

# KarateNow

Notizie, interviste, gare e risultati del Karate Olimpico

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**Karate at the Olympics. The weight categories and qualification rules are wrong**

## WKF needs to review a lot of things

It is not acceptable that an athlete who has won more points than another, in the same Olympic category, does not go to Tokyo

Errors, inconsistencies and illogicality committed by WKF in designing the "Olympic Karate" to be presented in Tokyo.

The first mistake was to modify the international weight categories: -60, -67, -75, -84, +84 male and -50, -55, -61, -68, +68 female, used in the Karate qualifying races "Premier League" and "Serie A", merging them into three male (-67, -75 and +75) and three female (-55, -61 and +61) categories in order to determine the qualifiers and compete

in the Paris and Tokyo Olympics. The second big mistake was to limit the qualification to only 10 athletes for each specialty and Olympic category. These decisions of the WKF determined the fact that in Tokyo Karate will be represented only by 80 athletes who appear too few to interest sponsors, media, audience and organizers.

If the WKF had provided, instead, the qualification of 16 athletes (two pools of 8), for each of the two specialties and ten inter-

national categories, in Tokyo there would have been, in total, 192 athletes and more national athletes present. Moreover, there would not have been the risk of not qualifying many world level champions, after they had won thousands of points, spent a lot of money and accumulated stress, psychological and physical. When the direct qualifying race will take place, many athletes, protagonists in the "Premier League" and "Serie A", will play a career in three minutes. See for example in kata:

Ariel Torres and Dilara Bozan, in Kumite: Thomas Scott, Gogita Arkania, Sara Cardin, Lorina Busà, Laura Pasqua, Bettina Plank, Dorota Banaszyk, Yassmin Attia, Clio Ferracuti and Silvia Scmeraro. With the unification of weight categories will compete athletes with different physical conformation, conditioning the show and increasing the risk of injury. To be considered also the disparity of treatment, the athletes of the categories -75 male and -55 female and the specialty Kata,

have competed for at least two years with the same opponents, knowing strengths and weaknesses, the athletes of the weight categories merged, however, will face athletes with whom they have never fought. The absurd WKF regulations have damaged: Eray Samdan (Turkey) Zabiollah Poorshab (Iran), Jana Messerschmidt (Germany) and Li Gong (China). Except for the very strong Iranian Poorshab, the others, perhaps, will have a chance in Paris.

Riccardo Partinico



Antonio Espinós  
President of WKF

**The interview. The unfair criterion of qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics**

## Zabiollah Poorshab, the big outsider

Second in the standings in the "Standings Tokyo" category kg. +75 with 9.225 points, will stay at home, his, though good, compatriot Ganjzadeh with 8.617,5 points will go to Tokyo

In all sports to win a match, a competition or a contest, you have to score more points than your opponents. In Karate, as usual, everything becomes complicated and sometimes unfair. It happened that, in the Olympic qualifications, after almost two years of competitions, Zabiollah Poorshab, captain of the Iranian national team, one of the strongest athletes in the world in the Kumite specialty, Olympic category kg.+75, will not go to the Tokyo Olympics despite having won more points than four other competitors who, inste-

ad, will be present.

Zabiollah Poorshab with 9,225 points, overtakes his compatriot Sajad Ganjzadeh, p. 8,617.5, German Jonathan Home, p. 8,062.5, Croatian Ivan Ksevic p. 7,087.5 and Japanese Ryutaro Araga, p. 5,490. He was surpassed only by the Turkish Ugur Aktas, p. 10,372.5.

The criterion adopted by the WKF foresees to qualify only one athlete per country and the first classified in the categories -84 and +84 by merging them in the category +75 kg and then the second classified, regardless of the score.

This is an injustice. The editorial staff asked Zabiollah Poorshab what he thinks about it.

**Q: Your sports career, in my opinion, has been affected by a great injustice, that of having to give way to your fellow countryman Ganjzadeh, despite the fact that you have won many more points than the other four candidates who will go to Tokyo. What do you think?**

**A: Yes, it was a great injustice. When you consider that we all competed to qualify in the same Olympic category kg. +75, in the end, the choice of one**

*person should be based on the points won. I'm second in the standings, my score is higher, so it should have been me who went to the Olympics. This criterion does not exist in any other sport. I hope that this problem is solved and karate is not questioned. All athletes who have dedicated their lives to sport deserve justice.*

**Q: What are your future goals?**

**A: I started playing this sport when I was eight years old and I love to fight. I will try again. I will continue to train without ever getting tired.**



Zabiollah Poorshab (Iran)

The editorial staff would like to thank Zabiollah for his availability and congratulate him for his skill and sportsmanship. Unfortunately, the Tok-

yo Olympics will lack a great champion who, in the +75 category, would have given more dynamism and spectacle.

Rossella Zoccali