

First you've got to unify the rules. Right now you've got thousands of styles. But you can't have stylists and nationalities controlling the sport. The fighters themselves have to form some sort of group to unify the rules. Kicks will have to become more prevalent. Maybe worth two points for head kicks. Once spectators know how to enjoy it and you start filling the bleachers, then TV will get interested and there will be sponsors and endorsements. But Colgate and Budweiser are not about to endorse a sport the public thinks is barbaric. They don't want their products associated with broken teeth and guys in the hospital. I've already talked to interested television people. So my impression is that it's a matter of time, a matter of finding people who can represent the sport.

Who did you talk to?

A guy with a television station down in St. Petersburg. I did a little five-minute spot for him on television, and he told me that they were thinking about putting some bucks in karate, organizing some tournaments and seeing if they couldn't build public interest. I did a little five-minute bit. George Chung introduced and interviewed me. The guy stopped and he goes, "Hey, I can't believe that you're number one in the country. I mean look at those guys. They're huge, some of 'em have scars, and they're very macho."

Meaning if you didn't look fierce you couldn't be good?

Yeah. I was dressed in a suit, and he's looking around and everybody associated with karate is wearing a T-shirt, and most of 'em have tatoos. Anyway, he said I came across very well on television, which was hard to believe because I stutter. So, I mean if I could do it, then anybody could.

"If a guy is larger and I think I'd better run, then, within limits, I'll run. But by the same token, I'll score more points against him than any other fighter will."

But what he was saying is that the public idea so far is of a guy that's all scarred up and very macho. Personally, I'd rather see guys dressed in suits, or dressed nicely. You see people getting on planes in T-shirts and hear people behind 'em talking about karate bums. But I don't feel like it's a losing battle. We've got so many good people, guys like Chuck Norris and Joe Corley, and slowly people are beginning to understand how the public mind works.

Earlier you said you'd learned from Bill Wallace?

Wallace is a sharp person. He's done so much for karate. People won't appreciate that for a while, I guess, but he was one of my idols. Back in the earlier days—my earlier days—Mike Genova and I used to go to his seminars and listen with both ears. Most people didn't listen. It's like Wallace says, though. "I go to a seminar and talk to all the students about how to improve their kicking techniques, and they love it. But as soon as I walk out the door, their instructors walk back in and say, 'Well, Bill Wallace does it this way because he's Bill Wallace, but the rest of you do it the way I tell you to do it.'" Genova and I were lucky. We were sort of free agents at the time, so we could do like he said.

What fighters do you look for to challenge you hardest next year?

Well, I believe that McCallum will actually get more and more involved in full contact because he'll be better paid for that so I don't see him hitting the tournament circuit that much. Jimmy Tabares has been very hot lately, but I don't see him