Nanjing 2014 Sports Lab -- Wushu’s Olympic Experiment at the 2014 Youth Olympic Games (YOG)

From August 17-27, 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-sport 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.

News

Olympic Recognition for Ukrainian Wushu Federation

The Ukrainian Wushu Federation was recently recognized by the Ukrainian National Olympic Committee as a subject of the Olympic movement, confirmed by an official document signed by President NOC Serhiy Bubka.

PARTNERS:

Follow us on social media:
News

Anti-Doping Rules 2015

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) adopted the new World Anti-Doping Code in 2013 and all the Code signatories were required to implement new Anti-Doping Rules in line with the new Code as of 1st January 2015. To this end, at its 30th IWUF Executive Board Meeting the EB approved the 2015 IWUF Draft Rules which are in line with the 2015 World Anti-Doping Code. These 2015 IWUF Anti-Doping Rules became effective January 1st 2015.

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 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 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 to 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!”

(End)
Wushu has been developed in Armenia since early 1970, and the Traditional Wushu Federation of Armenia became its regulating authority, founded in December 1992 by Tigran Chobanyan, who was also elected President. As a result of his management the Federation joined the International Wushu Federation in 1997, and the Federation was recognized by Armenian National Olympic Committee on September 1, 1998.

As an appreciation of his contribution to sport, and especially to Wushu during the past 25 years, the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Armenia awarded a medal of recognition to Mr. Chobanyan.

**Armenia Ministry of Sports Awards Medal to Traditional Wushu Federation President**

**Nanjing 2014 Youth Wushu Tournament**

**22-24 August 2014**

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.

No one could have been more thrilled than Malaysia’s lovely young champion Loh Ting Ying 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 anthemplayed. 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.

It was 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.
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 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.

When Men’s Jianshu Qiangshu All-Around gold medal went to French athlete Paul Henri Jacques Rondeau -- flanked by silver medallist 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 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.”

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. (End)

View video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTi25Y8ycb0
IWUF President Yu Zaiqing Attends the 2nd Swiss Wushu Qualifying Competition 2014 in Zurich

The Swiss Wushu Federation was delighted to have the President of the International Wushu Federation, Mr. Yu Zaiqing as an honored guest at its 2nd Competition of the year.

At the Opening Ceremony President Yu gave a short welcoming speech to all athletes, judges, coaches and volunteers and admired their enthusiasm for developing wushu in Switzerland. Afterwards President Yu watched the Wushu-Show of the organizing school which demonstrated modern and traditional wushu and sanda. Following the show President Yu and the Executive Board of the Swiss Wushu Federation had some exchange on developing Wushu in the country.

The competition was organized by the host school “Chinese Martial Arts & Yoga” and there were many compelling competitions, all in a fair and friendly manner. European Championships Medal Winners like Sami Ben Mahmoud, Jan Giachino, Pascal Dutoit, Benjamin Müller and Kenny Krebs were all winners at this national Event. The main traditional Events were dominated by Steven Balestra with 2 Gold and 1 Silver Medal. After a long day the competition ended and it seemed that the visit of President Yu gave a boost to the motivation of all athletes, judges, coaches and volunteers. (End)
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 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 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.
(World Traditional, con’t)

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.

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.

(End)

1st World Taijiquan Championships
1-4 November 2014

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 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
Taijiquan, con’t

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 Mi Hao.

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.

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. ”

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." (End)

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.
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 which was 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 qualifications as IWUF judges, as well as to gain invaluable knowledge regarding competition officiation from the various IWUF experts presenting at the courses. This year also marks the first time that the Taijiquan specific judge’s examination course was held, and the judges that passed this examination officiated during the 1st World Taijiquan Championships held directly thereafter. A full listing of the candidates that successfully passed this year’s Taolu, Sanda and Taijiquan examinations will be circulated shortly. (End)