

WORLDWIDE

THE MONTHLY VOICE OF GLOBAL KICKBOXING



THE WORLD STAGE AWAITS

THE NEXT GENERATION

From the first session to representing a nation.
The road to Jesolo starts here.

INSIDE THE ISSUE

**A global community.
A shared direction.**

PLUS

Women in sport. Continental news.
The next chapter for kickboxing.

AUGUST 2026

A WORLD IN MOTION.

- 03** A message from the President
- 04** The next generation
- 06** Jesolo competition programme
- 07** Continental news
- 12** Africa: behind every performance
- 14** Around the world
- 15** Kickboxing on the world stage
- 17** Women in sport
- 18** Beyond the fight
- 19** Leadership and partnerships
- 21** Focus on development
- 22** What's next
- 23** In memoriam

Select a story to open its page.

WAKO photo archive / IKWC 2026

ROY BAKER

WAKO PRESIDENT

ONE GLOBAL COMMUNITY.

Young athletes. Shared values.
A global community.

As WAKO prepares to welcome the next generation of kickboxers to Jesolo, our young athletes, shared values, and global community take center stage in this first edition of WAKO Worldwide.

Each month, the e-zine will provide insights into the people, events, stories, and progress shaping the world of kickboxing – celebrating the dedication behind every achievement and the passion that brings our community together.

This is a space to share our journey, inspire one another, and strengthen the bonds that unite the WAKO family across the globe.

ROY BAKER

President, WAKO

WAKO

THE NEXT GENERATION

A man in a dark blue suit, white shirt, and dark tie stands in the center, smiling. To his left is a young girl with dark hair, wearing a black martial arts gi with a gold belt and a patch on the chest. To his right is a young boy with light brown hair, wearing a black martial arts gi and blue and white boxing gloves. They are in a large indoor sports hall with a blue and red mat. Other people are visible in the background.

THE FUTURE STARTS HERE.

A first training session. A first competition.
A place on the world stage.

18-27

SEPTEMBER 2026

JESOLO, ITALY

World Championships

Children, Cadets and Juniors | All Disciplines

BEYOND THE MEDALS

MORE THAN CHAMPIONS.

The person behind the athlete.



THE FIRST STEP

Youth development is a key pillar of WAKO's long-term global strategy: creating opportunities for young athletes to compete, develop their skills and represent their countries.

The journey starts the moment a child steps into a kickboxing club. A first training session, a first belt, a first competition and a national-team invitation are all part of the same pathway.

VALUES THAT LAST

The value of youth development cannot be measured by medals alone. Sport teaches young people to respect opponents, compete within rules, handle victory and defeat, work as a team and take responsibility for their actions.

THE WAKO PATHWAY

**Club. Country.
World stage.**

WAKO photo archive / IKWC 2026

A PATHWAY THROUGH SCHOOL SPORT

In 2026, WAKO signed a cooperation agreement with the International School Sport Federation (ISF), opening new opportunities for kickboxing within international school sport.

The partnership covers youth development, technical support, qualified referees and judges, education, fair play and safeguarding.

The World Championships in Jesolo will serve as a qualifier for the 2027 ISF World School Championship.

THE NEXT DESTINATION

JESOLO 2026

18-27 September
Children, Cadets and Juniors
All Disciplines

[EXPLORE THE ISF PARTNERSHIP](#)

JESOLO / ITALY

YOUR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP.

18-27 September 2026

Children, Cadets and Juniors / All Disciplines**18-19**

SEP

ARRIVAL & REGISTRATION

Registration, weigh-in and medical control at Palazzo del Turismo.

20

SEP

OPENING DAY

Draw, seminars, General Assembly, opening ceremony and President's dinner.

21

SEP

QUALIFICATIONS / PART ONE

Musical Forms and Creative Forms. 10:00-19:00.

22

SEP

QUALIFICATIONS / PART TWO

Musical Forms and Creative Forms.

23

SEP

QUALIFICATIONS / PART THREE

Musical Forms and Para-Kickboxing.

24

SEP

QUALIFICATIONS & FINALS

Musical Forms, Creative Forms, and Children's Point Fighting qualifications and finals.

