WAKO

ISSUE 03 / OCTOBER 2026

WORLDWIDE

THE MONTHLY VOICE OF GLOBAL KICKBOXING



INSIDE / UZBEKISTAN WORLD CUP

THE WORLD COMES TOGETHER.

3,043 entries. 45 countries. One stage in Tashkent.

European Games 2023 archive · Photo: Tyler Miller / Sportsfile

THE NEXT GENERATION

Investing in kickboxing's future / 06

PEOPLE IN FOCUS

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THE WORLD OF WAKO.



OCTOBER 2026 / ISSUE 03
Competition, community and the people moving kickboxing forward.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

WE TALK.
WE WALK.

"We say it is important to invest in the future. We do exactly that. We walk the talk."

ROY BAKER / WAKO PRESIDENT

GameChangers 1st Edition · Olympic House, Lausanne · 28 October 2022

THE COUNTDOWN TO 50

FIVE DECADES. ONE FUTURE.



1977 — 2027

Borislav Pelević with Ennio Falsoni, 1988. / WAKO archive

As WAKO approaches its 50th anniversary in 2027, we celebrate five decades of kickboxing's remarkable development into a global sport. This journey has been shaped by the vision and dedication of past and present leaders, the achievements of generations of athletes, and the ongoing pursuit of international recognition, including the dream of Olympic inclusion.

George Brueckner and Mike Anderson played pioneering roles in creating an international platform for kickboxing. On 26 February 1977, WAKO was officially founded in Berlin, marking a significant milestone in the sport's history. From its European beginnings, WAKO established official rules and regulations, placing a strong emphasis on athlete safety, fair competition and a unified sporting identity.

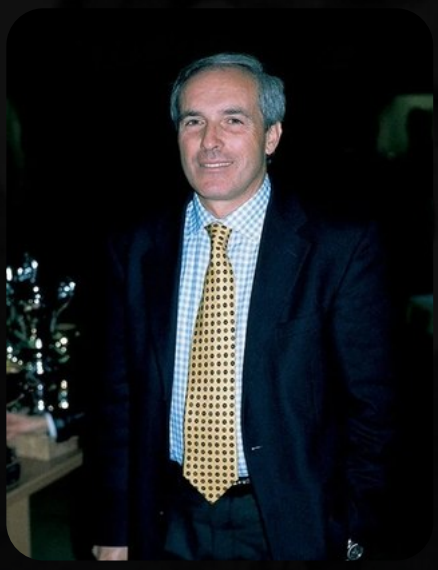
BUILT BY GENERATIONS.

THE COUNTDOWN TO

50

1977 — 2027

Co-founders Georg Brückner and Mike Anderson helped lay the foundations of international kickboxing.



ENNIO FALSONI

1984–2013



BORISLAV PELEVIĆ

2015–2018



ROY BAKER

Elected 2019

Ennio Falsoni served as President from 1984 to 2013, overseeing a significant period of growth and international development. Following a transitional period, Borislav Pelević led the organisation from 2015 to 2018, while Francesca Falsoni assumed the responsibility of Interim President. In 2019, Roy Baker was elected President, continuing the work of strengthening WAKO's global position and advancing its ambitions within the international sporting movement.

Today, WAKO continues to build on this legacy. Through initiatives such as the Gamechangers programme, a new generation of leaders is being empowered to bring fresh ideas, energy and vision to the sport, helping shape its future while respecting the values on which it was founded.

From the foundations laid by the pioneers of kickboxing to the leadership guiding WAKO today and tomorrow, our 50th anniversary to be celebrated in 2027 is an opportunity to honour our history, recognise the contributions of those who have shaped our journey, celebrate our achievements and inspire the next chapter of kickboxing's global development.

WAKO history & leadership

SCAN OR CLICK

FOUNDATION. LEADERSHIP. THE NEXT GENERATION.



THE NEXT GENERATION

THEIR FUTURE. OUR FUTURE.

Supporting young talent means building a stronger, more inclusive and sustainable kickboxing community. With continued investment in youth, WAKO is helping shape the next generation of athletes, leaders, officials and ambassadors of the sport.

MORE THAN A MOMENT.



01 / THE REWARD

A medal, a smile and a moment to share.



02 / THE EXCHANGE

Timing and control on the tatami.



03 / THE CONTEST

Two athletes. A ring. Full commitment.



