

To all members of the press

October 29, 2025

“Nippon Foundation SPOGOMI World Cup 2025 FINAL”

The 2nd World Champion Crowned

– Team “Smile Story” from Japan!

Cheers to all SPOGOMI Athletes from 34 countries who competed passionately!

The Nippon Foundation SPOGOMI Federation (Headquarters: Minato-ku, Tokyo; Representative Director: Masanori Tamazawa; hereafter “SPOGOMI Federation”) held the Nippon Foundation SPOGOMI World Cup 2025 FINAL on Wednesday, October 29, 2025, at the United Nations University.

The FINAL brought together 33 teams of 99 participants* who advanced through national qualifiers from 34 countries. Team “Smile Story” from Japan emerged as the champion, finishing ahead by 7,210 points. (*The Pakistan team was unable to attend due to travel restrictions.)

SPOGOMI athletes from around the world experienced the excitement and sense of accomplishment that comes from combining sport and environmental action. A total of 22,516.2kg of waste was collected, marking a significant step forward in global efforts to reduce marine litter.



Expanded Scale and Diversity: Toward Global Marine Waste Action

The **Nippon Foundation SPOGOMI World Cup 2025** is a competition to determine the world's top "sport of picking up litter," promoting a global movement to reduce marine debris originating in Japan. The second edition significantly expanded participation compared to the inaugural 2023 event, with **34 countries represented**, including **14 first-time participants**, highlighting its growing international reach. (33 countries advanced to the FINAL.)

A total of **2,834 teams and 8,502 participants** competed in domestic and international qualifiers prior to the FINAL, collecting **22,516.2 kg of waste** during the preliminary stages. Teams came from diverse backgrounds, including students, civic groups, corporate CSR teams, adventure-style teams collecting waste while traveling, and teams spreading environmental awareness through art and education. Each team brought its unique style and mission to the FINAL.

Another distinctive feature of the event was the participation of teams from highly diverse backgrounds. Alongside student and community groups, as well as corporate teams formed through CSR initiatives, participants included individuals from various professions such as music producers and mountain guides. People of different ages and occupations came together under one shared purpose.

SPOGOMI, which transforms the familiar act of litter collection into an enjoyable competitive sport, continues to gain momentum as an activity that "everyone can join." Each national representative team brought its own unique style and passion, reflecting the culture and spirit of their respective countries and regions, as they competed in the FINAL for the title of world champion.

*FINAL: 33 national teams competed (Pakistan team could not attend due to travel restrictions)

SPOGOMI Athletes Shine in Internationally Cultural SHIBUYA

The FINAL began with a vibrant parade led by cosplayers dressed as popular characters, accompanying each national team onto the stage. Against iconic urban backdrops, including the Shibuya Scramble Crossing, the opening ceremony showcased a fusion of Japanese culture and international spirit.



(The championship trophy returned by Sarah from UK, winner of the 2023 tournament.)



(The cosplayers who led the athletes' parade.)



(Kenichi Mamitsuka, the founder of SPOGOMI)



(The athletes' oath delivered by representatives from the organizing committee and judges, the previous champion UK, and the team representing Japan.)

At the cue from SPOGOMI Ambassador Takeshi Matsuda, the 33 teams simultaneously began the competition. Divided into two halves, the competition revealed litter patterns: empty cans, PET bottles, and cigarette butts in restaurant areas; plastic containers and packaging along alleyways. Teams communicated and strategically collected litter even in unfamiliar areas.



(Team Germany, which finished in second place.)



(Team Morocco claimed the third place.)



(Team Estonia carefully picking up cigarette butts.)



(Team Tunisia collecting trash in front of Shibuya Station.)

Piles of collected waste accumulated quickly, and athletes congratulated each other with smiles, creating an atmosphere of unity and excitement. The sight of SPOGOMI athletes from around the world actively picking up waste sent a powerful message that connects urban life and citizen awareness.

Competition Results

After two halves, **Team “Smile Story” from Japan** claimed the championship with a collection of **74.76 kg** and **7,210 points**, leading the second-place team by **996.5 points**.

