

THE HISTORY WE LIVE: SPORT AND ENTERTAINMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY



TURKEY

Chapter 4

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SPORT CULTURE IN TURKEY

In Türkiye, sports are about much more than just a match result or a physical activity. To us, it means so much more; it's a Sunday afternoon spent playing with friends in the neighborhood, the whole apartment building shouting "goal" at the same time during a big derby, or that unique thrill we feel when we see our flag at an international match. From our traditional wrestling roots to the Olympic medals we win today, we can feel a deep sense of national pride in every success. In 21st-century Türkiye, sports are no longer just a hobby; they have turned into a massive culture where millions of people share the same excitement.



Football

Football is by far the most popular sport in Türkiye. Everyone follows the “big four” clubs – Fenerbahçe, Galatasaray, Beşiktaş, and Trabzonspor – and derby days are always full of excitement. People gather at homes, cafes, or stadiums just to watch the match together. Famous players like Arda Turan and Kenan Yıldız have inspired lots of young fans to start playing football themselves.



Volleyball

Volleyball has become more popular recently, especially because of the national team’s success. Clubs like VakıfBank and Eczacıbaşı have very strong teams, and players such as Eda Erdem and Cansu Özbay are really admired for their skills and teamwork.



Basketball

Basketball is loved mostly by young people and in cities. Fenerbahçe and Anadolu Efes are the top clubs, and players like Cedi Osman and Alperen Şengün represent Türkiye in international games. Matches are full of energy, and many teenagers dream of becoming professional basketball players one day.



Wrestling

Wrestling is a traditional sport in Türkiye and people are very proud of it. Both oil wrestling and freestyle wrestling are popular, and wrestlers like Yaşar Doğu and Taha Akgül are considered national heroes because of their hard work and success.



Swimming

Swimming is mostly a summer activity for fun, but many Turkish swimmers also compete in international competitions. Athletes like Derya Büyükuncu and İsmet Atlı have done really well, making swimming admired by both kids and adults.



VakıfBank Sports Club: The Queens of World Volleyball

VakıfBank Sports Club is a global superpower in women's volleyball. Founded in 1986, this club has shown the world how strong, disciplined, and successful women can be in sports. Over the years, they have collected many gold medals and broken records that normally seem impossible to reach.

The Impossible Record: 73 Matches in a Row

The most famous success of VakıfBank is their incredible winning streak. From October 2012 to January 2014, they played 73 official matches in different tournaments, and they won every single one of them! Because of their perfect performance, they officially entered the Guinness Book of World Records.

BREAKING NEWS FLASH (January 2014)

"VakıfBank Makes History! The Turkish volleyball giant has officially entered the Guinness World Records. By winning their 73rd match in a row today, they now hold the world title for the 'most consecutive victories in all competitions' in volleyball history. During this time, they won five different championship cups without a single defeat. A truly magical team!"

Rulers of Europe and the World

VakıfBank is famous for winning the hardest and most important tournaments in the world. They do not only win in Turkey; they dominate the international stage.

- **World Champions:** They have won the FIVB Club World Championship 4 times (2013, 2017, 2018, and 2021).
- **European Champions:** In Europe, they are the absolute queens. They have lifted the CEV Champions League trophy—the biggest cup in Europe—6 times.
- **National Champions:** In Turkey, they are always the top team, winning the Turkish Women's Volleyball League (Sultanlar Ligi) and the Turkish Cup many times.

SPORTS DAILY REPORT (May 2023)

"Queens of Europe Again! VakıfBank has done it once more. They defeated their rivals to win the CEV Champions League for the 6th time. The players showed amazing passion and energy on the court, proving exactly why they are the most feared and respected volleyball team in Europe."

The Secret Behind the Success

A big part of this legendary success comes from their famous head coach, Giovanni Guidetti. He has been leading the team since 2008. Under his smart leadership, the team learned how to work hard and never give up. VakıfBank has built a team with both experienced world stars and young, talented players.

