

Turkish Oil Wrestling

THE ANCESTRAL SPORT OF KINGS

A School Presentation on Cultural Heritage

WHAT IS YAĞLI GÜREŞ?



The National Sport

Oil wrestling is the national sport of Turkey, deeply rooted in the history of the Ottoman Empire and Central Asian traditions.



The Olive Oil

Wrestlers douse themselves in olive oil before matches, making it nearly impossible to grip their slippery bodies.



The Pehlivan

Wrestlers are called "Pehlivan," a Persian word meaning "Hero." They must possess both strength and a moral character.

The Legend of 40 Warriors

Born in 1362 on the fields of Kirkpınar

KIRKPINAR FESTIVAL

The Kirkpinar Oil Wrestling Festival is recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage. Held annually in Edirne, it is the oldest continuously running sporting competition in the world.

Over 660 years of history!



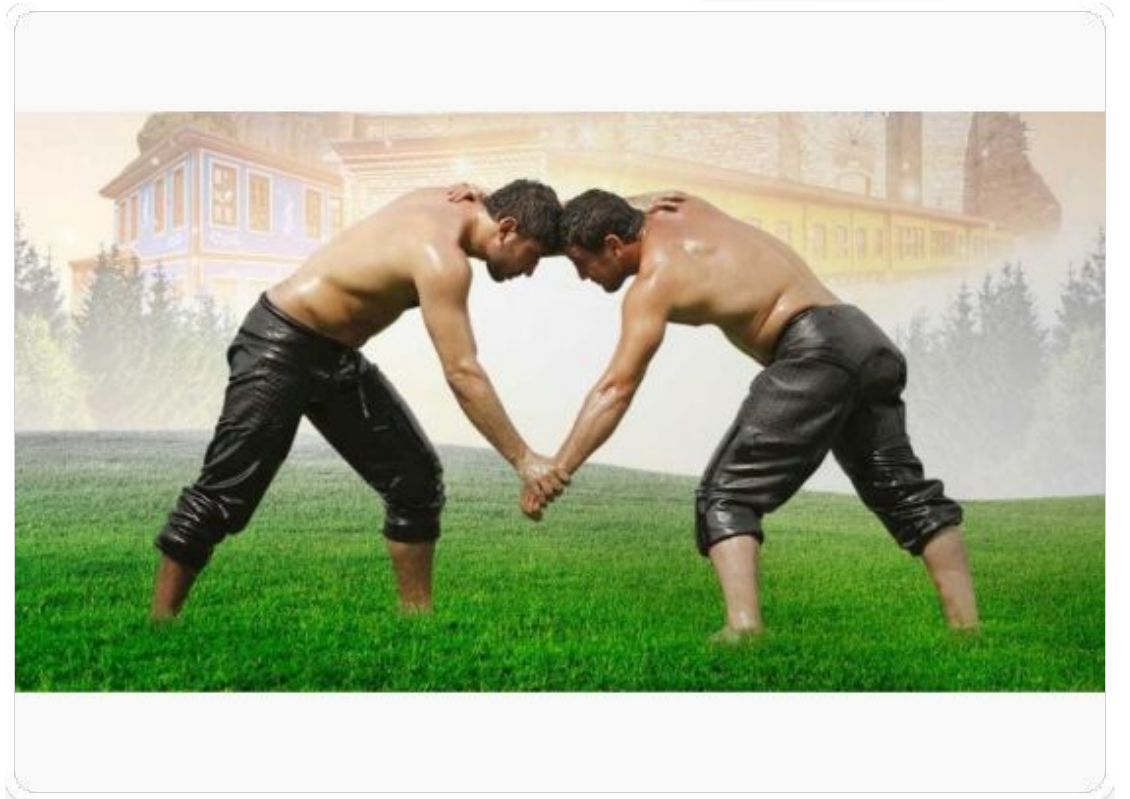
THE GEAR: KISPET

Craftsmanship & Strength

Wrestlers wear special trousers called ****Kispet****.

Traditionally made from water buffalo hide, they weigh about 13 kilograms when dry and even more when oiled.

The "paça" (hem) is tied tightly to prevent opponents from grabbing inside, but the "kispet" itself is the only place a wrestler can get a solid grip.



THE OILING RITUAL



Brotherhood and Balance

Before the match, pehlivans help oil each other. This is a ritual of mutual respect and balance.

The oil makes the match a test of endurance and technique rather than just raw strength. To win, a pehlivan must use his intelligence and leverage to overcome the slipperiness.

THE LIVING LEGEND: AHMET TAŞÇI



9-Time Master Champion

Ahmet Taşcı is the most successful wrestler of the modern era. He achieved the legendary "Başpehlivan" title 9 times between 1990 and 2000.

The Golden Belt

He is one of the few wrestlers to win the permanent ownership of the Golden Belt by winning three consecutive years—twice!

THE NEW ERA OF PEHLIVANS

Today's Superstars

Modern champions like **Ali Gürbüz**, İsmail Balaban, and Orhan Okulu carry the torch today. These athletes are national icons in Turkey.

They combine traditional training with modern sports science to maintain the prestige of the "Er Meydanı" (Field of Heroes).



THE VOICE: THE CAZGIR



Prayer and Poetry

No match begins without the ****Cazgir****. He is the master of ceremonies who introduces the wrestlers with poetic verses and prayers (Manis).

He reminds the pehlivans and the audience of spiritual values, humility, and the legends of the past, creating a sacred atmosphere for the struggle.

RULES OF THE MATCH

- ★ **Victory:** A wrestler wins if he makes his opponent's back touch the ground. This is called "showing the belly to the stars."
- ✌ **Respect:** If a younger wrestler beats an older one, he kisses the elder's hand out of respect.
- 🕒 **Duration:** In the past, matches had no time limit. Today, master matches are 40 minutes plus overtime.
- 🚫 **The Paça Kazık:** A key move where a wrestler reaches into the opponent's kispet to control and flip them.

THE ULTIMATE PRIZE

The Golden Belt (Altın Kemer)

The champion of Kırkpınar receives the Golden Belt for one year. To own it ****permanently****, a wrestler must win the championship for ****three consecutive years****. It is the most prestigious individual award in Turkish sports, representing the pinnacle of honor and physical mastery.



Any Questions?

Thank you for listening to the story of the Pehlivan!



IMAGE SOURCES



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IMAGE SOURCES



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