



Ekaterina Kozlachkova



Julia Cross –

The Way of the Champion



15 Times European Champion and 6 Times World Champion

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Tambov 2012

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Foreword

The idea to create a book about Julia Cross has occurred to me primarily because of my love of Taekwon-do. There are outstanding people, who achieve really great results in every kind of sports. And so, if we devote our lives to Taekwon-do it is impossible to neglect such a personality as Julia Cross.

I had my first Taekwon-do training in 2000. During my sports activities I was interested in famous Taekwon-do heroes, including Miss Cross, who showed brilliant results at Euros and Worlds and was worthy of admiration and respect.

Getting acquainted with Julia Cross was always my dream. The first time we met was in 2005 at the European Championship in Italy. How happy I was to see my favorite sportswoman competing! I could not take my eyes off her performing. When she

had got a gold in patterns I came to her and asked for permission to be photographed with her. During the next tournaments in the period between 2006 and 2009, we greeted each other and wished good luck, but in general our communication was not very close. Everything changed in 2010 after the European Championship in Sweden: Julia didn't come because of a hip injury. I was really upset not to see her in Skovde, because I always enjoyed her performances and couldn't think of any important Taekwondo Championship without her. At the same time an article headlined "End of an era"¹ devoted to Julia Cross was published on the AETF website. On coming home I contacted Julia by e-



The first meeting, Italy 2005

mail, because I wanted to support her in such a difficult period in her life. Thereby our friendship started. Next time we met was in October 2011 in Slovakia and by that time I had conceived an idea to write a book devoted to Julia Cross, so I discussed my project with her and she agreed to help me with the realization of my idea.

The first goal I wanted to achieve with this book is to pay a tribute to such a skillful sportswoman and to inspire all Taekwondo practitioners on their way to self-perfection and great titles. I am sure that the sports career of Julia Cross can set an excellent example to follow.

Julia Cross was included in the Hall of Fame in 2007 because of her phenomenal achievements: she has 15 European Titles and 6 World Titles.

1. <http://www.itfeurope.org/NL2010-02-12.html>

I would like to thank for assistance and help Miss Julia Cross, my parents, Mr. Lazos Tsilfidis, and also Mrs. Julie Tolkacheva who helped me edit the book. I am thankful to Master Jerzy Jedut and Polish Taekwon-do Assosiation for the pictures they permitted me to use. The book is written in the form of a comprehensive interview. All information it contains is reliable and was received from the legendary Champion Miss Cross.



Getting Closer to the Legend

Family, Childhood, Youth

Julia, when and where were you born and where do you live now?

I was born on 29th of March, 1974 in Edinburgh. Later I lived in Linlithgow, a small town for 28 years, a beautiful place to grow up. I lived next in Bathgate, a small town for 8 years, and I am now looking for a house somewhere else, not sure of where just yet.

Can you tell me a few words about your family?

My mother was a primary school teacher, now retired, and my father was a CA Accountant, now retired, but he helps me with my books, etc. Both parents play golf and were very active in sports, that's why I am. I have one older sister, Anne, who is a nutritionist and has helped me through the years. I have 1 niece Sophia who is 1 and brother-in-law John and Grandmother Margaret who is 91!!!



Julia (with the hat on) with her family

The rest of my family lives in South Africa.

We have a small family.

Can you give a short description of yourself at an early age? Were you naughty? Were you outgoing? Did you like to play with other children?

My earliest memory was at 3 years old breaking my leg after running in a museum as I thought a stuffed lion was real.

I was a very mischievous child, who liked to do her own thing. I had my own mind from a very young age. I loved playing with other children and was very social.

I loved playing outside and was never a girly girl. Didn't like dolls and girl things much, more rough and tumble things. I was always falling, breaking bones and getting hurt. Maybe that is why now I can handle pain very well.

Yes, I was naughty, but not in a bad way. My mother always said I had a 10-minute attention span, and I was a nightmare to keep amused.

From around 10, I was a little chubby and got bullied at school for this, which made me really sad and this continued for a few years.

Talk of your school time, please. Did you like studies? What was your favorite subject? Did you receive good marks or were you not keen on the result? Was it interesting for you to study?