Conclusion

In conclusion, VakıfBank Sports Club is a living legend in sports history. With their 73-game Guinness World Record and countless trophies, they are much more than just a volleyball club. They are a great example of team spirit, hard work, and female empowerment. They continue to inspire millions of young girls all over the world to play sports and dream big.



Sultans of the Net

The Turkey Women's National Volleyball Team, also known as the "Sultans of the Net," has become very popular both in Turkey and around the world because of its recent success. Especially in 2023, the team had one of the best years in its history. One of their biggest achievements was winning the 2023 CEV European Women's Volleyball Championship. In the final match, they defeated Serbia and became European champions for the first time. This was a very proud and important moment for the team and the country.

In the same year, the team also won the 2023 FIVB Women's Nations League. This is a very important tournament where the best teams in the world compete. In the final, Turkey beat China and showed that they are one of the strongest teams in the world. Throughout the tournament, they played very well and worked together as a strong team. This victory helped them gain even more respect in international volleyball.



The Sultans of the Net have also had success in other big tournaments like the FIVB Women's World Cup and the FIVB Women's World Championship. They have won different medals in European Championships in other years as well. Thanks to these achievements, Turkey has become one of the top countries in volleyball.

The success of the team is not only because of talented players but also because of hard work and good teamwork. Players like Melissa Vargas and Ebrar Karakurt played very important roles, especially in difficult matches. Their success has made volleyball more popular in Turkey and inspired many young people to be interested in this sport.



The Rise of Turkish Basketball

*Turkish basketball has experienced a golden era over the past few decades, becoming one of the most successful and popular sports in the country. Just like the “Sultans of the Net” in volleyball, basketball clubs and the national team have achieved historic successes that have united the nation and inspired millions. Through the incredible performances of clubs like **Anadolu Efes**, **Fenerbahçe** and **Galatasaray**, Türkiye has established itself as a true powerhouse in European basketball.*

Anadolu Efes



Anadolu Efes with the Korać Cup, 1996



One of the biggest milestones in Turkish basketball history came from the Anadolu Efes basketball club. In 1996, Efes became the first Turkish club to win a European trophy, capturing the FIBA Korać Cup. This victory was a groundbreaking moment that proved Turkish basketball could compete at the continental level. Building on this success, Efes continued to grow into a powerful club.

Years later, they reached their absolute peak in 2021 and 2022. In these two years, Anadolu Efes achieved something very rare and difficult: they became back-to-back EuroLeague champions. This success was a historic moment because no Turkish team had ever won the EuroLeague twice in a row. With star players and coach Ergin Ataman, Efes showed that Turkish clubs could compete with the very best in Europe. These championships made the whole country proud and proved that Turkish basketball had reached the highest level.



Back-to-back champions: Anadolu Efes, EuroLeague winners

Fenerbahçe Sports Club



Fenerbahçe Beko celebrating their EuroLeague championship in 2017





Fenerbahçe with the 2017 EuroLeague trophy

In 2017, Fenerbahçe became the first Turkish club to win the EuroLeague championship. They played a perfect final against Olympiacos and won the title, marking a turning point for Turkish basketball. This victory inspired other clubs to aim for the same success. Fenerbahçe also reached the EuroLeague Final Four multiple times between 2015 and 2019, they won another championship in

2025, proving that they are a consistent European giant. The championship in 2017 remains one of the most important moments in Turkish sports history.



Fenerbahçe Womens Basketball Team



Fenerbahçe's success is not limited to men's basketball. The **Fenerbahçe Women's Basketball Team** has also been a dominant force in Europe. They have won the EuroLeague Women championship multiple times, becoming one of the most successful women's basketball clubs in Europe. Their consistent success, has helped raise the profile of women's basketball in Türkiye and inspired many young girls to take up the sport.

