REY CHINEN
THE WORLD AND BEYOND JUNIOR KATA WORLD CHAMPION!

2020 USA KARATE SENIOR TEAM TRIAL COLORADO SPRINGS

Para-Karate Athlete STEPHANIE ARRACHE

JESUS DEL MORAL ELITE KATA COACH INTERVIEW

2019 JUNIOR PKF CHAMPIONSHIPS ECUADOR 2019

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JUNIOR PAN AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS ECUADOR 2019

WKF JR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS CHILE 2019
The time has come. The sport of karate has been waiting [and struggling] for decades to have a place in the Olympic stage. The “dream” of many became reality when the art was [finally] accepted to participate in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. That moment has arrived. The last few years have been more than a “traveling challenge” for athletes from all over the world. Premier Leagues and Series A events – plus the national, continental and world championships – have emptied the “savings accounts” of many and put on a hold classes at Universities, jobs, family plans and many other aspects of a “normal’ life. They all embarked into unknown territory with the hope of making it to the ‘promise land’ and be part of that “karate dream”.

With the last opportunity for qualifying set for the month of June in Paris [previously scheduled for May but postponed because of the Coronavirus pandemic], many still have a chance to make it. That Qualifier in Paris is going to be – to say at least - an “interesting” karate event: a combination of Waterloo, Sekigahara and Pearl Harbor [spiced with some collateral elements added] held in a battlefield called ‘tatami’ at the new Jean Pierre Coubertin Arena. It will be the last direct possibility to be in Tokyo and be part of the history of Karate. Only a few good men…and women will be there.

Several USA KARATE athletes still have the opportunity to make it to the land of the Nihon - “Source of Sun”. They will be traveling to Paris in the beginning of March. From these pages, we all at USA KARATE, wish them the best. Many friends, family members, students, teachers, coaches, etc. will be watching the event. All what is left now is… to cross the Rubicon.

The economist and psychologist Daniel Kahneman, who won a Noble Prize in economics for finding profound answers in seemingly innocent questions, wondered if the constant repetition of an enjoyable experience makes us value it more, or ultimately destroys our pleasure.

We hope that the sensational experienced lived the last couple of years [in tatamis around the world] that brought the sport of karate to its highest technical level ever and that ends in Tokyo 2020, will not destroy the love and passion for the sport and that [even without Paris 2024] we can find a new exciting “journey” for all of us to look at the future.

As we think so shall we be.. USANKF.
Unprecedented Times

As we all learn to function in this difficult time, I hope that you and your families are staying safe. I know how challenging this time is for our members. Everyone is struggling with limited abilities to train, dojos closed, events cancelled and far too much loss of life. The impact of this pandemic is far too real and many of us have experienced great stress and loss.

As a Federation, we have brought our Junior and Senior National Teams together with Dr Bartley, our Sport Psychologist, to support our Athletes in managing the stress of the situation. We have also started remote training sessions with our National Teams to get the athletes and coaches together and training during the stay-at-home order. We are working on other opportunities to bring our members together and plan to introduce these in early May. While the challenges have been many during the stay-at-home orders, one thing we are learning is how to be connected when we are physically distant. I think some of these lessons will be of great value after this crisis is over. I look forward to the return to sport and getting back on track.

I know many of you have questions about the events and unfortunately, it’s too early to tell. What I can tell you is that we are in regular contact with our event cities and our resources at the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee to determine the safest way to bring our Signature Events back. We have a lot of great information coming from Dr. Finnoff and the USOPC Medical Staff as they work with the World Health Organization, the Center for Disease Control and Major League Sports on return to training and return to events planning. Our number one priority is the safety of our athletes and their families and we will do our best to get the signature events back as soon as possible.

The international picture is still forming. The Sr PKF Championship has currently been canceled, but we are still waiting on information regarding postponement or cancellation of the Jr PKF and Sr WKF Championships. The postponement of the Olympics has been an interesting challenge and we are in the process of moving all plans and commitments to 2021. As you can imagine, the logistics are complicated. We expect to have the revised Qualification Procedures from the WKF soon. Once received, selection procedures will be amended for approval by the USOPC and published on our website for anyone to access. For now, we are assuming that the changes will be minor and the process will remain very close to the existing selection procedures.

The last item I want to share are some changes in the Athlete Safety Polices, as we are updating the Participant Safety Handbook to reflect the changes in the SafeSport Code and Background Check Policies and Procedures. As a result of the 2019 audits from the US Center for SafeSport and USOPC, there are three significant changes effective immediately.

1. All Adult Athlete members (18 years and older) will be required to take SafeSport Training in order to be a member in good standing and eligible to participate in USA Karate Events. There will be an exception available for some Para-Karate athletes with cognitive learning issues that would prevent them from taking the course in its current format. This process has already been implemented and was enforced with the registration for the USA Open prior to it be cancelled.

2. Sanctioned events will need to consider how they can implement the USA-NKF Minor Athlete and Officials Abuse Prevention Policies into their events. While we understand that not all participants of sanctioned events are members, we need to make sure Athlete Safety is a primary focus of all events. We will publish additional guidance on this over the next few months as they are finalized.

3. Our Member Clubs will need to make sure that all individuals who are in a position of authority over their members are SafeSport trained and have completed a NCSI Background check. We are developing a process to enable the clubs to be compliant with this and will be introducing that policy in May.

While these are incredibly trying times, one of the amazing elements about our sport is the relationships we have. We are in this together and my hope is that after the the hurt and grief, we come out of COVID-19 stronger together. Please stay safe, take care of one another and don’t forget to wash your hands.

Phil Hampel
Chief Executive Officer
USA National Karate-do Federation

From The CEO'S DESK

By Phil Hampel

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Karate began for me in California when I was 6-years-old. I originally started karate to spend time with my friends however, I soon realized I really enjoyed the sport itself and decided to continue doing it after I moved to Florida. Once I moved I joined the “Asaka Dojo” where my competitive career started.

I used to participate in swimming, ice-skating, ballet, and many other sports but I never stuck with any of them like I did with karate. I think it’s because I really admire the discipline and history aspect of it as well as the sport itself when compared to other sports.

To me, the most important attributes of a karate competitor are to be disciplined, determined, and humble. Discipline is necessary to trust your sensei/instructors, and do as they say, as they are trying to help you improve to be the best you can be. Determination is vital for obvious reasons; it’s not easy to try to be the best at what you do, but it will always be the people who put in the most work consistently who will come out on top. Being humble is most important because the moment someone thinks they are the best is the moment their competitors will start to catch up and surpass them.

My training changes according external factors like school, competitions, etc… I had a personal trainer, he was great with trying to make me stronger and more flexible and I learned many great exercises and stretches. Although, I enjoy working out on my own doing specialized exercises that would specifically help me with karate. I do conditioning in the morning 5 days a week, but I believe the most important thing when you are an elite competitor is focusing your energy on your specialty.

During competition season on weekdays I normally do strength and flexibility training in the morning, Kata and Kihon in the afternoon, group classes at the end of the day, and most days competition training after that. Saturdays are for running, and Sundays are for resting. Overall this totals out to be about 40 hours a week.