25

SEP

FINALS / PART ONE

Finals and awarding ceremony.

26

SEP

FINALS / PART TWO

Finals, Point Fighting team event and awarding ceremony.

[View the championship programme](#)

WAKO photo archive / IKWC 2026



A NEW CHAPTER TAKES SHAPE.

WAKO photo archive / Thailand World Cup 2026

500+

MATCHES SCHEDULED

ABU DHABI / YOUTH OPEN

The UAE Youth Kickboxing Open Championship brought young athletes together from 31 July to 2 August.

More than 500 matches were scheduled across three days, highlighting the depth of talent and growing participation across the region.

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia hosted its first Women's Kickboxing Championship, an important step for the development and visibility of women's kickboxing. It reflects WAKO's work to create opportunities for women as athletes, coaches, officials and leaders.

HONG KONG / 13-16 AUGUST

At the 2nd Cross-Strait Cities Kickboxing Invitational in Sai Kung, 37 athletes (22 men and 15 women) competed across three ring disciplines. Hong Kong China, the People's Republic of China, Chinese Taipei and Macau China were joined by the Philippines as a special guest.

EDUCATION & TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE

BUILDING THE STANDARD.

Developing the people who move the sport forward.



WAKO photo archive / IKWC 2026

BULGARIA / WORLD CUP

Over 3,000 registrations

IRELAND / 23 AUGUST

The KBI Training Day gave members of Ireland's kickboxing community an opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills.

A separate amateur tournament in Laois, exclusively for Kickboxing Ireland members, featured Point Fighting, Light Contact, Kick Light and Forms.

NORWAY / 21-23 AUGUST

The Scandinavian Referee Camp brought officials from Norway, Sweden and Denmark to Oslo. Over three days they exchanged knowledge, reviewed technical matters and continued their development under WAKO rules.

31ST HUNGARIAN KICKBOXING WORLD CUP



BUDAPEST.

47

COUNTRIES

3,012

ENTRIES

Budapest welcomed the international kickboxing community to BOK Hall from 27-30 August for the Hungarian Kickboxing World Cup and Hungarian Kickboxing Open.

A major fixture in the WAKO calendar, the event brought athletes and delegations together from around the world.

[Watch the World Cup](#)[More highlights](#)

