



WUSHU

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
International Wushu
Federation

2015



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AGE of WUSHU

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The PC Game Age of Wushu Along with its Mobile Title Will be Full-launched this August

Revolutionary Martial Arts Game Are Now Available on Both PC and Mobile

Chinese game developer Snail Games invested five years and more than ten million yuan in the development of the martial art smash hit Age of Wushu. The game reproduces a large and real martial art world through a series of innovative elements such as level-free character advancement, an innovative PvP system and random encounters.

Snail is committed to producing world-class digital products and promoting Chinese culture. In 2014, Snail Games forged a formal strategic partnership with the International Wushu Federation. They agreed to build a digital martial art base and hold martial arts tournament, all part of an effort to promote Chinese martial arts culture worldwide. The mobile version of Age of Wushu will run open beta testing in August 2015.

AGE of WUSHU

AGE of WUSHU

KING of WUSHU

TAICHI PANDA

PRESIDENT'S *Letter*

Dear Readers and Friends,

Welcome to our second issue of **Wushu**, the official magazine of the International Wushu Federation (IWUF).

In 2014 and 2015 the IWUF has been busy promoting wushu around the world, with events that both celebrate centuries-old traditional styles and those that look ahead to our sport's hopeful inclusion in the Olympic Programme.

In August 2014 at the Nanjing Youth Olympic Games (YOG) the IWUF was invited to exhibit wushu in the inaugural IOC Sports Lab, an interactive showcase of four sports working toward inclusion in the Olympic Games. Joining wushu were skateboarding, roller-sports and sport climbing. Also taking place alongside the Youth Olympic Games was the Nanjing 2014 Youth Wushu Tournament, where wushu's top youth athletes displayed our sport to millions of television viewers and tweeted the event around the world. Like the Beijing 2008 Wushu Tournament, this Nanjing event was chosen by the IOC to be part of its Culture and Education Program. It was my pleasure to attend the Nanjing event with IOC President Thomas Bach and IOC Honorary President Dr. Jacques Rogge. We were excited to show to the entire Olympic family how wushu has developed into a high-level, internationally competitive sport.

In October 2014, Anhui Province's Chizhou City, China, was host to the 6th World Traditional Wushu Championships where IWUF celebrated

Zaiqing Yu



many styles of centuries-old wushu. A month later the Federation was proud to inaugurate the first-ever World Taijiquan Championships in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. Around the world, wushu also made impressive showings at the popular Asian Games, and at continental wushu events including the Pan American Wushu Championships and the European Traditional Wushu Championships.

IWUF's official ties to global sport organizations were strengthened in 2015, particularly with our joining the International University Sports Program (FISU); I'm most pleased to announce that wushu will be part of the 2017 Universiade in Taipei, adding another outstanding multi-sport event to our IWUF calendar.


Finally, wushu had great cause this summer to celebrate upon being selected as one of eight shortlisted sports considered for inclusion in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Programme. This is indeed fine proof that our sport's global reach among athletes, fans, and the greater sports community is extending more and more each year. This success is due in part to the continued vision of IWUF, but just as much due to the deep dedication, commitment and hard work of all our member federations on every continent.

I look forward to seeing all our friends at the 13th World Wushu Championships in Jakarta, Indonesia, and to many more fine wushu events in 2016. ■

JET LI

Message



A large, expressive orange brushstroke that starts in the upper right and curves downwards and to the left, ending near the top of the text block.

This year I am happy to see wushu grow more and more around the world. The possibility for wushu to be a part of the next Olympic Games is very exciting, and I have no doubt this dream will someday come true.

Wushu is now a global sport, which brings all of us together – from different countries, different cultures, different religions – we all become one family in wushu, seeking a better balance in life, work, and friendship. Friendship is one of the most valuable gifts wushu has given me throughout my career. From competing on the Beijing Wushu Team in the 1970s to making Hollywood movies today – so many friends I’ve made on the wushu path have helped me, supported me, and let me understand the world and myself better.

I look forward to meeting today’s outstanding wushu athletes in the World Wushu Championships in Jakarta, but wherever you are, whatever kind of wushu you practice for health, fun, sport competition -- to all the wushu athletes I want to say, keep following your heart and chasing your dreams. ■

Jet Li

The calligraphy '李连杰' (Li Lianjie) is written in black ink. Below it, a large orange brushstroke curves from the bottom left towards the right, crossing under the calligraphy and extending towards the bottom right corner of the page.

李连杰

EDITOR'S *Note*



A year ago we debuted our first issue of **Wushu**, and the warm response we received from so many of our readers has been deeply gratifying. The magazine has proved an effective way to engage new fans, athletes from other sports, sponsors and sports professionals as we make greater strides to promote wushu around the globe.

There was no shortage of great wushu to cover for this issue. The Nanjing Sports Lab, and 2014 Nanjing Wushu Youth Tournament were premier events that grabbed the media spotlight for our sport – from tweets and Facebook posts, to Instagram, We Chat and good old fashioned newspapers and TV, there is no doubt these created a high profile for wushu. It was a delight to watch the performers and competitors wow the crowds; the energy was palpable, and for the athletes themselves the experience was unforgettable.

The 6th World Traditional Wushu Championships couldn't have had a more gorgeous backdrop, and the sight of nearly two thousand athletes competing beneath the giant statue of Buddha on a mountainside was quite inspiring. Taijiquan in Chengdu was no less compelling, and the IWUF's premier World Taijiquan Championships

has given the global wushu community an important new event. I must admit, the pandas were pretty amazing too.

This spring in Sochi, Russia, we traveled to the SportAccord conference, attended by IOC members and many other sport organizations. Our federation officials had formal meetings, and we hosted our first IWUF wushu trade booth where hundreds of attendees learned about our sport.

An abundance of fine wushu championships and qualifying events this year has honed the skills of our top athletes worldwide, and I look forward with great anticipation to the 13th WWC in Jakarta. Please do connect with us on our social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and We Chat – we'd love to hear from you!

Many thanks to my wonderful colleagues at the IWUF Secretariat who have made my wushu travels this year both enjoyable and fruitful, and whose contributions to producing this magazine have been considerable.

Martha Burr,

Editor



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On the Cover:

International Champion Daria Tarasova, of the Russian Wushu Federation.

Cover Photo by Sergey Sukhovey

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- ◆ 2010广州亚运会 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games
- ◆ 第十二届全运会器材供应商 The 12th National Games
- ◆ 第十七届仁川亚运会 The 17th Asian Games
- ◆ 第十一届全国运动会 The 11th National Games
- ◆ 2010广州亚运会 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games
- ◆ 第十二届全运会器材供应商 The 12th National Games

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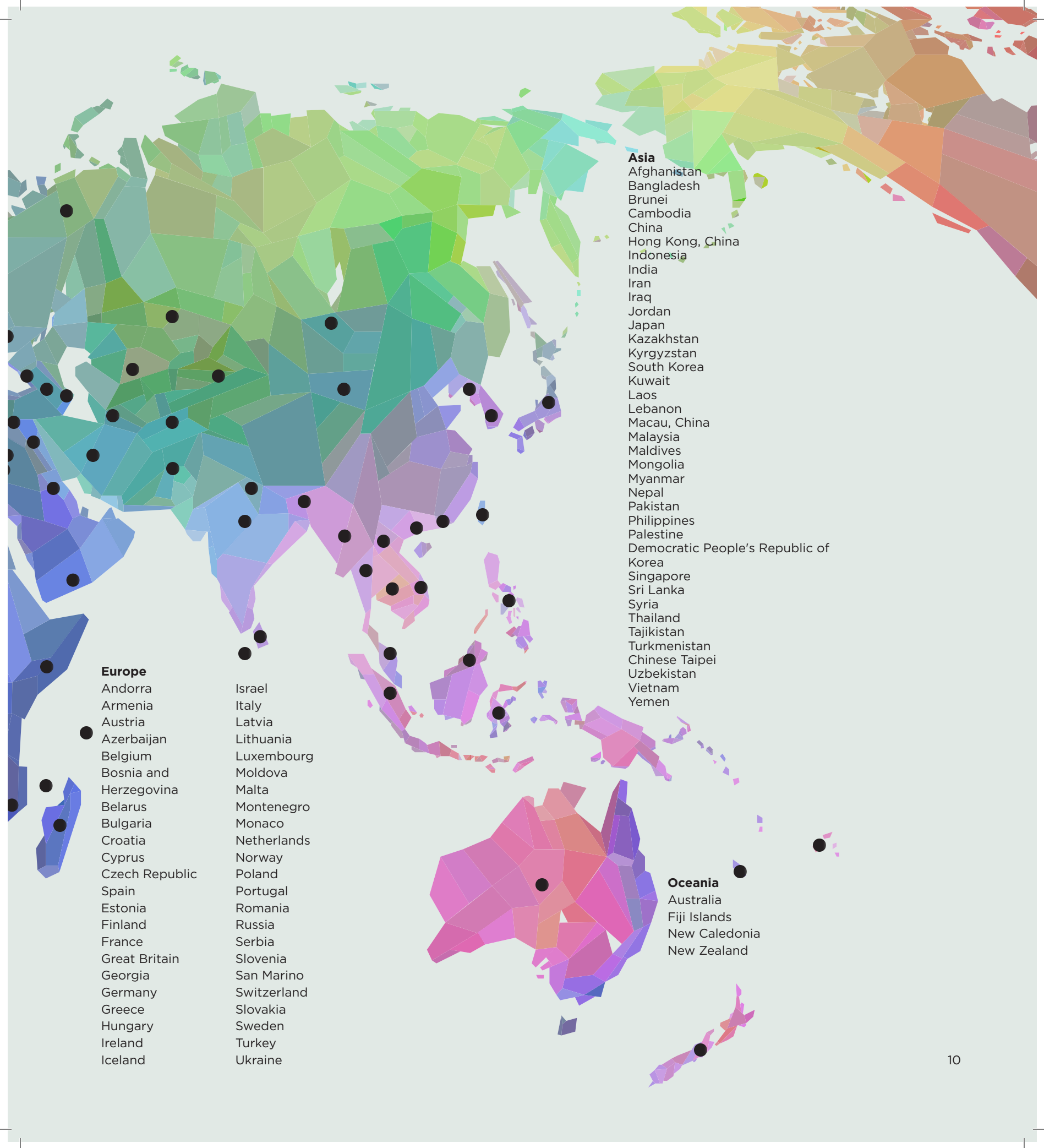
IWUF MEMBER NATIONS & REGIONS

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- Vietnam
- Yemen

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- New Caledonia
- New Zealand

IWUF TIMELINE

The International Wushu Federation (IWUF), which was established on October 3rd, 1990, is the international federation (IF) which governs wushu in all its forms worldwide. Currently, the IWUF has 146 members, across 5 continental federations. The IWUF is recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and is also a member of both ARISF and Sport Accord.



2004

The 1st World Traditional Wushu Festival, a sport for all event, is held in Zhengzhou - Henan, China.

2002

The 1st Sanda World Cup is held in Shanghai, China

1994

Accepted as a member of the GAISF (known today as SportAccord) during its 28th congress

1990

IWUF founded on October 3rd during the Asian Games.

2002

IOC officially recognizes the IWUF during its 113th session held in Salt Lake City, Utah, United States of America.

2003

IWUF signed with WADA the World Anti-doping Code in 2003.

1991

The 1st World Wushu Championships was held in Beijing.



2008

The Beijing 2008 Wushu Tournament is held; IOC President, Jacques Rogge, awards first medal.

2012

IWUF headquarters are established in Lausanne, Switzerland

2014

The 1st World Taijiquan Championships are held in Sichuan, China

2014

The Nanjing 2014 Youth Wushu Tournament is held as part of the IOC's culture and education program.

2015

IWUF signs cooperation convention with FISU

2011

Wushu shortlisted for inclusion in the 2020 Summer Olympic Games.

2006

The 1st World Junior Wushu Championships are held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



NANJING SPORTS LAB

*Wushu's Olympic Experiment
at the 2014 Youth Olympic
Games (YOG)*



From August 16-28, the 2014 Nanjing Youth Olympic Games brought 3,800 young athletes from all over the world to China for 12 days of spectacular sport competition. This second Summer Youth Olympic Games (YOG) played to thousands of live spectators and was broadcast around the world. Though not yet an official Olympic sport, wushu remains a hopeful contender, and as part of the IOC family of international sport federations, it was invited to join the Games in Nanjing as part of an experimental program called Sports Lab – an interactive showcase of four sports: wushu, skateboarding, roller-sports and sport climbing.

All four of these action-packed, youthful sports brought their 16 top international athletes and coaches to a unique, all-in-one venue



complete with wushu carpet, a skate park, a climbing wall and roller track. Each day brought 3,000 visitors, including crowds of athletes from the Olympic Village, IOC delegates, NOC officials and many Nanjing locals stopping by for morning and afternoon sessions that included both dynamic demonstrations and one-on-one “initiation” sessions. The purpose? To test new ideas and inspire young fans to explore new sports and be active. The most dramatic wushu moment? When IOC President Thomas Bach stepped onto the carpet and brandished a sword with deep and genuine enthusiasm – and a big smile. At the event’s closing press conference Bach said, “These have been the Olympic Youth Games of innovation.”

Sports Lab created a whole new wushu experience both for the athletes and coaches, and for the fans as well. The showcase featured athletes from China, Africa, Europe, India and the Americas. This became a brilliant opportunity for wushu to display its many attributes to the world of international sport, and wushu’s top athletes did not disappoint as they dazzled the crowds for 10 days, braving thunderstorms and oppressive, humid Nanjing August heat. They became, indeed, wushu’s top ambassadors.

But the job entailed more than just shaking hands or flashing smiles – athletes boarded the morning bus just after 7 a.m. each day, gave 2-3 performances, and taught dozens of curious initiates the basics of wushu. There was a daily meet-and-greet with a steady flow of IOC delegates where they explained the sport of wushu and answered questions. And perhaps the most high-profile moment was putting on a dazzling show for President Bach, bringing wushu to a new level of spectatorship.

Wushu went viral for the cameras -- and iPhones -- when Bach stepped onto the carpet to throw a few punches and get a crash course in sword forms from Russian star Daria Tarasova. Bach was accompanied by IOC Vice President/IWUF President Zaiqing Yu, who also looked to be enjoying himself as wushu had its day in the sun, and an entourage of IOC officials and delegates watched the lively, action-packed wushu show with deep engagement.

