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NEW PENTATHLON DISCIPLINE TEST EVENT III: THE TEENAGE ATHLETE VIEW – ‘IT’S EXCITING, CHALLENGING, FUN’



The next generation has spoken. Dozens of teenage pentathletes from around the world have endorsed the future direction of Modern Pentathlon after taking part in New Pentathlon Discipline Test Event III.

Taking a break from their participation in the UIPM 2022 Youth World Championships, 122 pentathletes from 21 countries sampled Obstacle Discipline for the first time on September 9 and 10. Dozens gave their immediate reaction and used words such as “exciting, challenging and fun” (*see below*) to describe the experience.

The event took place on a bespoke beach course where hundreds of spectators provided noisy support from a temporary tribune. The youth element added vibrancy to the overall spectacle compared to the previous, successful test events in Ankara (TUR) and Manila (PHI).

All the athletes, who competed throughout the week in Under 19 and Under 17 categories in the Youth World Championships, will be in their twenties by the time of the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games – when a new-look Modern Pentathlon will be introduced to the Olympic Games, pending approval by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).



Pentathlete reaction

The new discipline is very cool, funny, my arms got a workout but it's very good to be in the Modern Pentathlon" – **Mathilde Derval (FRA)**

"I really enjoyed it / I really enjoyed it / Yeah, it's so fun. It takes some time to get used to, but it's great" – **James Hulme / Zachary Hood / Raphael Huille (GBR)**

"It's very good, but a bit hard. In the race you need gloves" – **Szombor Mohi (HUN)**

"Just tried the New 5th Discipline and I think it's very intense and hard work but very fun, and it'll be a great addition to the Modern Pentathlon and straight into the Swimming or Laser Run, you need to get good with the arms" – **Jack Murray (GBR)**

"About the new discipline, I think it's very good for young athletes. It will be a good new sport" – **Moustafa Abouamer (EGY)**

"I think obstacle is so fun, and it will be better in future and I think it's a better option" – **Tarek Sadek (EGY)**

"It's a little bit hard but it's okay, we can train hard and we will make a good improvement and reach the highest place in this discipline, and we can do this in Egypt" – **Osama Zaki (EGY)**

"I think it's a good change, and it was fun; obviously I'll need to practise a bunch but once I get a bit of practice in, it will be really good and fun" – **Emmet Gosche (CAN)**

"It's fun; it aches on the arms and it's painful on the hands; I think overall good" – **Stefan Chirita (ROM)**

"It's an amazing game, it's hard but exciting and super fun" – **Ritage Ramadan (EGY)**

"I really enjoyed it" – **Elizabeth Ryan (GBR)**

"I love it but it's very, very difficult" – **Coline Flavin (FRA)**

"I think it's fun, I love it" – **Farida Abohashim (EGY)**

"It was a very great opportunity to try this discipline, it was fun and I will wait to try this one more time" – **Teja Pakinkyte (LTU)**

"It was really fun and I enjoyed it" – **Vivienne Meyer (SUI)**

"I really enjoyed it, it's definitely challenging but I recommend it, it's really good" – **Eva Marsh (GBR)**

"The competition was really exciting, it's hard and it's fun, I like it so much" – **Damaris Garza (MEX)**

"We just had a go at the New 5th Discipline and it's amazing, I love it" – **Poppy Clark (GBR)**

"I like this sport because it's wild and exciting" – **Matteo Amadei (ITA)**

"I like it, it was my first time and I think afterwards the shooting would be very difficult because now my arms and hands hurt" – **Valentina Martinescu (ITA)**

"I felt great doing the obstacles, because it was a thing I'd never done in my life. I enjoyed it a lot, it was really fun" – **Luisa Cunha (POR)**

"I liked it, it was funny and sometimes hard, but it was good" – **Amaya El-Masri (GER)**

"I liked it, because I always watch TV series about obstacle courses at home, so I always wanted to try them" – **Milan Czak (HUN)**

"I really liked the challenge today, I like that it was fast-paced and I think there are quite a few obstacles that are pretty hard" – **Szombor Tarkanyi (HUN)**

"It was very challenging but I still like it a lot; for the sport, it's good" – **Jose Molina (GUA)**

"I thought it was pretty good, it was a good challenge and I had a lot of fun doing it; even if some of the obstacles were scary at first, I thoroughly enjoyed it" – **Connor Chow (CAN)**

UIPM Athletes Committee reaction

Yasser Hefny OLY, Chair of the UIPM Athletes Committee, said: “We already saw a lot of excitement and enjoyment from athletes who tried Obstacle Discipline in Ankara and Manila but this Test Event took it to a new level.

“These U19 and U17 athletes are the future of our sport and will be a big part of the first generation to perform the new discipline at the LA28 Olympic Games. We can already see that they are enthusiastic and they want to learn and improve.