I don’t get too worked up mentally before big tournaments until the day of actual competition. I am a completely different person when I start to compete; there’s nothing anyone can tell me that can take me out of my zone, my mindset becomes a kind of tunnel vision and all I think of is how to win the next round. My friends have told me they don’t like talking to me before I compete, especially for really important tournaments and I completely understand. It’s because I look extremely angry and in a way, I am. To perform my best, I need my adrenaline to be all the way up and to get that I have to be as mad and pumped up as possible. It might sound funny, but I’ve even kicked walls before to mentally get to the place that I needed to be.

Every time I travel with the Junior National team the trip ends up being another one of the best experiences of my life. The tournaments have such high energy and I absolutely love spending time with people who share the same passion as me and they are all such great, interesting people.

My best advice to anyone is to realize that every tournament is a learning experience and they should be treated as such no matter the results. Always accept criticism and learn from it. Never get discouraged if the flags don’t go your way, instead figure out what you can do to get them next time. USANKF
For young Karate athletes, character development is an integral aspect of sport that plays a large role in their personal growth and maturation. Through sport, athletes learn and apply different values that are directly applicable to real-life situations they will face in adulthood. Also, the promotion of such values teaches athletes they can improve, change, and develop in order to reach their maximum potential.

Three Dimensions of Sportspersonship:
- The consequences of respecting or disrespecting the rules, officials, opponents.
- The consequences of encouraging or criticizing others.
- The consequences of maintaining or losing self-control.

Coaches who set the tone on athletes sportspersonship/sportspersonship have seen athletes more likely to model the desired behavior. Recent research from Botler and Weiss has developed the Sportsmanship Coaching Behaviors Scale, or SCBS (Botler & Weiss, 2012). Initially, we have found validity and reliability for the SCBS as a measure of the coach’s influence on an athlete’s sportspersonship/sportspersonship. According to this research coaches who did not enforce or promote good sportspersonship were much more likely to have athletes who failed to engage in the behavior (Botler & Weiss, 2012). Through their own actions and behaviors, as well as how they enforce good sportspersonship with their athletes, coaches can significantly contribute to an athlete’s character development.

Sportspersonship teaches the youth athlete:
- To respect others (opponents or members of opposing teams),
- To respect authority figures (referees, judges and the coaches of other teams).
- To maintain composure in difficult times (losing a game or match).

The structure and environment that a coach creates through their interactions with players can also profoundly influence the way in which athletes develop the life skills of initiative, respect, and teamwork and leadership.

Coaches are responsible for:
- Encouraging the athletes to set up and take challenges.
- Effectively promoting the development of life skills for their athletes.
- Promoting social perspective of teamwork, loyalty and perseverance.
- Teaching moral perspective and value of honesty.

Such skills are directly applicable to everyday life and are invaluable. Creating strong sportspersonship practices is critical for the developing Karate athlete. The athlete that embraces these character traits has been shown to be less judgemental of others and more resilient when faced with challenges. Sharing a strong character building practice is a crucial part of developing sportspersonship.

References:
How Far is Too Far?

The daily news has not brought us much comfort in the past weeks. We listen, desperately hoping to hear that somehow we have begun to control the Coronavirus outbreak. Instead, we hear more about an epidemic that continues to invade many countries in what seems like no time!

We know that travel bans and advisories to prevent the spread of the virus are helping, but not to the level we would like. The number of people affected is increasing, even though precautionary measures in some parts of the world are so extreme that some cities are in complete quarantine and canceling all sorts of gatherings, including sporting events.

This is all happening at a time when athletes from the United States and many other countries are deep into Olympic qualifications and getting excited about the games. In spite of the excitement, we can’t help but wonder what the next few months will bring.

The question remains: what should we do? What if Olympic tryouts around the world are postponed, with everything put on hold until we can secure the health of everyone? Or what if they aren’t postponed? Is it too risky to just keep going with the tryouts? Is it taking things too far?

U.S. karate athletes, like those from many other nations, are traveling around the globe to increase their chance of securing a spot in the 2020 Olympics in Japan. The Coronavirus outbreak makes that an even harder journey. In addition to the fatigue of travel, of pushing their bodies to their limits, of dealing with the emotion and stress of losing or winning competitions, athletes now also face the uncertainty of how this virus might affect their once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to compete in the Olympics. Although Japan is optimistic about hosting the Olympics in another few months, the truth is that the situation could change at any time. Schools in Japan are closed for at least a month with the hope of controlling the virus. But will it be controlled? What will happen if many Olympic qualifications do not take place? What will happen if the host country is safe, but not many others who are sending their athlete to compete? What will happen if Paris karate qualification is canceled? Who will decide the remaining qualified athletes for each category and how?

Without any doubt, karate officials also face similar uncertainty. As the WKF requirements obligate us to participate in many overseas premier league, series A, or youth league competitions, we don’t know what will happen if we take the precaution of not participating in a required event. By being prudent about the risk, would we lose our opportunity to be present at the world championship? Should we instead take our cue from karate leaders and participate in those events? These are questions that are difficult to answer, and there is no crystal ball to help us!

My personal point of view is that we referees cannot and should not drop the ball this close to the Olympics. As karate and Budo practitioners, we have been trained to not give up easily. We have learned and we teach others to keep pushing, to keep going, to overcome all obstacles in our lives. For the sake of our athletes, we should not give up on pursuing this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, even if we’re not sure yet about karate’s future in the Olympics. Our athletes are sacrificing many things and putting everything they have on the line to pursue their Olympic dreams, and we cannot ignore that. Their safety is our number one priority, but we can take all manner of precautions for the remaining events to ensure that they have every opportunity to achieve them.

Maybe between the time of writing this column and its publication, something will have changed, maybe the situation will be different enough for us to have an easier decision. However, until we know for sure, we cannot give up. We have to keep going, keep running the competitions that are the lifeblood of our athletes’ dreams. In my opinion, that is not too far, not by a long shot, for it keeps their dreams alive! USANKF
It was heartwarming to see. His older brother, a 10 year old child with Cerebral Palsy and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), was getting his green belt, at the same time his little brother, a neuro-typical child without disability, was getting his yellow belt.

In many schools, sports or other group activities, these two brothers would not be found in the same class. But in karate, and with the expanded Para-karate programming that so many dojos in the federation offer, this is a very real possibility.

“The fact that my kids can do a sport together is HUGE for our family. My little boy looks up to his big brother so much. He doesn’t see him as “disabled” or anything. He admires and loves his big brother and wants to do what he’s doing. Karate has made that dream come true in a way that I didn’t know was possible” said Tracy, the mom of the two kids mentioned above.

This is a wonderful thing, on many levels for this family, but it is actually much bigger than that.

Research shows that one of the biggest challenges our kids with ASD face is social interactions with their peers. Also, acceptance by their peers can vary from place to place. In the dojo, especially in blended classes that include all people, regardless of their differing abilities, kids can succeed. They can do structured partner exercises and work on team katas. The fact that our national championships has a division for family kata (which could absolutely contain one member of the family who is a person with disabilities) is a wonderful outlet for inclusion.

