

COMMENTS ON THE FAILURE OF KARATE TO MAKE THE OLYMPIC GAMES LIST.

Goerge Anderson, 7/13/05

The operation to the Olympics was all screwed up from the start and calls for questions and comments.

While traveling in Asia some years ago, I had serious conversations with Antonio Espinos, now president of the World Karate Federation. I found he had a great grasp of the situation and thought he could do the job for the Olympics. Furthermore, he was Spanish as was the President of the IOC.

What happened? I have been contacted by many of my friends in the WKF and what they way is interesting, to say the least, but is very private.

Serious people should and are asking serious question. What is wrong with these National and International Governing Bodies? Isn't it their job to disseminate information, raise money for the team, and coordinate national support for projects?

What happened with the much-touted goal of raising money for the team? What happened with the much-touted goal of sending out information so that other people can get into the game and help?

What happened to cause this bad situation for karate? Why keep all the vital information so secret? Why not tell the truth? We lost by seven votes! What happened with this planning...? Pushing on the IOC leadership was OK but the membership said NO. We had a long time to plan -- and this goal was not met.

Let us know what happened. What's the big secret? Is there something we shouldn't know?

When George Anderson pushed to get karate into the Pan American Games, at the National Meetings he would use the method of basic military "maze" analysis taught in all command schools. That is: Who and where we are ----our goals ---- and the obstacles for achieving those goals. Many times our delegates would groan about having to go over this again and again --- but it worked. In this method, there is you and the goal and the obstacles in-between. The trick is to get a direct line from you to the goal by either moving the goal, clearing the obstacle, or moving you yourself. Identifying the obstacles is part of the maze game.

For the WKF, it is clear that the IOC leaders agreed to the inclusion of Karate but the delegates must have had a different opinion. Certainly karate's operations must have known which delegates were pro and which against, right?

Do you suppose that now that our leadership will disclose those IOC members who bombed us? And do you think they have a clue why?

Here are some clues.

Many of the IOC Countries have Taekwondo and cannot appreciate the differences from Karate. Besides, Taekwondo has a much simpler competition method and does not have a cult like worship of referees. You can create team and officials in a shorter period of time and not interfere with the “high-dan powers that be.” This is very good for developing countries.

On the other hand, Karate is very complicated, and to make a good athlete requires years of training. The same can be said of the competition structure that includes the technical committees and referees. The referee structure depends on a not-understood-by-everybody complicated explanation of the rules that is called a precision of the rules – basically understandings not clearly stated in the rules proper.

Appointed senior dans control the operations from a political balance and most newcomers regardless of qualifications are pushed down. That is, unless they are part of the click. The result is a quasi cult of arrogant referees and disconnected technical representatives.

To restate the above and add on a little:

The IOC wants to see the BEST Athletes and our showing does not clear that hurdle. On TV there are great karateka - where are they? In the NGB – National Federations? I think that Taekwondo does put its best forward in the games.

We look too much like TKD. Of course, we are not but we look that way. Some years ago when the USA Karate Team was in the Dominican Republic a official from the US Embassy asked to have her son included in the presentation wearing his “Karate” uniforms. It seemed in order and we proceeded. Everyone was surprised when the lad came out in a Taekwondo uniform. Evidently, his mother thought that Taekwondo was Karate. Is it?

We have made Karate (Olympic) an elite and exquisite exacting sport. It takes years of training to produce a world level athlete (unlike TKD who apparently can get going without a lot of problems.) The deemed arrogant structure of Karate means that for some countries it becomes nearly impossible for them to produce IOC level competitors. Do some of the countries that voted not to karate already have TKD teams? Again, we need to know who these countries are.

Furthermore, karate people are so arrogant and full of hubris in the own selves, and clearly feel they do not need the assistance of other sports or martial artists.

The USA Karate Federation went to the nation's martial artists for a Dan-tai letter of support, meeting with those who opposed us to try get them involved and understand their opinion. Even though it worked, the principles have been discarded.

The USA Karate Federation met all the goals necessary for the Pan American Games and gained entrance. To do this we had to satisfy reservations of the people who might vote No and keep contact with those who would for us.