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THE TIME HAS COME

The wait is over. More than a year of Covid-19 Pandemic is slowly, but surely, coming to an end. Little by little and taking all necessary precautions, we are trying to go back to our normal lives. We are seeing light at the end of the tunnel, but we are not out of the tunnel yet.

Sports events are starting to take place with limitations. The WKF held the Karate 1 Premiere League in Istanbul and Lisbon and in the month of June, we had the final Tokyo 2020ne Olympic Games Qualifier in Paris, France.

All these events were held under the “famous-infamous” mandatory “bubble”. All precautions and measures put in place by the organizers were for the well-being and safety of athletes, referees, administrators and coaches. It was a tedious and sometimes annoying protocol but it is the way it should be so we can focus on moving forward and get the things done.

The Olympic Games of Tokyo 2020ne won’t be like any other. For the sport of Karate, the Tokyo Games means a once in a lifetime opportunity. The lack of spectators and crowd should not distract us from our objective and main goal of showing the world the beauty and excitement of our sport under the Olympic light.

Nobody knows when we will have the next opportunity to showcase karate’s beauty in an Olympic event but we must keep pushing forward and giving the best of us in every national and international event.

With age people begin to care less and less about the signs of achievement and more and more about whether they are with people they care about, doing things that mean something to them. In this journey, we [all karatekas] are together in the goal to bring and put karate where it belongs in the world scene.

The rest of 2021 is packed with great international events; Tokyo Olympic Games, Junior Pan American Games, Senior Pan American Championships and to conclude the year, the World Championships in Dubai and the USA Open.

Let’s focus and get the best out of it. After all we have been going through…we deserve it! USANKF.

Jose M. Fraguas
Editor-in-Chief
This is Really Going to Happen

By Phil Hampel

I am so proud of the fact that all 4 of our Tier 1 funded athletes have qualified for the Olympic Games. Congratulations to Sakura Kokumai – Female Kata, Ariel Torres – Male Kata, Brian Irr – +75kg Kumite and Tom Scott -75kg Kumite. I am also excited that we were able to get each athlete the coach of their choice for the Olympics. Brian Mertel will support Sakura Kokumai, Javier Mantilla will support Ariel Torres and Brody Burns will support Brian Irr and Tom Scott. Rounding out the USA Karate Delegation is Elizabeth Sottile – Team Leader, Dr Jessica Bartley – Sport Psychologist, Nicole Clinton – Athletic Trainer, Jose Fraguas – Press Officer and Fariba Madani - Referee this is an amazing team.

This amazing accomplishment by the athletes and their coaches couldn’t have happened without their hard work and dedication or without the support of so many people…..

Over the last 5 years we have been on a journey that none of us knew what to expect. As karate made its first, and for now only, appearance in the Olympic Games we had to learn all that it takes to get athletes to the Olympic Games. We leveraged the knowledge from other NGBs and leaned on our partners at the USOPC. We are proud to be a part of the Team V Sport Performance Group and I want to thank Jenn Geisheker, Sarah Crowell, Meredith Miller and Ron Brandt for all of their support. Jenn is no longer with the USOPC, but she taught me how the sport performance processes work and what we needed to show and do to receive high performance funding. They have all been great sounding boards to help us to get the most out of the support services we had available.

We have had great support from our medical partners at Prisma Health. Not only have they supported our Signature Events, but also Dr. Sease and his team have provided medical and athletic trainer support at all the major international events. Nicole Clinton, our athletic trainer, has been with the athletes heading to the Olympics at the Pan American Games and the Paris Olympic Qualifying tournament and will be in the Olympic Village with our athletes helping to have them ready for what will likely be the biggest event of their lives.

Our coaches and officials were there supporting the athletes all along the way traveling to Karate1 events around the globe to ensure the athletes were supported and had a fair field of competition. Dr. Jessica Bartley, our Sport Psychologist, was available to the athletes at each of the events either in person or via video conferencing – even before the pandemic. I can’t leave out Elizabeth Sottile who keeps the office running and logistics moving. Elizabeth is the one talking with the other sport Team Leaders helping us to understand the nuances of the Olympic Games and supporting all things USA Karate. It takes a village to make all this work.

Best of luck to all in Tokyo. Your hard work, dedication and perseverance gives you opportunity to showcase your talents on the greatest stage for competition. We are so proud and happy to have been part of your journey. USANKF

Go TeamUSA!

Phil Hampel
Chief Executive Officer
USA National Karate-do Federation
he countless hours of training, competition, and sacrifice culminates as the road to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics comes to a reality. The question is, what makes these athletes “tick”? It is obvious that the common denominator that is shared throughout the Olympic realm is GRIT. These athletes endure the ups and downs of living their lifelong dream of one day representing their country on the biggest sports stage.

According to Dr. Duckworth on her research on GRIT:

A significant predictor of success is having GRIT. She shares that “GRIT is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. GRIT is having stamina. GRIT is sticking with your future goals day in and day out, not for the week, not just for the month, but for years and working really hard to make that future a reality.” In our five-key model (listed below) “Passion and Perseverance” appears the third point, and the fifth is, “Determination and Direction”; these would be important traits to emphasize and develop in athletes.

1. Talent and natural abilities
2. Preparation and effort
3. Passion and perseverance (We can think of this as a person’s will to do something)
4. Self-discipline and self-regulation
5. Determination and Direction

Before we indulge in the five-key model that Dr. Duckworth lists, let us look at some prerequisites that will prepare you for the driving forces of GRIT. These 6 factors share a strong correlation to the foundational characteristics of the development of GRIT.
Define yourself:

• Being able to create a clear vision/insight, defining your personal goals, and taking ownership/accountability.
• Actions don’t happen overnight; defining yourself won’t either, it will probably be a lifelong investment.
• Many elite athletes have found success by writing their goals down.

Motivating factors:

• Your passion often defines your driving force; it identifies what creates your personal drive. A strong commitment to a specific goal will keep you accountable, focused, and engaged on both short-term and long-term goals.
• The motivating factors often provide a clear path against the temptation of getting distracted. According to Dr. A. Duckworth, it’s healthy and normal to try different things in order to narrow down your passions and find your ultimate focus.
• Maintaining a growth mindset is a crucial part of establishing the main building block known as GRIT.

Elite level of fitness:

• High-efficacy doesn’t come overnight. It builds with time and investment. According to J. Ratey, “those who are physically fit are far better able to withstand the normal stresses of everyday life and experience higher self-esteem than their less fit counterparts.”
• Take note of small successes:
• Make your GRIT investment serious, break your goals down into smaller steps so that they become attainable.
• Control the controllables, take a moment to plan, strategize, and reflect on tasks. Note the improvements that you have made.
• For the unsuccessful activities, focus on the task at hand. Implement your plan, strategy, or reflection to create a learning opportunity.

Be consistent:

• Creating good habits are strong characteristics of successful athletes. Attaining new goals does not rely on only the effort put forth, but working diligently on a daily basis is key to a strong routine.
• Building your grit quotient by keeping to your routine even if distractions become very tempting.
• Maintaining a routine is the key factor in supporting your passion. Routines that are ingrained into habit makes it much easier to resist the temptation of a sporadic outing. It’s about the long-game, a marathon not a sprint.

Power team:

• Create your own environment, align yourself with others who share a similar passion. This is an excellent way to strengthen your commitments.
• A prime motivator is to create a friendly competition with those who share your passion as well as your experience. This competitive atmosphere will serve as a prime motivator.
• Although GRIT is often referred to as an individual defining moment, having a shared interest focus group builds mental toughness.

Create a relationship with a Mentor:

• Studies have shown that athletes benefit greatly from working with sport specific specialists (e.g. mental skills consultants, strength and conditioning specialist, and coaches). Forming these lasting relationships aids in cultivation an attitude conducive to one’s success.
• The right mentor can help refine your competitive edge to the highest level possible by identifying your own personal best and making your goals attainable.