Farshad Arabi, from Iran, wowed the crowds with his powerful Southern sword form. American Justin Benedik showed off a powerful staff, while Russia’s golden girl, Daria Tarasova drew gasps and applause from the audience for her flips and splits. Her Russian teammate Tatiana Ivshina showed spirited nanquan, as did Stephane Engone, from Gabon; and the subtle power of Indonesia’s ethereal taijiquan star Lindswell rocked the stage as well. Italy’s passionate Michele Giordano charmed the crowds with his broad smile and fast nandao, and Sapana Devi Yumlembam from India showcased changquan. The Chinese crowd loved their fellow countrymen who represent some of the best and the brightest in China’s wushu – Zhuang

AS THE DAYS PASSED, THE LAB FOUND THE WUSHU ATHLETES BONDING IN WAYS THEY HAD NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE.

Shuangfeng, Zhou Bin, Liu Haiyun, Chen Xiangyin, Qin Linfei, Gao Jing, Zhang Xinxin, and Liu Yanyan. The duilian finale by Zhang, Qin and Chen brought down the house every time and ended the demonstration with a dramatic energy and flourish. Sanda fighters Yang Fangyuan and Chang Yayun

showcased the diverse punches, kicks, sweeps and takedowns of sanda, and the crowds loved them.

The Sports Lab schedule was demanding – a morning and afternoon session of demonstration and teaching initiation for all of the 10 days, less two that got rained out. High level wushu coaches included Mario Martinez from the USA, Oleksii Nosach from Ukraine,





"IT'S ALSO BEEN GREAT FOR OUR TRAINING, TO SHARE OUR DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES, DISCUSS WUSHU BOTH PRACTICALLY AND THEORETICALLY, AS WELL AS THE WAY THE SPORT IS EVOLVING. I HOPE THIS IS SOMETHING WE CAN DO MORE IN WUSHU, BECAUSE IT REALLY CREATES AN ENERGY HERE."



and Zhang Wangnan and Yuan Wenqing from China. They taught a variety of stances and weapon techniques, as well as some sanda. Eager Nanjing youth lined up daily to get lessons, and some of the most engaging moments of Sports Lab were with young kids who clearly found wushu a blast.

The showmanship of the demonstrations got energetic and expert English commentary from American announcer Colvin Wong, and the lively Cui Zhongsan revved up the Chinese spectators. This was also an excellent opportunity for IWUF to begin grooming a professional level of commentator for future TV broadcast potential.

At the end of each day the last half hour was reserved for athletes only, so they could try all 4 sports. The wushu stars immediately

took to sport climbing, with Tarasova scurrying up the vertical rock wall like a fast cat. Some also found roller sport a natural complement to wushu. Fewer athletes tried skateboarding as a fall threatened injuries that could take them out of the game. Throughout Sports Lab many athletes from the other sports also came to try out wushu, and their natural athletic abilities and training helped them assimilate basic skills quickly. One evening a group of wushu athletes also traveled to the Olympic Village and performed a demonstration for enthusiastic onlookers.

As the days passed, the Lab found the wushu athletes bonding in ways they had never experienced before. "Usually," notes Michele, "you make friends at international competitions, and get to hang



"THE NANJING 2014 YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES WERE A HUGE SUCCESS, AND THE GREAT INNOVATION FOR THESE GAMES – THE SPORTS LAB – WAS A REAL HIT. WE ARE VERY EXCITED AND PROUD THAT WUSHU IS PART OF IT."



out a little bit. We all know each other from world championships and continental tournaments. But when you arrive at a tournament you are busy preparing, and focusing on your performance. There's not much time so socialize. Maybe a day after, or the closing party. But here at Sports Lab, we have 10 days together, to get to really know each other. We're like a family now."

Tarasova adds, "It's also been great for our training, to share our different techniques, discuss wushu both practically and theoretically, as well as the way the sport is evolving. I hope this is something we can do more in wushu, because it really creates an energy here. "

IWUF Executive Vice-President Anthony Goh was in charge of the Sport Lab event, which entailed everything from picking an elite corps of international wushu talent, to finding engaging announcers in two languages, and making sure the demonstration and teaching was matched to the event. He also helped coordinate private taijiquan lessons for IOC Honorary President Jacques Rogge and his wife. Dr. Rogge paid Sports Lab a visit as well to take in some wushu, with several other IOC delegates. This event became an excellent catalyst for IWUF officials to begin thinking of future opportunities to create "wushu labs" where international athletes can meet, compare training techniques, ideas, and help grow the sport.

IWUF President Zaiqing Yu remarked on the event, "The Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Games were a huge success, and the great innovation for these games - the Sports Lab -- was a real hit. We are very excited and proud that wushu is part of it, and our team has done a fantastic job, showcasing to the Olympic Family and general public the power and beauty of this modern sport with time honored history. While spending time and energy to promote the sport and its values across the world, we are working continuously, with passion and commitment, to have wushu on the Olympic Programme. I wish that our Olympic dream will come true in the near future!" ■





Nanjing 2014

YOUTH WUSHU TOURNAMENT

The Nanjing 2014 Youth Wushu Tournament brought spectacular action and thrills to the beautiful district of Gaochun as it ran during the Nanjing Youth Olympic Games, August 22-24. It was also a dynamic demonstration of wushu's exciting development as a youth-oriented sport around the world -- and gave a very real taste of what a polished, Olympic wushu competition might someday look like.

This wasn't the first time wushu and the Olympics have conjoined. In 2008, the Beijing 2008 Wushu Tournament was approved by the IOC to be staged as part of the Cultural Program alongside the 2008 summer Olympic Games. It was a celebratory moment for China, for the Olympics, and for wushu.

This summer the Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Games took over Nanjing with an incredible energy and spirit. Athletes and visitors from all over the world flocked to the games to see the best teenage athletes go for the gold. Like in 2008, the IOC's Cultural Program chose wushu again to be part of the larger event. The difference this time, is that IOC President Thomas Bach handed out the first medal of the Tournament, and IOC Honorary President Dr. Jacques Rogge handed out another. Wushu was broadcast widely on Chinese television, and its young champions stepped into the media spotlight.

Hundreds of images of wushu were uploaded to Facebook, Youtube, WeChat, Twitter, Instagram and more as the digital potential of a new generation took hold. These bright young athletes defied gravity with amazing flips, twists and jumps, but they also transcended into the blogosphere with colorful posts and excitement.

Participants at this official IWUF event, held at Nanjing's Gaochun Gymnasium, were the world's

top junior wushu athletes who qualified at the World Junior Wushu Championships held in Antalya, Turkey in March 2014. The tournament was visited by many local officials, IOC members, and special guests. When IOC President Bach came to watch the competition on its first morning, and subsequently award the very first medal of the event, the excitement and energy in the air were palpable. Even as they focused on their competition, the young athletes knew this was a "big deal." When Bach arrived with his entourage all eyes were locked on the VIP box. But as Bach quickly focused his attention on the wushu carpet, jitters were dispelled and a dynamic display of wushu sport followed.

No one could have been more thrilled than Malaysia's lovely young champion Loh Ying Ting who fought her way with nearly flawless form, elegance and power to win the first gold medal of the event in girls' changquan. As she stood on the top podium, Bach hung the award around her neck and shook her hand, and both were beaming. News reporters and TV cameras swarmed the stage, and a blitz of flashes went off before the Malaysian flag rose and anthem played. The three champions waved, grinned, and hugged before taking a victory lap around the gym. Loh remarked to the crowd of TV cameras after the ceremony that besides being a champion, her favorite part was "making friends from all over the world."

In the following days, IOC Honorary President Dr. Jacques Rogge also presented a medal to winners of the women's Taijiquan Taijijian All-Around to Huang Xue Qing of China (gold), Usui Kanon of Japan (silver) and Chan Yu Li of Malaysia (bronze). Dr. Rogge -- who also had awarded the first gold medals to the winners of the Beijing 2008 Wushu

Tournament -- looked fit and fine, perhaps in part to his recent taijiquan lessons during his Nanjing stay, arranged by IWUF.

The presentation of the event evidenced the steady progress IWUF has made with professionalizing wushu sport. In the state-of-the-art Gaochun Gymnasium every athlete had center stage, performing alone on the floor with taolu in the morning, and sanda in the afternoon, creating fewer distractions for both athletes and spectators. You could hear the slap of a high kick, the snap of a broadsword, and resounding punches and throws.

Event categories included: boys and girls changquan (longfist), nanquan (Southern fist), daoshu (broadsword), jianshu (straight sword), qiang (spear), gunshu (staff), nangun (Southern staff), taijiquan, taijijian, and sanda (full-contact fighting.) The smartly-dressed color guard offered an impeccable flag-raising ceremony for each medal, with crisp salutes and emotional moments for the countries who heard their national anthem played.

The medal ceremonies continued to be star-studded throughout the event. IOC member Timothy T.T. Fok presented men's Changquan medals to China's gold medalist Wu Zhong, silver medalist Kelvin Young (Indonesia) and bronze to Wesley Huie (USA.) IWUF President Zaiqing Yu presented medals in Women's Jianshu and Qiangshu All-Around to Wang Yi Peng of China (gold), Elif Akyuz of Turkey (silver) and Emily Fan of USA (bronze.) And IWUF Executive Vice-President Anthony Goh smiled broadly presenting the Women's Daoshu and Gunshu All-Around gold medal to fellow countryman Amy Li (USA), along with Singapore's Mui Wei Ting Zoe (silver) and Malaysia's Loh Ying Ting (bronze).

When Men's Jianshu Qiangshu All-Around gold medal went to French athlete Paul Henri Jacques Rondeau -- flanked by silver medalist Wesley Huie of USA and Adalia Jesse Colin of Singapore -- he couldn't have looked more delighted. After the ceremony the young Frenchman modestly remarked, "I wasn't expecting to win, I thought perhaps Wesley would beat me, so I was a bit surprised. But this is a very happy moment, and I won't forget it. I'm also very proud to represent my country, France." Rondeau went back to celebrate in his small French village where he plans to help promote wushu, and hopes to return next year to compete in the next World Wushu Championships.

Lively afternoons were devoted to sanda, where young fighters showed much potential and gained terrific experience. The fighters from China proved superior, and encouraged by the boisterous cheering of local crowds, achieved a near shutout of gold. The winners were the sprightly Cao Wei Qing (Women's 52kg) whose many fine takedowns clinched her victory; Vietnam's rock solid Nguyen Thi Trang (Women's 60kg) who outmuscled and out-threw her opponent; catlike and quick Li Ya Ge (Men's 52kg) whose strong kicks scored many points; the fleet Guo Jia Feng (Men's 60kg) who picked up his opponent and threw him repeatedly to the crowd's delight; and the indomitable Chu Han (Men's 70kg) who



THE PRESENTATION
OF THE EVENT
EVIDENCED THE
STEADY PROGRESS
IWUF HAS MADE WITH
PROFESSIONALIZING
WUSHU SPORT.



ended the sanda finals with an incredibly exciting bout filled with many takedowns and fast, precise kicks to his opponent's head.

After all their hard work, it was time to celebrate, and the closing ceremony was quite a party, bursting with the energy of youth, joyful spirits, newly forged friendships and reunited old ones. Don't forget, that as young as they are, many of these teenage athletes have still been competing internationally for many years, meeting up in different countries, watching each other on Youtube, and hanging out on Facebook. The USA team jumped onstage for a performance of Pharrell's infectious pop song "Happy" and spontaneously pulled the local volunteers out of the audience to join -- then a flood of international athletes jumped out of their seats and joined in too packing the dance floor. Even IWUF officials were finally pulled in to the groove, and the evening ended as a fantastic dance party for all. Following, many of the young athletes visited the Nanjing Olympic Village, took in other YOG sporting event competitions, and then traveled on with their families or friends to sightsee in Gaochun, Nanjing and other scenic parts of China.

President Yu shared his thoughts on the event: "The Nanjing 2014 Youth Wushu Tournament was a great success, and has offered a wonderful and memorable experience to all the young wushu athletes. I would like to congratulate them, who are the future of our sport, on performing their best and staying true to their ideals. As role models, they have shown to young people that it is important to believe in one's own abilities, and strive to be medal winners in life.

"Following the Beijing 2008 Wushu Tournament, the Nanjing 2014 Youth Wushu Tournament has become another deeply significant milestone in the development of wushu. Building on past success, the IWUF remains open to new ideas and is ready for ever constant improvement with contributions from all its members. As we continue to work together, I look forward to a even brighter future of our sport."



"FOLLOWING THE BEIJING 2008 WUSHU TOURNAMENT, THE NANJING 2014 YOUTH WUSHU TOURNAMENT HAS BECOME ANOTHER DEEPLY SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WUSHU."

