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UIPM 2025 PENTATHLON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: TAKE FIVE



The flagship event of the season, the UIPM 2025 Pentathlon World Championships, takes place in Kaunas, Lithuania from August 26-30. This will be the first senior championships to include the new Obstacle and reimagined Fencing disciplines. Here are five areas of interest to look out for.

A new era and a priceless opportunity

A journey from the historic Palace of Versailles to the Žalgiris Arena would cover a significant amount of the European continent. One year and two weeks removed from the unforgettable Paris Olympics, the best of the best in global Pentathlon will gather again to usher in a new era on the banks of the Nemunas, the largest river in Lithuania.

The capital city of Kaunas is the venue for the first UIPM Pentathlon World Championships of the new Olympic cycle, one with a new discipline and format and plenty of fresh faces and heroes, many of whom have wasted no time in establishing themselves in a big way.

The highlight of the Pentathlon calendar is also the most proven testing ground. With the clock already ticking down to the next Games in 2028, it feels as though a generational shift may be about to move up a gear. But there are plenty of experienced big names who want to prove they're here for another long haul to the biggest show in sports too. Kaunas (LTU) will be the crucible for a fascinating championships which promises to answer so many questions.

Unstoppable Khalil (EGY) chases the 'Farida Slam'



It would be rare for a phrase to

be coined based on the achievements of a 14-year-old, but will we find ourselves in future talking nostalgically about the 'Farida Slam' and asking if anyone will ever repeat it?

There is no denying that Farida Khalil, the teen phenomenon from Egypt, stands on the precipice of something truly extraordinary in the Baltic region over the next few days.

At 14 years old, Khalil (EGY) has turned 2025 into her year for the ages. She arrives in Kaunas (LTU) as the reigning U17, U19 and Junior (U22) world champion as well as Pentathlon World Cup Final winner (not to forget two Pentathlon World Cups).

At every glorious step along the way she has been vocal about reiterating her biggest target: to become senior world champion. So now it's showtime.

What is it that makes Khalil (EGY) currently so dominant at every age group of the sport? In a multi-disciplinary challenge which tests every aspect of an athlete, she would appear to have few weaknesses.

Last week in Druskininkai (LTU), the U19 Women's Final saw her cast in a new role: part of the chasing pack, having ranked only 8th in Fencing. Khalil (EGY) rose to the challenge in the style of a seasoned champion, something she has rapidly become, defying her young age. Now a famous slam awaits. If she pulls it off it will only be fair that she be granted naming rights.

Hunted and hunters all game for a medal chase

While an unfortunate injury to Paris 2024 Olympic champion Michelle Gulyas of Hungary has

made Khalil (EGY) a clear favourite in the women's field, the same cannot be said of the men's competition.



Eight different athletes have claimed the 12 major podium places

so far this season. **Moutaz Mohamed** (EGY) claimed one of the three golds on offer during the World Cup regular season then stormed to glory on home soil in the World Cup Final. Along the way he became world junior champion too.

Mohamed (EGY) shapes as a fitting contender given our location this week. Lithuanian Pentathlon was led for years and years by the peerless icon Laura Asadauskaite, who finally brought the curtain down on her career after last summer's Olympics. Asadauskaite (LTU) was one of the most feared hunters in the sport, showing an incredible ability to dig deep in the Laser Run and reel in her rivals. Mohamed (EGY) has a similar quality.

He will need all of it in Kaunas (LTU) with a string of contenders to be at the head of the field, and therefore with the potential to be chased. Take the men currently ranked at 2, 4 and 5 in the world for starters: **Mihaly Koleszar** of **Hungary**, **Ugo Fleurot** of **France** and **Matej Lukes** of **Czechia**. Remarkably, all were born within 10 months of one another and all three have been World Cup medallists this year, Koleszar (HUN) and Fleurot (FRA) picking up a pair each.

Veteran **Valentin Belaud** (FRA) is 7th in the standings and has saved his best for these world stages, twice having been crowned world champion. **Changwan Seo** of **Korea** also likes to make a splash on the big occasions, while Olympic bronze medallist **Giorgio Malan** of **Italy** has adapted expertly to the Obstacle era.

Hunters and hunted are primed for the chase.

Judging the contenders to stop the favourite

The bad luck of an injury to Gulyas (HUN) has deprived us of a gripping rematch between the Olympic champ and her heir apparent, Khalil (EGY). The two instalments we did get this season were gripping. Who else can go toe to toe with the tyro?

A new emerging European elite shapes to be prominent. Last month's European Championships in Madrid (ESP) saw **Rebecca Castaudi** (FRA) step forward to pick up the mantle of Elodie Clouvel as French leading lady. She turned in a brilliant performance to win gold, a display which felt like the two-time world junior champion underlining her ability at senior level too.

Emma Whitaker of **Great Britain** finished runner-up in Spain and has the talent to contend again, while the Hungarians must surely scent a medal. The questions are — which colour and which Blanka will claim it? **Blanka Guzi** (HUN) and **Blanka Bauer** (HUN) are currently ranked 3rd and 10th in the world, respectively and can ably make up for the absence of Gulyas (HUN). And much like the men's competition, there is a supremely talented Olympic bronze medalist to consider too: **Seungmin Seong** (KOR).



A fittingly big travelling party for the USA

As well as being the first global get-together for the elite since last summer's Paris Games, this week marks the first World Championships of an Olympic cycle which will reach its conclusion on American soil at LA28.

Appropriately, the **United States** are poised to capitalise on the opportunity to expose their athletes to priceless experience at the very top level. While there are bigger contingents from the powerhouse nations of the sport, it's notable that eight Americans have travelled to Lithuania.

There is a mix of experience and promise among the cohort. The soon-to-be 33-year-old **Tyler Evans** (USA) first tasted a UIPM World Championships back in 2019 in Budapest (HUN). He's almost 16 years the senior of teammate **Luke Filar** (USA) who made his TV debut this year on the

wildly popular American Ninja Warrior, displaying the stellar Obstacle skills he hopes to bring to the party in Kaunas (USA).

By Joe Callaghan