As the Tokyo 2020 Olympics come into play we can honestly pay homage to all who have endured the path of excellence and celebrate the festivities of being the first Karate Olympians. To further facilitate the prerequisites of GRIT, one can actively say that consistency and passion are the key to any advancement. In our Karate-culture, GRIT is often synonymous with BUDO USANKF.
I come from a Karate family, where my father and my sister both practiced the martial arts, so I was exposed to it from a young age. I do not remember the exact reason why I joined since I was young, but I do remember that my beginnings were little rough, but I believe that experiencing these things young helped build a more disciplined foundation for my future. I only practiced Karate until I got in High School. There, I joined the Judo club in pursuits to supplement my Kumite foundation, only to injure myself by breaking my wrist. Getting injured wasn’t the sole reason I chose Karate though. I was very inspired by famous Karate athletes during my high school years in both Kata, and Kumite.

Currently I think of Karate as a sport, but I really love the traditional aspects of Karate, and would love to expand my knowledge on the traditional side even more in the future. That’s a lifetime journey. Karate teaches you many lessons, but doing other things like running, weight lifting, and even just things like a part-time job, which many may think that it is not related to Karate, can really supplement your Karate by widening your perspective.

For me a good Kata competitor is one who understands the meaning of the Kata. By understanding the techniques of the Kata, it helps separate an athlete from other athletes because of the way they can express their Kata. In addition, through understanding the meaning of the Kata, I also think having a solid athletic foundation is also important, because having the physical foundation makes it possible to use your body to its fullest capacity and express the Kata in a way you want to express it.

Every individual athlete's interpretation of a Kata is different, so I think the last thing that makes a good Kata competitor is a performance that showcases the athlete's personality and their strong points very well. In the end, Kata can be freely expressed to a point, so I think a good Kata athlete is one who has a style that suits them.

Supplementary training is really important because it not only makes you strong physically, but as a person it helps you to stay open and look for things that you can learn from one thing, and see how you can apply it to your Karate.

I think doing supplementary training is a necessity for young Karate athletes. While focusing on your specialty or Karate itself is important, I think there are many great things we can take from running, for endurance or explosiveness training from short distance sprints; stability and overall heightened physical performance from weight lifting.

It is very important to set goals that you can go for. Once you set your goal, all you have to do is to take the first step. Whether it is just waking up earlier in your day to go out for a run, to put your Gi on and train some Kata in your room, or whether it is just clicking that start button on that timer … just do it! You may not see results immediately, but that’s okay. No one changes overnight, and it will take some time depending on your goal. However, the most important thing to keep in mind when starting off is consistency. Just keep going forward and be better everyday! USANKF
2021 USA NATIONAL
Karate Championships & Team Trials
September 1-5, 2021
Chicago, Illinois
For More Information: www.usakaratenationals.com
Here Come the Olympics!

Despite many uncertainties, obstacles, and changes in location, the WKF could finally hold the first in its series of premier league competitions, along with first WKF license examination, in March in Istanbul, Turkey. The health requirements for anyone who wanted to be a part of the competition, in any capacity, was simple: be symptom-free and show a negative PCR test upon your arrival!

Although all international flights now require a proof of negative COVID test upon check-in, that was not sufficient to be able to participate in Istanbul. A second test was also required prior to starting the referee course and another one prior starting the competition and yet another before leaving the country, to be able to check in for an international flight home. For someone like me, who never had any PCR test done before, it was a pretty big deal to take 4 of them in 10 days!

The face mask provided by WKF was a burgundy color to match the Premier League color with very good protection. Even for me, who has been teaching and practicing using a mask all the time around the dojo, this one was tough to handle. But like everything else in life, we got used to working with it. Besides the competitors, who could take off their masks right before stepping onto the Tatami, everyone had to have the masks on at all the time. There were no spectators allowed inside the sport hall, so for first time in the history of WKF, officials were applauding the competitors as they were walking in to the sport hall! Who could imagine such a huge difference in karate competition within one year?

The competition went extremely smoothly with the great organization and many staff members who were assigned to different tasks. The face of athletes spoke volumes of their enthusiasm of coming back to the competition after one year. The result of some of the matches was interesting. Some already-confirmed Olympians lost in the first round and some others unexpectedly made their way to the medal matches. This is proof that no one’s ability should be taken for granted. It was wake-up call for many.

The next event and the last one that counts for the Olympics is right around the corner and will take place in Portugal. This competition surely will be one of most intense in the premier league as it will be the last chance for those who will need a few points to be the top four on the Olympic ranking to secure their spot. For those who do not make it, the Paris qualification event will be the chance to make the top three. Another intense competition!

And finally, a few days ago, Japan lit the Olympic torch and started the run around the country prior arriving on time to Tokyo for the opening day in July. While there is a lot of excitement, we know that there may also be some stressors for the host country and everyone involved.

Because Japan is not allowing any international spectators to watch the games in person, many of karate fan and families can only watch the competition on internet or TV. Still, we are glad to see our athletes making it to the Olympics. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for karate! Over the past year, everything was unclear for many things, including the chance of holding the Olympics. But now that we have started to see the light at the end of tunnel and the vaccine is bringing more security to the world, we are ready to go back and resume our competitions. It is time to let the athletes get ready for the games, it is time to bring joy to our life, it is time to go back to competing, and, finally, it is time to send the best karate-ka to the Olympics! USANKF
Respect: Where Sportsmanship Begins

Athletes, coaches, and parents agree: good sportsmanship begins with respect. And maybe you’ve heard the old saying that respect is a two-way street. That sounds pretty good at first; but if you stop to think about it, that metaphor doesn’t begin to capture the reality. If you want to be a good sport, then respect has to move in a lot more than two directions.

For one, respect has to include your opponent. It can express itself in obvious ways, like complimenting an opponent for their efforts during a match. That’s a positive thing to do; but the things you don’t do might be every bit as meaningful. For example: competition can get intense, and sometimes there are official calls you might disagree with. If you respond to those calls in ways that might invite penalties, you’re showing disrespect for your opponent and the match itself.

Of course, it’s also important to respect your parents and coaches. That’s easy when you agree with their decisions. It’s less easy when the coach decides to take you out of a competition. If you react negatively, you’re not only showing disrespect to your coach – you’re helping to create a negative atmosphere that can erode morale.

Respect is

- Teammates
  - Praise positive contributions... don’t blame or shame

- Opponents
  - Be gracious when you win... and when you lose

- Parents/Coaches
  - Show respect always... even when you disagree

- Self
  - When you respect others, you respect yourself

Think of respect as an intersection – an ongoing exchange of respect given and respect earned. Respect for teammates, opponents, parents and coaches, ...and yourself.

It can be challenging to teach young athletes how to practice good sportsmanship at times, but TrueSport is built around hands-on activities and other innovative learning techniques. For example, we know that big concepts like ‘respect’ can be hard to wrap your head around. But if you bring it down to the level of everyday personal relationships, it’s easier to understand and to put into action. Use the word TOPS – Teammates, Opponents, Parents/Coaches, and Self to help your athletes remember that Respect has to include all of them!
Pandemic Effects on Engagement and Socialization

We have all seen the challenges that have come about as a result of the pandemic. Everything from the loss of students in the dojos, less income, lack of ability or motivation to practice, the list goes on and on. One of the things I’ve noticed very acutely in the para-karate athletes in my dojo, especially those persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder, has been a decline or regression in their socialization skills and peer to peer engagement. In my opinion, this has been one of the most damaging parts of the last year.

I have 25-30 athletes with cognitive disabilities that are in a part of my weekly program. When things shut down a year ago, some of them, particularly those with immuno-compromised situations, just stayed home, stopped participating all together. A portion were able to figure out the zoom situation and did that, which was better than nothing. And then the last group begged for privates or small groups in person. We did our best to meet everyone where they were, in terms of safety, anxieties and everything. It was difficult, to say the least.

