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UIPM 2025 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP CAIRO: TAKE FIVE

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If it feels a long time coming, that's because it is. But the first instalment of this year's UIPM Pentathlon World Cup is now upon us. History will be made in Cairo and the first staging post on a brand new Olympic journey will be planted.

By the time competition kicks off on Tuesday in the Egyptian capital it will have been 198 days since we last saw Modern Pentathlon's elite heroes locked in competition, stretching right back to the Women's Olympic Final which brought the curtain down on an unforgettable Games in Paris last August.

It's not just the athletes who will be limbering up all over again. For viewers and fans around the world it's time to shake off the cobwebs and log back in. Here are five great reasons to tune in and watch the action ...

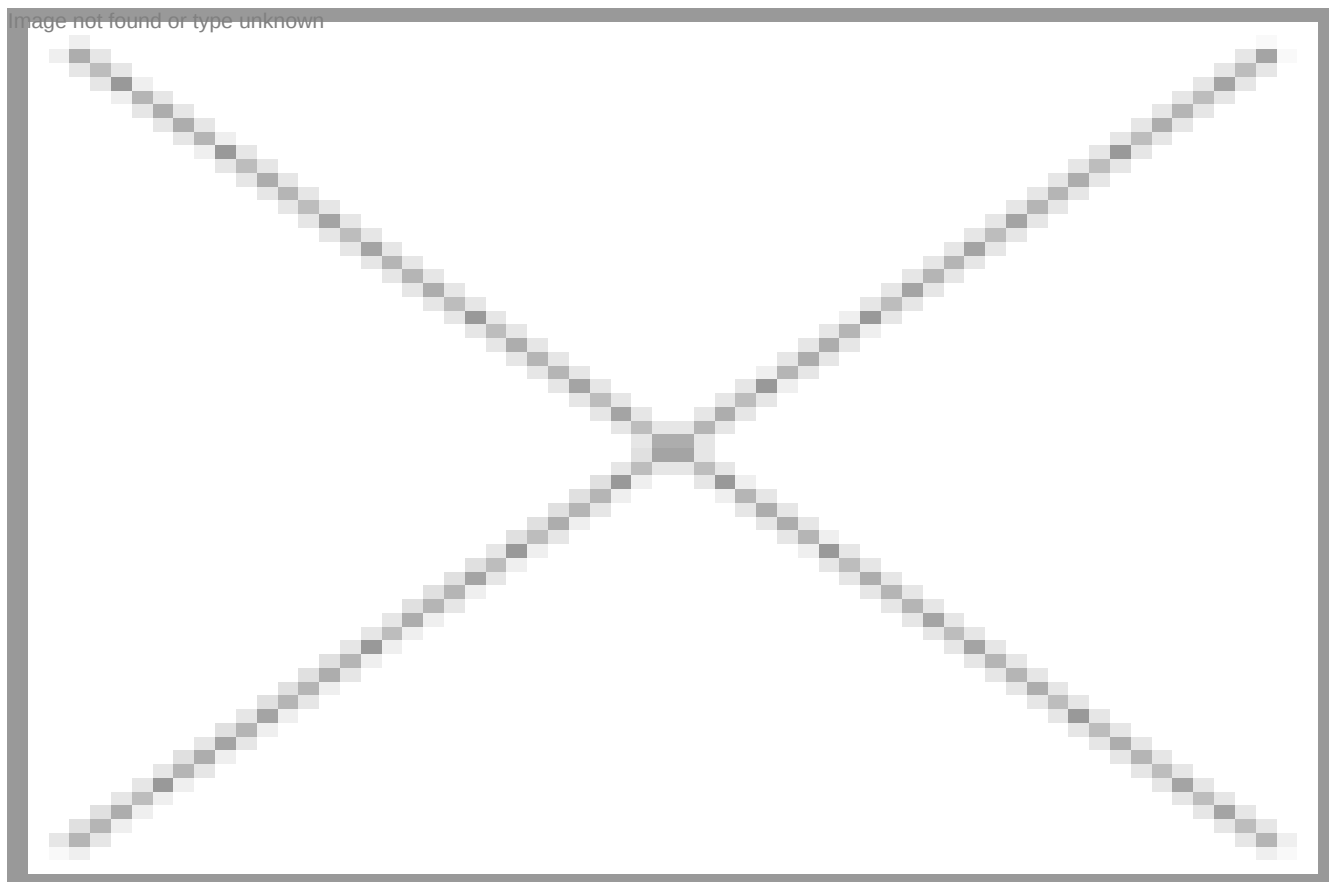
1. Finding balance in a brand new Obstacle era

