



**JUST SMILE, NO MATTER WIN OR LOSE**

Milica Babic of Serbia was all smiles during the 10m air rifle event at the Youth Olympic Games on Tuesday. She finished seventh. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

# Ex-IOC boss gets kick out of martial art forms

By SUN XIAOCHEN  
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Former International Olympic Committee president Jacques Rogge has become an ardent tai chi student after falling in love with the traditional Chinese martial art form, said a Chinese martial arts official.

People in Nanjing should not be surprised if they see Rogge practicing tai chi in their neighborhood during the Youth Olympic Games as the former IOC head has started to practice it with a Chinese teacher.

"The president is actually quite fond of the martial art form. He wrote to us last year that he wished he could have the chance to learn it from a Chinese master," Wang Xiaolin, a special representative of the International Wushu Federation and former president of the Chinese Wushu Association, told a media conference during the Nanjing Games on Monday.

The CWA appointed Wang Fang, a renowned tai chi master from Guangdong province, to teach Rogge, who stepped down from the presidency of the IOC in September 2013 and then became the honorable president of the IOC.

The Belgian has so far taken three classes during his stay and he is already showing progress, said Wang.

During his tenure as IOC president, Rogge made his interests in wushu obvious as he observed training sessions of the Chinese martial arts national teams and paid a special visit to the famous Shaolin Temple to watch monks practicing wushu.

The IOC approved wushu as a demonstration event at the 2008 Beijing Games, which provided proof of Rogge's interest in the sport, said Wang.

Rogge will also attend the YOG's wushu competition. He will present medals on Aug 24 after reigning IOC president Thomas Bach awards the first wushu gold medal on offer in Nanjing on Aug 22.

# Wushu takes another shot at impressing the world

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Wushu, the ancient Chinese martial art, is once again being showcased, this time at the Nanjing Youth Olympic Games in the ultimate hope of it being included in the Olympic program in the not-too-distant future.

Wushu has long intrigued global audiences through action movies featuring kung fu stars including Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan but it is still fighting an uphill battle to earn a spot on the official Games program.

As part of the cultural program of the Nanjing YOG, an international wushu competition will take place from Aug 22-24 in the city's Gaochun district. It will mark the second time wushu has been on the periphery of the Games, following an initial appearance at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Still, the age-long sport fell short in its bid to join the Games when its proposal was rejected by the International Olympic Committee in May 2013 and wrestling was instead reinstated for the 2020 Olympics.

However, International Wushu Federation officials are confident the sport is headed in the right direction by setting out strict judging criteria and launching worldwide promotions.

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former president of the Chinese Wushu Association

tive Wang Xiaolin, ex-president of the Chinese Wushu Association, said ahead of the wushu competition in Nanjing on Monday.

The demonstration at the 2008 Games greatly boosted the global reach of wushu as the growth of IWUF members has risen from 116 countries and regions in 2008 to 149 now.

Boasting deep cultural roots, wushu has been developed in countless schools and features many different practices, which makes it challenging for foreigners to understand and adapt to.

Wang said the most urgent need for wushu to earn international recognition as an athletic event was to simplify its competition format while improving the judging system.

"We have to guarantee fairness in the judging process," Wang said.

Regarding that issue, the IWUF has boosted training for foreign referees and introduced electronic scoring systems at major events like

the biennial World Championships and the SportAccord World Combat Games.

In accordance with this international format, the wushu competition in Nanjing will include two major categories, wushu routine and *sanda*, that comprise 15 events. The routine competition includes 10 events (five each for men and women) and the *sanda* contest features five (three for males and two for females).

Meanwhile, the large number of combat events on the current Olympic program, including boxing, wrestling and taekwondo, provide another obstacle for wushu, said Anthony Teng-koi Goh, the IWUF vice-president.

"The main challenge for wushu to enter the Olympic Games is that the IOC is controlling the scale of the Olympics and only allows 28 events," said Goh.

He said he expects the IOC to make its program more flexible so wushu will have a "bright" chance to gain inclusion in the near future.

Goh believes an advantage over other combat sports is its spectacular and appealing nature to audiences as well as its unique function in promoting Asian culture.

Wang agreed, saying "boxing fights with fists, taekwondo fights with kicks but wushu fights with both".

IOC honorary president Jacques Rogge, a big admirer of the sport, will award medals on the final day.