



INTERNATIONAL WUSHU FEDERATION

国际武术联合会

IWUF NEWSLETTER

No. 003 December, 2013

News

Anti-Doping Workshop in Malawi

The Malawi Wushu Federation attended a workshop on Anti-Doping organized by the Malawi Commission for UNESCO at the Crown Hotel in Lilongwe from the 23rd to the 24th of September 2013. Some of the topics covered included the structure and duties of WADA, RADO and NADO, the WADA Code, UNESCO, as well as the government and NOC's role in the fight against doping. Discussions also included the effects of doping and the way forward in Malawi. The event was officially opened by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Youth Development and Sports, Mr. Alex Mseka.

IWUF President's Message



The fruitful year 2013 marks an important milestone for IWUF, which has seen a lot of significant progress and accomplishments. Wushu officially participated in the Olympic bidding process for the first time, and our presentations were well received by the IOC. Even though we were unsuccessful in achieving our desired goal, IWUF gained invaluable experience and knowledge from this

bidding process and the sport of wushu gained significant global exposure and an enhanced image and status from our efforts. The successful 12th World Wushu Championships was held from October 28 to November 6, 2013 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In addition, Wushu Competitions of the World Games in Colombia, the SportAccord Combat Games in Russia and the Islamic Solidarity Games in Indonesia were all very successful, and preparations for "Nanjing 2014 Youth Wushu Tournament" are well underway.

We have managed to reach sponsorship agreements with 3 companies, Heng Yuan Xiang, the largest textile company in China established in 1927, 361°, a listed sportswear company, and Weising, a sport goods company. Our newly established head quarter in Lausanne is operating smoothly, and will create a closer working relationship with the IOC and other international sports bodies.

We have solicited opinions and suggestions from WADA and anti-doping experts and specialists, and set up a clear and professional anti-doping working structure. We have produced newsletters regularly to provide our members with news, reports, and updates on IWUF activities.

There is no question that our federation is steadily growing stronger and becoming more efficient in our overall operations. This is thanks to the joint efforts of all of us in the wushu family. I would like to thank you all for your dedication and continued contributions.

The highlight of our sport next year will be "Nanjing 2014 Youth Wushu Tournament", which will take place in conjunction with the Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Games as part of the Culture and Education programme. With your support and commitment, we will spare no effort to make it a success and showcase wushu as a spectacular and modern sport. Finally, I wish you all a healthy and prosperous year 2014! (Mr. Yu Zaiqing)

The 12th World Wushu Championships in Kuala Lumpur



A tropical monsoon season greeted 860 athletes from 74 countries at the 12th World Wushu Championships in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, but it did nothing to dampen the wushu spirit of everyone involved. The Wushu Federation of Malaysia offered superlative hospitality and style as they skilfully hosted IWUF's principal biennial event that marks the ever-increasing progress the sport of wushu is making as an Olympic hopeful.

This Championship, held from October 28 - November 6, 2013, showed much evidence that the level of wushu is growing around the world, particularly in many countries outside Asia which previously faced a number of challenges.

While strong Asian teams were expected to dominate, there were some surprises. China maintained its hold at the top of the podium with a whopping 17 gold medals – and 1 silver – to make a total of 18. Both men and women turned in dazzling changquan, qiangshu, jianshu, gunshu, nanquan and nandao performances. While many take this as a given, no one can argue that Chinese athletes and coaches continue to raise the bar with higher jumps, razor sharp precision and technical expertise that is often simply breath-taking. But Malaysian wushu athletes had the home advantage at the Kuala Lumpur Badminton Stadium with a wildly enthusiastic

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5th World Junior Wushu Championships

The 5th World Junior Wushu Championships will take place in Antalya, Turkey from March 11 – 18 2014. The regulations and information are available on the IWUF website.

http://www.iwuf.org/news_detail.asp?id=103

12th World Wushu Championships Results

The competition results from the 12th World Wushu Championships are available on the IWUF website >

http://www.iwuf.org/news_detail.asp?id=103

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audience simply, madly, in love with their team. And the team loved them back, dishing out not only technical prowess in routines of high difficulty, but also imbuing them with joy, soul and style. The Malaysian flag rose and the national anthem played for Ho Mun Hua (nanquan), Phoon Eyin (compulsory changuan), Diana Bong (nandao) and Tai Cheau Xuen (compulsory nanquan), as hundreds of voices rose in chorus singing emotionally together. An additional 5 silver medals and 5 bronze medals brought Malaysia to second place in the overall medal count, and light years ahead in cheers and applause, giving the entire stadium a continual energy that uplifted everyone. Other big winners were Vietnam with 12 medals (3 gold), and South Korea and Iran each with 10 medals. Iran's 7 gold medals (second behind China's gold count) were won thanks largely to their men's and women's sanda fighters and a wildly engaging men's duilian team. Russia, Japan, Macau and Hong Kong followed closely with 7 total medals each.



