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WORLD KARATE CONFEDERATION

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4th WKC World Championships, St. Petersburg, Russia, 21st and 22nd June 2003

Just three weeks after the official celebration of the 300th anniversary of the foundation of St. Petersburg with the Russian President Vladimir Putin and many heads of states the 4th WKC World Championships took place in this young and marvellous city. Nearly 600 individual competitors, 100 teams and 80 judges and referees participated in this event. They came from 43 different federations. This is a new record in the short history of the WKC. Six federations came for the first time.

As usual a two day seminar for the referees and coaches preceded the tournament itself. The new judges were taught separately. The team of the Senior Referees helped the teachers Messrs. *Carlo Henke*, *Bernd Hirschberger*, *Gerold Reifenauer*, *Joe Mirza* and *Ladislav Klementis*. The Japanese Masters *Y. Ishimi*, *H. Ochi*, *T. Ogawa*, and *K. Shibamori* were teaching the Kata of their style. The best 25 referees were declared Senior Referee.

On Saturday evening the Championships were officially opened by the Deputy Chairman of the St. Petersburg assembly, Mr. Konstantin Serov, and the President of the hosting federation *International Martial Arts League*, Mr. *Mikhail Kousmin*. A splendid show, a mixture of East Asian tradition and modern dance was displayed in the opening ceremony.

The standard of the fights has improved considerably. Having more and more new members the concurrence is increasing and this leads also to more quality. Out of the 43 participating federations 28 got at least one medal. The Italian federation FESIK is still the strongest squad at the WKC tournaments. This is also due to the fact that FESIK is strong in two styles: Shotokan and Shito Ryu. This is a success of Master *Sei Iwasa* who is the Shito Ryu instructor in Italy.

In the category „Old Boys“ Kata (over 40 years of age) two officials participated in the Shito Ryu style: Mr. *Vladimir Tarasenko* (Belarus) who achieved the gold medal and the President of the *All Iran Seishinkai Karate Association*, Mr. *Nasrollah Kakavand* who won silver. They are a good example that karate is good for all ages.

The highest number of entries with 76 was in the male kumite Shobu Sanbon under 78 kg. In the male team kumite Sanbon we had 30 teams and in the male Ippon there were 14 teams. In the kata event the Shotokan individual men category had 51 entries.

A special guest attended the referee seminar and the championships: Master *Eiki Kurashita*, 9th Dan of the Goju-Ryu Kokusai Karate Kobudo Federation of Okinawa, the homeland of Karate-do.

At the closing ceremony the WKC flag was given to Mr. *Oswaldo Messias de Oliveira*, President of the *Confederacao Brasileira de Karate Interestilos CBKI*. The Brazilian federation will host in two years the next WKC World Championships.