



# GoodSport NEWS

S R I L A N K A O L Y M P I C W E E K L Y N E W S B U L L E T I N

NOC NEWS

*Pentathlon – an old sport in a new packing*



**“This sport is growing fast”**  
*- Nishantha Piyasena -*

**P**entathlon is an ancient Greek Olympic sport. To understand the sport, we delved to the assistance of Wikipedia who describes the sport in this manner.

“The first documented pentathlon occurred in 708 BC in Ancient Greece at the Ancient Olympic Games, and was also held at the other Panhellenic Games.” The name derives from Greek words for “five competitions”.

The event proved popular and lent itself to illustrations on pottery. It is also featured in Greek mythology; the mythical hero Perseus fulfilled an oracle's prophecy by accidentally killing Acrisius with a discus while competing in the pentathlon.

In mythology, Jason is credited with inventing the pentathlon, and he declared his friend Peleus as the first winner of the event, after his -

victory in wrestling.

The wide variety of skills needed to compete meant that pentathletes were held in high esteem as physical specimens; in rhetoric, Aristotle remarked, “a body capable of enduring all efforts, either of the race-course or of bodily strength...this is why the athletes in the pentathlon are most beautiful”.

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1912 Olympic gold medal winner Ferdinand Bie referenced that story after completing the events.

By the 77th Olympics, the athletic event was usually ordered into the triagmos (long jump, javelin throw, and discus throw), followed by the stadion foot race and wrestling, as the final event.

Unlike modern athletics, the first three events did not appear as individual events outside of the pentathlon format.



Other variations on the format included boxing or pankration instead of the stadion race. Five years ago, this sport was established and formatted under the title of Modern Pentathlon by -

President Nishantha Piyasena, who is a seasoned campaigner in the administrative parasol.

In reality this sport is a serious challenge and to discuss the pros and cons of it, GoodSport invited Nishantha Piyasena.

“We launched this discipline in 2015 and building this up is a gradual process.

As you are well aware this is not confined to one discipline – this consists of five. They are swimming, running, shooting – running and shooting are combined sports,

That was the easiest manner to lure the people to the sport. The novelty in this is that, the gun that we use is a laser gun, sans any pellets or bullets, you have to have the target through the laser beam.

Late 2015 our mother-body UIPM adopted a very practical approach to the sport of pentathlon. It was called “the ladder in the form of a pyramid.”

GoodSport asked Piyasena with regard to how they are planning to take the sport to schools. He explained, “It was a big challenge to us.



then come the fencing and the horse riding.

This is the structure of modern pentathlon. At the moment we are very happy because we

are in the process of developing our sport in the Colombo area as well as some parts of the outstation. We started the first in 2016 – we had a very colourful event in Kotte and we called it the laser run and that consisted of only two disciplines.

Initially when we approached the Ministry of Education and explained to them what this sport was about, the reply was negative.

They said that already they have too many schools in their list, because it already consists of five different sports all in one.

But we were not discouraged; we started to introduce the sport to children, especially through International Schools district by district, and ended up with a sizable participation and that helped us to organise the events thereafter.

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Now I am confident that when the sport is growing in stature, the Education Ministry would give us their stamp of approval sooner than later.

“We have twelve clubs at present. Right now, we do not have district or provincial associations. We manage our development work and conduct programmes through our clubs. We have National tours and City tours which are affiliated by the UPIM; approved under their calendar.

In the City Tour all clubs can participate. At the same time, we also may invite some outside participants also to take part in these tours.”

The next question was how the sport is faring internationally? Piyasena said “We have performed quite impressively overseas too.

In 2016 we were in Goa, India and there we won three medals – gold, silver and bronze, that was the regional international championships. It was the Biathlon event – running and swimming.

Then in 2018 we participated in the laser run world championship – that was running and shooting. It was in Dublin, Ireland and we won the seventh and tenth place in the world.

That’s what we are capable understand in this short span of activity. We got the courage to move forward with this achievement.

“Meanwhile the UPIM had introduced the pyramid ladder. At that point we were in the second layer – Biathlon and Laser Run.

Then we tried to climb to the third layer – that is the triathlon.

That consists of running, swimming and shooting and that is more akin to beach events. In 2019 we took part in an event in Kazakhstan; that was the Asian championship and it was a triathlon event.



We got an invitation and we participated in the Wuhan Olympic Games.



“We are proud to mention that two of our athletes were selected for that and we were in a very good position at the Wuhan Games; they completed their disciplines in the 37th place in Asia.

“At that, the qualifying rounds there were only for the five events, but we did only four disciplines. Now we are more than confident that

In that outing we won seven medals – one gold, two silver and four bronze. I guess that was the turning point for us.

