

# EVENT REPORT

Official Event Report & Newsletter of the 2018 Youth World Championships

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## Opening Ceremony of the 2018 Youth World Championships

The young athletes taking part in the muaythai Youth World Championships were given a spectacular welcome to Bangkok by troupes of dancers and musicians. Government representatives attended including Deputy Minister for Sport and Tourism Khun Ittiphol Khunplome who formally opened the Ceremony.

The centrepiece of the event was the Athletes' Flag Parade where athletes and team officials proudly marched behind their national flag into the stadium. This exciting event was streamed live on IFMA Facebook and will be shown later on IFMA Youtube.





The young athletes were entertained by a series of increasingly fantastical dances including a homage to the ancient traditions of muaythai.

And in a first for an IFMA event the tournament anthem “We are Muaythai” was sung by a group of children who unaccompanied sang the whole song to great applause. They wore colourful T-shirts marked with the Sports Is Your Gang logo to mark the IFMA social project which so many federations watching participate in.

## TOURNAMENT DAILIES: DAY 1

Day 1 saw over 100 exciting bouts take place across four rings. The National Stadium was packed with seats at a premium as supporters and fans vied for a glimpse of the rings and the future stars of the muaythai world.

Larger teams including Thailand, Russia and Australia naturally dominated the winners’ lists but among them were wins for Afghanistan (Mashal Islamzai 16 – 17 years), Hungary (Laszlo Szebaszti 16 – 17years), and seven wins for Moldova out of ten bouts.

The Philippines took six wins from six bouts – including a shock win over youth world champion from Peru Alexander Chavez by Kristian Narca – finishing the day on a high with a lot in store for day 2.

Australia had mixed fortunes with 21 athletes in action, taking eight wins to go forward to the next round. Among them last year’s gold medal winner Sophie Curtain, her sister Emily scheduled to compete later in the week.

Six of the 70-strong Russian team were in action, taking five solid wins across boys and girls divisions.

IFMA President Dr Sakcyhe Tapsuwan welcomed the teams to the stadium, and said they will have a fantastic week and called on everyone to do their best so they can feel happy with making the best effort they can in the ring and outside of the tournament.

The Deputy Minister said it is a proud time for Thailand to see so many young sportspeople from all over the world joining together to practice muaythai. And a representative from the Department of Physical Education who are the hosting partner for the event said it will be an exciting and fun-filled week of culture and muaythai.

Stephan Fox, general secretary of IFMA said sport is a right for all, and muaythai can bring people closer together. He said the IFMA family is united and the athletes will stay united throughout this week in spite of political or religious differences between nations outside of the tournament boundaries.



## TOURNAMENT DAILIES: DAY 2

The excitement level was high on day 2 with many young athletes already on their second bout in the most keenly contested divisions – and the rings were active late into the evening. In Ring A one of the highlights was between Iraqi athlete Ayad Albadr and Thailand's Tinanchai Sriprang – a contest which brought even the neutrals into the fray cheering for one or the other. Ayad won the first round, lost the second and then came storming back to take the third and win the bout on 29:28 points.

In the girl's division Russia's Liubov Plakhova won a tough bout against Team GB athlete Charlie Louise Pritchard. She was just one of the 26 young athletes in action that day for Russia, a busy day for the coaches across boys and girls divisions. Australia and Turkey also had busy days as did Ukraine. Australia's athletes also stood out for their habit of gifting opponents with a tiny cute koala bear at the end of each bout. Traditionally in muaythai athletes cross the ring at the end of the bout for a drink of water from their opposing coach, so this twist was sweet to see especially after some hectic muaythai action.



## IFMA Executive Board Meeting

The 2019 IFMA executive board meeting convened with senior representatives from all continents present. The packed agenda covered updates on the current state of IFMA and plans to make the muaythai family even bigger and more united together.

One main topic was the on-going development of the Strategic Plan at different levels from the national federations upwards. These plans focus on keeping the sport safe for generations to come – and the high number of participants at this year's Youth Championships is proof that faith in IFMA continues to be strong.

The IFMA General Secretary Stephan Fox gave a detailed report on all activities, while Charissa Tynan, IFMA Sport Director presented all up-coming events for the next 12 months. A separate report was made by the Macau Federation on the final event for 2018; the Asian Championships.

A number of more technical reports were made including on the IFMA's educational anti-doping programme.