Galatasaray Women's Basketball



Galatasaray Womens Basketball Team

In 2014, Galatasaray won the EuroLeague Women championship, becoming the second Turkish women's basketball team to achieve this honor. What made this victory even more special was that Galatasaray defeated their archrivals Fenerbahçe in the final, marking the first time in EuroLeague Women history that two Turkish teams faced each other for the championship. This historic all-Turkish final was a huge moment for Turkish sports and showed that women's basketball in Türkiye was just as strong and competitive as men's basketball.

Impacts of Basketball

Over years basketball has become one of the most followed and loved sports in the country. The passionate competition between top clubs brings millions together in arenas and in front of screens, while the achievements of women's teams have changed perceptions of women's sports. Thanks to these clubs, Turkish basketball has produced world-class talent. Players developed in these strong systems have gone on to represent Türkiye in international competitions and even the NBA. Their success has inspired young people to dream of playing basketball at the highest level.

Alperen Şengün

Alperen Şengün is the rising star of Turkish basketball, the leader of the national team, and one of the most exciting young talents in the NBA.

Born in Giresun, Türkiye, Alperen began his basketball journey in Bandırma's youth system before joining one of Türkiye's most respected

basketball schools, where he drew attention with his incredible skills. The real turning point came with his move to Beşiktaş, where he became the youngest player in club history to debut in the Super League and was named MVP at just 18 years old.



(NTV News,13 November 2020)

His rise soon captured the attention of the NBA. In 2021, he was selected by the Houston Rockets, becoming one of the youngest Turkish players to make the leap to the world's most competitive league. With his performances in Houston, he quickly became one of the most promising young stars in the NBA.



Beyond his individual success, Alperen has become a source of pride and inspiration for Türkiye. His leadership of the national team during the EuroBasket 2025 tournament, where he led Türkiye to a silver medal and outplayed some of the world's best players, cemented his status as the new face of Turkish basketball.

Cedi Osman

Cedi Osman is one of the most talented and beloved figures in Turkish basketball. He is a loyal national team player, and a successful NBA member.

Born in North Macedonia, Cedi grew up in the youth system of Anadolu Efes after moving to Türkiye. His energy and defensive skills helped him rise through the ranks, and he became a key player for Efes during their EuroLeague Final Four runs.

In 2015, he was drafted by the Cleveland Cavaliers. Two years later, he made his NBA debut and went on to play alongside LeBron James, reaching the NBA Finals in his first season. He became a reliable rotation player known for his hustle and three-point shooting.



The 30-year-old Turkish forward led the way with 22 points, nearly flawless on 8-for-9 shooting, and did it with three rebounds, three assists, zero turnovers, all in 33 minutes.

-BasketNews, 2025 December 24

Cedi is deeply loved in Türkiye for his passion and commitment. Unlike many players, he has never missed a summer tournament with the national team, always putting his country first. His dedication has made him a fan favorite and a true role model for young Turkish players.

The Rise of Turkish Football

*In Türkiye, football has been one of the country's most popular and beloved sports for many years. Like other sports, football clubs and professional players have achieved national pride and historic victories. **Galatasaray's** European cup appearances and the incredible performances of players like **Hakan Çalhanoğlu, Arda Güler, Arda Turan, and Kenan Yıldız** have shown that Turkey has a voice in European football.*

European Conqueror Galatasaray

Galatasaray's UEFA Cup victory on May 17, 2000, at Copenhagen's Parken Stadium, stands as the first major European triumph for a club in Turkish football history. Under the management of Fatih Terim, the "Lions" reached the final by eliminating powerhouse opponents such as Mallorca, Borussia Dortmund, and Leeds United. Facing the English giant Arsenal in the final, Galatasaray managed to keep a clean sheet for 120 minutes, despite playing with 10 men and captain Bülent Korkmaz playing through a shoulder injury. By securing a 4-1 victory in the penalty shootout, Galatasaray won the trophy with the title of "Undefeated Champion," becoming one of the rare teams in the world to achieve such a feat.



