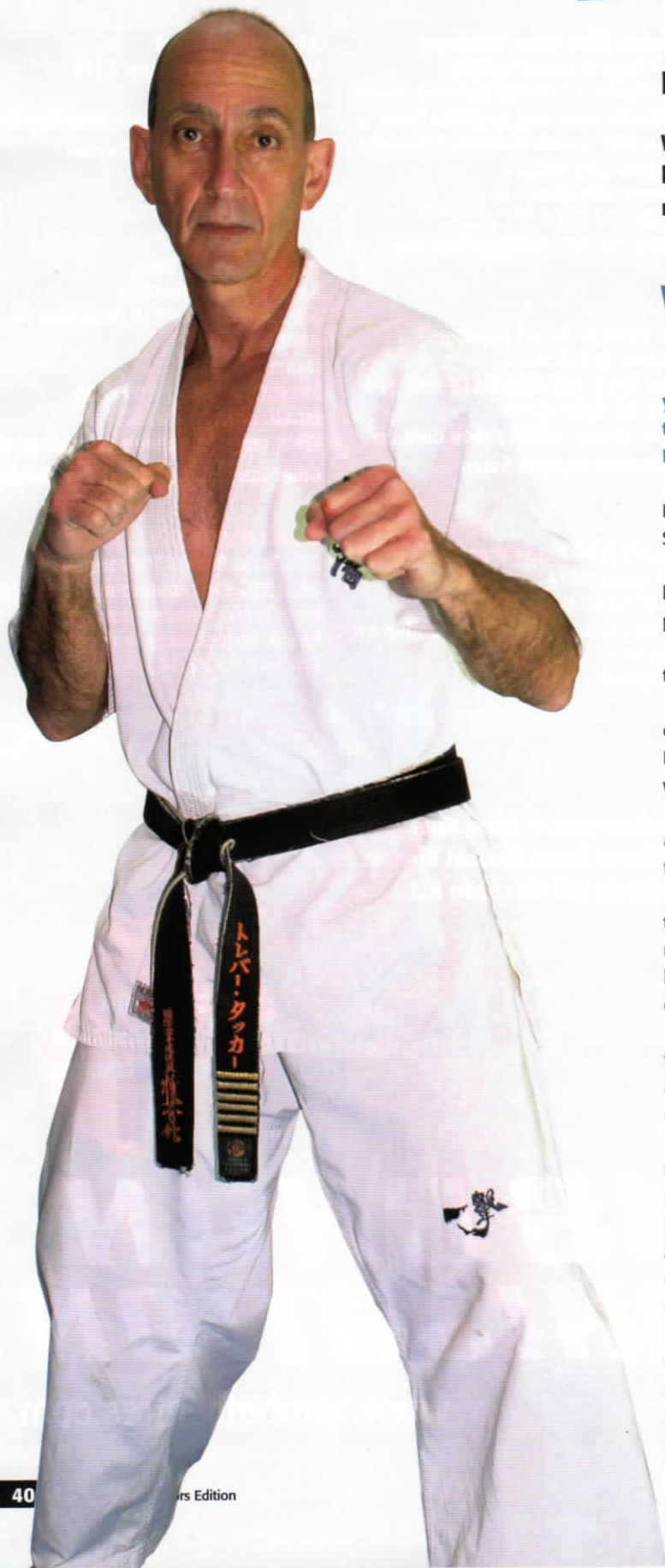


# Trevor Tockar



## Kyokushin karate – IKO Matsui

With almost 40 years of experience in Kyokushin karate, Shihan Trevor Tockar has forged a respected name in the karate world.

**W**hat are the most memorable lessons that you learned from your teacher/s that you now try to pass on to your own Kyokushin students?

The most memorable lessons I have learned from my teacher, Shihan Len Barnes, are:

**Distancing:** work inside the kicking distance and outside the punching distance.

**Tactics:** attack when you see that your opponent is thinking.

**Philosophy:** be with it, not of it. The credo of Shihan Len Barnes is: "To know, to dare, to will, to be silent".

**What are the core principles and aims of the martial art/s taught at your club?**

The core principles and aims of the martial arts I teach are simple: respect and courtesy. I am a strong believer that the true gentleman is often the most dangerous fighter.

