

03 AUG 2021

# TOKYO 2020 OLYMPIC GAMES MODERN PENTATHLON: COMPETITION PREVIEW



- Olympic medallists and world champions meet in mouth-watering global contest
- Adapted Tokyo Stadium awaits 72 of the world's most versatile athletes
- President Schormann encourages participants to enjoy 'the experience of a lifetime'

Two days until showtime. The Olympic Modern Pentathlon, which has provided a dramatic climax to every Summer Games since Stockholm 1912, is finally about to begin at the rescheduled Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Seventy-two of the world's most versatile athletes are primed for the competition of their lives, starting on the indoor piste at Musashino Forest Sport Plaza where the Fencing Ranking Rounds for women and men take place on **Thursday, August 5.**

The action then moves to Tokyo Stadium, which has been rapidly transformed into a Pentathlon Arena in three days since the end of the Rugby 7s competition to become the first Olympic venue ever to accommodate all five disciplines of the Modern Pentathlon.

While the 50,000 seats in the stadium will mostly be empty due to COVID-19 Coronavirus

restrictions, Olympic pentathletes will perform for a global audience across TV, digital and radio in a dynamic Finals programme consisting of Swimming, Fencing Bonus Round, Riding and Laser Run.

Those four disciplines will form the centrepiece of the Women's Final on **Friday, August 6**, with the Men's Final taking place on **Saturday, August 7** (see detailed schedule below).



Laura Asadauskaite (LTU) celebrates victory in the Olympic test event, UIPM 2019 Pentathlon World Cup Final

### Ones to watch

In one sense, there is a 'brave new world' feeling about this Olympic Modern Pentathlon, with only two of the six medallists from the Rio 2016 Olympic Games – silver medallists **Elodie Clouvel** of **France** and **Pavlo Tymoshchenko** of **Ukraine** – in attendance.

On the flip side, there are another three Olympic medallists in the field and the strong form of these Modern Pentathlon legends indicates that it will be difficult for the new generation to keep them off the podium.

**Anastasiya Prokopenko** of **Belarus**, whose Olympic bronze dates back 13 years to Beijing 2008, became individual world champion for the second time since becoming a mother at the UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Championships in Cairo (EGY). **Adam Marosi** of **Hungary**, bronze medallist at London 2012, ended a much longer wait for his second world title 24 hours later.

Like Prokopenko (BLR), **Laura Asadauskaite** of **Lithuania** took the shortest of breaks from elite

sport to become a mother and it seems to have only had a positive impact on her athleticism and drive. If the London 2012 champion can fence well and stay in the mix through Riding, her stunning Laser Run speed will be hard to resist. No female athlete has yet won two Olympic medals and Asadauskaite (LTU) will take nothing for granted after her elimination in Riding at Rio 2016.

Having survived a nerve-wracking qualification journey, Clouvel (FRA) is part of a remarkably strong team alongside **Marie Oteiza**, **Valentin Prades** and her fiancé, two-time world champion **Valentin Belaud**. All four have won gold medals in global competitions and the same can be said of the **Great Britain** team of **Kate French**, **Joanna Muir**, **Joseph Choong** and 2018 world champion **James Cooke**. Up until the World Championships, which they had to miss due to Government travel restrictions, the British were enjoying a rare spree of medals and top-six finishes.

There are many other individual world champions in the 72-strong field, including **Jinhwa Jung** of **Korea** who sometimes plays second fiddle to his younger and more prolific team-mate **Woongtae Jun** (KOR).

Could one of them become the first Asian athlete to win an Olympic Modern Pentathlon medal since Zhongrong Cao of China in 2012? It is highly conceivable, but the Chinese team now coached by Cao (CHN) also has strong prospects – **Shuai Luo** and **Shuhuan Li** (CHN) won individual medals at the two most recent UIPM Pentathlon World Cup Finals.

The podium in Rio five years ago was globally representative, with **Australia** and **Mexico** joining European nations on the apex. Four Mexicans will spearhead the North American challenge in Tokyo, led by Pan American Games champion **Mariana Arceo** (MEX) and the hard-running **Mayan Oliver** (MEX).

Africa could be in the medal mix for the first time, thanks to **Egypt** and a four-strong team led by 21-year-old **Ahmed Elgendy**, who has a maturity beyond his years and a track record of senior success since winning the 2018 Youth Olympic Games that suggests that anything is possible.

Another 21-year-old with the world at her feet is **Michelle Gulyas** (HUN), whose form this season has been so good she has soared to No.1 in the world rankings alongside iconic team-mate Marosi (HUN), who is 16 years her senior. **Germany** is the other nation to have qualified the maximum four athletes, and their hopes of a first medal since Lena Schoeneborn won Beijing 2008 gold could rest on **Annika Schleu** (GER) and **Fabian Liebig** (GER), one of the fastest Laser Runners in the men's field.



Ahmed Elgendy (EGY), reigning Youth Olympic Games champion, celebrates his Olympic qualification

**President's statement**

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “The Olympic Games is the pinnacle of sport and I am delighted in the name of the UIPM Executive Board to welcome all qualified athletes, coaches and trainers and team leaders to join us for a wonderful celebration of Modern Pentathlon here in Tokyo.

“We are living in challenging times but the Olympic Games remains the most prestigious sporting event for all Olympic athletes, all International and National Federations and Olympic Committees.

“In the magical city of Tokyo we will find excellent facilities for Modern Pentathlon at the Musashino Forest Sport Plaza and the Tokyo Stadium, where all five disciplines will take place in one arena for the first time at the Olympic Games.

“I know that our athletes will perform at the highest level in a spirit of fairness and mutual respect. Baron Pierre de Coubertin created a very special multi-sport especially for the Olympic Games and it is very important to keep his legacy intact in the present and into the future.

“As UIPM President since 1993 I wish all participants the experience of a lifetime; I hope their dreams are fulfilled and we will all leave Tokyo with pride and wonderful memories.

“The Olympic Movement is alive and will continue to inspire future generations with the new motto – faster, higher, stronger, together.”



*Pentathletes practise Laser Run in the heat of Tokyo (JPN)*

## **Competition schedule**

All times local (JST)

Thursday, August 5

Women's Final

- 1pm: Fencing Ranking Round

Men's Final

- 4.30pm: Fencing Ranking Round

Friday, August 6

Women's Final

- 2.30pm: Swimming
- 3.45pm: Fencing Bonus Round
- 5.15pm: Riding
- 7.30pm: Laser Run

Saturday, August 7

Men's Final

- 2.30pm: Swimming
- 3.45pm: Fencing Bonus Round
- 5.15pm: Riding
- 7.30pm: Laser Run