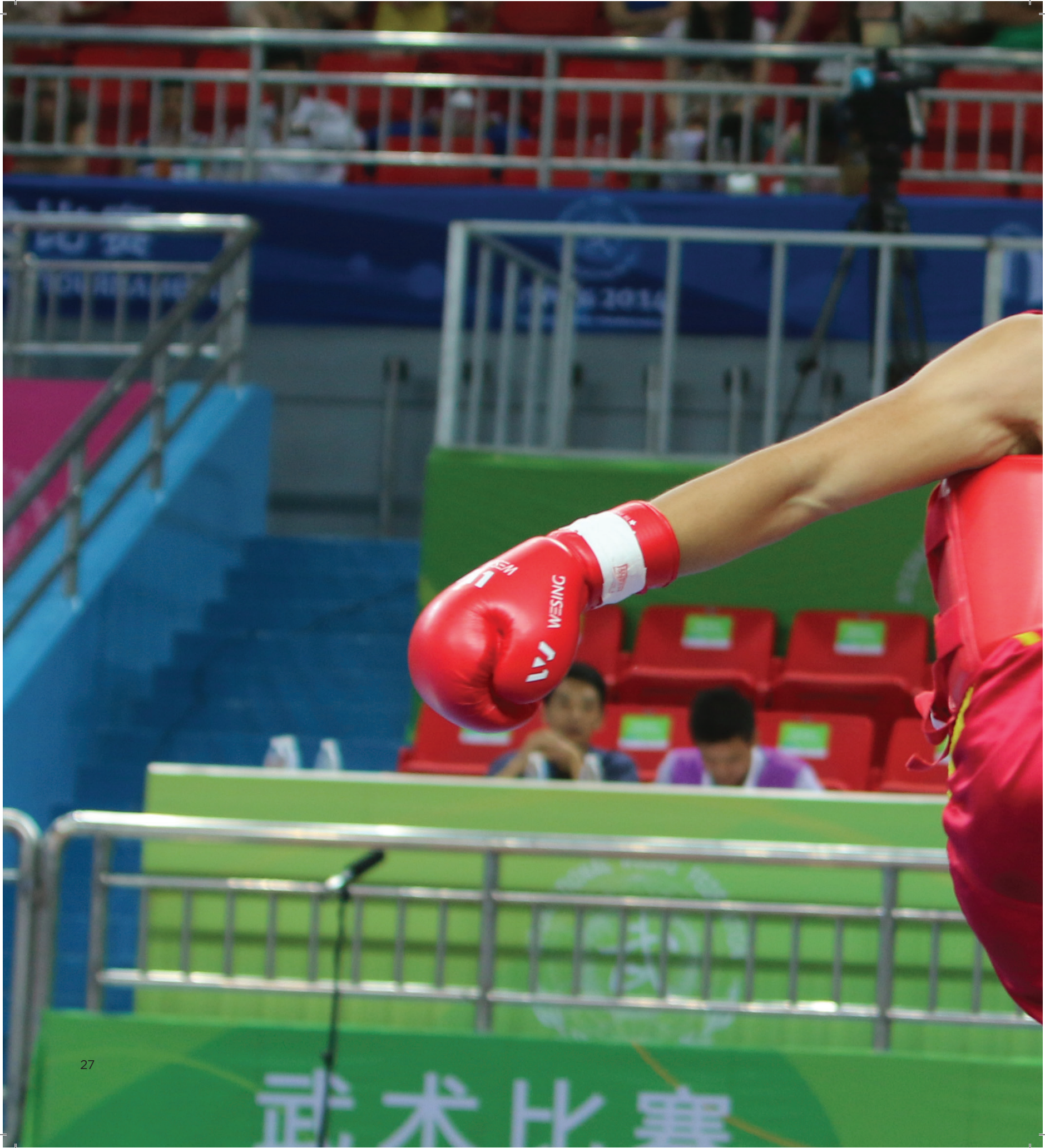


In the end, the theme of the Nanjing 2014 Youth Wushu Tournament might be summed up as “connections.” Through TV broadcast, Youtube and a myriad of social media many thousands of people were connected to wushu and this historic event. Through their participation in the tournament (and Sports Lab, see accompanying article) IOC officials got to witness the cutting edge of youth wushu talent and connect more with IWUF. And for the young athletes themselves, the experience of connecting with each other from all around the world, being welcomed by their gracious Nanjing hosts and enthusiastic audience, and finally, making their contribution to the sport of wushu with their best efforts, is a memory and an accomplishment they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. ■

PRESIDENT YU SHARED HIS THOUGHTS ON THE EVENT:
“THE NANJING 2014 YOUTH WUSHU TOURNAMENT
WAS A GREAT SUCCESS, AND HAS OFFERED A
WONDERFUL AND MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE TO
ALL THE YOUNG WUSHU ATHLETES.”















The 1st World Taijiquan Championships

Taiji, once thought of in the West as an exercise for old people in the park, has been busy reinventing itself as a modern sport. Now some of the world's top young athletes are transforming the image of taiji and showing off its deep internal power, athletic grace and mystical allure. Nowhere was this more in evidence than at the 1st World Taijiquan Championships which took place in Dujiangyan, Sichuan, China from November 1st to 4th, 2014.

The debut of this newly established biennial taijiquan-specific world championships, created and approved by the International Wushu Federation in 2012, met with deep enthusiasm from a local (and extremely wushu savvy) Chengdu audience. The venue was packed to maximum capacity by eager spectators on a daily basis who were wowed by the grace, athleticism and beauty of taijiquan practitioners from around the world.

The goal of this new event is to further promote and develop taijiquan, which is arguably the most widely practiced form of Chinese martial arts (wushu) in the world today. The event featured two main competition divisions, namely "Championship Events" and "Demonstration Events."

The event used the newly formulated Taijiquan rules and scoring method for the first time. A total of 297 participants (from 30 international teams) represented countries/regions worldwide and participated in the championships which featured optional routines, standardized routines, traditional routines as well as group routines.

Wushu is not always accustomed to roaring crowds, but the Dujiangyan Feilong Gymnasium was fired up from beginning to end with appreciative Chengdu fans that went crazy for taiji. When a Chinese champion stepped onto the carpet cheers and applause erupted, especially after a particularly stunning performance. But, notably, the audience also cheered for even the most nervous novice competitor, with enthusiastic applause boosting the confidence of anyone on the carpet who made a stumble or misstep. Like English or Spanish soccer fans, the taiji spectators here really knew their stuff, and that made the energy electric throughout the competition.

It didn't hurt that the gala opening ceremony also starred a famous acrobatic troupe performing mind-boggling stunts. Or, that many of taiji's top stars gave breathtaking performances – taijiquan royalty here included Chen Xiaowang, Chen Zhenglei, Zhao Youbin, Cui Zhongshan, Wang Jianhua, Li Zili, Wang Erping, Liu Wei, Yang Jing, Zhang Fang, Hei Zhihong and Michal Ignatowicz.

The event was organized by IWUF, the Chinese Wushu Association, and the Chengdu Wushu Association, led by the energetic President Ms. Yan Xiaomei. The Chengdu Wushu Association has worked tirelessly for many years to promote and popularize taijiquan in diverse communities. Among other projects, it has introduced taiji to school curriculums -- 1500 schools including primary school, middle school, high school are now practicing taijiquan. It has developed a program that introduces taiji into Sichuan's community centers, administration bureaus and companies, and even helped create a hybrid taiji dance to give the martial art a pop edge of appeal to the general public.

Competition styles of the event included taijiquan/taijijian in 36 Forms, 39 Forms, 24 Forms, Yang Style, Chen Style, Wu Style, Sun Style, and optional and traditional routines.

Many countries represented with robust teams – Hong Kong had the biggest with 27, followed by Canada with 23, China and Brazil each with

20, and Russia and USA with 18. But smaller countries like Romania, Great Britain, Switzerland and Algeria also made good showings, and the general spirit and camaraderie of the athletes was high as they enjoyed some of the best taiji in the world. Undeniably this was a premier debut event for wushu and IWUF, and one that will help expand the popularity and understanding of taijiquan as it matures and develops even more.

IWUF officials, athletes and team members also got to experience some beauty, history and famous wildlife of Chengdu's environs, visiting the city's ancient Jinli street for tasty dumplings and local crafts, seeing the impressive Dujiangyan Irrigation Project, and taking a lively trip to Panda Valley to see China's world-famous (and yes, adorably charming) pandas.

A host of local media came to report on the event, and it was broadcast on local Chengdu TV. In an interview with Chengdu Daily on the first day of the event, IWUF President Zaiqing Yu discussed IWUF's continued support of the development of taiji both in China and abroad. He told the newspaper, "Chengdu deserves the title 'City of Taiji' due to its sound development and enormous influence on the sport." Yu continued, "Over 2 million people in Chengdu have participated in taiji practice according to the latest statistics, and the number of participants is expected to reach 2.6 million within the year."

During the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics we saw taijiquan featured prominently, which undoubtedly gave a boost to its popularity worldwide. Taiji continues to grow, and with this new stellar IWUF championships event, we look forward to even more refined sophistication from today's champions, and to many more younger athletes discovering the beauty and power of this profound and multi-faceted martial art.

Creating a new Championships such as this was a significant accomplishment for IWUF in 2014, even among so many others. IWUF head judge Byron Jacobs explains one of the reasons why. "The 1st World Taijiquan Championships was truly a milestone event for the IWUF, but also for wushu's development worldwide. The reason I say this is because these new rules that were developed drew upon the generations of work and experience of competitive wushu since it emerged in the early 1900's, with an aim to address difficulties and discrepancies with the scoring methods, to further improve and refine the criteria and method, while at the same time focusing on the basic defining characteristics of all wushu -- that being the traditional taijiquan techniques, which in the past few years was lacking from competition. These new rules allow us to not only ensure that practitioners in competition are performing the traditional techniques correctly, but also further promote elite level competition with the method employed for the degree of difficulty component. The standards are clear, and the evaluation by the judges is clearly defined, making the new format transparent and fair." ■





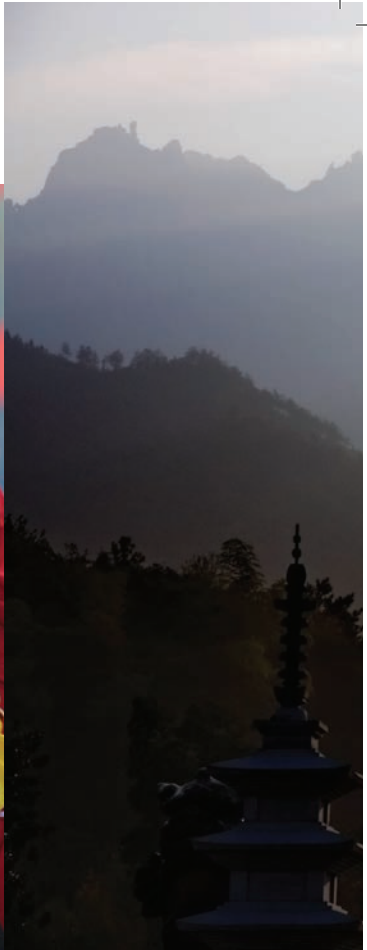


世界太极拳锦标赛

World Taijiquan Championships



羊





TRADITIONAL WUSHU AT THE SACRED MOUNTAIN

The 6th World Traditional Wushu Championships





A giant golden Buddha – 99 meters tall – shone softly out of the mists of Jiuhua Mountain in Chizhou City, Anhui Province, to watch over 2100 participants of the 6th World Traditional Wushu Championships. Taking place October 23-28, 2014, one could hardly hope for a more stunning venue to compete in than Buddhist Big Wish Culture Park, where six competition rings were nestled into the mountain slopes, surrounded by tall pine trees, huge stands of whispering bamboo, and the lotus-like profile of the famous mountain peaks.

Jiuhua is one of China's four sacred mountains of Buddhism – the others being Wutai Mountain, Emei Mountain and Putuo Mountain. Jiuhua lies on the southern bank of the Yangtze river in Southeastern China. Drive up the lush, fern-lined winding road to the peak and you'll pass picturesque waterfalls, enigmatic stone formations, and Buddhist monasteries built into the steep cliffs. The oldest, Huachen Temple, dates back to the Jin Dynasty (AD 265-420) and is alive with the sound of prayers chanted by the faithful, a blue haze of continually burning incense, and chirping mountain birds.

Perhaps some of this mystical qi emanated down to the Championships, or perhaps the

1779 competitors from 35 countries simply added their own palpable energy to the venue. Russia brought an enormous team, as did the USA, and Brazil. Ukraine and Hong Kong sharpened the competitive edge, and federations from Australia to Sri Lanka to Kazakhstan, Mexico, Italy, Egypt, Canada, New Zealand, France and South Africa came to show their best traditional wushu.

Traditional wushu – often known more commonly outside China as kungfu – has blossomed around the world over the past 5 decades. Bruce Lee's films may have started the global kungfu craze, but since the 1960s dozens of highly talented wushu

TRADITIONAL WUSHU – OFTEN KNOWN MORE COMMONLY OUTSIDE CHINA AS KUNGFU – HAS BLOSSOMED AROUND THE WORLD OVER THE PAST 5 DECADES.

masters from Hong Kong and China were part of a Chinese martial arts diaspora that steadily brought traditional styles to the West. A few devoted and intrepid students traveled to China to seek out top teachers in the 80's and 90s, but since the turn of the millennium many more foreign athletes have traveled to Beijing and beyond for access to top coaches. Wushu has thus thoroughly

embraced globalism and is developing ever more rapidly. This Championships not only celebrates the vigorous state of international wushu, but also celebrates its now truly global community.

One of IWUF's better-known accomplishments is the development of sport wushu as an incipient Olympic competition event. However, the Federation remains deeply committed to promoting traditional wushu, which is of course the very foundation of sport wushu. Promoting and running this event, (with the Chinese Wushu Association,) reaffirms the Federation's commitment to developing all aspects of

wushu to our global community. In doing so, IWUF continues to promote values that illustrate how wushu is for sport, for health, for the development of mind,

and spirit.


The sun brightened, gleaming off the golden Buddha as the morning mists lifted, and the opening ceremony and first day of competition was unusually hot for late October. It was exciting for both athletes and spectators to witness the wide range of traditional styles – from Shaolin to Bajiquan,

Houquan, Ditangquan, Bagua Zhang, Chaquan, and literally dozens more. Crowds thrilled especially to the myriad of weapons – there were plenty of staff, spear, broadsword and straight sword from many styles; we saw rope darts, whip chains, butterfly swords and fans; as well we also saw more rarely seen weapons like monks' spade, wooden bench and the enigmatic dragon scythe. The colorful, traditional robes of Shaolin and Wudang added a glamorous cinematic element, while gauzy, diaphanous taiji silks rippled in the mountain breeze along with their owner's flowing movements (which included Chen, Yang, Wu, Wudang, and other taiji styles.) Dozens of the youngest athletes added their own energy and enthusiasm, especially with some quite engaging performances of monkey style, praying mantis and eagle claw.