“We heard the voice of youth loud and clear, both at the competition venue and in a meeting afterwards. They are happy to have more information about Obstacle Discipline and they are happy to have tried it. I recommend that all generations of pentathletes listen carefully to the views of these athletes when forming their own opinions about the future direction of the sport.”



How it worked

Test Event III was held on a beach in front of the Bella Italia complex in Lignano Sabbiadoro (ITA).

A bespoke course was constructed in collaboration with World Obstacle (FISO) and Tokyo Broadcasting System Television (TBS), the rights holder of the globally popular *SASUKE/Ninja Warrior* TV show.

The following 21 countries from five continents registered athletes to take part:

- Brazil
- Canada
- Egypt
- France

- Georgia
- Germany
- Great Britain
- Guatemala
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Japan
- Korea
- Lithuania
- Mexico
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Ukraine

The event was attended by obstacle specialists **Dimitri Houles** of **France** and **Ibtisam Gardabou** of **Belgium**, who joined six other obstacle athletes from Italy and France. Each day the specialists led a group warm-up and provided a demonstration, which was followed by a free training session and then a competition.

All participants were invited to provide formal feedback on their experience along with coaches and observers, as per the previous two Test Events in Ankara (TUR) and Manila (PHI).

Earlier on both days, around 35 athletes of all ages from clubs across Italy were given a separate opportunity to test the obstacle course.

The course was comprised of the following 10 obstacles:

1. Wing nuts
2. 1.5m wall (over)
3. 1.5m wall (under)
4. Through bars
5. Cycle road
6. Balance beam
7. Monkey bars
8. Run and roll
9. Sonic swing
10. Warped wall

Podium summary

On day one, there was success for the host nation as **Valentina Martinescu** (ITA) took out the women's gold medal, defeating **Luisa Cunha** (POR) in the showpiece race. Bronze went to **Amaya El-Masri** (GER).

Connor Chow (CAN) demonstrated his prowess by defeating **Milan Csak** (HUN) in the men's

gold-medal race, with **Jose Molina** (GUA) taking the bronze.

On day two, Chow (CAN) won gold again after a gripping battle with **Nojus Chmieliauskas** (LTU), winner of the U19 Men's Relay in Modern Pentathlon a week ago. Molina (GUA) showed his consistency by adding a second bronze.

The women's champion was **Farida Abohashim** (EGY), who triumphed over silver medallist **Anna Dudka** (UKR) as **Damaris Garza** (HUN) – another U19 World Championships medallist – took home the bronze.



UIPM / National Federation reaction

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: “What we saw from the athletes who took part in this third Test Event of the New Pentathlon Discipline was a high level of excitement – they were asking ‘can we repeat, can we repeat?’

“We have learned from these young athletes is that we are on the right track. As we all know, we already tested the concept with seniors in Ankara and then a mixed demographic in Manila, but here the young athletes are focusing on the future and we are focusing on the future.

“It will be very important for us to receive their feedback and find out more about what they liked, what were their impressions. The voice of athletes is always important and has to stay in the centre of our preparations and later our discussions and the decision that will be made by Congress.

“I’m grateful to all who have helped to prepare and arrange this Test Event, especially the Italian Modern Pentathlon Federation and all our people from the obstacle society who provided assistance so that our athletes can learn and adapt.

“We are looking forward to Test Event IV, which will be hosted in Zielona Gora during the UIPM 2022 Junior World Championships and I’m sure it will be another exciting opportunity for young athletes. After four Test Events we will have a good platform for future decisions.”

Fabrizio Bittner, President of the Italian Modern Pentathlon Federation (FIPM), said: “*Alongside the* UIPM Youth World Championships we witnessed the presentation and tests of the New Pentathlon Discipline that will replace Riding in our sport. The results and the enthusiasm it arouses seem good to me; personally, I see it as a challenge for the future as well as for the training of a new type of athlete.

“It is no secret that a pentathlete must be open to challenges and obstacles to overcome. This aspect has always been part of our tradition.”

Background

Obstacle Discipline is undergoing an intensive pilot phase as a potential addition to Modern Pentathlon for the LA28 Olympic Games. After the successful Test Event I in Ankara (TUR) and Test Event II in Manila (PHI), Test Event III will be followed by Test Event IV in Zielona Gora (POL) on October 7-8, with a special focus on junior (Under 22) participants.

Obstacle Discipline was selected in May 2022 for testing. At the end of the testing and evaluation phase, UIPM 2022 Congress will vote on proposals for the LA28 Modern Pentathlon format to be submitted to the IOC.

Participants in Test Event I gave the event a resounding seal of approval in their answers to an official survey. More than nine out of 10 participating pentathletes (92%) and observers (93%) said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall Test Event experience.

Participants in Test Event II also answered the survey with high enthusiasm, with 90% of pentathletes and 85% of observers saying they were very satisfied with the overall Test Event experience.