

19 AUG 2025

PRESIDENT'S VIEW: WELCOME TO KAUNAS. ENJOY THE SHOW!



If I had to summarise the upcoming UIPM 2025 Pentathlon World Championships in just three words, I would choose: "Enjoy The Show!"

Modern Pentathlon is still exactly what Coubertin meant it to be – the ultimate examination of an athlete's physical and mental prowess.

Our exciting, 90-minute, start-to-finish format complete with new and improved disciplines enables us to honour and maintain this vital hallmark. But it also gives us the chance to attract more people – especially young people – to Pentathlon, by transforming our great sport into an entertainment product worthy of the Olympic Games.

Back when I started competing, this sport took five days to complete – now it's all done in an hour and a half. The action is relentless and thrilling. It's also very exciting for athletes. And we will continue to evolve the show, innovating around the presentation as well as the sport itself, to draw more audiences to Pentathlon for the benefit of everyone.

In close collaboration with our dedicated partners in Lithuania, we are putting on a World

Championships that will be dynamic, innovative and designed to entertain. From the athletes' walk-on to the final Laser Run, you'll see Modern Pentathlon as you've never seen it before — bolder, faster and more spectacular.

This year's flagship competition marks a turning point for Pentathlon. For the first time, our elite athletes are competing under the new format that includes direct elimination in Fencing and the brand-new Obstacle discipline, alongside Swimming and Laser Run. These changes are not just technical — they represent a reimagining of how our sport is seen and felt.

We are in the business of developing stars. Kaunas is the first major opportunity to show how we have turned a page, and how our athletes are rising to the challenge of a faster, more exciting and more viewer-focused competition. I believe many of the athletes you see on the field of play in Kaunas will be the same athletes you will be cheering for when the Olympic Games come to Los Angeles in 2028.

The Local Organising Committee here in Lithuania has done a tremendous job to prepare a world-class event. Zalgiris Arena is a spectacular venue, and the energy in the city reflects the excitement we feel across our global community.

But there's more to this than results. We are also building a signature viewer experience — something to make Modern Pentathlon stand out, both within the Olympic movement and beyond. In Budapest, we introduced a dramatic new walk-on for athletes to the sound of AC/DC's *Thunderstruck*. The reaction from fans was electric.



That's just one example of how we are working to make the sport unforgettable. We will appeal to all senses — the sights, sound, smells and feel of the arena, in addition to the great local fare that fans can taste.

Our athletes are the stars — and just like in theatre or cinema, sport must now entertain as well as inspire. That's the mission behind the evolution of Pentathlon. That's why we introduced Obstacle. That's why we transformed Fencing. And that's why, in Kaunas, you're going to see something truly special.

So wherever you're watching from — whether in the arena or online — thank you for being part of this moment. Enjoy the show!

Reflections on the season so far

It has been a long, hot summer in the northern hemisphere and I would like to share with you a few reflections from key events I have attended.

On June 23, it was a privilege to be present at the handover of the IOC Presidency, from Dr Thomas Bach to Kirsty Coventry – on Olympic Day.

The outgoing President's speech mentioned Baron Pierre de Coubertin and how the Olympic movement owes him everything. The Baron is our founder and we feel the same way, and we are looking forward to honouring him on Pierre de Coubertin Pentathlon Day (September 9).



Then it was on to Hungary, where we celebrated record numbers taking part in the Junior World Championships, nearly 200 young men and women.

In a post-Olympic year, this was impressive and Juniors really matters because they fuel the Senior level. But we do need more nations participate, and there will be an increase as we become more diligent with managing costs and calendars. We also know that some nations are finding it harder to accelerate development.

Of course it is very important to increase the number of participating nations. But our first priority is developing a viable commercial product that we can take to market to raise real funding for development.

Change takes time and we must be patient and keep making the case for more public and corporate investment in our sport. Every nation has its own plan and you will see different breakthroughs at different times when resources become available.

Following a typical successful Hungarian hosting experience, Egypt then staged a Pentathlon double-header of World Cup Final and World Relay Championships. The World Cup Final illustrated the elite talent we have in this first year of the Olympic cycle. We saw incredible success for the home nation across the World Cup Final and Relay World Championships, with a huge effort between staff and volunteers making very special memories for all involved and setting up what is now a mouth-watering Senior World Championships in Kaunas.



It wasn't summer in South Africa when they held the U17 World Championships in Johannesburg, and this was a welcome relief for the competing athletes.

Frans van Niekerk and his LOC team did an excellent job of presenting their first global pentathlon event in 18 years. It was winter so the temperatures were very pleasant and the athletes enjoyed it so much. The South African organisation and hospitality was wonderful and visitors got a real taste of the country.

I also went on a site visit to Mossel Bay, and I echo the sentiments of anyone else who has been there: the Biathle-Triathle World Championships is going to be a wonderful competition. Please sign up ASAP because accommodation at the main venue is going to be limited.

Finally, it was an honour to be invited by HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco to attend the World Athletics Herculis Meeting in Monaco. It was a chance not only to see some top-class track and field but also to speak to influential IOC Members like Lord Sebastian Coe, Sergei Bubka and Karl Stoss, many of whom will be joining us in Kaunas as a result of conversations we had in Monaco.

I have told them to expect something special – and that is what we, collectively, will deliver in the last week of August. Enjoy the show!