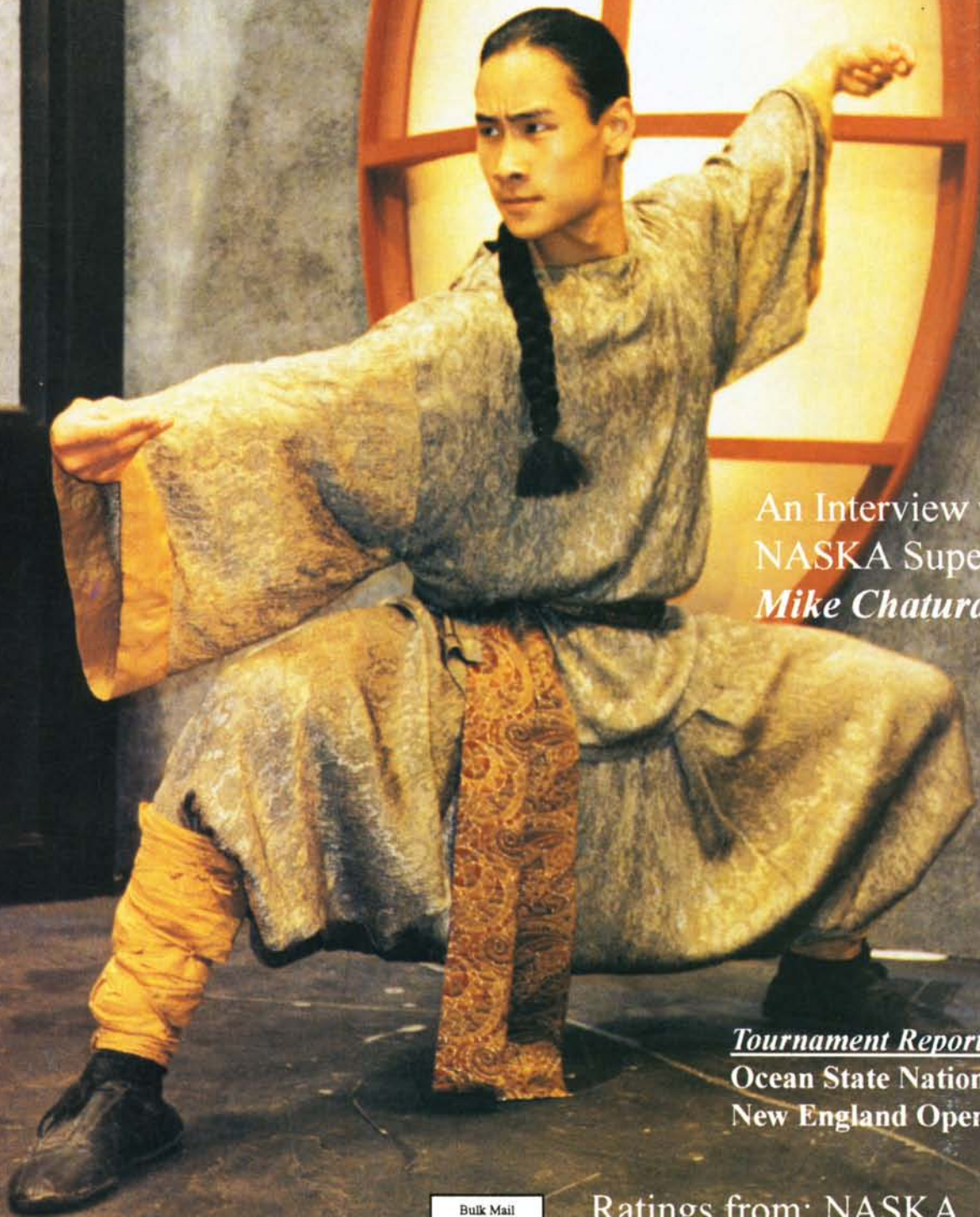




SPORT KARATE NEWS

The Official Publication of NASKA



An Interview with
NASKA Superstar:
Mike Chaturantabut

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An Interview with *Mike Chaturantabut*

Born In Rayong, Thailand, Mike Chaturantabut has rapidly become one of the hottest stars in NASKA. His success in 1995 earned Best All Around Male Competitor of the Year as well as the part of 'Wizard' on the hit TV show, WMAC Masters. SKN caught up with Mike at the Bluegrass Nationals and found out a little bit more about this success story.

SKN: When did you move to the United States?

MC: My parents moved to the Chicago area 2 months after I was born and have lived there ever since.

SKN: When did you begin training in the Martial Arts?

MC: I started when I was 8 years old at the American Karate School run by Chris Hardy, Tony Orr and Cory Orr. They were the ones that first introduced me to tournament karate. In their school, it was mandatory to attend any tournament that they promoted, so, one month after I started training I was forced to compete in the Chicago Open. I was terrified and I tried everything I could think of to get out of it.