In the shadow of the ancient pyramids, a new Pentathlon age finally dawns in Cairo where, for the first time, a senior-level UIPM competition adopts the Obstacle discipline. We have already seen

how dynamic and dramatic the new discipline, which replaces Riding, has been at youth and junior levels over the past 18 months. And now the big guns get in on the act.

Testing the most versatile athletes on the planet in myriad new ways, the World Cup Obstacle course is sure to see its fair share of drama as senior stars get to grips with the ropes, swings and bars. According to a recently-retired icon, the new generation will have an advantage over more vaunted names, because they have been limbering up for longer.

“I believe this discipline will suit young athletes the most because I’ve seen how quickly they grasp its fundamental elements,” two-time Olympic medallist Laura Asadauskaite (Lithuania) told UIPM News last week. “It will be engaging for spectators and will contribute to the overall popularity of our sport.”



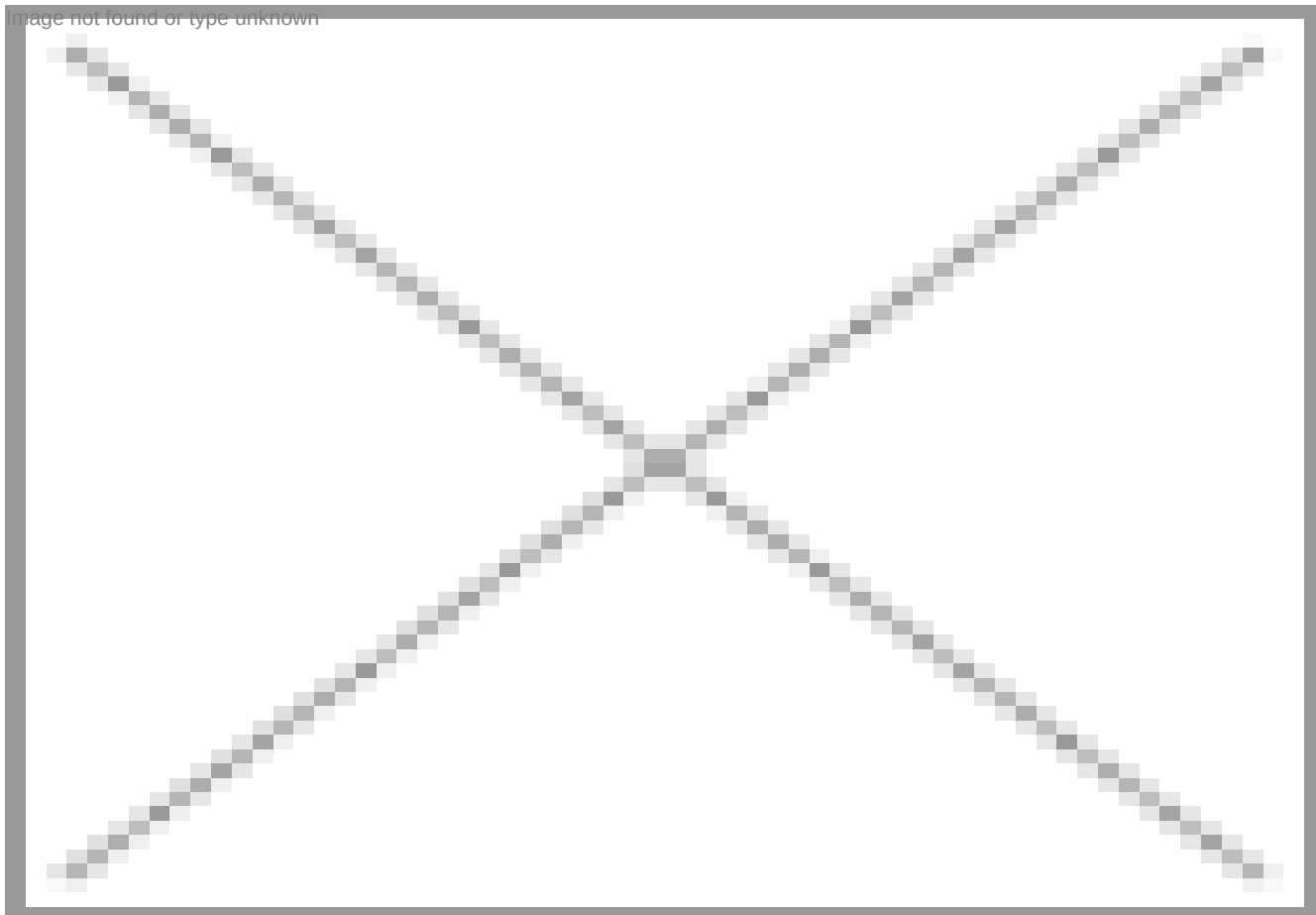
2. The City of Angels hovers into view

Amid the splendour of the Palace of Versailles in Paris last summer, Asadauskaite (LTU) equalled a remarkable Pentathlon record by competing at her fifth Olympic Games. Just six months later the page has turned and now Los Angeles is the destination which appears on the horizon for the first time.

Yes, it's still a long way off in the distance but UIPM 2025 Pentathlon World Cup Cairo is a launchpad to the summer of 2028 and the Los Angeles Olympic Games.

It's not just the Obstacle course which has altered in the Pentathlon landscape. The new sequence of Fencing / Obstacle / Swimming / Laser Run features a new elimination format in Fencing, presenting greater reward and greater risk. From organisers to judges, coaches and the athletes themselves, Cairo is indeed a fascinating first step on a great journey to the City of Angels.

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3. Olympic royalty in the land of the Pharaohs

They know what it's like to have a Paris 2024 Olympic gold medallist in their midst but the people of Cairo will now welcome another, as Michelle Gulyas (Hungary) headlines the field of entrants.

Ahmed Elgendy, men's Olympic champion and prodigal son of Egyptian pentathlon, will unfortunately not be on the field of play as he continues a staggered return to the sport, but his female counterpart (born in the same year, 2000) is straight back into the thick of it.

Gulyas (HUN) was imperious in Paris and at 24 has her eyes firmly set on defending her Olympic title Stateside in 2028. While she brings a huge chunk of the star power, her compatriot Blanka Guzi (HUN) sits three places higher in the Pentathlon World Rankings at No.2.