04 / THE RELEASE

Celebration takes its own shape.



05 / THE TEAM

The officials who make competition possible.



06 / THE DECISION

A result to remember.

Explore event galleries

SCAN OR CLICK



ATHLETES AT THE HEART

YOUR SPORT. YOUR VOICE.

WAKO's committees play a key role in shaping WAKO's policies, initiatives, and development, while promoting fairness, inclusivity, and excellence in the sport of kickboxing. They enable the organisation to operate to the highest standards. At the heart of WAKO's mission is a commitment to placing athletes at the center of the sport.



CLEAN SPORT

Protect fair competition.

REPRESENTATION

Bring athletes into decisions.

DUAL CAREERS

Support life beyond competition.

CONNECTION

Link competitors and committees.

Athletes' Committee

SCAN OR CLICK

Athlete Corner

SCAN OR CLICK

LEADERSHIP STARTS HERE.



GameChangers brings young talent into conversations about sport's future.

15
YOUNG AMBASSADORS

15
COUNTRIES

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CONTINENTS

WAKO GameChangers (WGC) is a development program designed to empower young talent and prepare the next generation of leaders within WAKO and the wider sporting community. Launched in 2021, the initiative focuses on good governance, transparency, integrity, athlete involvement and the Olympic Movement. Its broader aim is to strengthen leadership skills, encourage active participation and support the sustainable development of kickboxing.

First edition report

SCAN OR CLICK

The first edition (2021–2022) combined an online introduction with a Budapest meeting on governance, athlete involvement, sport and politics.

Contributors included Chantal Buchser (IOC Athlete365), Zsófia Csonka (Hungarian Olympic Committee Athletes' Committee) and IOC member Pál Schmitt.

Participants met WAKO and Olympic Movement leaders, building a network for collaboration and leadership development.

LEARN. LEAD. CHANGE THE GAME.



Second edition • 2023–2024

This edition included an in-person workshop in Budapest and at the International Olympic Committee (IOC) headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland. The program brought together 12 selected young talents and focused on leadership, sport diplomacy, personal development and ways to make WAKO more attractive as a sporting organisation and brand.

Key topics covered the inclusion of athletes and coaches, the IOC's Olympism365 initiative and Athlete365. Through collaborative group discussions, participants developed practical recommendations and provided feedback to WAKO, contributing ideas to support the organisation's future development.

Second edition report

SCAN OR CLICK

Third edition • January 2027

Building on the success of the first two editions, WAKO Europe announced the third edition of the WAKO GameChangers programme on 30 September 2026, marking another important step in its commitment to developing future leaders.

The selection process aims to recruit 10 young ambassadors - five men and five women aged between 20 and 30. Applicants were required to speak English fluently and preferably have an academic background. Applications had to be submitted through the candidates' respective WAKO member national federations.

The application deadline passed on 15 October 2026. The official curriculum and leadership training modules for the selected ambassadors are scheduled to begin in January 2027.

Programme and Espen Lund interview

SCAN OR CLICK

THE OCTOBER LEAD

ALL ROADS TO TASHKENT.



Uzbekistan Kickboxing World Cup • Tashkent • 13–18 October 2026

3,043

COMPETITION ENTRIES

One of October's major international competitions brought athletes, coaches, referees and officials together in Uzbekistan. The tournament was held with a high level of participation, featuring a total of 3,043 entries from 45 countries. The opening ceremony was scheduled for 14 October and was followed by professional kickboxing bouts in a separate arena. President Roy Baker congratulated the Uzbekistan Federation on the excellent tournament, where so many countries, cultures and colors could work together in harmony.

45

COUNTRIES

The WAKO Uzbekistan Kickboxing World Cup offered a valuable opportunity for athletes to compete at an international level in Tashkent, the host city of the 2027 WAKO Seniors World Championships. Beyond the competition itself, the event served as a preview of the city that will welcome the world's best kickboxers next year. The experience gained in Uzbekistan provides an important stepping stone as athletes and national teams continue their preparations for the 2027 World Championships.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE MOMENT.



Uzbek volunteers



The referees' team at ring 2



Warming up with the youngest teammate



Preparation, respect and fair play in Tashkent

Opening ceremony
SCAN OR CLICK

Coaches' meeting
SCAN OR CLICK

World Cup highlights
SCAN OR CLICK

INDIA RISING.