This opened the doors for us to be a part of the Olympic qualifying games in Wuhan – that was in the latter part of 2019. Simultaneously we also decided to move on to the fourth slot of the pyramid ladder, by introducing fencing to our disciplines. This means we had moved to the level of competing in the Triathlon.

in the near future, we could stage a competitor or two taking part in the Pentathlon” said Piyasena in conclusion.



# Birmingham 2022 joins forces with Severn Trent for a greener world

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2021, with 500 days to go until the start of Birmingham 2022, organisers have unveiled plans to deliver the first ever carbon-neutral Commonwealth Games.

Outlined in its newly published sustainability pledge, Birmingham 2022 has laid clear a series of commitments and the steps it will take with the aim of achieving this milestone, as well as other operational work-streams that will help it become the most sustainable Commonwealth Games to date.

A critical part of this commitment is the forming of a new partnership with Severn Trent. Becoming Birmingham 2022's Official Nature and Carbon Neutral Supporter, Severn Trent will be responsible for delivering a series of initiatives that help offset the carbon generated by the Commonwealth Games and hopes to leave a positive social and environmental legacy of sustainability in the West Midlands.

Two of the standout initiatives that Severn Trent will be delivering on behalf of Birmingham 2022 include the creation of 2022 acres of forest, as well as 72 tennis-court-sized mini forests, to be built in urban areas across the West Midlands. Each mini forest will be linked to one of the nations and territories competing at the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

The 2022 acres of forest, intended to be based in the

West Midlands, will feature native species, and will not only help local people reconnect with nature, but will also help offset the carbon generated by the Games.

Improving the natural environment has a positive impact on natural water sources, which is why alongside already pledging to be a net zero carbon organisation by 2030, Severn Trent has committed to planting 1.3 million new trees and enhancing 5,000 hectares of biodiversity as part of its existing Great Big Nature Boost initiative.

Ian Reid, Chief Executive of Birmingham 2022 said, "We have always had strong ambitions to set new standards in all we do with these Commonwealth Games and make significant progress in areas that matter. Our plan not only outlines how we will continue to support the region-wide economic recovery, but also demonstrates how we will leave a credible piece of social and environmental legacy.

"Our new partnership with Severn Trent is incredibly important to achieving these ambitions, and it sets a compelling benchmark for how we deliver on all aspects of sustainability over the next 18 months. Our commitment to become the first carbon-neutral Games is a significant one, and this marks just the start of our journey to make these Commonwealth Games the most sustainable to date."

Liv Garfield, CEO of Severn Trent said, "We're delighted to be partnering with the Commonwealth Games and to play a leading role in helping make Birmingham 2022 the most sustainable games ever. We're passionate about making a positive impact on the communities and the environment where we live and operate, and to the lives of everyone that we serve. And that's why we just had to be involved. Through this exciting partnership we'll build on our existing work and ambitions to deliver lasting social and environmental change by creating new green urban-



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spaces, further enhancing biodiversity, promoting plastic-free thinking and ultimately delivering a carbon neutral legacy for generations to come.”

In his acceptance speech addressing the IOC Members, President Bach said, “In the meantime, you know me well enough that I would also like to look forward and continue to achieve ambitious goals with you also in the post-coronavirus world.



“We learned during this coronavirus crisis, the hard way, that we can live up to our Olympic slogan ‘faster, higher, stronger’ in sport and in life, only if we are working together in solidarity.

“The creation of 2022 acres of forest, as well as 72 new urban forests in the West Midlands, is an inspired initiative that will provide numerous benefits for the local community.

“This will set a long-term blueprint for future Commonwealth Games that will make our event a global leader when it comes to staging sustainable, environmentally-sound sporting competition. I would like to give special recognition to our excellent team at CGF Partnerships (CGFP) in securing Birmingham 2022’s Official Nature and Carbon Neutral Supporter.

“Severn Trent is the perfect partner to help us deliver a carbon neutral legacy and we are delighted to be working with them.”

The plans come just a few months before the UK hosts the COP26 summit in Glasgow, host city for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, which will bring together heads of state, climate experts and campaigners to agree coordinated action to tackle climate change.

Nigel Huddleston, Minister for Sport and Tourism said, “I’m delighted to support Birmingham 2022’s ambition to be the first ever carbon-neutral Commonwealth Games. I hope this will set a new standard for major events as we look to build back greener and play our part in building a more sustainable future for us all.”

Cllr Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council, said, “As a city that aims to take a leading role in tackling climate change, there is so much in this sustainability pledge and the partnership plans with Severn Trent that complements what we are already doing.

We have stated through our own Route-to-zero project that we want to get to net zero carbon in the shortest possible time and only this month were reconfirmed as a Tree City of the World.

“The other social and economic pillars of the sustainability pledge also resonate strongly with everything we are doing at a city level. This pledge, when delivering on its ambitions, will undoubtedly bolster our efforts to improve life in Birmingham.”

