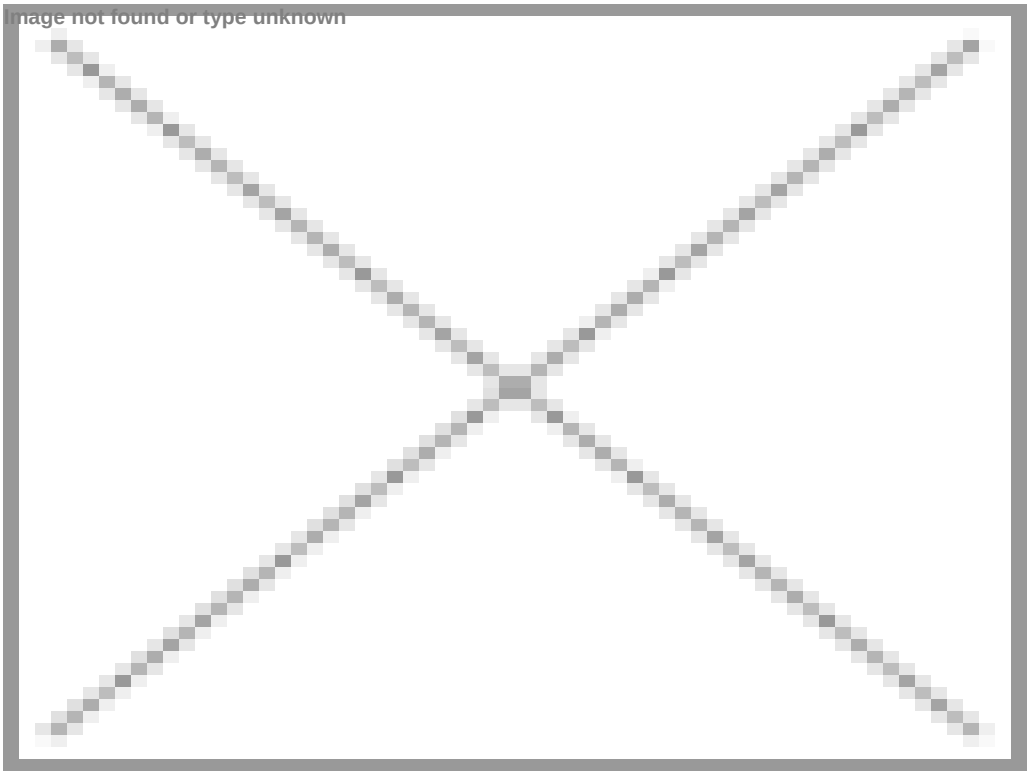
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PENTATHLON PERSONALITIES EMBRACE OLYMPIC LEGACY AT THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ACADEMY IN OLYMPIA (GRE)

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In summer 2025, beneath the olive trees of Ancient Olympia — the sacred birthplace of the Olympic Games — three ambassadors of Modern Pentathlon stood at the convergence of history, philosophy and purpose.

Marcela Cuaspud OLY of **Ecuador** and **Rahul Darshan** of **Nepal** participated in the 65th International Session for Young Olympic Ambassadors, while **Ana Luisa Almeida** of **Brazil**, an elected UIPM official and Olympic educator, joined the 12th International Olympic Academy Participants Association (IOAPA) Session that followed.

Each brought a unique voice to a shared mission: to honour and carry forward the Olympic ideals at the heart of Pentathlon.

Their participation not only reflected the growing global reach of the sport, but also reaffirmed its timeless connection to the educational and humanist vision of Olympic founder Pierre de Coubertin — whose heart is buried at Olympia, near the grounds of the International Olympic Academy (IOA).

During the sessions, the participants also had the opportunity to meet the newly elected **IOA President, Charilaos Tsolakis**, a multiple Greek national champion in Pentathlon, further underlining the deep connection between the IOA and the sport.