I remember one parent saying this to me last year: "Sensei, my boys were getting into it at home. They started verbally fighting about a video game or something. I told them to get on their kumite gloves and hold targets for each other. At first they rolled their eyes at me, but then they did it. They threw those punches and got out their energy in a safe, and constructive way, but also in a way that helped them practice karate AND promoted positive social interaction. It was great! By the end of the ten minutes they were laughing, like nothing had even happened. I had watched the whole exchange, and it was fantastic. Only after the fact did it occur to me that my older kid, a person with Autism, never really interacts and engages in that way. And that in fact, his interaction was the most typical thing ever for a boy his age. I started to cry tears of joy. Karate has changed my boy's life, for sure” said Mike, the father of two other kids in the dojo, one with disabilities and one without.

More and more I am seeing this pattern. One of the siblings in a family is a child with disabilities and one or more is not. With the increasing demands in scheduling, money and other factors, it can feel very overwhelming for a parent to find activities that kids can do together. When we were kids things were a little less busy, I think. But now, with karate, there is truly a spot for every member in a family, including the parents!

"As an educator who works with students on college admissions, I appreciate the unique learning environment para-karate and inclusion classes creates for siblings--and all students. I’ve seen both neuro-typical and differently abled siblings in the dojo make tremendous academic growth, which, I believe, is a function of how karate develops both their discipline and social-emotional learning. The students are simply more focused, mature, and self-confident. Siblings—different in so many ways—come together at the dojo around a common code of conduct and shared purpose. One of the most remarkable college application essays I’ve read was written by one of the dojo’s students, who explored her relationship with her differently abled brother, specifically how that complex relationship was strengthened and developed at the dojo. She was admitted to her first-choice school.” – Dr. Matthew Pietrafetta, educator and parent

Well, there you have it. I encourage all dojos that have para-karate athletes to consider classes where family members can train together sometimes. It’s worth it. USANKF
You may have heard of the term mushin. Mushin means “no mind,” which is the ideal mindset of the karate student. This principle is about the importance of keeping an open, flexible mind, both in the dojo and in the everyday world.

Although you have to concentrate on what you are doing, and give it your full attention, you must not close your mind off to the world around you. While you are completing a task you must concentrate on that task and at the same time keep your mind open and flexible enough to react to a sudden change in your situation. You have probably heard this before, and it is true: The one constant in life is change. Change happens all the time. It never stops. Remember: nothing is static. You must therefore be prepared to react to a change in whatever situation you are in, as it happens. Without such an open mindset, it is impossible to defend yourself against multiple opponents.

If you are able to maintain a flexible mind—if you can “release” your mind—then, and only then, can you release your body and ready it for movement and defense. If your mind is fixed in one place, then your body will also be fixed in place.

So you understand, the term mushin, or “no mind,” does not mean you do not use your mind at all. That is impossible. As human beings, the mind is of course an important tool in our ability to function. But what Master Funakoshi is talking about is releasing your mind—not attaching yourself to your mind—so that you are able to step back and see your mind just as you can see, say, a tree in your yard. You are not your mind, just as you are not that tree in your yard. You have a connection to both, but you should not entirely identify with either. It is essential to understand what it is to detach your “self” from “yourself.” This may sound confusing, but think about it. At one time or another, you have probably heard someone say, “I can’t live with myself anymore!” One person is talking about two different selves, “I” and “myself.” And unless you are hearing incorrectly, you have just learned that the one cannot live with the other. How can this be?

If we examine this problem, we will better understand the old saying, one that I believe very much to be true, that every person is his or her “own worst enemy.” Think of the “I” as your true self, the self that is able to step back and objectively observe your thoughts and feelings, completely without judgement. The “I” is pure consciousness, with nothing getting in the way. That, again, is your true self.

What, then, is the “myself” in this one person?

“Myself” is none other than your ego—that part of you that considers your thoughts and your feelings as you. As far as your ego is concerned, you don’t merely have thoughts and feelings—you are your thoughts and feeling! The ego is that part of you that wants this or that, and desires the world to be a certain way, and judges right and wrong. Ultimately, it is the source of all human suffering, both individually and on a grand scale, because it is the ego that tells us not to accept what is. The extreme example of how destructive the ego can be is when we see the terrible atrocities of war. At the root of every war are a relatively few human egos. So great is the ego’s potential for destruction, that all it really takes is one.
To say the least, this ego, this “myself,” can really get in the way of a person seeing reality for what it really is. You cannot see what is, if you refuse to accept what is. And that is what the ego does: It refuses to accept what is. That is why it is true that each of us is our own worst enemy. By refusing to accept what is, we refuse inner peace, wherein lies true happiness.

As “troublesome” as the ego can be, it is able to survive as a part of you because you identify with it. This happens because your ego wants you to think it is you. The ego is part of nature, your nature, and so it has its own survival mechanisms, its greatest one being that it can fool you into identifying with it, unless you take steps in your life to realize the truth. You must learn to separate yourself from your ego, to step back and see yourself, your thoughts and feelings, with objectivity. When you do this, you will see things as they are, with perfect clarity. This is what Master Funakoshi meant when he said to be able to “release your mind.” This is what is meant by mushin. Karate training, then, is a path to lead you to realize: You are not your ego. You are more, much more.

In the same way you can step out of yourself to objectively observe your “self,” you can also step back and observe your own skills and level of achievement in karate. Modern technology helps to make this possible, for a good way to do this is by watching videotapes. You may think that you are very good, or even the best, but if you view yourself on video, you will be surprised to see how you actually perform. There is always room for improvement.

But again, the most important aspect of “releasing your mind” is that it increases your awareness, your consciousness, of what is going on inside and around you. Remember when we talked about the importance of knowing yourself before knowing others? Here we are talking about the same principle. If you step back from yourself, so as to be able to objectively observe your own thoughts and feelings—if you “release” your mind—you will greatly increase your ability to sense or “feel” an opponent in your midst. This is important if you are entering a dangerous situation. If you are able to sense these circumstances then you can avoid them. However, if your mind is preoccupied with other things, you will not be able to defend yourself.

In ippon kumite, you are concentrating on executing one finishing technique. Simultaneously, you must be ready to defend yourself against multiple opponents.

In jiu kumite, if you are thinking about which techniques are best to execute you are not practicing kokoro wa hanatan koto o yosu. You must free or empty your mind in order to feel all your opponents’ intentions. Then, and only then, will your resulting techniques be natural.

A student who is just beginning to learn free sparring will many times “telegraph” his intentions to his opponent. The advanced student will be able to see this immediately and react accordingly. The ability to free your mind while remaining mindful takes years of practice.

You must fight within yourself and remain humble if you are to see yourself and your situation clearly. USANKF
The last WKF Junior World Championship represented a turning point in the career of Rey Chinen. In many ways it is a “no turning back” point because, where do you go after winning a Gold Medal and become the World Champion? For Rey, this is just the beginning: “I am still very young, a long way to go to get where I want to be but it show that if you put time and dedication in what you want accomplish, you will get it”.

He was born into a karate family, “the reason why I started Karate was because of a family in my dojo. Everyone was there for each other, which I look back now, was such a privilege to have.”

Aware of what is expected from him in the upcoming years, he is far from being overcome with the responsibility: “One day at a time. I am happy for the victories but I don’t get depressed with defeats. I know that sometimes all plays out well and others...nothing comes out right. So the secret is to keep working and training hard.”
How long have you been practicing Karate and who is your teacher?

