

Iran "Ba Choukhe" (*bā čuxe*) Wrestling



The first **International "Ba Choukhe" Wrestling Festival** took place in Iran, 31 March to 3rd April 2014, Northern Khorasan Province, at "Isfarayen". Every year thousands of people gather in this town to watch Ba Choukhe wrestling. The festival is held a few days after Iranian New Year.

The festival contains traditional wrestling styles which have roots in Iranian culture as well as Iranian life style. For the first time, Iran Traditional Sports & Local Games federation decided to invite some other countries. Wrestlers from Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey were invited to compete in "Goude Zeynalkhan" which is an historic place that is today a traditional stadium for Ba Choukhe wrestling.

For participating at this festival and receiving more information please contact below email address: Iran.Rural.Tribal.Sport@gmail

Some history

In the region of Khorasan, in the North East of Iran, different traditional wrestling styles are practiced. One of them is called *bā čuxe*. It has its roots in techniques of battlefield preparation. The term *bā čuxe* consists of *bā* (with) and *čuxe* (a type of jacket). *Bā čuxe* is mainly practiced by Kurdish tribes who live there. This style of wrestling is run around the cities of Qučān, Bojnord, Asfariyān, Farimān, and Čenārān.

The rules of "Ba Choukhe" Wrestling



Calling the wrestlers

- If a wrestler does not come to the mat when he is called by the announcer, after 3 times calling, he loses the bout.

Duration of the contest:

- 5 minutes (sometimes 10mn in the villages + 5 mn extra time after 2 mn of rest).
- If the result is a draw, an additional time of 3 minutes will be added after 30 seconds of break. In the extra time, the wrestler who scores the first point wins.
- If after 8 minutes the result is still a draw, both wrestlers are weighed. The lighter wrestler will be the winner of the bout.

In a recent past, there were no time and weight limits. The wrestlers of *bā čuxe* traveled from one village to others, requesting challenge matches, sometimes going to Turkmen villages. The Turkmen of Northern Khorasan held their wrestling matches particularly during their wedding ceremonies. They call their traditional style of wrestling *goraš* (Kurash).



Important rule:

- The wrestlers are not permitted to touch opponent's leg below to the knee (which signifies that one can grip on the higher part of the leg).

Winning

There are three possibilities to win: after a fall, after a higher scene (shadow), after a referee penalty.

Scoring points:

- A correct hold which throws the opponent in a "par terre" position (hands and knees on the ground) gives 1 point.
- When a throw, started inside the wrestling area of the mat, finish with a result outside the mat, this gives 2 points. If the fall is inside the mat, this gives one point.
- When a wrestler is thrown on his hip, and if he receipts himself on the palms of both hands + one elbow, it is 1 point.
- When the shoulders are closer to the ground than the waist after a throw.

Winning by "Stroke":

- Winning fall: when the opponent is thrown on one (or two) shoulder to the ground.
- "Stroke": After a throw, if both palms and both elbows touch the ground, the match is finished by "Stroke". If it is only one palm and elbow, there is no result.
- Technical "Stroke" or *sāye andāxtan* in Persian, an expression which means "to catch the shadow" by turning around the shoulder's axis in the air. Any throw that put the opponent in the following position: when the line of his back, vertically or in parallel with the ground, is bent to more than 90 degrees (between the line of the back and the legs), and in this position, when the body makes shadow on the ground.
(N.B. this last rule is not very clear for a non Iranian, but more generally a wrestler is in danger when lifted from the soil by his opponent).



Faults:

- Touching the lower parts of the legs (from knee) when attacking.
- Passivity and escaping (when a wrestler constantly attacks and his opponent only escapes then the latter will lose due to the technical superiority of his opponent)
- Holding opponent's throat

- Taking both collars of the jacket with one hand from the frontal side (near the throat)
- Catching and keeping opponent's wrist
- Twisting fingers in a wrong way
- Hitting intentionally or holding the neck with two hands.

Note: The first and second warnings are only given by the referee head of the mat". For the 3rd, the three referees must agree and then the Jury confirms.

Weight categories (for senior and junior level):

-65kg; -75kg; -85kg; -95kg; +95kg

The wrestling area:

The official matches will be on mats of 10X10 (12X12 with protections). During summer they can also be done on grass field or on soft sand soil (traditional way).



Costume:

- Wrestler must wear a special Choukhe costume. This consists of a T-shirt, a special jacket and a short.
- The shirt must cover the back of the buttocks. The sleeves of the shirt must go until the elbow. During the bout, the sleeves should be folded to the upper part of the arms.
- The sport trouser must be up to the knees and during the bout the short legs must be folded to the higher part of the legs.
- A strong shawl (or belt) of 5cm surround the body over the jacket, at the level of the belt, and is fixed at the back. The referee controls the dress and shawl during the match.
- Wrestlers must compete bare foot.

Originally, *bā čuxe* wrestlers used their everyday cloth for wrapping up their sleeves and binding their shawl around their waist to wrestle. From 1950, wrestlers started to wear pants reaching down to the knee and a sleeveless jacket. This jacket was made of very tough wool called *čuxe* (sheep wool or camel wool). They also used a shawl as a belt. From 1962, instead of wool they started to use linen, which is still the material for the *bā čuxe* jacket.

The referees:

Three referees control the bout. Two are in the corners and one in the centre. They wear a white T-shirt, white shoes and blue trousers. The corners referees are the "head of the mat" and the "judge of the mat". The central referee is in charge of controlling the athletes before the bout. He gives his decision which must be confirmed by at least one of the corner referees.

A fourth referee can be added as a time keeper.

The jury:

It consists of 3 to 5 of former wrestlers, and is called "Rogavran";

The jury control and supervise:

- The teams of referees.
- Any confusing result, for example by reviewing the video of the bout.
- The disqualification, after the 3rd warning.
- Choosing the best technical fair player
- Any kind of dispute or protest during the bout.

Music:

- All matches are accompanied by music performed with two instruments, the *dohol* (drum) and the *sornā* (hautbois),

Abandon:

- There is no right to abandon in favour of another competitor.

Prizes:

- For adults the winner gets a mare, the second place receives a dairy cow and the third place gets a ram. The first three places of adolescents get a gold medal each.

Injuries:

- When injured or after a hard fall, a wrestler has a time of maximum 2 minutes to recover.