At the heart of this traditional wushu event is the essence of wushu community. Traditional stylists possess a deep love of their art and at an event like this they have opportunities to share their passion, and knowledge, with other martial artists of their style; beyond this they can also showcase their style to the rest of the participants. The athletes, especially the younger ones, are exposed to a veritable encyclopedia

**FOR A LOT OF WUSHU ATHLETES
COMING TO CHINA – MANY FOR THE
FIRST TIME – THE WORLD TRADITIONAL
WUSHU CHAMPIONSHIPS CREATES AN
INDELIBLE MEMORY OF FRIENDSHIP,
COMMUNITY, AND COMPETITION.**

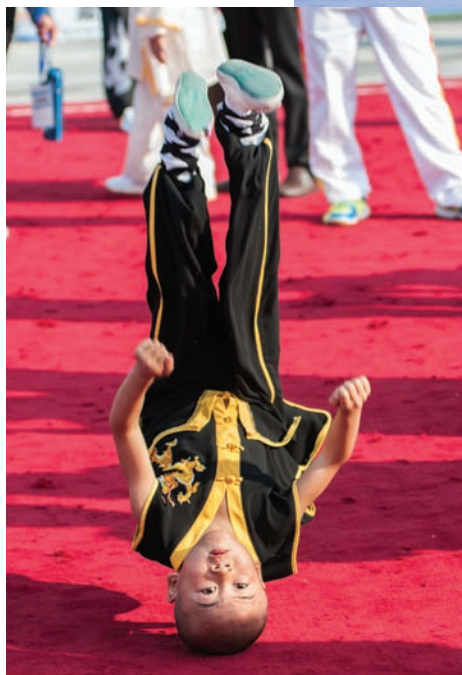




of wushu techniques, creating an educational experience no movie or Youtube video can equal, because no media can truly reproduce the spirit and energy of a live wushu performance.

For a lot of wushu athletes coming to China - many for the first time - the World Traditional Wushu Championships creates an indelible memory of friendship, community, and competition. China, as the birthplace of wushu, also offers an authentic cultural experience that gives global athletes an opportunity to learn about Chinese culture. Conversely, foreign athletes bring their own culture to China to share with new friends, realizing a cultural exchange that is one of the best aspects of international sport competition. The 1000 Chinese athletes that came from nearly every province of China to compete in the Championships also came to truly understand the context in which wushu has developed -- and is loved -- around the world; they also can see the extent to which the world is not only preserving this art, and martial arts culture, but also promoting and developing it. The success of the competition is ultimately measured not so much in medals won, but in experience gained, friendships kindled, minds opened.

The festive closing ceremony gathered athletes, coaches, judges and team leaders in a fun-filled party where friends ate, mingled and even a few IWUF officials, international coaches and judges jumped on stage to sing karaoke. After the competition many athletes and their families toured Jiuhua mountain and explored the ancient temples, picturesque villages, and savored local Anhui delicacies. The big golden Buddha continued to smile down on it all, as the mists rose from the mountain. ■



**LI BAI, THE CELEBRATED POET
IN THE TANG DYNASTY WROTE
OF THE MOUNTAIN:**

*Sailing down the Jiujiang
River the other day,
I saw the Jiuhua
Peaks in the distance.
Looking like a heavenly
river hanging in heaven,
Its green water
embroidering cotton
rose hibiscuses.*



The 6th World Traditional Wushu Championships was sponsored by IWUF; Co-sponsored by the Chinese Wushu Association; Organized by the Sport Bureau of Anhui, City of Chizhou and the Jiuhuashan Investment & Development Co. Ltd Company.





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恒源祥是中国进入市场经济后最早实施品牌文化战略的企业，在品牌、文化的理论和实践上不断突破和创新。

HengYuanXiang (HYX) is one of the most famous and time-honoured brands in China and a world-leader in the textile industry. Founded in 1927 as a specialist wool company, HYX Group has developed into a modern service-oriented enterprise, owning 14 subsidiaries, a state-of-the-art technical centre, nearly 100 franchise plants, 10,000 licensed agents and annual retail sales of nearly 6 billion RMB.

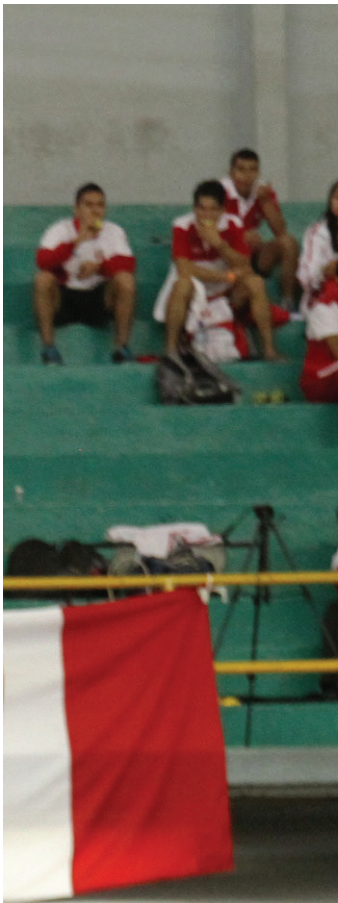
HYX has also been a leader in brand strategy as China has moved into the market economy, continually making breakthroughs and innovations in the theories and practices of brand and culture.

10TH PAN AMERICA WUSHU CHAMPIONSHIPS IN COSTA RICA

WUSHU DISCOVERS THE NEW WORLD




COSTA RICA



Costa Rica, nestled between the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, is famous for its lush rainforests, dramatic volcanoes, and exotic wildlife ranging from the fleet jaguar to the mossy-furred sloth. Now, perhaps, it is famous for wushu too. Last September 5-7, 2014 in the Costa Rican capital of San Jose, 368 wushu athletes from over a dozen countries gathered for the 10th Pan American Wushu Championships. Organized by the Federacion Wushu Kung Fu de Costa Rica, and led by Victor On (Director of the Central America Region for the Panamerican Wushu Federation) and his tireless and dedicated team, the championships were the biggest and most successful ever. 202 medals were awarded; the USA won the biggest total of medals at 62, Canada's winning number was 47, and Brazil clocked in at 37 -- taking the top number of sanda medals, 6 of them gold. Participating countries included Argentina, Barbados, Bermuda, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, USA, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

This was the first 3-day Championships in the history of the event, and also the first time anti-doping tests were carried out. As well, the event was declared of National Interest by the Government of Costa Rica (Office of the President and Culture Ministry).



The opening ceremony in the Gimnasio Nacional de Costa Rica was attended by officials from the Sports Ministry and local sponsors. Costa Rica's Sports Minister Carolina Mauri gave an inspiring speech encouraging the athletes in the competition and the promotion of wushu in Costa Rica. The President's Deputy Chief of Staff Daniel Soley was also in attendance and evinced a keen interest in the wushu events. Along with enthusiastic athletes and

spectators they were treated to a dazzling display of Costa Rican dance and celebratory speeches before the action began. On one side of the gym taolu athletes flew across the carpet. On the other side the full-contact sanda fighting on the lei tai platform kept it coming fast and furious.

Ian Lee, USA Sanda Team coach, was deeply encouraged by the progress sanda has made in Pan America. "Fighters from the Americas," he says, "have stayed true to sanda by focusing on the basics, especially the takedowns, to win the matches. I think Peru has the toughest fighters. One of the best fights here in Costa Rica had to be between USA and Brazil. The fight showed a lot of skill, and control, and showed the methodology of the sanda way. Cisne was competing in the last sanda fight of his career --- and it was the first time that a competitor has won 3 gold medals in 3 consecutive showings. So it was really a special day for him."

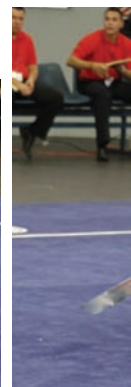
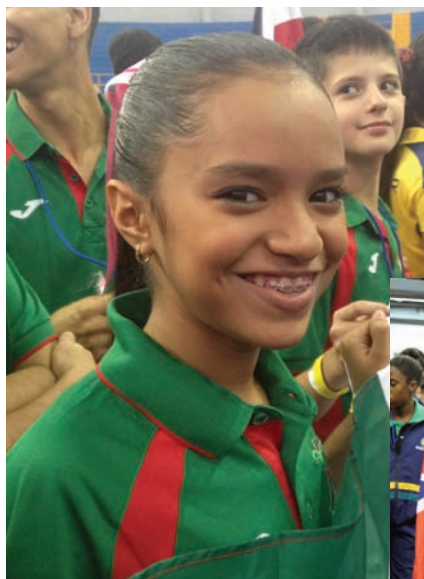
The taolu carpet was also filled with action, speed and high athleticism. More "A" level athletes competed, perhaps in anticipation of the following year's World Wushu Championships, but also due to the fact that PAWF has built this event up to true international standards, thus attracting some of the hemisphere's top talent. This in turn improves the experience and skill of all athletes, whether from "A," "B" or "C" categories. Costa Rica also proved to be ideal geographically as an easy midpoint for travel between North, South and Central America's 23 federations. Many Pan America athletes have known each other for years, literally growing up together as wushu athletes at various events spanning Canada to Argentina. The boisterous after-tournament party at the

hotel swimming pool amidst tropical flowers and trees renewed old bonds of friendship and helped create new ones.

The President of PAWF, Anthony Goh (who is also Executive Vice President of IWUF), enjoyed talking to athletes, watching the competition, and taking in some delicious Costa Rican cuisine during the event. He remarked, "PAWF has been growing rapidly in the last few years, as indicated by the extended 3-day competitions, a day longer than two-day events in the past. Also, the level of competition has consistently improved. Victor On and his team hosted a very well-organized championships. It was excellent! And in my mind, it was one of the best-organized PAWC in the last decade that I can recall. I hope this event being held for the first time in Central America will help to spur the sport of wushu around the region, especially in Central America and the Caribbean."

The Pan-American Wushu Federation (Federacion Panamericana de Wushu - PAWF) is the official continental representative of IWUF. It unites wushu in North, Central and South America. Events in the hemisphere echo with animated conversations in Spanish, English and Portuguese, but everybody speaks the language of wushu. Created to support and develop wushu in the Americas, PAWF was formalized in Baltimore during the 1995 World Wushu Championships. Presently, 23 member countries of the Federation include Argentina, Barbados, Bermuda, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Trinidad/Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela and the U.S.A.

PAWF is pleased to announce that in 2016, the 11th Pan America Wushu Championships will be held in Lubbock, Texas, USA. The USAWKF is looking forward to a stellar event, and warmly invites everyone to attend. ■





ALONG WITH
ENTHUSIASTIC
ATHLETES AND
SPECTATORS THEY
WERE TREATED
TO A DAZZLING
DISPLAY OF COSTA
RICAN DANCE AND
CELEBRATORY
SPEECHES
BEFORE THE
ACTION BEGAN.







Catching Up with
Wushu's Golden Girl

DARIA TARASOVA

“I was asked a very good question: “Do I have friends from other countries?” And I realized that all the people that surround me in wushu are more than friends. They are my big family.”

We last spoke with Russian wushu champion Daria Tarasova after she had won the Combat Games in 2013. Since then she has traveled widely as an ambassador for wushu around the globe. As a world-class athlete she dazzled crowds with her performance in Nanjing at Sports Lab, and as IWUF's Athlete Representative on the Executive Board she also traveled to Tokyo to help the federation pitch wushu as an additional sport for Tokyo 2020.

We caught up with her for a brief interview to see what's been keeping her busy lately in the world of wushu.

Q: How is the wushu scene in Russia these days? Can you update us on progress with the Wushu Palace currently being built in Moscow and what it will be like?

Daria: Wushu in Russia is growing rapidly every year. More and more kids are very interested in this sport. In the last National Championships there were about 600 participants. Usually parents would want to see their children as a professional athlete in wushu for the future.

We are all waiting for our new wushu palace to be finished. It will be a great building in Moscow that will open more possibilities for people who follow wushu. There will be four floors with 8 gyms. The biggest gym is 2000 square meters. We can hold many major championships like the World Wushu Championships and European Championships. I'm sure it will be our second home for wushu athletes, with great opportunities for training. And kids can really see the future of wushu in the investment of this building.

Q: How was the last European Wushu Championships?

Daria: My last European Championships was great. It was the 3rd Traditional and the 1st European Yongchunquan (Wingchun) Championships. I competed in both, and as usual had great experiences. Yongchunquan was a new event for me, but I got very interested in it. Especially since several Chinese masters (Chen Guoji,

Huang Nianyi, Wu Guojian) visited us and gave master classes to all the participants. I think it was a good idea. I won a gold medal in yongchunquan and was happy that I had a chance to get lessons from the masters.

In the 3rd traditional I won a gold medal in Shaolin. I really like this event, because during the whole routine you must show all your power, and energy. Some of this movement I put into my changquan routine. I enjoyed the country, Bulgaria, where the championships here held, and we had the opportunity to see the host city, Stara Zagora. I wish I could have had a little bit more time to see the beautiful city and to spend with my friends from other countries.

Q: You do a lot to promote the sport of wushu internationally. How was your experience in Tokyo on the IWUF Wushu Delegation for the Additional Event Program?

Daria: I am very glad that the International Wushu Federation trusts me and invites me to various events to help promote wushu. I've been part of the IWUF wushu presentation to the Olympic Committee for several years now. The first such presentation was in Switzerland, the second in St. Petersburg. And we recently, in August, had the chance to present wushu to the Organizing Committee of the Tokyo 2020 Games. I made a speech, and I spoke from my heart and for all the athletes of the wushu world. I was asked a very good question: “Do I have friends from other countries?” And I realized that all the people that surround me in wushu are more than friends. They are my big family.

Q: What was the best part about your Nanjing Sports Lab experience?

Daria: During the 2014 Youth Olympic Games, we did 30-minute demonstrations for the audience. We didn't pay attention to hot weather, or a busy schedule, and just enjoyed our moments. One day we were lucky enough to meet the President of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach. He came to us on the carpet and



even tried to practice wushu. As he is the Olympic champion in fencing, I asked him to practice with Jian and he was really interested in it. He stayed for 30 minutes with us instead of (the allocated) 15. I've always admired athletes, particularly Olympic champions. And I was happy not only to perform but also to talk to Thomas Bach.

I was there at Sports Lab with other very strong athletes from India, China, Indonesia, Russia, America, Iran and Africa. So we all became friends. And after two weeks of continuous practice, we

noticed that everyone improved their skills. I didn't want to leave. Everyone was parting with tears of happiness. I so wanted to prolong that time.

Q: Are you competing in Jakarta at the 13th World Wushu Championships? You missed the championships in Kuala Lumpur because you had just won the Combat Games and were meeting your country's leader, Vladimir Putin, who congratulated you. Are you looking forward to these championships, and how do you think the competition will be?



“Because my first and true love is wushu...I think the World Championships in Indonesia will be held at the highest level.”



