

MARIA PÉREZ			
1	Olympic Games	2024	Paris
1	World Championships	2023	Budapest
1	World Championships	2023	Budapest
1	World Championships	2025	Tokyo
1	World Championships	2025	Tokyo
2	Olympic Games	2024	Paris

Question:

1) Race walking is undergoing a transformation compared to traditional race distances. What do you think of this standardization of running and walking distances with the introduction of the marathon and half-marathon race walking distances?

I believe that standardization, with the introduction of the marathon and half-marathon race walks, is an important step in bringing our discipline closer to the general public. Sharing distances with traditional running helps people better understand the effort, the physical and mental demands that race walking entails. At the same time, we must ensure that this adaptation doesn't cause us to lose our essence: race walking is not "running slowly," it is a discipline with its own identity, history, and well-defined technique.

2) You're currently experiencing the current era of world walking: what would you like to convey about this world to young people and enthusiasts?

To young people and fans, I'd like to convey that race walking is much more than results and medals. It's a school of values: perseverance, patience, respect for the rules and for your opponents. We're living through a wonderful era in world race walking, with great athletes and a very high level of competition, and I'd love for the new generations to see it as an opportunity to grow as athletes and as people.

3) Race walking is performance, but also, and above all, technical identity. What do you think should be done to improve understanding and identification of the discipline, and to ensure fairness of judgment?

To improve the understanding and identification of race walking, I believe education is fundamental: better explaining the technique, from grassroots levels to the general public. It is also key to continue advancing the training and support of judges, and the responsible use of technology, always as an aid and never as a threat. Impartiality and transparency are essential for athletes to have complete confidence in the system.

4) Do you think that current race courses, mostly reduced to 1,000-meter laps, enhance the spectacle and understanding of the race, or would slightly longer courses help spectators better understand the event?

The 1000-meter circuits make the competition more dynamic and visible, especially for spectators both at the venue and on television. But I also think that slightly longer courses could help to better understand the actual flow of the race, the pace, and the strategies. Perhaps the key is to adapt the course to the context without losing the appeal of the spectacle.

5) You are a symbol of the history of the discipline, a legend of race walking. How would you describe your love and passion for this discipline?

My love for race walking is deep and sincere. It's a discipline that has taught me to fall and get back up many times, to believe in myself even when no one else did. The passion comes from daily sacrifice, the silence of training, the support of my people, and the thrill of representing my country. Race walking is part of who I am.

6) Do you think the current judging system is understandable and reflects the values of the discipline?

The current evaluation system reflects the values of the sport, but it's not always easy for outsiders to understand. It's clear to athletes because we've lived with it since childhood, but I believe communication and public awareness can still be improved. If we can make it better understood, race walking will be more valued and respected as the demanding and beautiful sport it is.