

Filipino Martial Arts

Digest

Special Issue
2006

World Escrima Kali Arnis Federation



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The ideas and opinions expressed in this digest are those of the authors or instructors being interviewed and are not necessarily the views of the publisher or editor.

We solicit comments and/or suggestions. Articles are also welcome.

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From the Publishers Desk

Kumusta

The World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (WEKAF) is an international organization of Martial Artists, which includes teachers, students and practitioners who share a common enthusiasm for the Filipino Martial Arts (FMA). It is a brotherhood that is open to all practitioners of the Filipino Martial Arts, all traditions and styles are welcomed. Through their tournaments a practitioner can demonstrate their skill and ability in the stick fighting combat of the Filipino martial arts.

The history of WEKAF dates back to 1975. In 1979, the first National Arnis Championships was held in Cebu City on March 24. During this event, leaders from the National Arnis Association (NARAPHIL), Cebu Eskrima Association, and others present agreed to launch a worldwide promotional effort.

And in the years that followed the WEKAF has grown to become one of the most respected organizations throughout the world.

This Special Issue comes about just before the 9th World Championships, which will be held July 2nd - 8th of this year in Walt Disney World Dolphin Resort in Orlando, Florida. The WEKAF events for the last two years have been building up towards this Tournament of champions.

The FMA Digest would like to thank Thomas Sipin for his help in putting this Special Issue together.

Maraming Salamat Po



WEKAF was envisioned by one man. His initiative and work at bringing people together was responsible for its inception and continued growth. His enthusiasm continues to inspire our work.

Grandmaster Dionisio Cañete - Doce Pares
International
Chairman Emeritus - WEKAF



WEKAF



The World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (WEKAF) is an international organization of like-minded Martial Artists, including teachers, students and practitioners who share a common enthusiasm for the Filipino Martial Arts (FMA). WEKAF is one of the largest organizations in the world, with members in over 25 countries.

WEKAF contributes to the Filipino martial arts community by organizing regular tournaments, including invitational events and qualifiers for the World Championships. WEKAF holds the World Championships every 2nd year, and regularly hosts some of the largest Filipino Martial Arts tournaments in the World.

WEKAF was founded with the goal of organizing a set body of rules and conventions under which practitioners from various traditions could come together and safely compete in Stickfighting and Forms. This gives practitioners a chance to showcase their skills and highlight their Art on a Regional, National and International level.

WEKAF is open to all practitioners of the Filipino Martial Arts, all traditions and styles are welcome. The rules are set up to emphasize and maintain the safety of its participants, accommodate techniques common to most systems of Filipino Martial Arts, and to insure exciting action and powerful demonstrations of skill and ability.

The History of WEKAF

Edited by Anthony Sell

A new sport is born from an ancient art

The history of WEKAF dates back to 1975, when Dionisio Cañete met with Dan Inosanto, Richard Bustillo and Fred Bandalan. Together they agreed to combine their efforts in promoting the Filipino Martial Arts. Cañete convinced the Masters of the Doce Pares Organization (led by his father, Eulogio) to standardize and promote a format for competing in the Filipino Martial Arts with a focus on increasing its appeal as a spectator sport. Cañete also worked to draft rules for tournaments and to design protective sparring gear for these events, enabling competitors to safely compete in a full-contact format.

In 1979, the first National Arnis Championships was held in Cebu City on March 24. During this event, leaders from the National Arnis Association (NARAPHIL), Cebu Eskrima Association, and others present agreed to launch a worldwide promotional effort. The need for a world governing body became quickly apparent, a body which would be centered on promoting and supervising the growth of the Filipino Martial Arts in teaching and in competition.

International interest in the Filipino Martial Arts

In August of 1987, Cañete invited masters and notable instructors from outside the Philippines for a seminar in Cebu City. Seventeen people from USA, England, Australia, New Zealand, and Guam attended the 5-day affair, which was called the 1st World Instructors' Arnis Seminar.

Those who attended left energized, excited about the future of the arts. Many of the participants would go on to play key roles, representing the WEKAF organization in their own countries. Among others, participants at this event included Bobby Breen (England), Sharon Burns (Australia), Greg Henderson (New Zealand), Arif Shaikh (India), and Tom Sipin (United States).

It was at this gathering that the formation for the World Federation was crystallized, and the group agreed to meet within two years to finalize and implement the plan. Cañete was elected as chairman of the organization, provisionally titled the World Arnis Federation.

In 1988, the goal of hosting competitions outside of the Philippines was realized as the 1st USA National Eskrima Arnis Championship was held in San Jose, California. Thanks to the combined efforts of Fred Bandalan, Arnulfo "Dong" Cuesta and Dionisio Cañete, the tournament attracted more than one hundred competitors from various parts of the United States.