WAKO India / national development

Under the leadership of Mr. Santosh K. Agrawal as President, WAKO India has made significant efforts to establish kickboxing as a recognised, organised and increasingly competitive sport in one of the world's largest countries. Its work extends beyond international medals: it includes national sports recognition, youth development, women's participation, coach and referee education, international competition hosting and the expansion of kickboxing across India's states and territories.

WAKO India's athletes have achieved notable results at international competitions, particularly in youth kickboxing. Their young athletes can compete at the highest international level.



Team India / international connections

One of the most important milestones in WAKO India's development came on 2 July 2021, when the Indian government officially recognised the WAKO India Kickboxing Federation as a National Sports Federation. This national-level institutional support helped the sport expand its participation base, improve its competitive structures and develop pathways for athletes seeking to represent their country internationally.

At the Uzbekistan World Cup, WAKO President Roy Baker, and President of Asian Kickboxing Confederation (WAKO Asia) Nasser Nassiri congratulated the President of WAKO India, Santosh Agrawal, and the entire Indian team extending their best wishes for success.

Team India was honoured by a visit from the Defence Attaché at the Embassy of India in Tashkent.

Team India in Tashkent

SCAN OR CLICK

IRAQ

01–05

OCTOBER 2026

1ST ARAB INTERNATIONAL OPEN CUP

NORTH AMERICA. FULL ENERGY.



22–25 OCT / CANADA

CENTURY CUP

WAKO Canada, in close partnership with Century Martial Arts, hosted the 2nd Annual North American Open Century Cup. The event contributed to the development of kickboxing in North America.

Canada event coverage

SCAN OR CLICK



07–11 OCT / MEXICO

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Hosted by FENAKIB and WAKO México, for all disciplines, and all age categories.

Some competitions stand out, and then there is the National Championship — the highlight of the season and the culmination of months of preparation. It is the moment when athletes' hard work, dedication, sacrifice, and determination come together on the competition floor.

Mexico event coverage

SCAN OR CLICK

COMPETE. CONNECT. DEVELOP.



BRAZIL / TWO STAGES

The Brazil Open began in Paraná on 28–29 March alongside the WAKO IF Development Seminar. Athletes began earning continental world ranking points.

The 10–12 October stage in Vitória brought senior ring sports competition and WAKO World Ranking points, alongside the Southeast Brazilian Para Kickboxing Championship.

Brazil Open information

SCAN OR CLICK



COPA SIMÓN BOLÍVAR

Miranda, Venezuela / 30 October–1 November 2026.

Organised by the Venezuelan Kickboxing Federation, the season-ending national championship brings Venezuelan athletes and clubs together across all age categories.

Copa Simón Bolívar

SCAN OR CLICK



Ecuador seminar

SCAN OR CLICK

ECUADOR / OFFICIALS IN FOCUS

Javier Alberca and Ana Sordo (FEKM Spain) delivered referee education in Ecuador. FEDEME recognised its contribution to technical skills, fairness and consistent judging.

FEDEME has selected athletes for the CISM Military Kickboxing Championship.

SAFER SPORT. STRONGER CLUBS.



SAFE COMBAT final conference · 24 October 2026

The final conference brought together consortium members, certified Portuguese clubs, academics and safeguarding specialists. WAKO Europe received positive feedback for the quality and significance of its contribution.

The SAFE COMBAT project has demonstrated a high standard of implementation, effective communication and cooperation among the consortium partners, and a successful conclusion.

For WAKO Europe, participation in this project has represented a valuable opportunity to contribute to the development and promotion of safeguarding standards in combat sports, strengthen cooperation with European partners, and support the practical implementation of safeguarding measures at club level.

EXPERT VOICES

Kristina Pekkola · European Judo Union Vice-President.

Filomena Fortes · ACOLOP Cabo Verde representative and IOC Member.

Haruka Tashimoto · 2016 Olympic judo champion.

