

THE SOUTH AFRICAN KICKBOXING ASSOCIATION AN OVERVIEW AFTER 20 YEARS

My purpose with this document is to give the reader a brief overview of what we have achieved since the inception of SAKA (South African kickboxing Association) in 2001:

1. Kickboxing as a Sport

With the establishment of SAKA our purpose was to have a unified kickboxing association for all Kickboxing Styles. Most Martial Arts were and are still privately operated. We envisaged to manage kickboxing democratically as a sporting code under SAKA and to allow styles to operate as a martial art.

This is the reason why SAKA associates with the South African Sporting bodies on all levels and allow the various styles to operate as independent martial arts systems. Therefore, SAKA doesn't grade kickboxers and the different styles do not issue official provincial and national colours.

2. Management Process

Like all official sporting codes, our association is guided by:

- a Constitution
- Code of Conduct
- Competition Rules and
- Regulations

We operate as an organized structure guided by an activity calendar for the specific year.

In a sporting code, post bearers on the various levels are elected democratically, whereas in a martial art style or a private organization democracy is not normally at the order of the day.

Once a year we have an Annual General Meeting where all instructors are given an opportunity to air their views.

The day to day management of SAKA is done by an executive.

3. International Association

In 2001 according to my knowledge no other major international kickboxing organization was associated with:

- **WADA** (World anti - doping Association),
- **GAISF** (General Association of Sporting Federations),
- **IWGA** (International World Games Association),
- **World** Combat Games or the IOC (International Olympic Committee).

Through the years **WAKO** worked to get themselves associated with these organisations. (WAKO – World Association of Kickboxing Organisations)

Once you have been accepted by these international organisations your sporting code is accepted as a **credible** international sport.

WAKO is the only international kickboxing organization accepted by all the above organizations.

This being the reason why we are registered to **WAKO** and have been accepted as a full member.

Our goal is to become an Olympic Sport

4. Our International Beginning

Because no kickboxing organization was affiliated to the mentioned bodies above we started off with **World Profi Kickboxing Association**. They were based in Greece which were centrally aligned with Western and Eastern Europe. This gave our fighters the opportunity to compete against the best of both sides of Europe.

They were also willing to assist us and let us register free of charge.

In 2007 WAKO was accepted by GAISF and when the African Games were held in Algeria, we were told by SASCO to attend with a 10 man team to represent South Africa.

There we met Mr Falsoni, The President of WAKO at that time, who explained the route which WAKO is taking internationally to become an IOC member.

We understood the sporting code concept and decided that WAKO is the best way to go.

Of the eight amateur fighters participating we brought back four medals (3 bronze and 1 silver). Our opponents were African fighters who fought on the European Pro circuit.

5. International Events hosted by SAKA in SA

We realized that many South African fighters would find it difficult attending an international event in Europe or the USA. We therefore entered into a bilateral agreement with countries who were willing to come to South Africa.

We hosted:

- The Canadian National team - Eleven times (11),
- The Mauritian team - Six times (6),
- Azerbaijan - Once (1),
- Turkey - Once,
- Zimbabwe - Five times (5)
- and a number of smaller groups of fighters from various African countries.

These were mainly delegations of between 10 to 25 people. The deal was they pay their airfare, we accommodate them, supply transport and provide two meals daily. All of this was done without National Government or Lotto funding.

A few people assisted me and at times we had to use our own finances to ensure success. We started arrangements to host Belgium this year but had to abort. Should I have missed any other events hosted by SAKA please forgive me, but the above activities show what was achieved. It was a challenge hosting large groups and entertaining them.

6. International Events abroad

We attended:

- The World Championships every year - Nineteen (19) World Championships attended.
- We attended five (5) events in Mauritius,
- One Championship in Italy,
- The African Championships in Madagascar,

- The African Games in Algeria and
- Three events in Turkey.

We also sent individual fighters to compete at events such as:

- The Irish Open,
- WAKO Diamond event in Russia,
- The Lady`s Pro-Event in England etc
- SAKA was also invited by Azerbaijan to send promising young fighters to attend a training camp with their WAKO world class pro fighters. Azerbaijan assisted in covering expenses within their country.

7. International Seminars

A number of these have also been held in South Africa and several of our seniors also attended seminars internationally.

The most recent one held was with the new WAKO World President (Mr Roy Baker) in March 2020, here on own soil. Mr Barry Hendricks, the acting SASCOC President, attended part of the seminar and had a meeting with the WAKO President, Mr Roy Baker, which was very positive for us as SAKA.

