

TAEKWONDO AKTUELL



HIGHLIGHT IM TURNIERKALENDER

19. INT. PARK POKAL

SPEKTAKULÄRER BRUCHTEST

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What remains when a tournament is over?



Competitors and coaches are often unhappy after tournaments. They are disappointed with themselves or they feel treated unfairly by the referees. We all know about these problems. What we rarely hear is what the organizers think after a tournament.

It might be interesting to examine this issue from the organizer's viewpoint. I have some experience in this field. Next year we will celebrate two anniversaries: The "Park Pokal" (Park's Cup) will take place for the 20th time, the International Children's Championships for the 10th. The 19th Park Pokal is just over. We were very happy and proud to welcome more than 900 players from 21 countries in the Sindelfingen sporthall "Glaspalast".

But we as the organizers were left with a big problem too – and a very embarrassing one on top of it: once the teams had departed, the hall was left in a terrible mess. Not only were there heaps of rubbish lying around. Drinks had been spilled, sandwiches and melted chocolate had been squashed onto the Tartan track. To say

nothing of the outright vandalism we had to cope with this year: some participants have lit a fire in the rest rooms and broken cobbles out of the floor in the foyer. During all these years we have come across many kinds of vandalism. One year we had to replace all locker doors because participants used them as punching balls. Broken mirrors are the rule. And once we were surprised to hear that participants had broken an entire toilet bowl out of the floor. These incidents do not happen by accident. They need considerable force and they are intended. This is why we worry after every tournament what might have happened this time. And I know we are not the only ones who worry about this problem. At the World Championships 2003 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen/Germany there was a lot of trouble, too. And I am sure all organizers of international tournaments know, what I am talking about.

Please do not misunderstand me: I know that most of our players and coaches are very decent and orderly. I do not want to tar all with the same brush. It is, after all,

only a few who misbehave but they cast a slur on the reputation of all participants. We only see the outcome and we do not know who is responsible for it. So I have to speak in general.

Vandalism and rubbish have a major impact on costs. The normal cleaning of the sports hall after the event is not sufficient. We, as the organizer, have to bear the costs for special cleaning and for repair work – this year we had to pay a record sum of 4,250 Euro. (more than 5,000 \$).

But what is worse than the costs is the bad reputation taekwondo has as a result of the behaviour of its representatives. We have been working together with the Marriott Hotel in Sindelfingen for many years. In the early years we were very welcome there. But gradually things changed. When taekwondo people were in the hotel the swimming pool and sauna stayed closed, breakfast was served in a special area, away from other guests. There were complaints about soiling of the walls, about noise at night.

There are sports halls which are suddenly booked out for years in advance when a taekwondo club asks for them – caretakers and management rather do without rent for a certain weekend than offer their hall for a taekwondo event.

For us this is particularly bad. We run two big tournaments a year and there are simply not that many halls which can fit in six or eight rings. The Glaspalast Sindelfingen is ideal for us. You may know that hall. In 1998 the World Cup and exactly 25 years ago, in 1979, the World Championships took place in that hall. Therefore many coaches and officials came to the "Park Pokal" 2004 who remembered being there 25 years ago. For them it was like a historic homecoming and for us it was a great honour to welcome them.

The Glaspalast is spacious and attractive, Stuttgart airport is not far, there are many big hotels in Sindelfingen. National Championships take place in a different city every year, therefore, after some time, the problems after a Championship are forgotten. But we want to keep our tournaments at the same place and the complaints of the hall management and the local hotels are very embarrassing for us. Every year we are afraid that they might say: Enough is enough – we do not want you any more!

We have big plans for next year. At our International Children's Tournament we have a Taekwondo Demonstration with the Grandmasters Kang Jong-Kil, Chang Jae-Hee and Pyo Rak-Sun whom I want to thank so much for his cooperation with us over the years. Next year we want to stage an additional show especially for children, with clowns and magicians. For the 20th anniversary of the Park Pokal we plan a king and queen of Taekwondo contest on Sunday afternoon. But to realize such plans we need a professional venue like the Glaspalast. If its doors should close for us one day, we can not organize these tournaments any more. No other hall in our area has enough room for 900 players. It would mean the end of two decades of Taekwondo-tournaments in the Sindelfingen and Stuttgart region.

For this reason I want to make an appeal to all participants: Tournaments like the Park Pokal and the International Children's Championships are not our tournaments, they are your tournaments! So please behave as you would behave at home. It is that simple: Use the waste bins, do not throw food leftovers on the floor and do not destroy things that are not your own. You would save the organizers of events all over the world a lot of trouble and what is more: You would behave in a way that

would enhance the reputation of our sport rather than diminish it. Winning medals is important but equally important is to keep up certain standards of behaviour, of integrity. Do you really want to turn your sport into a nightmare of hotel and hall managers as well as ordinary citizens who happen to stay in the same hotel as you do?

Those who have ever organized a Taekwondo tournament know about the difference between Poomsae and Kyorugi competitions. After a Poomsae competition the venue is immaculate – after Kyorugi it is the opposite. Is it possible that Taekwondo is a two-class-society? Do we not all have the same values, the same "Do"?

As I said earlier on: I know the majority of participants are not to be blamed for the mess in our sports halls. But I nevertheless want to implore all of you to keep in mind that bad behaviour harms the reputation of your sport and if you see anybody acting in such a manner tell them off. Often it is only thoughtlessness. Do not spoil the future of our sport by damaging its public image. We are not a young sport any more, we have our own history and tradition, we have grown up. Let us show to the world that we belong to one Taekwondo family and that we are proud of it!