Over 5 days of events there was truly something for every sports fan. At one end of the stadium the taiji ring expressed the beauty and dynamic expression of internal power. Music and romantically flowing silks mesmerized the audience, while Indonesia's lovely young star Lindswell stole the show with a deeply soulful gold-medal performance.

The centre ring offered a taolu showdown and a dramatic display of jumps, flips, and flashing weapons that drew frequent cheers and applause. A few eye-catching performances were especially outstanding, such as the men's nanquan from Iranian Farshad Arabi, a very experienced athlete who previously won the overall nanquan medal from the World Games in Colombia this year. In women's jianshu Duong Thuy Vi from Vietnam displayed a style ideally representative of the rich content and variety of Chinese straight sword. In men's nangun China's Li Fukui, a seasoned veteran with numerous Chinese championship medals under his belt and a very complete style, exhibited profound power and mastery. And in women's gunshu, Geng Xiaolin from Hong Kong showed us impeccable physical and technical skills.



Over on the sanda leिताi there was near non-stop excitement and an international display of sophisticated fighting techniques and action. With athletes in many weight divisions, China won 7 gold sanda medals (4 men's, 3 women's) with fast, precise kicks and a well-versed repertoire in terms of scoring points. The Russian team brought their indomitable, seasoned fighters to win 3 gold medals with unsurpassed wrestling skills, throws and takedowns. But punch for punch, Iran was the powerhouse to contend with, mowing down many opponents with fearsome skills and superior strength.

In the 80kg division Amir Fazli even managed to slip in a deadly punch that felled the mighty Russian King of Sanda Muslim Salikhov in the second round of the final, going on to win the gold for Iran that eluded him in the previous Championships two years earlier. But perhaps no fight was as dramatic as the women's 52 kg final, where a brutal showdown between Korean Kim Hye-Bin and Elaheh Mansourian played out with the Iranian fighter receiving a kick to the face breaking her cheekbone in 2 places; she bravely held fast, returned her own deadly kicks keeping her opponent at bay, and finally won the match, bloodied but unbowed.

While Asian nations took all but 2 of the Championships' gold medals in taolu – the exceptions were men's duilian won by Iran and women's duilian taken by Ukraine – a full 50% of sanda gold went to Russia and Iran. The fighting level for other non-Asian countries is impressive and fast improving, and some heartfelt triumphs came out of the American, Bermudan and Brazilian sanda teams -- who we expect to see more of in another 2 years. Women's sanda – which has only been a formal event for a mere decade – has seen an unprecedented growth in leिताi skills and mastery, and is now pretty much just as compelling to watch in terms of action as the men's competition. - *Cont. Page 3*



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Official IWUF Youtube Channel

A newly established IWUF Youtube Channel now available at the following URL:

<https://www.youtube.com/iwufwushu>

Official IWUF Facebook Page

In our efforts promote interaction between the IWUF and its members, as well as to further promote Wushu worldwide, we have recently created an official IWUF Facebook page. Through this medium we will be able to spread news and information about Wushu in general, as well as specific IWUF related events. We encourage all our members to join and participate in this online community.

<http://www.facebook.com/iwufwushu>

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Taolu levels outside of Asia may be growing more slowly around the globe compared to full-contact fighting, but several things are contributing to a steady worldwide growth. Foremost is the increase in funding for wushu federations from individual sport ministries since the IWUF became a formal member of the IOC family in 2002. This has given wushu a profound validation that has translated into funding from sport ministries in Iran, Brazil and Mexico, just to name a few. This funding has allowed for various federations to build new facilities, sponsor athletes, hold more frequent national and regional competitions, hire experienced coaches, and send athletes to China for training, all of which greatly contribute to raising the level of training and competition.

While the dominant flags rising above the medal podium of the 12th World Wushu Championships may have been from China, Malaysia and Vietnam, we nevertheless witnessed a groundswell of international talent rising fast. Russia, Ukraine and Iran are serious contenders for the next Championships, and younger stars from the USA, Egypt, Turkey, Italy, France and Gabon are just getting warmed up. With 2 years to go until the 13th World Wushu Championships in Jakarta, Indonesia in 2015, a determined new generation is busy training hard, perfecting their skills, and hungry for gold.