8. Local and National Activities

If you want to see whether a sporting code is active have a look at its activity [calendar](#) for the year.

The amount of opportunities for fighters to participate locally and nationally are most certainly listed there.

Our calendar offers development, intermediate and more advanced events, one must simply be willing to participate at all levels.

Our events have also been structured in such a way to gradually prepare you for the SA Championships.

The way our SA's have been structured falls in line with all other credible sporting codes which must allow for the best of a province/region to participate.

Not be just another major event where everyone is allowed to participate at.

Our special events such as Fight Nights and Mall events picked up well once again.

This can be attributed to people who were willing to lay out their hard-earned cash to give fighters a more prestigious event to participate at.

In 2002 this started at:

- The Carousel, North of Pretoria for which we had TV coverage and continued to
- Emperors Palace,
- Hartbeespoort Dam,
- Thabazimbi,
- The Cape Town area,
- Grand West Casino,
- The West Coast,
- The Hangar events,
- The Eden area,
- Nelspruit and Barberton area etc.

This concept has been running for quite some time but took a dip and has been revived.

For these events to be more active, financing is vital and where possible TV coverage. I might have slipped on a few activities but as you can see SAKA has been very active and will be going forward.

9. Going Forward

After the meeting between Barry and Roy it was decided that SAKA will be seeking direct affiliation with **SASCOC** due to the **IOC** status WAKO has and that we are a large sporting code represented in all the national provinces.

Presently there are 130 clubs [registered](#) to SAKA.

Our biggest challenges are:

- **Funding** which will assist us in setting up opportunities for fighters to participate at internationally accredited events and to bring more teams to South Africa.
- **TV coverage** which we need to concentrate on and there are presently people working on it.

I believe that once we **associate** directly with SASCOC we could get there quicker.

Our ties with Angola have developed very well and we will soon be having bilateral events with them.

The next African Championships will be held in South Africa during which fighters who representing Africa at the Combat Games in Kazakhstan and the World Games in the USA will be selected.

Unfortunately, due to COVID 19 it has been postponed until further notice.

10. Achievements

I do not have all the facts to my disposal but have a very good recollection to what fighters have achieved.

- During our WPKA membership, 21 fighters won their respective divisions at the World Championships and a large number of silver and bronze medals were won. The average amount of countries at these world championships were between 25 to 35. This was also the average one would've found at all the other organizations before 2007.
- With WAKO we had three fighters win their respective divisions. We had a number of silver and bronze medallists. After 2010 most of the countries saw WAKO's intentions and started co-operating more permanently with WAKO. Due to WAKO's alignment with the mentioned organizations most countries are assisting their fighters financially. This has resulted in WAKO having 126 countries registered to them. Presently they have up to 86 countries in attendance at a world championship which makes the event very competitive and tough.

11. Assistance

As you would have seen I did not mention any SAKA member's name in this brief overview.

There are just too many people who assisted in all the above-mentioned ventures. Human nature always wants to single out people as though they are the only people who made SAKA what it is today.

Yes, there are people who only use the platform established to promote their hidden agendas or promote themselves, which is unfortunate.

However, there are people who contributed more than others and when thanking them for it, their answer would normally be, "I am doing it for SAKA and Kickboxing".

12. Our REAL HEROES

- are the Instructors who manage gyms/clubs,
- Volunteers who work at competitions from morning to evening,
- the ones who de-escalate senseless politics,
- the Enablers who assist disadvantaged students to attend events at their cost,
- the Motivators getting the parents to help and support at competitions and events,
- the Mentors using kickboxing to build the character of troubled individuals,
- the Generous supporting the organization and not their private agendas
- and most of all, being great friends. FRIENDS OF SAKA!

Conclusion

To have been active for Twenty Years (20) and still going strong without regular government funding or sponsorships, we have done exceptionally well.

None of the above would have been possible without assistance and support from all involved in developing SAKA.

Taking the above into consideration, imagine what we would have been able to accomplish should we have received the same amount of funding as what "A" Category sporting codes received.

In SA, Rugby is an `A` category sport.

In Russia not, Kickboxing is.

Each country categorises sport differently, however, once you have **full Olympic Status**, which WAKO is working towards, things can change!

As the President of SAKA, I thank everyone from the bottom of my heart for your loyal service over the 20 years towards SAKA.

WE ARE A FAMILY.