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NEW YEAR, WHOLE NEW SPORT: FIVE THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR IN 2025



The early days of 2025 have come and gone and some new year's resolutions may already be wavering. But the Modern Pentathlon world is fully focused on goals for the year ahead.

That's because 2025 is not just a new year but the first year of a new Olympic cycle. And while January may be a quiet time of pre-season preparation, the action will soon begin. Here are five reasons to be very excited about what 2025 has to offer...



LA highway opens with dynamic defending champs in driving seat

While the magic of a historic summer in Versailles will live long in the memory banks, the pace of elite sport remains relentless and so the Paris 2024 Olympic cycle is now firmly in the rearview mirror.

Once the calendar flipped over to 2025, the first glimpse of Los Angeles loomed into view and the new year began with brand new Olympic dreams. Modern Pentathlon will head towards the first Games to take place in the US for 32 years with two dynamic defending champions at the head of the queue.

Michelle Gulyas (HUN) and Ahmed Elgendy (EGY) savoured golden glory last August in what was a second Olympics for each of the duo. A third Games is now the focus for two of the most consistently brilliant athletes in the sport, both of whom are still just 24 years of age.

However, in a sport where new talents can rapidly emerge and dominance can be hard to sustain, the integration of a new fifth discipline will provide a hugely intriguing leveller for those who have their eyes on challenging Gulyas and Elgendy to reach the pinnacle of the LA28 podium.



Now everyone gets into the swing of Obstacle

February 25 is a date that looms large in the 2025 calendar. It will eventually hold a special place in the history books. The first event of the senior UIPM season will be a watershed moment as the new Modern Pentathlon with Obstacle replacing Riding makes its debut at the highest level.

With Obstacle having already proven to be a compelling and dynamic addition to the sport during its integration across younger age groups in the past 18 months, UIPM 2025 Pentathlon World Cup Cairo will be the moment its integration across all levels of the sport is complete.

How the senior stars of the Paris 2024 cycle adapt to the unique challenges posed by the Obstacle course as well as the new competition sequence of Fencing / Obstacle / Swimming / Laser Run will be fascinating.

In the aftermath of the 2024 Games, the vast majority of participants insisted they wanted to tackle the challenge. The next generation, of course, have already had a chance to get to grips with it all. Will that prove to be a game-changer? Time will tell.



What teen phenomenon Farida Khalil does next

In late January 2025, Farida Khalil (EGY) celebrated her 14th birthday. To say she has fitted a lot into her life and sporting career to date would be an understatement. Khalil's already-burgeoning reputation exploded in spectacular fashion in 2024 as she delivered a campaign of total dominance.

From April to October she competed 13 different times across individual, team and relay events. She finished in the top three all but once. Among her haul of medals, she retained her UIPM U17 Pentathlon World Championships title and then rounded off the year with a clean sweep at the UIPM U19 Pentathlon World Championships, claiming four gold medals.

"God gave me these gifts and I will do my best to get into this position to win prizes in higher categories," Khalil said. "I am looking forward to the seniors next year and now look forward to a gold medal in seniors and a gold medal at the LA28 Olympics."

Watching her chase those goals — and golds — among the sport's elite will be fascinating.



South Africa prepares to welcome the world — twice

While Egypt's recent prowess was particularly evident in 2024 with the triumphs of Ahmed Elgendy and Farida Khalil, among others, UIPM development across the continent of Africa continued apace.

Now in 2025, attentions will turn to the southern tip as South Africa prepares for a hectic and exciting year of hosting major UIPM championships for the first time in well over a decade.

This summer, the UIPM U17 Pentathlon World Championships will take place in Johannesburg from July 17-20, the country's most-populous city.

Later in the year, history will be made on the country's stunning Western Cape as the picturesque coastal town of Mossel Bay will host the UIPM 2025 Biathlon-Triathlon and Laser Run World Championships, being combined for the first time and running from December 9-14.

Hype would appear to already be building: recent estimates from organisers suggested there will be as many as 500 competitors from the host nation alone for the combined event.



Executive Board turns the page with new faces and energy

The decision to award those two competitions to South Africa was rubber-stamped at the 73rd UIPM Congress in November 2024. And there were many more significant developments during the historic gathering in Riyadh (KSA).

Numerous new faces were elevated on to the UIPM Executive Board as elections delivered fresh and first-time office-bearers in many of the key roles in the sport. At the very top, Rob Stull OLY (USA) took over from outgoing President Dr Klaus Schormann and he was joined by four new UIPM Vice Presidents and a host of other new EB members, including an increase in female representation, a younger average age and a fascinating continental spread.

“You can feel how exciting this is,” Mr. Stull told UIPM News.

The renewal of energy, optimism and ideas will be evident — and pivotal — as the new EB’s four-year mandate kicks off with a meeting at the end of January 2025, leading all the way to Los Angeles 2028.

By Joe Callaghan