Wushu makes its Olympic debut

Dakar - October 30, 2026: Wushu, also known popularly around the world as kungfu, is about to savor its Olympic debut as an official sport at the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games. Scores of wushu athletes around the globe have fallen in love with the centuries-old Chinese martial art by watching action movies with stars like Jet Li, Jackie Chan, Michelle Yeoh and Bruce Lee. The International Wushu Federation (IWUF), the governing body of wushu, has been steadily eyeing an Olympic dream since the sport's founding in 1990. Formalizing centuries-old martial disciplines into a modern global sport that spans five continents has been no small task – but the 48 youth athletes representing 47 National Olympic Committee (NOCs) about to take the stage in Dakar are looking less back at history and more ahead to the shining Olympic medals to be won.

Yet these young athletes are keenly aware that they are making wushu and Olympic history. They can carve their names on this milestone that marks the first time that wushu has become an official competition sport at an Olympic event. Gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded in four events: Men's Changquan Combined (Changquan and Gunshu), Women's Changquan Combined (Changquan and Gunshu), Men's's Taijiqan Combined (Taijiquan and Taijishan), and Women's Taijiquan Combined (Taijiquan and Taijishan). Young sports fans new to wushu will likely be dazzled by the artistry, power, dynamism, and daring athleticism of the athletes' jumps, flips and weaponry. The subtle power and beauty of taiji will also be closely watched by some of the 150 million taiji fans worldwide.

Dakar 2026 will be the first Olympic event ever held on the African continent. It is a historic milestone for the Olympic Movement and particularly significant for the new IOC President, Kirsty Coventry, a two-time Olympic swimming gold medalist from Zimbabwe, with South Africa also pursuing a bid to host the 2036 or 2040 Olympic Games

It is a fitting occasion for wushu to make its Olympic debut. The IWUF has placed considerable emphasis on developing wushu across Africa in recent years, with 43 National Federations now established across the continent. Reflecting this growth, young athletes from Senegal, Egypt, Rwanda, Morocco, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Niger, Gabon, Algeria, Tunisia and Benin have qualified for the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games.

Reporters: Martha Burr and Anthony Edgar

Participating Nations

Athletes from the 47 NOCs have qualified for the Wushu Taolu competition at the Youth Olympic Games, Dakar 2026.

Africa (13): Senegal (2 athletes), Algeria, Benin, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Morocco, Niger, Rwanda, Tunisia.

Americas (6): Argentina, Canada, Chile, Mexico, United States of America, Venezuela.

Asia (15): Brunei Darussalam, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, China, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, People's Republic of China, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Uzbekistan, Vietnam.

Europe (13): Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine.

Oceania (1): New Zealand

Accompanying Photos
LIN Yilei – CHN (Male Changquan Combined)
Marshall BRAYTON - USA (Male Taijishan Combined)
Lisa LO – FRA (Women's Changquan Combined)
Woreye NDIAYE – SEN (Women's Taijiquan Combined)
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