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TAKE 5: PENTATHLON IN 2025



As we approach the end of another momentous year for the Olympic sport of Modern Pentathlon and its burgeoning global community, **Joe Callaghan** recalls five moments that changed the game and shook the world.

1) A Whole New Arena

Amid flashing spotlights and lasers and with a booming soundtrack in the background, the vision for Pentathlon's future was as vibrant as one could have imagined. The first UIPM Pentathlon World Championships of a new Olympic cycle, held in Kaunas (LTU) in August, mapped out a brilliant blueprint for the road to Los Angeles in 2028.

One of Europe's leading basketball venues, Zalgiris Arena, was transformed into a Pentathlon Arena for the week. Thousands of spectators savoured the spectacle and exquisite sporting drama in the form of a redefined multisport.

Earlier in the year, an appetiser was served up by the organisers of UIPM 2025 World Cup Budapest.

With the full integration of Obstacle, taking the show indoors in 2025 has helped Modern

Pentathlon emphatically fulfill numerous reforms and strategic pillars that focused on enhanced entertainment value and increasing attractiveness to youth.

At the Zalgiris Arena, a crowd of 5000-plus was engrossed as two young stars rose to the occasion, ensuring the UIPM 2025 Pentathlon World Championships will be seen as a moment in time for the sport.

Four IOC Members who attended the Semi-finals and Finals heaped praise on what they had witnessed. “This is very exciting, very attractive, very interesting. It’s music, it’s dynamic, it’s active. The athletes, the crowd... it was a great job,” said IOC Member and Olympic icon Sergii Bubka. “This will help you to achieve wider development of your sport around the world.”

2) Farida redefines dominance

Amid the hype and hoopla there was history in Kaunas (LTU), and the headlines belonged to one remarkable young woman. **Farida Khalil** of **Egypt** made the season her own in such an unprecedented fashion that one wonders how she – or indeed anyone – could ever possibly match the achievements of 2025.



In her first full season at senior level, the 14-year-old phenomenon smashed all precedent and even the wildest predictions.

She arrived in Lithuania in late August as the reigning U17, U19 and Junior world champion. For good measure she had also picked up World Cup Final gold, her first title at Senior level. At every glorious step along the way she had been vocal about her biggest target: to be the outright senior world champion. In typically awesome fashion she achieved that target with her trademark nerveless consistency across all five disciplines, completing what was christened as the ‘Farida Slam’.

“It’s like I’m dreaming now. It was a very tough season and I got four World Cup medals, three of them gold including the World Cup Final, and then the World Championships,” Khalil said afterwards. “For all viewers around the world, anyone who has any dream, they can do it. Nothing is impossible; anything can be done.”

Still a young teenager but this was truly a season for the ages.

3) Obstacle integration goes global in Beijing

In October, Khalil (EGY) rounded off her trailblazing year in fitting fashion – as part of another global gathering that broke new ground.

China's National Olympic Sports Centre in Beijing was an appropriately prestigious venue to mark a major milestone in the integration of two sporting movements at the inaugural UIPM Obstacle World Championships (OCR).



Gathering the leading lights of the Pentathlon, OCR and Ninja racing communities, the four-day festival of elastic excellence saw over 2000 athletes of all ages from over 30 countries gather in China.

As reigning world record-holders in Modern Pentathlon's Obstacle discipline, Khalil and her

Egyptian compatriot **Moustafa Abouamer** joined their rivals from the OCR world to take on the urban labyrinth inside the Olympic Sports Centre with 100m, 400m and 3km courses arranged.

American duo Tiana Webberley and Luke Beckstrand became trailblazers as the first world champions crowned and there were strides made off the course too.

The UIPM Obstacle Task Force agreed on momentous steps to formalise the integration of the Federation Internationale de Sports d'Obstacles (FISO) within the Union Internationale de Pentathlon Moderne (UIPM) in 2026. Obstacle is here to stay and the swinging is all upward.

4) Men's rivals play generation game

While the women's half of the sport was mostly dominated by one powerhouse, the elite Men's side of Modern Pentathlon began a new Olympic cycle with the honours shared more evenly.

From rising stars underlining their promise to veterans finding new energy and Olympic medalists providing some reminders of their pedigree, 2025 had a little bit of everything.

Moutaz Mohamed of **Egypt** ends the calendar year atop the world rankings and that surely feels right after he became the first African male to be crowned world champion in Kaunas (LTU). The Laser Run specialist, who revels in eating up the lead of rivals, was prolific, having already won gold in the Pentathlon World Cup Final and Junior World Championships.



Matej Lukes of **Czechia** was a formidable foe, however, adding world bronze to World Cup Final silver in a stellar season that saw him rise to World No.2.

The addition of Obstacle at senior level had some wondering whether the adjustment could be a challenge for the sport's longer-toothed stars. **Valentin Belaud** of **France** offered a brilliant riposte in 2025, the 33-year-old threatening the podium in his debut tilt at the new format before marking

his season with a World Cup bronze.

Switzerland veteran **Alexandre Dallenbach** proved multisport is indeed a country for old men as he ended the year with Laser Run World a string of titles from the UIPM Biathle-Triathle and Laser Run World Championships in South Africa.

For good measure, Paris 2024 bronze medalist **Giorgio Malan** of **Italy** made his return an emphatic one when storming to gold at UIPM 2025 Pentathlon World Cup Pazardzhik.

5) Para sports movement's marquee year

The sun-kissed beaches of Mossel Bay in South Africa's Western Cape were a glorious location to sign off competition for the year as the UIPM Biathle-Triathle and Laser Run World Championships were combined for the first time.

It will be remembered as one of the most inclusive competitions held in the history of UIPM Sports, with Para racing held across all three of Biathle, Triathle and Laser Run attracting Para competitors from **Egypt**, **France**, **Great Britain**, **Italy** and **South Africa**. It was a fitting end to a year when the UIPM Para Sports movement continued to break new ground.



For the first time, the Para Tetrathlon World Championships was integrated into the 2025 calendar.

The UIPM 2025 Para Tetrathlon World Championships formed part of the UIPM 2025 Pentathlon U19 World Championships in Druskininkai (LTU) in August and proved a landmark event for Para athletes who created a shared celebration of sport, inclusion and performance.

Vicco Irbín (ITA) went down in history as individual winner of the inaugural event, while **Ukraine** was recognised with the team medal as a group of pioneering athletes tackled the new format of Para Obstacle > Para Swimming > Para Laser Run.



“This is more than a championship – it is a celebration of resilience, talent and the unifying spirit of our sport,” said Dr Nicola Robinson, Chair of the UIPM Para Pentathlon Commission. “I could not be prouder of every athlete and of this milestone moment for Para Pentathlon.”