



Newsletter of the American Sambo Association. Vol. 8. No. 2. March - April, 2010

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A Word from the President

Greetings everyone,

The last few months have been great for Sambo and the ASA! Lots of news to report! We have results from the AASF USA Open and the British Open Championships. As usual, we have lots of seminars to announce, ASA member club news, as well as other important ASA news.

I usually spend a bit more time with my opening remarks, however, in this issue I am going to keep it short as I have written a pretty long commentary. Please take the time to read it! It addresses a very important and unfortunately neglected issue – student medical concerns.

Sincerely,
Stephen Koepfer
ASA President

Commentary: Student Medical Histories

I had an experience last month at the club last that prompted me to write this commentary.

As a school owner I always make sure to get a brief medical history of my students before they start training the club. It is amazing how many new students will neglect or forget to include important medical information if left to simply fill out the school application unchecked. The medical history section will often be left blank until I question them about it. Then after some basic questions from me regarding prior surgeries, allergies, illnesses such as asthma, diabetes, etc., people suddenly remember. How many times I have heard statements like: "Oh yeah, I forgot about that" or "Well, my diabetes is under control" or "I had surgery, but that was years ago" or "I did not think that mattered".

This is not to say that students omit information on purpose, but oftentimes people who have had past medical concerns or current issues which are well managed, will not consider them current medical concerns. How many times have I had to remind students with asthma, for example, to keep their inhaler handy? It must be explained to them that training with one's body the way we do may put the body under new pressures which may aggravate old injuries, or even current issues which are managed well. New students often have an "out of sight, out of mind" attitude towards their health. This can be potentially very dangerous.

It is extremely important to take at least basic

medical histories of our students. Furthermore, it is equally important to get an emergency contact for our students. Again, this is often left blank on the enrollment forms...until I specifically request the information. Equally important is that instructors get trained in basic first aid and CPR and have the proper supplies available. How often have I seen injuries in clubs where they did not even have ice packs available? **It is our responsibility as coaches to do this.**

Then, there are the occasional students who will not admit to medical concerns due to ego, embarrassment, or just a desire to look "tough" - The old "no pain, no gain" motto. How often during class do people experience problems they do not share, only to regret it later?

This brings me to my experience at the club last month. After class one of my students alerted me that another student (18 years old) was complaining of dizziness, seeing stars, and experiencing a headache. This is not something which he normally experienced to my knowledge. They are also symptoms of several potential serious issues.

While talking to him, I discovered that he had been experiencing symptoms like this for several weeks in and out of class, but had not shared it with anyone because "he did not want to worry anyone". More likely, he was scared of the possibilities of looking into the issue.

He wanted to go home on the subway, but We kept him at the club a bit to see if the problems would persist. The class was a relatively low impact class and he had experienced no head trauma. During our discussion in the changing room, his nose spontaneously started bleeding. Not a good sign. He still wanted to leave on his own. I forbid it.

I kept him at the club and insisted a visit to the ER. I called his mother, who was also not aware that he had been experiencing such symptoms. He had never told her. So, his mom went to meet him at the ER. We got him a ride to the hospital.

By the time he got to the ER, his state had deteriorated significantly. He could not walk, and was very disoriented. He could not recognize his mother when we got there. Thank God he did not go home on the train on his own!

So, he was admitted and, after many tests, the diagnosis is still unknown. However, some significant things have been ruled out like a tumor. However, a cyst causing intracranial pressure was discovered (non malignant it appears). He is also being assessed for a previously unknown seizure disorder. But, the jury is still out.

So, folks, here is the moral of the story:

If you run a club, **you must know that your students may not always be up front with you about their health.** And even if they have been, **there is always the possibility of unknown issues arising during training.** As a coach, you must have basic first aid knowledge and most of all a willingness and means to act upon what you assess. If you smell trouble, act on it: if it turns out to be nothing, great. But if it turns out to be something critical, you will be glad you did.

Lastly, **you must have emergency contacts for all your students.** Don't let students slide on this or their medical histories for that matter. Students who train with us are literally putting themselves in our hands. It is a huge responsibility. It is our responsibility to do our job and get the info and training we need so in the case of an emergency, we can do the right thing by the people who trust us and maybe even save a life.

Sambo in the News:

Team American Sambo Brings Home Historic Gold from England!

April 11, 2010 - **Team American Sambo** members Vincent Beurrier (**NY Combat Sambo**), Anthony Sansonetti (**Team Renegade**), Doug Fournet (of **LA Boxing**) and Stephen Koepfer (TAS Coach) traveled to Kent, England for the 2010 British Open Sambo Championships. Everyone fought hard! There was some very good Sambo at the event and everyone had a great time!

Team American Sambo also made history as the first Americans to win gold medal at the event, which has been running since 1986. Congratulations to

Anthony Sansonetti who brought home gold in the Veteran's 95kg division and Silver in the Men's 90kg division. **Doug Fournet** brought home the gold in the Men's 100kg division.

For high-lights of the trip watch this video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OPKnydzX6o>

For the full BSF report of the event, click here:

http://www.britishsombo.co.uk/british_open_2010_sombo_champion.htm

American Amateur Sambo Federation hosts the XVII Annual USA Open.

May 2, 2010 - This year the AASF USA Open boasted some very high level Sambo competition with athletes participating from 11 countries and several US states. 120 athletes participated, approximately 40 of which were in adult divisions. From the competitive end, this event was a great opportunity for US Sambists to get on the mat with seasoned opponents from around the world. It was also very refreshing to see so many young children at the event ensuring the future generations of the sport. Many current and former champions were in attendance.