**How do you structure the training sessions at your club and why have you chosen this structure?**

The training sessions at my dojo follow the traditional Kyokushin format, established in the 1950s by Sosai Oyama. All classes commence with calisthenics, then progress to standing basics (*kihon*), moving basics (*ido geiko*), moving combinations (*ren raku*), forms (*kata*) and sparring (*kumite*). Special drills, such as bag work, strengthening exercises, speed

and reaction training, shadow boxing, stamina work, breathing, etc. are introduced in addition to, or in substitution of, some of the formal training.

This structure ensures continuity and consistency, and develops mental and physical discipline. The Kyokushin way is universal, and bears a very distinctive character. Spirit is essential, and is constantly promoted. I do try, however, to guard against the necessary repetition degenerating into monotony and tedium.

**How has the martial art you teach evolved in the time you've been studying it?**

In regards to Kyokushin, the skill levels have improved since the 'early days', but I am concerned by the fact that the organisation has split into various groups, with each group claiming to be the 'true' Kyokushin of Sosai Mas Oyama. While I have much respect for many of the practitioners in some of the other groups, I believe that ego and misinformation are the basic causes for many instructors having defected from the Matsui organisation. They have often been tempted by the allure of higher grades and titles, and have deprived their students of being part of probably the strongest single martial arts organisation in the world (even bigger than in the days of Sosai Mas Oyama). This has been a particular problem in Australia, where the Matsui organisation is not as strong as

elsewhere in the world. As time goes by, however, people of real merit are being attracted back to the organisation, and the future is very exciting.

### What do you feel have been your best achievements in your martial arts career?

The friendships which I have established with outstanding martial artists throughout the world has been the greatest reward. Besides training with many other Kyokushin instructors, I have also had the benefit of training with such people as Shotokan's legendary Sensei Stan Schmidt, and with Shihan Chris Thompson (one of the three world leaders of Kimura Shukokai karate) and Shihan Bakkies Laubscher (second-in-command of Okinawan Goju-Ryu Karate, after Shihan Mori Higoana). My fondest memories, however, are of spending time with, and training with, [Kyokushin founder] Sosai Mas Oyama himself. While I rate Kancho Matsui as a karate genius and technically the best karateka I've come across, I'm convinced that Sosai Oyama stands alone as the greatest martial artist of the modern era – he was a true modern-day Musashi.

Otherwise, my personal achievements have really been in my legal career. As an

Advocate (Barrister) in South Africa, I was granted 'Silk' (Senior Counsel status) in 1997 by the then President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela. In 1998 I was appointed as an acting Judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa (now known as the High Court), which prompted Shihan Gorai (IKO International Department) to name me 'The Fighting Judge'.

### Can you give an outline of your grading structure?

There are 10 Kyu-grades before Shodan (1st Dan Black-belt). There are five colours, commencing with orange (earth), light blue (water), yellow (fire), green (wind) and brown (void). Gradings are tough, and require candidates to demonstrate technique, stamina and spirit. Grading sessions take many hours, and there is a strong emphasis on fighting (no candidate for Black-belt having less than 30 bouts of at least one-and-a-half minutes each).

I do not hold more than two gradings per year, and am opposed to the idea of grades being awarded simply to attract or to keep students. Kancho Matsui has worked hard to maintain and improve standards, and it is noteworthy that very few high grades have been awarded since Kancho took over in 1994. From

4th Dan and above, all Dan gradings are held in Japan, and the failure rate is high. Kancho has no difficulty in failing entire groups of aspirant Black-belts, and he has resisted the temptation to grow the organisation by relying on the expedient of handing out senior level grades. Regrettably, this approach appears not to have been followed by many other groups. Since grading to Godan in 1982 (26 years ago), I have graded once only, in 1995, to Rokyudan. The same applies to many other senior instructors in the organisation, and Kancho is to be admired for adopting this approach. It is time that people stopped regarding themselves as being entitled to ridiculously high grades simply because of 'long service'.

