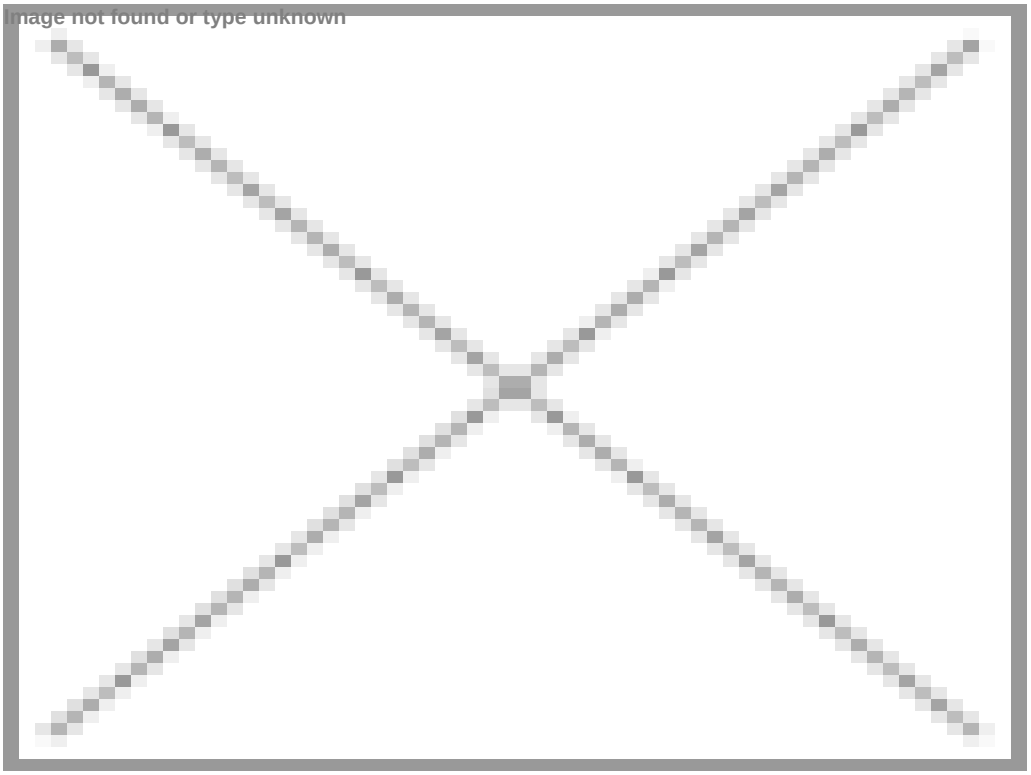
29 APR 2025

PRESIDENT’S VIEW: BUDAPEST HAS RAISED THE BAR FOR ORGANISERS WORLDWIDE

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By UIPM President Rob Stull

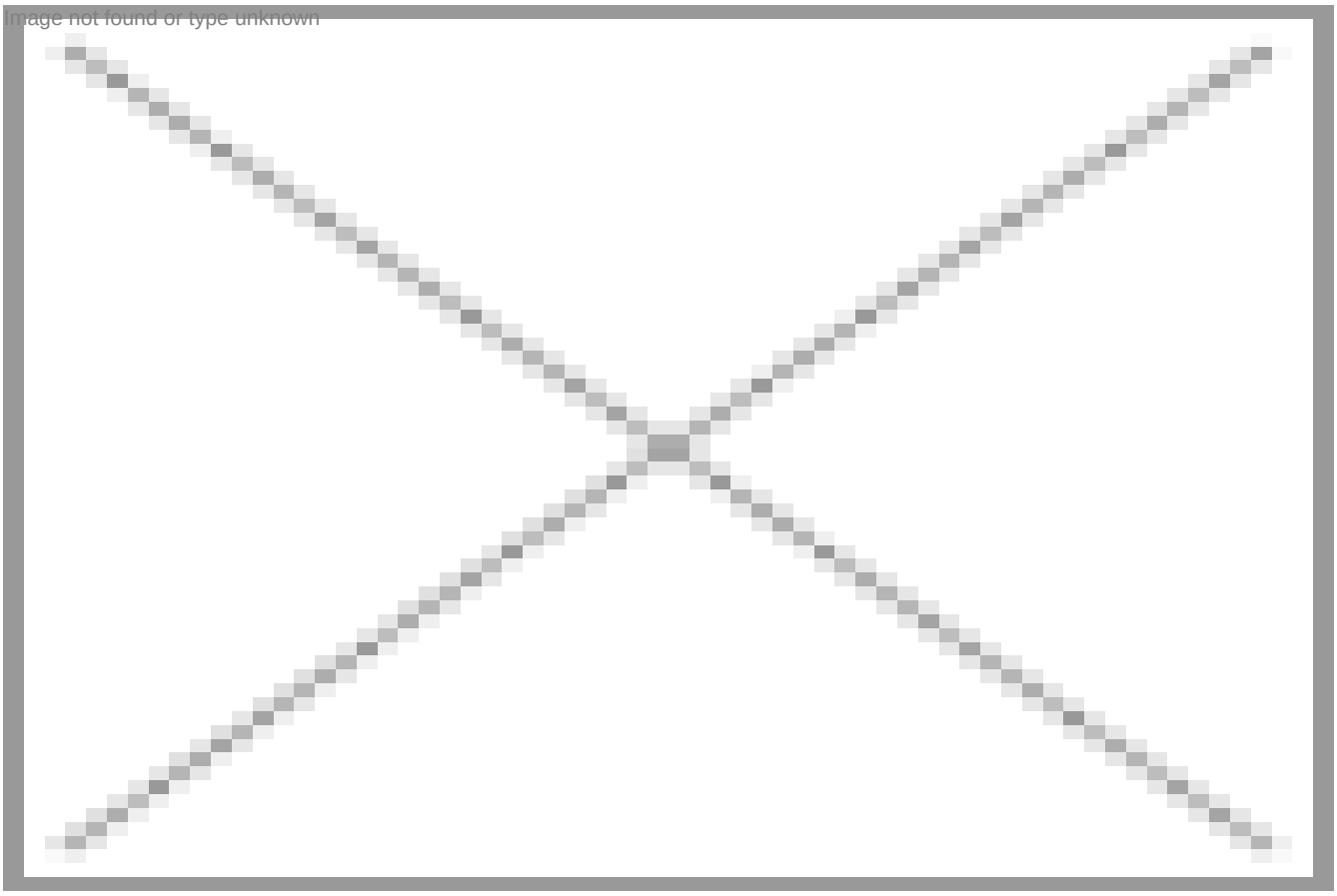
With due respect to Neil Armstrong, I described the competition we just witnessed in Budapest as one small step for our athletes, one giant leap for our sport.

They might not be astronauts, but in terms of what humanity is capable of achieving on this planet, I happen to think pentathletes push themselves pretty close to the outer limits.

In Budapest at the end of April 2025, it was the organisers’ turn to explore what they could achieve through innovation and aiming high, and they launched something very special that promises to lead us into new territory.

