



## **AAU TAEKWONDO**

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Dear AAU Taekwondo Members:

As the new 2007/2008 competition and fiscal year gets underway I thought I would take a moment to review with you the fantastic success our Program has enjoyed as well as preview some of our plans, hopes, and desires for the future.

Each year, at its Annual Convention, the leadership of the AAU presents what it calls, “The Year in Review” video and makes copies of that presentation available to its attendees. In this presentation the officers, most notably our esteemed President, Mr. Bobby Dodd, offer a look back on the preceding year with all of its challenges, initiatives, and successes. No small task for a 30+ sport cornucopia of amateur athletics encompassing more than 500,000 members.

Following this year’s convention, I thought ‘why not something similar to this for our own individual sport—Taekwondo’? Of course I don’t have the resources available to our national office such as the video production expertise that our corporate partner Disney brings to the table or the staff of dozens of professionals at AAU Headquarters in Orlando to assist me. But surely something as simple as the spoken/written word could serve the purpose.

And then I thought, “why The Year in Review? Why not the Decade in Review or the Program in Review? After all, AAU Taekwondo has never ‘blown its own horn’ concerning its own challenges, initiatives, or successes. We have quietly gone about our business of creating the best grassroots Taekwondo Program in the US. And I’ll bet that most of today’s members don’t fully understand from whence we came. Just how successful we’ve become. Just how great a quantum leap we’ve been able to make in a relatively short period of time.

Over the next several weeks, I will be sending you a short message detailing these accomplishments in areas such as Growth, The Olympic Game, Finances, Partnerships, Our National Championship, Technology, our Benefits Package, Training and Education Projects, and much more. Once this is done, I hope to post similar information, on a monthly basis, helping to keep you informed of the direction your Program is pursuing.

### **GROWTH**

First of all I wish to thank each and every one of you for your support for the year ended August 31, 2007. Without you, our members, there would be no AAU Taekwondo. It was with you in mind that the Program was re-introduced to the AAU family of sports way back in 1991. And I must say, ‘What a fantastic ride it has been ...so far’. In all but one year since our start up in 1991 the AAU Taekwondo Program has

recorded annual growth in all meaningful, statistically measured areas. And by these I mean, athlete registrations, club memberships, number of participating athletes at both qualifying events and the national championship level, and active grassroots participation at the District level. And that is quite an accomplishment!

For those of you who may have only recently become members of the AAU Taekwondo Program, this sustained growth might be easily overlooked. But for those of us who have shared the dream for all of these years, it has been truly inspiring. In 1991 the AAU Taekwondo Program regained recognition as a National Sport Committee of the AAU by demonstrating a total membership base of some 400+ athletes with participation/activity in but four separate AAU Districts/states. At the close of 2007 those numbers were 16,000+ members with activity (competition) in 35 separate and distinct AAU Districts representing 50 states!

In just the past ten years alone, athlete participation in qualifying events has risen from less than 3500 athletes to more than 8,000. In that same time frame, the number of individual athletes competing at the AAU National Taekwondo Championship level jumped from just over 1,000 to 2400+! It's hard to believe that all of this started with a two-day event in Albany, NY in 1991 with less than 400 competitors.

Did you know that the AAU Taekwondo Program was re-introduced to the AAU in 1991 as a 'Point Sparring' only endeavor? Olympic style sparring was only introduced in the mid 90's in response to demand by you, our membership. And what a sky-rocketing addition that has been to the Program. No small thanks are due to individuals like George Weissfisch and Jean Lopez who contributed their experience and reputation in the Olympic Sparring field to this 'fledging start-up' organization. Next week, a look at what has become of that work!

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AAU Taekwondo