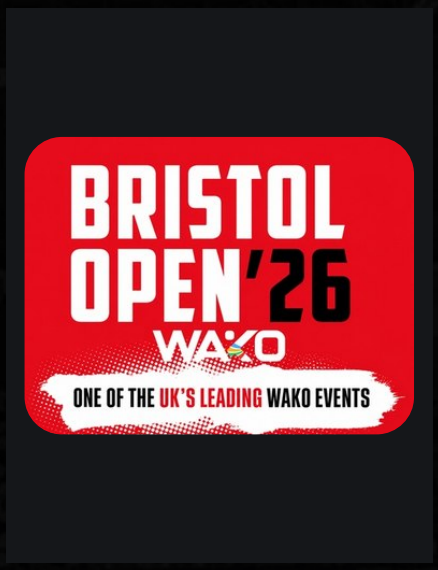
Tine Vertommen · Safeguarding researcher, Thomas More University.

Miguel Nery · Faculty of Human Kinetics, Lisbon.

Bruno Avelar Rosa · Safeguarding expert.

ON THE COMPETITION FLOOR.







CZECH OPEN | BRISTOL OPEN | BALKAN OPEN

OCTOBER

02–04	**Top Ten Norwegian Cup – Zinken Hopp** Radal, Norway
02–03	**Sana Open** Sanski Most, Bosnia & Herzegovina
03–04	**Lithuania Open** Tauragé, Lithuania
09–10	**Czech Open** Praha, Czech Republic
20–24	**The Clash European Combat Sports Festival** Tallinn, Estonia
23–25	**Bristol Open** Bristol, England
23–25	**Arena Kickboxing Games** Ano Liosia, Greece
23–24	**Balkan Open** Tesanj, Bosnia & Herzegovina
24	**40th Slovenia Open** Ob Savi, Slovenia

LOCAL ROOTS. WIDER REACH.



WAKO competition photography / international action.

OPEN CUPS & REGIONAL COMPETITIONS

03 OCT	**Branko Cikatić Memorial K-1 Cup** Zagreb, Croatia
16–18 OCT	**Mazowsze Open Kickboxing** Węgrów, Poland
17 OCT	**Belgrade Trophy** Belgrade, Serbia
30 OCT–01 NOV	**Trofeo Ciudad de Benidorm** Benidorm, Spain
31 OCT	**Ypres Open Cup** Ieper, Belgium
31 OCT	**Bavarian Open** Altöttingen, Germany

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS & CUPS

03–04 OCT / Serbia · Senior K1, Zlatibor
09–10 OCT / Poland · Youth Championships and Cups, Starachowice
16–18 OCT / Poland · Silesian Championships, Wałbrzych
31 OCT / Croatia · Županijsko Prvenstvo, Zabok

THE INTERVIEW

MORE THAN THE TITLES.

TOMAŽ BARADA

“True success is not measured only by the titles you win yourself, but by what you give back to the sport and what you leave behind.”



1. Who is Tomaž Barada in the world of kickboxing? Tell us about your journey and your history in the sport.

My journey in martial arts and kickboxing is not just a story about sporting achievements; it is also a story about life, perseverance, and the determination to overcome challenges.

I started practising sports at the age of six. Unfortunately, that was also the age at which I lost my mother to cancer. My father was severely disabled, so I moved from my hometown of Maribor to Vuzenica, about 50 kilometres away, where I lived with my aunt and her family on their farm. I am grateful that they took such good care of me during those important years of my childhood.

My sporting journey began with gymnastics, which I practised from the age of six until I was fourteen. Gymnastics gave me an excellent physical foundation, teaching me body control, coordination, balance, and discipline — qualities that would later prove invaluable in martial arts.

At fourteen, after finishing primary school, I returned to Maribor to live with my father and my sister. Sadly, my father passed away just two weeks after my return.

Around that time, I was fascinated by Bruce Lee's films. Almost by chance, I walked into a gym where people were practising martial arts. I fell in love with martial arts at first sight, and from that moment on, I knew I had found my passion.

My competitive career progressed very quickly. In 1994, I competed at my first European Kickboxing Championships and immediately became European Champion.

In 1995, I was selected for the Slovenian national team at the World Championships in Stuttgart, Germany, and I was fortunate enough to achieve the ultimate result and return home as World Champion.

Looking back on my competitive career I won six European Championship titles, two amateur World Championship titles, and five professional World Championship titles.

However, my ambitions extended beyond my own competitive career. In 1991, I founded my own kickboxing club, and after 10 years I established my own private sports centre.

Today, I look back on this journey with enormous pride and gratitude. Kickboxing has given me far more than sporting titles. It has given me purpose, the opportunity to build something lasting, and the chance to dedicate my life to a sport that has shaped the person I am today.