Daria: I am now preparing for the World Championships in Jakarta. I did miss the World Championships in Malaysia after I won the Combat Games 2013, and I thought I might retire from competition; but after some time, I could not calmly watch other people training, and I wanted to go back on the carpet. So a month before the European Championship in Romania, I was really back into shape. Because my first and true love is wushu. I think the World



Championships in Indonesia will be held at the highest level. I know Iwan Kwok and know how hard he works now to organize this World Championships.

About predictions I won't say anything. This year we will compete with a lot of young athletes, even on our team. But I train hard with them every day, and hope to be able to show good results. ■





Ukraine's

WUSHU STORY





Ukrainian Wushu Federation Gains National Olympic Recognition

The story of wushu's triumph in 21st century Ukraine is one of struggle, passion, will and perseverance. Ukraine, since its 1991 independence, relies almost entirely on the tireless efforts of small her core group of athletes and coaches to bring it to prestigious world levels. Last fall, the Ukrainian Wushu Federation was recognized by the Ukrainian National Olympic Committee as a subject of the Olympic movement; this was a most notable achievement after years of hard work by the Federation's leaders. How did this struggling, former-Soviet republic manage to raise wushu to world-class levels, show a strong profile at recent World Championships, and bring home golden success in the last European Championships? To look for answers we caught up with one of Ukraine's key wushu players, Oleksii Nosach, last summer in Nanjing at the 2014 Youth Olympic Games (YOG).

Nanjing's Sports Lab was the IOC's experimental, interactive showcase of four sports: wushu, skateboarding, roller-sport and sport climbing. Each day brought thousands of visitors, athletes from the Olympic Village, IOC delegates, NOC officials and Nanjing locals.

Nosach, as one of the top Ukrainian athletes and coaches, was recommended by the Ukrainian Wushu Federation to the IWUF to work in Nanjing at the Sports Lab teaching wushu to curious initiates. "We're like a family here," he says, smiling, alongside fellow coaches from the U.S. and China, and demonstration athletes from Russia, Iran, India, Italy, and China. The combination of wushu and family is no stranger to Nosach, something that became abundantly clear as he told us the story of Ukraine's wushu history, which is also in some ways the story of a unique, extended wushu family.

From Donetsk to Brovary

Nosach was born in Debaltsevo City, in the Donetsk region. "I started wushu when I was 14 years old," he says, "When I began, I practiced without shoes. For the first two years I did sanda also, but after that I only did taolu. I remember that when I first saw the taolu performance of Andrii Koval, Ukraine's top wushu athlete, I realized that I needed to study further to improve. Koval's coach, Oleg Chukanov, was a true leader in Ukraine wushu -- he

supported athletes in their training, professional development, and stood up for fairness in competition. So in 2003, when I was 19, I went to Brovary Wushu School, which is near Kiev, and trained at the wushu school there with coach Chukanov."

Nosach recalls, "In Ukraine, coach Chukanov undertook the challenge to create a new wushu federation. He gathered all interested coaches and athletes who wanted to openly develop wushu as a sport. As a result, Andrii and I, we also became the founders of the new federation. Chukanov established a strong team of wushu of specialists for whom wushu was life. For four years two federations in Ukraine struggled for recognition from the Ministry of Sports of Ukraine. But finally it's been resolved. We have been recognized; my coach Oleg Chukanov was elected and is currently the President of Ukraine Wushu Federation. He is deeply committed to wushu. He urged us to go over to train in China and bring its expertise back to Ukraine. As we did this consistently I've watched wushu in Ukraine develop and grow stronger. Every year I see progress."

Ukraine's Wushu Pioneer

Ukraine Wushu Federation President Oleg Chukanov was one of his nation's pioneers of wushu, and one of the first to train in China. He was born in Kiev, and in 1989 when Ukraine was still part of the Soviet Union, he went to college far away in Siberia at Khabarovsk Sport University to study wushu. In a university exchange program in 1991 he went to China. "I studied taolu about 70% of the time, and sanda about 30% of the time. I spent three months there, and of course, that was the beginning."

Chukanov brought back his wushu knowledge -- and his passion for the sport -- to his school in Siberia. In 1993, after Ukraine became independent following the dissolution of the USSR, Chukanov returned to Kiev to open a wushu school. He moved the school to nearby Brovary in 1993, and began building Ukraine's wushu sport program and nascent federation. Devoting himself almost entirely to wushu, he worked relentlessly to get wushu recognized as a kind of sport in Ukraine. In 2004 he became the new President of the Ukraine Wushu Federation, and essentially reinvented the organization from the ground up. It was a continual struggle, and it took four years for the government to officially recognize the new federation. In 2008 they finally won the support from our Ministry of Sport, and the Ukraine



Wushu Federation was accepted by IWUF.

Chukanov's strategy to build wushu in Ukraine included creating a sports education program for youth and a special sports school. When the program got noticed by Ukraine's sport ministry, wushu was finally recognized by the Ukraine government. "But," he notes soberly, "It's been very hard, especially with very little money. The coaches work in a small school, we don't have a government building. We have wonderful parent support, which helps keep us going."

When students can't afford to pay for wushu lessons, he teaches for free. Sometimes, he says, he even buys his students pants so they can train. His devotion to his students has paid off in Ukraine's many national and international wushu champions, and top amongst them are Chukanov's longtime student Andrii Koval, Nosach (who partnered with Koval to bring home several world championship duilian medals), and one of the country's rising female stars, Liudmylia Temma.

Training In China

Nosach has been working with Chukanov since 2003. "We have a high level of wushu in Ukraine," he says, "in great part because we made the opportunities to go to China to study and learn. In 2004 we went to China for the first time for competition. Then in 2005 I, along with Andrii and coach Chukanov, went to Shanghai University and trained with Chinese athletes for three weeks. This first time – there was lots of pain! But it was a good experience, and it changed our preparation for competition, and gave us a better understanding of wushu."

Nosach started competing nationally in 1999, but in 2003 he won his first championship medals, taking third place in straight



"The Ukrainian Wushu Federation
now – it's one big family!"

-Oleg Chukanov

sword and spear. "In 2008 my third championships --- and my first competition in the European Wushu Championships in Poland -- I got first place in duilian, second in spear and third in straight sword. It was an exciting time for Ukraine Wushu -- we were a new team, a stronger team, and each athlete won some medal. We trained in China, and we really moved ahead in the sport. I went back to China and trained -- with my friend and wushu brother Andrii Koval -- for 2 months in 2010, two months in 2011, one month in 2012, and three months in 2013."

Coaching and Judging

Since 2003 Nosach had been coaching children in wushu. He had five groups, 100 total. "In the beginning," he recalls, "It was for fun. In 2009 I stopped teaching for fun and focused on one group of 15, and trained them seriously for competition. We trained for 2 hours each day, and before a competition, twice a day."

Nosach also started to take a broader look at building wushu in Ukraine. Given the task by the Ukrainian Wushu Federation, Nosach began to build a coherent system for judges. He subsequently was elected the Chairman of the Technical Committee of the federation eight years ago. "In 2009 I started organizing our Ukrainian technical committee and teaching judges. In 2010 I attended a judges training course in China. Coming back, we trained 120 judges for sanda and taolu competition. It was difficult building the wushu organization in Ukraine because we were not an Olympic sport. We had to do it all ourselves."

Nosach's appetite for competition remained strong, and in the Toronto World Wushu Championships in 2009 -- his first world event -- he took second place in duilian (along with teammates Andrii Koval and Sergey Romaniuk.). In the 2011 World Championships he competed in nandao and spear; he is now practicing traditional bagua, and in Romania at the 1st European Taiji championships he placed second.

To make wushu truly grow in Ukraine, and Europe, Nosach realized that constantly improving technical and judging standards was essential, so he began traveling as a judge as well. "I had my first international judging experience in 2012 at the WJC Macau, and in the last WJC in Antalya I judged also."

At home in Ukraine, Chukanov, Nosach and Koval keep the focus on the continual development of the Ukrainian Wushu Federation, supporting young or novice teachers, judges, and improving training to create stronger young athletes. "I work 12 hours almost



every day, training from 6 am, finishing at 10 pm," remarks Nosach. "I only eat when the athletes warm up." Koval himself is a longtime Ukrainian wushu champion, having trained in the sport for 20 years and traveled to many tournaments. Nosach describes his duilian teammate: "He's a seven-time European champion, and has won the Traditional Wushu Championships many times. He competed in the 2008 Beijing Olympic tournament, and is the Junior Wushu team head coach. All the time he is focused on developing the Ukrainian Wushu Federation, and bringing the sport forward."

Nosach speaks with considerable pride when he describes the Federation's recent accomplishments, especially developing youth athletes. "On the Ukraine Junior Wushu Team," he says, "One girl got second place in Macau, three students got first place in duilian, and in Antalya one girl placed third in gunshu." The Ukrainian Wushu team also did extraordinarily well at the last European Wushu Championships.

Ukraine Looks to the Future

Chukanov's enthusiasm for wushu and the athletes he's nurtured so carefully bursts through when he talks about the organization. "The Ukrainian Wushu Federation now -- it's one big family!" he says proudly. "Athletes, coaches, judges, doctors. We have our own branches in 25 regions of Ukraine. We have about 3,000 members of the Federation! In some they are developing better taolu (Kyiv, Zaporizhia, Odessa, Lviv, Mariupol, Lutsk, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk). In others, sanda (Vinnytsia, Kyiv, Donetsk, Mariupol, Sumy, Zaporizhia, Kherson, Chernyiv). Others still follow the development of traditional wushu. But -- we need peace!"

Recent events in Ukraine put even more pressure on developing wushu there. "Ukraine is dangerous," says Nosach soberly. "My family lived in the Donetsk region, but now their house has no windows, no electricity. They are staying with me in Brovary, all in one apartment." Despite the struggle of the past, and present challenges, the Ukrainian Wushu Federation remains undaunted. The recent recognition by their national Olympic Committee is not only a measure of success after many hard years of work, but also reaffirms the Olympic wushu dream Ukraine shares with 145 other nations around the globe. ■







THE AFRICAN

CHINESE CONNECTION

LUC BENDZA'S ODYSSEY - FROM GABON WUSHU PIONEER TO CHINESE MOVIE STAR

One of Africa's true wushu pioneers, Luc Bendza has devoted his life to studying Chinese martial arts for more than 30 years. Since he left his homeland of Gabon at the tender age of 16 to pursue his dream of being a wushu champion, he's experienced an adventure-filled martial arts odyssey. Today China has become Bendza's second home, with a wife and son, a place where he leads a busy life making movies, doing business, and helping promote the sport of wushu with IWUF. A genuine 21st century globalist, he splits his time and energy between his domiciles in China and Gabon, and is a passionate ambassador of African-Chinese cultural exchange. After founding the Gabon Wushu Federation over 20 years ago, Bendza continues to

work tirelessly to spread wushu throughout the African continent.

Like many wushu athletes, he fell in love with the sport watching Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee movies in 1980s. "Nearly my entire family is in politics or public service, some sort of government position. My mother was Minister of Finance in Gabon - my father Press Secretary. My whole family wants me to be in politics. But for me, this was not my way. When I saw kungfu movies, I knew that was for me."

His first brush with real Chinese culture was meeting an interpreter for a French medical group, named Wang Yu Quan. "I was 13, I was afraid to talk to him. In Africa we think all Chinese know kungfu, and that they all know how to fly, like in the movies! I thought that was true!" But Bendza got over his shyness and when he learned Mr. Wang practiced taiji, he asked for lessons.

"When I was younger I did some martial arts - judo, karate, tae kwon do - but now I was a teenager, and I studied taiji in his home every night. He also taught me basic Chinese. Finally, I decided to quit school to learn Chinese and taiji. I wanted to go to China. My mom and dad said I was crazy - that's impossible! They wanted to meet Mr. Wang. He came to my house and my mother was very upset. She says, "Now my son is crazy because of you. Can you tell him to go to school?"

He replied, "Your son is very special. I think if you force him you won't be successful. I advise you to let him go to China. I think he will succeed there." Bendza was patient. He waited another year until his mother and an uncle, who was the director of Gabon airlines, gave him their support, and his mother finally told him he had another uncle in the Chinese consulate.





“In 1983 I left with Mr. Wang – we went to Paris, then Switzerland, Pakistan, then China. My uncle came to meet me in Beijing. I looked up, and expected to see people flying! So my uncle took me to a Beijing film studio and said, “I’ll show you how people fly.” I was disappointed.

“In 1984 I went to Shaolin Temple – I was the first black visitor there. I stayed there for a year studying wushu, and in 1987 went to Beijing Sport University. On and off, I spent 20 years in Beijing, from 1987-2007, majoring in wushu, acupuncture, TCM. I got a master’s degree also, and competed in the first World Wushu Championships.”

In 1992 Bendza went back to Gabon to start the Gabon Wushu Federation. He recalls, “It was difficult to compete with karate there. It took me 10 years to get financial support from the government. Politics change quickly, and the sports ministries kept changing. I got lucky, and a new minister of sport came in and the Chinese media and French media talked a lot about what I’m doing. The new minister of sport called and asked to see me, and gave me financial support. In 1992 the Gabon Wushu Federation became an IWUF member. I financed the federation by doing movies. A Chinese petrol company sponsored me and gave me funding to develop wushu in Gabon.”

Simultaneously, Bendza was developing wushu in Gabon, studying for his masters degree, and doing movies. Soon, he would have another unofficial title – wushu ambassador. “The WMA (Wushu Masters Association) asked me to go to other African countries to develop wushu,” he says. “I went to Congo Brazzaville, DRC, Botswana, Namibia, Chad, and Central African Republic. Rwanda and Burundi are still pending.”

“I use wushu to engage with Chinese companies in Africa, and I started the Chinese Africa Association. I talk to Chinese companies in Africa and try to persuade them to

support wushu associations in Africa. No non-Olympic sport gets any financing, so wushu has to work very hard to persuade the governments to support them.”

Bendza notes that there are several different Africas – including French speaking Africa, English speaking Africa, and North Africa. “The North Africans,” he says, “have a different policy – their national sport associations support every sport – Olympic and non-Olympic. The African-French speakers and African English-speakers are different – no financing. And, making things more complex, our continent also has Portuguese speaking countries like Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea Bisao, while a few also speak Spanish like Equatorial Guinea.”

Besides lobbying Chinese companies in Africa for support, Bendza also looked to build relationships with Chinese government bodies.



