

PAN AMERICAN CUP

The foundation for what would become the major biennial race walking competition in the Americas was laid in Caracas, Venezuela, in 1983. A select group of the hemisphere's top judges gathered, and the guest of honor was Mr. Palle Lassen of Denmark, president of the Race Walking Committee of the International Athletics Federation.
The panel of judges met with Mr. Lassen to explore ways to stimulate interest in race walking in the Americas. They agreed on the opportunity to form a Pan American Race Walking Committee and to launch a hemispheric competition as soon as possible, in which the best athletes from the Americas would compete. The initiative was presented to the plenary session of the Pan American Athletics Commission at the 1983 Pan American Games. The proposal was well received, and the president was authorized to prepare regulations based on the Race Walking World Cup and to assess the interest of various countries in hosting the first event.

To ensure the presence of multiple nations at the start, a country with significant sporting activity and as equidistant as possible from many states was chosen, and for this reason, Colombia was chosen.

The first Pan American Cup was held in November 1984 in the city of Bucaramanga, Colombia, with the participation of sixty walkers from eleven countries.
At those first Pan American Games, held on the Paseo de los Ilustres circuit, with the start and finish at the Olympic Stadium in the university city, Danish Palle Lassen, president of the IAAF Race Walking Committee, was invited as guest of honor. He also served as chief judge for the races and held an important seminar for the judges in the days leading up to the Games.
Since 1984, the World Cup has always been held every two years, except for 2001, when it was moved up so as not to overlap with the World Cup.

The edition with the highest number of participants was the eighteenth edition held in Lima in 2017. On that occasion, 141 athletes representing 16 nations from the continent competed in the five scheduled races. The record for the largest number of countries participating belongs to the sixteenth edition held in Guatemala City, where athletes from 19 nations took part.
The race with the highest number of competitors was held in the same edition. 40 athletes competed in the men's 20 km race. On some occasions, the Pan American Cup was held concurrently with the IAAF World Walking Challenge races, while on other occasions, athletes not ranked within the Pan American Cup rankings participated. For these reasons, the total number of athletes includes only those officially registered in the Cup races.

A particular detail worth noting is the high number of disqualifications for incorrect walking in the 50 km race held in Cuenca (Ecuador) in 2001, where 11 of the 21 participants were stopped by the judges, representing 52%.

The great dominator of this cup races was Carlos Mercenario, who in eight editions from 1986 to 2000 managed to win seven medals in both the 20 km with three medals (1 gold- 1 silver- 1 bronze) and the 50 km with four medals (2 gold- 1 silver- 1 bronze). He is followed in the medal-winning rankings by another Mexican: German Sanchez, with five medals, all won in the 50 km (3 gold and 2 bronze) from 1992 to 2003.
In the women's event, the star of Graciela Mendoza shines, with four gold medals in the 10 km from 1986 to 1996. In the 20 km, the greatest successes were achieved by Sánchez Maria del Rosario, who won the races in 2000, 2001, and 2003, as well as two bronze medals in 1998 a and 2009. Peruvian Kimberly Gárcia-León followed, winning two gold medals (2013-2019) and two silver medals (2015-2017).

Mexico is the dominant nation in the individual events. Of the 132 medals awarded in the men's event, the nation of sombreros has won 75 (29 Gold, 22 A, and 24 B), followed at a considerable distance by Colombia with a total of 23 medals (7 Gold, 11 A, and 5 B).

The women's competition has been less dominant, although Mexico leads the standings with 11 gold, 6 silver, and 10 bronze. Peru follows with 5 gold and 5 silver medals.

In the men's team standings, Mexico leads (28 gold, 6 silver, and 1 bronze), followed by Ecuador and Colombia. In the women's standings, Mexico is first, Colombia second, and the United States third.

In the Junior (Under-20) events, starting in 2005 in Lima, Colombia leads the men's individual rankings (3-2-5); Mexico is second (2-2-4), and Ecuador is third (2-2-0). In the

women's individual rankings, Mexico leads (3-4-2), Colombia is second (2-3-1), and Ecuador is third (2-0-1). In the men's team standings, Colombia leads the men's team, followed by Ecuador, and Mexico is third. In the women's team standings, Peru leads, followed by Mexico and Colombia.

The best men's performances in the Pan-American Cup races belong to Rolando Saquipay, who won the 20 km race in Lima in 2005 with a time of 1:19:21; the best time in the 50 km race is held by Miguel Àngel Rodríguez with a time of 3:43:52 in Poza Rica in 2000; the best result in the 35 km race is José Montaña, who won in Managua in 2023 with a time of 2:37:49.

Among the women, the best performance in the 10 km race is Graciella Mendoza, who won the 1986 edition of Saint Leonard with a time of 45:23; and in the 20 km race, the best result is held by María Guadalupe Gonzaléz with a time of 1:28:09 in the Lima 2017 race. Nathaly Léon set a new record in Guayaquil in 2021, clocking 2:54:44; in the 50 km, Evelyn Inga set a best time of 4:22:57, a time she clocked in 2019 in Lázaro-Cárdenas.
In the Junior (under 20) races, the best time for men was Caio Bonfim, with a time of 40:39, set in Envigado in 2011, and for women, Glenda Morejon, who finished first in 2019 in Lázaro-Cárdenas with a time of 43:07.