I have been practicing Karate for about 15 years, and am under “Kachi Karate Hawaii”, where my sensei are Sensei Robert Koncal, Sensei Barbara Maile Chinen, Sensei Shannon Nishi, and Sensei Eimi Kurita.

How were your beginnings in the sport?

I come from a Karate family, where my father and my sister (Sensei Barbara Maile Chinen) 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 in the sport weren’t the greatest.

I used to be a rascal, and a cry-baby, and would always be doing push-ups every weekend in the corner of the dojo for being a rascal [laughs]. At tournaments, I did both Kata and Kumite. When I was young, I absolutely dreaded competing in Kumite because I would easily cry even with the slightest touch. When my opponent would punch me, I would proceed to roll over on the ground and cry during my match, embarrassing my father.

Obviously, my beginnings were little rough, but I believe that experiencing these things young helped build a more disciplined foundation for my future.

Why did you choose karate over other sports?

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. By witnessing the world-class level, I really wanted to become like my idols. If we are talking about Kumite, I really was inspired by Rafael Aghayev, and Araga Ryutaro; and in Kata, I was inspired by Antonio Diaz, Kiyuna Ryo, Usami Rika, Hoang Ngan Nguyen, the Hasegawa Brothers, and many more athletes. Watching their videos of their Kata’s led me wanting to continue Karate in hopes that I would reach their level someday.

My second reason why I chose Karate was because of a family in my dojo. Everyone was there for each other, which I look back now, was such a privilege to have. I especially enjoyed training Karate because of one friend who was also my rival at the same time. He was a really great athlete, and training side by side with him was
always so fun. While I could hardly beat him, training with him with the thought of wanting to beat him really fueled my flame. Compared to Judo in high school, I really felt the bond that everyone in my dojo shares, and I felt that was what led me to choosing only Karate.

The last reason was because of my late brother. In 2011, my brother passed away through cancer. His fight through cancer was very tough, and doctors told him that he wasn’t going to live long. Despite that he proved the doctors wrong, and lived way past the predictions of the doctors.

Even though he eventually passed away, he imparted a really important lesson, which was to persevere through any obstacle in life. I promised in my heart that I would continue Karate and persevere just like him. He is always in my heart at every tournament, and there was never a moment where I would go into the ring without thinking about him.

How important do you think is for you – at this point of your career - the supplementary training like running, weight lifting, etc?

I think doing supplementary training is a necessity for 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 from short distance sprints; stability and overall heightened physical performance from weight lifting. 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.

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

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

That's a really difficult question, but in my opinion, 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.

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

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.

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

These past few years have been difficult in knowing what's the correct way to train. I've experimented with many ways of training, but in the end I do not think there was one correct answer. As of now, I implement supplementary training like CrossFit, Sprints, and Core Training. Then, I also practice my Kata and just keep trying to get repetitions over and over until competition.

**Being a Junior athlete, how’s your experience traveling with the National team and competing internationally?**

I have been on the National team since 2015, and I have to say that I really do enjoy traveling with everyone because it really is fun to meet everyone from all over the U.S., and being exposed to all sorts of personalities.

In addition, I really enjoy the atmosphere of international competitions like the Pan American Championships or the World Championships, where I was able to immerse myself in the international atmosphere: hearing the cheers from different national teams, getting to meet new people from different countries and becoming friends with them; as well as seeing every country's style of Karate. I am always inspired after every tournament as I am exposed to amazing competitors out in the world, which helps fuel my fire for the next upcoming competitions!

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

This is something I really have struggled with for a few years actually. Recently, I’ve adopted affirmations, visualizations and journaling, and it has helped me prepare psychologically for competition. My mindset until competition is to just train a lot and make sure I have no regrets until competition day because the last thing I want is to go out on the tatami regretting that I didn’t do that one round of Kata in the dojo, etc.

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

I think having Karate in the Olympics is the most amazing thing ever to happen for us! I think even though Karate has a huge population, about 50 million, it would be
nice to show the world what the competition side of Karate looks like. Also maybe it will inspire future generations to take part in the martial art, which is a positive thing because I believe Karate can teach a lot on how to be disciplined, respectful, confident, and also to cope during difficult situations, since Karate can be difficult sometimes...[laughs].

How did you prepare for the last Junior World Championships in Chile where you got the Gold medal?

My preparation started in 2017, right after my loss in the Junior World Championships in Tenerife, Spain. I lost against Egypt 3-2 in the third round, and I was really frustrated.

With this loss being the spark, which started this flame inside me, I promised with everyone else at that time that the U.S. will come back strong in the next World Championships. I trained a lot more after coming back home from the World Championships.

Within the span of two years, I continued my training, but I took many detours, and had to experience a lot of failure in the process. What brought a change to my preparation, and refueled my flame was the Ecuador Pan American Championships in 2019, where I lost first round for the first time.

I quickly realized that the biggest obstacle I had to overcome was myself. It was in the last month and a half before the Junior World Championships, that I was able to bring my Kata to another level. I didn’t change anything in my Kata. I only focused on the points I needed to work on after Ecuador, but focused majority of my time on mental preparation.

I continued doing this until the day of the World Championships, and I was able to bring back home a great result for my country.

How would describe becoming a World Champion?

I was really shocked at first. During the World Championships in Chile, I really didn’t know what was going on in that moment when the judge came to say, “Ao no Kachi”. Certainly the hand was raised towards my side. I really was confused for a split second because I was already shaken with the fact that I made it to a medal round, let alone a gold medal round.

I had a difficult time after the Pan American Championships in Ecuador, and from starting from the ground up again from zero, where I would lose the first round, to making the gold medal match.

I was honestly down for a while after the Pan American Championships however, all the struggle in the end was worth it when I got to see my name on top in the finals, as well as the judge raising their hand for the U.S.

Becoming the World Champion to me was the most amazing feeling because I was able to leave everything out on the mat from round one to the finals, and win a gold medal for the U.S! Plus, hearing the cheering from all my teammates, coaches, parents and everyone else was the greatest feeling ever!

What advice would you give to those who wish to start training?

I can give only a few tips from my experiences, but I think the most important thing is to set a goal first. What do you want to achieve through Karate? How do you see yourself in that moment when you accomplish that goal? I think that you would have to set these first before starting anything.

Once you set your goal, all you have to do is to take the first step.
just do it! The hardest thing that prevents a lot of people from achieving what they want is because of this first step. It seems hard, but once you take that first step I promise it will be a lot easier. 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. Even if you had one bad day, it’s okay! Take the first step again quickly, and get back into it. Just keep going forward.

Keep affirming yourself everyday of your goal. Write it in your journal. Say it out loud to yourself in the mirror. Visualize everyday what accomplishing your goal will feel like. And lastly, take that first step every day to go out there and do something that takes you one percent closer to your goal. Be better everyday!

Finally, what are your plans for the future?

I’m not too sure what the future will hold for me, but I plan to keep continuing doing what I love, and working one percent closer every day to improving my Karate.

USANKF
The top USA karate athletes traveled to Colorado Springs to compete for their spot on the 2020 Senior National Team. This year marks a historical and exciting time for karate with its debut in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games this August.

The athlete who claims first in their division will travel to the World Championships in Dubai this November. Those who place in first and second in their division will travel to the Senior Pan American Championships in Costa Rica this May. Lastly, athletes must place in the top four of their division for a chance to compete later in the day for a spot in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Qualifier in Paris. While several athletes have already secured their spot for the qualifier, the Female Elite -55kg, Female Elite +61kg, and Male Elite -67kg Olympic divisions are all up for grabs.

