



World Para Taekwondo Newsletter

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Fighters close the 2023 season in style



Dominance and Resilience in display in Manchester



High-quality action was in display as fighters look to end the season on a high. Iran dominated the season-ending Grand Prix with 4 Gold.

The Manchester 2023 World Para Taekwondo Grand Prix Final was about dominance, resilience and setting new goals in the final Grand Prix of the year.

There were upsets too with several fighters tumbling to the packed schedule and fatigue as some others grabbed the chance of ending the year on a high note.

Iran dominated the final event of the season clinching four gold

medals led by their Asian Para Games champion **Mahdi Pourrahnama** who won his first Grand Prix Finals gold in Manchester.

Pourrahnama defeated Uzbekistan's **Alikulov Javokhir** (UZB) 17-10 to win the K44 Men – 70kg final, also his first Grand Prix title of the season. "This victory was very important for me as I want to qualify for the Paralympics. I was away from competition for about a year and returned only at the European Championships in Montargis – it was not very good, managed a bronze there. Then I followed up with three gold medals including one at the Asian Para Games, which was a crucial one as it gave me 40 ranking points," said the Iranian star who also had a gold medal at the President's Cup in Jordan.

"And finally, I am very happy to take my first gold at the Grand Prix Finals," added a relieved Pourrahnama.

First Birthday gift

Pourrahnama was joined on the top of the podium by 16-year-old **Maryam Abdollahpour**, who clinched her second Grand Prix final title and first gold medal at the Manchester 2023 GP Finals.

"Today I got my second I hope I can repeat my gold medal at the Paris 2024 Paralympics. This medal is my first present for my birthday. This medal is also for the women Para-Taekwondo players of Iran," said Abdollahpour who beat Peru's Paralympic champion **Angelica Espinoza Leonor** with a convincing 15-5 scoreline in K44 Women -47kg.

Mexican world no. 1 **Caludia Romero**, who settled for the bronze after defeating her close rival Isakova Ziyodakhon from Uzbekistan, was later named the Best Female Player of the Year at the World Taekwondo Gala Awards.

Alireza Bakht (K44 Men -80kg) and **Hamed Haghshenas** (K44 men +80kg) also followed suit adding two more golds to Iran's medal tally. While Bakht claimed his second Grand Prix Finals title shocking Republic of Korea's **Jeonghun Joo** 29-18 in the K44 men -80kg. Haghshenas put up a powerful show thrashing world no. 1 **Ivan Mikulic** in a one-sided final with he scores reading 17-2.

Confident Yasur

Israel's **Asaf Yasur** (K44 Men -58kg) continued his winning momentum adding one more Grand Prix gold to a successful year where he has a world championships title as well.

Yasur defeated France's **Bopha Kong** by a convincing margin 41-18 in the final, after overcoming a tough challenge from Chinese Taipei's **Xiang wen Xiao** in the semi-finals 31-27.

"Sometimes the fight doesn't go as we expect, so I just keep going, just keep scoring, listen to my coach, and never quit. I knew I was going to win it. I waited for the right opportunity to attack," said the 23-year-old Yasur.

In K44 Men -63kg, Mongolia's **Bolor-erdene Ganbat** failed to maintain his Asian Para Games golden show settling for a silver medal in Manchester. Ganbat went down to Turkiye's **Mahmut Bozteke** 24-12.

Italy's **Antonino Bossolo**, who later went on to take the Best Para Player Award, settled for the bronze medal.

Home glory for Munro

Home player **Beth Munro** claimed the only gold for the hosts on the day. The Liverpool based fighter continued her amazing run this year – having made all the finals – defeating **Elena Savinskaya**, the only Individual Neutral Athlete in the event.

"I am very excited in Manchester at the GP Finals. It was the last competition of the year and a very important one, with 100 points towards Paris 2024. It was a fantastic day with on my home soil with my family here supporting me, getting me through. Coming away with gold medal here and hopefully next year in Paris with lot of training and little bit more learning I will get the gold in Paris as well," said Munro, adding that the year 2023 had been great for her considering that she has reached the final of all the events she had competed. Munro ended the season with her eighth gold medal and first in Grand Prix finals.

Stumpf takes gold for Brazil

Likewise, Maria Eduarda Machado Stumpf claimed the only gold medal for Brazil in K44 Women -52kg after favourites Silvana Mayara Cardoso (K44 Women -57kg) and Ana Carolina Silva de Moura (K44 Women -65kg) managed the bronze medals in their respective categories.