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, said, “The West Midlands is facing a very serious climate emergency, and in order to reach our #WM2041 goal of carbon neutrality by 2041 there are going to have to be some very radical steps taken.



“Today’s announcement about the Commonwealth Games being the first ever carbon-neutral games is exactly that, and the organisers alongside Severn Trent deserve enormous praise for such a bold and courageous move that sets a precedent right across the globe. We’re looking forward to working with Severn Trent on the really exciting plans to create 2022 acres of forest across the region in places that will benefit people across the West Midlands.” “The move to carbon-neutrality for the Games should also help create thousands of jobs across the West Midlands, working hand in glove with my plan to get 100,000 people into work in the next two years to help the region recover from the economic damage the Covid-19 pandemic has caused.”

In addition to the ambition on carbon, and further detailed in its newly published sustainability pledge Birmingham 2022 lays clear the seven key pillars it will work on to become the most sustainable Commonwealth Games to date, including:

1. Addressing carbon and air quality Birmingham 2022 aims to be the first carbon neutral Commonwealth Games. It has conducted an independent, credible analysis of the Games likely carbon footprint to determine the baseline.

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The primary goal is to reduce carbon at every possible opportunity and offset what remains through credible initiatives with support from Severn Trent. The Games will also help the region to change the way it thinks about sustainable travel as it actively encourages the use of public transport and active travel to reduce congestion.

This will help directly improve air quality, as well as overall health and wellbeing. Birmingham 2022 is working with experts on maximising the use of cleaner generators, supplying a modern and cleaner bus fleet, and aspiring to develop a car fleet containing hybrid and electric vehicles. In addition, the three-site campus village model which will see some athletes staying close to their training and competition sites will support us to reduce travel and carbon emissions.

2. Promoting a circular economy (reducing and encouraging waste reduction)

Birmingham 2022 will work with subcontractors to reduce waste across the full Games footprint. It will also install free drinking-water refill points wherever possible to encourage people to use refillable water bottles. Additionally, wherever possible the Games will hire rather than buy equipment, and where it does buy equipment it will repurpose, reuse, and redistribute as many assets as possible at the end of the Games

3. Delivering new conservation initiatives

The contractors working on the new Sandwell Aquatics Centre and Alexander Stadium developments are being actively encouraged to increase the levels of biodiversity

and bring improvements to the local environment. Furthermore, the Games partners will clean and clear 22 miles of canals through the 'United by 2022' partnership that exists with The Canals & Rivers Trust. Conservation and sustainability will become core themes as part of the Games' regional and international education programmes, and it will continue to work with expert organisations such as the National Trust, Environment Agency, and Carbon Trust, to make sure all activities are credible and measurable.

4. Setting new standards in accessibility

The Games will offer the largest fully integrating para-sports programme in history. This means accessibility has been firmly embedded from the outset in early planning for the Games and its existence. Offering access to sport for all means providing accessible venues, facilities, and barrier-free environments so that these once in a lifetime Games can be enjoyed by everyone and it is possible to do that independently. Birmingham 2022 has an ambition to reduce the disability employment gap. As a Disability Confident Employer the Games continues to review its processes to remove barriers for paid roles and volunteering opportunities to make them accessible to all. Birmingham 2022 is also working to deliver the best accessibility standards across the Games, going beyond best practice for other major multi-sport events.

5. Embedding Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in all aspects of Games delivery

The Games will be an event that is inclusive to all, regardless of gender, age, race, sexuality, ethnicity, or socio-economic background. We will actively seek to recruit a diverse

workforce and build an inclusive environment for our employees as well as thousands of volunteers that are representative of the region and we will be transparent about workforce demographics; it will host the first Commonwealth Games with more female medal events than male medal events, and the largest ever integrated para-sport programme; and provide an accessible ticketing policy to maximise participation across the local community.

6. Promoting social value through all practices

The Games will provide jobs to try and help reduce unemployment and serve to upskill the workforce of the West Midlands. It will create around 40,000 new jobs and skills opportunities through its wider supply chain including over 12,500 volunteering roles. This will aid regional recovery from the economic impact of the pandemic, as well as helping to reduce poverty and exclusion. By measuring social value, we will contribute to how other publicly funded events and organisations could evidence social value and added benefits.

7. Ensure human rights are at the heart of the Games

The Games will align with all Human Rights law and UN best-practices, embedding human rights training at every level of the Games team's structure to incorporate ethical trading, safeguarding, and freedom of speech. Furthermore, the Games will require all contractors and suppliers to demonstrate robust anti-slavery and anti-human trafficking measures.

For more information on the Birmingham 2022 sustainability pledge, please visit [www.birmingham2022.com/sustainability](http://www.birmingham2022.com/sustainability).