# UPHOLDING MUAYTHAI TRADITIONS



Every muaythai athlete young or old learns a Wai Kru dance to carry out before starting each bout in the ring – and today the young athletes learned from some of the best teachers in Thailand as part of a Giant Open Lesson. Led by IFMA president Dr Sakchye Tapsuwan, the young athletes practiced a number of different rituals – learning the history behind each sequence as well as practicing the moves. The sound of laughter increased as the lesson went on, the young athletes enjoying the chance to really practice this move in peace.

Dr Sakchye and his trainers stood on the stage facing the hundreds of children, and clearly demonstrated each move. The aim was that the children would leave the lesson with a new sequence to practice and use in the ring, as well as a deeper understanding of where the Wai Kru ritual comes from.



The youth also this morning took part in an awareness session around bullying and how to combat it – run by Julia Govinden from the United Through Sports campaign. A series of fun activities encouraged the young athletes to discuss ways to recognise bullying and prevent it.

And at the end of the session, the youth signed notes on The Wish Tree, laying out some sweet thoughts for the future.



## TOURNAMENT DAILIES : DAY 3

What an exciting day of muaythai with the youngest athletes battling it out in two rings while their teenage peers faced each other in another two, and the crowds were treated to such high quality action it was hard to tell these were young athletes.

Among the standout teams on day 3 were Team USA sending through eight athletes from eight bouts to the next rounds. In Ring D two mini-dynamos fought each other to a standstill in the Age 10 38kg division when Yves Tabarangao faced Hungary's Szilard Józsa in a close points battle – and the pattern continued with the American athletes keeping a clean sheet. This included defending champions Bekah Irwin and Tierra Brandt in the women's divisions.

Other teams having success included The Philippines taking four wins from six bouts, and Moldova taking two wins. Iraq's Ayad Albadr (below) was in action again, taking a win against Lebanon in a points win.

Afghanistan's Mashal Islamzai continued his march onwards, but his team-mate Shir Hossain Azimi lost out in a tight 29-28 point bout against Iranian athlete Sattar Ghaderzadehhesar.



### semi-finals //

In spite of hours of heavy rain, the muaythai youth turned out for the semi-finals at the National Stadium with some gold medals given in smaller divisions. The competition was fierce from the youngest divisions up with national flag waving and competitive cheering the order of the day.

The large Turkish team sent through six athletes to the finals tomorrow. UAE at their first Youth tournament claimed two bronze medals, and Ireland also at their first Youth tournament took two silver medals in the girls' division.

Jade Jorand who won gold last year for France is through again to the final, as are twins Emily and Sophie Curtain (Australia) - they celebrated their birthday in the stadium today with two semi-final wins. Other teams taking home medals include New Zealand who so far have four medals including two golds, and Team USA who have two golds already for Maile Eugenio-Caras and Lei Saludares.



## 2019 IFMA General Assembly

Representatives from all 82 federations present at the Youth World Championships attended the Annual General Meeting this morning in Bangkok, with future plans for amateur muaythai globally on the table.

Naturally the growth of Youth muaythai was a central focus, as 240 children in the hotel prepared for their bouts at the arena that day.

Turkey was officially confirmed as the host of the 2019 Youth World Championships, they have big shoes to fill after the success of the last three years in Thailand. But the world of muaythai is looking forward to visiting the beautiful beachside resort of Antalya. Other events for 2019 which were discussed include the European Championships to be held in Marbella, Spain. The qualification system for 2021 The World Games was finalised.

In other presentations: IFMA Sport Director Charissa Tynan gave a full update on the administration developments, and Rolf Hess IFMA Finance gave the financial report. Julia Govinden CEO of United Through Sports UTS addressed the AGM with continued cooperation and on the topic of the UTS forum on August 9th.

General Managuelod gave the Competition Plan for the SEA Games. Niamh Griffin, press commission presented on the IFMA media plan, and the IFMA online results system IFMA Live in cooperation with Rsportz was also discussed. Stephan Fox IFMA general secretary discussed IFMA's anti-doping programme, and President Sakchye on behalf of AMTAT gave a detailed report on the 2018 Youth Championships.

UPHOLDING TRADITIONS:  
**MUAY BORAN**  
CHAMPIONSHIPS

Everyone has seen the famous Ong Bak movie, which made Muay Boran world-famous and showed the effectiveness of the unarmed combat from the old battlefields of Siam. Muay Boarn developed in a time when survival was of the essence, combat had to be decided in seconds - today we live thankfully in a more peaceful world where the beauty of these moves can be appreciated in isolation.