Machado Stumpf overcame Egypt's emerging star Salma Ali, who went on to win the first Grand Prix gold for the nation in Veracruz, 7-4 in the K44 Women -52kg final.

"I am very happy and proud to win the gold in the last event of the season. This gold is a special one as this is for my country and for my team. My next goal is winning a place at the Paralympic Games," said Stumpf who overcame Qian Shao who had shocked top ranked Meryem Betul Cavdar from Turkiye in the quarter-finals.

Naimova is hard to beat

Munro's compatriot **Amy Truesdale**, also a Paralympic medallist, had to settle for the silver in K44 women +65kg. Truesdale went down to Paralympic champion **Guljonoy Naimova** of Uzbekistan who rallied from two points down to win the fight 11-10 in the last seconds.

China's **Li Yujie**, the Asian Para Games bronze medallist, continued her good run this year to win the K44 Women – 57kg.

Yujie pulled off a surprise win over Brazil's Paralympic medallist and world no. 1, **Silvana Mayara Cardoso Fernandes**, in the semi-finals 24-21 before she beat Turkiye's second ranked **Gamze Gurdal** 17-8 in the final.

"I had lost to her (Silvana) in the quarter-finals at World Championships by a close margin so I was motivated to change the result. I am very happy to end the year on a high," said a motivated Yujie looking ahead to the new season.

Technical delegate of Manchester 2023 Grand Prix Final and Para Taekwondo Committee Chairperson **Usman Dildar** was happy to end the year with another successful event.

"Manchester has always been a great host. To end the year with one of the premier events was an honour for us. It was a successful year with a lot of positives going into the Paralympic year. We are happy with the organisation and the success of the event and looking forward to another great year," said Mr. Dildar.

IPC President impressed with skills, competitiveness



The Para Taekwondo community was honoured to have the august presence of International Paralympic Committee President **Andrew Parsons** at the Manchester 2023 World Para Taekwondo Grand Prix, the final Grand Prix of the season.

Parsons, who was also joined by World Taekwondo President **Dr. Choue Chungwon** gracing the event, went on to praise the quality and competitiveness of the event with the players' skills and technique were a treat to watch.

Parsons also met with World Taekwondo officials including President Choue and discussed the future and development of Para Taekwondo and the exciting year ahead that include the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.





Best of Para Taekwondo awarded at World Taekwondo Gala Awards





The Best of Para Taekwondo were awarded at the World Taekwondo Gala Awards in Manchester

Mexico's **Claudia Romera** and Italy's **Antonino Bossolo** were named the Best Para Female and Para Male Athletes of 2023 as Taekwondo's finest athletes, coaches and officials were recognised at the World Taekwondo 2023 Gala Awards in Manchester.

The Gala Awards, that served as a celebration of excellence, recognising outstanding athletes, coaches and officials who have

left their mark on the global Taekwondo and Para Taekwondo stage throughout the year, was opened by World Taekwondo President Chungwon Choue with a rousing speech that celebrated the global success of Taekwondo in its jubilee year.

Romero took gold at both the Paris and Taiyuan Para Taekwondo Grand Prix, along with bronze at the World Para Taekwondo Championships in Veracruz.

"I am so happy. This is the first time I received this award. A big thank you to World Taekwondo for recognising my effort."

"This year was full of challenges but full of gratitude as well as I made it to the podium several times. Next year, I am waiting for my qualification for Paris 2024 Paralympics.

The Mexican world no. 1 also has a message for all the women players: "Always fight for your dreams to make them true. Be true to your convictions."

Meanwhile, Para Taekwondo World Champion Bossolo had a successful year that also included gold at the Paris 2023 Para Taekwondo Grand Prix.

"2023 was an important year as I won some big events. I am very happy today to stand here with this award. My goal is to win the Paralympic Games in Paris," said Bossolo.

Rodrigo Ferla, who continues to play a key role in strengthening Brazil's gold standard Para Taekwondo programme, was awarded the Best Para Coach of 2023.

Mexico was awarded the Para Taekwondo MNA of the Year for its efforts to promote Para Taekwondo in the country and beyond.