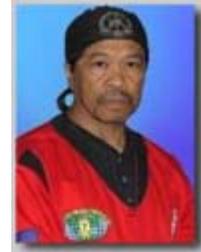
Dionisio Cañete



Dan Inosanto



Richard Bustillo



Fred Bandalan

This event was also the first time in many years that the top three Grandmasters of the Filipino Arts living in the US were in attendance together at the same event - Grandmaster Ben Largusa (Villabrille-Largusa Kali), Grandmaster Leo Giron (Giron Arnis Escrima) and Grandmaster Angel Cabales (Serrada Eskrima).



Grandmaster Ben Largusa



Grandmaster Leo Giron



Grandmaster Angel Cabales

The World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation is formed

In August of 1989, over 100 people from 10 different countries assembled at the Convention Hall at the Sacred Heart Center in Cebu City, Philippines, to formalize a world organization for the Filipino Martial Arts. The success of the plan to broaden international appeal of the arts was evident in the fact that three quarters of the people at the meeting were from outside of the Philippines.

Dionisio Cañete was chosen as the Chairman and Presiding officer of the newly named World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (WEKAF). Articles and By-laws were adopted by the Assembly, including that each member country be represented by at least one Director on the Board, and that the Officers responsible for supervising the day-to-day activities of the Federation would be elected from among the members of the Board.

During the elections, 35 candidates were nominated and the following Directors were elected: Dionisio Cañete, Arnulfo Cuesta, Richard Bustillo, Fred Degerberg, Bobby Breen, Arif Shaikh, Sharon Burns, Nino Pilla, Roland Krauer, Manuel Fragoso, Jorge Alcordo, Ted Javier, Andreas Becker, Anebros Paay and Greg Henderson. Cañete was subsequently elected as the Chapter President with Richard Bustillo as the Vice President, their term of office to last for two years until the 2nd World championships and Congress.

Since 1989, WEKAF has grown to represent over 24 countries where the art has gained tremendous following. There have been 8 World championship tournaments to date (1989 - Manila, Philippines; 1992 - Manila, Philippines; 1994 - Manila, Philippines; 1996 - Los Angeles, CA; 1998 - Cebu, Philippines; 2000 - Cebu, Philippines; 2002 - London, England; 2004 - Cebu, Philippines) as well as countless regional, national, and invitational competitions.

Each tournament season has seen a growth in the arts, the number of competitors and the scale of the events. The 9th World Championships are expected to be the largest tournament of Filipino Martial Arts in the history of the organization, both due to the venue and the degree of planning involved.

Leadership (2005-2006)

WEKAF is an international organization, with members in 25 different countries. Headed by the Executive Board, each country has a National Director, and in the larger countries, a Director for each Region. Elections for the Executive Board and National Director positions are held every second year, in conjunction with the World Championships for that tournament season. The US National Director appoints regional Directors in the US.

In addition to the Executive Officers and Directors, WEKAF is facilitated by a group of volunteers who make these events possible. Serving in the capacity of coaches, event staff, planners, administrative assistants, organizers and promoters, these individuals are often school owners, instructors, parents, and competitors who have sacrificed the time and energy necessary to make things happen.

WEKAF Officers/Executive Board Members

Chairman Emeritus, Grandmaster Dionisio Canete (RP) - Philippines
Acting President, John James - England
Secretary, Sharon Burns - Australia
Treasurer, Thomas Sipin - USA
Secretary General, Dulce Manlapaz (RP) - Philippines

WEKAF National Directors

Australia - Peter McNally
Belgium - Frans Stroeven
Canada - Rudy Cosico
Denmark - Nasser Mahvashi
France - Thomas Rousell
Germany - Stefan Jerzenbek
Great Britain - Mubarik Hussain
Greece - Sokratis Kapikos
Netherlands - Bram Hoogendoorn
Hong Kong - (Gary) Ma Ming Tat
India - Radhika Shaikh
Ireland - Brian Caulfield
Italy - Claudio Campanini
Mexico - Carlos Hidalgo Rasmussen
New Zealand - Gordon Carnie
Norway - Karl Johan Remoy
Philippines - Michael Canete
Poland - Jan Nycek
Reunion Islands - Charles Maillot
Saudi Arabia - Scott Yenzer
South Africa - Japie Cilliers
South Korea - Lee Sung Do
Switzerland - Markus Buhlmann
United States - Thomas Sipin
Vietnam - Ruel A. Gatbonton

WEKAF US Regional Directors

West Coast Region - Master Sonny Napial

Rocky Mountain Region - Eric Underwood
Texas Region - Dean Goldade
Midwest Region - Kelii Sipin
Atlanta Region - Chris Caban
East Coast Region - Carlos Patalinghug