MORE THAN WINNING.



Coaching the next generation



Barada Camp / passing it on



With WAKO leadership

2. What are the achievements in kickboxing that you are most proud of?

I have to say that my greatest achievements are not my own competitive results, nor the fact that I remained undefeated throughout my ten-year career.

As a coach, I am extremely proud that I have helped develop 44 European and World Champions across kickboxing at my sports centre.

Of course, I am particularly proud of my daughter, Tyra Barada. At just 22 years of age, she has already achieved remarkable results. At senior level, she is a two-time World Champion, a European Champion, and a winner of the European Games in light contact. At junior level, she won three World Championship titles and two European Championship titles.

Beyond the sporting arena, I am also proud to have contributed to the wider development and recognition of sport in Slovenia. I have served two terms as Vice-President of the Olympic Committee of Slovenia and am currently serving my third term as President of the Maribor Sports Association.

I have also had the privilege of serving as Chief of Mission at the Olympic Games in Beijing and the Mediterranean Games in Tarragona. These experiences have allowed me to contribute to sport beyond kickboxing and to work towards greater recognition of sport and its athletes at national and international levels.

For me, true success is not measured only by the titles you win yourself, but by what you give back to the sport and what you leave behind.

3. What do you like most about WAKO?

What I like most about WAKO is that kickboxing is about much more than winning medals or defeating an opponent on the tatami or in the ring. It is also about building friendships, mutual respect, and lasting relationships between people from different countries and cultures.

I am also very proud of the tremendous development WAKO has achieved in recent years, particularly within the Olympic movement and particularly beyond Europe. For a long time, Europe was the leading continent in our sport, but today we are seeing significant growth across other continents as well. Kickboxing is becoming increasingly global, bringing together more countries, athletes, and national federations than ever before.

Another unique aspect of WAKO is the diversity of our sport. We bring together seven different competitive disciplines under one international federation. This gives kickboxing a special identity within the world of combat sports and offers athletes a wide range of opportunities to find their own path and reach their full potential.

Finally, one of the things I value most about WAKO is that our sport offers opportunities for everyone. We have children, young athletes, seniors, and veterans participating in our sport. We have also been developing opportunities for athletes with disabilities, who have been participating in our continental and World Championships for several years.

This demonstrates that kickboxing is not only about competition and performance; it is also about inclusion, equal opportunities, and making sport accessible to as many people as possible.

A BIGGER STAGE.

Visibility. Competition. Partnerships. Development.

4. What do you think should be improved, adjusted or even changed within WAKO?

I believe WAKO has enormous potential for further growth, but there are several important areas where we need to make progress if we want to take our sport to the next level.

One of our biggest challenges is media visibility. Although kickboxing is attracting an increasing audience and more people are following our competitions, we have not yet fully established ourselves as a commercially attractive product for mainstream television and major broadcasters.

We need to find better ways to present our sport, tell the stories of our athletes, and make our competitions more appealing to audiences, broadcasters, and commercial partners.

Our World Championships are massive events, with enormous numbers of athletes competing across seven different disciplines and multiple age categories. This demonstrates the strength and global reach of WAKO, but it can also make our competitions difficult for television audiences to follow.

I believe we should complement our major championships with smaller, more focused events designed specifically for spectators, broadcasters, and commercial partners.

For example, we could organise an annual premium elite tournament featuring the eight best athletes in the world in a selected discipline or weight category. Imagine bringing together the world's top eight fighters in a spectacular ring event, with a clear competition format, professional production, and a strong entertainment element.

Such a format could help us build recognisable sporting stars, attract new audiences, generate greater media interest, and create a more commercially attractive product for television and sponsors. We must preserve the strength and diversity of our existing competitions while developing new formats that are easier to follow and more exciting to watch.

This is closely connected to another important issue: financial resources. Compared with many other sports, kickboxing still operates with relatively limited financial support, including in Slovenia.

At present, many of our sponsors are companies that provide equipment and products directly used by our athletes. Their support is extremely important, but I believe we must broaden our commercial partnerships and attract sponsors from other industries, including beverages, sports nutrition, watches, the automotive sector, insurance companies, and banks.

Just as importantly, we must ensure that any additional financial resources are invested wisely.

Generating more revenue should never be an objective in itself. The real goal must be to reinvest that money in the development of kickboxing worldwide.

