

History of CISM Seaweeek

In 1949, the Sports Office of the Italian Navy began a comprehensive study on the physical training of naval personnel. Based on the principle that the core operational unit of a navy is the ship's crew, a structured training program was developed around four fundamental pillars:

- Development of general physical abilities required for a comprehensive naval sports program;
- Enhancement of the mental and emotional qualities essential for seamen;
- Improvement of skills in nautical sports (swimming, rowing, sailing) and military sports (shooting);
- Development of agility and balance required by the operational conditions of life at sea, particularly in rough waters.

On the basis of these criteria, standardized drills were introduced to foster discipline, speed, and efficiency in the execution of operational duties.

To assess the physical level achieved, competitions were organized in four main events:

- An agility course to measure balance, reflexes, and courage;
- A nautical course to evaluate seamanship and shooting skills;
- A swimming course including lifesaving, utility swimming, and underwater activities;
- A rowing race to test physical endurance and team spirit.

The first competitions were conducted within the Italian Navy in 1950 and 1951. They proved highly valuable for operational readiness and were greatly appreciated by personnel.

The creator of this program, Captain Giuseppe Vocaturo of the Italian Navy, submitted in 1953 to the CISM General Assembly in Stockholm a proposal to establish a naval discipline similar to the existing Military Pentathlon and Air Force Pentathlon. In the same year, a test competition was organized in Venice in the presence of delegates from eight nations.

The proposed format was approved in principle, with certain technical adjustments to ensure its applicability to navies that did not possess the same types of vessels used in Italy.

In 1954, the Italian Navy organized the first CISM "Seaweeek" in Livorno. This inaugural edition included:

- A Naval Triathlon (Seamanship, Swimming, and Agility Race);
- Sailing Championships;
- Rowing Championships.

Six nations participated, and the event was a significant success, marking the beginning of an enduring international tradition.

In the following years, the program was further refined: the swimming event was divided into Lifesaving and Utility Swimming, and an Amphibious Cross-Country Race was introduced to provide advanced operational training for marines and specialized units.

Since 1969, Seaweek has consisted of two main events: Naval Pentathlon and Sailing. Rowing was gradually removed from the program.

In 2000, Sailing and Naval Pentathlon were officially separated within the Seaweek framework and are now conducted as distinct Military World Championships.

Today, Naval Pentathlon represents one of the most comprehensive military sports disciplines within CISM, combining nautical skills, physical endurance, shooting precision, coordination, and team spirit — preserving the original vision of its founder: to develop complete sailors through sport.