Planning Committee, 2006 World Tournament Season

Thomas & Susan Sipin - Event Chairpersons
Paulette "PJ" Yauger- Event Planner
Kelii Sipin - Tournament Coordinator
Sonny Napial - West Coast Supervisor
Anthony Sell - Web Master, Copywriter, Designer
Dennis Yauger – Videographer, Video Producer
Mike Krukowski - Photographer
Dale De los Reyes - Database/Programmer
Antonio Lucero – Application Engineer
Elizabeth Lasak - Sponsors, Vendors, Entertainment Coordinator
Christine Thelen - CPA
Heather House - Awards Banquet Coordinator, Registration Manager
Kris Vasquez-Davantes - Tournament Programs, Customer Service
Jun Davantes - WEKAF Membership Management
Terri Stiper - Regional Results Coordinator
Greg Kennin - US Team Uniforms, Events Staff
Lenn Deltgen - Videographer
Dr. Elieser B. Suson - Philippine Community Advisor
Meri Misko – Event Decorations
Patty Hoath - Event Personnel, Time Keeping, Scorekeeping
Adam Correa - Artist, World Tournament T-shirt Design
Allan Talusan – Artist, National Tournament T-shirt Design
Linda Napial – Bandalan Doce Pares (West Coast Organizer)
Cecille Denney - Doce Pares Sacramento (West Coast Organizer)
Holiday Buen - Bandalan Doce Pares (West Coast Organizer)
Ellie Barna - Kick Connection (East Coast Organizer)

Travel & Accommodations

Richard Schutkin - Travel Agent
Diana Jay & Hotel Staff - Four Points Sheraton Milwaukee Airport
Mark Mayer & Jackie Martinez & Hotel Staff - Walt Disney World Dolphin Resort
Marco Bloemendaal, Carolyn Martin, Tina Jones - Orlando/Orange County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc.

The Future of Competition

An Interview with Thomas Sipin, WEKAF USA Director
Interview conducted by Anthony Sell



Master Thomas Sipin

Q: *How has the organization changed since its inception in 1987?*

A: On the whole the organization has been growing consistently in its following, not only in the US, but around the world. Some members in Europe and Australia have been active in these competitions since the organization was formed. The United States organization has begun to accommodate a growing following, including new participants in the Southeast, and the possible creation of Hawaii as a Region separate from the West Coast.

Presently whether in the US, Canada, Europe or another of the representative countries, to enter the World Championships, competitors need to qualify for a National team through a National tournament, which, in the larger countries; is often

times preceded by Regional qualifiers.

This has raised the bar for the performance expected of our competitors. With a growing following, WEKAF tournaments are quickly becoming bona fide sporting events. As more people get involved, there is more notoriety for the events, more recognition of the skill involved and greater expectations in terms of training and preparation. This all equates to more exciting events.

Q: *The level of athleticism demonstrated by some of the participants is amazing. Are there plans to move the sport towards acceptance into the Olympics?*

A: This has been a long-term goal for the organization. As you know there are stringent requirements regarding the induction of any sport into the Olympics, a certain number of people in a given number of countries have to participate before it can officially qualify, but we are pushing for that level of involvement. Maintaining a Qualification format for the World Championships is a step in that direction. Right now, in order to compete in the World Tournament, you have to qualify to become part of the country's team, it's not just a matter of showing up that day and competing, there's a lot more to it.

Q: *Is there a certain type of FMA Practitioner that these events cater to?*

A: Although some of our largest divisions are in the Adult Men's category, there are many youth, teen and female participants, ages range from kids under 10 years of age all the way up to seniors and masters division at 51 and over. These competitors come from a variety of backgrounds, styles and systems in the Filipino Martial Arts. There are not many sports that offer that range or divisions. Not every competitor is from an FMA dominant school, either. In recent years we've approached Tae Kwon Do and Karate schools to get involved, some have and many have expressed an interest.

We've also done a great deal to make our tournaments more affordable for families and parents of youth competitors. We include as many divisions as possible for kids, broken down by age bracket and weight class, to keep things positive and give them a chance to succeed. That's the success of our kids in these events is really important - the next 2 generations are being prepared to take over, continue the sport and the art.

Q: *There have been rumors that you are planning to introduce new formats of competition. Is there any truth to that?*

A: Not for the WEKAF World Championships, but definitely in the event immediately after them.

Q: *So there are actually two tournaments this July?*

A: Yes, exactly. We often follow our World events with a second Invitational tournament that is open to international competitors, but doesn't require national team qualification. This tournament is often used to introduce or try new events, much like an exhibition sport in the Olympics. There are a number of ideas being discussed. With the popularity of some of the padded weapons, we are considering offering additional divisions.

Q: *Would the rules change? Less armor?*

A: Exactly, less armor, maybe helmets and gloves only, possibly different types of helmets, and padded weapons. The rules would change to reflect the format.