WAKO photo archive / HKWC 2026

SUMMER ON THE TATAMI

GREECE

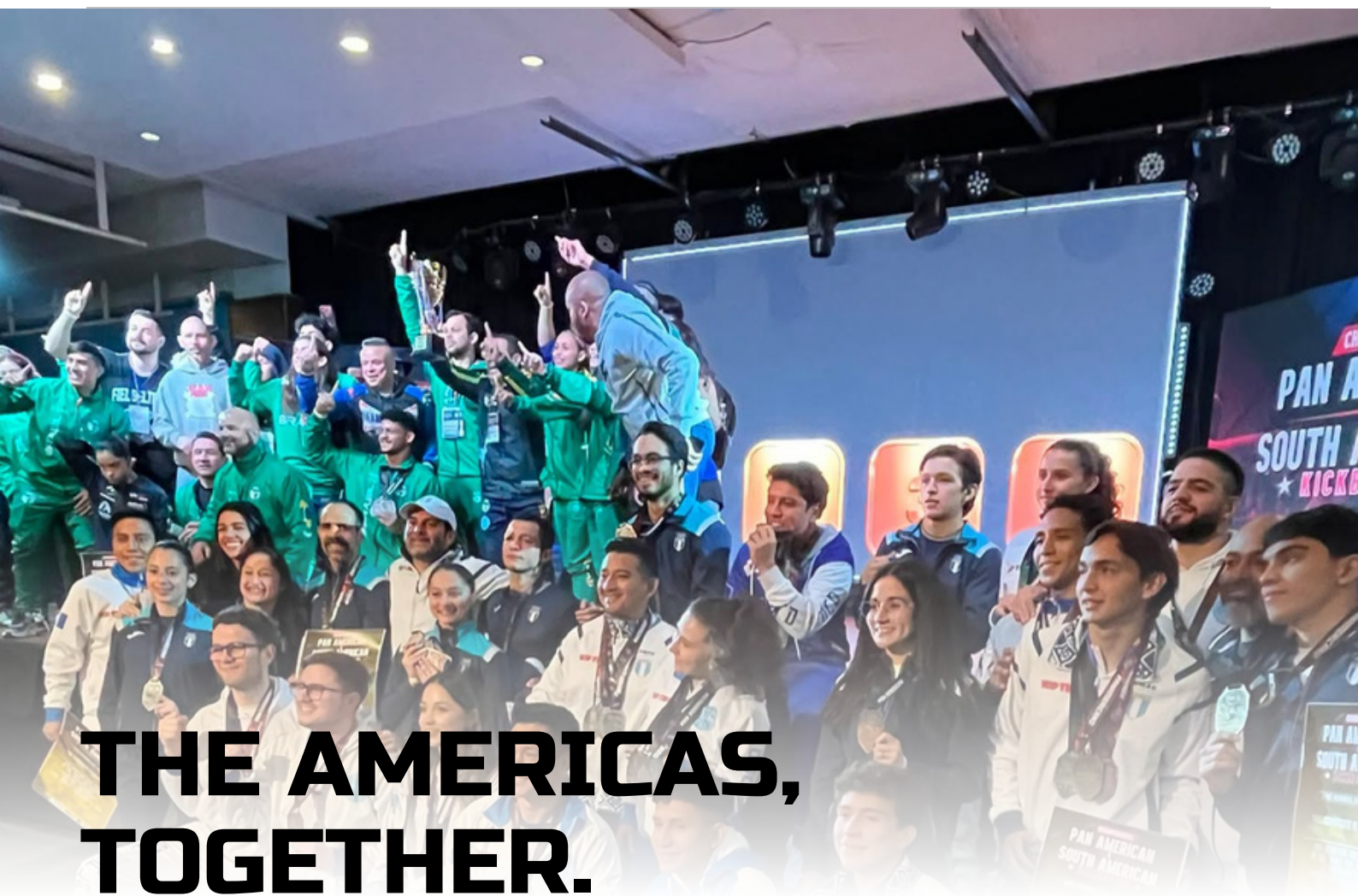
Legend Summer Camp 2026, Point Fighting
Kamena Vourla

HUNGARY

Király Team Summer Camp
17-25 August / Csongrád

CROATIA

9th Kickboxing Summer Camp
2-9 August / Split



THE AMERICAS, TOGETHER.

CHILE / 12-16 AUGUST

Olmué, in Chile's Valparaíso Region, hosted the Pan American Championship for Seniors and Masters, alongside the South American Championship for Cadets and Juniors.

Athletes, coaches, officials and national representatives came together for competition and to strengthen relationships across the Americas.



A NEW BOARD. A SHARED DIRECTION.

At the Pan American General Assembly in Chile, a new WAKO PanAm Board of Directors was elected. Paulo Zorello was re-elected as President of WAKO Pan Am.

[Watch the championships](#)

[Read the board announcement](#)

AFRICA / CAMEROON

A CONTINENTAL SHOWCASE.

The WAKO African Kickboxing Championships took place at Mflandena in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 21-27 June 2026. They served as a continental showcase and a selection platform for The World Games 2029.

Aslam Mahomed was unanimously re-elected as President of the African Kickboxing Confederation for a new four-year term.

[Read the Africa update](#)



Aslam Mahomed

MEXICO / AUGUST 2026

THE REGIONAL PATHWAY GROWS.

Mexico hosted the Campeonato Macro Regional del Sur 2026 during August. The WAKO-affiliated regional tournament gave athletes another opportunity to compete, gain experience and progress through the WAKO competition pathway.





CAMEROON / 2026

BEHIND EVERY PERFORMANCE.

Thank you, TOP TEN and Century Martial Arts.

WAKO extends its deepest gratitude to TOP TEN and Century Martial Arts for their valuable support throughout the 2026 African Championship in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Behind every strike in the ring and every contest on the tatami, their high-quality equipment helped provide the safety, comfort and performance conditions our athletes deserve.