### In your opinion, what are the most important elements in effective self-defence, and why?

The answer is easy: years of rigorous training, whereby instinctive and effective reactions are developed, is the only way to genuinely improve one's ability to defend oneself. Most important, however, is the fact that proper training will enhance one's character and thereby reduce the likelihood of one becoming embroiled in situations where one has to resort to physical confrontation. **IS**

## Shihan Trevor Tockar

Shihan Trevor Tockar has had a long career (nearly 40 years) in Kyokushin karate. He is a branch chief of Kancho Matsui's International Karate Organisation in Australia, and was previously branch chief of the IKO, South Africa, and was vice-chairman of the African organisation.

He represented South Africa at an international level, and fought in the first World Open Karate Tournament in Tokyo in 1975. From 1979 until the year 2000, he was also coach of the South African Knockdown Karate team.

Shihan Tockar immigrated to Australia in 2001. Over the nearly 40 years that he has practised karate, Shihan Tockar has trained with many experienced martial artists. His primary teacher was the late Shihan Len Barnes (8th Dan), who was known as 'the father of karate' in South Africa.

Although Shihan Tockar is, and always has been, a dedicated and loyal practitioner of Kyokushin karate, he has always recognised that all styles have great merit, and he has regularly trained with practitioners from other styles. In particular, Shihan Tockar has formed a very special relationship with Wing Chun kung fu's Sigung Rick Spain. Sifu Spain and some of his students train with Shihan Tockar on a regular basis. Shihan Tockar has often said that those karateka who are critical of other styles demonstrate only one of two things: their ignorance or their arrogance.

Shihan Tockar was graded to 6th Dan in 1995, and was graded by one of the strongest grading panels imaginable, comprising Kancho Matsui, Shihan Barnes, Shihan Midori, Shihan Sampei and Shihan Gorei. Shihan Tockar had previously been graded to 5th Dan in 1981 at the young age of 31 years by Sosai Mas Oyama himself.

Tockar with kung fu master Rick Spain



# Defence technique workshop with Trevor Tockar

## DEFENCE AGAINST A PUNCH/KICK COMBO:

### KYOKUSHIN KARATE



**1**  
Tockar squares off with an opponent as he comes into range.



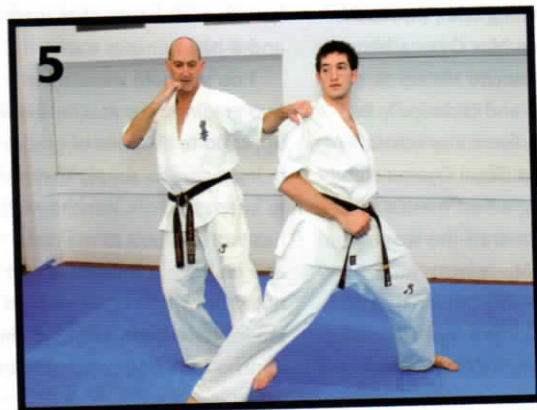
**2**  
As his opponent punches low, Tockar parries it away with his forearm...



**3**  
...but his opponent kicks high, so Tockar blocks with both forearms, moving away with the strike to absorb its power...



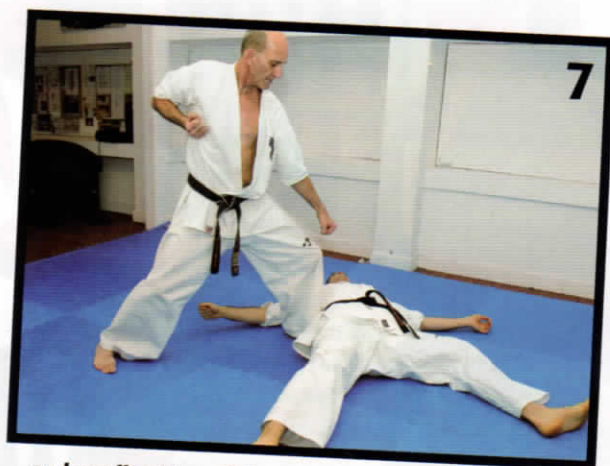
**4**  
...then drags the leg down and pulls it through past his body...



**5**  
...so he ends up behind his opponent. Grabbing the shoulder, he kicks out the the kicking leg as it lands...



**6**  
...dropping his opponent. Tockar then finishes him with a punch as he hits the floor...



**7**  
...and readies himself for any more retaliation.