Determination and dominance in display at Santiago 2023 Parapan Am Games



Thrilling fights and rivalries took centre stage as Para Taekwondoists displayed incredible skills and determination in the Parapan American Games in Santiago

Top fighters including Paralympic and World Championships stars from the region displayed extraordinary technique and skills as Para Taekwondo events at the Santiago 2023 Parapan American Games were a success.

This was the second time that the sport was part of the programme

at the Parapan American Games after its successful debut in Peru. Brazil finished on top of medals standings with 16 medals that had 4 gold medals, followed by Mexico (2 gold) and Argentina (1 gold).

While there was dominance stamped by the top ranked fighters, there were a few upsets too as fighters aimed for earning the important Paris 2024 Paralympic qualifying points in the G-40 level event.

USA's Evan Medell returned to winning way after his silver medal show at the Veracruz 2023 World Championships. Medell, the top ranked Para Taekwondoist in K44 Men +80kg, defeated Brazil's **Lucas Moraes** for the gold.

Likewise, World champions **Silvana Mayara Cardoso Fernandes** (K44 Women -57kg) and **Ana Carolina Silva De Moura** (K44 Women -65kg) stamped their dominance to clinch the gold medals for Brazil.

Meanwhile, Brazil's fourth ranked **Maria Eduarda Machado** pulled off an upset win over reigning world champion **Jessica Garcia Quijano** in K44 Women -52kg.

In men's event, Paralympic star **Nathan Cesar Sodario** claimed the gold for Brazil in K44 Men - 63 kg defeating Dominican Republic's **Geraldo Castro** in a thrilling final.

Espinoza upsets Romero

For Peru, Paralympic gold medallist **Leonor Angelica Espinoza** claimed the only gold medal. Espinoza defeated World no. 1 **Claudia Romero** in the K44 Women -47kg final, in a repeat of the World Championships semi-finals.

Mexico fighters also put up a brilliant show as **Ivan Torres Perez** clinched his first title in the season after defeating **Fabricio Marques** in K44 Men – 58kg.

The other gold for Mexico was claimed by **Fernanda Vargas** who surprised Paralympic medallist Debora Menezes of Brazil in K44 Women +65kg.

Andres Esteban Molina was only medallist for Costa Rica as he claimed the K44 Men -80kg, on the other hand **Juan Eduardo Samorano** emerged winner for Argentina in K44 Men's -70kg.

Technical delegate of Santiago 2023 and Para Taekwondo Committee member **Chakir Chelbat** was satisfied with yet another successful regional championships after the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou.

“It was a successful event. We are happy with the organisation and the success of the event – while the athletes displayed amazing spirit and determination to excel and promote the sport, the organisers showed tremendous interest and effort to the success of the event. Santiago 2023 was also a great platform for some athletes to show their potential in international scene and win medals at home,” said Mr. Chelbat, who is also the technical delegate for Paris 2024 Paralympic Games..

As many as 70 athletes (44 men and 26 women) from 15 Pan American nations took part in the continental Games.



Para Taekwondo to feature in Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games



Paralympic Games programme.

An expected 3600-4000 athletes from the 45 Asian NPCs will compete in the same venues that will be used in the Asian Games a few weeks before. This will be the fifth edition of the Asian Para Games which is the biggest para-sport event after the Paralympic Games.

The full list of sports is

- Para Archery

Para Taekwondo will be one of the 18 sports included in the official sports programme of the next edition of the Asian Para Games in the city of Nagoya in Aichi Prefecture, Japan, which will take place between October 18 and 24 in 2026.

This was announced by the Asian Paralympic Committee (AsPC) and the Local Organising Committee (AINAPGOC) recently, in a boost and motivation for the Para Taekwondoists to achieve their dreams.

Unlike in previous editions of the Games, all 18 sports are on the

- Para Athletics
- Para Badminton
- Blind Football
- Boccia
- Para Cycling (Track and Road)
- Goalball
- Para Judo
- Para Powerlifting
- Shooting Para Sport
- Para Swimming
- Para Table Tennis
- Para Taekwondo
- Volleyball (sitting)
- Wheelchair Basketball
- Wheelchair Fencing
- Wheelchair Rugby
- Wheelchair Tennis

AsPC President Majid Rashed commented: "We're delighted to announce the full list of sports which will give certainty to the athletes and NPCs planning for the Alchi-Nagoya Asian Para Games. Coming two years after Paris and two years ahead of LA 2028, our Games enable athletes to truly test their progress in a large-scale multi-sport environment.