After a brief recess, athletes returned to the mats to fight for the last spots to compete at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Qualifier in Paris in June 2020.

Per the USOPC/USANKF selection procedures, Ariel Torres (Male Kata), Sakura Kokumai (Female Kata), Tom Scott (-75kg), and Brian Irr (+75kg) secured their spots for the Qualifier with their top 12 World Ranking as of January 1, 2020.

The combined weight divisions for Female Elite Kumite competed first with the top four athletes in both categories from the morning team trials in the pool. The -50kg and -55kg divisions included Tyler Hudson, Eva Alexander, Gia Mazza, Samantha Gant, Trinity Allen, Jenna Brown, Brandi Robinson, and Mackenzy Fields. They all battled it out in a double-elimination bracket, where Trinity Allen claimed the spot for Paris.

1. Brandi Robinson closing the distance on her opponent.  2. Tyler Hudson scoring with a perfect Ura Mawashi Geri.
Results for the 2020 Senior Team Trials

MALE ELITE KATA
FIRST SEAT – GAKUJI TOZAKI
SECOND SEAT – ARIEL TORRES

MALE ELITE KUMITE -60KG
FIRST SEAT – DANY CABELLO
SECOND SEAT – RIKI OSAKO

MALE ELITE KUMITE -67KG
FIRST SEAT – BRIAN RAMRUP
SECOND SEAT – JOSUE HERNANDEZ

MALE ELITE KUMITE -75KG
FIRST SEAT – TOM SCOTT
SECOND SEAT – JARED SMITH

MALE ELITE KUMITE -84KG
FIRST SEAT – KAMRAN MADANI
SECOND SEAT – MAXIMILLIAN SEGAL

MALE ELITE KUMITE +84KG
FIRST SEAT – BRIAN IRR
SECOND SEAT – DAVOUD ASHRAFIAN JAZI

FEMALE ELITE KATA
FIRST SEAT – SAKURA KOKUMAI
SECOND SEAT – JESSICA KWONG

FEMALE ELITE KUMITE -50KG
FIRST SEAT – TYLER HUDSON
SECOND SEAT – EVA ALEXANDER

FEMALE ELITE KUMITE -55KG
FIRST SEAT – TRINITY ALLEN
SECOND SEAT – JENNA BROWN

FEMALE ELITE KUMITE -61KG
FIRST SEAT – ELISA AU
SECOND SEAT – ASHLEY HILL

FEMALE ELITE -68KG
FIRST SEAT – SKYLAR LINGL
SECOND SEAT – ASHLEY DAVIS

FEMALE ELITE KUMITE +68KG
FIRST SEAT – CIRRUS LINGL
SECOND SEAT – MAYA WASOWICZ

2020 TOKYO - PARIS QUALIFIER

FEMALE KATA
SAKURA KOKUMA

FEMALE KUMITE -55KG
TRINITY ALLEN

FEMALE KUMITE -61KG
ELISA AU

FEMALE KUMITE +61KG
CIRRUS LINGL

MALE KATA
ARIEL TORRES

MALE KUMITE -67KG
BRIAN HILLIARD

MALE KUMITE -75KG
TOM SCOTT

MALE KUMITE +75KG
BRIAN IRR

1. Trinity Allen stopping her opponent with a solid Yoko Geri. 2. Ashley Hill scoring with a Chudan Gyaku Tsuki.
1. Trinity Allen throwing a Roundhouse Kick to Ashley Hill. 2. Noah Frisvold avoiding a Chudan Kick. 3. Maya Wasowicz facing Cirrus Lingl. 4. Alex Jinesta looking at his opponent after sweeping him. 5. Brian Hilliard loses his balance during his attack.
1 – 2 & 4) Elisa Au during two of her elimination matches. 3. Joseph Martinez performing kata “Kururunfa”.

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1. USA Karate President, Mr. John DiPasquale and USA Karate CEO, Mr. Phil Hampel. 2 & 3) Junior World Champion Rey Chinen performing kata "Suparimpei". 4 & 5) Gakuji Tozaki gaining the first place with his kata performance.
1. Kamran Madani attacking his opponent. 2. Skyler Lingl during her first match. 3. Ariel Torres on the way to his 2nd place in kata. 4. Jessica Kwong and Gakuji Tozaki smiling for the camera. 5. Sakura Kokumai performing kata “Suparimpei”.

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Next, the top four athletes from the Female Elite Kumite -68kg and +68kg divisions fought for the spot in the +61kg category. Ashley Davis, Kiera MacKenzie, Cheryl Murphy, Cirrus Lingl, Taylor Wood, Maya Wasowicz, Skylar Lingl, and Christy Dey all took the mat, but it was Cirrus Lingl who claimed victory.

With no combined divisions making up the -61kg category, Elisa Au secured her spot with her first-place finish in the morning team trials.

Moving into Male Elite Kumite, the +84kg and -84kg divisions competed for the alternate spot in the +75kg category. This included Braden Ivey, Eric Jones, Kamran Madani, Logan Witte, Davoud Ashrafian Jazi, Benjamin Harrison, and Maximillian Segal. In the end, it was Kamran Madani who was victorious.

Lastly, the Male Elite Kumite -67kg division encompassed the top four athletes from both the -60kg and -67kg divisions to fight for the final spot among their fellow athletes. Dany Cabello, Brian Hilliard, Josue Hernandez, Riki Osako, Brian Ramrup, Elvis Ramic, Kenneth McLymore, and Alex Jinesta all battled it out until finally, Brian Hilliard secured his spot for Paris. USANKF
JEWISH KARATEKAS
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AGE DIVISION:
JUNIOR (BIRTH YEARS 03-06) M/F
OPEN (BIRTH YEAR 2002+) M/F

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I had the pleasure of meeting Stephanie in 2019 at the Nationals in Chicago. Her bright smile and great enthusiasm were contagious! I watched her compete in the Elite Para-Karate Team trials and she was so happy to win her spot on the US Team in the Para-Karate Wheelchair division. As she will be travelling with us to Costa Rica in May, for PKF, I thought it would be great for folks to hear her story.
Stephanie Arrache, age 39, was born in Lancaster, California, and then later moved to Los Angeles. Now a days she and her husband and 4 year old son live in the Palm Springs area. She started training in martial arts at age 7, at that time practicing the Korean style called Tang Soo Do under Mister Kenny Herrera, but stopped in High School, due to other interests. She hadn't done anything of the sort until she met Sensei Tamara Canedo in 2017.

I asked her if she was willing to talk about her disabilities and the reasons she’s now in a wheelchair full time. She replied: “Absolutely! I am more than happy to talk about it any and all of it! I was born with a tumor on my spine, a non-cancerous fatty lipoma. My first surgery was at the age of 18 months. They removed part of it, but it kept growing back. Then my first major surgery was at the age of 10, and that one kept me walking. With high tech laser technology they removed most of the tumor at that time, a 13 hour operation. And through all of this time I credit karate and martial arts with being the thing that helped me pull through. And guess what? My original sensei trained under Chuck Norris! And when I was in the hospital, they got him to call me and wish me well! That was a huge honor for me.”

