

Koen Scharrenberg, president (1956)

Education:

Trainer and teacher of Physical Education. Specialization: exercise physiology, athletics.

Study of criminal and civil law.

Professional profile:

Profession: journalist for Dutch television and national magazines. Also a writer/novelist. Books published: fiction, two novels. Non fiction: five books on fighting sports and (organized) crime.

Karate Profile:

Grade in shinkyokushin: 5th dan

Practicing kyokushin karate since: 1970

Teaching and training: every week, once or twice. At the moment recuperating from shoulder surgery.

Member of the EKO-board: elected as Vice-president in 2004, elected as President in 2008.

Experience in karate:

Multiple times Dutch and International Champion (eight years Holland Team Member)

1/8 final in Second Open World Tournament 1979 (lost to champion Makoto Nakamura)

Last 64 in Third Open World Tournament (lost to Willie Williams)

Two times training as 'uchi deshi' in Japan, under Oyama Sosai

Eight years trainer and coach of the Dutch Team (with Michel Wedel, Gerard and Nico Gordeau, Peter Smit, Eric Constancia, John Kleijn, Michiel Gerritsen and others).

Teaching and instructing on Summer Camps and seminars in: France, Poland, Romania, Spain, Nepal, Denmark, Belgium, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Holland and other countries.

Trainer of Special Forces of France (GIGN) and Holland (BBE and AT's).

Remarkable achievements in karate: broke up to 24 thick and massive baseball bats in one minute with his bare shins, on Dutch television. This was in charity events, thus earning up to 6.000 euro for Children in Third World Countries (search youtube for: Koen Scharrenberg)

Best remembered fight: against Andy Hug. He was only 18 or 19 years old and I was eight years older, but he was extremely tough and I could only barely beat him for the Open Dutch Championship. From then on, until he sadly died, we became very close friends and always visited each other several times a year. And my fights in Honbu, with Keiji Sanpei. Every fight was very hard but we became very good friends. As I have become with more strong (Japanese) opponents. There are few things better to create friendship than the training and fighting together in kyokushin karate!

Karate biography:

Born in 1956, I started kyokushin karate in 1971, together with my twin brother Wim. Our sensei was August Lumallesil, a Moluccan born man who from the start of our career took us into his heart and many times in his home – his people's tradition is, to have great and wonderful tasting meals with friends and family, as much as is possible (picture with my sensei: a yoko tobi geri).

Under his guidance, we trained hard and in 1977 I obtained my shodan. During the training and while fighting in tournaments, I had become fascinated with Japan as the motherland of karate and of course with Masutasu Oyama, founder of the then rapidly expanding kyokushin style. I remember listening to the stories of Peter Voogts, who was a 5th dan at that time and had trained in the Tokyo Honbu, while visiting Tokio. He also mentioned the uchi deshi: the traditional house students in Japan (you also find them in ikebana, origami, drums playing and so on) that had a very hard time in the kyokushin Honbu but made enormous progress in karate. Admittance to train and live as uchi deshi was very limited and foreigners were rarely permitted to enter the Wakajishi Ryo, the House of Young Lions, as the dormitory was called. In 1977 I won the Dutch Middleweight championship and I decided, to try to make a dream come true: visit Japan and try to train as an uchi deshi in the Honbu in Tokyo. Loek Hollander, then head of the European kyokushin organization, wrote an letter of introduction and I took the plane.

After coming to Japan, I had to spend the first night in a hotel and then had a talk with Sosai Oyama. In the end, he decided that I could enter as an uchi deshi. I was happy, but that soon changed ...

Training was very hard, with no protection allowed, so in the beginning my shins, feet and muscles were hurting very much. I had to get used to the rhythm of training, with many mae keages, push ups, hard and spirited kihon, hundreds of kicks and very hard fighting. Sometimes sparring, which was relaxed, but also kumite – this was like a tournament fight in Holland. And then ten or fifteen times over and over because I had to face the black belts one after another and they really beat the sh... out of me. So, every day I thought of leaving, but one way or another I was too stubborn. And I wanted to succeed, not in the least because Sosai too an interest in me and his teaching was extremely inspiring. Every Sunday in the afternoon he instructed the black belts; on Friday sometimes also and afterwards we had a meal in the Wakajishi Ryo all together. On a normal day, we had to train all together stamina at 6.30 in the morning, until 7.30, then have breakfast (rice and a raw egg, sometimes with fish), clean the dojo, listen to a speech by Sosai at 09.30 and start the first training at 10.00. This Ichibu training finished at 12.30, then lunch (rice and fish usually), time for an hour of sleep and at 16.00 hour Nibu, second training. Or you could take Sanbu, the third training, at 19.00 hours. It had to be one of these. Around 21.30 dinner and sometimes to the Furo, the hot baths, near the Honbu. The very hot water was great for the muscles. And then you fell unconscious on your Futon .. until 06.30 in the morning. This was six days a week for the Uchi deshi, for me the first three week seven days a week ...

It was a great time, in spite of all the loneliness and pain.

The loneliness and isolation ended after three weeks, when I was taken out with the black belts after the Sunday afternoon training. This was also hard work: we drank and ate until late and I was completely drunk – like all of us. But since I did not fall unconscious or whatever, I was accepted by the black belts and gradually everything became easier. Still hard, but I was not kicked and beaten as hard as before. My

body adjusted to the grueling workouts and I came into a rhythm that was wonderful and spirited, enjoying especially when Sosai was around or when we were fighting hard amongst each other, but knowing that we made each other stronger.

When, after several months, I left for Holland again to take up my study as teacher of physical education, I experienced one of the most moving moments of my life. The Japanese instructors, the same ones who had beaten me fiercely for a long time (it seemed endless haha) had organized a Guard of Honor when I came out of the Honbu Dojo. I was almost moved to tears and left Tokyo as a happy man.

Later, after the Second World Tournament in 1979, where I was soundly beaten by the later champion Makoto Nakamura, I went back to prepare for the Third World Tournament and trained again as uchi deshi. This time it was different, knowing the routine and adapting quickly, I was even allowed to stand in front of the class. Again I had a great time, but in the World Tournament I faced giant Willie Williams in my third fight. Him being much taller and heavier, I lost after a very hard and vicious fight. After the World Tournament, I decided to focus on my study, went to law school and eventually became a journalist for television and magazines, and also a writer and novelist.

I traveled everywhere to train and teach, became coach and trainer of the national team of Holland and, I can say, through kyokushin karate I have met true friends and experienced great things. It has formed me in many ways. And I am still grateful to the man who has given this to millions of people: Masutatsu Oyama Sosai.