“Sensei, can you please see my son for a private? We can wear masks and stay far apart and whatever you want, but he’s just sitting up in his room and won’t do anything. I’m afraid he’s depressed,” said one mother.

“Sensei, I’m worried about my kid. He is not talking to anyone, withdrawing more and more, and when I ask him questions, he just looks at me, doesn’t even answer. He was doing SO great at the dojo and now I’m afraid that he’s really gone backwards,” said another.

These were the things I kept hearing, over and over, from the parents of my students with Autism. Kids who truly struggled with social interactions, but had, after many years of intentional effort, made great progress with speaking, leading exercises, talking to their and more, in the dojo setting. And just like that, in a matter of months, it was as if they were starting over at zero.

I’ve seen it in my neuro-typical athletes as well. They are quieter, more introverted, less engaged. After a year of doing kumite drills alone at their house, one student closed her eyes and flinched when her sparring partner came at her for the first time recently. I’ve never seen this student do that before, but she had spent a year not engaging and her fears go the better of her. It’s going to be a long road back for all of us.

What advice can I offer? Well, if you have students on the Autism spectrum who struggle with social interactions and engagement, I would suggest that you have them talk and specifically lead exercises or drills. I also have had success with having them tell new students about the dojo and being a “buddy” to a younger student. I make them all learn punching and kicking drill sequences, using the traditional Japanese vocabulary words and then each take a turn saying the Japanese out loud. When a student can’t find their voice, I’ll tell them I don’t hear so great myself and need them to speak up. The more we repeat it, the better they get, and little by little they find their voices.

It will take time, but it will be well worth it.
Danshi mon o izureba hyakuman no teki ari
Be aware at all times that you have millions of potential opponents

S
ome students read this principle, and perhaps interpret it as advocating extreme paranoia. This of course is not the case. To be paranoid is to project onto reality that which is not real, and we strive for just the opposite in trying to achieve “no mind,” or mushin. In this principle, Master Funakoshi is giving us a method by which we can constantly check on our own inner balance. He is merely saying to be aware at all times. When you leave home, your job, even the dojo, you have to be aware of any possibility. If you only think about defending yourself while training, if you are only aware of opponents when practicing kata, if you think differently when you leave the dojo, you can’t defend yourself. You should be a martial artist continuously, twenty-four hours a day.

Master Funakoshi didn’t mean that when you walk out the door in the morning, expect someone always there to physically attack you. But he is saying to be prepared for anything, at all times. In life, you have opponents in many situations.

So how do we prepare ourselves for any situation? In karate, we say, “Keep a mind like water…mind like a mirror.” That means a mind that automatically reflects, automatically sees and responds, to what is around you. When your mind is calm, you’re always ready. You don’t encounter danger every moment of every day, but you should be physically and mentally prepared to deal with it if the situation should change and suddenly you are confronted with a threat of some kind. You develop this preparedness in training. Master Funakoshi said to apply it to your everyday life.

First there is training, developing techniques. From that comes an awareness of possibilities, without fear or nervousness. This doesn’t happen overnight. It comes from practicing karate-do over a period of time. If you are really training to develop yourself, you will gain awareness. But if you are just thinking about being a champion, how to get a higher rank, you will eventually fail. In an emergency your training won’t help. By training with a right mind you will always be ready. Of course, there’s nothing wrong with competition and achieving rank, but it is more important to be a good human being than it is to be a champion.

There is a lot of violence in the world today, and karate teaches us how to avoid such situations. A martial artist can feel danger and predict violence. You may use physical karate skills only once in your life. Perhaps you will never use your skills—and hopefully, that will be the case. But it doesn’t matter if you are never once physically attacked, you will use what you learn from training every day, in living your life. You use karate training in the process of your becoming more aware—of yourself, and therefore, the world around you.

Master Funakoshi said, “Martial arts are about fighting within yourself, not others. Develop yourself so they cannot attack you.” If you apply this idea to the principle we are talking about—that you should anticipate a million opponents when you leave home—he is really saying, “Control yourself at all times.” The first thing you have to do to defend yourself is to be in control. So if you imagine that there are a million opponents out there waiting for you, and you need to be ready to defend yourself, you have to be aware, you have to be present in the moment, at all times.
USA KARATE ATHLETES
GO TEAM USA!

USA KARATE congratulates Sakura Kokumai, Ariel Torres, Brian Irr and Tom Scott for their qualification to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games! Tom Scott will compete in the -75Kg division, Brian Irr in +85Kg, Ariel Torres in Male Kata and Sakura Kokumai in Female Kata, joining the athletes will be Fariba Madani, USA Referee.
The USA Team delegation will depart for Japan at the end of July and will return to the US around the 10th of August.

GO USA TEAM and bring the GOLD home!
A riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma, Trinity Allen walks to the beat of a different drummer. With her ever-present smile and reserved personality, she is one of the most easily recognizable figures of the young USA KARATE athletes. Her good-natured originality doesn’t obscure that fact that she is an excellent competitor. Being born in a family of karatekas, she discovered the art of karate at very early age and became a strong believer in the benefits the sport has to offer girls and women of all ages. After a full year of Covid-19 Pandemic and achieving her qualification for the 2021 Junior Pan American Games in Cali, Colombia in September this year, USA KARATE Magazine met with Trinity to ask her about a selection of topics for discussion. Here is what she had to say.
How were your beginnings in the sport?
I have been practicing karate since I was four years old, but I have been around karate my entire life. Since my dad is my sensei and coach, I was always at the dojo with him. Growing up, I felt like I was always at the dojo.

I honestly don’t remember what it was like starting karate. For me, it was just a normal part of my life because I was at the dojo almost every day. I just loved to play with the other kids in my class and I looked up to the older students in the dojo. Since I was introduced to karate at such a young age and was an only child (at the time), I think I valued being around other people more than the sport itself. Although I don’t remember karate classes from when I first started, I remember many of the people from my dojo who I saw as a second family.

Why did you choose karate over other sports?
For a while, I was doing other sports along with karate. I did tennis from the age of five to fourteen and I ran track and field for one year in high school. While I enjoyed doing those sports, I never felt the same passion for them as I did with karate. I always viewed the other sports as something that could potentially benefit
me in karate, whether it was quick footwork from tennis, or speed and explosiveness from track and field. After I stopped running track, I started focusing solely on karate because it was what I knew best and what I loved most. It was an easy choice, and I don’t think I ever considered leaving karate for another sport.

How important is supplementary training like running, weight lifting, etc. to you?

I think supplementary training is extremely important as a karate athlete. In order to compete at the highest level, it is essential to build myself as an athlete alongside my training in karate. I also like having supplementary training to set separate goals for myself. Having the contrast between supplementary training and karate motivates me and keeps training exciting when there’s a variety of things I can do to push myself.

What do you see as the most important attributes of a good Karate competitor?

I think some of the most important attributes of a good karate competitor include having discipline, focus, willingness to adapt and learn, a competitive spirit, athleticism, and love for the sport. I am sure that there are other attributes I am leaving out, but karate is so interesting because different competitors are stronger in some areas than others. It is amazing to see how different types of people thrive in their own unique ways as karate competitors.

Self-defense, sport or tradition: what is karate for you?

Karate is, of course, a combination of self-defense, sport, and tradition. Growing up, I think there was more of a self-defense and traditional aspect to karate than there is now. While I still value these aspects of karate, I am currently focused on the sport of karate as a competitor. However, I think that these aspects of karate will be more dominant in different times throughout my life. Currently, I am focused on the sport, but I have not forgotten about self-defense or tradition, and I hope to put more focus into these areas of karate in the future.

How do you structure your personal training for an important competition?