After that, she went through a couple more surgeries in her mid-20's, but they didn’t help much and the tumor grew back. Then in 2012 she went to a new surgeon. He performed a major operation on Stephanie in August, 2013. A surgery from which she woke up paralyzed.

“I woke up paralyzed. But honestly, it was no fault of the doctor's or anything, it just happened. The nerves gave out. I actually feel so grateful to that surgeon because he was able to save my complete bladder function. Many people in my situation have no feeling in their core or legs or anything and therefore no ability of bladder function. But in my case, I have some sensation in my upper thighs, my legs haven’t atrophied at the same rate as other people and I have a really strong core. It’s actually so amazing.”

After high school she went to University of California, Riverside, for two years and then dropped out because she just wasn’t sure what she wanted to do and just wasn’t ready. So many of us can relate to that. After working for a few years she returned and finished her Bachelor's degree in English. Then she still wasn’t exactly sure which way to turn, until one day she had a life-changing conversation with her father.

“I can’t kick, but I can punch really hard. I would love to do some sparring! But seriously, it’s all about learning to adapt”.

“I can’t kick, but I can punch really hard. I would love to do some sparring! But seriously, it’s all about learning to adapt.”
“I told my dad I wanted to help people. I thought I wanted to be a special education teacher. And then my dad suggested that I consider law school. I was shocked. Honestly, I didn’t think I was smart enough to go to law school. But I went, took a chance. The first day of classes I fell in love with it! I had the feeling that “I belong here”. And let me tell you - I was a total nerd that first year! I sat in the front row and was all in! I was so happy.”

Stephanie went to Law School at Chapman University in Orange, CA and began her law practice in criminal defense after passing the bar in California.

Just randomly, a little over two years ago, she saw a flyer advertising free trial karate classes for children and brought her son in to try it out.

“It’s funny, my son was only 2½ and I took him because I wanted him to love karate, like I did when I was a kid. I shared with Sensei Tamara that I used to train and she said “why aren’t you still training?” I looked at her like she was crazy. Don’t you see the wheelchair? I thought to myself. She said she’d teach me, no problem and told me about the opportunities for para-karate on the national and international levels. The next day, I thought I would see how it went. But I sat in the parking lot, so nervous to even move. I thought that people would look at me funny. I thought I was being crazy! I was 37 years old, a mother, a professional person and in a wheelchair! So I did what many of us do in situations like that, I called my mom. After she gave me a pep talk, I went in the dojo. Everyone was so nice. In my second class I was breaking boards and punching targets and it all came flooding back to me. I was hooked!”

Being on the US national team wasn’t on Stephanie’s radar. But Sensei Tamara encouraged her to compete, and serve as an advocate/mentor and even pioneer for persons in wheelchairs who wish to compete in karate.

“I hope to be an example to other people in wheelchairs or with any type of disabilities. I want people to know that they CAN do things, even when they feel hopeless. It’s ok to feel bad, you have a right to your emotions, but know there is always hope.”

Stephanie, along with her husband and son, is moving to Wyoming in June. They are headed to a little town, 45 minutes outside of Yellowstone, where they bought a cabin and gift store.

“I am licensed in Washington DC, California and will get my law license in Wyoming, although I don’t know if I’ll practice when we move there. I may keep my festival practice open in California, but other than that, probably not. My husband is a HS teacher, teaching theater and shop. In Wyoming, he will be working as the Assistant Director of the National Museum of Military Vehicles. I will be running the gift shop and raising my son. That’s where we want to raise him.”

As far as her condition, she shared that at this point she is stable, but assumes the tumor will grow back at some point. But it’s slow growing, and as she mentioned earlier, the location (L-1 and S-1 area) allows her to have complete upper body and major core strength.

“I can’t kick, but I can punch really hard. I would love to do some sparring! But seriously, it’s all about learning to adapt. Growing the Pare-Karate program is biggest thing.”

FUN FACT: Stephanie also writes romance novels under a pen name! She’s working on a new one now starring a military person in a wheelchair, who “is a karate bad-ass!”

USANKF
The city of Guayaquil in Ecuador held the 2019 Cadet, Junior and U21 Pan American Championships. These are the medals and places the USA KARATE athletes took in the continental championships. 

