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UIPM 2025 PENTATHLON WORLD CUP FINAL: TAKE FIVE



Let's hope everyone used the past seven weeks to their advantage and managed to find rest. Because things are about to get breathtaking again in a hurry.

The world's best have gathered on the stunning Mediterranean coast with the first major title of a new Olympic cycle at stake.

The UIPM 2025 Pentathlon World Cup Final brings a new generation of elite pentathletes to Alexandria (EGY), where the potential for history for the home favourites will surely guarantee an electric atmosphere at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport from July 4-6.

Whether you are lucky enough to be there in person or watching from further afield, here's a look at some of the key storylines to keep an eye on this weekend...

The potential coronation of Queen Khalil

Does **Farida Khalil** of **Egypt** ever take a breath? We're not so sure. Mere minutes after storming to yet another gold medal at last week's UIPM 2025 Pentathlon Junior World Championships, the 14-year-old stepped in front of a microphone and set her sights on yet more grandiose goals.

"I'm aiming next week to win the gold medal in the World Cup Final and then the gold medal in the senior World Championships," said Khalil, who smashed multiple junior world records in Hungary. "I can't overthink anything, I take everything step by step."

The steps being taken by Khalil (EGY) are not those of a precocious teenage hopeful but a seasoned winner. It's important to remember that we're a mere few months into her debut season at senior level.

Having won her Pentathlon World Cup debut in the season-opener in Cairo (EGY), she took silver and another gold in the subsequent legs, her prowess over Obstacle extending to all disciplines.

While the prospect of an Alexandria showdown between the young sensation and the reigning Olympic champion had been mouth-watering, an unfortunate injury has ruled Michelle Gulyas of Hungary out of the competition. If anything, that would only appear to add to Khalil's chances of making her breakthrough with an inaugural major championship at the highest level.

It's more than 15 months since Khalil failed to make the podium of an individual event of any description. Already, it feels like it would be quite shocking to see her finish anywhere but 1st in Sunday's Women's Final.



Bronze brigade looks for shinier prizes

While Paris 2024 champion Gulyas (HUN) has to sit frustrated on the sidelines for now, her male

counterpart has become accustomed to waiting in the wings. Ahmed Elgendy is a national hero in Egypt but will be among his people in the stands this week watching on as he builds up his own fitness.

That doesn't mean we won't have the shining talents of Paris prizewinners among the field. Both bronze medalists from last summer are pitching up and ready to prove their pedigree.

Seungmin Seong of **Korea** returned to the elite level in April in Budapest (HUN) but her first taste of the sport's newest discipline didn't go well as elimination in Obstacle saw her unable to progress beyond Women's Qualification.

However, world champion Seong (KOR) has already proven herself a dogged competitor and she bounced back with a superb silver medal at Pentathlon World Cup Pazardzhik in early May. Another two months of getting to grips with Obstacle makes her a serious contender this week.

Her brother in bronze, **Giorgio Malan** of **Italy**, went one better last time out in Bulgaria as he won a first Pentathlon World Cup title and his first top prize at senior level since the 2023 European Games. He too looks primed to reprise the standards he set in Paris (FRA) 11 months ago.

Female field stacked behind favourite

Sitting at No.8 in the UIPM World Rankings, Seong (KOR) is part of a stacked field of contenders who will try to halt Khalil's relentless rise.

In total, six of the next seven behind Khalil in the current global leaderboard will be on hand in Alexandria: No.3 **Malak Ismail** (EGY); No.4 **Blanka Guzi** of **Hungary**; No.5 **Anna Jurt** of **Switzerland**; No.6 **Ilke Ozyuksel** of **Türkiye**; No.8 Seong (KOR) and No.9 **Rebecca Castaudi** of **France** (only No.7 Emma Whitaker of Great Britain is missing).

Three-time Olympian Ozyuksel (TUR) is among the most consistent big-game hunters in the sport, delivering in the most pressurised moments and was a Pentathlon World Cup Final medallist in both 2023 and 2024.

Meanwhile, there was at least one Hungarian medallist at each World Cup Final in the Paris Olympic cycle. Given the threats posed by Guzi (HUN) and compatriot **Blanka Bauer** (HUN), it may be foolish to expect the first edition of the Los Angeles cycle to buck that trend.

New dad Belaud leads French charge

The first Pentathlon World Cup Final of the last Olympic cycle saw a prolific French veteran finally add a missing medal to their collection. Back in 2022 in Ankara (TUR), it was Elodie Clouvel (FRA) who won women's World Cup Final gold for the first time. Could it be that her partner in life matches that feat this time around?

Valentin Belaud (FRA) has been one of the stories of the season so far, the 32-year-old winning huge admiration for how quickly he has adapted to the Obstacle era. On a recent edition of The Pentathlon Podcast, Olympic champion Elgendy (EGY) could be heard enthusiastically saluting Belaud's performances.

Having met just last month, Clouvel and baby daughter Sasha will be cheering on new dad

Valentin, but also the rest of a potent French line-up. **Ugo Fleurot** (FRA) and **Jean-Baptiste Mourcia** (FRA) were the top two points-scorers in the season-long Pentathlon World Cup standings with Belaud not far behind in 4th.

The French men's challenge will be a fascinating one to watch but there are contenders up and down a field that represents 17 different countries. **Moutaz Mohamed** (EGY), returning home after a dominant Junior World Championship triumph, may well be the man to beat.



Three days of sheer elite intensity

Those who pay close attention to the calendar will notice that the 2025 Pentathlon World Cup Final is a day shorter than more recent editions of the competition.

With the Mixed Relay having now been added to a ground-breaking UIPM Pentathlon Relay World Championships (which takes places July 8-13, also here in Alexandria), this showpiece is now packed into a three-day weekend.

That means the first major championship of Pentathlon's new era will be full-throttle from the get-go once Women's Semi-finals begin on Friday, July 4 followed by the Men on July 5 and both Finals on July 6.?

UIPM President Rob Stull OLY will also be marking the first showpiece of his leadership and is among many eager for the action to begin: "With a new format providing a fascinating new competitive energy, the racing has been compelling and it has been great to see a new generation of contenders coming up against established stars of our sport."