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# **FUTURE SHINES BRIGHTLY AS EMERGING NATIONS IMPRESS IN ASIAN AND PAN AMERICAN / SOUTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS**



The surge of energy and interest brought about by Pentathlon's Obstacle revolution has rarely been more evident than in recent weeks where on either side of the Pacific, two continental confederations celebrated record participation in their championships.

Across both the 2025 Asian Senior Championships and the 2025 Pan American / South American Senior and Junior Championships, there were also breakthrough performances from emerging nations as the hugely positive knock-on effects of the implementation of the newest discipline are being felt.

One of the primary hopes and aims with the introduction of Obstacle was that its unique combination of dynamism and accessibility would help increase the inclusivity and reach of Pentathlon, and both continental championships showed that that is indeed already the case.

At the 2025 Pan American / South American Championships, held in the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires from November 6-9, a record 17 nations took part with a fresh landscape for the continent emerging through some exhilarating action.



With athletes representing 11 South American countries and a further 6 nations from across the NORCECA confederation, regional powerhouse **Guatemala** underlined its current supremacy with a string of gold medals.

Host nation **Argentina** was also a prolific presence on the podium, while **Venezuela** made a hugely impressive breakthrough, taking a haul of silvers and bronze home from a week of stellar performances. **Uruguay** sent a full contingent of competitors and was rewarded with a team medal while **Brazil**, **Panama**, **Chile** and **Cuba** also enjoyed podium rewards.

Top honours in the Women's Individual competitions went to **Paula Valencia** (GUA) who won the Pan-American title and **Maria Serrano** (ARG) crowned South America's queen.





On the Men's Individual side it was **Andres Fernandez** (GUA) who won Pan-Am honours while **Franco Serrano** (ARG) delighted home fans by taking South American gold. **Albert Rivas** (VEN) took an individual silver (South American) and bronze (Pan American).

The following week, attentions turned to the Aichi Prefecture of **Japan** where the picturesque city of Anjo hosted the 2025 Asian Senior Championships. There, the growth of the sport was again highly apparent with a record 21 nations gathering to vie for continental supremacy.

Among the perennial contenders came a new wave of hopefuls with **Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Palestine** and **Lebanon** all represented for the first time as development of UIPM sports across the vast breadth of the Asian confederation paid promising dividends.



As in Buenos Aires (ARG), the signs of progress were not just among the newcomers joining but with lesser-heralded nations making significant breakthroughs to contend and racking up ranking positions in the process.

A huge team from the **Philippines** could feel particularly proud of their efforts despite leaving without a medal. In the Men's Final in Anjo (JPN), **Michael Comaling** (PHI) came within seconds of a historic podium performance as he finished 4th. There were also 4th, 5th and 6th-placed performances in Relay and Team events for a Filipino team that has undoubtedly been galvanised by the integration of OCR – a very popular sport in the Asian archipelago.

In the Women's Final, **Korea** superstar **Seungmin Seong** underlined her big-event pedigree as the 2024 Olympic bronze medallist roared to gold ahead of **Xiyao Wu** (CHN) and **Jing Fu** (CHN).

Another Olympic hero to impress was Paris 2024 silver medalist **Taishu Sato** (JPN), who delighted the home fans as he returned the podium with a bronze in a Men's Final where the experienced **Changwan Seo** (KOR) was forced into second place by a brilliant performance from **Liuchang Li** (CHN), who was crowned Asian champion.

UIPM President Rob Stull OLY said: "We have had great faith that our concerted investment and focus development allied with the addition of Obstacle as a dynamic fifth discipline would help fuel new growth for our sports. The past month has served as a compelling signal that we are indeed trending in all the right directions.

"What we have seen in both the 2025 Pan American / South American Championships and the 2025 Asian Championships is that spark igniting new energy and identity across the globe. It's not just the raft of countries making a breakthrough at a major continental championships, but the performances of so many nations being rewarded in the final standings.

"My congratulations go to all of those athletes taking part, especially the first-timers who I'm sure

went home feeling hungry for more. I must also congratulate our Confederations and our National Federations for their wonderful development work and for organising these landmark competitions. The present is bright and the future is already shining before us.”