President Yu not only led a successful meeting of the 12th IWUF Congress, but his presence also buoyed the spirit of the games. As he observed the closing of the event he remarked, "On the occasion of the successful conclusion of the 12th World Wushu Championships, please allow me to say thank you on behalf of IWUF to all athletes, coaches, officials, organizers, media, volunteers and friends in the wushu family. I would like to congratulate in particular the Wushu Federation of Malaysia and Local Organizing Committee. It is the third time for Malaysia to host the World Championships and Junior Championships after 1993 and 2006, and it has delivered an exceptional Wushu gala that gave the young athletes and spectators a fascinating and memorable experience."



President Yu added: "I would also like to congratulate athletes on performing your best and staying true to your ideals. As role models in particular for young people, you have shown them that it is important to believe in their own abilities. The 12th World Wushu Championships has set a record in the history of Wushu, but it is not an end at all -- I look forward to seeing you in Indonesia in another two years."

- (Article by Martha Burr)

Wushu Enters Islamic Solidarity Games

Wushu entered the Islamic Solidarity Games during this year which saw the 3rd edition of the games take place in Palembang, Indonesia from September 22nd to October 1st. The games feature 13 sports now including both Taolu and Sanda competition.



The Wushu events took place from September 28 to October 1st and featured 134 athletes from 24 nations participating in 14 Taolu and 6 Sanda events. The Islamic Solidarity Games is a multinational, multi-sport event. The Games involve the elite athletes of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. The first edition was held in 2005 in Saudi Arabia. - Results:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wushu_at_the_2013_Islamic_Solidarity_Games



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Wushu Canada Takes Action in Internship and Charity

On Saturday September 21, 2013 Wushu Canada was honoured to take part in a fundraiser concert for ORBIS International. A team of young wushu athletes joined Hong Kong singer George Lam in a performance to bring awareness for ORBIS, a non-profit humanitarian organization dedicated to saving sight worldwide. Orbis prevents and treats blindness by improving public health facilities and providing airplane eye hospital for countries in need such as rural China, Vietnam, Ethiopia, and India. Along with Orbis Ambassador George Lam, this Wushu demonstration fundraiser also featured a performance by Wushu undergraduates from Zhejiang University, China. Wushu Canada has partnered with Zhejiang University in an International Internship



Program, providing opportunity for wushu students from China to apply their coaching and athletic skills. As the host country, Wushu Canada offers students a range of experiences from coaching internships, live performances, and field trips to gain cultural enrichment. This program is also recognized by the Parliament of Canada as an outstanding approach in multiculturalism preservation and athletics promotion in Canada.

Bolivarian Games Wushu Competition



The 17th Bolivarian Games were held in Chiclayo, Peru from November 17 to 19 this year. It is a multi-sport event held every 4 years and features 57 sports participated in by 11 Latin-American Countries. Wushu has been included as an official sport, and this year 5 countries sent athletes to participate in this IOC recognized event. The participating countries included Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic and Colombia. The highlight of the competition was the Sanda finals, which were played in front of a gymnasium filled with excited spectators as well as the distinguished Mr Jose Quinones, the president of the Peruvian Olympic Committee. Mr Quinones also participated in the awards ceremony. Members of the Peruvian Olympic Committee were extremely pleased with the event, which was also heralded as a success by the participants.

President Yu Zaiqing leads IWUF delegation to Nanjing

From the 9th to the 11th of October, President Yu Zaiqing led an IWUF delegation to Nanjing, China to hold preparatory meetings with the local organizing committee



and to inspect the venues for the "Nanjing 2014 Youth Wushu Tournament" which will be held in conjunction with next year's 2014 Youth Olympic Games as part of the IOC's Cultural Program. The delegation consisted of IWUF President Mr Yu Zaiqing, IWUF Vice-President Mr Anthony Goh, IWUF Representative Mr Wang Xiaolin, IWUF Technical Committee Chairperson Mr Wang Yulong and IWUF Technical Committee Member Mr Byron Jacobs. The delegation arrived in Nanjing on the 9th of October and went directly to the district of Gaochun to inspect the competition stadiums for next year's event.