Super Cup Final

The UEFA Super Cup won by Galatasaray on August 25, 2000, in Monaco, marks the absolute peak of Turkish club football. Facing the Champions League winner Real Madrid, the match ended in a 1-1 draw during regular time with goals from Mario Jardel and Raul. In extra time, Galatasaray secured a 2-1 victory with a "Golden Goal" by Mario Jardel, claiming the title of Europe's best.



This victory did not only mean winning a trophy but also proved to the entire world that Turkish football could compete head-to-head with European giants. Thanks to this unique achievement, Galatasaray became the first and only Turkish team to be ranked number 1 in the world club standings as of January 2001.

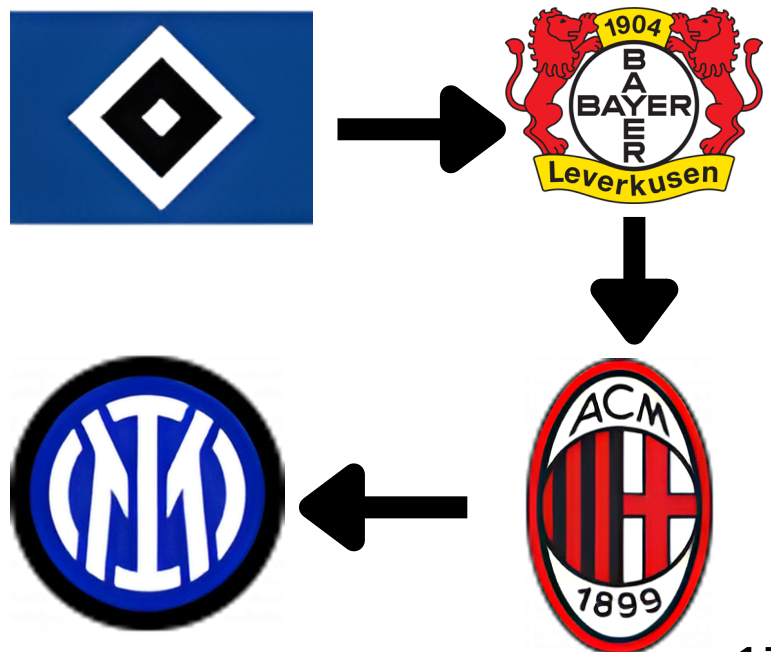
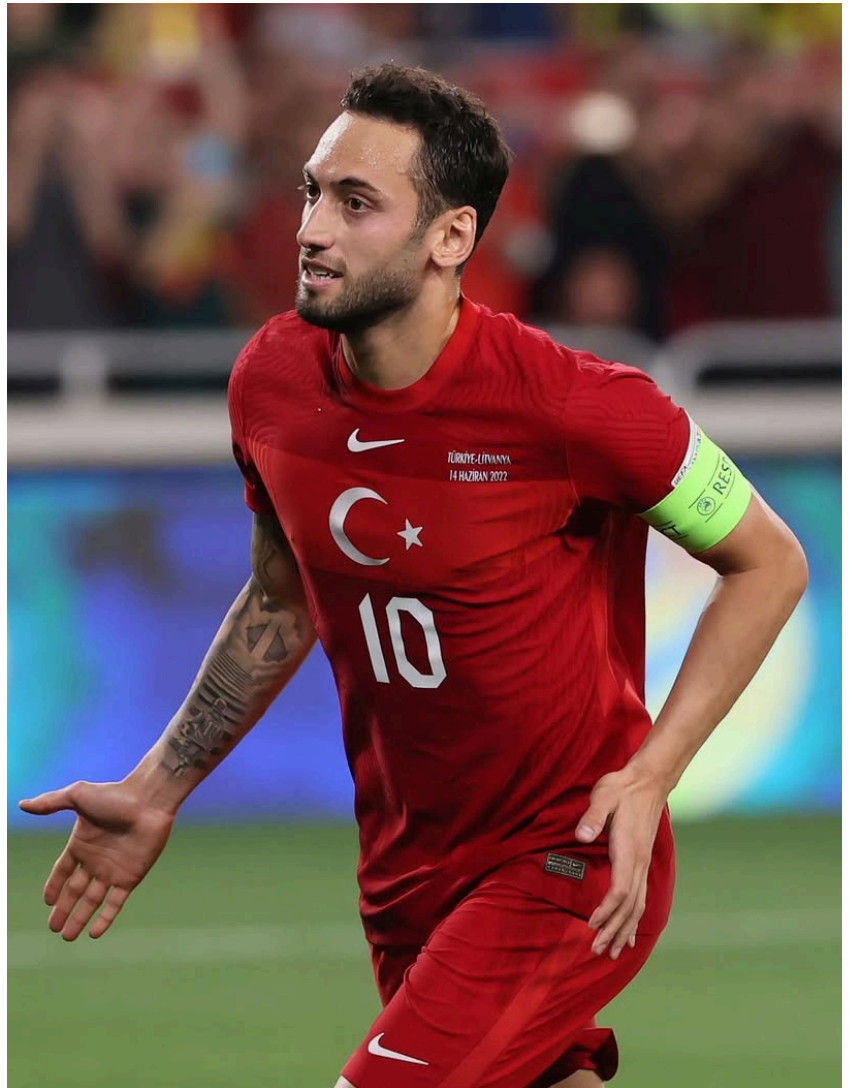