“The Ministries of Culture in China were very helpful,” he says. “The Chinese embassies in Africa must support the wushu associations that are there. Ambassadors are very important for the sports in Africa – people see karate, judo, TKD on TV on the news – and they see the Japanese ambassador, the Korean ambassador – the government sees this and supports them. Gabon became an example of how this proved successful because the Chinese

WHEN HE’S NOT BUSY PRODUCING, OR SPENDING TIME WITH HIS WIFE AND THEIR YOUNG SON IN BEIJING, BENDZA REMAINS FOCUSED ON PROMOTING WUSHU WORLDWIDE. HE’S VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE IWUF TRADITIONAL WUSHU COMMITTEE.

ambassador or cultural consular attended our wushu events. The Chinese ambassador always comes to see the Gabon National Championships. In Central West Africa, Gabon is on top because we have the support of the government.”

Bendza continues, “We’re luckier than other African countries. We still have the problem in most of the rest of Africa – there’s no support, and no promotion. The CWA helps to develop wushu; they pay for flights and accommodations for 3 months for a Chinese coach to stay in Gabon. In Cote D’Ivoire also. We try to spread this to other African countries but it’s difficult because the system of policies are all different. We need to do more. We

need to send more Chinese coaches to more countries. We need national wushu associations to connect with their Chinese ambassador to arrange with their ministries of sport. Then the Chinese coaches can talk to the ministry to develop wushu, and create solutions. All Africa can talk to Chinese companies to support wushu and its development.”

But the complex politics, culture and economics of a continent with 54 diverse countries creates a daunting challenge. Even getting the Gabon team to the World Wushu Championships every two years is difficult, as Bendza notes. “One of our top athletes, Stephane Engone, is 23. He’s studying law at university. Two years ago he had to convince his parents that he needed to go to China for six months to train and get the proper experience. He went to study wushu in Hebei for six months. It paid off – he was number 4 in nanchuan in Malaysia.”

Bendza believes things are improving, slowly. “I use my little popularity in China with movies. I use my influence to increase Chinese companies in Africa to support wushu.”

How did Luc Bendza become a minor kungfu movie star in China? It all started in 1991 when the first Shaolin Tournament was held. He remembers, “I won first place in traditional events, doing sword. An old man came up to me and asked, ‘Are you interested in movies?’ He was from Hong Kong. ‘I say yes, why not?’ He created a script about an African man who comes to China, and invited me to Hong Kong. He turned out to be Lo Wei – the producer of the Bruce Lee movies – I was like, whoa! I had no idea!”

Sadly, Lo Wei died during film production and the project was stopped, but before his passing he introduced Bendza to Jackie Chan, and many other Hong Kong stars and producers. Bendza got hired for a new project to be shot in Beijing, a movie



President of the Gabon National Olympic Committee Mr. Luis Leon Folquet, and first Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in Gabon, Mr. Wang,



called “Dragons of Shaolin.” When it was successful, Bendza says, “Then Tong Wei, a friend of Lo Wei, called with another project, and needed good fighters from different countries. I went on to make over 20 movies. The best was the TV series “The Legend of Bruce Lee.” We shot in New York, Seattle, LA., for a six-month shoot, and made 50 episodes. It had Jim Kelly, Dan Inosanto, Jesse Glover; it was a big hit on China TV. I stayed friendly with the studio in Beijing. I met Frankie Chan, Jackie Chan’s brother. I learned a lot about producing, distribution, acting, assistant directing. It was a big opportunity.”

Bendza likes to recall doing a movie called “Legend of the Amazon.” “It’s a Chinese story,” he explains, “with traditional Chinese costume. People say, how can a black man be in that movie? Chan went to do research, and found that during the Sung Dynasty China and Africa had exchanges of culture and business –East Africa, Ethiopia – that’s why Luc Bendza could appear!”

The years of film production experience paid off as Bendza decided a few years ago to move behind the camera. “I started my own company, Grace Deer Media, with a partner and Chinese investor. I’m producing and acting in projects. I want to focus on African movies for Asia. I’m also working with CNC, the French National center to give Chinese producers opportunity and help create a bridge between Chinese production and French production.”

In 2005 the first African movie festival took place in Beijing, sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and Chinese

government. It helped build a film relationship between China and Africa. Bendza is taking the lead in this direction. “We focus on French-speaking films with European financing,” he says. “Right now I’m doing an Africa-China co-production, with China and the Republic of Congo, an action movie – the main actor will be the president of the Congo Wushu Federation. I will be the producer of the movie, and we’ll shoot half in China and half in Congo.”

When he’s not busy producing, or spending time with his wife in Beijing and their young son, Bendza remains focused on promoting wushu worldwide. He’s Vice-Chairman of the IWUF Traditional Wushu Committee. But no matter where he travels, his thoughts are never far from his home in Africa and his students there. While less obviously glamorous than making kungfu movies, his steady work to perpetuate a wushu culture in Gabon has paid off with a successful and cohesive Gabon Wushu team. Bendza’s ties with China are also a key factor in helping Gabonese athletes travel there for extended training with top coaches. Attending the Nanjing Sports Lab in 2014, Bendza was proud to see his student Stephane Engone perform compellingly in front of hundreds of fans and IOC President Thomas Bach.

“Looking ahead for wushu in Gabon,” he says, “we look forward to the World Wushu Championships in Jakarta. We’ll have 10 athletes; some will train in Beijing. We’ll have the Gabon National Championships in July, and then to train in Beijing for six months. It’s going to be really, really good.” ■

BENDZA LIKES TO RECALL DOING A MOVIE CALLED “LEGEND OF THE AMAZON.” “IT’S A CHINESE STORY,” [...] PEOPLE SAY, HOW CAN A BLACK MAN BE IN THAT MOVIE? CHAN WENT TO DO RESEARCH, AND FOUND THAT DURING THE SUNG DYNASTY CHINA AND AFRICA HAD EXCHANGES OF CULTURE AND BUSINESS.



SPOTLIGHT ON GABON'S STEPHANE ENGONE

Back home studying law at university in Gabon, wushu athlete Stephane Engone hits the law books, and then he hits the gym. He may have a bright law career ahead, but on his way he's also seeing the world as one of Gabon's leading wushu athletes. Placing fourth in Nanchuan in the 12th World Wushu Championships in Kuala Lumpur, he drew the attention of IWUF and was invited to participate performing in the IOC's experimental Sports Lab showcasing exciting, youth-oriented sports (see accompanying story.)

"For me," he says, taking a break from performance in the drenching Nanjing July humidity, "This is a very important experience. In my country, I don't get to see many people doing wushu at this level. Here, I get to train every day with athletes from all over – China, India the USA, – it's very great, and I know we will be lasting friends."

After a day of wushu, the athletes got to try out other Sports Lab sports – roller sports, skateboarding and climbing. "The climbing is pretty extreme," Stephane says, descending from a vertiginous climbing wall in the sports park. "But roller sport is fun. I do it back in Gabon also."

To train for the 13th World Wushu Championships in Jakarta Stephane will travel to Hebei, a place he has trained before the last World Championships. "It's hard to balance my law studies and wushu, I have to plan my schedule far ahead. In Gabon I train every day for several hours."

Besides roller sport, what does Stephane like to do for fun? "I like to listen to music," he says with a smile. "American, French music. I like One Direction, Rihanna, Chris Brown."

Looking ahead, he says he also wants to be an international wushu judge. "I want to help promote wushu in Gabon, and help it grow." ■





7TH SANDA

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WORLD CUP



The 7th Sanda World Cup took place in Jakarta, Indonesia from November 20-21, 2014. The biennial event featured the top 3 placed fighters from the 12th World Wushu Championships in Kuala Lumpur. This marked the first time that the Sanda World Cup was held outside of China, and the Indonesian Wushu Federation worked tirelessly to ensure this event was a resounding success. Fifty-three athletes representing 18 countries/regions vied for top honors in their respective weight divisions to be crowned the champion of champions in international sanda. ■



Amidst a cheering crowd, French spectators were especially thrilled at last year's Nanjing 2014 Youth Wushu Tournament to watch the Tricolour rise over the arena as La Marseillaise, the French national anthem, played over the loudspeakers. At the top of the podium stood Paul Henri Jacques Rondeau, who had just won the gold medal for Men's Jianshu Qiangshu All-Around. "I was particularly happy to have won that medal," he says, "and it was a big satisfaction after all the hard work I had done training. It was great to represent my country, and I was especially happy to win it for my coach and all the people back home in France who had supported me. When I stood up on the podium I was proud of myself, and proud to be French, because it shows that the French wushu got a small place on the international wushu stage."

In person Paul is charming and modest, belying his intensity on the taolu carpet as one of wushu's most dedicated young athletes. A long, grueling year led up to the road to Nanjing. Paul recalls, "Last year I competed in two international competitions, the Junior World Wushu Championships in Antalya in March, and the Nanjing Youth Wushu Tournament in August. It was a big year for me, and very important, because it was also the year of my baccalauréat. So I did not train as much for the World Championships as for the Nanjing Tournament. The World Junior Championships was quite stressful for me -- I felt that I was not prepared enough. However I still managed to be selected for the Nanjing Games."

After the pressure of his baccalauréat, Nanjing was both a freeing event and a new challenge with unique pressures. It would also mark the end of an era. Paul explains, "The Nanjing Wushu Tournament was an adventure, and a very beautiful experience. It was also an intimidating championship, because it grouped together the best athletes. This time I wasn't nervous, because I knew that I had prepared so much, and I knew I was ready. It was my last championship as a junior athlete. I wanted to succeed with a winning result and be on that medal podium one last time before moving into senior competition."

Paul lives in a small village named Jaux, about 70km north of Paris, with a population of 2,200. Since he was a child he has studied at the CAMCO wushu school in Jaux. "It's well-known for its high quality training and coaches," he notes. "At the French Wushu Championships our club usually always wins the most medals."

Paul takes his training seriously and, alongside his studies, it remains his main focus. "I train four times per week in taolu," he says, "and three times per week in bodybuilding, totaling about 13 hours of training every week. All my training is done at my school in Jaux. My trainer is named Celia Francinet N'Guyen, a former member of the French wushu team. She's been my teacher since I was seven years old. I look at wushu as an art of life, it's something that I have to practice everyday. I think about it and I do it all the time. It's a bit like a drug for me."

Paul's philosophy of wushu goes beyond merely winning



PAUL RONDEAU

A Young
French
Champion
Looks
Ahead



medals. “Wushu,” he says, “requires discipline and rigor, which is not a problem for me. The aspiration of my training is to reach my goal and go as far as possible – to get on the podium of the world championship would of course make me very happy. But I train to progress, to succeed in new challenges, and to get even stronger.”

It’s highly likely that Paul will be selected to join the French wushu team in the 13th World Championships in Jakarta. He explains the process of selecting the team: “The French wushu team has 20 athletes, half practice sanda and the other half practice taolu. All the first and second place winners of the most recent championships in France can participate in selection competition, and may be able to join the French team. For each international championship, there are selection levels (physical and technical), that athletes must perform the entire year. They must agree to practice and make a commitment to the team. They must attend certain practices, and athletes always like to attend these practices because it’s an opportunity to meet each other, and to practice the sport they love together.”

“If everything goes well I will participate in the World Championships in Jakarta. I do want to make it to the podium, but more importantly I want to enjoy the experience and do my best, and not regret anything. I’ve trained for this event like the other events, with desire and will. I have been training every day and sometimes twice a day, like I always do for international competitions.”

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In Nanjing, Paul enjoyed socializing and sightseeing after the focus of competing. "In this kind of championships," he says, "there are a lot of athletes from different countries, because wushu is spread out over the whole world now. All the athletes I met were very nice, and everyone there was eager to share the adventure with each other."

"This wasn't the first time I had been to China," he adds, "I've been to Chengdu to

train and visit in 2011; that was my first big tour traveling with my school from Jaux. Then I was in Macau for my first Junior World Championships in 2012 with the French team, where I won in sword. After that I went to Beijing to train and do some touring with my Jaux teammates. And finally I visited Nanjing with the members of the French team. I like China a lot. The countryside is beautiful, and I find the Chinese welcoming and warm."

In France, Paul wants to use his success to help promote wushu, and hopes one day to have the French flag raised above an Olympic podium. "Wushu is a very complete and beautiful sport. I will try to make my sport better known in France, to transmit my passion, and promote wushu in interviews and demonstrations. If wushu makes it to the Olympics, that will be great for a lot of athletes. I hope when it becomes an Olympic sport it won't be too late for me, because I want to be there." ■



WHEN I STOOD UP ON THE PODIUM I WAS PROUD OF MYSELF, AND PROUD TO BE FRENCH, BECAUSE IT SHOWS THAT THE FRENCH WUSHU GOT A SMALL PLACE ON THE INTERNATIONAL WUSHU STAGE."

