

Other Sports in Pakistan: Wrestling, Squash, and More



Main Sports: Squash, Wrestling, Kabaddi, Athletics
Global Recognition: High (Squash), Regional (Kabaddi)
Historic Achievements: Multiple World Titles in Squash
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While cricket and hockey dominate the headlines in Pakistan, several other sports have significantly shaped the nation's athletic identity. From the golden age of squash to traditional wrestling and the gritty appeal of kabaddi, these disciplines have contributed to Pakistan's sporting legacy and continue to thrive in local communities.

Squash: A Global Legacy

Pakistan once ruled the world of squash. From the 1950s to the late 1990s, players like Hashim Khan, Jahangir Khan, and Jansher Khan brought immense glory to the country. Jahangir Khan remains a global legend, holding a record of 555 consecutive wins—the longest winning streak in any professional sport.

Squash courts in Peshawar, Lahore, and Karachi trained champions who dominated the British Open and World Open for decades. Today, efforts are being made to revive the sport through local tournaments, international coaching, and youth programs.

Wrestling: Traditional and International Fame

Wrestling, known locally as **Kushti**, is deeply rooted in Pakistan's culture. It is practiced in rural areas in mud pits called akhadas, particularly in Punjab. Legendary wrestlers such as Gama Pehlwan and Bholu Pehlwan became household names.

Pakistani wrestlers have also represented the country at the Commonwealth Games and Asian Wrestling Championships, bringing home medals and promoting a blend of tradition and modern fitness. Wrestling remains a symbol of strength and pride in many communities.

Kabaddi: A Traditional Power Sport

Kabaddi is a high-intensity contact sport popular in Punjab and rural areas of Pakistan. Pakistan has excelled in international kabaddi competitions, winning multiple medals in the Asian Games and South Asian Games. In 2020, Pakistan won the unofficial Kabaddi World Cup, defeating India in the final held in Lahore.

The sport thrives at the grassroots level, with regular tournaments and televised leagues boosting its popularity among youth.

Athletics and Emerging Disciplines

Athletics is slowly gaining recognition in Pakistan. Javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem made history by reaching the final of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and winning gold at the 2022 Commonwealth Games—an unprecedented achievement for Pakistan in track and field.

Other sports such as boxing, weightlifting, and martial arts (taekwondo, karate) are also growing, with athletes making their mark in regional events and international circuits.

Challenges and the Road Ahead

Despite talent and tradition, these sports face challenges such as lack of sponsorship, inadequate training infrastructure, and poor media coverage. However, the dedication of athletes and initiatives by local federations and private academies are helping sustain interest and performance.

With increased investment, structured coaching, and international exposure, sports like squash, wrestling, and athletics can return to their former glory and inspire the next generation.

Conclusion

Pakistan's sports identity is more diverse than often recognized. Beyond cricket and hockey, sports like squash, wrestling, kabaddi, and athletics reflect the nation's history, culture, and competitive spirit. With growing grassroots support and global ambitions, these sports are poised to play a larger role in the country's sporting future.

"True strength lies not just in the games we watch, but in the traditions we uphold and the champions we build in silence."