

My Travels to the USFMAF Nationals 2008

October 25 - 26, 2008

By Marc Lawrence

My older son Michael and I had qualified for the USFMAF Nationals that were to be held in Orlando, Florida. They were to be part of the Disney ® Martial Arts Festival held October 25 - 26, 2008. To get ready for this tournament we had to train seriously a month before. For me, this was not so much as more as I train in Filipino martial arts four days a week already. My son, Michael had made it on to a travel basket ball team and they were working hard, so I knew his endurance would be fine, we just had to work on his sparring. He and I did a lot of sparring with friends and family to be ready. Just 1 1/2 weeks before the Nationals, my son had an accident while playing basket ball and injured his right arm. That caused him to have to get a cast!

We had purchased our tickets (they were non-transferable) and made arrangements to use a timeshare condo from my timeshare association for place to stay. I told my son he could still go if he went as my corner man and coach for the Nationals. That was the only way my wife would agree for him to go. When we flew in we came a day early so we could adjust to the time difference, it was a longer flight over to Florida than to Hawaii to the big island to see family. It was rainy and humid when we got there, kind of like Hawaii. When we got in and settled I called Darren Tibon the President of the USFMAF to let him know we were there as we were to be in the Saturday night Showcase as well as be volunteers for judging and helping with the tournament. Due to Michael's hand being in a cast, I had to make arrangements to have someone else become my partner in the flow my son and I had developed.



The flow was developed as way of honoring my teacher, Felix Roiles the Grandmaster of Pakamut International. The flow we were to show would show largo, media and corto single stick fighting, corto knife fighting and hand to hand fighting. Darren Tibon had a member of his school, Phillip Labatad that had volunteered to work with me to learn the flow on Saturday.

Saturday morning we met up with folks from USFMAF at the front gates of the Disney ® Wide World of ® Sports Complex. We did our registration and met up with our friends. We also saw some other friends that were there from California, Rich Verdejo and Gigie Alunday of FCS were there for the FSC blade competition. So I got with Phillip and we started working on it together. Phillip was great to work with as he was getting a crash course in the Pakamut Fighting Arts. We went over and over this for several hours then showed it to Master Darren Tibon, who gave great feed back about slowing it down so the audience could see the moves.

Disney had given us four minutes to highlight five separate Filipino Fighting Art systems together. All of us from Pakamut-Torrance and Angels Disciples Serrada got to together with Tuhan Ray Dionaldo, Instructor Rich Verdejo and Instructor Gigie Alunday of FCS to plan what we all were going to do. This was a fun discussion by far. Ok, so about now some of you are giggling at the thought of five separate systems working together to show off their art in front of a large crowd maybe 1500 people with just about every martial culture from around the world demoing their respective arts. Well, with one of the greatest sports facilities in the world with a phenomenal stage and lighting effects,

mist and music. We had four minutes on stage in Florida, we put on a great demonstration, with back light Sayaw with blade and candle, with bull whip and blade forms, with combat flow and flow spar. It was a great thing to be a part of and to see what we in the Filipino martial arts could do working together!

**Demonstration
Click Here**



Michael Lawrence in foreground doing Sayaw with Master Marc Lawrence in the background left

So Sunday morning rolled around and my son and I had to get ready for the big day. I found out that USFMAF offers a handicapped division so my son Michael, with his cast on his right hand, could compete in two divisions, one was Cadenza/ Forms and the other was Padded Stick Point Sparring. Michael had to use his left for forms. You know how your teacher always says “learn to use your left in case your right gets injured”; well that’s what he had to do. Michael got a gold medal in Junior Handicapped Division. Michael was up first in padded stick point sparring and he still able to take a gold medal in his division. I had entered in six separate divisions. I had a day’s work ahead of me.

My first division was Cadenza/ Forms good thing I like to practice this by myself in the park; I managed to pull a 1st place gold medal with high marks. My second division was going to be different as it was the Self Defense Division. The rules in USFMAF say you must demonstrate six techniques for this division at two speeds one at slow explaining and the second at real time and motion. Phillip Labatad really came through for me as he volunteered to do this with me and was demonstrating stick grappling and takedowns. True to my teacher methods that he taught me well, I was able to get a 1st place gold medal for this division. I knew the sparring was going to be work. I was going to fight style I have never fought before. My first was padded stick point division, this is from a blade perspective, and it works on first contact strike get the point unless they clash. It goes for three minutes or first one to seven points with a reset after each point scored. I had practiced this plenty with my students and friend in the park and at my club. I did well getting a 1st place gold medal in this division. My next division was padded stick continuous sparring. This is very different with then a WEKAF



Master Lawrence winner in padded stick sparring

tournament that you must show 50 % defense, the whole body is a legal target, only the disarms that counts if someone takes the stick away, not dropped and thrusting to the body is legal. So now you really have to be a high level in your game with good live/checking hand clash and counter and use of foot work to distance. The fights went

well for me and I was able to get another 1st place gold medal in this division. In the live stick point was new to me and I did not practice this so it was tougher for me to pull out good scoring, I did well with a loss to my new friend Phillip Labatad who got the 1st place gold and I got a 2nd place silver. My last fighting division was live stick continuous. I did well with corner support from the MDT Lameco Martial Arts people. They cooled my neck, gave me water between the rounds, my son gave me coaching points he was seeing on how I was fighting. I feel this combination really helped. I was able to get a 1st place gold medal in this division. My son and I had great time at the USFMAF Nationals.

I liked the USFMAF method of sparring more than WEKAF. You start out apart at the far ends of the ring. The judges are trained and certified by the association after attending a workshop. The judges are taught, it is about honesty and integrity and the right person wins always! This is the way Filipino martial arts matches should be. We are looking forward to next year at Disney Anaheim 2009 and the USFMAF Eskrimador's World Tournament in Long Beach August of 2009. Hopefully I can see you next year at the USFMAF tournaments'!



Master Lawrence, Master Tibon and Philip Labatad after live stick point sparring

