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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2025: MAGDALENA QUINTANILLA (GUA)

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The International Olympic Committee's theme for International Women's Day 2025 is *#SportForAllWomenAndGirls*. Why is it so important that equal opportunities are provided for all women and girls in sports worldwide?

To remind us of the importance of contributing to breaking gender stereotypes, and because there are many women who have the necessary abilities and skills to contribute to the development and improvement of the Pentathlon, just like men.

Reflecting on your own time as an athlete, how far has the gender equality movement come since then, and how far do we still have to go?

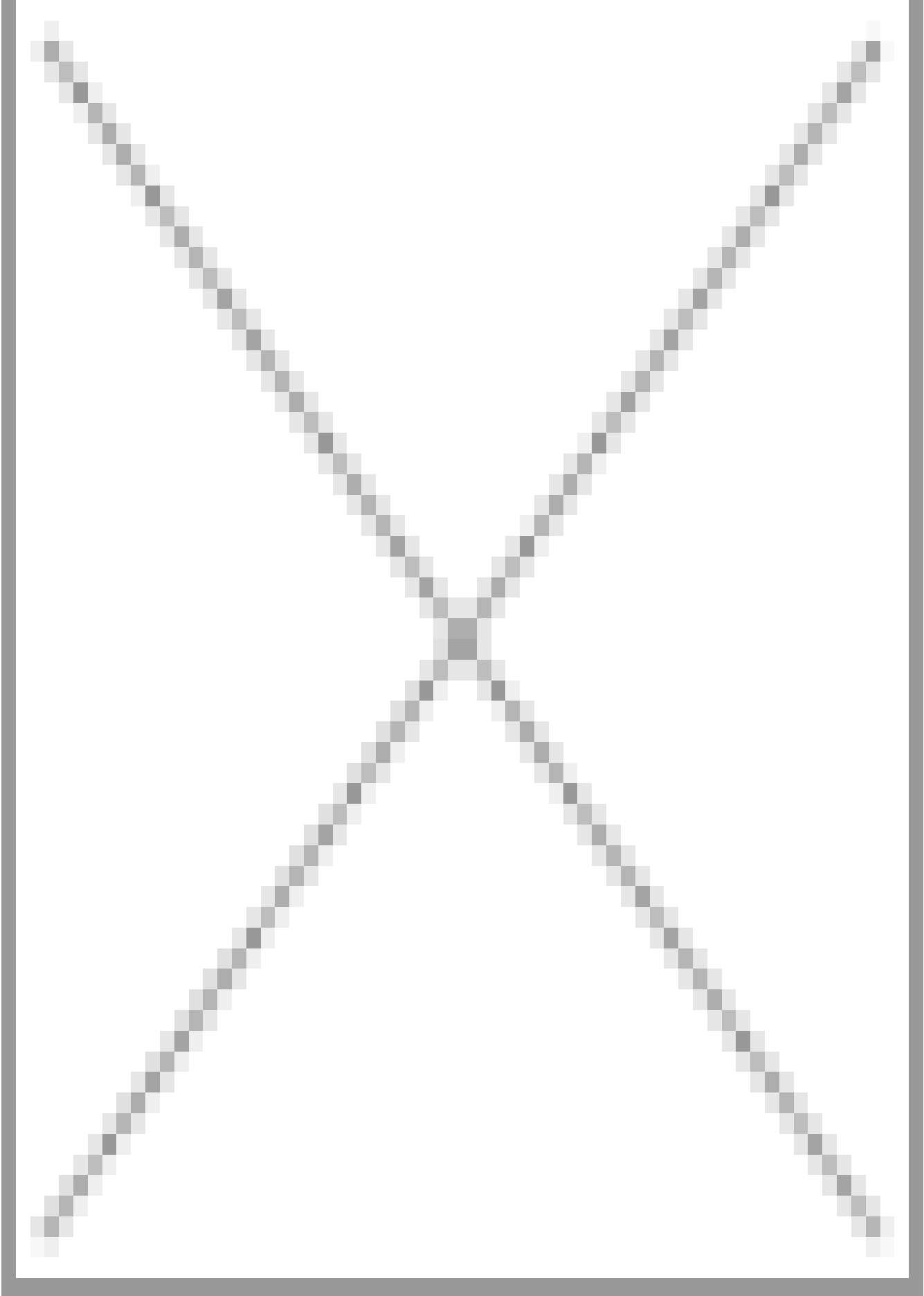
I remember the difficulties in my time as an athlete when the facilities and equipment were almost non-existent. My parents' support was so important on the financial side, to be able to acquire the sports equipment I needed to practise the sport.

When I was an athlete I had to cross the city to practise shooting, or go to the Fencing Federation to train, all the disciplines were very far apart. There were few athletes, of course fewer women,

men and women had to compete together in Fencing and that made it difficult to score points for the female gender.

But all that has changed, now the Pentathlon facilities in Guatemala are much more accessible and now the female population exceeds that of men.

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As a sports leader, how much are you motivated to show other women and girls that there are pathways in this field?

I have always liked to practise sports, whether it is competitive or just as a hobby. However, I am registered as a Masters athlete and I participate in the National Rankings.

I try to tell young athletes that I understand their sacrifice, but that if I can do it, they can. And that serves as an example for my two children, who are also athletes. I am talking about athletes, but we can also grow as women by preparing ourselves in sports, as coaches, judges, physiotherapists, managers, etc.

What do you see as the main inequalities affecting women and girls in sport at the present time, either in your country or worldwide?

First of all, the lack of respect for the female gender, the fact that we are often discriminated against for being the weaker gender even though we always fight for gender equality.

Even though Pentathlon in Guatemala has a larger population of female athletes, it is quite difficult to overcome the challenges we face in order to get ahead. The lack of compassion for each person in their personal situation, at school, at the University or in sports complexes, this does not bring us closer to a better world.

Many times it is the same women who do not give support to others to get ahead together successfully. There is much to reflect on.

Do you have any suggestions for policies or actions that might address these inequalities?

Encourage training or workshops to empower women, team building, and raise awareness among men and women about the acceptance of women in key positions for the growth of the female population in sports, improving the self-esteem of girls and women and contributing to the development of leadership skills and strategic thinking.

About the author

Name: Magdalena Quintanilla

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