

Red Bull Street Style 2020 tournament kicks off on 18 May

Freestyle football is mind-blowing art of performing tricks with a football



KUWAIT: The world's most important freestyle football tournament will not only go on in 2020 – it will be more inclusive than ever. After over a decade of World Finals in front of crowds on five continents, Red Bull Street Style will take the official World Championship of freestyle football entirely online. Anyone can enter by submitting a video clip.

Through a series of challenges, the field will be narrowed until the best international men and women – from reigning titleholders to hungry newcomers – turn it up in a live online World Final streamed globally. Entry from Kuwait opens on 18 May 2020 at 12:00am CET.

Freestyle football is the mind-blowing art of performing tricks with a football, and Red Bull Street Style is the sport's premier event. The current global situation has seen freestyle soar even higher in popularity, because it can be done individually anywhere, anytime. All you

need is a ball.

"This online season of Red Bull Street Style could not have come at a better time, and it's unique: There has never been a freestyle competition on this scale that's online and open to everyone," says Steve Elias, President of the World Freestyle Football Association (WFFA). "We're going to see all the top stars and also discover new faces who never had a chance to enter before. It's exciting."

Red Bull Street Style 2020 is open to everyone across the globe, everywhere, in every single country, including from Kuwait. The format has five stages. The first begins when the entry window opens at 12:00am CET on 18 May 2020. At www.redbullstreetstyle.com, everybody from across the planet is invited to submit a video with a 30-second set showing their all-round skills, which will be reviewed by judges selected by the WFFA. Of the thousands ex-

pected to enter, only the best – the top 200 men and top 60 women – will advance.

Subsequent stages will serve up specific challenges related to musicality, trick execution, and creativity. With each, the field is whittled further, while the global exposure, including live performances, grows higher.

Finally, 16 men and 8 women will face off in Stage 5, the battle of the online World Final, streamed live worldwide. Among them are anticipated to be the defending World Champions, who get an automatic berth in Stage 4: Reigning freestyle queen Mélody Donchet of France is the only person, woman or man, to have captured three Red Bull Street Style titles. Ricardo "Ricardinho" Fabiano Chahini de Araújo is the first Brazilian to hold the men's crown.

Launched in 2008, Red Bull Street Style aims to find the best overall freestyle football player in the world. The sport is all about combining

out-of-the-box creativity with out-of-the-ordinary skills. The most creative, technical and stylish player in each gender is crowned Red Bull Street Style World Champion. The elite judging panel has included such legends as Roberto Carlos, Gary Neville, Fabio Cannavaro, Edgar Davids, Luís "Nani" Almeida and Pável Pardo.

To enter qualifying for the Red Bull Street Style World Final in 2020, the requirements are simple: Videos must be no longer than 45 seconds overall, with the freestyle set lasting no longer than 30 seconds. They also must be in horizontal (landscape) format and without edits. No music is allowed. Everyone 16 or older is welcome to take part.

For submission details, deadline information, and all the news and updates on the Red Bull Street Style World Championship: www.redbullstreetstyle.com

MLB outlines player safety plans in 80-page memo

LOS ANGELES: Major League Baseball will send to players an outline of plans for player safety in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. According to Ken Rosenthal of The Athletic, the detailed outline covers 80 pages and provides a step-by-step return to spring training and beyond.

Owners approved restarting spring training with a goal of beginning the 2020 regular

around July 1. Under the plan, teams can hold spring training at their home ballparks or return to their usual spring training facilities in Florida or Arizona in mid-June.

The players association will review the player safety proposal this week, per reports, with the all-important discussion around financial fallout from a shortened season yet to take place.

Should games begin in July, fans will not be present in ballparks, and there is question as to whether all home stadiums will be available to host players-only games. Los Angeles County is expected to extend a stay-at-home order into July, which would impact the Los Angeles Dodgers and every team because the All-Star Game is scheduled to be held at Dodger Stadium on July 14. The game could be canceled or moved on the calendar or to a new venue.

Other states are opening the door for sports to come back even sooner. In Georgia, Florida and Arizona, governors have said there will be no limitations on baseball teams taking the field, provided social distancing and sanitization protocol can be established. Still, those games would not include fans.

Washington Nationals reliever Sean Doolittle expressed detailed concerns about a return to play given evidence that COVID-19 can cause permanent lung damage. He also said MLB must address frequency and volume of testing without taking away tests from the public at large and how a "second wave" of the coronavirus would be addressed.

MLBPA executive board member Andrew Miller of the St. Louis Cardinals had similar thoughts. Miller said in an ESPN interview that

he's not supportive of a return until safety is guaranteed. The NBA reportedly shared with its players on Friday that there will need to be a level of understanding around the likelihood of at least some positive tests.

"I don't think anything can be done until safety can be guaranteed and we feel comfortable with it," Miller said. "We want to put a good product on the field, but that's totally secondary to the health of the players. We are generally younger and healthier, but that doesn't mean our staff is, that doesn't mean umpires are going to be in the clear."

Baseball is being played in South Korea, but with several measures in place designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Players are tested daily, umpires wear masks, spitting is banned and high-fives are prohibited. — Reuters