

5th SAN SHOU WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS Hong Kong, China November 1999

Written by US team Member Josh Bartholomew

The US sent the strongest, most well balanced team it has ever sent to the World Championships. The US was considered one of the strongest teams at the event along with Russia, Iran, China, and Egypt. The results were mixed but all the fighters represented the US well.

Chinu Ly 60 kg (133 lbs. San Jose) lost a tough fight against a surprisingly tough fighter from Sweden. Chinu started well and had showed more skill than his opponent. After some questionable scoring the fight went to a third round and Swedish fighter fought a counter fight and squeezed out a few more clean points than Chinu. Chinu gained some good experience and will defiantly be a force in the 2001 and I would guess the 2003 worlds.

Rudi Ott 75 kg (165 lbs. Boston/San Jose) Rudi entered the event with confidence after a breakout year in which he won and then defended his IKF Pro Title. He had by far the toughest draw of the first round when he was paired up with the defending 75 kg world champion from Iran (In my opinion the best fighter at the event). It promised to be one of the best fights of the event and Rudi was ready. Iran started strong with quick takedown and push out but Rudi rallied and scored back with hands and feet.

Then in a clash, Rudi took an accidental elbow to his nose casing a deep cut. The fight was stopped as the corner tried to stop the bleeding but after the restart the cut continued to bleed and the head judge stopped the fight. Both fighters were upset and wanted the fight to continue. Rudi represented himself well and unfortunately we will wont know the outcome of what would have been a great fight until they meet again.

Josh Bartholomew 85 kg (188 lbs. Boston) Josh was the smallest fighter in his division having gone up weight to make the team (Editor's note = Josh competes regularly in Cung Le's weight class but moved up in weight because Cung, by virtue of his previous Bronze Medals, automatically qualified for his spot). He was, however, used to being shorter than his opponent and went into his first fight against Yugoslavia with a good game plan. He lost the first round with the Yugoslavian doing a good job at fighting at long range and tying up inside. Jason

Yee made some adjustments between rounds and Josh scored more points inside and had much better penetration and won the second round. The third round was even when inexplicably Josh stepped off the platform while moving to set up a shot.

The resulting three point error tipped the scales in the Yugoslavian direction and he won the third round.

Cung Le 80 kg (176 lbs. San Jose) Cung came in a favorite to win his division and was considered one the best fighters at the event. Cung fought conservatively his first fight against fighter from the Netherlands. Cung was suffering from side effects off the local cuisine and was not at 100% but he easily won his first fight. Two days later he fought a strong fighter from Portugal and although still under the weather, dispatched the fighter with cleaner techniques and better execution. On to the real test and what proved to be the deciding fight of the division, Cung vs. Russia.

The Russian was a powerhouse and Cung was still not at 100% so things looked tough. But Cung is a champion and stepped up to the task like a warrior and was out fighting and landing brutal inside leg kicks from the start. The Russian was strong and withstood the punishment a managed to turn the tide as Cung started to get tired. In the end the Russian won and Cung, who fought harder than should have been possible, was left with a Bronze meddle for the third time.

Allain Loriaux 65 kg (143 lbs. Boston) After killing himself to make weight Al stepped into his first fight against Chinese Tai Pei (Taiwan) as the tallest and heaviest fighter in the division. Al dispatched Chinese Tai Pei in short order, being more skilled and in better shape, and moved onto his next fight against Sweden. Again Sweden turned out to be better than expected and took Al in to the third round after winning a first round draw by being the lighter fighter (the first tiebreaker in international San Shou is that the lighter fighter wins the round). In the third round Al lands a rear leg Round kick to Sweden's nose and he goes down. Sweden manages to get up and after the bleeding stops staggers through the rest of the round, onto Egypt.

Egypt just coming off an easy victory came in with confidence but quickly realized Al was going to be far from easy. Again the fight goes to three rounds

after Al losses another tie round by weight and a determined Al tears Egypt apart with his hands and finishes him off with another rear leg roundkick to the chin except this time the fighter did not get up, KO, on to Russia.

Gold medal round and Al is ready. First round is close but it appears to go to Al who landed much cleaner and harder techniques but inexplicably three judges call it a tie and one judge for each of the fighters (Holyfield Lewis I anyone?). Round to Russia buy weight. Round to Al comes out strong and it ahead when Russia uses his only effective weapon, spin back-fist, catching Al with an elbow that goes unnoticed by the ref and blurs Al vision in that eye for a short time. Russia pressed the advantage and won the round four to one. Al get the silver and becomes the only US San Shou fighter to advance to the gold medal round in the world championships.

As a side note: Russia was the only team that complained about the last minute random drug testing that was announced and Iran missed the weigh in and was allowed to weight in without any other teams or coaches around. Rudi's opponent looked to be about two weight classes off but the Irianian team trains with the Irianian Olympic wrestling team and would have learned how to cut wight. Just a thought.