

## **Santa Cruz City Council and Fundación Cepsa launch latest indigenous sports program**

- **A new campaign of exhibitions will raise awareness of the traditional sports practiced in the Canary Islands**
- **Canarian wrestling, *el salto del pastor*, *el garrote*, *el palo* and *el tolete* in schools around Santa Cruz**

Fundación Cepsa and Santa Cruz de Tenerife City Council's Department of Sports have launched a new campaign of exhibitions in schools around the city to teach youngsters about traditional sports such as: Canarian wrestling, *el garrote* [Gran Canarian long staff fighting], *el salto del pastor* the shepherd's leap [a form of pole vaulting], *el juego del palo* [another discipline of long staff fighting] and *el tolete canario* [baton fighting].

This is the third year of the initiative, which will reach around 4000 pupils in 38 kindergartens and elementary schools across the city under the slogan Santa Cruz-Fundación Cepsa Indigenous Sports School.

The campaign was launched at Bethencourt y Molina Compulsory Education Center in Barranco Grande, attended by the city's mayor, José Manuel Bermúdez; Cepsa's director for the Canary Islands, José Manuel Fernández-Sabugo; sports councilor, Verónica Meseguer; the president of the Canarian Wrestling Island Federation in Tenerife, Jeremías Hernández; and the principal of Bethencourt y Molina Compulsory Education Center, Raquel Rodríguez. The pupils participating in the event enjoyed an exhibition of these sports given by: the Canarian Wrestling Island Federation in Tenerife, Escuela Los Acosta (Canarian long staff fighting), Ahur-Achinec Sports Club (Canarian baton fighting), Damián Acosta (shepherd's leap) and Campitos Wrestling Club (Canarian wrestling).

Bermúdez noted that this project "is crucial to raising awareness of sports that are only practiced here and hark back to our past. It's right that youngsters are able to find out about them in school because you can't try out something if you haven't heard of it before."

Fernández-Sabugo, meanwhile, said that Fundación Cepsa "is committed to educational values and, in this case, to an initiative that aims to make sport a way of life, preserving our traditions."

Hernández pointed out that the Canarian Wrestling Island Federation in Tenerife "appreciates the efforts of Santa Cruz City Council and Fundación Cepsa to encourage children to take part in our traditional games and sports

because they are the ones who will guarantee their survival in future generations.”

**What the project involves**

Off the back of the success of the first two editions, the organizers will take the Santa Cruz-Fundación Cepsa Indigenous Sports School to any schools that want to take part.

Each visit will serve to introduce the traditional Canarian sports and explain the history and rules of these indigenous sports. Sessions will then be given to allow the kids to interact with those delivering them to practice the rules, techniques and skills described during the theory class.

The coaches running the exhibition will also tell children where they can go to carry on with the sports.

In order to further showcase and provide information on this project, exhibitions will also be held at public events such as the May Fiestas to raise the profiles of the groups coaching these indigenous sports.

**Traveling exhibition**

The Canarian Wrestling Island Federation in Tenerife will participate in this third edition of the Santa Cruz-Fundación Cepsa Indigenous Sports School by providing its “History of Canarian Wrestling in Santa Cruz” exhibition, which will comprise a temporary exhibition installed at the schools involved in the initiative.

The exhibition boards will be on display in each school for at least a week to enable pupils to find out about the history of the sport and its top wrestlers from the past in the city.

**Fundación Cepsa** is a general interest, non-profit entity with the goal of undertaking initiatives to serve the needs and priorities of the local communities where its founder, COMPAÑÍA ESPAÑOLA DE PETRÓLEOS S.A.U. (Cepsa), conducts its activities. The areas of action for Fundación Cepsa are social, cultural, environmental, scientific-educational, and support for amateur sports.

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