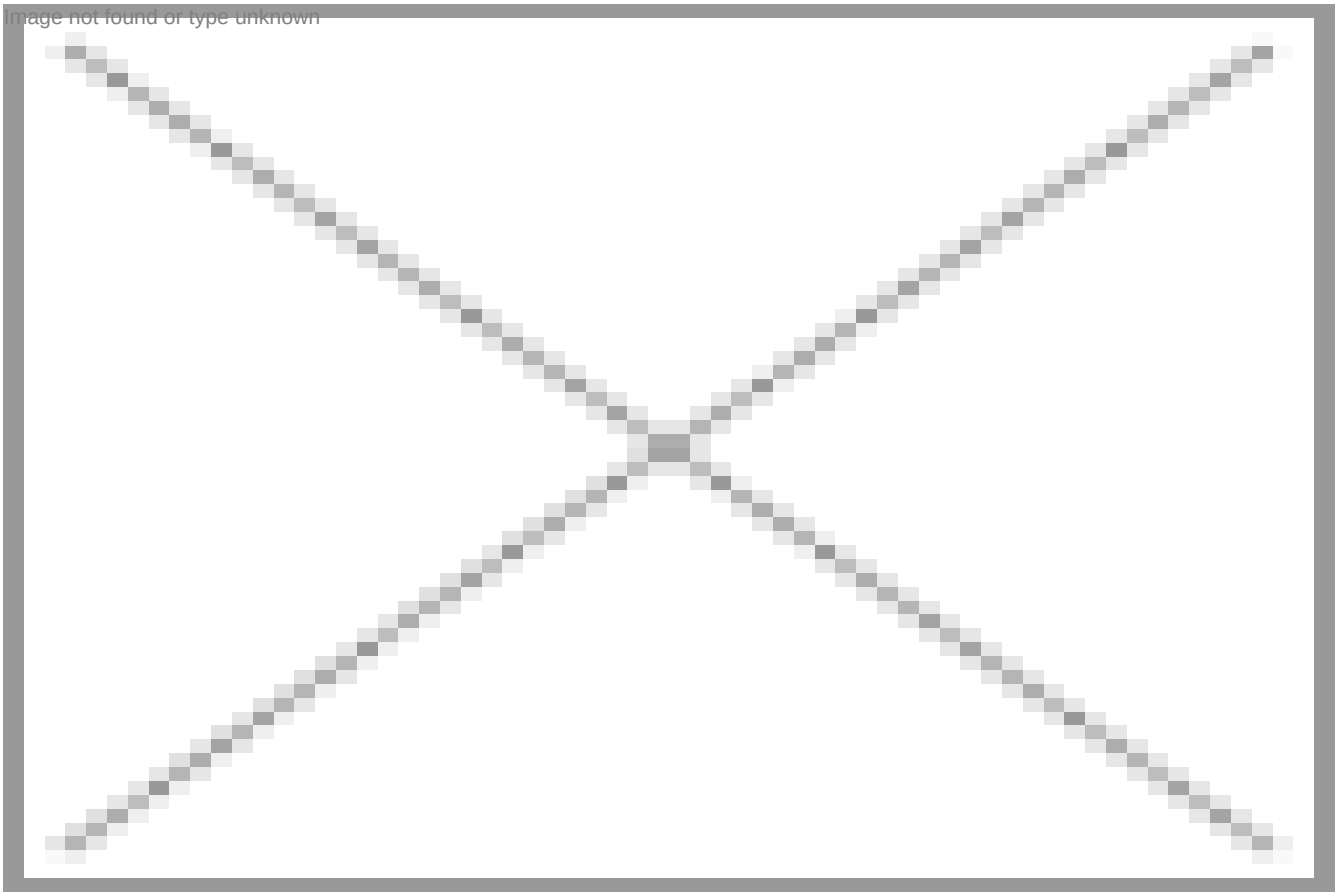
Marcela Cuaspud OLY: A Journey of Resilience and Purpose

Marcela Cuaspud's path to the IOA began long before she arrived in Greece. As the first Ecuadorian modern pentathlete to qualify for the Olympic Games (Tokyo 2020), Marcela has broken barriers in South American sport. Today, she serves as Chair of the Athletes' Commission of the Ecuadorian Olympic Committee, where she advocates for athletes' rights and holistic development.