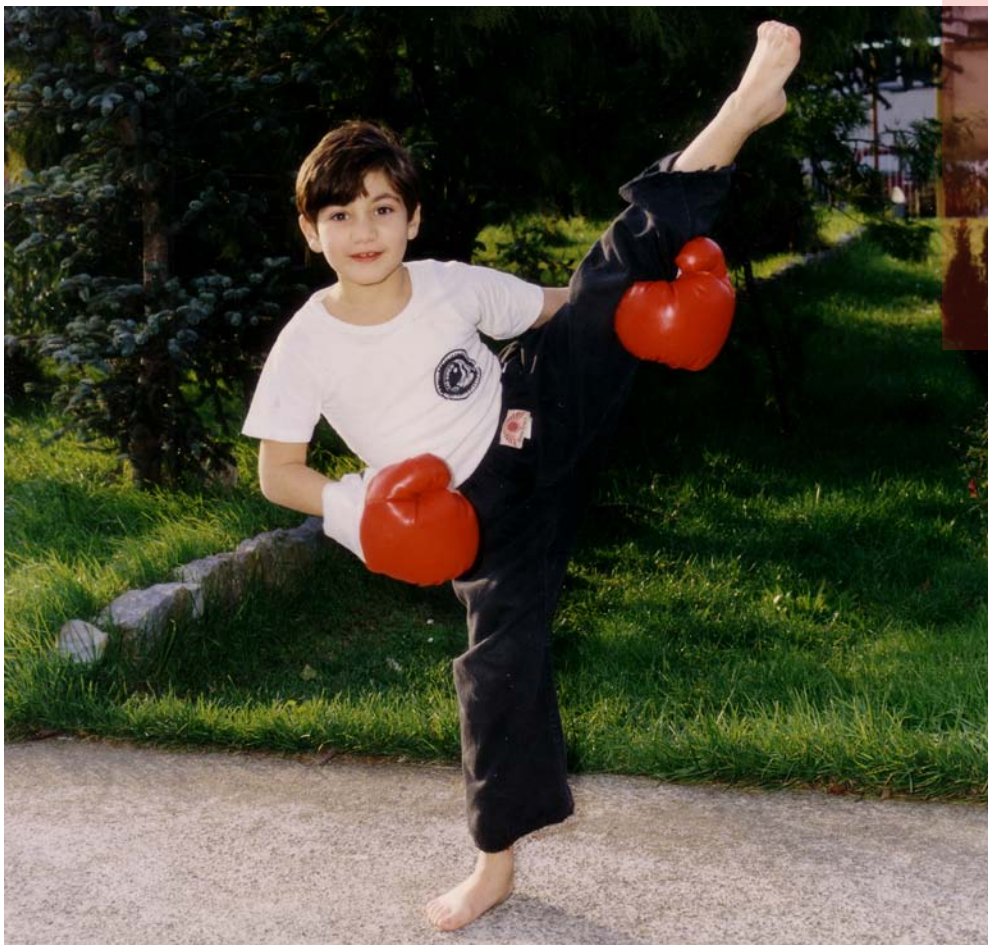




A person wearing a red long-sleeved shirt is partially visible on the left side of the frame. The background is a dark, out-of-focus gymnasium with a basketball hoop and a hexagonal-patterned safety net visible. The lighting is dim, with some highlights on the person's shirt and the net.

A PASSION FOR WUSHU

Italian Wushu Star, Michele Giordano



In Southern Italy near Salerno, in the small town of Baronissi, Michele Giordano makes wushu his life's passion. Surrounding his town is the stunning Amalfi coast where summertime is often spent playing soccer by the sea. But Giordano, who trains six days a week, doesn't mind giving up beach time for wushu routines on the carpet of the gym he runs with his father, Bruno Giordano, who has taught wushu for 40 years. "It's not easy when your father is also your coach," says Michele, "but when there is passion it is easy to train, and teach. He 's the reason I fell in love with this sport. He gave me the opportunity to train in China to understand what is really wushu, and during training he always encouraged me to do my best."

At their gym in Baronissi, the Giordanos teach wushu, sanda, fitness and body building. Michele trains every day with his brother. He says, "I started wushu when I was five, because my father is a wushu teacher. I was very young and I started for fun and because I liked jumping. My father is the only coach that I've ever had. He's a person in love with martial arts."

"Here in Italy," Michele says, "although wushu is a minority sport compared to soccer, we are gaining success promoting it to more and more young athletes with the Italian Wushu Federation. We have a dedicated group of coaches helping to spread wushu in more regions of the country." Michele himself teaches children aged 5-10 at his wushu school, and since 2014, he has been an international judge. At 29, Michele is the senior member of the Italian national wushu team. He competed for the first time in 2002, when he was 16, in the European Wushu Championships in Portugal. His first World Championships followed in 2005 in Vietnam. He was 19. One of Italy's proudest moments was when Michele competed in the Beijing 2008 Wushu Tournament, where he took seventh place.

"Our national wushu team is a good group," Michele says with a broad smile. "We don't see each other that much during the year, but at competitions we become very close, both the taolu and sanda athletes. Having my brother travel with me on the national team is also great, and we 've always shared the

same hotel room, since 2008."

Many athletes around the globe come to value the experience of wushu competition because of feelings of camaraderie, brotherhood, and belonging, not only with their own teammates, but also with other athletes from different countries. When he was invited to participate in Nanjing at Sports Lab, Giordano was thrilled to reunite with longtime wushu friends, and also to make new ones. "Of course I know the other European athletes well, like Daria from Russia, and Oleksii from Ukraine. We all have a long friendship." He continues, "But it was also great to meet the athletes from the USA. My hotel room was opposite Justin (Benedik) and Mario (Martinez) and our doors were always open as if it were one big room. Immediately there was a good feeling between us, and we joked and laughed all the time in those two weeks. They really helped me improve my English too!"

All the athletes participating in Nanjing's Sports Lab found this watershed Olympic event to be transformative in one way or another. Michele found it especially so.

Pod

Mission





"I like the power I have to put into every movement, and of course the jumps. Nan dao (sword) is my favorite to perform, because when I go really fast I feel the speed and power at the same time."

"When I was first asked to participate in Sports Lab of course I said yes," he says, "but I didn't know what to expect in Nanjing. I really didn't imagine the kinds of intense emotions this experience would create. But the feeling was amazing, it was like a dream. As I said before, in Italy wushu is not as big as soccer, but in China I was treated as a star -- there were interviews every day with different media, volunteers were always available to help, and we signed hundreds of autographs. So many people came to our wushu exhibition, and it was nice to show the Chinese that Westerners are good at this sport too. To be there -- it was one of the most beautiful things I've done."

After the cool sea breezes of Amalfi, Nanjing in July was undeniably hot! "We sweated a lot in the sun," Michele admits with a smile, "but we pushed hard in those weeks like never before. Of course, with President Bach we knew we had a great opportunity and we just wanted to make a good impression. And after we took a photo with him I got even luckier -- the Sports Lab people took me for pictures with him and three other representatives of the other sports. "During that session President Bach took my nandao in his hand and asked me how to hold it in the right position. That was memorable."

When asked about trying the other Sport Lab sports -- skateboarding, roller sports and sport climbing -- Michele laughs as he remembers. "In Nanjing I tried climbing," he says, "and I was not bad -- but with roller sport I had big problems like never in my life -- it was my first time feeling I was uncoordinated."

On the wushu carpet, however, Michele displays exceptional power, strength and style. "I specialize in nanquan, Southern boxing,"

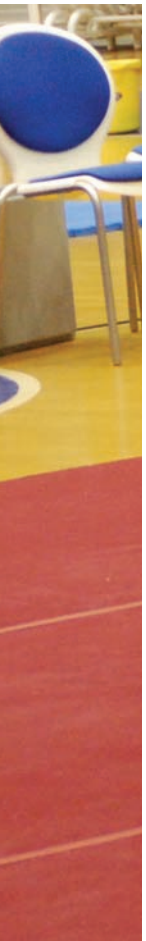
Michele explains. "I started when I was ten because my teacher thought it was the best style for me. I like the power I have to put into every movement, and of course the jumps. Nan dao (sword) is my favorite to perform, because when I go really fast I feel the speed and power at the same time."

Michele's competition in Jakarta will be his sixth world championships. At the 12th World Wushu Championships in Malaysia in 2013 he took ninth place in all three of his routines -- nanquan, nan gun and nan dao -- but he is determined to do better. "The dream is to win a medal," he says, "and I'm training for that. I've been in the top 10 many times now, but for this year I will try and do better."

What are Michele's Italian training secrets? "I eat lots of fruits and vegetables," he says, "but of course in Italy we have many kinds of pasta, so every day there is something delicious, and especially good food when my mom cooks. I don't have a problem to say that pizza is my favorite food!"

Michele adds, "Usually for training I like listening pop or rock music like Linkin Park, Sum 41, or Rise Against. Music that can give me a charge. When I'm at home I also like Eminem or Coldplay. When I'm not training in wushu I like to play badminton, and of course when I can I play soccer with my friends, especially on the beach. I enjoy reading thrillers, and I like the author Dan Brown. When I was young my dream was becoming an archaeologist, and still I have this passion -- so I love everything concerning archeology, whether it's documentary films, books or travel. That's my priority. The only thing I love more is wushu." ■

“When I was first asked to participate in Sports Lab of course I said yes,” he says, “but I didn’t know what to expect in Nanjing. I really didn’t imagine the kinds of intense emotions this experience would create. But the feeling was amazing, it was like a dream.”





THE EVOLUTION OF WUSHU TRAINING – TECHNOLOGY, CONNECTIONS, AND SOUL

By Mario Martinez

It was a warm summer day in 1999, and the third-ever collegiate wushu competition in the U.S. had just wrapped up a few months earlier. I sat in my living room eagerly waiting for the postman to arrive. The Third Annual Intercollegiate Wushu Championships was the first competition I quite literally flew across the country for, and this was my first exposure to the wushu community outside my own gym.

Many lifelong friendships began at this competition. We were all hungry to share stories, and information on wushu. I remember talk of there being a copied VHS tape being circulated; it was of someone's recent China trip, which included a few hours of a professional provincial team training. What arrived at my door that afternoon was a large brown envelope with about 12 stamps on it postmarked from California. I eagerly ripped apart the packaging and withdrew a large VHS tape titled "Beijing Wu Shu Team Training." I popped the tape into my VCR and spent the next month or so watching a barely viewable recording of the Beijing Wu Shu Team's daily practice on repeat.

Fast forward to today and with only a few keystrokes the internet offers video of just about every national and international level Wushu competition in the world. China Nationals, World Wushu Championships, Continental Games -- even my beloved Beijing Wushu Team training video has been re-encoded onto digital media readily available online. This is a big departure from the days of exchanging VHS tapes by mail; as technology progressed, even dial up internet connections simply did not allow for a whole lot of available online content. Since those days much has evolved, including the resources available to athletes and coaches – and this has in turn changed the way we train.

The reality is that wushu as a whole has had a long, rich history and an evolution of training methods. Many international athletes were not able to train in China and see Chinese training methods firsthand until the mid-1980s. As we progressed throughout the 90s and 2000s, it became more and more common for international athletes to train in China or have accessibility to a modern wushu coach from the last decade. You can easily pull up videos from wushu competitions in the early 90s today and see how much has changed in the sport. As the sport has evolved so has the skill level abroad. We have gone through 3 iterations of compulsory forms, individual routines with nandu, and now even traditional routines are being added to the World Wushu Championships. As the sport evolved, so have the training methods that followed.

Many of those initial international athletes training and competing throughout the 80s in their respective countries later went on to become coaches. These coaches passed their knowledge down to the next generation and so this pattern has continued to this day, with each generation the training becomes more and more efficient and streamlined.





One such example of adaptation in wushu training is the added focus on strength training that many international teams have adopted. With the addition of nandu, so came the need to add some method of resistance or strength training protocol to be able to sustain the strains put on the body through jump techniques. The same could be said of plyometric training: during plyometric training, exercises in which the muscles exert maximum force in short intervals of time are utilized, with the goal of increasing both speed and power. Though used sporadically throughout the years, there seems to have been a resurgence in plyometric training almost to the point of becoming a staple in wushu training since the 90s.

The internet has had one of the most profound impacts on the sport of wushu training, perhaps more so than anything else in the last few decades. With the popularization of social media came the online wushu community

-- sharing videos, training methods, and web forums where athletes and coaches could interact and exchange ideas. Through social media avenues such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, it is not uncommon to be able follow just about any international or continental event. Athletes, families, and friends many times post updates; including videos, scoring, and athlete rankings, almost live. Many competitions have even taken to streaming live broadcasts, allowing people all over the globe to view things in real time as they happen.

Prior to the internet, it was tough to find many wushu resources or avenues to connect with an international wushu community. Something even as simple as competition regulations was very difficult, if not impossible, to find. Now there are numerous websites promoting the sport of wushu around the globe. Athletes and coaches have videos, rules, even instructional tutorials available in the palm of their hands thanks to smartphones. The internet has allowed for the continued growth and promotion of the sport of wushu abroad, and social media avenues such as Facebook have created a place for international competitors to stay in touch with one another, sharing training or competitions videos, and fostering long distance friendships. Athletes today can Skype or use Facetime to communicate virtually via video chat, or even share live video with one another.

Technology has also come a long way in terms of individual practice and training, and many athletes are able to utilize the cameras on their smartphones to capture their practices or analyze techniques. Within our own gym, we have incorporated an instant replay system to allow for immediate technique analysis with our athletes. Many smartphone applications are quickly being developed for sports analysis alone, making the process even easier. Athletes can review side by side comparisons of their techniques, store multiple training hours' worth of videos, and even upload or stream their videos to social media or video hosting sites such as YouTube -- all at the touch of a button. In our gym it's not uncommon these days to see a group of young athletes crowded around a tablet viewing instructional videos or simply watching their own practices.

As the wushu landscape evolves, training methods and technologies contribute to more streamlined methods, resulting in many more countries producing international caliber athletes. However, the soul of wushu training has remains unchanged, reflected in the passion and love for the sport that our community shares. Without that passion and personal commitment, no level of technological or sports science advancement could have brought us to where we are today -- or to where the sport of wushu is headed. ■

About the Author:

Mario Martinez has served as U.S. Team Coach 2013-2014. He has over 29 years of martial arts experience and currently coaches at the Professional Martial Arts Academy in Sterling, Virginia under Chinese and International Champion Jiang Bang Jun.

IN THE NEWS

Olympic Update: Wushu Shortlisted for Tokyo 2020 Additional Event Programme

In June IWUF and the world learned that wushu was one of eight sports out of 26 applicants nominated to move on to the next stage of the application process for addition to the Olympic Programme for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. Wushu was selected (along with baseball/softball, bowling, karate, roller sports, sport climbing, squash, and surfing) to move on to the second stage of the application progress; less than two months later, an IWUF delegation was on a plane to Tokyo to attend an interview with the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee on August 7 and 8.

The Tokyo 2020 Additional Event Programme Panel stated it would identify one or more additional events to be proposed to the IOC, based on the following key principles:

- The additional event(s) will serve as a driving force to promote the Olympic Movement and its values, with a focus on youth appeal
- The additional event(s) will add value to the Games by engaging the Japanese population and new audiences worldwide, reflecting the Tokyo 2020 Games vision
- The selection procedure will be open and fair

With these themes addressed in a written proposal, alongside technical specifications of each sport, the respective IFs attended two sessions in Tokyo. The first gave the delegates 15 minutes to present their bids, followed by 30 minutes of questions from the Additional Event Program Panel. Day two saw the IFs return for another 50 minutes of questioning.