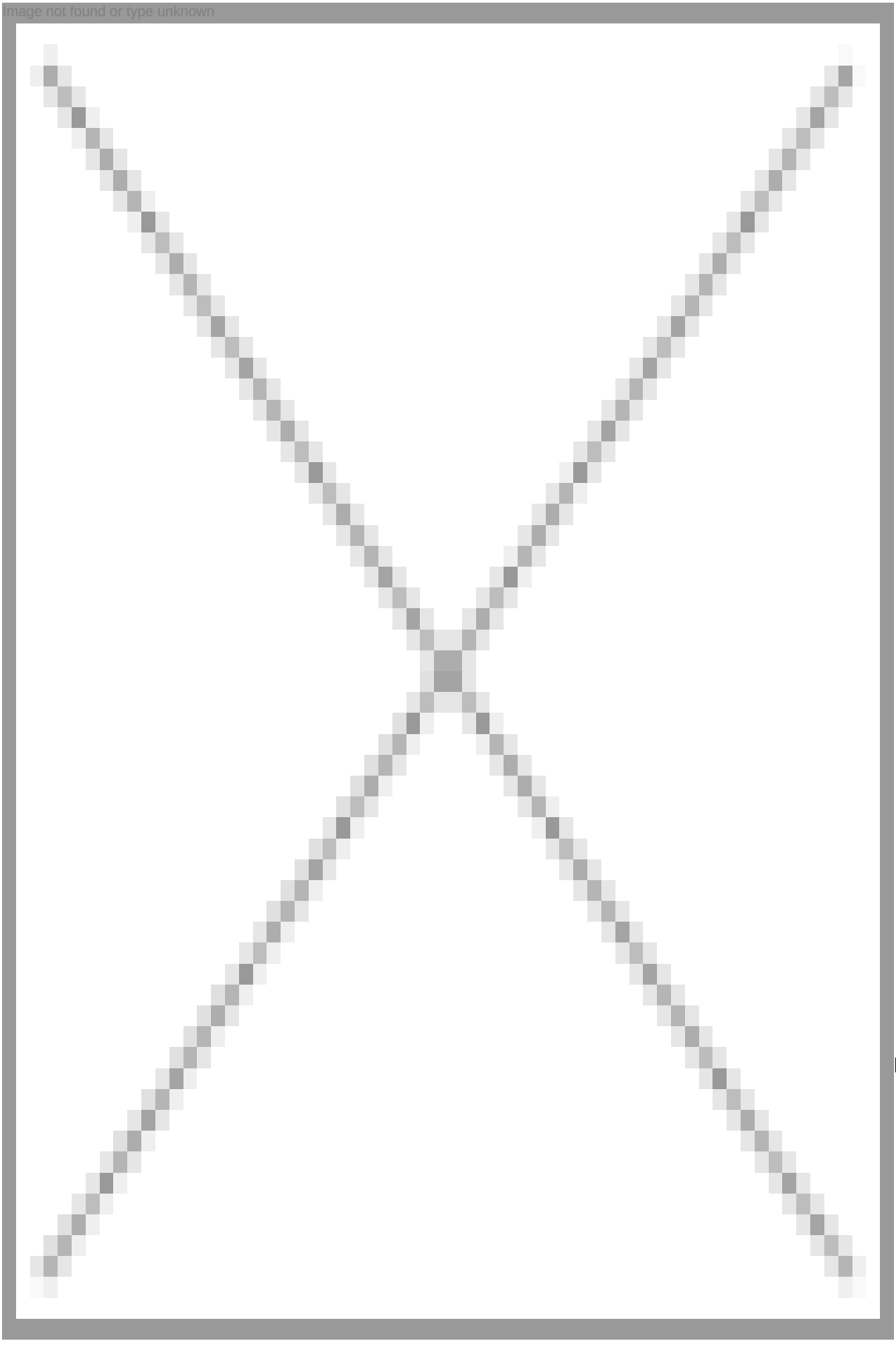
In case you missed it, UIPM 2025 Pentathlon World Cup Budapest was an extraordinary

spectacle. Having looked at venue options to accommodate the new format, and considered the reliability of the weather in Hungary in April, they took a chance on a primarily indoor competition and it paid off spectacularly.



We already knew they could host an indoor elite competition – the Budapest Indoors has been an annual highlight at the start of many Pentathlon seasons – but what we didn't know was that they could create a *show* of this quality.

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Budapest they provided a compact venue full of spectators. They provided dramatic mood lighting. The DJ varied the noise levels and got it just right. Athletes arrived in their Fencing gear and were introduced like the heroes they are. Pausing for the cameras under an arch with their name in lights, in a nod to the Paris 2024 Olympics. Striding on to the piste with AC/DC ringing in their ears. AC/DC! I had never associated the song *Thunderstruck* with Pentathlon until now, but from now on I'm not sure I want to hear anything else.

And this was all before the competition even began. Our pentathletes did the rest, producing an intense and electrifying race to the podium that was just so dramatic. The result was a Pentathlon with more entertainment value than anything we have seen outside of the Olympic Games. I mean no disrespect to our many fantastic past organisers by declaring that Budapest has raised the bar.