Together with their partners, their support contributed greatly to the success of this important continental event. We are truly grateful for their commitment to our athletes and to African kickboxing.



Equipment supporting athletes at the 2026 African Championship.

YAOUNDÉ / CAMEROON

IN THE RING. ON THE TATAMI.

The championship in action, equipped for performance.



Ring and tatami competition at the 2026 African Championship. Supplied championship photography.



MEDITERRANEAN REGION

A WIDER SPORTING STAGE.

Taranto, Italy, hosted the WAKO Mediterranean Games from 31 July to 2 August. Kickboxing made its debut as a demonstration sport, bringing it to another multi-sport platform.

Athletes from across the Mediterranean delivered strong performances. The milestone reflects years of work to expand kickboxing's international presence.

In Taranto: Espen Lund, Salim Kayici, Jesus Equia and Riccardo Bergamini.

AROUND THE WORLD

**One common passion.
Three community stories.**

[Austin Bybee / An athlete's journey](#)

[Kazakhstan / Sport Club Arlan camp](#)

[Kyrgyzstan / Worlds preparations](#)

[Read the Taranto update](#)

[Watch the action](#)

ROAD TO OLYMPIC KICKBOXING

A STRONGER VOICE.



ROY BAKER / ARISF

In July, ARISF approved WAKO President Roy Baker's appointment to its Executive Board for the term ending in 2029.

In August, Baker met ARISF President Dr Raffaele Chiulli in Rome to strengthen relationships and continue dialogue with the wider sporting movement.

These relationships support WAKO's long-term ambition of Olympic inclusion for kickboxing.

[Read the ARISF announcement](#)



ESPEN LUND / IWGA

WAKO Europe President Espen Lund was elected to the IWGA Executive Committee for the 2026-2030 term.

His election gives kickboxing further representation within the international sporting community.

2026-2030

[Read the IWGA announcement](#)



KARLSRUHE 2029.

Following Birmingham 2022 and Chengdu 2025, kickboxing's place at The World Games 2029 was confirmed on 25 April 2026.

WAKO photo archive / HKWC 2026

UNIVERSITY SPORT / FISU

Sport and education.

WAKO signed a Collaboration Agreement with FISU on 22 July 2026. The connection between sport and education creates opportunities for the next generation to pursue sporting and academic journeys side by side.

[Read the FISU update](#)

MILITARY SPORT / CISM

A new international challenge.

CISM confirmed kickboxing's inclusion in its official calendar in the Military Challenge sector. The first International Military Kickboxing Challenge is scheduled for 14-20 December 2026 in Antalya, Türkiye.

[Read the CISM announcement](#)

SHAPING THE FUTURE.

WAKO photo archive / Turkish Open 2026



BIRMINGHAM / 9-11 JULY

Linn Kristine Haugen represented WAKO at the IWG Women and Sport Global Conference in Birmingham, Great Britain.

The conference is a major international forum for advancing gender equality and inclusion in sport.

[Read the conference story](#)

OPPORTUNITY AT EVERY LEVEL

WAKO has had a dedicated Women in Sport Committee since 2016 and a formal Policy on Women in Kickboxing. Developed with safeguarding, it addresses women's health, rights and representation across competition, development and operations.

The first WAKO Women Conference took place in Budapest in 2018. Today, events such as Saudi Arabia's Women's Kickboxing Championship underline the importance of women's participation in the sport's future.

[Read the WAKO policy](#)



PARA & INCLUSIVE KICKBOXING

EVERY ATHLETE BELONGS.

ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY

Para and inclusive kickboxing opens training and competition to athletes with physical and intellectual disabilities, creating safe, supportive and accessible environments.

The first Para & Inclusive Championships took place in Athens on 5 November 2024 during the Senior European Championships. In 2026, the discipline featured at major WAKO events in India, Croatia, Türkiye, Hungary and Chile.

[Explore para & inclusive kickboxing](#)

SAFE SPORT

Rules, weight and age categories, prohibited actions and mandatory safety equipment provide a framework for fair competition and athlete wellbeing.

International Safe Sport Day on 8 August highlighted the importance of protecting the person behind the athlete. WAKO's commitment extends beyond the competition itself.