Hakan Çalhanoğlu

Hakan Çalhanoğlu is one of the most important representatives of modern Turkish football on the world stage, the captain of the national team, and the undisputed playmaker leader.

Born in Germany, Hakan gained fame in the Bundesliga with Hamburg and Bayer Leverkusen, particularly as a "set-piece specialist." However, the real turning point in his career was his move to Serie A in Italy. After successful years at Milan, his transfer to Inter transformed him from just a winger or attacking midfielder into one of the world's best deep-lying playmakers.

In Italy, where football is played like chess, Hakan managed to become one of the few players who dictated the tempo of the game. This is one of the highest individual tactical achievements in the history of Turkish football.



Arda Turan

Arda Turan is a former Turkish football player and manager who played as a left winger. He played for and captained the Turkish national football team from 2006 to 2017. He is currently the manager of Shakhtar Donetsk in the Ukrainian League.



With Galatasaray, Arda Turan won one Süper Lig title, one Turkish Cup, and one Turkish Super Cup. In August 2011, he transferred to Spanish club Atlético Madrid for a transfer fee of €12,000,000. This transfer fee made him the most expensive Turkish football player to transfer abroad at that time.



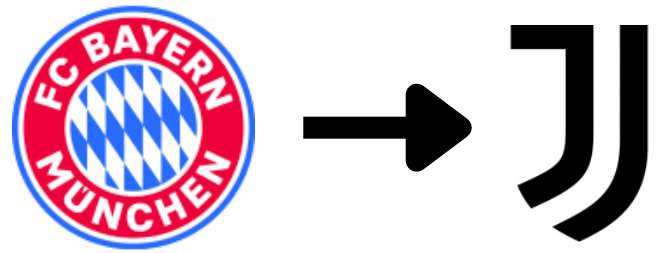
During his seasons with Atlético Madrid, he won one La Liga title, one UEFA Super Cup, one Spanish King's Cup, one Spanish Super Cup, and one UEFA Europa League title. In 2014, he played a key role in his team's advancement to the Champions League final with a goal in the semi-final. Before the 2015-16 season, he transferred to another Spanish team, Barcelona, for a transfer fee of €34 million (€7 million in performance bonuses), becoming the most expensive Turkish footballer.

Kenan Yıldız

Kenan Yıldız is one of the most exciting representatives of modern Turkish football on the world stage, the shining star of the national team, and the creative force of the attacking line.