As a competition gets closer, I try to focus more and more on replicating a real fight. We will have more matches in the dojo and I will train on what to do in certain scenarios. The training becomes more centered on fighting and sharpening my skills than on specific techniques or new ideas.

Being a young athlete that is currently transitioning to the Senior level, what do you consider to be the major differences between them?

Due to COVID-19, I have not had any experience traveling as a member of the Senior National Team yet. However, I am definitely excited to do so. I have looked up to many of the members on the National Team since I was a kid, so it is somewhat surreal to believe that I am now on the same team as them.

How do you prepare psychologically for an important competition?

Personally, I prepare psychologically for an important competition by journaling and visualizing the competition. I imagine myself fighting at the competition and having positive outcomes. I try to prepare to maximize all the things that I am able to control. Of course, I get nervous as the competition day nears, but I try to
remind myself that every competition is an opportunity and a privilege. I do my best to keep a positive mindset and to keep my routines and behaviors normal so that I am not shocked on the day of competition.

**Do you think it is positive or negative for Karate to be in the Olympic Games?**

I definitely think it is positive that karate will be in the Olympic Games. I loved watching and experiencing how the sport of karate has grown since the announcement of karate in the Olympics. Karate competition has reached new heights and I have such great respect for the athletes who have been working so hard to make it to the Olympics. It is definitely a dream come true for many in the karate world. It is very unfortunate that karate is not set to be in the Olympic Games after Tokyo (as of now), but my hopes are still up.

**How is your personal training these days considering all the limitations that the COVID-19 Pandemic has imposed on all athletes around the world?**

At the beginning of the pandemic, it was definitely difficult to stay motivated and optimal throughout my training. I was hurt to hear all of the competitions I had been training for were being postponed or cancelled. My dojo had classes online and it was not easy to train. However, after I adjusted to the limitations of the pandemic, I got right back into my normal routine. I trained with my family and my boyfriend when I didn’t have my usual training partners, and I feel as though I have progressed throughout the pandemic. I am fortunate that my health, as well as the health of my family and friends, has been good. I am lucky to still have a dojo to train at and things are starting to get back to how they were prior to the pandemic.
What advice would you give to those who wish to start training and to those who already have been training already and are getting ready to enter into national and international competitions?

For those who wish to start training in karate, I think it is best to just try it out and see what part of karate is for you. There are so many different areas of karate that one can enjoy; for example, one person may be more interested in kata and tradition, while another person may find a love for kumite. Some people love everything about karate! Try to explore what karate has to offer, and hopefully you can find what you are looking for.

As far as those who are preparing to enter into competitions, I would advise them to appreciate their opportunities and to find gratitude in every step of the way. Competing is a privilege and it is easy to forget this. Appreciate and enjoy the ups and downs of competition. There will be times where you lose or you may be disappointed in yourself, but these are things every athlete experiences and it is important to be grateful for these tough moments as well. Every obstacle and every achievement is a part of a journey, and if you enjoy every step, it will all be worth it.

What keeps you motivated to keep training?

There are a number of things that motivate me in my training, and they tend to be more prevalent at different periods of my training. My family, my friends, my boyfriend, people and students at my dojo, and my passion for karate all motivate me to keep training. When my self-motivation gets low, I am motivated by others in my life. Teaching karate also helps motivate me to keep training. Whenever my students are working hard and I am pushing them to do their best, I remember that I must also take my own words to heart. The support I have from those around me is astronomical and I would say they are all my biggest motivation.

You come from a family where your father is very active in the sport of Karate. How this aspect has influenced you in you overall approach to Karate?

My family has, without a doubt, motivated me to pursue karate at a high level. Our passion for karate is something we can all share and brings us closer together. Seeing how my family has continued karate throughout their life, I see firsthand how karate is not just a sport, but a lifestyle. I am able to see the future benefits to karate and it excites me to see what is waiting for me down the road. My dad is able to share his personal experiences and the lessons he has learned in karate. These not only help me in my journey with karate, but it also drives me to continue training. My family also inspires me in how they teach others karate. I can see how Senseis are able to help kids grow and develop while changing so many lives for the better. Seeing how much teaching karate can help others through my family has made me want to become a Sensei and have my own dojo as well.

Finally, what are your plans for the future?

As far as karate goes, I don’t plan on stopping any time soon. I hope to continue competing and I also want to have my own dojo in the near future. Throughout my experiences in and out of karate, I have realized how much I want to continue karate and to teach others karate. I love working with children and I hope to make a difference in their lives in the same way my teachers and coaches have done for me. I want to take in every moment of training and competition I am experiencing now not only for my own happiness, but also to have information and lessons to share with my students now and in the future.
WHEN YOU MEET “SAI” SENPON YOU WILL FEEL NOTHING LESS THAN THE ENERGY OF SOMEONE SERIOUSLY DEVOTED TO THE STUDY OF THE SPORT OF KARATE. ALTHOUGH HE STARTED HIS TRAINING A VERY EARLY AGE UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF HIS FATHER, HE IS EXTREMELY UNDERSTANDING, APPROACHABLE AND RESPECTFUL.

HE RECENTLY QUALIFIED FOR THE 2021 JUNIOR PAN AMERICAN GAMES TO BE HELD IN CALI, COLOMBIA IN THE MONTHS OF NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER.

“USA KARATE MAGAZINE” WANTED TO REACH OUT TO HIM TO GET HIS IMPRESSIONS AND STORIES ABOUT HIS LIFE IN THE ART AND SPORT OF KARATE.
How long have you been practicing Karate and who is your teacher?

I have been doing Karate for about 18 years and my Sensei is my dad Senthil and my Coach Andres Madera.

Both my parents were national champions back in their day so no doubt I would also have to do Karate. I first joined my parent’s dojo in India and when we moved here I would train in the local park with my dad because we didn’t have room in our apartment. My first tournament in the US was the 2005 Nationals which I got first in Kata. I’ve been competing ever since.

Why did you choose karate over other sports?

There was never really a choice for me. Since both my parents did Karate for years, I was next in line. With the start of our dojo, my days would consist of going to school and going straight to the dojo to help teach and train. I never really got the chance to try too many other sports. I knew Karate was the sport for me when I first made the team at 14. The joy I felt winning and going on different trips with the team was unlike any other. I’ve never considered any other sport since then.

How important do you think supplementary training is for you?

It is very important as you progress to higher levels of competitions. There’s only so many ways you can improve working the same techniques. Having weight training and cardio to supplement your explosiveness and endurance can be very beneficial.

What do you see as the most important attributes of a good Karate competitor?

Discipline. Karate is built on Discipline. You can have all the skills in the world, but without proper discipline and humility in the wrong you’re simply fighting, not doing Karate.”
Do. Without proper technique the fight isn’t that enjoyable to watch.

Karate has always been about sport and competing to me. With both my parents as karate athletes, competing in tournaments and winning has always been the goal. I have a lot of respect for the self-defense and traditional aspects of the martial art, but the sport aspect defines my perception of Karate the most.

**How do you structure your personal training for an important competition?**

I like to work on the flaws in my game up until 2 weeks before the competition then refine my best techniques and skills 2 weeks before. This helps me improve what I need to work on and refine my best techniques to implement both of them in the upcoming tournament.

**Being a Junior athlete that is currently transitioning to the Senior level, how’s your experience traveling with the National team and competing in international events and what do you consider to be the major differences between them?**

Traveling with the team and making memories and new friends has always been one of my favorite aspects of Karate. Everyone there is aiming for the same goal of winning the tournament and it’s always great to share big wins with your teammates. Competing in a lot of trips on the Junior trip should give me good experience when transitioning to Seniors. I look forward to competing on Senior trips.