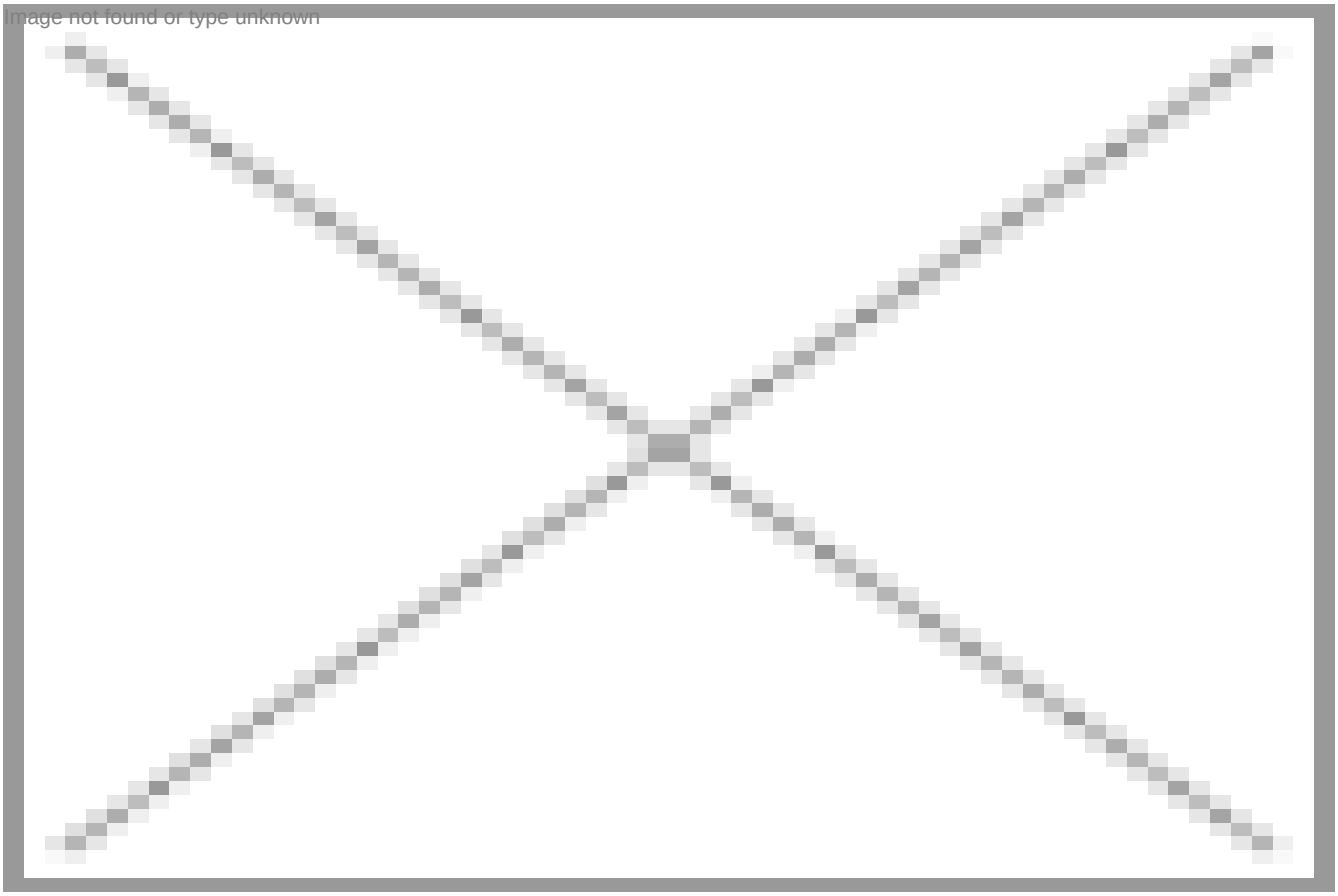
I've always felt that our sport has the potential to be more appealing to audiences, and in turn to broadcasters and sponsors. This competition marked the beginning of a new chapter of commercial potential in Modern Pentathlon.

I'm so grateful to the Hungarian Modern Pentathlon Association, to President Gábor Balogh and CEO Péter Vizkeleti and all their team, to our UIPM Executive Board Member for Media, Leila Gyenesei, and to Peter Biro – there are many other people to thank but these four were key to the creative conception and the innovative execution of an epic sporting event.

Hungary is one of many nations that is very respectful of our sport's historic past and just as committed to the bright future of Pentathlon in the Olympic movement. To illustrate this Pentathlon fever at the highest levels, our event was attended not only by Pentathlon luminaries and champions who bestrode our sport in the past, but by the country's current IOC Member, Balász Fürjes, and Pál Schmitt, a former Hungary State President, IOC Vice-President and Olympic Fencing champion.

Joining this constellation of stars was an IOC Member who we know extremely well, women's Pentathlon champion and Member of the Egyptian Parliament, Aya Medany.