The delegation was led by IWUF President Yu Zaiqing, (who is also Vice President of the International Olympic Committee.) Other members included IWUF Executive Vice President Anthony Goh, IWUF Vice Secretary-General Chen Chong, IWUF Technical and Event Manager Byron Jacobs, IWUF Executive Board member Daria Tarasova, IWUF Administrative Manager Lily Fang, President of Japan

Wushu Taijiquan Federation Muraoka Kyuhei, and Japan Wushu Taijiquan Federation Secretary General Ishihara Yasuhiko.

“Both the presentation and question sessions ended very successfully and we feel very positive about our efforts in Tokyo,” observed Mr. Goh. “Wushu has evolved as a martial art in China over thousands of years, and made popular around the globe through icons like Bruce Lee and Jet Li in the past half-century. Now, 25 years after the Federation’s founding in 1990, IWUF promotes the modern sport of wushu to millions of taiji practitioners, a growing number of elite international athletes, and champion full-contact fighters. Wushu promotes health, friendship and mutual respect. Wushu’s fast action has thrilled millions of TV viewers in China; it’s poised now as a broadcast-ready sport, and also enjoys great popularity on Youtube among a dedicated, young tech-savvy audience. IWUF is confident that wushu is an ideal sport for Tokyo 2020 that will engage Japanese fans, appeal to viewers around the world, and create an energy that global youth deeply connects with.”

President Yu stated, “We’re very excited to be shortlisted for Tokyo 2020, and we will continue our keen efforts to get wushu added to the Olympic Programme. This is a good sign that wushu is being globally recognized as a fast-growing sport, and one that’s popular especially among youth. Wushu is a popular sport in Japan with 1.5 million practitioners. The Japan Wushu Taijiquan Federation is a well-established organization that has produced many top medalists in our World Championships in the last two decades, so I believe that making the sport part of the Tokyo 2020 Games would undoubtedly add a dynamic appeal that will attract great interest from the Japanese public.”

The decision on the event(s) to be proposed will be delivered by the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee to the IOC by the end of September 2015, and the final decision will be made at the 129th IOC Session in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in August 2016. ■





IN THE NEWS

IWUF & FISU Sign Historic Collaboration

Wushu Coming to 2017 Taipei Summer Universiade

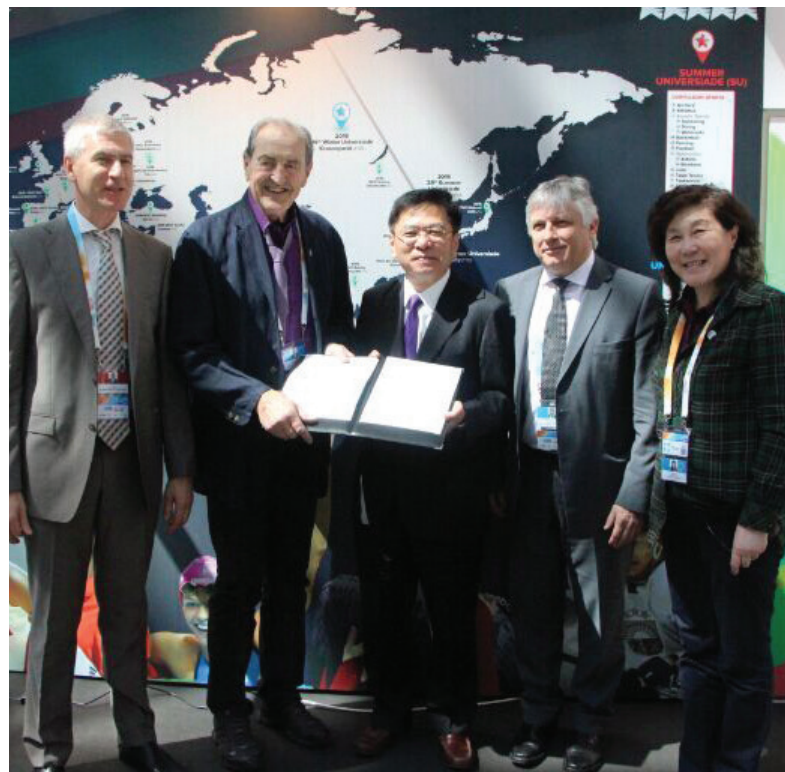
During the Assembly held at the SportAccord Convention in Sochi, IWUF and the Federation Internationale Du Sport Universitaire (FISU) signed a cooperation agreement, and both parties became partner federations. Both organizations will cooperate in the inaugural wushu competition of the 2017 Taipei Summer Universiade and World University Wushu Championships to further promote wushu development in university sports.

Some highlights of the agreement are a list of initiatives that FISU and IWUF will carry out together to:

- a. Encourage the development of the practice of sport by all university students of both genders;
- b. Further encourage the practice of women's university sport;
- c. Identify and implement synergies between the two Federations on the Field of Play;
- d. Identify shared goals and objectives between FISU and IWUF;
- e. Set up a joint educational initiatives to protect sport against the dangers of doping and violence;
- f. Establish a training and assessment unit for ITOs; and
- g. Promote sustainability, the concepts of fair-play and integrity, and join the fight against all forms of racism in sport.

All in all, wushu will enjoy a number of new benefits from this collaboration. One is that FISU will appoint a wushu technical delegate and will collaborate with IWUF organizing seminars and training for coaches, managers and ITOs at the time of FISU competitions. Another is that FISU will offer on its TV webpage (www.fisu.tv) live streaming and VOD content from wushu during

the Universiade and World University Championships; IWUF will have access to this material to use for further wushu promotion. More details of the partnership and upcoming wushu FISU events will be available on the IWUF website in the near future. ■



IWUF Raises Wushu's Profile at SportAccord Convention in Sochi

On April 19-24 IWUF hosted its first booth at the annual SportAccord Convention World Sport and Business Summit in Sochi, Russia. The former winter Olympic city was abuzz with all things sporting, and as IWUF Executive Board members attended official sports meetings, the lively, colorful wushu booth was visited by a steady stream of delegates curious to learn more about wushu and its Federation. Stars of all sorts abounded – Russian President Vladimir Putin was in town to meet with IOC President Thomas Bach to discuss the legacy of Sochi, and sports legends attending the gala closing ceremony included gymnastics great Nadia Comenici and football star Lothar Matthaus.

SportAccord was the annual gathering of leading representatives from international sport. The Convention brings together

representatives from over 100 International Sports Federations and organizations affiliated to SportAccord (General Association of International Sports Federations), ASOIF (Association of Summer Olympic International Federations), AIOWF (Association of International Olympic Winter Sports Federations), ARISF (Association of IOC Recognized International Sports Federations), and AIMS Alliance of Independent Members of SportAccord).

With over 3,000 delegates participating in the convention, the local organizers put on a grand opening ceremony April 20 at Sochi's Iceberg Skating Palace in Olympic Park, the site of the 2014 Winter Olympics figure skating competition. A dazzling show spotlighted Russian culture and sports, setting a festive tone for the convention.

SportAccord President Marius L. Vizer caused something of a

dramatic stir in his opening address, where he stressed the importance of national federations and athletes worldwide in the global realm of sport development. “The power of sport are the International Federations,” he said. “The engine of sport are the National Federations with Ministries of Sport, the NOCs and the Athletes.”

A packed week of events followed. IWUF Secretary General Beijian Liu and Executive Vice-President Anthony Goh attended official meetings that included the SportAccord Council meeting, the SportAccord General Assembly, the ARISF General Assembly, and ARISF Council meeting.

Many compelling conference programs offered speakers, panel discussions, workshops and presentations on diverse sports topics ranging from technical event management to the digital future of sport broadcast and promotion. Various IWUF officials and staff attended these events to gather cutting edge information that will help further develop the Federation and promote wushu on multiple platforms.

The convention’s wushu booth proved to be a popular stop for hundreds of convention delegates who stopped to watch wushu demos on the TV screen, pick up a magazine or pamphlet introducing wushu, or chat with the IWUF team that included Technical & Events Manager Byron Jacobs, Beijing-based Administrative Manager Lily Fang, Lausanne-based Project Coordinator Shuheng Wang, and Communications/Press Officer Martha Burr. This was a great opportunity for us to better define to the greater sports community what wushu is and how it’s been developed over the past 25 years as a modern, Olympic-ready sport. Other combat sports exhibiting at the convention included Muay Thai, International Belt Wrestling, and Sambo, and it was quite informative to visit the booths of subaquatiques, roll ball and orienteering to see how other aspiring Olympic sports promote themselves. All in all, the wushu booth was a big hit, and many people left Sochi with a fuller understanding of both the sport of wushu and the IWUF.

Executive Vice President Anthony Goh stated, “Wushu has developed rapidly around the world in recent years, and IWUF is doing everything possible to keep this momentum rolling forward. This is the first time wushu has been fully represented both by delegates and in exhibition activities at the SportAccord Convention. Our presence there was most certainly productive – the booth is like a window for wushu to attract more attention and project our sport’s many vibrant attributes. I hope IWUF will continue to attend the SportAccord convention in the future, and that our experience can help us solidify an even stronger foundation for wushu to build on.”

As for the business part of the summit, The IWUF team also kept quite busy meeting with various marketing and digital service companies – so look out for new developments IWUF will announce in the future on how we may better distribute wushu content and promote wushu sport around the globe. ■



IN THE NEWS

IWUF Judges Examination Courses 2014 Italy • Shanghai • Chengdu

The IWUF concluded 2014's final judges examination courses in the fall with the third and final course being the IWUF Taijiquan Judges Examination Course held in Sichuan, China at the end of October. In total, the IWUF ran three separate judges examination courses throughout the year, namely in Catania, Italy (June), Shanghai, China (August) and Sichuan, China (October). A large number of both new and existing IWUF judges attended these courses to receive

and renew their judging qualifications, as well as to gain invaluable knowledge regarding competition officiation from the various IWUF experts presenting. This year also marks the first time that the Taijiquan-specific judge's examination course was held; the judges that passed this examination officiated during the 1st World Taijiquan Championships held directly thereafter. ■



2014 International Wushu Judges Examination Course | Catania, Italy
1-7 June 2014

International Wushu Coaches Training Course in Guangzhou Emphasizes Rules and Judging of Four New Competition Events

On March 25 the International Wushu Coaches Training Course (Asia) took place in Guangzhou, China. 58 professional coaches from 11 countries and regions took part in the course over 6 days. Following the closing of the training course in Africa (Hammamet, Tunisia), this is the second in a series of courses hosted by IWUF.

With this key series of IWUF training courses, wushu has been rapidly developing around the world. This year, there will be a total of 6 coaches and athletes training courses conducted worldwide, across five continents. More courses will be given in the second half of the year in the regions that require technical support.

This year, the 13th World Wushu Championships (WWC) will take place in November in Indonesia. Notably, completely new programs in Women's "Xingyiquan," Men's "Baguazhang," Men's "Dadao" and Women's "Shuangjian" are being introduced into the formal competition of the championships. This is the second time IWUF has increased the programs since the 1st World Wushu Championships in 1991, and the medals for wushu will be increased to 32. Wushu athletes will now have more opportunities to compete for medals in the WWC.

The recent training course in Guangzhou emphasizes rules and judging of the four newly added wushu events. Chairman of IWUF Technical Committee, Mr. Wang Yulong, noted that, "Changquan, Nanquan and Taijiquan are the main programs of the WWC, and the newly included four traditional wushu programs have long histories; they are systems rich in theory and also all possess a strong practical nature." Top wushu masters from Beijing, Shanxi and Guangdong were also invited to give valuable lectures in the course for a more sophisticated understanding of competition rules and training methods.

The course contains elements of both theory and practice, and the participants must pass the test for their qualification certification. The professional coaches demonstrated deeply earnest efforts, and were rewarded with the rich content of the course teachings. Having attended the training, they have now mastered the competition rules and training methods of the four new programs; with this important knowledge they are presently qualified to teach more athletes these skills, and will without a doubt contribute to wushu's more rapid future development. ■



Wushu Around the World



European Wushu Federation (EWUF)
Celebrates 30th Anniversary



3rd European Traditional Wushu Championships,
May 16 - 23, 2015, in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria



1st Pan American Traditional Wushu and Taijiqian
Championships in Santo Andre, Brazil, July 7-13, 2015



Bolivian Festival Of Kung Fu Wushu Commemorates
International Day Of Taiji Quan 2015



Open Flanders Wushu Cup 2015/Belgian Wushu Championships
in Dendermonde, Belgium, on April 25



The 4th Oslo Wushu Open, March 14th 2015



**Taolu and Sanda International Tournament, Armenia,
April 23-26, 2015**



22nd Azerbaijan Championships, May 1-3 in Baku



**Côte d'Ivoire National Wushu Championships,
May 10, 2015 in Abidjan**



**3rd West Asia Wushu Championships, February 9-10, 2015,
in Zahedan, Iran**



**Romanian National Wushu Championships, Taolu and
Traditional Qinda, February 28, 2015, in Bucharest**



**2nd Tanzania International Wushu Competition, The Lessa Cup,
August 30-31, 2014, in Dar Es Salaam**

IN THE NEWS

Anti-Doping at IWUF

The 2015 World Anti-Doping Code was approved and came into force on January 1, 2015. IWUF Anti-Doping Rules 2015, based upon this new code, also came into force this year. With the significant changes made to the Code and the Rules, the ultimate objective of the fight against doping in Wushu is to protect the clean athletes.

IWUF collected a total of 60 samples last year and saw four anti-doping rule violations. IWUF is committed to anti-doping testing across its portfolio of events, with an extra focus on targeted out-of-competition testing. More than half of all tests will take place out of competition this year.

18 top-level athletes from 13 national federations have been selected into IWUF Registered Testing Pool 2015 (11 Sanda athletes and 7 Taolu athletes). The athletes and national federations

concerned were informed officially of their inclusion and obligations.

WADA believes that “a long-term solution to preventing doping is through effective values-based education programs that can foster anti-doping behaviors and create a strong anti-doping culture.” IWUF started the anti-doping education programmes at the 5th World Junior Championships 2014, which has been a success for young athletes to participate in the anti-doping quiz. The outreach will be held again in Indonesia during the 13th World Wushu Championships in November 2015. The athletes, coaches, officials and staff will be encouraged to take part in this face-to-face anti-doping education programme.

For more information of IWUF’s anti-doping programmes visit <http://www.iwuf.org/antidoping/>. ■



WORLD ANTI-DOPING AGENCY

INTERNATIONAL WUSHU FEDERATION



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