- 1st Place: Team Japan (74.76 kg, 7,210 pt)
- 2nd Place: Team Germany (74.56 kg, 6,213.5 pt)
- 3rd Place: Team Morocco (79.89 kg, 6,070.3 pt)

Points were calculated based on both the quantity and type of collected waste. The results highlighted strategic teamwork at a high level, reflecting the global competitiveness of the event. A total of approximately **878,98 kg of waste** was collected.

Champion Team Comment – Team Japan “Smile Story”

“Thank you so much, everyone! Those 45 minutes of competition were tough, but the SPOGOMI (World Cup version) rules were so unique and exciting that I truly felt — this is a real sport! Thank you very much!”



(“Smile Story,” who avenged their second-place finish in the previous tournament, emerged as this year’s champions.)

Comments from the Ambassadors

Mr. Takeshi Matsuda: “It was truly wonderful to see Team Japan, who finished second in the 2023 tournament, claim the championship title this year. Although this is only the second WORLD CUP, everyone’s passion and commitment have clearly grown stronger. I believe SPOGOMI will continue to spread as an environmentally friendly sport that resonates with even more people around the world.”

Ms. Aki Taguchi: “Of course, I was delighted that Team Japan won, but more than that, I was truly happy to see that all participants returned home safely and with a sense of accomplishment. While it is a competition with scores and rankings, what struck me most was how everyone praised and celebrated one another afterward — that, too, is what sports are all about.”

Ms. Asuka Terada: “What left the strongest impression on me was how much fun participants from every country seemed to be having. I believe that everyone who joined today already has a strong awareness of protecting our oceans, and I hope they will continue their efforts back in their home countries. I also hope they feel proud to have competed on the FINAL stage.”

Remarks on the 2025 World Cup – Masanori Tamazawa, Representative Director, SPOGOMI Federation



This year's tournament, marking the second edition of the WORLD CUP, saw participation from 34 countries, a significant increase from the previous event. Through the preliminary competitions held in each nation, SPOGOMI inspired numerous stories and revealed various

challenges — from differences in public awareness to waste collection systems unique to each country.

At the same time, the appeal of this Japan-born sport — “competitive litter collection” — has steadily spread across the globe. The rise in participation reflects how the unique excitement of *competing while having fun* has resonated with people everywhere. We also felt a great sense of progress as several countries from the African region took part for the first time. Our goal is to reduce marine litter through SPOGOMI. By promoting this enjoyable and accessible sport in everyday life, we aim to inspire individual behavioral change and foster greater environmental awareness around the world.

FINAL Overview

Date: Wednesday, October 29, 2025, 9:30–15:30

Competition Areas: Shibuya and Minato Wards, Tokyo

Opening Ceremony: United Nations University Plaza, Shibuya (5-53-70 Jingumae, Shibuya)

Participants: 33 national teams (3 members per team, 99 participants total)

Organizer: Nippon Foundation SPOGOMI Federation

Supported by: The Nippon Foundation

Supported by: The Ministry of the Environment, the Japan Sports Agency, and Shibuya City

List of FINAL Participating Countries: *

Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, France, Germany, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Morocco, Namibia,

Philippines, Senegal, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vietnam

*Alphabetical order (Pakistan participated in qualifiers.)

We will continue to promote the spread of SPOGOMI, a sport originating in Japan, both domestically and internationally, raising awareness of marine litter issues and creating opportunities to reduce waste. Moving forward, we will continue to organize activities that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and nationalities, including events such as the SPOGOMI Koshien and the SPOGOMI World Cup, as well as community-based events.

■ The Nippon Foundation SPOGOMI Federation

The Nippon Foundation SPOGOMI Federation regards trash collection as a sport. By competing and actively picking up litter, participants build physical fitness while fostering a culture of recycling and waste-free habits among people of all ages. This contributes to cleaner, more livable communities. Furthermore, by combining sports with environmental action and proposing new attractions within sports, the Federation aims to contribute to the development of the Japanese sports community.

<https://nf-spogomiwc.com/>



■ The Nippon Foundation

Sharing pain, hope, and the future together.

Founded in 1962 as Japan's largest private foundation, The Nippon Foundation conducts a wide range of activities across borders and races, supporting children, people with disabilities, disaster relief, marine conservation, and humanitarian aid. These activities are funded by grants derived from boat race revenues.

<https://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/>

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