Born in Germany, Kenan was raised in the Bayern Munich academy, laying his foundation in one of the most prestigious schools of European football and drawing attention with his technical skills at a very young age. However, the real turning point in his career was his move to the Italian giant Juventus. With his performance in Turin, he proved that he is more than just a talent; his game intelligence, dribbling ability, and finishing have transformed him into one of the best young prospects in the world.

In Italy's Serie A, the pinnacle of tactical discipline and the art of defense, Kenan managed to become one of the few players to change the fate of the game by donning the number 10 jersey at such a young age. This is considered one of the most significant individual growth stories in the international history of Turkish football.



Arda Güler

Arda Güler is a Turkish professional footballer who plays as an attacking midfielder and winger. He currently plays for Real Madrid in La Liga.

Internationally, he represents the Turkish national football team. Known for his game vision and dribbling skills, Güler is considered one of the best young players in the world.



In the UEFA Europa League match against Dynamo Kyiv, he scored a goal and provided an assist; with this goal, Arda also became the youngest Turkish footballer to score in European competitions.

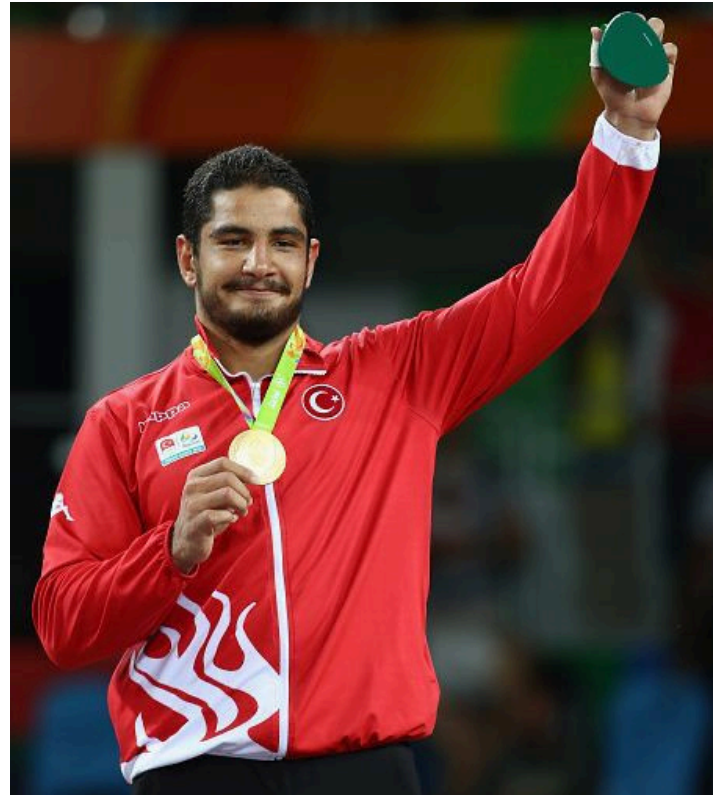


In the summer of 2023, Arda Güler transferred from Fenerbahçe to Real Madrid for €20+10 million. The young star, who attracted interest from many European clubs including Barcelona, chose Real Madrid, one of the world's most prestigious clubs.

His hard work and talent in training caught the attention of Carlo Ancelotti. In 2024, he became the first Turkish footballer to win the Champions League. Currently an indispensable player for Real Madrid, Arda holds the record for the longest-distance goal in La Liga with his 70-meter goal against Elche.

Taha Akgül

Known for winning the gold medal at the Summer Olympics in Rio in 2016, Taha Akgül is one of the most successful wrestlers of Turkish wrestling history. The successful athlete was born in Sivas, Turkey. He started wrestling when he was 14. At University, he met the coach of national team and started to train more professionally. He won his first silver medal at the 2010 Junior World Wrestling Championships in Budapest, Hungary.



In the following years, his achievements kept increasing nonstop. He won three world championships. In the year of 2016, he won the gold medal in Summer Olympics in Rio. Therefore he became the only one to bring Turkey the Rio Olympics Championship. While he was training for the Europe Championship preparations he injured his left collarbones badly and had an operation. Despite his injury, the resilient athlete won the bronze medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.