2019 RESULTS

CADET KATA FEMALE
JOELLE INCIONG – GOLD MEDAL
KALEA ARANDANAS – BRONZE MEDAL

CADET KATA MALE
DASILVA CAIO – SILVER MEDAL
RICKY JON BALGENORTH – BRONZE MEDAL

CADET KUMITE FEMALE -47kg
JOELLE INCIONG – GOLD MEDAL

CADET KUMITE FEMALE -54kg
XIAMARA DRUMMER – BRONZE MEDAL

CADET KUMITE MALE -52kg
JANCO DORTA – GOLD MEDAL
MARTIN GISSA – 7TH PLACE

CADET KUMITE MALE -57kg
JONATHAN MEROLA – 9TH
JUNIOR KUMITE MALE -76kg
BRANDEN IVEY – BRONZE MEDAL

CADET KUMITE MALE -57kg
JONATHAN MEROLA – 9TH
JUNIOR KUMITE MALE -76kg
BRANDEN IVEY – BRONZE MEDAL

CADET KUMITE MALE +70kg
LESTER DIAZ – BRONZE MEDAL

JUNIOR KATA FEMALE
ZOE MESZARO – GOLD MEDAL
KAITLYN SHIMOHARA – SILVER MEDAL

JUNIOR KATA MALE
KEVIN STEVENS – SILVER MEDAL

JUNIOR KUMITE FEMALE -48kg
SCHUYLER MAGUIGAD – BRONZE MEDAL

JUNIOR KUMITE FEMALE -59kg
SARA HOSTETTLER – GOLD MEDAL

JUNIOR KUMITE MALE -55kg
FRANK RUIZ – BRONZE MEDAL
BRANDON NAKAJIMA-WU – 5TH PLACE

JUNIOR KUMITE MALE -61kg
EDGAR TORRES – GOLD MEDAL

JUNIOR KUMITE MALE -68kg
DORIAN PAJOR – GOLD MEDAL
ALEX GROSVENOR – BRONZE MEDAL

JUNIOR KUMITE MALE -76kg
JONATHAN MEROLA – 9TH
JUNIOR KUMITE MALE +76kg

KATA TEAM CADET & JUNIOR FEMALE
BRONZE MEDAL
KAITLYN SHIMOHARA
NATALIE HERTOGH
ZOE LAGUNAY

KUMITE TEAM MALE U21
SAFIN KASTURI
NOLAN OREAR
KAITO PRICE
SAISHEREN SENPON

U14 KUMITE FEMALE -47kg
MARIA GLADKH – BRONZE MEDAL
SOPHIE MALAN – 5TH PLACE

U14 KUMITE FEMALE +47kg
BAYLEE SPENCER – 7TH PLACE

U14 KUMITE MALE -55kg
EVANGELOS AKDE – 5TH PLACE

U14 KUMITE MALE -40kg
JAMES DIAZ – 5TH PLACE
AIDAN NAKAJIWA-WU – 5TH PLACE

U14 KUMITE MALE -45kg
SEIGA BRIONES – 5TH PLACE

U14 KUMITE MALE -55kg
LAWRENCE MUSAT – BRONZE MEDAL

U21 KATA FEMALE
TAYLOR CHUNG – 5TH PLACE
JAYCIE NELSON – 11TH PLACE

U21 KATA MALE
TOZAKI TAISHI – SILVER MEDAL
REY CHINU – 9TH PLACE

U21 KUMITE FEMALE -55kg
ANIKO TROTMAN – 7TH PLACE

U21 KUMITE FEMALE -60kg
JOSEPH TOLENTINO – 5TH PLACE

U21 KUMITE FEMALE -61kg
KELARA MADANI – 5TH PLACE

U21 KUMITE MALE -60kg
JOSEPH TOLENTINO – 5TH PLACE

U21 KUMITE MALE -67kg
ANGELO PALMIERI – 7TH PLACE

U21 KUMITE MALE -75kg
SAISHEREN SENPON – SILVER MEDAL

U21 KUMITE MALE -84kg
SAMUEL PARMA – 7TH PLACE
1. Coach Maile Chinen giving last moment instructions to the Female Kumite Team. 2. USA Team athletes warming up before the event. 3 & 4) Taishi Tozaki during his kata performance.
1. Coach Akira Fukuda talking to one of the kata athletes. 2. Female Kumite team ready to start. 3. Coaches Dustin Baldis and Maile Chinen posing for USA Karate Magazine. 4. Athlete Riky Garcia during his first match.
1. USA Team supporting the athletes. 2. Rachel Lam finishing her kata. 3. Coach Brody Burns giving final advise to an athlete. 4. Coach Randy Word congratulates the USA athlete. 5. Taishi Tozaki demonstrating an impressive technique.
1. Riley Garcia scoring with a Jodan Tsuki.  
2. Saiheren Senpon scoring a perfect Jodan Tsuki.  
3. Rachel Lam during her “Chatan Yara No Kusanku” kata.  
4. Coaches Baldis and Fukuda observing the kata competition.  
5. Sabrina Hostetler-Kheder scoring a perfect “Ippon” after sweeping her opponent.
“No paints nor brushes, marbles nor chisels, are needed to make the art of karate, for we are the stuff that kata is made of. It is born in our body, exists in our body and dies in our body. Kata, then, is the most personal of all the arts... it springs from the very breath of life.”

Yoshimi Inoue
Sensei Jesus del Moral is a rarity in the world of karate – while you don’t hear negatives about him, he is a relevant figure with very clear viewpoints. But those viewpoints are centered in his love for the art of karate. When you ask Sensei Del Moral a question, he’ll give you an answer not only as a sport Coach but as ‘budoka” as well. Research and development are his guidelines, and as a teacher, he is superb. Head Kata Coach for the Spanish National Federation, he instructs the Spanish kata athletes in Madrid, at the High Performance Training Center (CAR), where he resides. His decades of useful experience, training and knowledge in both the traditional and sportive aspects of the karate-do are a great source of inspiration to all.
Sensei, the Spanish athletes Sandra Sanchez and Damian Quintero are already qualified for Tokyo 2020, and they are serious candidates for an Olympic medal. How was the process to get there?

Yes, we are finally in Tokyo. It has been a long journey; many years of hard training, discipline and fighting against all kind of odds but finally we qualified to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. We have been at the number one and two of the World WKF Ranking and Olympic Ranking for many years now. Evidently, this is result of a very hard of work and preparation.

Are those two champions [Damian and Sandra] very different, one from the other, as elite athletes?

Yes, they are very different but also very similar in the important aspects that make an elite athlete and champion. Both of them are very disciplined, dedicated and willing to go that extra mile that only the top of the elite understands. That extra mile is what eventually puts you on the top of the mountain. Obviously and from a technical perspective Sandra and Damian are different, they have different personalities and different technical qualities that it is important to differentiate in order to bring out the best in both.

How do you approach their training?

We train 5-7 hours per day, six days per week at the High Performance Training Center (CAR) in Madrid, Spain. We live there. We have been following this schedule for the last 4 years, although I have been training with Sandra Sanchez for a longer period of time. The only time we are not there is when we travel for the Premiere League events and other international competitions.

This allows me to plan and prepare in detail the full training program.
How is the training schedule?

Well, that would be very long to explain here but I can tell you that we approach every single aspect of karate and every single athletic aspect that affects kata training and performance. Of course, we have sessions focused on strength and conditioning training, technical training, specific skills, etc. All these are pieces of a more complex training puzzle. Everything we do has an effect in kata competition or otherwise...we don’t do it. It would be a waste of time. At elite level, you can’t waste your time.

What do you mean by “specific”?

There are more elements in elite kata that simply repeat the same technique over and over. Repetition is not enough. You need to “deeply understand” the movement and be aware of how that technique is executed by your body. You got to have a mind/body connection that occurs through a “body feel” and “body awareness”. It is important that the athlete is aware of what their body is doing, the force that is being used, the space that the body is “using” for the movement, the timing of the physical action, the force and energy of the movement, etc.

It must exist an internal understanding of what the body is doing at all times.

How important is the power in the technical actions of a kata?

Power is one aspect of the athlete’s physical conditioning but it is not the most important element in kata, although today it seems that many people think that way. I'll explain a little. The correct “mold” of physical technique in kata is the ‘vessel” of the action. Speed and power must be at the service of the technique not the other way around. For instance, if you have to do three “shuto uke” in Neko Ashi Dachi advancing to the front but you do them “too fast”, there will not be “technical definition” in either one of them. It will be like a “blur”. You need to do them fast but making sure that the speed in the combination doesn’t “blur” the perfect technique, otherwise the speed is killing the purpose of the kata movement.
What about power?

It is the same thing. If you do an “Oi Tsuki” but you use so much power that your trunk leans forward at the last moment of the technique...you are using ‘too much’ power. The perfect physical mold of the technique must be the “container” of the speed and power without losing its proper shape and correct form.

It is up to the coach to find the correct balance for each athlete in these important aspects.

With that schedule of 5-7 hours a day and six days per week, how do you find time for your athletes to rest?

Nothing should be left to the improvisation. Every year I sit down and I look at all the calendar, I study the competitions, the time in between, the training at home, the traveling periods, etc. Everything should be worked to the minimum detail. I try not to let any loose ends.

Then I will find out how the pieces are going to fit in the “puzzle”. After that I develop the training program, with different phases of intensity, recovery times, vacations, etc. It takes time and an understanding of all the components. Everything has to make sense at elite level or you won't make it to that gold match. As a Coach I try to “not guess” what is next. After I have all the details for the year...I don’t “guess” anything. Of course, you have elements that are out of your control like an injury for example, but it is then we – as Coaches – need to have a Plan B and a deep understanding of how all the pieces are glued together so you can move them properly and don’t lose the momentum and conditioning and technical level already reached at that point.

When you create your plan, do you do it “in general” for all the athletes of the Spanish team or specifically for each athlete?

Both. There are some things that I can schedule in “general” for all and some others that they have to work and train separately because affects specifically to each one of them. If I see one athlete in the National team has a problem with “balance” in a section of a kata, then we specifically develop a program to improve the balance there following specificity and a direct correspondence between the exercises and drills we’ll have him/her doing, and the technical aspects of the section of that kata.