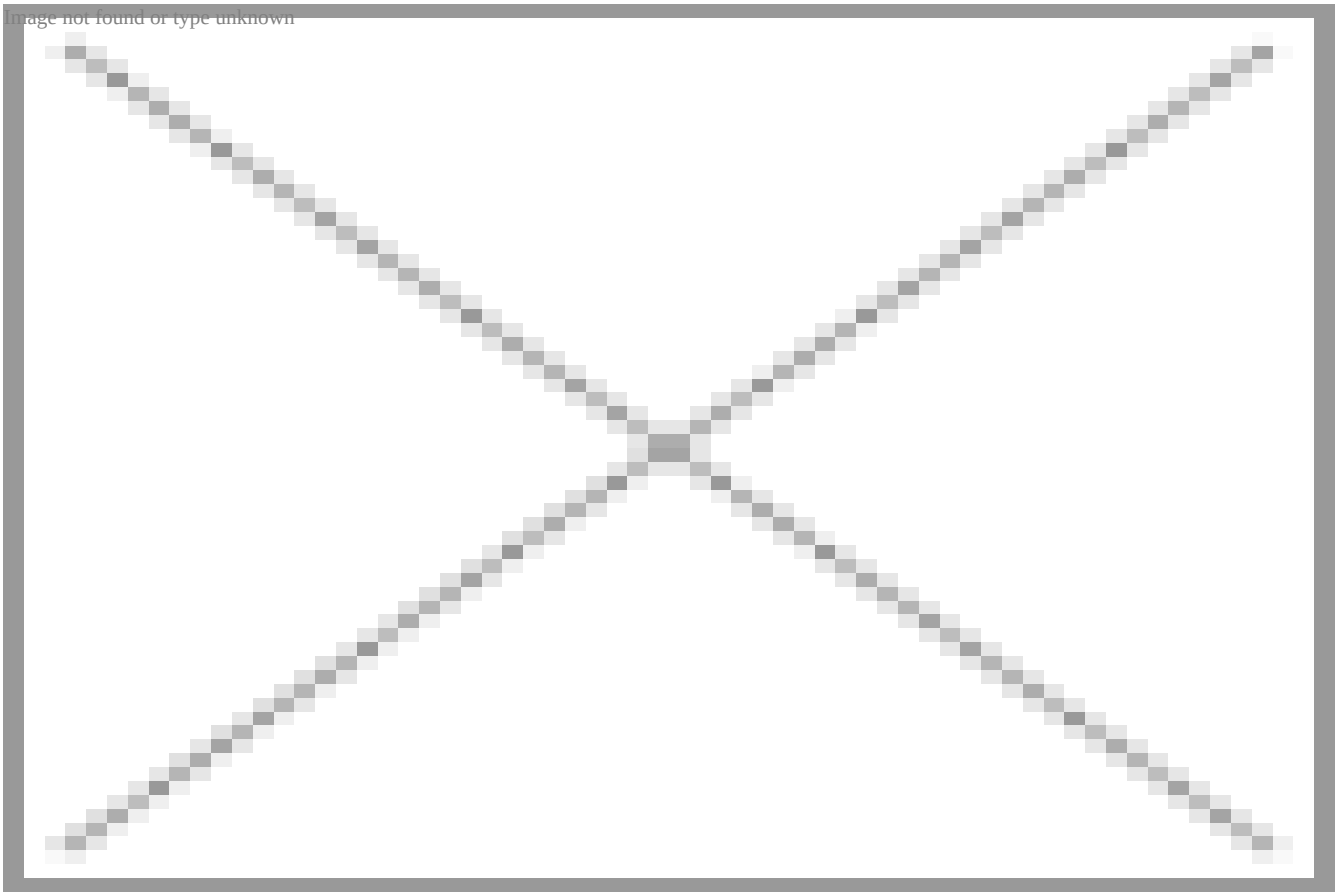
Fittingly, Paris 2024 Olympic champion Michelle Gulyás won the Women's Final to give our hosts the champagne moment they had been anticipating, and then Mihály Koleszár came from behind to clinch silver in the Men's Final.



Not only were these moments rich in significance for the host nation, but they added to the compelling storylines that Pentathlon is increasingly set up to tell. The sport is now faster, more dynamic and more accessible, and this makes it more unpredictable, leading to an enhanced experience for viewers online and onsite.

Look how many times the lead changed hands in both of those Finals. There were multiple medal contenders at different times throughout the five disciplines, and after three days of competition, it took a photo finish to decide which male athlete won silver and which won bronze. And we will never forget where we came from: you may have heard a bell ringing to denote the final lap of Laser Run – it was the Riding bell they used for decades in Hungarian Pentathlon.

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I want to be clear and not get too over-excited here: the competition in Budapest was not perfect and there is always going to be room for improvement. But it was a game changer that proves what we always knew: that Pentathlon can be a commercially attractive sport. Its versatility is one of the reasons for that: you can stage competitions indoors and outdoors and that’s exciting for future organisers.

Now we move on with the World Cup season with the last round of the regular season in Pazardzhik, Bulgaria, and then the Final in Alexandria, Egypt. From Budapest I travelled to Lithuania for more engagements set up to discuss and promote the flagship competition of 2025, the Pentathlon World Championships. It’s an exciting journey from here to August, from one European heartland to another. Budapest has raised the bar for others to follow!