Following the inspection, the delegation had a meeting with the local organizing committee in Gaochun to discuss relevant details regarding the preparation work for the event. The following day on the 10th, the IWUF team travelled to Nanjing's centre to hold talks with the main organizing committee of the 2014 Youth Olympics and heard their feedback and queries following the IWUF presentation. These meetings were extremely crucial as many questions and unclear topics were addressed by both the organizing committee and the IWUF in order to better prepare for next year's event.



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When the SportAccord Combat Games finished in St. Petersburg this past October, Russia's top taolu star Daria Tarasova had captured her nation's heart with her powerful yet graceful forms. She also captured the highest judges' scores – at least by 1/100th of a point to beat China's top athlete for the gold medal – and only days later she was invited by none other than Russian President Vladimir Putin himself to the Kremlin. Putin, it may be noted, is a former judo practitioner, but his two daughters study wushu. Daria Tarasova was born in Moscow and began her wushu training when she was 5 years old. Now 24, she has twice been World Champion, 15 times European Champion, and took first place at the 2008 Wushu Olympic Tournament in Beijing. She is captain of the Russian National Team, and holds another deeply distinctive honour – to have been chosen as Wushu Ambassador of SportAccord. On top of that, only two weeks later at the 12th IWUF Congress in Kuala Lumpur, Daria was appointed to the IWUF Executive Board as the member representing the Athletes' Committee. During the Combat Games Daria represented wushu at cultural programs, in schools and in hospitals around St. Petersburg to increase awareness of martial arts and give people the chance to see its beauty and power first hand.

"This event has given us the opportunity," she says, "To be ambassadors of martial arts, to go out and talk to people about it, and make a real connection with them. I feel good about this. We've gone to many schools, and made a lot of presentations." As a SportAccord ambassador for martial arts Daria wanted to connect more people to wushu, to help offer them unique opportunities. "I want to show them that martial arts can help them in their life, not just in health, but also in spirit and philosophy," she says.

Daria's favourite visit was to the hospital for orphans with HIV. "They sang for us, and danced. We talked to them, and played with them, and showed them not only our sport but also our respect. That really moved them, because some others don't respect them. It moved me too."

Daria Tarasova: The Golden Girl of Wushu

In her daily life in Moscow, Daria not only trains for competition but she also teaches, making wushu all-consuming. "I'm in the training hall from 8am to 8pm every day. I have a half hour break for lunch, dinner. But this is my choice. I love this life. I love teaching too, I love the kids. If I get tired, my students always give me the energy back."

As the captain of the Russian Wushu team, Daria believes she can help bring Russia to the pinnacle of wushu to dominate on a worldwide stage. Russia is already famous for a long history of outstanding athletic champions, and it almost seems sporting destiny that Russian wushu should rise to the top.



Some challenges from these Combat Games were daunting for Daria – particularly since her weapons specialties are broadsword and staff, but the women's weapon events at the Games were straight sword (jianshu) and spear (qiangshu) – which she only started training in for competition 6 months ago. Daria believed, however, that she could win. "I've always had an aim, a goal to be a champion. When I didn't get a medal in my first tournament I just said, well, what doesn't kill me makes me stronger. I just trained until I got it. Listening to my national anthem on the podium, it made me so proud of my country."

Daria's young wushu students travelled from Moscow to watch their teacher compete and root for her. After she won the gold medal they crowded around her, giving her hugs and flowers. "I knew they came a long way to see me," she says, "and I knew I couldn't make any mistakes. I must win. I felt a lot of emotions, with them being here cheering for me."

Thanks to Daria, a new generation now has golden wushu dreams of their own.

- *(Article by Martha Burr)*

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Wushu Dazzles at St. Petersburg World Combat Games 2013 - Gold Medals Shine on China, Russia and Iran



Wushu competition culminated nine days of intense martial arts events in St. Petersburg at the 2013 SportAccord World Combat Games that took place from October 18-26, 2013. SportAccord is the umbrella organization for all Olympic and non-Olympic international sports federations. The second edition of the Games (the first was in Beijing in 2010) featured top athletes from 15 different martial arts and combat sports -- Aikido, Boxing, Fencing, Judo, Ju- jitsu, Karate, Kendo, Kickboxing, Muay Thai, Sambo, Savate, Sumo, Taekwondo, Wrestling and Wushu. Nearly 1,400 male and female athletes from 62 different countries competed, and a total of 473 medals were awarded. Russia led the medal count, followed by France, Japan and Ukraine.