**How do you prepare psychologically for an important competition, and how does your mindset change when you are getting close to the competition day?**

I run through the events of that day in my mind with as much descriptive imagery as possible, from the way everything looks to how scoring a point will feel. I focus the imagery more on the positive aspects such as scoring a point or winning a big match, almost like thinking it into existence. I used to get super nervous and anxious before tournaments, but after Covid that anxiety has turned into excitement. I’m just ready for everyone to see what I can do again.

**Do you think it is positive or negative for Karate to be in the Olympic Games?**

Karate getting into the Olympics has to be one of the biggest events in Karate history. I think its about time people put some respect to the sport. Even if its only a one time event, I believe the athletes going will put on a great show for the general audience that we’ll have a chance at the Olympic spotlight again.

**How is your personal training these days considering all the limitations that the COVID-19 Pandemic has imposed on all athletes around the world?**

I’m honestly glad the pandemic happened when it did. Without the stress and anxiety of competition, I was able to find my love for the sport again. Karate wasn’t simply about winning the next tournament, but doing something you enjoy. We did a lot of online training, but we’ve gotten to a select few in person training. I’m grateful I was able to make the most of this situation.
What advice would you give to those who wish to start training and to those who have been training already and are getting ready to enter into national and international competitions?

Don’t place too much importance on results, but rather on improvement. It’s okay to lose a big tourney as long as it pushes you to get better. Everyday is another day to push and better yourself.

You come from a family where your father is very active in the sport of Karate. How this aspect has influenced you in your overall approach to Karate?

The biggest influence he has is his personal experience. He knew it would take time. I was never the best kid in Karate growing up and would often come back home without a medal and yet he never gave up on me. He knew if I kept working hard I would develop into a good fighter and he was right. He knows the hardships and the work it takes to get to a high level and he does everything he can to support my dreams. I now know matter how many times I fail, I have someone in my corner.

I am a huge fan of winning. As cheesy as it sounds, I love everything about it. I push myself and work hard so I can feel all the joys of winning. Aside from that, my support team sacrifices a lot for me. The motivation to work harder comes from the need to make them proud.

Finally, what are your plans for the future?

I’m currently finishing up my Kinesiology degree and planning on going to Physical Therapy school. I want to work concurrently as a PT while focusing on my Karate career. When it’s all said and done, coaching is the next step for me. I want to train the next generation to win medals for my dojo and for the US.
JEWS KARATEKAS
JOIN THE USA DELEGATION
21ST MACCABIAH
ISRAEL, JULY 5-26, 2022*

AGE DIVISION:
JUNIOR (BIRTH YEARS 04-07) M/F
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*TEAM TRAINING CAMP PRIOR TBD
The city of Dallas hosted on April 23rd and 24th, the Qualifier event for the first 2021 Junior Pan American Games that will take place in Cali, Colombia at the end of November.

The Junior Pan American Games is a TeamUSA event where our athletes are part of the US Delegation with the other sports in the games. These games occur every 4 years and are a continental version of the Olympics. Karate has been in the Pan American Games since 1995 for the Senior athletes.

Karate is one of the sports included in this event and the USA Team had earned 7 quota positions for athletes in the U21 kumite divisions.

In a “round robin” and double elimination format, the athletes for the seven categories competed against each other. The “young bloods” had very exciting matches and the intensity was felt throughout the venue. The technical level of these Junior athletes is really outstanding. With these Juniors coming up to the Senior National Team the future is bright for USA Karate.

The final seven athletes that will travel to Cali, Colombia at the end of November are:

- Trinity Allen -55Kg
- Frank Ruiz -60Kg
- Alexandra Wainright -61Kg
- Edgar Torres -67Kg
- Safin Kasturi -75Kg
- Saisheren Senpon -84Kg
- Parth Kansara +84Kg

USA KARATE congratulates these athletes and looks forward to the experience that they will have competing in the inaugural Junior Pan American Games. Athletes who earn a gold medal at these Games will earn direct qualification for the Senior Pan American Games to be held in Santiago de Chile in 2023.

More info: https://www.panamsports.org USANKF
TRINITY ALLEN - 55KG

FRANK RUIZ - 60KG
USA KARATE
CALI 2021 JUNIOR PAN AMERICAN GAMES QUALIFIER

ALEXANDRA WAINRIGHT - 61KG

EDGAR TORRES - 67KG
SAFIN KASTURI - 75KG

SAISHEREN SENPON - 84KG
PARTH KANSARA - +84KG
After more than a year off due to Covid-19 pandemic, a select group of USA KARATE’s WKF Referees gathered together for the 2021 Junior Pan American Games Qualifier Event in the city of Dallas, Texas. On Friday 23rd, Chief Referee Fariba Madani held a clinic to review some of the rules and changes that have happened during the last year. Mrs. Madani currently sits on the USANKF Referee Committee and is the Assistant Secretary of the WKF Referee Commission.

USA Karate wants to thank this group of Referees, for their support and dedication to the sport of Karate. USANKF
Karate

We are a CONTACT SPORT!

Our first priority is the health and safety of our athletes!

U-21 Pan American Games Team Trial Referee Briefing
Recently I had the pleasure of interviewing John Klatt, USA karate national team member, para-karate visually impaired division. John has been a member of the national team since 2018, qualifying that year for a team spot, he then travelled with the team to Panama for the 2019 PKF where he won a bronze medal, and then continued on to win his division at USA Nationals, 2019 (gold medal in elite kata – visually impaired division).

May I ask your age and where you live?

“Absolutely, I’m 45 and I live in Madison, WI, with my wife Lia, my step son, Nathaniel, age 20 and our daughter, Hannah, age 6. When I first tried out for the National team I was 43.”

At what age did you start studying karate? Did you start as a child?

“No, not as a child. As an adult. I grew up in Hartland, WI, about an hour east of Madison, and as a kid I played traditional sports like football, basketball and baseball, ran track in HS, etc. I have always been extremely active and really enjoy competitive and team sports. But, as I started getting older the games got faster. In middle school and high school the limitations with my vision loss started to catch up with me and I couldn’t track the motion of other players or the ball. Then I needed to find different outlets.”
Do you mind discussing your vision loss? Is this a permanent condition?

“Oh sure, no problem at all. I was born with a form of macular degeneration, called Best disease, named after the doctor that identified it. Best disease is a childhood onset form of macular degeneration. As a young kid, my vision loss was relatively gradual until my teens and then it started to degenerate faster. Best disease affects your central vision, the part that allows you to see details. I have several blind spots in the center of my vision, and the outer areas of my vision do not pick-up much detail. People often ask, “What can you see?” I often struggle to explain what it is like. The best analogy that I have is that it is like wearing glasses that have smudges you can’t see through in the middle of the lenses and only allow you to see silhouettes around the outside. Of course, this is not a perfect analogy, I see some detail that is not in silhouettes, but colors, shapes, and contours are muted and objects blend into one another. In terms of karate, kumite is always an adventure. I am often hit by techniques that start in one of my blind spots and I don’t see coming. Many people have told me to look for opponents’ tells, but I am often oblivious to subtle movements and recognize larger movements too late, sometimes right after I feel the impact of a kick or punch.”

As an adult, does your degenerative vision loss greatly affect your day-to-day life?

“Not really in the ways people often think it would. I have been able to adapt and adjust to my vision loss. I live a very happy life, I have a great family and a great job. Of course, my vision presents some obstacles. Over time, I have developed strategies to navigate around my vision loss. For example, I can’t drive. As a teenager I was granted a ‘daytime only’ driver’s license, and had some really close calls, due to not
seeing cars breaking to turn or sometimes even coming towards me. So, I voluntarily gave up driving at that time. In retrospect, I should have never had a license, even if it was limited to daytime driving. So, I live in an area that has public transportation and I take the bus most places. Another obstacle is that I struggle to identify people because I cannot see facial features. When I am in meetings for work, I rely on identifying voices to know who is in the room. I also create a lot of routines or patterns. For example, always putting things in the same place, like my keys, cell phone, etc. Since I can’t register the shapes, I put things in very specific places so that I can find them. I also travel the same routes over and over to the bus stop, from the bus to my office, etc. Even though I do not count my steps, I am used to walking the same routes so regularly that I know if I missed a turn, where stairs are located, where safe crosswalks are located, or other things like that. Creating routines really works for me. I am not able to read without magnification, so I use accessibility software on computers and phones that magnifies images or reads content.”

