

KEEPING IN TREND



From baby boomers

Rodo Vinh-Tung (FRA), 2001 Akita gold medalist in wakeboarding, is about to turn 30!

A long, long time ago, in 1980, the International Federations joining forces and founding the IWGA governed a dozen sports which had all withstood the test of time and were practiced by young people the world over. Water ski and trampoline were considered the youngest among them. Not necessarily due to the practitioners average age, but because their origins traced back to rather recent inventions.

In 1922, Ralph Samuelson, 19 years old and resident of Lake City (USA), believed and proved that if one could ski on snow, one could ski on water. At the age of 26, another zealous American, George Nissen, built the prototype of a trampoline — binding a piece of canvas with elastic bands to a metal frame in 1936. Water ski's first ever world championships were held in 1949, trampoline's followed 15 years later. Their federations being two of the founding fathers of the IWGA, they coincided on the program of The First World Games 1981 Santa Clara (USA).



By its fourth edition, The World Games included two other **young** sports: beach volleyball and triathlon. Neither being inventible per se — neither requiring any space-age equipment — they had both started to emerge in the seventies, matured rapidly throughout the eighties, and they reached their boom levels by

to baby busters and on to the young!

1993 The Hague (NED). However, theirs was a slightly different kind of young: one that appeared to link to the lifestyles of those participating: the young daring to go beyond all established frontiers, particularly, if this could be done methodically; the young aiming to be extremely fit while also being appropriately dressed. Some of these sports have since moved on to the Olympic Games (beach volleyball in 1996, triathlon and individual trampoline in 2000). A decade later, a number of **young** sports have been selected to be part of The World Games: sports aerobics, skydiving, flying disc, competition climbing and others. But enough to keep in trend with generations X, Y and the really **young**?



Deliberate efforts to continuously rejuvenate the Olympic brand govern the IOC's choices of new, young and trendy sports. Snowboarding is among the most recent additions to the Winter Olympic Games. In its review of the program for Turin 2006, the IOC noted the high appeal for spectators and broadcast of the

snowboard events in the Olympic Programs 1998 and 2002, in particular with the youth group of 15 to 25 year olds. Demographics convincing enough for another of its disciplines — snowboard cross — to be considered for the Games in 2006. BMX (bicycle motocross) racing will substitute for two of the least popular track cycling events during the XXIX Olympiad Beijing 2008. What is the IWGA to do in order to keep The World Games in trend with the **young**? It simply needs to continue what it has been doing successfully ever since 1980: monitor the development sports, including its own, and react promptly!

The World Games 2001 Akita saw the premiere of wakeboarding as the third official discipline of water ski. Shortly after being invented by — you guessed right — yet another American (Tony Finn in 1985), wakeboarding



Mero Narita (JPN)

started to sweep the youth off their water skis. Not unlike snowboarding did with alpine skiing! And virtually around the globe as well: 280 000 riders were registered by 2001 in Japan alone. The gold medalist in women's wakeboarding at Akita was the youngest in the history of The World Games: Mero Narita, JPN, who was all of 13 **young** at the time.