Q: *What do you mean?*

A: Well, our rules have always been a balancing act between safety for our competitors, making the fights as real as possible, and keeping things exciting for the spectators. This means that we have to create rules that give proper weight to realistic attacks, without actually injuring each other in the process. It's difficult, and part of the problem is that judges and referees need to be trained with each new change. That is one reason why changes can take so long. Ultimately, we want to make this open to as many other systems in the Filipino Martial Arts community as possible. Our organization is said by many to have the longest running and most successful events. Still, there are some Filipino Martial Arts schools and systems that prefer padded stick fighting and less armor.

By far, the majority of our members train in many other Martial Arts, not merely stick fighting, and not just the sparring format used in WEKAF. Most of our members train in other sparring formats and some would enjoy competing under those formats as well. Offering additional sparring divisions, such as padded sticks, less armor, etc., adds the potential to expand the growth of the Filipino Martial Arts community and the spectator interest in this type of competition, which is a worthwhile goal.

Q: *So you are considering adding in Padded Single and Double stick fighting to the divisions. Are there any other formats that you have considered?*

A: Knife fighting - it's part of the art, and with the advent of newer equipment, padded weapons, simulated weapons, etc., we can allow for greater realism.

I am personally interested in seeing a triple weapon fight, where a fighter goes either single stick vs. single stick in one round, double stick vs. single stick in the second

round, and single stick vs. double stick in the last round - or perhaps three different types of weapons. The spectators will get a chance to see how this changes the tactics involved.

We are also looking at a Largo Mano division, using a longer stick, maybe slightly different rules, allowing for a two-handed grip, etc. Stick and Dagger, Stick and Shield, Punch-Kick-Stick divisions have also been brought up. Actually, we used to have that - fighters could Punch, Kick or strike with the Stick, sweeps and throws were legal, but we had to change due to concerns over the number of injuries that occurred. That's why we no longer allow thrusts or butt strikes either.

We want to give people a chance to try a variety of formats. I envision for the future of the organization that people have the opportunity to do both, to open up different dimensions in competition, inviting participants from traditions where the armor is not prevalent. Again, this is good for the art and the community. We have come a long way from fighting with padded or plastic sticks and hockey gear in the 1970's.

Q: *Some of your detractors say that the WEKAF format tends to emphasize unrealistic tactics.*

A: I think that for every different competition, for every set of rules there are some advantages and some disadvantages. I don't believe that our set of rules are perfect in every way, there are things that I like the most, we used to have sweeps and throws, we used to have butts and thrusts, we had to eliminate them due to safety concerns. With padded weapons, that may open up these rules again.

The bottom line also revolves around liability, especially when kids are involved. In the US, events of this caliber have to be insured, which is difficult to begin with and even more so if the rules are too open. It would be nice to be able to accommodate a wider range of styles and traditions.

The problem in developing rules that reflect the reality of fighting while also remaining safe for competitors is who's reality are we using? Obviously, if some one is struck in the helmet with a sparring stick, there will be a less dramatic effect than if they are side kicked across the ring or thrown on their head. In a real fight, however the effect would be more pronounced, but then again, how do we simulate that safely? With rules that give priority to targets and types of strikes. There has to be some compromise.

Yes, there are people who say that the WEKAF rules emphasize strikes that would not necessarily be effective in a real fight. But what does that mean - "real fight?"

As a Police officer, I've personally seen cases where, resisting arrest, the person was hit repeatedly in the leg with the baton, in the knee and even the shin with full power strikes, and not go down. On the other hand I've seen guys get hit once in the thigh and they went right down. So again, what exactly is realistic?

When people say, "You can't do that - that wouldn't work," whose reality are they referring to? If you get hit in the head, you might stop, then again, you might not. You get hit in the thigh and you might stop, then again you might not, especially with your adrenaline pumping, etc. It's difficult to say for sure what will work. In the end, your attacker's motivation can really be the only deciding factor.

Q: *So a "Dog Brothers" type of division would be out of the question in WEKAF?*

A: I understand that, just like getting into the ring, certain formats will appeal to certain types of people. I don't believe that the average person would want to take the chance, or

should take the chance to go in there and do that. I have enough experience with training injuries and injuries in competition to make me question the benefit of that.

Martial Arts have always been generally thought of as a means to improve oneself and maintain one's health for the future. To do things where there is a high likelihood of damage, possibly permanent damage, to your health, effecting your livelihood, your family; I don't believe this is entirely beneficial. Sometimes people say that they want to test themselves, not everyone feels that they have to do that.

The goal of these competitions is not just to provide an outlet for aggression or adrenaline or whatever, it's to promote a sporting event that the average person can participate in and still go back to work and to their families the next day without risk of serious or permanent injury. I would not want to see that type of competition as part of the organization.

I think that in general, the people who feel that the benefits of such a format are worth the possibility of suffering permanent damage generally have no real conception of what the injuries can mean to them and their families.

Q: *How is this a significant tournament year?*

A: Overall, I think the scale of our World event is going to outdo anything that we have done so far. Not only for the quality of the venue and the accommodations, but the ease of it all, being packaged for our members this time.