“But honestly, there are so many things that I can do, and have done, that I don’t feel my vision has a negative impact on my day to day life. For me, the slow progression of the disease has given me time to develop strategies to adjust and adapt. All of which has been very helpful in terms of my study of martial arts!”

**Did you continue your sports training in college?**

“Since I couldn’t continue to play the sports I loved, I turned my passion to strength and endurance training, and by college, I had made a lot of connections and started coaching basketball. I loved it, I enjoyed the game planning and working with the athletes on skill building. Coaching in games became a challenge when I lost the ability to keep track of information on the scoreboard. But I did a lot of skill building with the players.”

“When I met my wife Lia, she got me into endurance events like marathons and triathlons, and we have enjoyed training and participating in these events together. Since then, I have run 12 marathons, and completed 5 triathlons. I qualified for the Boston Marathon, in my age group (not in the athletes with disabilities division) which was huge for me. I qualified by running a marathon in under 3 hours and 10 minutes, which I’m proud of. I love to race and to compete against the clock, the course, and the other runners. I enjoy marathons, but I do need to be a little careful on the course! During one marathon, I took a wrong turn. The course was marked with signs I could not read, so I was trying to follow other runners. I saw two people in front of me turn right at an intersection. I assumed they were runners in the marathon and I turned too. Unfortunately, the people I followed were not in the race!”

**Wow! That’s amazing! And when did martial arts kick in for you?**

“Truthfully, I have only been studying martial arts for 9 years. I started by chance, with my step son Nathaniel. When he was a kid, there was a martial arts school nearby, he joined it, and shortly thereafter they were running a special parent’s week. So, I signed up, I thought it would give us something good to do together and it was important for him to see me struggle through something and not give up. But then, as it turned out, I really enjoyed it! And then maybe a year later my wife and I were looking for something else to do together and the school was offering another parent’s special, so we signed up. Lia did it for a month and then she stopped, but this time I kept going. I was hooked! Then I was invited to be on the school’s competition team, and just like that I was fully committed.”
What did you like about karate, or martial arts in general? What “hooked you in”?

“When I started taking martial arts classes I was struck by how many things I really liked. There were physical challenges, just like there were in other activities like strength training or marathon training, but there was also a sense of history and culture, a sense of connection that I had not experienced in other sports or physical activities. I really liked the feeling of being part of something that was passed from generation to generation, and I liked learning not just the martial movements but the history and the culture behind martial arts practice. I never got this in running marathons or playing basketball. The activity itself had a lot of characteristics that really appealed to me on different levels. The opportunity to train and go out and compete is also something I find meaningful. In competition I get to train my body and my mind to reach new levels of performance and then pit my skills against others. Then, win or lose, I take what I learned back to the dojo and start working to improve again. Competition is a great feedback loop for learning and constant improvement.”

What dojo do you train at? Who is your Sensei?

“I train at Paik’s Traditional Martial Arts in Madison, Wisconsin. The school was founded by the late Dr. Sang Kee Paik, and I train under, Shihan Peter Paik. We practice Shudokan, which was founded by Kanken Toyama. Dr. Paik was able to study with Toyama Sensei’s students Kim Ki Whang and Yoon Byung-In. The Okinawan and Korean influences give Shihan Paik’s students a rich traditional martial arts experience. Shihan Paik competed widely in the mid 70’s through the early 80’s and won more than 20 grand championships and 2 national championships. Shihan
Paik encourages all of his students to compete and he trains us to compete across martial arts styles. Some students excel in tae kwan do tournaments and others excel in karate competition. Shihan Paik retired in 2019 and now I train under one of his senior students Sensei Chris Masaki.

“I really lucked out having a world class instructor who didn’t care that I had visual limitations. He told me that he would not treat me differently than his other students, that I would have to do the same training as they did. I could tell he was going to try to get the best out of me that he could. I liked that a lot. I didn’t want to be treated differently or feel like I was the odd man who sat out at times. I knew that if I was going to take Shihan Paik’s class, train in kumite and self-defense, I needed to trust him. Which I did, because I had seen the way the way he worked with my step son and other students. Karate has been a tremendous thing to do in my adult years that I would never have guessed that I’d do.”

What do you do outside of martial arts and other sports?

“My academic interest was in Psychology and as an undergraduate I wanted to study the psychology of belief systems, so I did an undergrad degree with an emphasis on psychology and religious studies. I wanted to think about the psychology behind belief systems and how people learn, or are socialized into, their belief systems. My masters and PhD are in educational psychology which I pursued so that I could work in higher education. I work for University of Wisconsin-Madison as an assistant dean, and director of academic advising services. I have been working there for about 15 years. Outside of my work for the university, I stay connected to the focus of my doctoral research by contributing to studies of human resiliency in the face of injustice. My recent publications have focused on resolving intergroup conflict. Work I enjoy, family, and karate, keep me fairly busy.
Dr. Klatt! That’s wonderful. Is there anything else you’d like to share with our readers?

When I first got involved with USA Karate and was training to try out for a spot on the National team, one of the things I was most looking forward to doing was meeting Sabahudin Tricic and Coach Kohn. I had read about the para-karate team on the USA Karate website, I had read Sabahudin’s TeamUSA profile, and I had watched some interviews of Coach Kohn. When I saw Sabahudin registered for the 2018 National Championships, I really wanted the chance to meet him. I admired Sabahudin’s accomplishments and the opportunity to compete alongside of him in 2018 was a great thrill. Then, to be on the team with him, practice with him, and receive coaching from Sensei Kohn in 2019 was an amazing experience. The unexpected bonus was meeting many other great people involved in some way with USA Karate, the athletes, the coaches, and the USA Karate staff members. I would like the readers to know I really appreciate the commitment USA Karate has made to para athletes both in creating opportunities to compete and in creating a welcoming environment. Over this last year, during the pandemic, USA Para-karate team continues to practice the second Saturday of each month via zoom. I have really enjoyed getting to know everyone. I am very grateful to the team members and to Coach Kohn for this opportunity and I look forward to what the future brings after things get back to normal. USANKF
The city of Lisbon, in Portugal, held the last WKF Premiere League event before the 2020ne Tokyo Olympic Games. It was a good “sounding board” for many athletes after more than a year off due to the Covid-19 Pandemic around the world.

It took place under, the now famous, “bubble” which requires a series of Covid-19 safety protocols for all participants. Some of the USA Karate athletes travelled and did their last competition either before the Games or the Paris Qualifier to be held in the month of June.

The Tokyo Olympic Games are around the block. Time to roll. Go USA!
Ariel Torres performs kata “Annan Dai” during the second round elimination.
Sakura Kokumai executing “Chatan Yara No Kusanku”. She made it to the bronze medal match.
Gakuji Tozaki showing his best during the performance of kata “Annan Dai”.
It was the last train to the Budokan. With five of the ten spots filled, the top four athletes in the Ranking already qualified along with Japanese selection for the Tokyo Olympic Games, the stadium Jean Pierre Coubertin was going to be the witness of one of the most exciting karate events in the history of the sport. Some of the great names were going to fight for the next three Olympic spots on the tatami of the legendary Nippon Budokan.

The three kumite weight divisions for both male and female matched those that will be in Tokyo 2020; Male: -61Kg, +75Kg and -75Kg. Female: -55Kg, +61Kg, +70Kg.

