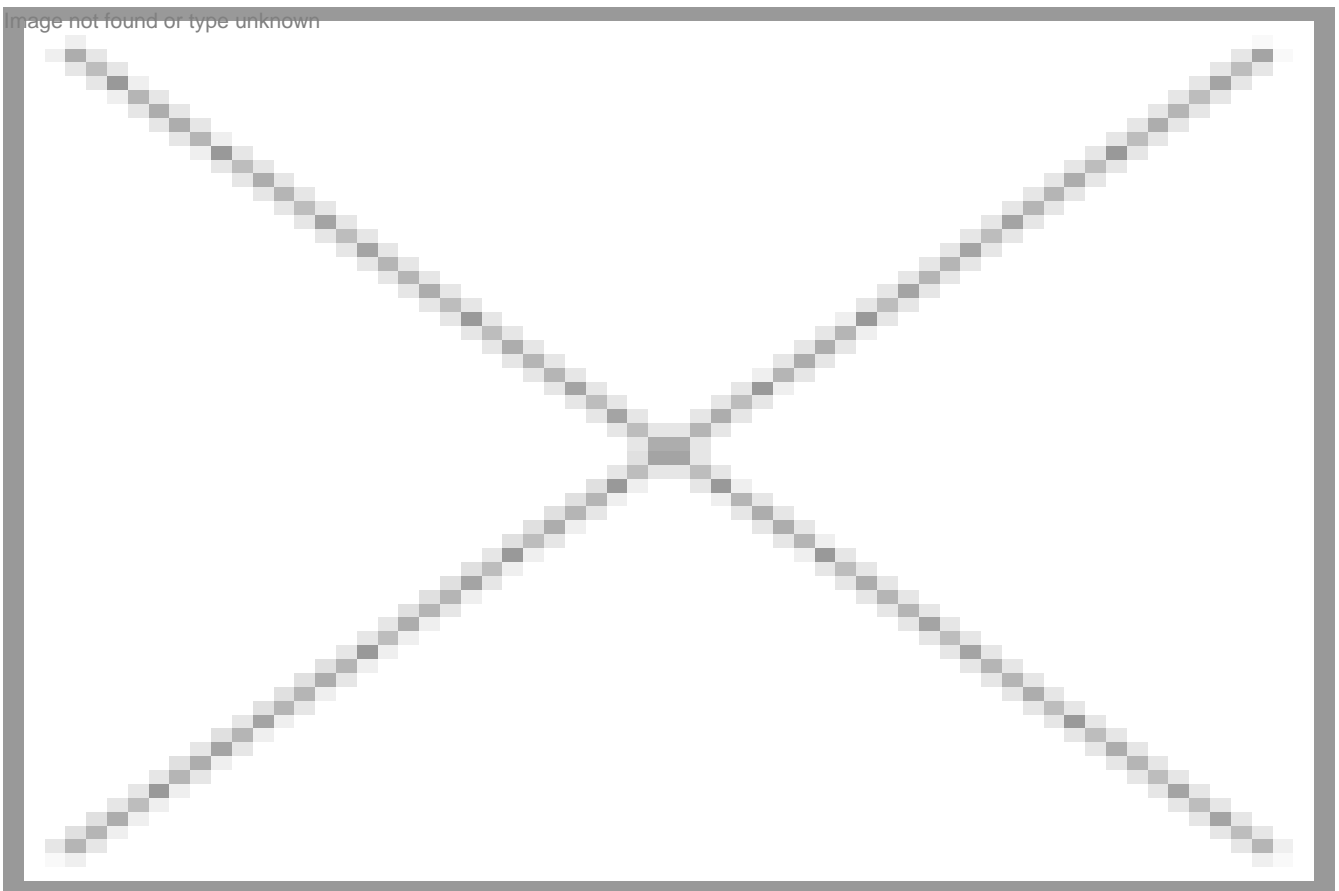
UIPM President's reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "Today we had the historic first Test Event for the integration of a New 5th Discipline in Modern Pentathlon – a new dawn for our sport."

“The course set-up was dynamic and challenging, and it tested the unique versatility and skills of pentathletes. The athletes really enjoyed the competition – you could see and feel the excitement in their faces and in their interviews afterwards. It was a great first step towards a youthful, urban and highly accessible future for our sport.

“It’s not just a simple replacement of one discipline for another. Obstacle Discipline will transform Modern Pentathlon into a TV-friendly multi-sport with proven appeal to younger fans and commercial partners around the world. The UIPM Athletes Committee have been central to the process and several members led by example on the Obstacle course over the past two days.

“We are grateful to everyone involved – the judges, the observers, the members of the New 5th Discipline Working Group and the Turkish Modern Pentathlon Federation for all their assistance – not only this week but during the UIPM 2022 Pentathlon World Cup and World Cup Final.”



The background

Obstacle Discipline was selected in May 2022 for testing as UIPM explores the possibility of integrating the globally popular racing concept into Modern Pentathlon after the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. At the end of the testing and evaluation phase, UIPM 2022 Congress will vote on proposals for the Los Angeles 2028 Modern Pentathlon format to be submitted to the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

A survey of all participating athletes, coaches and observers in Test Event I will now be evaluated and the results will be announced soon along with details of Test Event II.

Follow World Pentathlon on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram throughout the year for additional content, and visit the UIPM website for the latest news.