“Rio Olympics 2016: Taha Akgul wins Turkey's first gold medal in Rio

Taha Akgul won Turkey's first gold of the Rio Olympics by beating Iran's Komeil Ghasemi in the men's -125kg freestyle final. Akgul, 25, beat his 28-year-old opponent 3-1 to add to his world titles from 2014 and 2015.

Turkish wrestlers had already won two silver medals and two bronzes at Rio 2016.

Akgul, a 2015 European Games champion, was ninth in the -120kg event at London 2012.”

-BBC Sport, 20 August 2016



Ferhat Arıcan

Ferhat Arıcan is one of the most important Turkish gymnasts who won many medals worldwide. Arıcan was 10 years old when he was encouraged by his PE teacher to start gymnastics. When he was 15, he injured his arm and the doctors made it clear that he couldn't keep doing gymnastics. He forgot about his pain and got sad over how he was supposed to stay away from sports. However, he was such an



ambitious athlete that he got motivated when people said “You can’t”. Six months later the plates were removed and in the seventh month with a little bit of training he became the champion of Turkey. At the 2010 Youth Olympics in Singapore, he won the silver medal. He became one of the few athletes who has had three different moves registered under his name in the FIG Code of Points.

At the 2016 Summer Olympics, he competed in qualification events. And after 108 years, he became the second male gymnast, after Aleko Mulos, to represent Turkey in the Summer Olympics by earning a quota place. At the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics he won a bronze medal and became the first athlete to win a medal in artistic gymnastics, for Turkey.



“Ferhat Arıcan exclusive: “I want to make more history”

Türkiye’s first Olympic gymnastics medallist reflects on his journey, comeback from injury, and building a winning culture

A decade ago, Turkish gymnast Ferhat Arıcan wouldn’t have believed his own résumé.

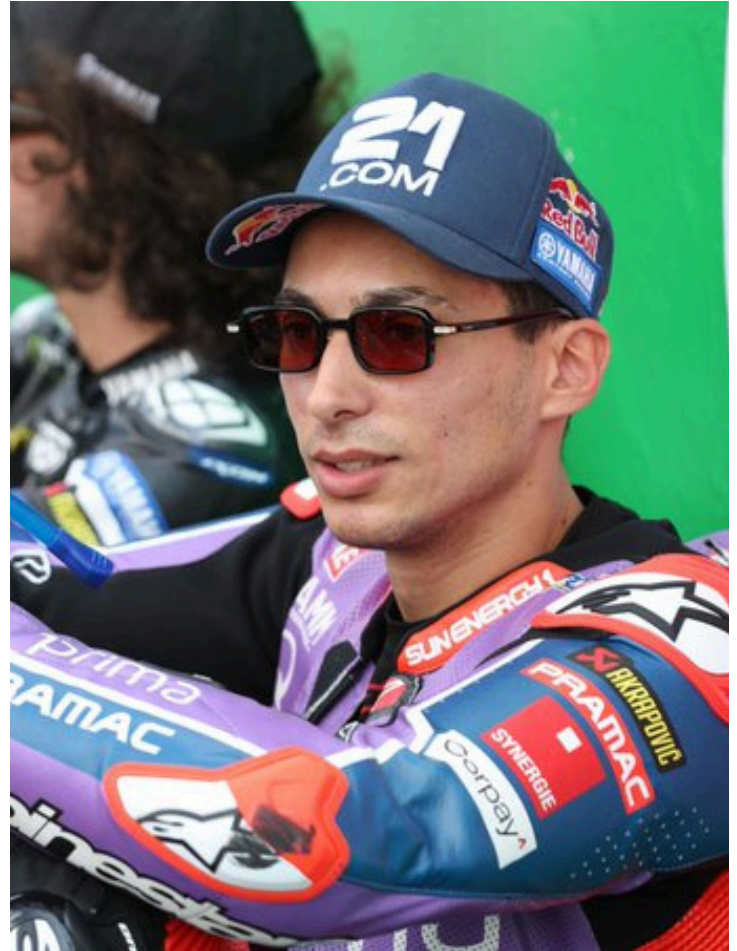
The idea that he – or any gymnast from his nation – might win an Olympic medal seemed like a far-off, unachievable dream. So when Arıcan mounted the podium at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, having won bronze on the parallel bars, he didn’t just make history... he helped write the future.”