Today Muay Boran lives on with participants with 130 countries through the IFMA federations learning these self-defence techniques.



The Muay Boran tournament, a team competition where two athletes in self-defence sequences in demonstration showcasing the deadly techniques of the battlefields. Czech Republic took the first place in the Under-14 division and in the Over-14, Team The Philippines secured the first place.

IFMA President Dr Sakchye Tapsuwan said he was delighted with the performance showing that muaythai and all its disciplines in many ways are now performed better than in the motherland itself.



## #YWC2018 LIVE STREAM

### reaches the world...

The Youth World Championships 2018 has been the record-breaking event by attendance and some 40K+ viewers tuned into watch the live stream on the IFMA YouTube Channel to support athletes from their home countries. Followers from around the world could watch the youth in the 16-17 divisions that qualified for the world championships next year.

IFMA Media Director, Ms Niamh Griffin said *"Our aim is to cover the youth and let them take the central stage during the competition week. Many of the youth are transitioning to the IFMA senior division and the event's live stream gave a great insight to the future stars of Muaythai."*



# FINALS

## tournament dailies day: 5

Four rings were in action on the final day with just over 80 gold medal bouts taking place for the boys and girls at the youth world championships in Bangkok. As the medal count mounted it became clear that while some large teams did well, some smaller teams actually won more gold medals.

The long day of bouts threw up some interesting results. In the older categories America dominated, their 16-person team taking home medals of all colours. Half of the team won gold, clearing four medals in the over-14 categories and taking the prize for best team in this age group.

In the under-14 categories Russia dominated both boys and girls divisions – they had 42 athletes competing today alone. In total they won 26 gold medals, taking 19 of these in the Under-14 categories and claiming the prize for best U-14 team. Amirkhan Zakiev won gold for the third consecutive year, and was given the Outstanding Athlete award in his age group.



Medals were awarded by a range of dignitaries including the former Minister for Sport Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul.

Afghanistan took two medals, France also with a smaller team took gold and a silver for Jade Jorand – she also took the Sportsmanship award for her behavior towards her opponents.

Sophie Curtain took gold for the third year running for Australia, carrying Boris the Wombat into the ring with her, and was given Outstanding Athlete for her achievements. Also in this age group Ceren Yilmaz who took gold in her weight category was recognised as the Rising Star to look out for in the next years of her career.



In the younger divisions Kazakhstan also claimed a number of gold medals, with Baurzhan Mukhambetaliuly recognised for his incredible bout against Thailand with Outstanding Athlete in this category.

The over-14 rising star award went to Ayad Albadr from Iraq for a series of exciting bouts during the tournament, culminating in a gold medal win in a battle with Portugal's Joel Colaço

The medal bouts were interspersed with the final bouts during the day, with the athletes led onto the podiums by singers and dancers dressed in traditional Thai clothing. As the anthems were played, bouts stopped in all rings to show respect to the winning athletes.

And in the girls under-14 divisions the Rising Star went to silver medallist Ashley Jazmine Gavina, and Outstanding athlete to Kullathida Kueasanor from Thailand.

Thailand brought 81 athletes to the Championships, and certainly reaped the benefits of that taking 30 gold medals in various categories.

## MEDALS REACH ALL 5 CONTINENTS

This year muaythai again proved to be a truly universal sport with athletes from all continents stepping on the highest step of the medal podium at the awarding ceremony. Athletes from 46 countries out of the participating 82 went home with medals of different value bringing fame to their country, school and gyms.

The final days of the championships saw many emotional moments when the winners shared the joy of making the world's best athletes. These have been the moments to remember and IFMA is proud of the grass root growth in each country. The record number of participants coming to compete is the best evidence that the future of Muaythai is secured.

Many athletes made their first steps in their international career at the Youth World Championships 2018 and for some, it was a stepping stone to the world of Elite Muaythai where they will challenge the famous champions for their title. From Iraq Ayad Albadr won gold at 51 kgs defeating athletes from Portugal, Moldova and Thailand to get to the podium. Peruvian athlete Arena Castro Buscaglia won against Russia and Turkey on her way to gold, claiming the 16 to 17 over 75kg title.

