

World Para Taekwondo Newsletter

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Para Taekwondo Stars Win Prodigious National Awards

It was a massive month for two of Para Taekwondo's biggest stars. Both Para Taekwondo's old and new generations were honoured with monumental national awards last month, with Ukraine's Vika Marchuk and Mexico's Juan Antonio Garcia Lopez winning the highest honours their respective countries bestow on Para athletes.

Marchuk was honoured by the Ukrainian government with the title Merited Master of Sport in Para Taekwondo, becoming the first athlete in any post-Soviet country to win such an award for Para Taekwondo. The award is rarely bestowed and only on international champions that have also made valuable contributions to the sport.

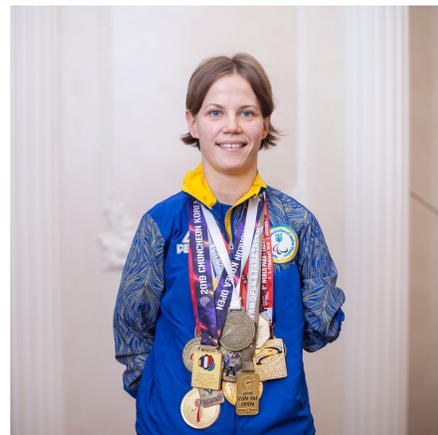
Garcia Lopez won Mexico's prestigious 2020 National Sport Award in Paralympic Sport, becoming the first Para Taekwondo fighter to receive the honour since the award's inception in 1975. The teenage world champion received the award from Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador just two days after turning 18.

Massive Achievements in Para Sport

Marchuk is one Para Taekwondo's original superstars. The diminutive Ukrainian has won six world titles and five European crowns.

Displaying how serious a threat she is at this stage of her career, Marchuk set Para Taekwondo records for most points and biggest margin of victory with a mammoth 72-2 semifinal win at the European championships last year – her last tournament before the COVID-19 lockdown.

Part of the sport's new wave of teenage stars, Garcia Lopez had one of the biggest years in Para Taekwondo history last year. He started the year by winning his first world championship at the tender age of 16, before racking off four more international titles, including the inaugural gold at the Pan American Games in Lima, Peru. His only blemish came on a last-second defeat at the 2019 European championships.



Lucrative Payouts for Prestigious Prizes

Both fighters received lucrative bonuses for winning the highest distinctions their countries have to offer.

Garcia Lopez was awarded over 796,000 pesos (\$40,000 USD), alongside a certificate signed by the Mexican President and a medal made of gold.

Marchuk will receive a new Merited Master of Sport distinction and medal to complement the Master of Sport award (pictured) she received after winning her earlier world titles. In a separate decision, her local city government has promised to provide Marchuk with her own apartment – a major benefit for the fighter who was orphaned as an infant.

Both fighters have already booked their tickets to the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo, Japan and are patiently awaiting their opportunities to again make Para Taekwondo history when the sport makes its

Paralympic debut next summer.

World Taekwondo would like to extend its most sincere congratulations to these accomplished fighters on their impressive achievements.



Denmark's 4-Time World Champion Lisa Gjessing Speaks about 'Women in Para Sport'

Denmark's four-time world champion Lisa Gjessing was invited to speak at World Taekwondo's first 'Gender Equity and Women Leadership' forum last month. The Para Taekwondo superstar was asked to bring her perspective on 'Women in Para Sport' and delivered a heartfelt speech about the role Para Taekwondo played in her journey of acceptance and personal growth after losing her hand to cancer.

Held in partnership with the Taekwondo Humanitarian Fund (THF) and the Saudi Taekwondo Federation, the event drew several important figures, including WT President Chungwon Choue, IOC President Thomas Bach, and the President of the Saudi Arabian Olympic Committee, H.R.H. Prince Abdulaziz Bin Turki Al Faisal Al Saud.

In addition to Gjessing, several other athletes spoke at the two-day event, including: Olympians Sarah Stevenson, Myriam Baverel, and Lubna Alomair. Topics covered WT's Women Empowerment Programmes, Saudi

female participation in sports, and how the THF is using taekwondo to empower women in refugee camps.

Gjessing's speech outlined her own journey from being an able-bodied athlete, to having her hand amputated, to turning to Para Taekwondo to cope with the loss.

Here are some of the highlights from her speech:

- "I will never know why I had cancer or what the situation could have been had I gone to the doctors earlier ... It doesn't matter now".
- "It was difficult for me. I had always been strong and able ... Now I was at home and thinking of all the things I could not do anymore".
- "Then I saw the [2012] Paralympics ... I was so inspired".
- "I saw people with far more disabilities than I had. These people were more than their bodies. These people competed; these people cried, were angry at themselves, or happy and proud of themselves – I knew immediately that I could never again feel sorry for myself".
- "I have now been fighting [in] Para Taekwondo for eight years. And my very big goal – the one that inspired me in 2012 to take part in the Paralympic Games – is now very close. I still know the place I was standing when I got the call in January 2015 that Para Taekwondo had become a Paralympic sport ... I cannot believe that the dream has actually come true".
- "It has been such an inspiring eyeopener for me ... I have seen [how athletes] who get the opportunity to join competitions, and be a part of this, get a better life ... It is like I see life with clearer eyes now".
- "I would like to have my hand back – but I would not be on my journey through Para Taekwondo without [the experience]. It has been a big part of me and given me so much quality to my new good life".