Under the leadership of our President, Roy Baker, WAKO has already made important progress by organising development seminars and educational programmes in countries and regions where kickboxing is not yet sufficiently established. These initiatives have produced encouraging results, and I strongly believe we should expand them further.

There are still many countries and regions where our support is essential. By investing in coaches, referees, athletes, education, and local federations, we can create stronger foundations for the future and give more people the opportunity to become part of our sport.

Ultimately, I believe our priorities should be clear: increase media visibility, develop more attractive competition formats, attract stronger commercial partnerships, and reinvest the resulting resources into the global development of kickboxing.

WHAT WE LEAVE BEHIND.



Tomaž and Tyra Barada / shared achievements



Tomaž Barada with WAKO President Roy Baker

5. How do you see the future of WAKO?

I see a very bright future for WAKO, but I also believe that we, as the people responsible for leading our sport, must be more ambitious and take the next steps forward. We have the athletes, the international reach, the competitive structure, and the quality of our sport. Now we must ensure that kickboxing receives the recognition it deserves.

Important priority is creating better opportunities for our athletes after they have achieved everything possible at amateur level. I know this challenge from my own experience. After winning major titles and reaching the highest levels of amateur competition, what comes next?

WAKO should offer athletes a clear pathway into professional kickboxing, where they can continue competing at the highest level, build their careers, and earn money through their achievements.

At the same time, I must highlight the work being done by our President, Roy Baker, and his team, of which I am proud to be a part.

We must also pay much greater attention to the history of our sport and the people who built it.

We have produced outstanding World and European Champions, exceptional referees, dedicated coaches, and influential leaders. Unfortunately, too often, once their competitive careers are over, they gradually disappear from the spotlight. We must not allow that to happen.

I would love to see WAKO give its legends a more prominent role at major championships, including inviting former World Champions, respected referees, and other important figures in our sport to present medals and recognise the next generation of champions.

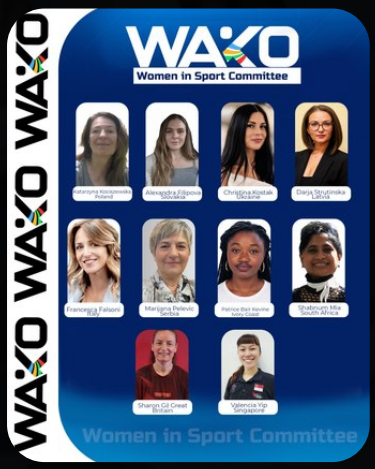
I also believe that kickboxing has enormous potential beyond traditional competitive sport. We should work towards introducing our sport into school physical education programmes and developing more cooperation with institutions such as the police and the military, where kickboxing can contribute to physical fitness, discipline, coordination, and personal development.

And, of course, one of our greatest ambitions must be to see kickboxing represented on the Olympic Games programme.



WOMEN IN SPORT

EVERY ROLE. EVERY OPPORTUNITY.



Women are an essential part of the WAKO community, contributing as athletes, coaches, referees, administrators and leaders. Their participation and visibility help create a stronger and more representative sporting environment.

ATHLETES. COACHES. OFFICIALS. LEADERS.

OCTOBER / BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

BE AWARE.
BE PROACTIVE.



TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH.

Sport is about more than performance, competition and achievement. It promotes well-being, solidarity and mutual support. A strong sporting community recognises that taking care of our health is just as important as striving for excellence in sport.

Every October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month highlights the importance of prevention, early detection and access to appropriate care. It encourages women to stay informed, pay attention to their health and take proactive steps towards their well-being.

The WAKO Women in Sport Committee supports this global initiative, raising awareness of breast health and encouraging women throughout the kickboxing community to make their health a priority. Through education, awareness and collective action, we can help foster a culture in which everyone feels informed, supported and empowered to make informed decisions about their health.

WAKO health update

SCAN OR CLICK

HEALTH IS PART OF THE CONVERSATION.

EVERYONE IS INVITED.



Inclusion is part of sporting excellence.

WAKO is committed to maintain a fair competitive environment for every athlete, and works to the highest standard of assessment to ensure fairness and inclusion in the sport.

ParaKickboxing in Brazil

The 1st Brazilian Southeast ParaKickboxing Championship was scheduled for 11 October in Vitória, as part of an event organised by CBKB.