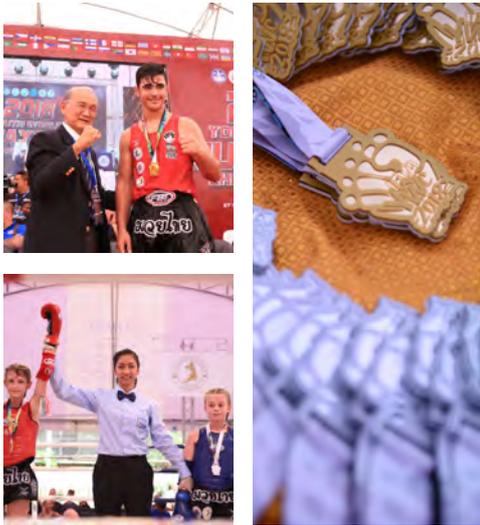


Australia's Sophie Curtain also had an international road to the finals leaving Poland, Russia and Turkey in her wake.

Smaller national teams also scored well on the medals table, with Moldova muaythai taking home seven medals with a team of 12 including one gold.



The award for the Spirit of Muaythai went to ten year old Amer Kucevic from Belgium for his enthusiasm and love of all aspects of muaythai.



Travelling all the way from New Zealand the team of 13 took six medals including one gold.

Grassroots development in other countries also showed great results with muaythai Malaysia taking nine medals for the Southeast Asian nation. Other countries traditionally strong in muaythai like Ukraine and Kazakhstan and host nation Thailand laid down strong markers for the future, training up the next generation.



The award for Sportsmanship went to Jade Jorand from France, silver medalist for her gracious interactions with her opponents.



# MUAY TALAY

A successful Muay Talay brought the young athletes together for a competitive but fun afternoon. The draw was supervised by event Technical Director Dato Shah, with representatives from 40 countries entering. As the main muaythai contest is already concluded, the Muay Talay Championships were open to all. Each athlete wore the same helmet and boxing gloves as used in the muaythai tournament. The body-guard was replaced by a life-jacket. The rules are slightly different to muaythai, but based on the same principles. Athletes were divided into age-groups, and then subdivided into gender groupings for fairness.



Under Muay Talay rules no blows to the head are permitted, and elbows are also ruled out.

The entire swimming pool was converted into a gladiator arena; athletes from 40 countries participated. The swimming pool was jam-packed with spectators around the edges supporting the athletes and their teams. As with muaythai, the "pee muay" (Thai traditional musicians) accompanied each contest. This gave this modern discipline of the martial art a traditional feel.

The winners in the 10 - 11 male division - first to Libya, second to Malaysia. In the 12 - 13 years old male, it was a draw between India and Malaysia. In the 14 - 15 year old male, first place went to Iran and second to Australia.

In the 10 to 11 year old female, gold to The Philippines and silver to India. In the 12 to 13 year old female, first to Malaysia and second to India.

In the 14 to 15 year old girls' division gold went to Peru, and silver to Malaysia.

This is the fourth year IFMA has staged the Muay Talay contest, and every year more countries have participated.

## "And the **AWARD** goes to...."

CELEBRATING OUR BRIGHTEST STARS AT THE YOUTH GALA AWARDS NIGHT.

There were almost 700 young athletes from 82 countries gathered in Bangkok this year, all showing great muaythai skill and talent. And among them were a few who really stood out either for their ring skills or their exemplary behaviour during the tournament. IFMA honoured these young athletes and some officials at a moving ceremony after the final bouts.

It's always difficult to pick out award winners from so many deserving candidates and this year the Jury had a particularly difficult task with over 100 gold medals awarded to these young champions.

Awards were given in the Under 14 and Over 14 categories for Outstanding Athlete (male , female), Rising Star (male, female) as well as individual awards for Spirit of Muaythai and Sportsmanship. Teams were recognised for bringing large delegations, and separately for the all-important medal table placing. Other awards celebrated the best Hosts of 2017.



# Best Team Awards went to....

Best Team Under 14 divisions based on medals :  
 Russia with 26 gold medals for the team.  
 Best Team Over 14 divisions based on medals :  
 USA with a team of 16, USA won 8 gold medals.

Teams who made the effort to arrange and bring large delegations were also recognised; it's no easy job training and preparing dozens of athletes for a week of competition!!

The largest travelling delegation: Russia with 71 athletes  
 2nd largest travelling delegation: Turkey with 44 athletes  
 3rd largest travelling delegation: Australia with 37 athletes

Host team Thailand with 81 athletes claimed 30 gold medals for a strong showing.