The USA Team took the following athletes to Paris:
- Trinity Allen (-55Kg)
- Elisa Au (-61Kg)
- Cirrus Lingl (+61Kg)
- Brian Hilliard (-67Kg)
- Tom Scott (-75Kg)
- Brian Ir (75Kg)
- Ariel Torres (Male Kata)

The USA Team delegation had its HQ in the Mercure Hotel, approximately 70 yards from the event venue. Extremely close and convenient.

During the initial phase of the stay, the USA athletes had to figure out a couple of basic logistics. Surprisingly, the organization of the event had no place for any team to practice for three or four days before the even started. This situation put all teams in a very difficult position and the athletes competing at the end of the tournament, could have been almost a week with no proper place to practice. This is extremely hard to understand for an Olympic qualification event.

The USA delegation managed to rent a room in the Hotel for use of the USA Team only. Although it was not the a traditional training space, the Team managed to do what it had to do.

The competition venue, the legendary Jean Pierre de Coubertin, historical place where some of the greatest karate matches ever took place, had a surprise for all of us: absolutely no AC inside the venue. The drops of sweat run through the faces of those getting into the venue, as soon as we passed the “control point”.

On the first day of competition Trinity Allen faced Cambell Kathryn from Canada on the first match. Although being a very young athlete could have been an obstacle for a tournament of this level, she definitely pulled her weight on the first match and won convincingly. It was in the second match against Valeria Kumizaki from Brazil when she got eliminated.

Brian Hillard faced Plakhutin Evgeny from Russia and lost in the first match. Unfortunately, his opponent lost in the match after and there was no recharge for Hilliard.

The second day started with Ariel Torres in the male Kata division. Ariel started with an impressive “Kururunfa” that made him win his first round.

On the second round Ariel won – one more time – with impressive dominance in both technique and physical criteria. On the third and final round of the morning elimination, the USA athlete secured the place for the evening final, where he demonstrated why he was the “seed” number one in this event.
In the evening “round robin” elimination, Torres – performing “Ohan Dai” in the first round to defeat the athlete from Iran. On the second round, he did “Anan Dai” and impressively beat the representative of Taipei. And in the final match, with a great delivery of “Anan”, Torres beat Park Heejun from Republic of Korea. The young kata athlete from Florida impressed everybody – including the judges – showing his progress and improvement during the Pandemic and leaving a very good image for his possibilities in Tokyo by defeating other top contenders by a wide margin.

The kumite division brought Elisa Au in the -61Kg division. She fought well but the match went to ‘hantei’ and the decision was favorable to her opponent, Alnaimi Aseel from Jordan.

Elisa Au, a three-time World Champion, saw her dream evaporate in the hands of the referees, being that ‘hantei’ always is a very subjective appreciation of what happens on the mat.

Tom Scott, “Captain America” was next on the -75Kg division. Scott started the match blitzing and scored a point from the “get go”. This set the pace for the rest of the match that Tom controlled, dominated and won convincingly. It was an impressive match.

The legendary Brazilian fighter Douglas Brose won against his opponent and Scott was going to face the Brazilian in the next match. They both knew what was at stake here. The first seconds of the match were used to analyze and ‘feel’ the opponent. Brose got the first point. Scott attacked with a Chudan kick that seemed to score but that was not given by the referees. Coach Brody Burns asked for Video Review (VR) and the point was denied. With more than 90 seconds still to go, this could be an important factor since this match was going to be very close. Toward the end, Scott landed a Jodan kick to Brose’s face but no referee called the point. With no possibility of a VR because of the previously lost card, there was no chance to request the VR and prove that the kick actually scored.

Brose won and left Tom Scott out when the Brazilian lost on his next match.
On the third and final day Cirrus Lingl and Brian Irr had their opportunity to get their spot for Tokyo Olympics. Cirrus Lingl faced Isaeva Victoria from Russia and lost in the first match. Her opponent lost afterwards and left Cirrus with no chance of getting into the repechage.

Brian Irr faced Jakupi Berat from Macedonia on the first match. Brian controlled the match with good sense of distance and tempo but no score occurred until the last moment when his opponent grabbed him, swept him onto the floor and punched. The referees gave an Ippon although for many the punch seemed to hit Brian Irr’s arms which were covering his body and face.

Brian waited for repechage and although his opponent kept winning, he ended up losing and preventing Irr from getting into the Round Robin part of the tournament to be held in the evening.

The Paris Qualifier came to an end with a bittersweet taste. USA Karate kata athlete, Ariel Torres won his ticket to Tokyo in an impressive manner; winning the elimination rounds decisively and in the final round robin part of the tournament, winning all his matches once more with an outstanding performance.

Tokyo will be waiting to USA Karate athletes; Ariel Torres (kata), Brian Irr in +75Kg (who qualified by Continental selection) and Sakura Kokumai (kata) already qualified previously to this event.

All of them will pack their bags shortly and will give their best to bring home the Gold for the USA TEAM.

Tokyo awaits, but now….is much closer. USANKF
TRINITY ALLEN (-55KG)
ELISA AU (-61KG)
CIRRUS LINGL (+61 KG)
PARIS, FRANCE

BRIAN HILLIARD (-67KG)
TOKYO 2020 KARATE QUALIFIER

TOM SCOTT (-75KG)
BRIAN IRR (+75KG)
ARIEL TORRES (MALE KATA)
LAUNCH, LOCATION & GOVERNANCE

The U.S. Center for SafeSport is a national nonprofit organization providing education, resources and training to promote respect and prevent abuse in sport. The Center is located in Denver, Colorado, and opened in March 2017. The Center is governed by a nine-member board of directors, which includes subject-matter experts in the areas of abuse prevention and investigation, ethics compliance and sport administration.

MISSION, PURPOSE & VISION

To cultivate and steward a culture of dignity and respect in sport.

Purpose

Enable every athlete to thrive by fostering a national sport culture of respect and safety, on and off the field of play.

Vision

Every athlete is safe, supported and strengthened through sport.

• Safe. Athletes are protected from emotional, physical and sexual abuse.
• Supported. Athletes enjoy welcome, respectful environments, and diversity is actively embraced.
• Strengthened. Athletes use the skills they’ve learned in sport to contribute to the well-being of their communities.
SERVICES

Education and Outreach Office
The Center’s Education and Outreach Office will administer prevention programming, raise issue awareness, and provide resources and training to promote respect and prevent misconduct, such as bullying, hazing, harassment and abuse. The Center will:
• Provide education materials, including talking points, fact sheets, brochures and training materials
• Centralize best practices, provide self-evaluation tools and offer specialized resources
• Offer sport organizations easy access to educational opportunities for their coaches, staff, volunteers, parents and athletes

Response and Resolution Office
The Center’s Response and Resolution Office will investigate and resolve alleged policy violations for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements’ 47 member National Governing Bodies, including the USA National Karate-do Federation.
• As a member organization of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, the USANKF has agreed to adhere to the Center’s policies and procedures, including the SafeSport Code, which identifies prohibited conduct and serves as the benchmark by which the Center determines whether or not a policy violation has occurred. These policies and procedures also outline:
  - Center jurisdiction and authority
  - Sanctioning guidelines
  - Reporting and confidentiality
  - Resolution procedures, including investigation and arbitration
• Aggregate data from Center investigations will be used to identify trends and patterns across sport, strengthening national prevention efforts.
JURISDICTION & AUTHORITY

The Center has jurisdiction over Covered Individuals. These are persons:

- Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of the USANKF
- The USANKF or the USOC authorizes, approves or appoints to a position of authority over athletes or who will have frequent contact with athletes
- Identified by the USANKF as being within the Center’s jurisdiction

The Center will have the exclusive authority to investigate and resolve alleged SafeSport Code violations involving sexual misconduct. The USANKF will retain the authority to investigate and resolve alleged SafeSport Code violations that are non-sexual in nature. Although, at the USANKF’s request, the Center may exercise the discretionary authority to take on cases of this nature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exclusive Authority</th>
<th>Discretionary Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All forms of sexual misconduct.</td>
<td>Other policy violations, including physical misconduct, emotional misconduct, bullying, hazing and harassment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR SAFESPORT CODE VIOLATIONS

All individuals, regardless of membership with the USANKF, are encouraged to report suspected violations of the SafeSport Code. Covered Individuals who are over the age of 18 are required to report suspected SafeSport Code violations related to or accompanying sexual misconduct. Covered Individuals who fail to report SafeSport Code violations may be subject to disciplinary action.

