

TRAINING FOR A ITF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

And

WHAT TO EXPECT

**By
Mark Trotter**

Coach 2000 & 2002 Mr Steve McQuillan told our team

**“A World Champ is someone
Who will go the extra mile,
Stay 20 minutes longer,
Get up 30 minutes earlier
Just to prepare themselves”**

It comes back every time to how much you want it and how prepared you are.

To represent your Country in any sport at an International Event is awesome, but a World Championship is the Ultimate goal and experience.

Myself, by age 16 have had the opportunity to compete internationally on several occasions and lucky enough to have competed at a World Championships twice. the unforgettable experiences of a Junior World Championships, in the home of TKD, in DPR Korea and the Senior World Championships, in Italy.

To train and travel with a New Zealand Team is one of the best experiences I have had. You learn not only from the Coaches but the Team Members themselves. All teams are different and all Coaches have different styles of teaching but ultimately you learn.

At the very beginning a notice will be sent out to all practitioners asking for names to be put forward of those from Red Belt and above who feel or their Instructors feel are of a standard to trial for a position on the team. Originally only 15-20 names were put forward but over the years as more and more students wish to trial the numbers have grown to around 45-50. Camps are organised, normally in Taupo (as this is a central meeting point for most)

For juniors it starts as a development squad and for seniors it is straight into trials. But for both, you have to be prepared.

Starting time in the morning is around 6am, with a 2.4 kilometer run, press-ups, sit ups, broad jumps, vertical jump, squats and then a light training session until breakfast. After breakfast you can expect around three hours of patterns with constant drilling on all that you thought was perfect, to be deflated when you find out how much of your pattern is technically incorrect.

Lunch, and one hour later your back to training again. Sparring. The session will normally consist of bag work, ring fitness, side stepping, combinations, speed work and finally ring sparring. This is a great chance for the coaches to see where each individuals weaknesses are so they can help you in your sparring.

Most of the time at this stage of the day you are so tired that the leg that can normally kick out with little or no effort can hardly lift off the floor. Persevere at this point, the Coaches are waiting, watching and writing.

The pressure is on, stress is showing, nerves are making your stomach feel strange, you know how you want to fight, but with the tension building, you never fight the way you want to or how you know you can, but believe me, no matter how you feel at this point, it is mild compared to how you feel when you make it to the world champs.

The Coaches are watching you and you know it. How you deal and cope with pressure and tension while in the ring whether it is patterns or sparring or breaks and how you cope with winning or losing and how it effects you as a prospective New Zealand Team Member.

An hour before the end of the sparring session your body feels like it can not continue, all you need is a hot bath, a soft bed and some sleep. Expect to finish this session between 6 & 6.30pm

Dinner and free time to mix and get to know others from around the country. Senior Team members are normally in bed around 10.30 11pm. They appear to be well aware of the hardships of tomorrow, while some junior team members are new to this and will find out in the morning.

Sunday Morning, you're lucky if you get up at 6.30am instead of 6. And once again another fitness work out, either the Seniors with a "Salton Circuit" or the Juniors with the "McQuillan run" either one is extremely difficult with every part of your body tired and sore from the day before and seems to take you twice as long to do.

Breakfast and back to the Gym for Power, Special Techniques, some more sparring and patterns. Even if you don't put your name forward for some of the events you join into one of the others so there is no down time.

Finally finishing around 1pm and then a 3-5 hour drive home, physically and mentally drained but expected to be all refreshed for Work or School the next morning. If you make the New Zealand Team this is your lifestyle for the next year.

The following session normally 1-2 months later you do the same all over again, numbers have dropped a wee bit, and some may have felt it was not for them. Try to make all sessions, as Commitment is something you must have.

Selections are normally conducted like a tournament. It is not always the person that wins on the day that is selected as a Team Member, coaches are looking for talent that they can develop and attitude that will make New Zealand Proud, commitment that goes beyond the norm.

You go home and wait for the letter in the mail, for some it is a time to celebrate for others it is bitter disappointment.

Then it's back to the training sessions above, but as your fitness builds up so do the sessions both regional and national.

New Zealand's trailing system is very good compared to some other Countries I know of e.g. USA, Canada, Czech Republic, Russia, Uzbekistan all choose there teams from a National tournament, they only take the gold medallists from each division. That would be really high-pressure stuff to perform on the day. I think a lot of New Zealand's trials are based on performance at more than one weekend of trials.

The New Zealand Junior or Senior Team is normally chosen around one year prior to the actual event, this gives the coaches time to work with each individual and the hardest one "Team Event"

In NZ our team event people are spread right throughout the country making it hard on not only the coach to train them but for the competitors to train together. One thing that could be taken into consideration was the way USA and Canada chose their team events. At the trials the state puts forward a team event and the winning team event goes to the World Championships not individuals chosen right throughout the country.