How important is the recovery phase for your athletes?

I’d say that probably is the most important phase. Growth only occurs after the recovery phase. If you don’t recover properly, there is no growth. You can’t build a mountain in a hole. When we train hard, we are actually “digging a hole” in your organism. Then you need to recover, like “filling the hole with sand”, to build
the mountain in the next training…which is when growth occurs. If you don’t recover properly you can’t get better, you actually get worse in technique and performance. That is very common these days.

**How do you make a recovery phase correctly?**

There are many aspects to it but nutrition and sleep are paramount. Of course, massages and other physical therapy elements can be used but you need to use the right nutrition and have enough “quality” sleep. Just remember that “eating healthy: is not “eating right” when you are talking about an elite athlete and being 10 hours in bed may not be “quality time” if you are constantly waking up, tossing and turning.

**You still travel often to Okinawa, Japan and China to train and learn from other traditional masters, how useful is that for your job as a Coach?**

Yes we do. We go to Japan and Okinawa to train with Sensei of the caliber of Morio Higaonna, Tsuguo Sakimoto, Kenyu Mabuni, amongst others. Also to China to learn aspects of some traditional Chinese kata (“kuen”) that are the basics of a more modern Japanese version found in the art of karate. It is not a contradiction in terms, we learn traditional karate but we understand the sportive aspect of the modern WKF competition and adapt certain aspects to it in order to be successful in the sport. The more you learn as a traditional karateka, the better you can understand kata and perform it.

**It is said that styles are “changing” these days and kata as well. What’s your opinion about this?**

All styles are temporary emanations of a deeper reality. Chojun Miyagi based goju ryu on Fukien White Crane and other systems; Kenwa Mabuni developed shito ryu by combining the methods of Kanryo Higaonna and Yasutstune Ito; Gichin Funakoshi made use of the shorin and shorei traditions; wado ryu was created by Hironori Ohtsuka by mixing the karate of Gichin Funakoshi and Choki Motobu with the jiu-jitsu of the Shinto Yoshin Ryu and ideas taken from ken-jitsu. All of these methods were created by modifying, adapting and changing older models. Change is necessary if the vitality of the system and art is to be maintained. If you try to pass on something without improvement it will inevitably stagnate and die. Gichin Funakoshi said in his biography that “in time the student well may surpass his teacher – to achieve that, the student may need to introduce new ideas into the system”. What is wrong with that?

**What are your plans after Tokyo 2020?**

Time will tell…[laughs]... **USANKF**
1. Dorian Pajor attacking with a Jodan Tsuki. 2. Edgar Torres scoring with a clean Jodan Tsuki. 3. Official poster of the Junior World Championships.
2. Emre Kivanc attacking with a Roundhouse kick.
4. Coach Maile Chinen talking to Kieran Tamondong.
5. World Champion, Rey Chinen, starting his kata.
6. Rey Chinen during her final kata.
7. Saisheren Senpon getting his fighting distance.
1. Xavier Calvo ready for action. 2. Kaitlyn Shimohara performing her kata. 3 & 4) Rey Chinen during his first round of kata.
**HOTEL INFORMATION**

**Host Hotel:**
The Davenport Grand Hotel
333 W Spokane Falls Blvd
Spokane, WA 99201
$159 / night
Reservation Cut-off Date: June 8th

DoubleTree by Hilton
Spokane City Center
322 North Spokane Falls Court
Spokane, WA 99201
Call (509) 455-9600 to Make a Reservation
$149 /night
Reservation Cut-off Date: June 6th
USA National Championships & Team Trials
Spokane, Washington
Spokane Convention Center

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
https://www.usakaratenationals.com
FULL COVERAGE
ROAD TO TOKYO 2020!

MADRID PREMIER LEAGUE
MOSCOW PREMIER LEAGUE
PARIS OPEN
SANTIAGO SERIES A

Photos Courtesy Kphotos.net
1. & 3) Cheryl Murphy scores in the first round and blocks an Ura Mawashi Geri. 2. Brian Ramrup exchanging ideas with Coach Brody Burns. 4. Jessica Kwong performing her kata in the first round.
ROAD TO TOKYO 2020!

MADRID PREMIER LEAGUE

Photos Courtesy of KPhotos.net

1. Jessica Kwong in her way to the next kata round.  2. Brian Ramrup scoring with a Gyaku Tsuki.  3. Sakura Kokumai performing during her first round.
1, 3 & 4) USA Karate kata competitors during the first round of male kata division. 2. Tom Scott throwing a Mawashi Geri Jodan to his opponent. 5. Brandi Robinson scores with a Gyaku Tsuki.
1. Elisa Au misses the target. 2. Cheryl Murphy checking her opponent's moves. 3. Brian Irr effectively using his long reach kick.
1 & 2) Brandi Robinson during her first match. 3. & 5) Tom Scott putting pressure on his opponent and attacking with a Roundhouse Kick. 4. Cheryl Murphy evaluating her options.
ROAD TO TOKYO 2020!
MOSCOW PREMIERE LEAGUE

Photos Courtesy of KPhotos.net

1 & 2) Sakura Kokumai during her performances of “Papuren” and “Suparimpei”. 3. Tom Scott and Coach Brody Burns smiling for the camera.
1 & 3) Gakuji Tozaki during the kata “Anan Dai”. 2. Coach Dustin Baldis watching the performance from the Coach’s box. 4. Ariel Torres performing his kata in the first round.
1. Tom Scott scoring with a perfect Jodan Mawashi Geri.  
2 & 3) Brian Irr pressuring his opponent in the first round.  
4. Maya Wasowicz missing the body but hitting her opponent’s arm.
1 & 5) Brian Irr during his first two matches in the Paris Open.  2 & 3) Jessica Kwong performing her kata during the first round.  4) Tom Scott. Ready to go!
1 & 2) Brian Irr and Tom Scott missing their targets by “just a little bit”. 3 & 4) Sakura Kokumai performing “Chatan Yara No Kusanku”.

Photos Courtesy Kphotos.net

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1 & 5) Gakuji Tozaki during the performance of his first two kata rounds. 3) Ariel Torres performing kata “Anan”. 2 & 4) Brandi Robinson and Brian Ramrup during their first match.
1 & 2) Ariel Torres performing kata “Anan Dai”. 3 & 4) Gakuji Tozuki during his first round of kata.
1 & 3) Kata competitors, Ariel Torres and Gakuji Tozaki during their second kata. 2 & 4) Trinity Allen controlling the distance and feinting a high kick during her first match.
1 & 2) Brian Irr showing his offensive style in the first two matches. 3 & 4) Jessica Kwong performing kata “Suparimpei”.
1. Young USA Karate athlete Nakajiwa-Wu, getting his fighting distance in place. 2 & 3) Sakura Kokumai performing kata “Suparimpei”.
1) Athlete Dany Cabello scoring with a Jodan Gyaku Tsuki.  2) Sakura Kokumai performing kata “Kururunfa”.  3 & 4) Jessica Kwong performing kata “Anan Dai”.
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

T

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

O

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

P

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

S

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!

This series of TrueTalk features is inspired by the values and principles of TrueSport – an initiative powered by USADA, the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency.
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

Mission
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>
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</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 athletesaafety.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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Where Olympic Journeys Begin