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MODERN PENTATHLON AT PARIS 2024 OLYMPIC GAMES: COMPETITION PREVIEW



A glittering array of talent will take to the stage from August 8-11, as the world's most versatile athletes bid to join the pantheon of heroes who have attained the status of Modern Pentathlon's Olympic champion – known in the Ancient Olympics era as *victor ludorum*.

There are six Olympic medallists in the field at Paris 2024, led by **Laura Asadauskaite** of **Lithuania**, reigning champions **Kate French** and **Joseph Choong** of **Great Britain**, **Elodie Clouvel** of **France**, **Ahmed Elgendy** of **Egypt** and **Woongtae Jun** of **Korea**.

The full line-up of 72 athletes was revealed on 8 July, with only one change thereafter – **Charles Brown** (GBR) replaced the injured Myles Pillage (GBR).

Ones to watch: Women

The 40-year-old Asadauskaite (LTU), gold medallist at London 2012 and silver medallist at Tokyo 2020, is poised to become the first woman and only the second pentathlete after Peter Macken of Australia to line up for five Olympic Games, teaming up in a formidable double act with UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup Final winner **Gintare Venckauskaite** (LTU).

At the other end of the age scale, 21-year-old world No.1 **Seungmin Seong** (KOR) will make her Olympic debut having become world champion for the first time in Zhengzhou (CHN) in June, while there are three teenage women in the field representing the next generation – **Malak Ismail** (EGY), **Lucie Hlavackova** of **Czechia** and 16-year-old **Sol Naranjo** of **Ecuador**.

Carrying the hopes of the home nation will be Rio 2016 silver medallist Clouvel (FRA) and 2018 European champion **Marie Oteiza** (FRA), while two-time world champion **Elena Micheli** lines up beside 2023 European Games winner and world record-holder **Alice Sotero** in a strong **Italy** team.

Tokyo 2020 champion French (GBR) returns for her third Games alongside debutante **Kerenza Bryson** (GBR), the current world No.5 and European champion. Both are expected to compete strongly in Fencing, where **Michelle Gulyas** of **Hungary** and **Salma Abdelmaksoud** (EGY) are also perennial contenders. But if they reach the Laser Run start line with a chance, faster runners like world No.2 **Blanka Guzi** (HUN) and world No.4 **Ilike Ozyuksel** of **Türkiye** will be impossible to ignore.

Outside of Africa, Europe and Asia, **Mexico** can have high hopes of featuring in the Final thanks to the experience and athleticism of **Mayan Oliver** and **Mariana Arceo**. And **Australia** is represented for the first time since Chloe Esposito won the country's first gold, with **Genevieve Janse van Rensburg** having taken up the sport after Rio 2016 champion Esposito (AUS) visited her school.



Ones to watch: Men

Csaba Bohm (HUN) will enter the Games as the undoubted favourite after winning gold at both the UIPM 2024 Pentathlon World Cup Final and World Championships, setting a new world record on each occasion. World silver medallist **Balazs Szep** (HUN) provides the strongest possible support and challenge to his team-mate.

The challenge from outside Europe is sure to be fierce again, following the Olympic medals won three years by **Ahmed Elgendy** (EGY, silver) and **Woongtae Jun** (KOR, bronze). Both return for another shot at glory alongside two of the breakthrough athletes of this cycle, **Mohanad Shaban** (EGY) and **Changwan Seo** (KOR).

He may not have enjoyed peak form this season, but class is permanent and many eyes will be on the reigning Olympic champion **Joseph Choong** (GBR), while the host nation's hopes rest on three-time Pentathlon World Cup Final winner **Valentin Prades** (FRA) and 2019 junior world champion **Jean-Baptiste Mourcia** (FRA).

Last time the Olympics was held in Europe, **China** secured its first Modern Pentathlon medal, and having reached three successive Finals before finishing 6th in the World Championships, **Shuai Luo** has an outside chance of emulating London 2012 silver medallist Zhongrong Cao.

There is a range of experience in the field – **Thailand** joins the Olympic pentathlon roster for the first time with **Phurit Yohuang** having qualified for his debut Games, while **Esteban Bustos** of **Chile** returns for his third – but overall it is relatively inexperienced, with 33-year-old **Alexandre Dallenbach** of **Switzerland** starting as the oldest male competitor.