SKN: How did your martial arts history unfold after this rough start?

MC: Well about 1 year later, their school went out of business. I started training at another local school and continued competing. From when I started until I was 10 years old, I must have competed in over 10 tournaments, never even placing in the top 8. Finally

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I was competing at one of Mr. John Sharkey's local tournaments and I placed 1st in forms in the intermediate division. After this tournament Mr. Sharkey invited me to come and train at the school he was opening very close to where my original school was and I accepted. I stayed with Mr. Sharkey for 8 years training in Okinawa Shorei ryu receiving my Black Belt at 15 years old.



SKN: When you started competing as a Black Belt when did you first win a major tournament.

MC: Well the first time I placed in the top 4 was at the US Open in 1987, where I finished 3rd in Musical forms to Jon Valera. At the time I was still a Brown Belt but competing as a Black Belt. My first win was at Tony Lee's Palm Springs Desert Classic. It was great feeling after trying for so long.

My first Grand Championship came again at the US Open in 1991 in weapons.

SKN: When did you start competing as an adult?

MC: I started in 1993 and couldn't win a thing. Finally, again at the US Open I tied with Chris Casamassa for first

place in the Musical forms divisions and beat him in the runoff. I was so pumped up that I went on to win Men Forms Grand that night. At the end of the year. The US Open was the only tournament I won.

SKN: What do you consider to be your most significant victories?

MC: Well obviously the 91 US Open where I won my first Grand Championship as a youth and the 93 US Open where I won my first Grand Championship as an adult. In addition to those though, the Grand

Championship at the 1995 US Open and my two gold medals at the 1995 WAKO World Championships in Germany are the most important victories to me. Other than winning tournaments being added to the John Paul Mitchell Team was one of the most significant accomplishments in my life.

SKN: Where do you live now and what are you doing?

MC: When I turned 18 years old I moved to San Jose, California to go to college and work with Larry Lam. I'm presently majoring in Business and am on the honor roll. In the fall I'll be transferring to UCLA to finish my college education and live in LA in the heart of the TV and Movie industry.

SKN: How has your martial arts training helped you in everyday life?

MC: Well, the martial arts in general has taught me how to be good at everything by applying myself 100%. I use that skill everyday in college. I take school very seriously and usually get A's in all of my classes, because I work hard at it.

SKN: What else have you been doing besides going to college and competing on the NASKA Circuit?

MC: Well, actually I've been very busy. Being a NASKA Champion has opened the door for many opportunities both in TV and the movie industry. I just got back from Orlando where we just finished filming *WMAC Masters* where I play the part of Wizard. I appeared on *ESPN2* last year competing for the ISKA International Weapons & Forms Championships. From the this footage part of the competition was used in a music video. The name of the band is the *Dave Matthews Band* and the name of the song is "Satellite". After the 95 US Open, I was invited by Mr. Norbert Schiffer to come and perform at the *BUDOGALA* in Germany in November. This was the biggest martial arts show I've seen. After that Jean Frenette invited me to perform at his *Budogala* in Montreal, Canada.

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SKN: Wow! You have been busy. What have you got coming up?

MC: Well I just released my first video tape. "A Workout with Mike Chaturantabut, Basic Kicks" that will be the first in a series of tapes. Future tapes will cover the kama, musical forms, creative kicking combinations and open forms combinations. I'm also hoping to land a part in the upcoming *Mortal Kombat II* movie. I'll also be teaching at the MACHO Summer

Camps throughout the summer and will be moving to Los Angeles in July. I'm really looking forward to the move because there is a lot of opportunity waiting. I'm going to start taking some acting classes as soon as I arrive.

SKN: Well that's incredible! You really are a martial arts success story. If you were to give the young martial arts competitor of today any piece of advice, what would it be.

MC: My parents and instructor, John Sharkey, always told me that I could accomplish anything I wanted as long as I believed in myself and was willing to work for it.

My first goal was to become the #1 Junior Forms and Weapons competitor, and I obtained this goal after **seven years** of hardwork and perseverance. Yes, 7 years! After being #1 for three years, I dropped down to #3 my first year in the adult division. As a result of hardwork, determination and dedication, I have regained the #1 ranking in Forms and Weapons, won 2 gold medals at the WAKO World Championships, started a career in the entertainment industry and maintained high honors in college. Whether you want to be a national champion, or get straight A's or be successful in life, don't ever let anyone tell you that you can't. Your potential is unlimited, it's up to you. How far do you want to go? The last phrase of a poem my father gave me years ago, still rings loud and clear today: "Life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster man; but soon or later the man who wins is the man who thinks he can."