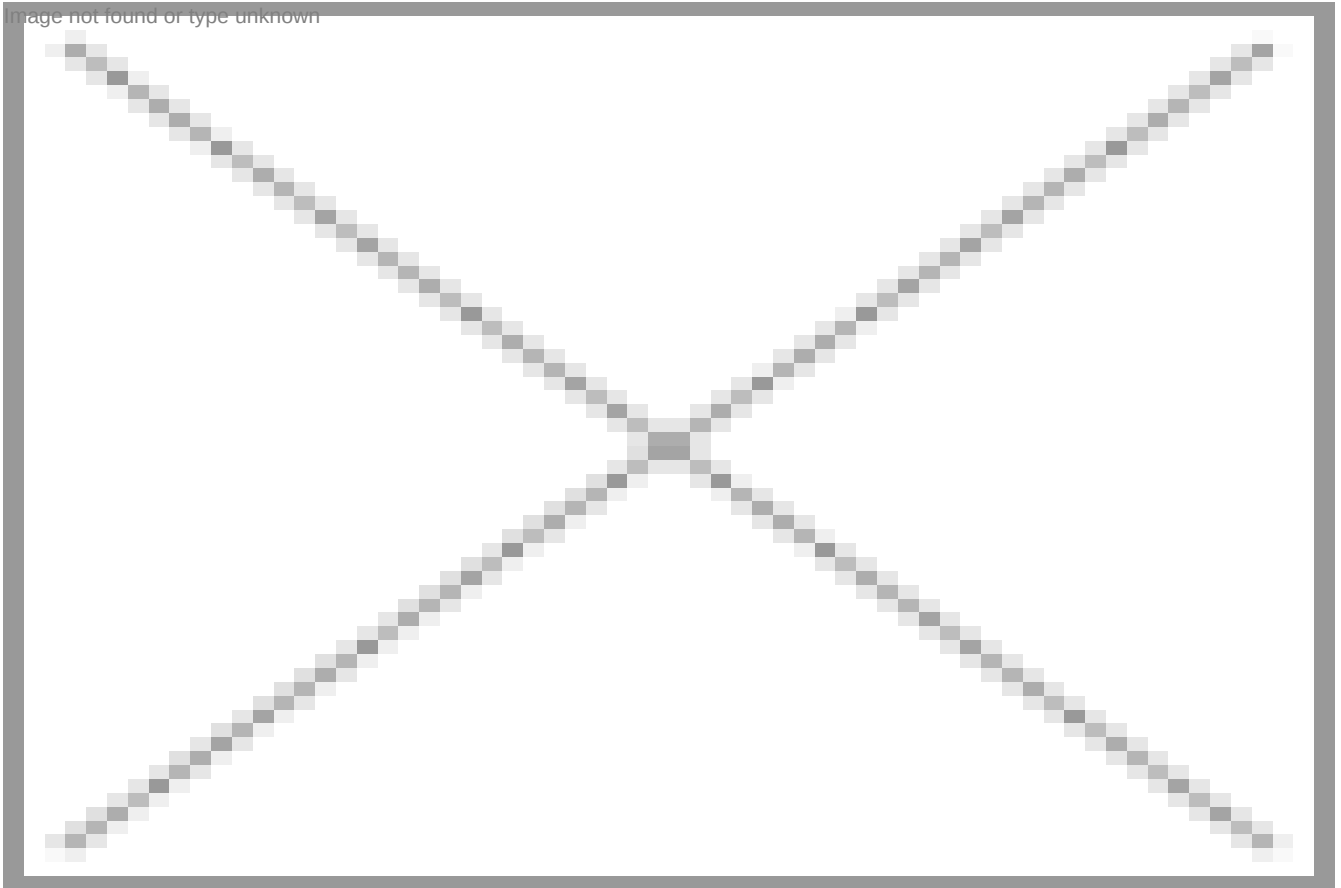
World No.6 Mariya Gnedtchik (AIN), who enjoyed a breakthrough World Cup triumph last year, and No.9 Salma Abdelmaksoud (EGY), sure to benefit from home support, will make life hard for the doyenne as she gets back to the grind.

4. The next generation clock in

With some nations and athletes understandably not rushing back to the needle of competition, the overall field in Cairo undoubtedly has a different look than recent World Cup seasons.

However, that gives the potential opening for the future to shine through. There are almost 40 teenagers taking part but few will be as hotly anticipated as Egypt's own Farida Khalil, the wunderkind who conquered all before her last year, completing the U17 and U19 World Championship double. Now she makes her senior bow.

But she is far from the only rookie to watch. Also making a debut at the elite end of the sport is another U19 world champion in the shape of Etienne Clergeau (France).



5. Points to prove and fresh starts

With almost 20 countries from five continents represented, the first World Cup of the season will still have a truly global feel and everyone has their own motivation.

Take Clergeau's teammate, two-time world champion Valentin Belaud (FRA), who was bitterly disappointed to miss out on selection for Paris last summer. The men's competition may not be as stacked with luminaries as the women's side but world No.5 Moutaz Mohamed (Egypt), No.10 Matteo Cicinelli (Italy) and No.14 Jean-Baptiste Mourcia (France) will all sense an opportunity to get a new season and a new Olympic cycle off to a swinging start as the Obstacle era begins.