Gjessing has become a major draw during the COVID-inspired break from competition. She also acts as an ambassador for Denmark's Staffet for Life and was a keynote at a cancer event in Odense, Denmark last month that raised over 32,000 krone (\$5,230 USD) for charity (pictured).

Ranked No. 1 in the women's up to 58 kg K44 division, Gjessing last year added a fifth European crown to her four world titles and one IWAS gold. Still undefeated, she was forced to withdraw from the world championships after the semifinal due to injury.

To view Day 1 of the forum, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0lc14GxPRM>.

To view Day 2 of the forum, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TLavq25Bmc>.

For more information on the cancer event, check the Staffet for Life Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/StafetForLivetOdense/>.



Para Taekwondo Coach Course - Level I

7th World Para Taekwondo Online International Coach Certification Course [Level I]
(English/Persian)

- Course Dates : 15-17 Dec. Registration Deadline: 12 Dec., 11:59:PM (GMT+04:30 Asia/Tehran)

8th World Para Taekwondo Online International Coach Certification Course [Level I] -
(English/Arabic)

- Course Dates : 27-29 Dec. Registration Deadline: 24 Dec., 11:59:PM (GMT+03:00 Asia/Riyadh)

9th World Para Taekwondo Online International Coach Certification Course [Level I]

- Course Dates : 22-24 Jan. Registration Deadline: 19 Jan., 11:59:PM (GMT+01:00 Europe/Berlin)

Para Taekwondo Coach Courses - Level II

4th World Para Taekwondo Online International Coach Certification Course [Level II]

- Course Dates : 18-20 Dec. Registration Deadline: 15 Dec., 11:59:PM (GMT+02:00 Africa/Cairo)

5th World Para Taekwondo Online International Coach Certification Course [Level II]

- Course Dates : 21-23 Dec. Registration Deadline: 18 Dec., 11:59:PM (GMT+10:00 Australia/Sydney)

6th World Para Taekwondo ONLINE International Coach Certification Course [Level II]

- Course Dates : 15th January - 17th January 2021 Registration Deadline: 12 Jan 2021, 11:59:PM (GMT+01:00 Europe/Berlin)

[Click to Register for Para Taekwondo Coaches Courses](#)

Second MNA Para Taekwondo Workshop (Invitation-Based)

The second MNA Para Taekwondo Workshop is aimed for MNA Presidents, Secretaries General, and Administrators. Each MNA can nominate up to five (5) participants and the participating MNA will receive a participation certificate in the MNA profile in GMS.

The Para Taekwondo Workshop was designed for our MNAs as part of our ongoing efforts to further enhance the knowledge of Para Taekwondo among our WT stakeholders.

Please send your nominations to para-tkd@worldtaekwondo.org before 9 Jan 2021, 11:59:PM (GMT+01:00 Europe/Berlin).

Para Taekwondo Around the World



Europe:

German Para Poomsae World Champion Makes Kids' Wishes Come True

German Para Poomsae world champion Christopher Frömmgen met online last month with students that had reached out to him looking for an autograph. Sharing his impairment, the students were set to meet the 37-year-old world champion in-person twice, before being canceled due to COVID-19. Frömmgen captured his first world title last year in Antalya, Turkey by defeating the reigning champion from Honduras, Guillermo Erazo Schauer, in the P20

over-30-years-old final. He added his first European title at the European championships in Bari, Italy later in the year. Both the German Taekwondo Federation and Frömmgen are looking forward to fulfilling the kids' dreams - in-person - as soon as the pandemic subsides.

Great Britain Launches Para Taekwondo 'Star Search'

After successfully turning in former shot putter and javelin thrower Matt Bush into a Para Taekwondo world champion, Great Britain hopes to strike gold – quite literally – again as Great Britain Para Taekwondo launches a search for new talent.

Bush had already enjoyed moderate success in Japanese and Brazilian Ju-Jitsu before picking up Para Taekwondo on his way to a surprising gold medal in the men's 75+kg K44 division at the 2019 world championships.

In the process, he became the first British male to win a taekwondo world championship, as he follows in the footsteps of teammate and Para Taekwondo pioneer Amy Truesdale, the 2017 champion.

GB Para Taekwondo is looking for athletes from other “dynamic, explosive, and sporting backgrounds”, including kickboxing, karate, Tang Soo Do, Muay Thai, or Thai boxing, although any athlete that meets the K43 or K44 classification criteria and has the interest and ability to compete at the 2024 and 2028 Paralympic Games will be welcomed.



The effort was launched to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Winners of the 'Star Search' will join the Para Taekwondo programme, operating out of the National Taekwondo Centre in Manchester.

Africa:

Cameroon Partners with Red Cross for Para Taekwondo Trainings

The Cameroon Taekwondo Federation, in collaboration with the Red Cross and Cameroon's Mifi Departmental Committee, developed a unique training aimed at Para Taekwondo instructors in the country. The five-part training focused on First Aid awareness adapted to the needs of children, as well as COVID-19 measures and club hygiene rules.

An introduction to the pedagogical foundations of coaching, the training was aimed at Taekwondo instructors, assistant instructors, instructors-in-training, and instructor candidates at Taekwondo clubs that had already received their federal black belt grade. Participants gained tools for better supervision and more effective harmonization of taekwondo and learned to plan, organise, and lead their own courses. In addition to the five theoretical sessions, participants were tasked with participatory examples and applications.



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