"Visiting Olympia was an incredible and meaningful experience," Cuaspud (ECU) reflected. "It allows you to connect with the roots and true spirit of the Olympic Movement. It reminded me that sport not only opens doors to competition but also to education and personal development."

Selected by her National Olympic Committee for her athletic achievements and academic background — which includes a Master's in Sport Management — Marcela joined participants from more than 100 countries. In her powerful personal presentation as an Olympian, *My Journey to the Olympic Games*, she spoke openly about the triumphs and mental health challenges that shaped her path and touched fellow participants with a message of courage, vulnerability and the transformative power of sport.

"Modern Pentathlon has taught me that limits do not exist," she said. "Every defeat may be a hidden opportunity. You just have to trust the process."



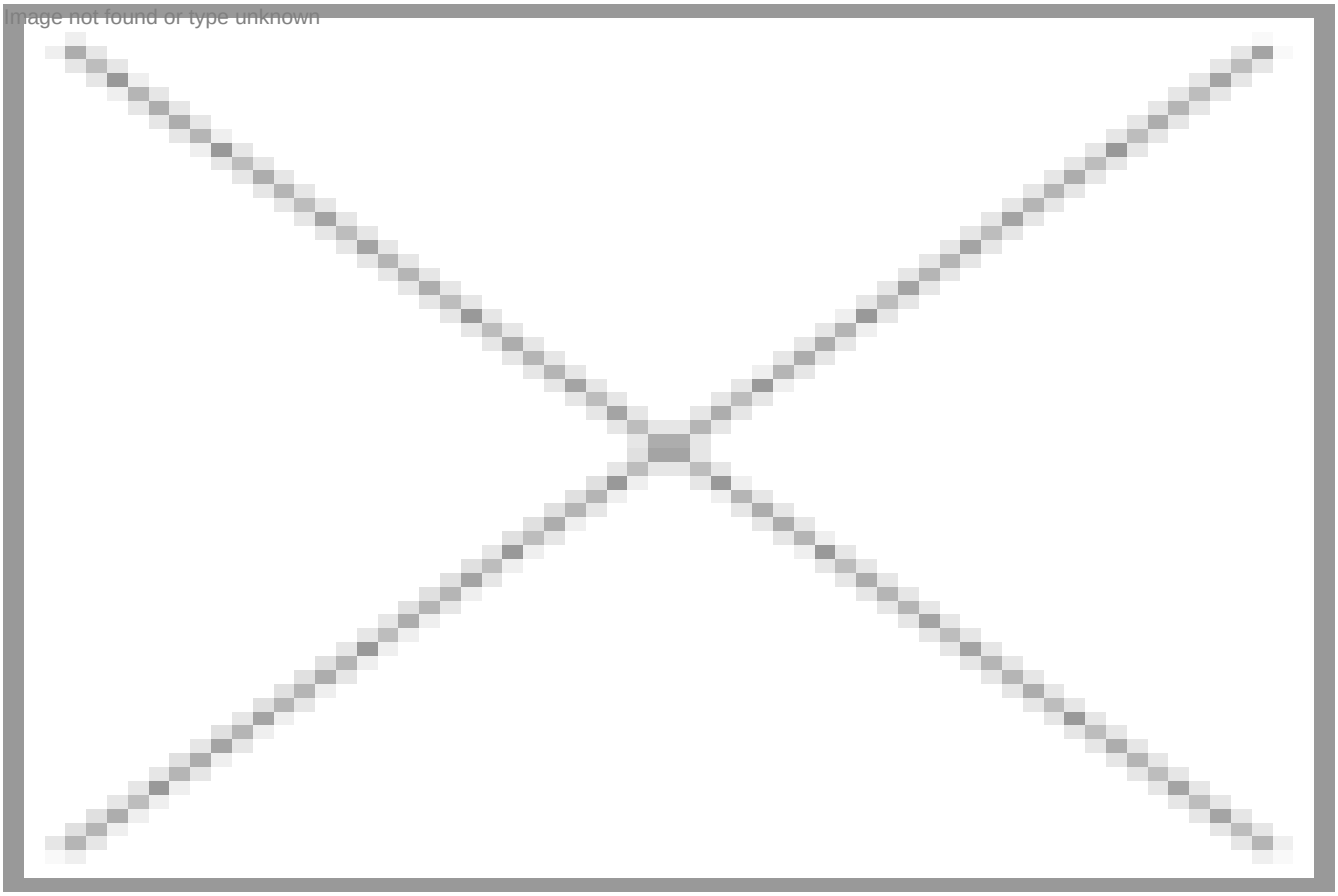
Rahul Darshan: championing Olympism in a developing nation

