

Pennsylvania Referees Association Meeting 7/7/07

President Grand Master John Null began the meeting at J.A.K.S. by welcoming the new Black Belts, as well as those who have been with the PRA previously. Promoters Grand Master Tom Joerg (Mechanicsburg), Master Ken Miller (Lewistown), Master Gary Grant (Wilkes Barre), and Master Jeff Washington (Harrisburg) were all asked to offer their ideas on the direction the PRA should be taking in the future, and then the other Black Belt attendees were asked to pose questions or observations to address situations that have arisen in PRA sanctioned tournaments.

Black Belts Dave and Carrie Baker, Dave and Suk Yee Smith, and Matt Pochadzay came from Newville, and Carlisle respectively, interested in becoming members of the PRA, while Black Belt members Jan Casner, Jerry Harmon, Mike and Katie Zrncic, Matt Evans, and Darryl and Isaac Davis also were in attendance.

Salient points of Mater Null's discussion were as follows:

- a) The Black Belt meetings at the tournaments are the crucial places where rules should be given to those attending and it is vital that those Black Belts then convey those rules to their students.
- b) Head referees in the respective rings are the vital ones in knowledge of rules and should be PRA members.
- c) Safety is the primary concern in enforcement of the rules – especially in sparring – no contact to the head ensures that matches do not become blood baths.
- d) The purpose of the PRA was also to work out rules agreement prior to the tournaments, not in front of the students and audience at the tournament itself.
- e) Any dispute **MUST** be handled at the time of dispute, not afterwards.
- f) Under the PRA several sets of rules could be used for different events
- g) He does not favor a layered system of awarding one point for punch or kick to body and two points or more for kicks to the head, for safety reasons
- h) Only one JBB can be in a ring, and then only in divisions where the competitor's age is below their age division
- i) Belt color and respective division for that color should be addressed well **BEFORE** the time of the contest – he suggests that it be brought up at the Black Belt meeting.

Grand Master Joerg offered these thoughts:

- a) He told horror stories of the pre-equipment days of kumite, and of severe injuries he had seen at various tournaments where contact rules to the head were not enforced or high points to the head had encouraged out of control kicks
- b) He will put signs on the registration tables to tell the competitors to make sure their belt level compares to the division they are competing prior to the time of competition. *Generally*, one year and below of training is a beginner/novice, 2 years and below is intermediate, and 3 years and below is advanced.
- c) He sees the organization as having regular training sessions for member BBs for refereeing/judging, and hopes the PRA eventually resembles UMARA or KRANE in having a large number of qualified referees who the promoters of PRA events can count on for their events

d) He agreed with several of the others that coaching and audience interference with an official could and should be penalized by a point deduction and/or disqualification

Grand Master Miller offered his opinion that coaching from out of the ring should be penalized. He said rules should be posted at the tournament.

Mr. Harmon said that perhaps a flow diagram could be used to solve recurring problems/issues in the ring.

Master Washington discussed his view of forms from a traditional style, which is less flashy than some others and welcomed the chance to have his students compete against those styles in his upcoming tournament 8/4/07 at the Camp Curtin YMCA in Harrisburg. He also stressed that the martial arts was crucial for kids in developing respect, courtesy and self-respect.

Mr. Zrncic gave some suggestions on age and belt level issues.

Master Smith gave his view that respect for the tournament and officials should be paramount and that the BBs should act as role models to their students there.

On a sad note, Grand Master Null emotionally ended the meeting by saying that he could not continue as president any more and Grand Master Joerg offered to take over his role. Grand Master Null said that he would support the organization and help as Promoter Director. Several people expressed how much he had done in the martial arts and how much devotion they had for him and his principles.

Ms. Rebinski was present to help with input on KIKA rules and procedures.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 2nd (the day before Grand Master Null's tournament in Harrisburg) at will be held at JAKS.

Grand Master Null said that patches and registration forms will be available at that meeting.