For the New Zealand Team Members once chosen, You are expected to make 80% of all training's as well as attending your normal club nights.

One of the other reasons our Teams are selected early is for fundraising purposes. Not only are you expected to keep up and improve yourself you have to pay for yourself as well. It is expensive and most people get a shock when they realise the costs involved.

Airfares		\$2000.00 - \$2500.00
Accommodation	(for tournament only)	US\$50-\$60 per day
Food & Drink		\$50.00 per day
Sparring Gear	1 x Red & 1 x Blue set	\$300.00
NZ Dobok		\$90.00
NZ Tracksuit		\$190.00
NZ T-shirt		\$20.00
Team Shoes		\$100.00
Entry Fees		US\$50.00
Team Bag		\$30.00
Departure Taxes, Insurance etc		\$300.00 - \$400.00
Travel within New Zealand (Taupo Camps etc)		\$500.00 - \$1000.00

Plus any extras you as an individual may want eg. Spending money.

Now not only do you have the pressure of performing you have the pressure of trying to save and get there. Trying to balance whether you should go to work to earn the money to get to the World Champs or going to training because you know if you don't, you will not be ready to compete is one of the most difficult things to do.

You do get a lot of support from all around New Zealand, but the ones that help the most (probably because they understand) are other older more experienced or past Team Members. Listen to them, you may or may not agree with everything they say but they have so much to offer.

Once you have been chosen as a New Zealand Team Member, you are expected to set the standard and lead the way. You can never forget your Tenet's and you must show that you know and understand them.

Around a month before leaving New Zealand, you reach the stage that one day you know your ready and the next day you know your not. It is a hard time, full of being positive and then full of doubt, you just can't wait to be there.

Once you actually reach the World Championships you have not finished preparing. You must fully focus on the event and not be phased by the whole thing. This is the most difficult time and all your training does not prepare you completely for the tricks of the mind.

Can you imagine 10,000 people watching your every move and looking for every mistake that you could possibly make. I was once told the judges are not there

to see what a nice pattern you are doing, they are looking for every slight flaw so a point can be deducted.

At the Junior World Champs in DPR Korea, we were told that the Korean Team had been on a Eight Month training camp, training 12 hours a day seven days a week and it showed in their results by taking 23 gold medals out of 30.

In going to a World Championship you have to be prepared to pay all that money and train all that time, to perhaps draw Korea or Poland in the first round.. Why can we not beat Korea and Why are they so good? To them it is a way of life not just a sport. They want it more and they are willing to put every second of time they have into it. But yes they are beatable --we have seen it.

New Zealand is still very young and we are quite isolated when it comes to competing internationally. We are still learning when it comes to the World Champs having only attended four seniors and one juniors, but if we get it into our hearts that we can compete with the worlds best then we do have the talent to Win.

I have spoken to the current Coach of the Junior New Zealand Team and asked him for a coaches point of view. Mr MCQuillan has replied on the following page.

COACHES POINT OF VIEW

WHAT A COACH LOOKS FOR IN A JUNIOR TEAM MEMBER

The most noticeable difference a Coach needs to see in a student wishing to compete at this level is the motivation to learn new skills, and to have the utmost respect for their competitors.

The Junior World Champs is a totally different experience than most of you realize, the competition is fierce, the rivalry between Countries is apparent, and the level of expertise in different categories is outstanding and faultless.

Here are some tips to better prepare for the Junior World Champs,

- I. Forget all previous competition wins you've had, they mean nothing here.
- II. If you train with the development team, your chances of making the New Zealand Team are higher, because the training received will better prepare you for the World Champs.
- III. Coaches look for the all rounder who can slot into a position if required.
- IV. Make sure you are fit and healthy; to often students think it's ok to sit at the back of the class and watch.
- V. Junior Development Squad Training is for the introduction and development of new skills, it is not intended to re-teach your lower ranking Patterns.
- VI. Your appearance is important International tournaments means Master Instructors and Grand Masters, lip rings, nose rings and eye rings have no place at these events.
- VII. Attitude is looked at seriously at this level; if you have a bad attitude there is no place on the team for you.
- VIII. As a development squad member you are an individual competing for a place on a team 110 percent training is what is needed to make that team.
- IX. If you have successfully been picked for a team, remember never slack off there is always someone else training twice as hard hoping you don't make it.
- X. If you are going to the World Champs for experience forget it, learn as much as possible, be fully prepared before you compete against the World.

Making a New Zealand team in any sport is a life long achievement for some people that will be with them forever, so why wouldn't you train longer and harder, go that extra distance it will make the difference between winning and losing.

Steve McQuillan