For Rahul Darshan, a national-level athlete and part-time coach from Kathmandu (NEP), the session in Olympia marked a new milestone. Representing Nepal — a country where modern pentathlon is still in development — Rahul was selected for his competitive results and commitment to Olympic values.

“I was honoured to be selected for promoting Olympism through coaching and international competition,” Rahul shared. “The most enriching part of the session was connecting with people from all over the world. The workshops, cultural exchanges and walking through Olympia’s sacred grounds were unforgettable.”

Darshan (NEP), who also participated in the **UIPM 2024 Development Camp**, sees himself not just as an athlete, but as an educator and community builder, and a key part of the growing movement to expand Modern Pentathlon in Asia.

His experience in Olympia (GRE) reaffirmed his belief in the sport’s potential to inspire across borders: “Ancient Olympia is not just a historic landmark. It’s a place of deep reflection on the values that define our sport.”



Ana Luisa Almeida: honouring Coubertin legacy through education and service

Ana Luisa Almeida's journey to Olympia reflects a different, but equally profound, aspect of the Olympic Movement. A member of the **UIPM Pierre de Coubertin Commission** and **Business Affairs Committee**, Almeida (BRA) has worked in Brazilian Modern Pentathlon for over 20 years.

She attended the IOAPA Session after graduating from the **IOA Master's Degree Programme in Olympic Studies**, a program that brings together professionals and scholars dedicated to Olympic values.

"The Master's Programme is ideal for people working in sport management or transitioning from athletic careers," Almeida (BRA) noted. "Its format allows professionals to continue their work while deepening their understanding of history and governance, and the role of sport in society."

During her visit, Almeida (BRA) paid tribute at two symbolic landmarks linked to Modern Pentathlon and Olympic heritage: the **Coubertin Monument**, where the heart of the Olympic founder is buried, and the **olive tree planted in 2024 by long-serving former UIPM President Klaus Schormann**, alongside then-IOA President Isidoros Kouvelos (now President of the Hellenic Olympic Committee) and Spyros Capralos (IOC Executive Board Member and President of the European Olympic Committees).

"For all pentathletes, visiting Olympia should be a pilgrimage," she said. "It's where you truly understand our sport's connection to the Olympic legacy."

Modern Pentathlon's living Olympic legacy

Modern Pentathlon, originally envisioned by Pierre de Coubertin to embody the ideal Olympic athlete — adaptable, balanced and morally strong — remains deeply rooted in education and character development.

As the UIPM community continues to grow across continents and generations, the voices of these three ambassadors — from Ecuador, Nepal, and Brazil — demonstrate how Modern Pentathlon remains a living expression of Olympism, built on heritage, driven by education and united by a shared belief in the power of sport to shape a better world.