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The World Championships of NextGen talent: in Doha, the future of padel is being written

Young, full of talent, and in some cases, already with an impressive winning history behind them. At the **FIP World Padel Championships** in **Doha**, starting next weekend, the NextGen wave is arriving: Under-20 talents or just barely in their twenties making their debut in the most prestigious competition for nations. After their experiences in junior championships – European, Panamerican, and World – for many, this will be the first opportunity to prove themselves on the biggest stage, in a turning point for their growth both as athletes and as individuals.

THE "BABY" CHAMPIONS In the generational renewal process strongly promoted by the **International Padel Federation** along with national federations, the undisputed model is **Arturo Coello**. A key figure for Spain, the 22-year-old from Valladolid began his rise in 2021 and is now the number one in the **FIP ranking**, with ten titles won in the Premier Padel circuit since the beginning of the year. The 2024 season has also been the breakthrough for **Claudia Fernandez**, who turned 18 in February before claiming four victories in Premier Padel tournaments and climbing to number 5 in the rankings. Alongside them is **Mike Yanguas**, also 22 like Coello, and another standout in a rising season, bringing him to the ninth position in the world rankings. From Spain to **Argentina**, which will bring a powerful squad to Qatar, enriched by the presence of talents destined to make padel history: 20-year-olds **Alex Chozas** and **Leo Augsburger**, who only started playing together a couple of months ago, already have significant wins under their belt, such as their victory over Lebrón/Di Nenno in Rotterdam; and **Tino Libaak**, who at just 19 years old fulfilled his dream of playing alongside his lifelong idol, Fernando Belasteguín. Then there are the "baby" stars of Argentina's women's team, with **Claudia Jensen** (ranked 13th) leading a trio of young talents including **Martina Fassio** (52) and **Daiara Valenzuela** (111).

THE EMERGING TALENTS There's also a long list of emerging talents from around the world who will rise to prominence in Doha. Among the standouts is **Diego Arredondo**, a Mexican born in 2007, recently a runner-up at the **FIP Junior Pan American Padel Championships** and already a regular presence in the **CUPRA FIP Tour** tournaments. Another great South American promise is Paraguayan **Facundo Dehniké**, who turned 16 in August; just three months earlier, still 15, Facundo debuted in the Premier Padel circuit at the P2 in Asunción, after winning the FIP Promotion in Castellón in February. Facundo is one of the gems of a very young Paraguayan

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national team, with seven of the eight members born after 2000. South America also holds the record for the youngest participant in the World Championships in Qatar: Brazilian **Julia Gomes Giusti**, born in 2009, who won two FIP Promises tournaments in 2024, played in Brazil, in Curitiba and Camboriú.

From America to Europe, where padel is growing exponentially and new countries are emerging as key players on the global stage. In France, all eyes are on **Thomas Leygue**, 23, who played a key role in the fourth-place finish for the French team at the **European Championships** in Cagliari. Besides the CUPRA FIP Tour, the Swedish pair of **Adam Axelsson** (2005) and **Willy Slaryd** (2006) are set to make waves in the national team as well, which has big ambitions. For Axelsson, this will be his second national team tournament in just a few months, after the European Championships last July. Among the European countries with high ambitions is also the **Netherlands**, where 19-year-old **Thijs Roper** stands out, already among the top 200 in the world, having played in his first Major (in Rome) this year after winning the FIP Promotion in Cairo. And even the hosts of Qatar will have a talent ready for a big breakthrough, with 16-year-old **Hassan Waly** making his debut in the country where he was born and raised. It will be a celebration along with the other young talents who will parade alongside today's champions, and one day inherit their place in the hearts of the fans.

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