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## USA and South Korea take a lead in Taekwondo

NAPOLI, 7 July - The Palazzetto dello Sport centre welcomed the first competitions in taekwondo on Sunday, in individual poomsae. The venue is located in Casoria and features an impressive round roof made of thousands of metal bars and a glass window in the centre.

Both, the men's and women's event produced dramatic finals in which the gold medallist was not clear until near the end. Adalis Munoz from the USA was nervous until she learnt she had won gold. Silver went to Chia-En Su from Chinese Taipei, and bronze was taken by Jihye Yun from South Korea and Fatemeh Hesam from Iran.

In the men's event the ranking changed many times over the day. The finals saw Wanjin Kang from South Korea finish in the first position. The second place was taken by Edward H Jeong from the USA, the third place was shared by Iranian Koorosh Bakhtiyar and Mexican Leonardo Juarez Rodriguez.

The route to the medals lasted the whole day. Athletes went through a 2-hour preliminary round in the morning to get a chance to compete in the semi-finals. The absolute leader in the first round was Wanjin Kang. His hand and foot techniques helped him score an outstanding 8.183. Close behind him was Cheng-Gang Li from Chinese Taipei who performed well to get 7.983. The third best result was achieved by Koorosh Bakhtiyar (7.916).

The preliminary rounds continued in the women's poomsae as well. Sakuna Laosungnoen from Thailand stayed in the third position throughout the session with her 7.799 points. Raquel Guillen Sanchez's routine was evaluated with 7.932 points that placed her in the second position. Iranian Fatemeh Hesam who was the last one to enter the stage put in the best performance and moved to the top with 7.966.

In the afternoon, as attention switched to semi-finalists, fourteen best male qualifiers showed their routines consisting of koryo and keumgang. An energetic performance from Edward H Jeong earned him a score of 7.810 and helped him advance to the final in second spot. Wanjin Kang, coming to the semi-finals as a top qualifier, delivered an enjoyable performance with calmness and beautiful extensions on the side kicks.

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The real drama though, was reserved for the finals. Excitement was building in the stands as in addition to the traditional pattern of Taebaek, the eight female finalists were performing freestyle routines. Stepping out third for the finals, Adalis Munoz set a high standard. She remained on the top of the rankings, as she waited nervously until the last athlete competed.

After winning gold, she said to FISU “This event was a struggle for me from the very beginning. I am happy that I was able to make it this far and win gold. It was important to find the right balance mentally.”

Korean Jihye Yun was expected to be among the medals. Even though she made a small error while landing during her last element in the freestyle pattern, she claimed bronze. Later she said, “I felt very confident when I was doing the traditional patterns. In freestyle, I slipped with my hands and felt quite unsure in that moment. I really wanted to finish strong and I did my best.”

As for the men’s finals, the men were demonstrating Pyongwong and freestyles. Silver medalist Edward H Jeong said to FISU, “I was very nervous. During the first round, I was not performing my best and it got to me. After thinking about it for a while I told myself that I just had to let myself enjoy that moment and leave everything on the mat and have no regrets. My coach and me are very satisfied with what I did.”

Gold medallist Wanjin Kang has already set himself a new goal. “I will focus on the competition tomorrow and will try to do better than today,” he said.

Tomorrow, on July 8, medals will be awarded to athletes competing in team poomsae and mixed pairs poomsae. Monday will open up with competitions in six men’s and six women’s divisions in Kyorugi. In total, there will be seven competition days in taekwondo in Napoli, that end on July 13.

## Results

### Individual Poomsae (Men)

Gold: Wanjin Kang (KOR) (7.950)

Silver: Edward H Jeong (USA) (7.500)

Bronze: Koorosh Bakhtiyar (IRI) (7.310)

Bronze: Leonardo Juarez Rodriguez (MEX) (7.120)

### Individual Poomsae (Women)

Gold: Adalis J Munoz (USA) (7.060)

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Silver: Chia-En SU (TPE) (6.990)

Bronze: Jihye Yun (KOR) (6.920)

Bronze: Fatemeh Hesam (IRI) (6.910)

The International University Sports Federation – FISU

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Founded in 1949, FISU stands for Fédération Internationale du Sport Universitaire (International University Sports Federation). FISU was formed within university institutions in order to promote sports values and sports practice in harmony with the university spirit. Promoting sports values means encouraging friendship, fraternity, fair-play, perseverance, integrity and cooperation amongst students, who one day may have responsibilities and key positions in politics, economy, culture and industry.

With FISU's motto being 'Today's Stars, Tomorrow's Leaders', all FISU events include educational and cultural aspects, bringing together sport and academia from all over the world to celebrate with a spirit of friendship and sportsmanship. FISU cooperates in developing its events and programmes with all major international sports and educational organisations. As major outcomes of those collaborations, in 2015, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) proclaimed the International Day of University Sport to be celebrated annually on 20 September – an event that has seen huge growth in its first few years.

FISU is composed of 174 Member Associations (National University Sports Federations). The FISU General Assembly elects the members of the FISU Executive Committee, its board of directors. A total of 14 permanent committees advise the Executive Committee in their specialised areas. For the daily administration of FISU, the FISU Executive Committee relies on the Secretary General, who is assisted by the FISU staff. FISU's headquarters are in Lausanne, Switzerland.

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