

I've found that people just can't handle a lot of fakes. They might call me a runner, but the fighters who've fought me will admit that they can't stand my fakes. I pump my shoulders and arms and fake continuously. It makes opponents uneasy and breaks up their rhythm.

**How does the news that you've been judged the country's number one semi-contact fighter for the second year in a row affect you?**

I'm elated about it, I honestly am. It's great to feel that with the caliber of fighters out there I can still be considered number one. What means more, to me, and you can back this up by talking to anybody, is that the top fighters tend to agree. I've been personally told as much by the fighters I respect most, the Andersons, the McCallums, the Fishers. So, what I mean is, the judgment of those people really means something to me. They are the other contenders and as far as that goes, they're the people I've mostly beaten this year.

**Of course, we'll be accused of bias in our selection of national competitors.**

Well, basically, there's nowhere you can go to get away from dissatisfied people, but I think things are going great again. The national tournament is coming back again. There was a time when full contact first started that all the recognizable people went full contact and the tournament scene was kind of empty. Now, with the new ratings, things should begin to change. And I have to credit guys like myself, Anderson, Fisher, with the idea of, "Hey well, I'm going to get on a plane and go to a karate tournament somewhere and compete." And now a lot of other people are starting to do the same thing.

**What about full contact?**

Well, I've beaten some really good fighters. I beat Bobby Tucker and a few other people. My only loss was a very close decision to Larry Carnahan in Washington, D.C. And afterwards, Carnahan came into my dressing room and told me he was sorry about the hometown decision. But actually, I didn't feel it was a hometown decision. It was a one-point decision, and a real close fight, but Larry Carnahan is a good fighter. I mean I try not to make

excuses when I lose. I could fight him again, I suppose, but I was getting two hundred dollars a fight. If I can make five hundred for winning a tournament, without the exertion and training of full contact, I'd prefer that. Besides, in full contact you have to learn to take so much punishment. I admit that I don't like being hit, and in semi-contact I very seldom do get hit.

**How do you go about training for semi-contact?**

Well, I feel that I have one of the top schools in the whole South down here. I'm not just bragging, I'm just really proud of my students. I've got people like Vernon Johnson to train with, and I have a couple of red belt girls that help me out. They're so flexible and fast with their feet I train with them. I refuse to run as part of training, anymore, though. If you're going to be good at eating spaghetti, you eat spaghetti; I fight to be good at fighting. Some guys jump rope, do situps, lift weights, and run; I spend my training hours sparring, staying flexible and fighting.

**What about the role of attitude?**

There I think I'm ahead of the rest, though not over people like Fisher and Anderson. They realize the game now, but the rest of the fighters are still trying to catch on. If you don't enjoy it, you're not going to be good at it. If you act like you're going to die if you don't win, you probably won't win. You've got to go at it like it's a game and you're better at the game. You've got to have a good, clear head. I play it with a good feeling, believing that there's nobody I can't kick in the head.

**What about John Jackson (John Jackson, heavyweight full contact contender is 6'7")?**

Dave Ruppert is just as big. I kicked him in the head. But forget about John Jackson. He's so big and hits so hard and is such a good friend of mine that I hope I never have to meet him. Seriously, though, I enjoy fighting the big guys, I really do. The only thing is they tend to get mad when you kick 'em in the head, like It's an insult to their size or something. Sometimes, I feel like smiling when I'm fighting. I really do.

**You said before that sport karate could be as big as tennis. How would that happen?**