



W K C

WORLD KARATE CONFEDERATION

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3rd World Cup for Children and Juniors 3rd to 6th October 2002 Novi Sad, Yugoslavia

Novi Sad, situated 80 km north of the Yugoslav capital Belgrade at the Danube river, is the main city of the region of Vojvodina. Here in the Vojvodina many different people settled since the middle ages. Novi Sad was founded during the time of the Austrian empress Mary Therese in the 18th century. Novi Sad is one of the main industrial cities of Yugoslavia, especially the petrochemistry is concentrated here. That is why the city, the industrial plants and the bridges were bombed 44 nights consecutively in 1999 by NATO war planes. All bridges crossing the Danube river were damaged. Fortunately they were reconstructed by now.

The World Cup was one of the first major sport events in Yugoslavia after the war of 1999. The *Yugoslav Karate Union* YKU proved to be an excellent organiser of such a big international tournament. Ms. Rada Stopic, Mr. Dušan Dacic and Mr. Zoran Beronja made the impossible possible: to transport and to accomodate not only over thousand competitors but an additional fivehundred supporters, parents and officials. One advantage in Novi Sad was that the huge stadium Sportcentre Vojvodina „SPENS“ was nearly in walking distance to the main hotels. Taxis were unlimited available and very cheap.

As usual a two day referee and coach seminar took place prior to the tournament. This time the new category of *Jiyu Ippon Kumite* for the children brown and black belts took a great part of the teaching and explanation at the seminar. Already introduced at the referee seminar at the European Championships by the South African Master Norman Robinson, 8th Dan Shotokan, it was now taught to more referees, especially those who were not present at the Europeans. This new category proved to have a lot advantages but also disadvantages. The technical experts of WKC have to go through the rules and techniques again. The discussion about this system is not yet finished.

This year we had more categories than in the two previous World Cups: instead of two ages groups for children there were three, Jiyu Ippon Kumite as an additional category for the black and brown belt children categories and a second age group for juniors were introduced. These were also reasons for the large number of participants. Exactly 1.013 competitors took part in the World Cup. They came from 22 different federations. Of course the hosting federation YKU had the largest number of 247, followed by the *Karate Savez Republike Srpske* KSRS with 152, *Federazione Sportiva Italiana Karate* FESIK with 111, and *All Styles Karate South Africa* ASK-SA with 91. Even from South America came two federations: the *Confederação Brasileira de Karatê Interestilos* CBKI with 12 competitors and the *Union Argentina de Karate* UAK with four participants. Members of the *Federacija Karatedo Shito-Ryu Rossii* FKSR travelled by bus as far as from Siberia several days and nights. This shows the enthusiasm of our members.

The two day event was formally opened on Saturday afternoon before the finals. The one thousand competitors marched in behind their national flags and nearly all of them wore the basecap which was given to them as a present at the registration. Several dance and karate groups made a fine demonstration before the mayor of the city, Mr. Borislav Novakovic, the president of the Yugoslav Karate Union, M. Sci. Marko Nicovic, and the WKC President opened the World Cup.

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The tournament itself went smoothly except the first day when the beginning was delayed for nearly an hour because of late arrival of several children. The late arrival was the responsibility of the parents respective the coaches of a few teams. The WKC Organizing Committee with WKC Chairman Carlo Henke as its leader decided to wait for the children. They did not want to strip the children of their chances after having travelled a long way. But this may not happen again. In the future the coaches have to take the consequences. We cannot expect the other competitors and officials to suffer because of the lack of discipline of some officials.

The same undisciplined behaviour occurred during the registration of the competitors. Some federations did not preregister by e-mail or fax their competitors. So until Friday late afternoon the WKC organising committee did not know the exact number of participants in each category and could make only in the night the program for the different categories on the different tatamis. This cannot happen again in the future.

Shortly before the prize giving ceremony on Sunday several medals, especially gold medals, were stolen by participants. This is a very unfair behaviour. The YKU organisers could manage to get made new medals during the night so that the stolen medals could be replaced and given to the winners before they left for home on Monday. Thank you, Dušan Dacic, for your initiative and quick help!

All participants received a special basecap with the logo of the World Cup and a participation diploma. So everybody went home with a souvenir from this great event. The sporthall offered all facilities like restaurants, snackbars, olympic size indoor swimming-pool, many shops of all kinds, banks, post office, etc. The World Cup was the second tournament on a world level in this sportcomplex which was built to host Chess World Cup in the early 1980's. The sporthall is used nearly every day for all kinds of sport and cultural activities. It is a central meeting point for business, sports and leisure open from early until late night. The Farewell Party also took place in a Disco in the Sportcomplex. It was reserved especially for the thousand karate players of the World Cup. Many children and juniors danced in the Disco until late after midnight. New friends were found, addresses were exchanged and promises made to see each other at the next World Cup.