Karate's recommendation for Tokyo 2020 inclusion celebrated at event in Japan's capital

By Daniel Etchells

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An event to celebrate karate being named among the five sports recommended for inclusion on the Olympic programme at Tokyo 2020 has been held in the Japanese capital.

More than 450 guests were invited to Tokyo by the Japan Karate Federation (JKF), including many of those who have supported the sport's Olympic campaign and officials from domestic organisations.

World Karate Federation (WKF) President Antonio Espinos was present, along with his Asian Karate Federation counterpart Kuang-Huei Chang and WKF general secretary Toshihisa Nagura.

Following a karate demonstration by Japan’s national team, JKF President Takashi Sasagawa and Espinos both delivered speeches.

The celebration is said to have provided an opportunity to state karate’s passion for the Olympic Games, not only for the 2020 edition but also for the 2024 Games and beyond.
Karate has never been contested at the Olympics, leaving the sport in the shadow of its fellow home-grown martial art, judo.

Judo was first included on the Olympic programme in 1964, when Tokyo last hosted the Games, and despite missing out on the 1968 edition in Mexico City, it has been ever-present from Munich 1972 onwards.

Baseball and softball, skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing were the four other sports recommended for Olympic inclusion in September as bowling, squash and wushu missed out.

A final decision is due to be made at next summer's International Olympic Committee Session in Rio de Janeiro.

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Daniel Etchells graduated from the University of Huddersfield with a BA honours degree in Media and Sports Journalism in 2010. Before joining insidethegames.biz, Daniel covered football for various national newspapers through the Wardle Whittell Agency and undertook placements writing for the official website of his beloved Manchester United, the Manchester Evening News and BBC Sport.

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