Despite the very high quality of Sambo seen at the event, there was unfortunately a noticeable decrease in participation and very little participation from clubs outside the relatively small AASF community. An increase in promotion would benefit this event greatly as well as bring in more spectators. It is rare to see such world level Sambo being played in the US and it is a shame more folks in the grappling community were not aware of the event.

The event was to be a team trial for the 2010 World Combat Games in China. Promised were two all expense paid spots on the US Sambo Team. However, this was apparently not to be the case as the tournament was actually being held 4 days after the deadline for World Combat Games team registrations.

Another concern was the lack of spoken English by referees and announcers at the event. Referees who can't speak English pose a serious safety concern in that they will not be able to communicate properly with the athletes on the mat, who are under their care. In one case, an athlete had to translate to his English speaking opponent what his Russian speaking referee was saying – during the match!

A string of injuries in the sport and combat Sambo divisions led to an allegation that the event had improper medical staff and insufficient accident insurance for its athletes. An article written by Peter Lampasona of MAT Combat Sports addressed these concerns. The AASF denies these claims. However, at the time of this writing, evidence to the contrary has yet to be offered to Mr. Lampasona, who has offered to print a retraction.

One athlete who dislocated his shoulder during the sport Sambo competition had no ice to pack his shoulder and was never seen by an EMT. The Russian speaking referee offered no assistance. In fact, when a police officer overseeing the event was asked by the athlete's coach where the event EMT was, the response was "He is out on a run". It seems that there may have been EMTs at the event, however, they may not have been tasked to watching the event specifically.

In addition to language problems, false promises, lack of medical staff, and the allegations of insurance problems, there were also problems with establishing the brackets, which in one case was not clarified even as the bracket was beginning on the mat.

It is unfortunate that such a high level tournament, with such high level athletes was surrounded with such organizational concerns. At the end of the day, the athletes that stepped on the mat had an opportunity to roll with some of the best in the world. But, the underlying organizational problem served to diminish what otherwise was a spectacular day for both athletes and spectators.

Ultimate Sambo – New York

Congrats to **Brian Benjamin**, past **Team American Sambo** member, on his Silver medal at the AASF/FIAS USA Sambo Open!

Rosati Martial Arts – New York

May 2, 2010 - RMA brings home medals in Sport Jujitsu!

Michelle Husslein: 2nd Place Sport Ju Jutsu,
4th Place Sparring

Ashley Schecher: 1st Place sparring

Angelo Fradelakis: 1st Place sparring

Tyler Pohlman: 1st Place Sport Ju Jutsu

Brianna Pohlman: 4th Place sparring

Ryan Blank: 2nd Place Sparring

James McDermott: 1st Place Sport Ju Jutsu,
1st Place Weapons, 3rd Place Kata

Steven Dachel: 1st Place Weapons

Nate Roth Rosati: 1st Place Sport Ju Jutsu,
2nd Place Kata, 3rd Place Weapons

Noah Roth Rosati: 1st Place Sport Ju Jutsu,
1st Place Sparring, 1st Place Kata, 2nd Place Weapons

Building a Sambo “Fight Finder”

We at the ASA are attempting to build a database of domestic Sambo tournaments and players. As Sambo grows in the US & Canada, we consistently get inquiries regarding old tournaments, past athletes, etc. It is our goal to create a searchable database on our website.

We are asking all our readers to forward us any official results they may have from Sambo events held here in the US and Canada, as well as any important places by North Americans at world or international Sambo events.

Photo of the Month



Ariel Elghanayan of NY Combat Sambo attempting an arm bar at the 2010 USA Sambo Open.

2010 Event Calendar

COMPETITIONS:

-July 10, 2010.

Ultimate Submission Tournament

No-gi grappling tournament.

Event starts at 9am.

Contact Vlad Koulikov at

www.ultimatesambo.com for more information

-August 14, 2010. Chillicothe, Ohio

Sambo Joe summer nationals (Sport Sambo)
(non-ASA event)

For more information contact Joe Neely:

jneely@fuse.net

www.sombojoe.com

SEMINARS:

-June 5, 2010. Florida, New York.

Leg Lock seminar with Vlad Koulikov

Seminar starts at 1pm.

Contact www.ultimatesambo.com for more information.

-July, 23-25, 2010. Seattle, Washington

ASA presents Igor Kurinnoy US Seminar Tour
Igor is a 3x world champion and 5x world cup champion

Owner/head coach of Borec in Moscow

Open to the public.

contact: Aaron Fields at batakhan@speakeasy.net

-July 30 - Aug 1 , 2010. Bettendorf, Iowa
ASA presents Igor Kurinnoy US Seminar Tour
Igor is a 3x world champion and 5x world cup
champion
Owner/head coach of Borec in Moscow
Open to the public.
contact: Gregg Humphreys at
dynamogregg@msn.com

-July 15-18, 2010. East Strousberg, PA
Without Limits Training camp
Kyokushin, Combat Sambo, Boxing, Conditioning
Coaches include: Tony Capraro, Stephen Koepfer,
Devon Cormac, and more!
Open to the public.
Contact:
<http://www.masoyamaskarate.com/index.cfm?page=9>
Cost: \$400. Includes 4 day room & Board and
training.

-September 25, 2010. North Branford, CT
3-5PM
Sambo Seminar with Stephen Koepfer
By invite only for ASA members
Location: <http://www.aikiacademy.com/>

-October 8-10, 2010. Bettendorf, Iowa
4th Annual Sambo Summit 4 day training camp.
Open to the public
Required for ASA member club instructors.
Location: Miletich Fighting Systems
More info coming soon