-Olympics, 01 July 2025



TOPRAK RAZGATLIOĞLU

Toprak Razgatlıođlu is a professional motorcycle racer. He was born on 16 October 1996 in Antalya, Türkiye. He is the son of motorcycle racer Arif Razgatlıođlu. Raised in a family of motorcyclists, he started riding at a young age. He later trained under Kenan Sofuođlu, a multi-time World Supersport champion.



He is recognized as a three-time World Superbike Champion. He is also known for his aggressive riding style, spectacular braking, and trademark "stoppie" celebrations after races.

İbrahim Çolak : "The Lord of the Rings"

Born in 1995 in Izmir, İbrahim began gymnastics at age 5, turning a childhood hobby into a lifelong pursuit of excellence. His breakthrough came on the still rings, where his immense strength led to a historic 2019 World Championship Gold—the first in Turkish history.



"I have been training for 19 years for a performance that lasts only 50 seconds. This gold medal isn't just mine; it belongs to a nation that never gave up on me."

— İbrahim Çolak after his 2019 World Victory.

His mastery is so unique that he has an official move named after him: "The Çolak." A dominant force, he became the European Champion in 2020 and 2022, a Tokyo 2020 Olympic Finalist, and a multi-time Mediterranean Games Gold medalist, proving he is truly one of the world's best.

Semih Sayginer: “The Magician”

Born in 1964 in Adapazari, Semih Sayginer didn't just learn billiards, he deconstructed it. While most players followed angles, he questioned them. While others repeated patterns, he rewrote them.

Three-cushion billiards is often described as calculation.



For Sayginer, it became interpretation.

His defining moment came with the 2003 World Championship, but the real story wasn't the medal, it was how he got there. Shots no one attempted. Lines no one trusted. A style that blurred the line between precision and audacity.

“The table doesn't limit you. Your imagination does.”

— Semih Sayginer

Busenaz Sürmeneli : "The Golden Fist"

Born in 1998, Busenaz started boxing at age 10 in Trabzon, evolving into a global powerhouse under coach Cahit Süme. She made history at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics as the first Turkish woman to win Olympic Gold in boxing.



"When the National Anthem played in Tokyo, I felt the strength of 84 million people behind my gloves."

— Busenaz Sürmeneli after she won gold in Tokyo Olympics

Her dominance is unmatched; she is a Triple World Champion (2019, 2022, 2025) and has swept the continent as the 2024 European Champion and 2023 European Games winner. Known for her aggressive precision in the 66kg class, she remains the undisputed "Queen of the Ring."

Mete gazoz

Mete Gazoz is one of Turkey's most successful athletes in archery.

He made history at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games by winning the gold medal in the men's individual recurve event. This victory was especially meaningful because it was Turkey's first-ever Olympic gold medal in archery.

Gazoz's success is the result of years of dedication, discipline, and strong mental focus. He has become a national symbol of perseverance and pride, inspiring young athletes across Turkey.

His achievement is not only a personal victory, but also a milestone in Turkish sports history, showing that with determination and hard work, great success is possible on the world stage.



BREAKING: Mete Gazoz Makes History with Olympic Gold for Turkey!

In a highly competitive final, Gazoz demonstrated exceptional focus, precision, and confidence. Competing against some of the world's best archers, he remained calm under pressure and secured a well-deserved victory. His performance impressed audiences around the world and brought great pride to his country.