

sports

...on the Semiahmoo Peninsula

Golden Glory Martial Arts Academy owner, Team Canada head coach Mostafa Sabeti, fighter Joseph Piccolo fly to Texas for Nov. 14-20 event

Local fighters on way to world wushu competition

Tricia Weel
Staff reporter

Everybody will be kung fu fighting next week in Texas.

Well, maybe not everybody – but those who are participating in the 16th World Wushu Championships at the Fort Worth Convention Centre will be very actively wushu – or kung fu – fighting against the best in the competitive Chinese martial art.

With 600 to 800 athletes from more than 80 countries and regions around the world expected to attend, South Surrey's Mostafa Sabeti will be there as head coach and manager for the Wushu Canada National Team in the Sanda division for the third year in a row.

"We've been training hard, we've been focused... we are ready to rumble!" Sabeti said.

As the owner of Golden Glory Martial Arts Academy in South Surrey and president of the of the Canada West Wushu Association, Sabeti himself has plenty of experience in competing, but enjoys and embraces his role as head coach and manager.

Joseph Piccolo, 23, one of Sabeti's longtime fighters, will also be travelling to Texas to compete, as a member of Team Canada, in the Sanda division.

Wushu, which originated in China, is the official name of kung fu and one of the most popular forms of martial arts. The sport consists of two parts – taolu, or forms, and sanda, which is one-on-one fighting.

Piccolo was one of 12 Golden Glory competitors to win a gold medal at the 4th Pan American Kung Fu (Wushu)



Mostafa Sabeti with Joseph Piccolo (age 9, with trophy) and the pair together in August, after Piccolo, now 23, won a gold medal at the 4th Pan American Kung Fu (Wushu) Championships in Ontario earlier this year. (Contributed photos)

Championships in Ontario last August, where Team B.C. earned a total of 15 medals.

"Fortunately, we got the first place as a team in whole competition, for first time in the history," Sabeti said.

He emphasized how hard Piccolo and other Team Canada members have been training in the leadup to the world event, noting that

so far, no one has won a "notable medal for Team Canada in the Sanda division" in the Texas-hosted world competition.

"I am pretty confident this time we can make history," he said. "We are aiming for the best result as we (can)... this will be an amazing opportunity for us in South Surrey and White Rock as a community – Joseph

was born and raised right here."

Having trained Piccolo since he was quite young, Sabeti shared a photo of him and a nine-year-old Piccolo, smiling widely, holding his very first martial arts medal.

"With good support and dedication, anyone can reach the highest level of the game," he said.

'Early bird' passes available for men's fastpitch event



A batter with New York Gremlins, winners of the 2023 International Softball Congress (ISC) World Men's Fastpitch Championship. The 2024 tournament will be played in South Surrey. (Facebook/isc.fastpitch photo)

Tom Zillich
Black Press Media

Ticket sales have started for next summer's International Softball Congress (ISC) World Men's Fastpitch Championship at Softball City.

For a week in August 2024, the South Surrey ballpark will buzz with 60 teams from 10-plus countries during a tournament billed as a "premier global softball event."

Tourney host Canadian Amateur Sport Society, Softball City oper-

ators, "is committed to creating a world-class event that leaves a lasting legacy for our community and the world," a news release explains.

In "early bird" pricing until Dec. 31, a tournament pass is \$100 for adults, \$80 for seniors/teens, free for kids under 12. Details are posted on isc24.softballcity.bc.ca

The ISC tournament aims to provide "young, high-caliber athletes the opportunity to expand their potential and ability by fielding elite-level fastpitch teams, provide

a source of inspiration and mentorship to the youth of the sport, and provide an entertaining, fun-filled sporting experience for the ISC World Championship spectator."

The 2023 ISC world tourney was played in Denmark, Wisconsin, where New York Gremlins beat Ontario's Bear Creek Express in the final. Also last August, at Softball City, Softball Canada's 2023 Men's and Master Men's Fastpitch Championships was held in this province for the first time since Prince

George in 2006. Greg Timm, chair of the organizing committee with Canadian Amateur Sport Society, travelled to Wisconsin for the 2023 championships, to observe, learn and start planning for the event in Surrey next summer.

"The ISCs have been held in B.C. only twice before, both times in Victoria," Timm said earlier this year.

"We won the (ISC) bid last year and that gave us two years to plan that the 78th tournament in their history. We're excited about that."

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