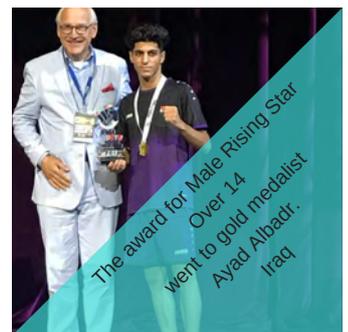
The award for Female Rising Star Under 14 went to silver medalist Ashley Jazmine Gavina. The Philippines



The award for Male Rising Star Under 14 went to bronze medalist Fergus Asher Munro Smith. Team GB



The award for Female Rising Star Over 14 went to gold medalist Ceren Yilmaz. Turkey



The award for Male Rising Star Over 14 went to gold medalist Ayad Albadr. Iraq



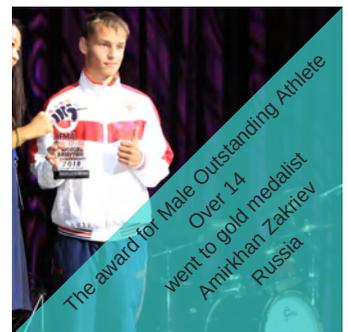
The award for Female Outstanding Athlete Under 14 went to gold medalist Kullathida Kueasator Thailand



The award for Female Outstanding Athlete Over 14 went to gold medalist Sophie Curtain Australia



The award for Male Outstanding Athlete Under 14 went to gold medalist Baurzhan Mukhambetaliuly Kazakhstan



The award for Male Outstanding Athlete Over 14 went to gold medalist Amirkhan Zakriev Russia

And of course we cannot forget the 3rd person in the ring – Italian referee Rodolfo Meoni was recognised for his skills and ability to work with the young athletes in the ring, and his commitment to muaythai.

A special award for LifeTime achievement was given to Mr Kajorn Prowsee who has dedicated his life to the development of amateur muaythai – in his 80s today, he can still be found at the Arena every day, watching proceedings with a hawklike eye. A father to generations of young athletes, it was an honour for everyone to see him once again on the stage with this new generation of international athletes.



# united through SPORT

YOUTH CONFERENCE @ UNESCAP

“ Sport teaches us all so many vital skills that are required, no matter how old we are or where we live.... ”

On the 9th August, a spectacular moment was captured in history. The first International Sports Youth Forum was held in Bangkok under the patronage of GAISF and organised by United Through Sports (UTS) along with the International Federation of Amateur Muaythai (IFMA). The previous day saw the IFMA youth from over 80 countries invite their sisters and brothers from 50 other recognised sports to a Welcome Party and the IFMA Youth Gala.

At 9.00am the doors of the United Nations in Bangkok opened and in flooded wave after wave of children from over 82 countries. The ESCAP Centre filled to the capacity of 1,200 youths. With the additional patronage of the National Olympic Committee of Thailand, the Ministry of Tourism and Sport as well as Thailand’s Department of Physical Education, the event was set for the stars.

The opening welcome address was given by United Nations Mr Hongjoo Hahm followed by the ringing of the final bell and a moment of silence led by NOCT and IOC member Khunying Patama to commemorate the passing of Dr. Nat Indrapana IOC member from Thailand. President of GAISF Patrick Baumann gave a warm welcome message and congratulated all the athletes. He addressed the recent crisis in Thailand, where the world watched with anticipation the entrapment of the Wild Boar Youth Football Team in the Tham Luang cave of Pattaya for a duration of 23 days.



Speakers flew in and contributed from exceptional organisations including: IFMA President Dr. Sakchye Tapsuan, Director of Thailand's Doping Control Agency Dr. Meechai Inwood, IFMA Sport Director, Charissa Tynan, UNICEF representative Christina Popivanova, CEO of United Through Sports Julia Govinden, Head of IFMA Athletes' Commission Janice Lyn, Right to Play's Niamh De Loughry, IFMA Vice President Sue Glassey, UN Women's Younghwa Choi and GAISF Vice President Stephan Fox.

Topics included: Gender equality, Non-Discrimination, Anti-Doping, TUE's, Health and Nutrition in Sport, Social Responsibility in Sport, Ethics and Sport, Olympicism, Unity in Sport, History and Future of IFMA amongst other topics. Each speaker focused on the young audience with the aim to unite, raise awareness, educate and guide.



One highlight of the conference was the powerful vocal performance by Imani Cintado-O'Donovan who gave an emotional rendition of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" as she looked out upon a sea of candles held up in unison by the youth.