Overall, the event offered a dazzling display of martial power and skill, mixing up both Olympic and non-Olympic combat sports. For wushu, and the International Wushu Federation team in St. Petersburg, the organizers and producers offered a professional venue and event packaging that included spectator promotion, high-level sports lighting, excellent sound, big screen moments, announcers and a polished medal ceremony with pomp and circumstance. Three TV cameras captured the action for both broadcast and big-screen projection, giving us a tantalizing look and template for wushu's visual potential as an international television and future Olympic sport. IWUF also had three new sponsors present --- 361 degrees, Wesing and the Heng Yuan Xiang group – who observed the action as special guests from the VIP booth along with other top IWUF officials.

SportAccord President Marius Vizer noted of the event, "The World Combat Games are proof that the martial arts and combat sports are one family of sports that support each other and this event is a great opportunity to show how their values can be transferred to societies." The scope of the event was grand, spreading across the beautiful city of St. Petersburg in the Saint-Petersburg Sports and

Concert Complex, the Yubileiny Sports Complex and the Arena Spartak. Events were broadcast live on 18 channels in Latin America, Canada, USA, China, Russia, Malaysia, Romania and the Middle East; online broadcasting in over 120 countries also reached viewers across the globe.

Each sport had its own "ambassador" – Kickboxing saw Don "The Dragon" Wilson, Sambo had Fedor Emelianenko, and Wrestling boasted 3-time Olympic gold medallist Alexandr Karelin. Wushu's own ambassador was Daria Tarasova, the personable Russian star who, at 24, has twice been World Champion, 15 times European Champion, and took first place at the 2008 Wushu Olympic Tournament in Beijing.

The opening week of the Games Tarasova was busy representing wushu at cultural programs, especially in schools and in hospitals around St. Petersburg to increase awareness of martial arts and give people the chance to see its beauty and power first hand.



Despite some frosty weather, when the competition opened wushu definitely heated things up the Spartak Arena. With dazzling taolu forms and powerful sanda full-contact fighting, spectators were treated to flashing swords and spears, lethal kicks and punches. 21 wushu teams had travelled to St. Petersburg for this event, and while China once dominated the medal podium in the early days of the sport, other countries have now come up to speed in technical sophistication, power and style. A select group of international champions came ready to challenge for wushu supremacy. Top amongst those was Russia, a nation possessing many stellar athletes across a variety of martial sports.

This was not lost on an enthusiastic crowd that offered cheering support to all athletes, but especially to their own Russian stars topped by Tarasova and the indomitable sanda champion Muslim Salikhov.

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Shimmering silks and flashing swords lit up the rings as the men's and women's all-around taolu competitions began. Women's events for the all-around taolu included changquan, straight sword and spear. A real battle between Tarasova and the formidable Liu Xia from China was won by Tarasova by just a few hundredths of a point, and the audience erupted in wild cheers and applause. A similar battle was fought in women's taiji all-around, where Indonesian star Lindswell tied with China's Li Jianfang



in taiji sword, but scored higher in taijiquan to win gold in the all-around. China held onto the gold in the men's taijiquan all-around thanks to the power and grace of Huang Yingqi.

The men's taolu all-around was a dramatic battle again between China and Russia, though strong performances were also seen from Hong Kong, USA, Ukraine, Vietnam, Mexico and Singapore. More cheers erupted for Semen Udelov of Russia, who displayed a regal, balletic grace and style to

match his power. China's Yu Lei was less passionate and artistic in his performance perhaps, but his technical prowess edged him ahead for the gold. After a fanfare-filled medal ceremony for taolu, the sanda began, and again the Russian "local favorites" drove the crowd crazy with cheers and applause, filling the arena with electric energy. Most beloved was sanda king and reigning World Champion Muslim Salikhov, whose gorgeous fighting style is pure enjoyment to watch. He took control early on in his fight with the strong Canadian Nacereddine Zemmal, taking him down three times right at the start, landing hard kicks to the chest, and making one masterful takedown after another; Salikhov's beautiful spinning back kick really thrilled the crowd. He looked relaxed and in control from beginning to end, displaying a fighting grace and finesse that marks him as Russia's – and the world's -- top sanda champion. His final display for the crowd was picking up his opponent completely off the mat and dropping him with a thud just before the gong sounded ending the match.

Salikhov's victory was made all the sweeter with 3 more Russian golds from teammates Rustam Kakraev (who beat China's Cai Wei), Aliev Ismail (who beat Roumanian Traian Augustin), and Gadzhi Nuritdinov beating Jesus Rafael Licet from Venezuela. All 4 Russian fighters brought the crowd to their feet and really energized the entire evening. The other sanda powerhouse taking charge of the leिताi was Iran, whose fighters Jafar Shirzadeh Tophraghlou and Hamid Reza Ladvar won 2 gold medals and delivered skilful performances as they vanquished their rivals.