This tournament season is also much more organized than in previous years, due largely to the contributions of a group of dedicated volunteers across the US, including the planning committee and Regional organizers. The website is now an up to date source of information about the events, offering rules, an email newsletter, contact information, world tournament results, history and background on WEKAF. Something else that our members aren't used to having.

Q: *It looks like the events are getting more expensive.*

A: Well, yes and no. In previous events, London, Los Angeles, the Philippines, Canada, etc., the difference in cost was due to the fact that competitors had to supply their own transportation, not only to the city but back and forth between the venue and their hotel, seeing the city, and so on.

This time the tournament is being held at the #2 vacation spot in the World for families. This offers safety, convenience, quality, and many local attractions to see during the week of the event. Also, this year everything is set up to make the trip easier for competitors and their families, from the quality of the amenities to the food at the banquet. Plus, it's all in one venue, the rooms, the facilities, and the banquet hall, with transportation to and from the airport. We have gone to great lengths to make sure that both our local and international members have their travel arrangements well taken care of, bringing in a travel agency to help everyone have an enjoyable trip. This year, a luncheon, two ceremony dinners, and admission to the Invitational Tournament is also included in the cost of registration.

It was definitely harder organizing this tournament season, due to the amount of planning required to host an event of this caliber. It took a lot of sacrifice and hard work of many people to make this happen.

Q: *Like what?*

A: Well for one thing, all of the preparation work that had to be done. To obtain the sites for US Nationals and the World Championships, we had to contact hundreds of convention sites, determine the requirements that we needed, how large the facilities had to be, flooring, banquet, adequate bathroom and locker room accommodations, the layout of the competition floor, loudspeakers, tables, etc.

Then we had to look at the rooms, the amenities, we had to make sure the venue could accommodate the number of rooms we needed and on the times we needed them, all while keeping the prices affordable.

For the World tournament, the venue alone took 30 different on-site inspections of the proposed convention centers, hotels, area restaurants, etc., meaning we would fly out, get the grand tour of the venue, the rooms, the banquet center, the area restaurants, etc. We would begin to narrow it down to a group, then work out further deals, then narrow it down even further. When we had our pick, we still had to go over room requirements, scheduling meals, etc.

Q: *This was different from what WEKAF members are used to?*

A: Yes, it was harder this year, as they had to meet the dates for registration, which meant making commitments earlier than in previous years. This in turn allowed us to get the room count, the number of meals for the banquet, travel arrangements, etc., all of this is necessary months ahead of time. We had to get commitments from our people sooner, which is not what they are accustomed to doing.

In the end, the only way to make a jump in the quality of the event without also having an astronomical jump in the price of participation is to organize and commit to these things in advance.

Q: *What would you like to say to someone who has not yet been to a WEKAF event?*

A: I would like to extend an open invitation to Martial Arts practitioners of all styles and systems to come down and try this. Anyone interested can visit our website (www.wekafusa.com) for more information on our events, and learn more about how they can get involved. We would also invite sponsors and vendors to contact us regarding opportunities at the World Championships.

US National Championships

The US National Championships were held on February 17-19, 2006. The Event held at "Four Points by Sheraton Milwaukee Airport, Milwaukee, Wisconsin and featured Traditional and Open forms divisions (single and multiple weapons), Team Forms, Single and Multiple Stickfighting, as well as a Team Fighting Division.

Participants who did not qualify in a Regional Event were able to compete for a Wild Card slot in the Nationals. Competitors competed for a spot on the US National Team and a chance to fight on an International level in the World Championships this July.

Unless otherwise noted below, all photos are by Delfina Rodriguez-Lucero.

Division JG01 - Girls *6-7 years (Finals)

Mariah Misko (Black) - 1st place defeated Katherine Schwerman (Red) - 2nd place.



Mariah Misko gets support from her father, Chez Misko



Note: Referee for this bout was Grandmaster Bong Jornales



Cheering mom "Nicole Schwerman" (Mother of Katherine)

Division M17 - Men's Super Heavyweight Single Stick Sparring
Jose Garcia (Blue armor) defeated Anthony Sell (Black armor)



Photo by Brian Roselund

Division BD02 - Junior Boys *12 years
Double Stick Middleweight (Finals)
C.J. Patalinghug (Red) - 1st Place
Alex Lickers-Lawson (Black) - 2nd Place



Division MD05 - Men's Middleweight
(Elimination Round)
Adam Correa (Black) defeated Alex Schultz (Red)



Note: Adam Correa went on to win the Finals in this division and is also one of the Team Sparring gold medalists.