ParaKickboxing demonstrations aimed to raise awareness and open opportunities for athletes with disabilities, supporting a more accessible sporting environment.

Next stop: Skopje

The upcoming Senior, Master and Para-Inclusive European Championship (All Disciplines) in Skopje provides a timely opportunity to show how participation across different age groups and abilities can be incorporated into a major international competition. The event is scheduled for 6–15 November 2026.

PROTECT YOUR POTENTIAL.

01 / CLEAN SPORT

2027

THE PROHIBITED LIST

Clean sport is a shared responsibility, and staying informed is an essential part of an athlete's preparation.

WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) has published the List of Prohibited Substances and Methods. The List was approved by WADA's Executive Committee, and will enter into force on 1 January 2027.

We kindly ask all WAKO Federations, affiliated clubs and members to review the key changes to the 2027 Prohibited List.

Athletes who have a legitimate medical reason for using a prohibited substance or method can apply for a Therapeutic Use Exemption.

The Anti-Doping Education and Learning Platform can be accessed on WADA's site.

WADA 2027 List
SCAN OR CLICK

TUE guidance
SCAN OR CLICK

ADEL education
SCAN OR CLICK

WAKO anti-doping
SCAN OR CLICK

02 / MENTAL HEALTH

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU?



What defines you as an athlete?

A conversation for Mental Health Day.

Mental health conversation
SCAN OR CLICK

FROM SCHOOL TO THE WORLD STAGE.



THE NEXT GENERATION

Kickboxing's international development depends on more than championship results. Cooperation with sporting institutions, transparent governance, athlete development and a commitment to integrity all contribute to the sport's long-term position within the international sporting community.

The International School Sport Federation (ISF) was founded in 1972 to promote sport and educational opportunities for school students aged 11-18. It has been recognised by the International Olympic Committee since 1995.

WAKO's cooperation with ISF. In April 2026, the two organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen cooperation in school sport and support the development of kickboxing in that environment.

Introducing young people to kickboxing through school sport can help broaden participation and establish pathways from grassroots activity to organised competition. The inclusion of kickboxing in the ISF U15 Gymnasiade 2027 is scheduled to take place in Zlatibor, Serbia, in September 2027. The qualification for it has already been held as part of the 2026 WAKO World Youth Kickboxing Championship in Jesolo.

WAKO / ISF partnership

SCAN OR CLICK

ISF announcement

SCAN OR CLICK



ARCHIVE / European Championships, Athens 2024. Photo: WAKO Europe.

SKOPJE FIRST. ISTANBUL NEXT.

One of the most significant strategic milestones for the WAKO community is the qualification pathway for the 2027 European Games in Istanbul, Türkiye, which will take place from 16–27 June 2027.

Following the confirmation of kickboxing's place in the European Games programme, WAKO has announced that three kickboxing disciplines will be featured at the Games. The WAKO European Kickboxing Championships in Skopje, North Macedonia, from 6–15 November 2026, will be the official qualifying event. This makes the November European Championships important not only for continental titles, but also for athletes pursuing the opportunity to represent their countries at the European Games.



Qualification pathway

SCAN OR CLICK

01 QUALIFY

Skopje / 6–15 November 2026

02 CONFIRM

Quotas and athlete nominations

03 COMPETE

Istanbul / 16–27 June 2027

FIT FOR THE FUTURE.



International sports governance at the SportAccord Summit, Lausanne.

ARISF General Assembly

WAKO President Roy Baker took part as an ARISF board member under the theme “Fit for the Future”, contributing to discussions on governance, ARISF’s strategic plan and the Olympic Movement.

Topics included anti-doping, athletes’ rights, competition manipulation, sustainability and coordination with IWGA and SportAccord.

Speaking alongside WADA and the International Testing Agency, Baker outlined WAKO’s new Anti-Doping Code, planned for 2027.

IWGA extraordinary meeting

WAKO Europe continues to strengthen kickboxing’s position within the international sports community.

The IWGA Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), was held on 4 October 2026 in Lausanne, Switzerland in the Olympic Museum, during the SportAccord IF Forum. Espen Lund, WAKO Europe President and Member of the Executive Board of the International World Games Association (IWGA), attended the EGM. The Extraordinary General Meeting addressed constitutional amendments and the election of an additional IWGA Vice-President.

ARISF update

SCAN OR CLICK

IWGA update

SCAN OR CLICK

WAKO AT SPORTACCORD.



