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UIPM 2025 U19 PENTATHLON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: TAKE FIVE



The UIPM 2025 U19 Pentathlon World Championships take place in Druskininkai, Lithuania, from August 20-23. Here are five things to look out for.

Running out of words for fantastic Farida

What more is there to be said about **Farida Khalil** of **Egypt**? The wonderkid's performances this year evoke a famous piece of football commentary when a brilliant and prolific striker kept producing moments of magic. "We're beginning to run out of superlatives," cooed the commentator.

It has surely felt the same in recent times as Khalil (EGY) has taken her youth dominance to the senior stage. But we'd better find a thesaurus because it's important to remember that Khalil is still just 14 years of age. We cannot afford to be running out of superlatives any time soon.

A reminder of the Farida streak: since November 2023 Khalil (EGY) has featured in 15 individual finals at UIPM events. All 15 times she has finished on the podium, winning eight gold medals, four silver and three bronze.

She travels to Lithuania not just as defending U19 world champion but also the reigning Junior and U17 supremo. The teen queen's eyes are fixed on Senior glory later this month in Kaunas (LTU). If she wants to complete a mind-boggling quadruple there, then first she must retain her U19 crown.

Lim (KOR) looks to catch lighting in a bottle again

While Khalil (EGY) returns to defend her title as an athlete we have grown accustomed to watching on a regular basis, the same cannot be said of her male counterpart.



Taegyung Lim of **Korea** stormed to the Men's U19 title last year in Druskininkai (LTU) by setting a new overall world record, in the process wrecking an Egyptian gold rush. However, we have seen precious little of Lim (KOR) since his golden moment and this will be his first official UIPM competition in a year.

The 18-year-old will return to the scene of his glory with plenty of company, part of an eight-strong team from Korea with six male hopefuls among them. We have become accustomed to seeing representatives of the Asian powerhouse on the podium any time the world's best gather, with back-to-back Korean medallists at the Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Olympic Games. Lim (KOR) has a chance to make lightning strike twice.

He can expect to face stiff competition from **Nemere Szecsi** of **Hungary**, the newly crowned world U17 champ who arrives chasing a double.



Plenty of big game hunters looking for upset

As Khalil (EGY) celebrated her U17 triumph last month, two rungs down from her on the podium was a medallist with perhaps an even wider smile. **Tatiana Thomatos** of **South Africa** had delivered a medal on home soil in Johannesburg (RSA).

Five weeks later, Thomatos (RSA) will pitch up to another face-off with the world's best with all of that positivity. Another key factor going for her — she knows what it takes to become world champion, having won the U15 title last year.



Behind the overwhelming favourite a truly global field features many who have delivered under the bright lights. Khalil's counterpart, **Alia Enayet** (EGY) returns having won silver at the 2024 U19 World Championships while current U17 world silver medallist **Annachiara Allara** of **Italy** has plenty of pedigree too.

Hungary athletes walked away from last year's edition wondering what might have been as they occupied positions 4-6 after the Final. **Linda Haraszin** (HUN), a stellar Laser Run competitor, will return looking to go at least one better than her tantalising 4th-place finish in 2024.

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More green shoots in the city with a 'Modern Pentathlon Forest'

Druskininkai (LTU) may not roll off the tongue as rapidly as some of the renowned global capital cities which host some of UIPM's most high-profile competitions. However, the spa resort has quickly become a favourite for the wave of young athletes who have visited.

Surrounded by forests with rivers and lakes, it's a natural paradise that has proven a fitting and frequent host for big events: in the past two years it has held the UIPM 2023 Junior World Championships and UIPM 2024 U19 World Championships as well as European U17 and U19 Championships.

In conjunction with the Lithuanian Modern Pentathlon Federation, the city last year demonstrated its commitment to environmental sustainability with a pledge to plant 1,500 trees during this competition in an area named 'Modern Pentathlon Forest'. Keeping the place green and clean is a priority.

This year it will also make further positive steps as Druskininkai will help the UIPM Para Sports movement continues break new ground with the first UIPM Para Tetrathlon World Championships

forming part of the competition schedule. Athletes in the PMP4 and PMP5 classification categories will compete in Swimming, Laser Run and Obstacle disciplines across two days of exciting competition.

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Home hopefuls and young dreamers

A field of more than 170 athletes representing 31 countries from every corner of Planet Pentathlon will be gathering in Lithuanian's verdant south. Looking up and down the pages of entrants the eye is caught by so many big names but also lesser-knowns. The beauty of this competition is the platform it offers for break-out stars. Certainly the squad of 16 competitors representing the host nation will be dreaming of just that.

As the sport continues to grow apace in Asia, it's fitting that the youngest hopefuls should represent burgeoning nations there. On the Men's side the honour goes to **Bader Alsuhaibi** of **Kuwait**, born in September 2012 and not yet 13, who will be going toe to toe with rivals seven years his senior.

In the Women's competition, it is **Yu-En Lee** of **Chinese Taipei** who is surrounded exclusively by elders. Born in March of 2013, she's the youngest in the entire competition.