In addition to the UTS Conference, the forum included an evening of Gala Awards, a Cultural Show and to bring the forum to a close, a Cultural Festival was held celebrating themes of unity and diversity. The objectives of the forum were to address various social issues including: Social responsibility of athletes, Uniting nations above and beyond political boundaries, non-discrimination and gender equality as well as educating the youth about their choices and the responsibilities they have towards themselves.



GAISF Vice-President and former Muaythai World Champion Stephan Fox highlighted the importance sport can play in young people's lives regardless to their background: *"Sport teaches us all so many vital skills that are required, no matter how old we are or where we live. United Through Sports provides opportunities for young people to experience sport and gain these skill. As the leaders of sports, we should focus our attention on creating platforms for all to play."*



CEO of UTS Julia Govinden stated: *"History was made on this beautiful day in bringing the youth of the world together even from parts of the world in which countries are in conflict. We witnessed children coming together in solidarity, accepting their differences as they sat side by side under the United Nations symbol. We saw the shaking of hands and the building of friendships. For the adults in the room it is clear that there is still hope."*

The conference drew to a close, with a group photograph capturing the precious and powerful moment in time. This event showcased children coming together and sitting side by side regardless to politics, under the United Nations symbol proving that there is still hope. It was a proud moment for all of them to sit in the chairs where the leaders of the world make decisions that influence the next generation.

Only this time, we saw the next generation come to showcase that unity in diversity is possible as long as we understand and respect each other. Sport unites, sport builds bridges and sport undoubtedly is a universal language.

## ONLY DOPES DO DIURETICS

### Clean youth muaythai championships raises awareness of Anti-doping

All doping tests done at the youth Muaythai championships came back negative, a result welcomed by the IFMA Medical Committee. The IFMA message has always been clean Muaythai and winning with honour but in the past a lack of understanding especially around diuretics like Furosemide may have led to mistakes.

Head of the medical committee Dr Erdogan Aydin said clean tests should be celebrated as a sign the message is getting through even at the youngest levels. But he warned IFMA will continue testing and punishing cheats.

He explains in the past some young athletes associated doping with taking strong drugs and did not understand diuretics are also against the rules.



He says: *"We did 30 tests this year in Bangkok. Thanks to the awareness IFMA has created we have no positives at all. We are so happy about it, but would never want to leave it without control, this is something we will always monitor."*

In fact for weight-category sports like Muaythai, taking diuretics is very serious. Dr Erdogan singled out the diuretic "Furosemide" as a WADA-prohibited substance. He noted a small number of Muaythai athletes have mis-used this substance and suffered the consequences. He says: "Should we blame the athletes for it? No, they are juniors- young people and when we investigate we can see that it is their coaches or even parents who had advised them to use a chemical to get some advantages. And minors are of course obedient to their coaches and parents." He adds, unfortunately, it seems some coaches are not aware Furosemide is a banned chemical.

# In the fight against DOPING EDUCATION IS KEY



*At the Youth Forum in the UN ESCAP Hall teams at the muaythai youth world championships were addressed by Dr. Meechai Inwood from Thailand's Doping Control Agency.*

Also speaking during the Youth Forum Charissa Tynan, IFMA Sport Director gave the young athletes a talk on the dangers of diuretics.

Ms Tynan stressed to the young athletes that losing weight by any other way than slow and steady adjustment is not safe and is against the rules. She called on coaches to put their athletes into the appropriate weight category and said that as youth athletes they should not be losing weight.

In May of this year, Ms Tynan gave a similar presentation to the senior athletes at the muaythai world championships held in Cancun, Mexico. Speaking at the Athletes Forum, she focused then on the Therapeutic Use Exemption and the responsibilities and rights of the athlete. Following her talk, educational print materials were given to all participants sourced from WADA's educational resources.

He stressed: " If Furosemide is the reason you can make this weight; not discipline, hard work and dedication then it means you are cheating against the rivals. That's it, full stop and when you are caught you will be out of competition for 4 years."

IFMA's core value is fair play, it is one of the 5 pillars and essential both in sport and life. IFMA has a zero-tolerance stance on doping and believes in fair competition and the 5 pillars of Muaythai, respect, honour, tradition, excellence and fair play are part of the written and unwritten rules of the IFMA family together with solidarity, care, tolerance and above all joy.

IFMA believes that education is the key and therefore workshops and a close cooperation with WADA and ITA is an important part of the grass root development.

During the senior and youth level championships this year, athletes heard talks from anti-doping experts with advice on how to stay clean and keep muaythai fair for all.