THE MEDITERRANEAN CONVERSATION

WAKO President Roy Baker and WAKO First Vice President Espen Lund met with Mediterranean Games Secretary General Iakovos Filippousis to discuss a major goal: Making kickboxing a full medal sport at the 2030 Mediterranean Games.



At the SportAccord Forum in Lausanne WAKO President Roy Baker met with David Eades, former BBC World anchor and long-standing moderator of SportAccord Forums and Conventions. They exchanged views on the future of international sport and the opportunities ahead.



WAKO President Roy Baker and Vice President Espen Lund met with Nasser Majali, Secretary General of the Islamic Solidarity Games Association, and Fatema Hayat, ISSA Director of IR and a member of the Kuwait Olympic committee.

CONNECTIONS WITH PURPOSE.



THE OLYMPIC CONVERSATION

The Olympic Rings Ceremony at the SportAccord Forum in Lausanne. WAKO President Roy Baker met IOC President Kirsty Coventry. The encounter placed WAKO alongside the international sports community at the Forum's Olympic Rings Ceremony.

Olympic Rings ceremony

SCAN OR CLICK



DIALOGUE IN LAUSANNE

Meeting in Olympic Village Lausanne with IOC sport Director, Pierre Ducrey



A WORLD CUP WELCOME

Distinguished guests with WAKO President Roy Baker at the Opening Ceremony of the World Cup.

Lausanne update

SCAN OR CLICK

Tashkent update

SCAN OR CLICK

KNOWLEDGE IN MOTION.



A NEW MEMBERSHIP CHAPTER

RSPORTZ TO SPORTS ID

Education and continuing professional development help ensure that WAKO's global community can operate with consistent procedures and up-to-date knowledge.

WAKO's online seminars explain the transition from RSportz to Sports ID and what it means for members. The programme offers several sessions, allowing federations to hear the update and prepare for the change.

Membership seminars

SCAN OR CLICK

THE SEMINAR SCHEDULE / CET

09 OCT	15:00–16:00
20 OCT	08:00–09:00
04 NOV	19:00–20:00
20 NOV	08:00–09:00

SPORTDATA BENEFITS & RSPORTZ REGISTRATION

The 8 October webinar focused on Sportdata benefits and RSportz registration. English-language and Spanish-translated sessions provided access for members across different language groups.

English session: 10:00–11:00 CET. Spanish translation: 22:00–23:00 CET.

LOOKING TO THE HORIZON.





BRISBANE 2032

The launch of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic emblem gives the next Games cycle a new visual identity. For WAKO's Oceania community, the announcement is a reminder of the region's place in the international sporting conversation.

CONNECTIONS IN UZBEKISTAN

WAKO President Roy Baker and WAKO Vice-President Espen Lund met in Uzbekistan at the World Cup with Mikhail Gerasimov, former world-champion, experienced sports administrator and Vice-President at the World Kickboxing Federation (WKF).

The World Cup offered space for discussion away from competition, bringing together people with experience in the sport as athletes and administrators.

Uzbekistan meeting

SCAN OR CLICK

SÁNDOR KOVÁCS-SADA.



Sándor Kovács-Sada, kickboxing coach from Hungary, passed away. Sada was one of the founders of Tigers Kick-Box SE, the club of multiple world champion Gabriella Busa. He was a respected coach in his community, a driving force behind the Szeged World Cups for many years.

Remembering Sada

SCAN OR CLICK

REST IN PEACE, SADA.

NEXT UP.
THE WORLD STAGE.



06–15 NOVEMBER

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Skopje, North Macedonia

Event information

SCAN OR CLICK



02–07 DECEMBER

AFRICAN OPEN CUP

Cairo, Egypt

Event information

SCAN OR CLICK

30 NOVEMBER / INTERNATIONAL KICKBOXING DAY

FINISH THE YEAR. MAKE YOUR MARK.





12–21 DECEMBER

ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Event information

SCAN OR CLICK

Competition: 12–21 December
Invitation period: 11–21 December

14–20 DECEMBER

MILITARY CHALLENGE

Antalya, Türkiye

Event information

SCAN OR CLICK



ONE SPORT.

COUNTLESS STORIES.

One WAKO. One Champion. One Global Community.

FOLLOW THE WORLD OF KICKBOXING

Uzbekistan World Cup

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