



## SURFING

IGARASHI Kanoa, who represents Japan at the Tokyo 2020 Games. Surfing is a unique sport in which athletes ride the waves in an ever-shifting natural environment. Watch how the surfers display their skills so effortlessly that they seem to be one with the wave.

# EXCITING NEW SPORTS TO DEBUT AT TOKYO 2020

Four new events have been added to the Tokyo 2020 Games, all of them showcasing the power and grace of movement. The Japanese martial art of karate and the aquatic sport of surfing are two of the additions bringing a fresh sparkle to the Summer Games.



Starting with the Tokyo 2020 Games, a new policy has been inaugurated that allows host cities to propose additional sports for the Olympic programs. At this year's Games, karate, sport climbing, surfing, and skateboarding will make their Olympic debuts. All four of these sports feature graceful agility and dynamic maneuverability.

Spectators will be dazzled by the skateboarders' spectacular aerial moves and the physical prowess of the climbers. With the splash of rolling waves comes the feel of summer. The sport of surfing involves athletes riding waves on shortboards 170 to 190 cm in length, competing with one another on such criteria as technique and originality. Surfing

is not only a sport, but an entire culture of beach music, art, and fashion, and is especially popular with the younger generation. The surfing event at the Tokyo 2020 Games has athletes in the water for 20 to 30 minutes, during which they catch as many as 10 waves or more. Points are scored for each wave caught, with the best two performances determining

the winners. The waves are forever changing with the wind and tides, so no surfer ever rides the same kind twice. In addition to showing off their skillful maneuvers atop the board, surfers also have to pick the right wave to seize, a talent that requires a winner's instincts. The event at the Tokyo 2020 Games will have a four-person heat structure, where four surfers ride it out in the water at a time and the best two of each heat advance to the next round. As only one rider can ride a surge at any given time—a common rule among surfers—a big highlight of the event is watching the surfers jostle for position to catch the best wave.

While surfing is all about maneuvering a surfboard on a wave, karate fascinates audiences with its impressive control of the body. This Japanese martial art is thought to have originated from the self-defense techniques developed by the warrior class of the Ryukyu Kingdom, which ruled over the

Okinawa Islands until the end of the 19th century. Today, karate is practiced in more than 190 countries. A key element of karate in Japan, reflecting its origin as a form of self-defense, is its focus on training the mind. For this reason, taking karate lessons is popular as an extra-curricular activity.

Remarkable for its mental toughness is the discipline of *kata*, a set of offensive and defensive movements. Competitors, or *karateka*, choose the *kata* they wish to demonstrate from among the 102 that are recognized by the World Karate Federation. The *karateka* then demonstrate these *kata* as if they are fighting an adversary. Their punches and kicks are judged on a range of criteria, from conformance and timing to strength and speed. The fluid motions of the *karateka* are a thrill to see.

For those who want to see *karateka* actually fighting it out with each other, the more

competitive discipline within karate is that of *kumite*. While in *kata*, the two competitors score points for the quality of their movement, in *kumite*, they gain points when landing punches, kicks, or strikes on their opponent, and win by amassing more points than their adversary. Karate at the Tokyo 2020 Games is based on a traditional style that observes *sundome* (non-contact) rules, which impose penalties if a *karateka* should make full contact with his or her opponent. The speedy exchanges of blows attempting to catch one another off guard, as well as the stunning agility of their high kicks and other bold moves, are a sight not to be missed.

New events brimming with youthful energy and traditional skills should bring a fresh breath of air to the Olympic spectacle and take it to a new stage. All eyes will be on these exciting competitions.



## KARATE

SHIMIZU Kiyou (left), representing Japan in *kata*, and SAGO Naoto (top, on the right), representing Japan in *kumite*. Karate features two disciplines; *kata* is a choreographed pattern of moves against an invisible adversary, while *kumite* involves two fighters sparring with one another to decide the winner.