Division MD11 - Men's Double Stick Super Heavy Weight (Finals)

Justin Lemke (Black armor) - 1st Place defeated Mike Turk (Red armor) - 2nd Place



Note: Referee for this fight is Mr. Jun Davantes

Men's Team Fighting Division Place Holders



1st Place - Four Winds Martial Arts from Wisconsin

2nd Place - Tae Kali Do from California

3rd Place - Kick Connection from Maryland

Filipino Martial Arts - Not Just for Grown Ups

By Kat. Puno (Grandmaster) Bong Jornales



Kat. Puno Bong Jornales
Referring

Think of the history of Filipino martial arts and the story of Lapu-Lapu fighting the Spaniards will eventually come into play. This hero, armed with his *kampilan* (a bladed weapon) and shield can be seen today displayed in grand form in a monument on Mactan Island in Cebu, Philippines.

Fast-forward to 2006 and you will see today's male warriors displaying their training, talent and desire to compete in perhaps a slightly more civilized fashion on the floor at

any national or international WEKAF tournament. But as you look closer, you will also see the flash of blades and hear the strikes, shouts and cheers for those of a much younger age.

The future of any martial arts today, particularly for Filipino martial arts, is children. Let's face it, those of us that have been studying and teaching this art for years...decades, need to eventually pass the baton – make that stick – onto the next generation!

Reaching and teaching youth the passion for Filipino martial arts and the sport of WEKAF requires an approach different of that needed to reach adults. There are many experts out there with different approaches and opinions. I am here to simply share what I have discovered has helped me in getting kids excited about this incredible art form and reaching their personal optimal potential.

Here are a few items to consider:

Martial arts is like learning a language. You need to break it into individual “words”, than “sentences” and after much practice they will be “speaking” fluently. Teach more than just the skill. Teach them the language and the culture. It is one thing to be able to use the tools of Filipino Martial arts. It is another thing to understand some of the rich history and pieces of the culture and people that are the foundation of this martial art.

It must be safe. Start with the “ABCs” - Always be careful. Make sure proper gear is used and kids fight at an appropriate level with others based on age and skill set. Many a child has shied away from sports due to one bad experience.

Show respect. Always be courteous - to your classmates, instructor, parents and competitors. These basic skills will follow you throughout your life, both inside and outside the martial art world.

T.E.A.M. Together everyone accomplishes more. As individuals we may be seeking for that “win”. But, as a group of individuals all passionate to grow the art, we

can accomplish much more working as an integrated family of martial artists encouraging each other regardless of status, system or style.

Display good sportsmanship. Learning to win and lose is part of life's lesson and key to the success of an individual and this sport. (This is a lesson many of us adults and parents could use more practice at as well!)

Get the parents involved! For many kids (and their parents), a sport that includes full contact fighting, flailing of sticks, playing with blades is not your typical day-to-day happening! Parents need to understand the proper time, place and manner for their children to practice use of these instruments and the rules of WEKAF. **Have fun!** Key to any long term successful commitment is to enjoy what you are doing.

The kids of today's Filipino Martial Art practitioners and competitors are providing us only a glimpse of what is to come. They are incredibly talented, focused, passionate and displaying athletic capabilities to take this art and WEKAF to its next level.

We need to encourage, support and promote this growing generation of dedicated martial artists.

Arnis-Sikaran

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Email



Eric Carison Denney

Age: 8

School: Sacramento Doce Pares

Sacramento Tang Soo Do Martial Arts

I started taking martial arts when I was five years old. I practiced Goju Ryu karate with Sensei Mike Harriman at Jinbukan Karate/Kobudo Dojo in Sacramento, California. Sensei Mike had to close his school because he went to Iraq in 2003 for the military.

I wanted to continue with martial arts so my parents started looking for another martial arts school. At age six, I began taking Doce Pares from Master Jaunito "Nito" Noval. I have been training for two years under Master Nito at Doce Pares Sacramento.

Doce Pares is a form of Filipino stick fighting. It is very different than karate. It is a little bit of everything, like boxing, wrestling, and knife fighting. Since I am half Filipino (Mestizo), Doce Pares has helped me learn more about my Filipino heritage.

In 2005, I competed in several open karate tournaments and the Western Regional World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (WEKAF) Stick Fighting Championships. The tournament was held on November 5, 2005 in Oxnard, California. I placed 1st in double

weapons forms competition and 3rd in single stick fighting. In February 2006, I traveled to Milwaukee, Wisconsin to compete in WEKAF U.S. National Competition. At Nationals, I again placed 1st in double weapons forms competitions. Although I like forms, I like sparring better because I get to show everyone what I learned in practice and wearing my armor makes me look like a warrior. I won all three of my fights and finally placed 1st in single stick sparring.

Now I get to represent the U.S.A. at the WEKAF World Championships. I will be fighting Filipino, French, German, and other kids from around the world. The 2006 WEKAF World Championships will be held at Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort in Orlando, Florida on July 2 through July 9, 2006. I can't wait for World Championship because, "I'm going to Disney World!"

Wish me luck!