[Read the safeguarding update](#)

NEXT: JESOLO 18-27 SEP / SKOPJE 6-15 NOV



TOGETHER, STRONGER.

President Roy Baker during his television visit in Chile.

WAKO President Roy Baker attended the Pan American Championships in Chile's Valparaíso Region from 12-16 August. During the visit, he appeared on Chilean national television to discuss the sport's growing presence in the country.

Baker also led a Development Conference, thanking WAKO Pan American member countries for their commitment to kickboxing. Alongside the championships, he congratulated Paulo Zorello on his re-election as WAKO PanAm President.

[Watch the television visit](#)

[Development Conference](#)



HUNGARY / WORLD CUP WEEK

BUILDING THE NEXT CHAPTER.

At the Hungarian Kickboxing World Cup in Budapest, WAKO leadership met Mr Fürjes, a member of the Executive Board of the Hungarian National Olympic Committee.

Discussions focused on the growth of kickboxing in Hungary, further development and institutional support to create opportunities for the wider community.

WAKO leadership also met Hungarian Sport Secretary Mr Kálnoki-Kiss. He emphasised the scale of the World Cup, from the youngest age groups to senior competition, and described kickboxing as a forward-looking sport with a promising future.



WAKO leadership and Hungarian sports representatives.

Institutional support update

Sports leadership update

WAKO DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

LEARNING. DEVELOPING.

Seminars, athlete wellbeing and the systems supporting the sport.

WAKO photo archive / IKWC 2026



JULY

OPERATIONS & DEVELOPMENT

Membership and event management

WAKO met with RSportz and Sportdata, its membership and event-management providers.

21 JULY / 2:00-3:00 CET

Concussion and return to training

Online development seminar with Dr Gianlorenzo Daniele, physician and consultant in Sports and Exercise Medicine. In English.

28 JULY / WAKO PASSES

Registration with RSportz and Sportdata

09:30-10:30 CET / English
18:00-19:00 CET / English with Spanish translation

AUGUST

12 AUGUST / ONLINE

Injury prevention in kickboxing

Zoom seminar with Andreas Lodrup, former Full Contact world champion and specialist in orthopaedic surgery.

25 AUGUST / 15:00-16:00 CET

Optimising athlete performance

Hormetic stimuli with Dr Guillermina Barat, specialist in internal medicine and clinical nutrition. For Spanish-speaking members.

SEPTEMBER

1 SEP / 15:00-16:00 CET

Optimising Athlete Performance: Hormetic Stimuli with Dr Guillermina Barat. Spanish-speaking members.

2 SEP / WAKO PASSES

Registration with RSportz and Sportdata.
09:30-10:30 CET / English
22:00-23:00 CET / Spanish

Times shown in CET as supplied by the organisers.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS / 2026

WHAT'S NEXT.

SEP	12-17	EUSA Combat Championships Tirana, Albania
SEP	18-27	World Championships / Children, Cadets & Juniors All Disciplines / Jesolo, Italy
OCT	10-12	Panamerican Continental Cup Espírito Santo, Brazil
OCT	13-16	Uzbekistan Kickboxing World Cup Tashkent, Uzbekistan
NOV	06-15	European Championships Skopje, North Macedonia
DEC	02-07	African Continental Cup Cairo, Egypt
DEC	14-20	CISM Military Kickboxing Cup Antalya, Türkiye

[World Championships event update](#)

WAKO photo archive / HKWC 2026



WOJCIECH KIERSTEIN

POLAND / NATIONAL COACH

In August, our sport lost one of the founders of the Polish Full-Contact National Team. Wojciech was not only a colleague, but also a friend and a cherished member of our kickboxing community.

His contribution to our sport, and above all, the memories he created with so many of us, will never be forgotten.

His spirit and legacy will continue to inspire those who knew him and the generations that follow.

[Read WAKO's tribute](#)



SEE YOU IN JESOLO.

18-27 SEPTEMBER 2026

WAKO World Championships
Children, Cadets and Juniors

ALL DISCIPLINES / JESOLO, ITALY

[Watch the championship preview](#)