"They also help keep the excitement and interest in para-sport going, with lots of media coverage expected for NPCs who may not send large delegations to the Paralympic Games. We're immensely proud of our regional games and the scale and reach that they have. They play a vital role in developing the Paralympic Movement in Asia."

Message from Para Taekwondo Committee Chairman



As we bid farewell to 2023, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the extraordinary journey we together had in the past year. 2023 has been an exciting year with several exhilarating and groundbreaking moments that showcased the spirit and skills of our amazing athletes.

The Veracruz 2023 World Para Taekwondo Championships, Hangzhou 2022 Asian Para Games and European Championships for both Kyorugi and Poomsae were the high points of this year.

While we witnessed the Grand debut of Para Taekwondo in the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Para Games with the Asian Parasports fraternity warmly welcoming the sport in its programme.

The 10th World Championships and Grand Prix in Veracruz exceeded our expectations – it was an event to remember with Para Poomsae players making return to competitions post Covid -19 in style.

In Kyorugi events, several new stars emerged with countries and players getting their first ever gold medals.

Besides, Para Taekwondo was part of the first European Championships in Rotterdam. It was another success with International Paralympic Committee President Mr. Andrew Parsons attending the event.

We were also happy to have Parsons in the final Grand Prix of the year in Manchester where we have had a chance to interact with the IPC President Parsons along with World Taekwondo President Dr. Choue Chungwon on the development of the sport and its future.

Altogether it was a successful year with a lot of hopes and positives going into the Paralympic year. My best wishes to everyone and gratitude to all athletes, coaches and officials for making this year remarkable. We are looking forward to another great year.



Athletes classified in Solomond Island, Papua New Guinea



In a move to develop the sport in the Oceania region, a Para Taekwondo team headed by Head of Classification Hadwah Matlou Moawad held an in-and out-of-competition classification in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

The meeting held a lot of significance as international classification for athletes were held during the visit in Solomon Island. There was also a lot of interest from the Oceania NPC on classification of their

"We had great communication with the Oceania region as we had an international classification for 3 athletes in Solomon Island, and the Oceania NPC exerted every effort to make it possible to classify further 2 athletes in

an out of competition classification in Papua New Guinea," said Moawad on the development

Calendar



2024

- African Qualification for Paris 2024 Paralympic Games (G1), Dakar, Senegal, Feb. 9, 2024

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

- WT President's Cup Para Taekwondo Asia Region, Tehran, Iran, Feb. 20, 2024

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

- European Qualification for Paris 2024 Paralympic Games (G1), Sofia, Bulgaria, Mar. 8, 2024

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

- Asian Qualification for Paris 2024 Paralympic Games (G1), Tai'an City, China, April 6, 2024

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

- Pan Am Qualification for Paris 2024 Paralympic Games (G1), Dominican Rep., April 9, 2024

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

- Pan Am Para Taekwondo Open Championships (G4/G2), Rio de Janeiro, May 3, 2024

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

- Asian Para Taekwondo Open Championships, Da Nang, Vietnam, May 26, 2024

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

- Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, Paris, France, Aug. 29-31, 2024

Around the World



Zakia features in IPC's Paralympic Moment of the Year

It was a proud moment for Para Taekwondo fraternity as Refugee athlete Zakia Khudadadi featured in International Paralympic Committee's Paralympic Moments of the Year!

Zakia Khudadadi won her first ever Para Taekwondo gold at the European Championships this year in Rotterdam.

Khudadadi, who fled Afghanistan in 2021 and now lives and trains in Paris, France, is aiming for a Paralympic medal in Paris. Her French coach Haby Niare was the first to celebrate the victory with her. She won gold competing as a refugee team athlete.

"I win for the women of Afghanistan", she had said.

The voting for Paralympic Moment of the Year opened this week.

Felicitations for Brazilian Paralympic star Nathan

Paralympic champion Nathan Torquato was felicitated by Fundação Pró-Esporte de Santos (Fupes), a body responsible for managing high-performance sports in the city.

"Another year receiving the award for the Best Paralympic Taekwondo Athlete @fupes_santos. very happy for the recognition. I thank the foundation for all the support in my career!" said Torquato in his Instagram handle.

The Brazilian star clinched the gold medal at the Santiago 2023 Parapan Am Games and was the bronze medalist at World Championships in Veracruz.



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