How to Report

Individuals should report suspected SafeSport Code violations directly to the Center.

Reporting to the Center:

- **Online:** https://uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/
- **Phone:** (720) 524-5640

Confidentiality

Although the Center cannot guarantee confidentiality, it will, to the greatest extent possible, maintain the privacy of all individuals involved in the investigation and resolution of alleged SafeSport Code violations.

Anonymous Reporting

Anonymous reporting is permitted.

Legally Mandated Reporting

Reporting alleged criminal conduct to the USANKF or the Center will not satisfy any individual mandatory reporting requirements under state or federal law. Visit https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/ to view state-by-state mandatory reporting laws to determine your reporting obligations and options.
THE INVESTIGATION & RESOLUTION PROCESS

In response to an alleged SafeSport Code violation, the Center may:
• Initiate an informal resolution
• Conduct a full investigation
• Conclude the alleged violation is out of scope and refer the matter to the USANKF or the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee

Informal Resolution
The Center may conduct an informal inquiry to collect preliminary facts to determine if the matter should be resolved informally, investigated further or not investigated at this time.

Full Investigation
At the start of a full investigation, the Center will provide notice to both involved parties. Each will be given the opportunity to present supporting evidence and provide contact information for potential witnesses.

Investigator’s Report
After reviewing the evidence in the case and interviewing relevant witnesses, an investigator will prepare a written report detailing:
• The facts of the case based on the available evidence
• Whether or not, based on a preponderance of the evidence, the investigator believes a violation of the SafeSport Code has occurred
• Recommended sanctions, if any

Director’s Decision
The Center’s director of investigations will issue a decision based on the available evidence. If the director determines the individual in question has violated the SafeSport Code, he or she may seek arbitration.
SANCTIONS

The disciplinary process is designed to protect all USANKF athletes, members and participants from future misconduct. With this in mind, all recommended sanctions will be reasonable and proportionate to the violation committed and will emphasize education to ensure that minor misconduct does not escalate into a major violation.

Imposing Sanctions

In response to the Center’s determination that a SafeSport Code violation has occurred, the USANKF will impose any sanctions recommended by the Center. Potential sanctions include, among others, any combination of the following:

- Warning
- Loss of privileges
- Education
- Probation
- Eligibility or participation restrictions

In determining appropriate sanctions, the Center will consider a range of factors, including but not limited to:

- The seriousness of the violation
- The ages of the individuals involved
- Whether or not the alleged policy violator poses an ongoing threat to the safety of others

Implementation Across the Olympic and Paralympic Movement

Participation restrictions imposed by a USOC-member NGB will be upheld across the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

Visit www.uscenterforsafesport.org to learn more or to view the Center’s policies and procedures to determine your responsibilities under the SafeSport Code. The Center’s policies and procedures are subject to change. Should the policies and procedures vary from the information contained herein, the policies and procedures will govern. Visit safesport.usankf.org to review the USANKF Participant Safety Handbook and Minor Athlete and Officials Abuse Prevention Policy.
Some changes have recently occurred as part of the SafeSport initiatives which we partner with the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee and the U.S. Center for SafeSport to develop. As a result of these changes some changes have been implemented in our SafeSport Program. Latest Information on the program, the Safe Sport Code and Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies can be found on our website at SafeSport.usankf.org and the U.S. Center for SafeSport website at uscenterforsafesport.org

Highlights of our SafeSport Program

1. The following individuals are covered under U.S. Center for SafeSport’s Disciplinary Jurisdiction (the most current list of participants can be found at SafeSport.usankf.org):
   - Board of Directors
   - Staff (employee, contractor or volunteer)
   - Interns
   - Contractors with access to athletes
   - Operational and Governance Committee Members
   - Volunteer Event Staff
   - Event and National Team Medical Staff and Trainers
   - Photographers and Videographers with access to competition floor
   - Senior and Junior National Team Athletes over 18 yrs of age
   - Coach members
   - Official members
   - Athletes over 18 yrs of age
   - Volunteers over 18 yrs of age
   - Chaperones

2. SafeSport Training is required annually. Policies around training can be found in the USA-NKF Minor Athletes and Officials Abuse Prevention Policy and Participant Safety Handbook. Training is available at no charge to participants 18 years of age and older. Individuals under 18 years of age can take the course with a signed approval from their parents. The SafeSport Training is available at uscenterforsafesport.org and the course consists of the following topics:
   1. Mandatory Reporting
   2. Sexual Misconduct Awareness Education
   3. Emotional and Physical Misconduct
To obtain the code to create a login and have the results connected to USA Karate you can login to your membership account at usakaratemembership.com or contact the national office at natoffice@usankf.org. The course is also available to individuals not affiliated with the NGB for a small fee at AthleteSafety.org.

Training and resources for minor members have been developed. Youth toolkit is available on the resources page of the safesport.org website and training resources that are age specific for minors will be available soon at athletesafety.org.

3. Background checks will be completed every 2 years with our vendor NCSI rechecking annually.

The cost of the background screening is approximately $30 depending on your state. To complete the background check, you will simply need to do the following:
1. Visit www.ncsisafe.com and click on Background Screening Self Registration
2. Enter Self Registration Number 26244495
3. Enter Your Information as Requested

4. We have updated the Participant Safety Handbook which defines the SafeSport Policies for USA Karate. You should review these policies. The Handbook includes:
   - Training and Education
   - Criminal Background Check Policy
   - Athlete Protection Policy
   - Physical Contact with Athletes Policy
   - Electronic and Social Media Policy
   - Travel Policy
   - Reporting Policy
   - Disciplinary Rules and Procedures

5. We have added the USA-NKF Minor Athletes and Officials Abuse Prevention Policies in compliance with the requirements from the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy to cover both our minor athletes and minor regional officials. You should review these policies. The Policy includes:
   - Training and Education Policy
   - One on One Interactions Policy
   - Massages and Rubdown/Athletic Training Modalities Policy
   - Locker Rooms and Changing Areas Policy
   - Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy
   - Local Travel Policy
   - Team Travel Policy
6. Training and resources for parents have been developed. Parent toolkit is available on the resources page of the safesport.org website and training resources are available at athletessafety.org

7. Reporting

If you know of or suspect a violation of any of the SafeSport Policies or Procedures you are required to report the incident. Reports can be made at:

Sexual Misconduct involving a minor:
- U.S. Center for SafeSport – uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/ or 720-531-0340
- USA Karate Ethics website usakarateethics.com or 844-598-1865
- You should also report Sexual misconduct involving a minor to local law enforcement

All other violations:
- USA Karate Ethics website usakarateethics.com or 844-598-1865
- Report directly to the CEO or Ethics Committee Chairperson
- CEO Contact Phil Hampel – phampel@usankf.org 719-309-6030
- Ethics Committee Chairperson Contact Chris Hodgin – chodgin@usankf.org

USA Karate is concerned about the safety of all our members and has worked diligently to comply with the standards established by the U.S. Center for SafeSport, United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee and federal law. If you have questions on the policies please contact me. If you believe there is a violation to the policies or you have a concern please report that concern. Ways to make a report including anonymous reports can be found at SafeSport.usankf.org
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