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The dream becomes nightmare and the nightmare becomes dream

WKF: "It was a joke"

The World Karate Federation that hastily decreed the top 40 athletes qualified for the Tokyo Olympics, now reopens the rankings and indexes the two previously canceled races

by Riccardo Partinico



"The nights of Covid-19" have confused the top executives of the WKF.

Perhaps the lack of Olympic experience or the pressure from the Federations led the WKF, before the IOC decided to postpone the Tokyo Olympics for a year, to declare the qualification of 40 athletes to the Tokyo Olympics, without disputing the last ones scheduled races. The decision, undoubtedly inadequate and hasty, had left many athletes who could still qualify disappointed and had made other athletes cheer who, at that moment, still had to get involved. The WKF, perhaps under pressure from the IOC, last May 20, 60 days after the proclamation of the 40 qualified, without considering the emotions of the athletes, the training programs already rescheduled and the agreements with the sponsors, canceled the previous decision, reopened the "Tokyo Standings" ranking and re-proposed the two races previously canceled by local authorities, replacing them with two other races in 2021: the "Premier League" in Rabat and the EKF European Championship in Gothenburg (Sweden). Furthermore, it indicated the direct qualification race for the remaining 40 athletes in Paris in June 2021. The results of these races could upset all the forecasts and turn for athletes transform "The Olympic Dream" into a "Great Nightmare".

Male Kata

In this specialty, considering that a Japanese and a Turkish athlete are already qualified, the ranking goes up to the American Ariel Torres Gutierrez who, with 2,707.5 points, is unthinkable that he found the fourth classified, the Italian Mattia Busato who, with 4,650 points, in addition to the "Premier League" in Rabat, he can also participate in the European Championships in Sweden to accumulate points. Therefore, the five qualified athletes remain the Spanish Damian Quintero, the Japanese Ryo Kiyuna, the Turkish Ali Sofuoglu, the Venezuelan Antonio Diaz and the Italian Mattia Busato.

Female Kata

Even in this specialty the situation remains unchanged, the New Zealander Alexandra Anacan with 2,535 points cannot worry the American Sakura Kokumai with 5,887.5 points. The qualified are the Spanish Sandra Sanchez, the Japanese Kiyu Shimizu, the Italian Viviana Bottaro, the Chinese Grace Lau and the American Sakura Kokumai.

Male Kumite

In this specialty many situations can be reversed. The Kazakh Darkhan Assadilov (-60 kg) with 10,387.5 points and the French Steven Dacosta (-67 kg) with 8,940 points remain immovable in the **-67 kg category**. The Italian Angelo Crescenzo

(-60 kg) with 8,850 points and the Brazilian Viniçius Figuera (-67 kg) with 6,832.5 points are also involved, pursued respectively by the Turkish Eray Samdan (-60 kg) with 7,912.5 points and by the Egyptian Ali Elsayw (-67 kg) with 6,472.5 points. The Japanese Naoto Sago with 4,447.5 points could be overtaken by his compatriot Hiroto Shinohara with 4,275 points, it will depend exclusively on the outcome of the Rabat race.

In the -75Kg category the Iranian Bahman Asgari Ghoncheh, the Italian Luigi Busà, the Azerbaijani Rafael Aghayev and the Japanese Ken Nishimura are unattainable. The Ukrainian Stanislav Horuna with 5,707.5 points compared to the 5047.5 points won by the American Thomas Scott and the 4,147.5 points won by the Kazakh Ermek Ainazarov, should be calm, also because Horuna, unlike the American and the Kazakh, will be able to play the European championship in 2021 in Gothenburg (Sweden), maintaining the gap with the conquest of other points.

In the +75 kg category only Ugur Aktas with 10,372.5 points is certainly qualified for the Olympics. The distortions in this category can be manifold. The German Jonathan Horne (+84 kg) with 8,062.5 points, participating in the "Premier League" of Rabat and the

European Championships in Gothenburg (Sweden) could acquire many points and overcome the Iranian Sajad Ganjzadeh (+84 kg) currently first in ranking, with 8,617.5 points and which, unlike the German, can only participate in the "Premier League". The relegation of Sajad Ganjzadeh to second place in the standings would determine the qualification of his compatriot Zabiollah Poorshab (-84 kg), with 9,225 points. This condition would exclude the Croatian Ivan Kvesic (-84 kg) with 7,087.5 points from the qualification, taking over the Georgian Gogita Arkania (+84 kg) with 7,080 points. The slightest difference in points between Horne, Ganjzadeh, Poorshab, Kvesic and Arkania will determine any result. Keep in mind that, unlike Ganjzadeh and Poorshab, Horne, Kvesic and Arkania will be able to participate not only in the "Premier League of Rabat, but also in the European Championships in Sweden. The Japanese Ryutaro Araga (-84 kg) with 5,490 points cannot be reached by his compatriot Hideoshi Kagawa (+84 kg) with 2,842.5 points. The forecasts, based on technical and statistical data, would see qualified in the "Tokyo Standings" ranking, as well as the Turkish Aktas and the Japanese Araga, the German Horne, the Iranian Poorshab and the Georgian Arkania.

Female Kumite

In the category -55 kg. Turkish qualifiers remain confirmed Serap Ozcelik Arapoglu (-50 kg) with 11,302 points, the Ukrainian Anzhelika Terliuga (-55 kg) with 9,472 points and the Japanese Miho Miyahara (-50 kg) with 6,315 points. The ex-qualifiers, the Chinese Tzu. Yun Wen (-55 kg), with 7,080 points, return to the race; the Iranian Sara Bahmanyar (-50 kg) with 5,647.5 points that could be undermined by the German Jana Messerschmidt (-55 kg) with 5,707.5 points and the Austrian Bettina Plank (-50 kg) with 5,197.5 points.

In the category -61 kg. the Chinese Xiaoyan Yin with 10,545 points are confirmed, the Egyptian Giana Lotfy with 7,710 points. The former qualifiers, the Turkish Merve Coban with 7,027.5 points that risk little, and the Serbian Jovana Prekovic who, with 5,482.5 points becomes the goal to be achieved by the Canadian Haya Juma, with 5,137.5 points, come back into play by Iranian Rozita Alipourkeshka with 5,107.5 points, but above all by one of the two French women who will be able to participate in the European championship, Gwendoline Philippe with 4,890 points, recently operated at the LCA, or Leila Heurtault with 4,515 points. The Japanese Mayumi Someya with 3,217.5 points could be undermined by com-



Antonio Espinós
President of WKF

patriot Ayami Moriguchi with 2,617.5 points. **In the category +61 kg.** only the azerbaijani Irina Zaretska (-68 kg), with 9,247.5 points, and the Japanese Ayumi Uekusa (+68 kg), with 5,910 points remain confirmed. The former qualifiers, the Iranian Hamideh Abbasali (+68 kg) with 6,997.5 points and the Turkish Meltem Hocaoglu Akyol (+68 kg), with 5,677.5 points can be overcome by the Greek Elena Chatziliadou (+68 kg) with 5,655 points, from Kazakh Sofya Berultseva (+68 kg) with 5,467.5 points and the Italian Clio Ferracuti (+68 kg) with 5,017.5 points. The Swiss Elena Quirici (-68 kg), with 6,525 points, however, could be overtaken by the Chinese Li Gongli (-68 kg), with 6,412.5 points, by the Egyptian Feryal Abdelaziz (-68 kg) with 6,075 points, but, especially from the Italian Silvia Semeraro (-68 kg) with 5,730 points, which may also have the European championship score in Sweden.