Doce Pares Sacramento

Master Nito Noval
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Sacramento, CA 95823
(916) 375-0745

Email

Website

Amanda Thelen

Age: 11

School: Milwaukee, WI. Four Winds Martial Arts



1st Place Amanda Thelen
2nd place Rose Frank, 3rd place Alexis Denney

My name is Amanda Thelen. I am 11 years old. I am from Two Rivers, a small town in Wisconsin. I have been in martial arts for 4 ½ years.

In 2004, when I was seven years old I saw my grandfather, Dennis Yauger, practicing something with a stick. I had no idea what he was doing or what it was. He explained to me that it was a type of Filipino Martial Arts in which you defend yourself with weapons and attack the other person. I was fascinated. I was so fascinated I decided to learn.

The first time I put the stick in my hand it felt awesome, but of course different. I started practicing and going to watch competitors in demo's and tournaments. I had been practicing so I decided to train for a WEKAF Regional

Tournament. I knew the training would be difficult but I was ready to put myself to the test.

When I began training for the tournament, my grandfather started taking me to his school. It is called Four Winds Martial Arts in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It was scary for me because I did not know anybody that went there. There were also few girls there, which made it even more nerve racking. But I was not going to let that bother me. Finally, I met my instructors: Thomas Sipin, and Kelii Sipin. They made me feel very comfortable and feel like I was at home with my grandpa.

The first time I sparred I was nervous. Sparring is where you block and hit your opponent. You wear a lot of padding and you wear a helmet. The judges look for the most effective hits, the most movement coming from the fighters, and the most technique or combinations. Kids 12 and under spar for 45 seconds and you get a 30 second break. Adults spar for 1 minute and get a 30 second break. Trying to hit with the stick while you have the padding on was hard, but after a while I got used to it.

It was finally time for regionals. Since this was my first time in a tournament I had no clue what to expect. I was definitely ready for this I just had to focus. Everything comes up to that one day, one hour, and it is just amazing. Nothing is more exciting than watching people from your school compete and cheering for them while they are fighting.

I started to spar. It was a lot of fun! I took 1st place in sparring. Then I did my form. I took 2nd place. I had qualified to go to Denver, Colorado and compete in the National Tournament. So I needed to start training again.

Training was much harder but I expected that. I was very excited to go to Denver and meet new people, but I was also nervous.

Nationals finally came. I competed in sparring and took a 1st place. In forms I got 1st place. It was so fun meeting new people and seeing everyone from the regionals, and our school. I wanted to do it again. I have qualified for the United States Stickfighting Team and could have gone to the Philippines, but I did not go.

I continued with it and I decided to go to regionals again on October 8, 2005 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I competed in sparring and forms again. I got 1st place in forms and 1st in sparring. I qualified for Nationals in Milwaukee, Wisconsin at the Four Points Sheraton.

Nationals had come again. It was held on February 17, 18, 19, 2006. I was really looking forward to this. I competed in forms, single stick sparring, and double stick sparring. I did single stick and I did double stick. It was my first time doing double stick. I took 1st place in single stick, 1st place in double stick and tied for 1st place in forms.

Now I have qualified to go to Disney World in Orlando, Florida in July 2006 for the 9th WEKAF World Tournament. The World Tournament is like our Olympics. Everyone from around the world is going to be there.

I never thought I could do this. I could never have accomplished all this if it was not for my family, my friends, my school, but especially my grandfather Dennis Yauger, and my instructors Grandmaster Thomas Sipin and Master Kelii Sipin. They make me feel so comfortable when I am learning. I would never have had the friends I have now if it was not for this and I would not know as much. I feel like I am part of an international family. I love it.

I have always felt different from my friends in a way because I do not get to hang out with them as much as I would if I was not in this. But I always think about and I

realize I am very lucky to be doing this and gaining knowledge and discipline. I love doing this. **It is all worth the commitment.**

Four Winds Martial Arts

Master Thomas Sipin
10633 W. Oklahoma Ave.
West Allis, WI 53227
(414) 541-3656

Email

Website

Some things to Consider

By: Kevin Schoenebeck

I have been training in Filipino Martial Arts for 14 years. I have never really considered putting on all the WEKAF sparring gear and seeing what happens when you hit as hard and as fast as you can.

I received an e-mail from Master Tom Sipin one day asking if my Eskrima group might be interested in helping out at a the National WEKAF tournament in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Saturday and Sunday, February 18 and 19. I thought why not? Then Master Sipin wanted know if any of my students might be interested in competing at the tournament? I said, "We never fought with all that equipment on before, and don't know what it would be like. Master Sipin then offered to come up to my school in Green Bay and bring a few students with some gear and have some fun.

So on a Wednesday evening they showed up, and helped us put on the sparring equipment. At first I thought there is way too much gear on here, but after we got going I was glad I had the gear on! What a Blast! We sparred off and on for about 15 minutes. I couldn't believe the work out! After we got done, I asked, "When can you guys come back". We did it again the following week.

Once you get use to the equipment you begin to relax a bit and can start working on footwork, counters, different attacks etc.