After 13 events China took a total of 8 medals, Russia came away with 6, and Iran also won 6. All in all, the wushu competition offered some of the most diverse, thrilling and entertaining action at the World Combat Games, changing up displays of long and short weapons, the internal power of taiji, and world-class full contact fighting with sanda. Russian competitors who took home the gold – literally home that is – brought pride and joy to their St. Petersburg audience, who in turn supplied a wonderful energy to the events.



As a crowning achievement, Daria Tarasova's gold medal performances not only brought her to the top of the podium, but also to the top honour of Russia – just after her win she was called to Moscow to meet President Vladimir Putin who offered her his personal congratulations on her wushu victory.

▪ (Article by Martha Burr)

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Russian Sanda King's Fighting Farewell – A Profile of Muslim Salikhov

“Sanda King” Muslim Salikhov is Russia’s top sanda fighter, and a legend among wushu’s full-contact fighting scene. His odyssey from mountainous Dagestan to China, Thailand and ultimately the MMA, has helped make him a top ambassador of sanda. He recently won his last amateur gold medal at the World Combat Games in St. Petersburg last October, an especially poignant triumph for the long-time Russian fighter, since it was his last sanda fight in his home country Russia before turning professional to fight in MMA.



home languages, we all speak Russian when we travel and compete together. We are all a big family.”

Muslim started training in sanda in Makhachkala when he was 9 years old. His coach Gusen Magomaeiev, also the Russian sanda coach in St. Petersburg, was one of the early pioneers of sanda in Russia, having trained in China in the 1980s and opening his famous Five Directions sanda school in Dagestan in 1991. During the next two decades he helped build Dagestan into the sanda capital of

Russia, and has produced a huge amount of Russia’s top fighters. It is now the biggest sanda school in Russia. Muslim went to learn sanda at the Five Directions School at age 9, and immediately his coach saw his raw talent and put him in the top training class. In 2003 he entered his first World Wushu Championships in Macau and fought the famous Chinese sanda star Liu Hailong. He lost, in a closely contested bout, but his talent was noticed by everyone. Two years later he fought in the World Championships in Vietnam and won gold, defeating the fighter from Iran in the final round. Now his star was rising fast.

In 2006 he was invited to China to the “King of Sanda” competition. He was almost 20 years old. “They probably thought I was going to lose, but I won,” he recalls, with a modest smile. The next year he won another hard-fought victory in China at the World Wushu Championships in Beijing, where he had 5 tough fights and defeated Iran in the final round to win the gold. Then he fought in the 2008 Beijing Olympic tournament, where he again won gold, alongside his Russian teammate Daria Tarasova who took the gold medal in taolu; this double victory not only made Russia proud, but it also firmly established the country as a superpower in wushu. In 2009 his life changed. Muslim got married and then had a baby daughter. “The night my daughter was born,” he recalls, “I was fighting in Moscow in a Russian military tournament. I was fighting for the Russian police. I fought very hard, because I knew my wife was in labour at the same time. I won, and then ran to my phone, and got the call from my wife that we had a baby girl. When I became a father, I felt like I became a champion again, for the first time all over.”

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Muslim was born in the city of Makhachkala in Dagestan, near the Caspian Sea. “It’s beautiful country there,” he says, “with mountains and ocean. Our whole sanda team at the Combat Games was from Dagestan, which is very famous for sanda. It has the best sanda schools in Russia.” Dagestan is a diverse region of Russia. “We have 32 nationalities there,” notes Muslim, “and everyone lives together happily, all like brothers, even though we speak 32 different languages. But even though some of my teammates on our sanda team speak different



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As a new father, Muslim decided he needed to better support his family. So he decided to move on from amateur fighting to become a pro fighter in the MMA. He began to train in different styles to increase his fighting arsenal, moving to Thailand for a while and beating the top Muay Thai fighter in Pattaya in 2012. "I tried all the martial arts," he says, "wrestling, jiu jitsu. I do everything."

"But sanda is my style," he says, "and I am bringing sanda to the MMA, really, to give it more recognition around the world." His new role as a "sanda ambassador" should bring a powerful boost of promotion to the sport of wushu to spotlight it on the world stage.

- (Article by Martha Burr)



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