The following week was the National Tournament in Milwaukee. I took some of my students went down to help time keep, score keep, and just help out where we could. The tournament was very well organized and the people very friendly. The level of competition was very good. I am glad my students and myself had the opportunity to learn more about what WEKAF is and what it has to offer.

I think next time Master Sipin has a Tournament we will consider competing instead of just watching!

9th World Championships



The 9th World Championships are scheduled for July 2nd - 8th, 2006. This event will be held at the Walt Disney World Dolphin Resort in Orlando, Florida. The event will also include an Invitational International Tournament that will follow the World Championships, allowing those who did not qualify for the US Team to compete on an International level.

This season's finale is shaping up to be one of the largest and most exciting tournaments in the history of the WEKAF organization. In addition to the tournaments, there will be a variety of Martial Arts seminars offered by noteworthy instructors throughout the week. All Filipino Martial Arts enthusiasts are welcome to attend.

Information Flyer - [Click Here](#)
Online Registration - [Click Here](#)



How to Become a Member

Becoming a member of WEKAF is very easy. Those who maintain their active membership status are helping to support an international organization, making WEKAF Sanctioned events possible.

Membership Fees

- Fees are \$20.00 annually for an individual.
- Checks are to be made payable to "WEKAF USA"
- Membership runs on the calendar year, January 1 to December 31.
- Fees are not prorated for those signing up late in the year.
- To apply, download this [Membership Application](#) (Acrobat PDF) and return the completed form with payment to this address:

WEKAF Memberships

c/o: Thomas Sipin
Four Winds Martial Arts
10633 W. Oklahoma Avenue
West Allis, WI. 53227

Use of Fees

National fees help fund the biannual national championships and defray costs of U.S. participation in the world tournament.

Regional fees are designated to promote regional tournaments and promotion of WEKAF at regional levels. This use could include equipment, in which case said equipment belongs to a region, and must be turned over to the new director when one is appointed.

The revenue from membership fees is distributed in the following ways:

- 25% goes to the World organization in the Philippines
- 50% goes to the National organization
- 25% goes to the Region in which the member resides

For more information on WEKAF Membership, contact us by **Email** or by phone: 414-541-3656.

Frequently Asked Questions - Click on a question to find the answer.

Recent Questions

- Why can't I register for more than one Forms Division?

About WEKAF

- What is WEKAF?
- Is there a "World Series" or "Superbowl" of Stickfighting?
- Can I just come and compete at the 9th world Championships in

Orlando, Fl?

WEKAF Membership

- What does WEKAF Membership include?
- Where do my dues and tournament entrance fees go?
- How do I become a member of WEKAF?

The Tournament Experience

- How does a typical tournament run?
- Can I have a coach in my corner?
- A special note for all competitors regarding age brackets.

Equipment Requirements

- What is the stickfighting equipment like?
- Does it hurt?
- My system uses a different sized stick than the 28" stick used at the tournaments. Can I still compete?
- Can I supply my own gear for the competition?

Rules and Scoring for Competition

- How is the Stickfighting scored?
- What do Judges look for when scoring a Stickfighting match?
- How are the Forms Competitions scored?
- What criteria do Judges use to score Forms Competitions?

Representing a Different Country

- What is a Wild Card Slot?
- What if I want to represent another country in the World Championships?
- Can I still compete in US events?
- What happens if I fail to notify tournament officials of my intent?

Arif Shaikh



This past January 2006 WEKAF suffered the sudden loss of Arif Shaikh. Arif was charter member of WEKAF, involved since its inception in 1987. The former President of WEKAF, Arif was always very supportive of the organizations and the community as a whole. He was a major organizer in India and brought the Indian National Team to several World Championships. His example and contributions will be sorely missed. In his stead, John James (Great Britain) is serving as Acting President.

Arif Shaikh, former WEKAF President, recently died in a car accident in Bombay. The exact details are yet to be determined.

He was a 5th Degree Black Belt in the Filipino martial art Eskrima. This fighting discipline is different from other martial arts because a student starts training with weapons and then goes on to master self-defense techniques with the empty hand. Arif was an expert fighter with all of Eskrima's weapons, the knife, sticks, and sword.

After an extended hiatus due to personal reasons, he had notified the Board that he was intending to renew his involvement with the WEKAF organization. Arif was a founding member and a major contributor to the WEKAF organization since it's inception.



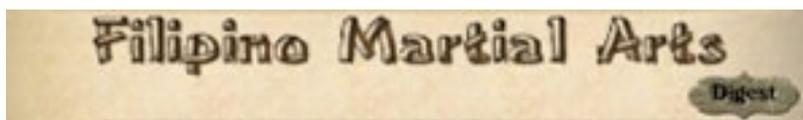
He was missed during his time away. He will be missed now. WEKAF thoughts and prayers go to his wife, Radhika and family.



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