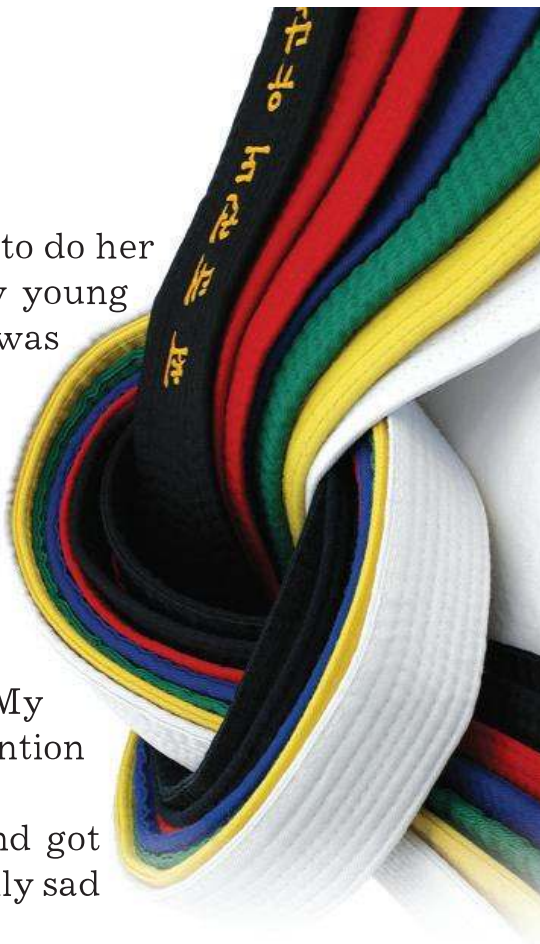
When I was 13-16, I slimmed down a lot, but was still bullied for having black hair and sallow skin. These days at secondary school were not my favorite. Girls made my life really bad.

I started TKD at 11, and by 15 I was pretty sure I could defend myself but was also scared of getting in trouble.

At primary school I was in nearly all the top classes. I didn't like gym so much then as I was always teased for being overweight.

When I moved to secondary school, I was really good for 3 to 4 years and got good grades, in most subjects. I loved Maths, Cooking, PE and Geography. My spelling was not so good, but I did like English, just I found it a little harder and got flustered, when I couldn't do something, and I hated asking for help, I still do to this day. I hate others to see my weaknesses.

I never liked to study, I only liked it, when it was something I was interested in. My mother once bribed me into reading 3 books one summer, and if I did she would buy me a hamster,



guess what I did? I read the books, but my mother being a teacher tested me to make sure I had.

By 16-18, I started to hate school very much, but I was not sure what I wanted to do. I kind of went a little wild and rebelled against my parents, school and everyone in authority.

What profession did you dream about when you were a child? Could you imagine yourself as a great TKD competitor or as an instructor? Or could you imagine yourself as a sportswoman?

When I was younger, I wanted to be everything from a fire woman, policewoman, Chef, you name it, I wanted to be it. That was me always wanting more and never happy with one choice.

I never imagined at a really young age what I would become and what I wanted to be in TKD.

I just loved and wanted to train all the time. It made me feel free, alive and interested in one thing. I never thought of teaching at this age, I just loved most sports and the joy they gave me. I was not confined to a class room, free to express myself in other ways.

When did you start TKD? Did you start it just for fun or were you really thinking of becoming a top competitor?

I was 11 years old, when I first went along to TKD, my father took me to my local club.

From the very first night I knew this was the sport for me. I just loved it. I couldn't walk the next day as I found muscles I never knew I had. My first night was such buzz. Fast, fun, exhilarating and the freedom to be me. I loved everything about it and the discipline. At first it was to get fit and lose some weight, as my mother was worried that I would become too big, and also a sport to enjoy with my father. I never dreamt I would be a World Champion.

Tell us about the time when you finished school. What were your plans for the future (to continue studying or just only TKD), and how did you realize them?

I stayed on until 6th year at school, I was 17 and still did not know what I wanted to do. I didn't really want to go to University,

and my parents would not let me leave school until I had a job. I got pretty good grades in standard subjects, but at 17 all I wanted to do was TKD. Some thought I was stupid to have such a dream, but I really knew it was for me.

I left school at 17 and went to work in a bank. I hated it with a great passion; it made me really sad and frustrated to be sitting at a desk all day. I felt like an animal in a cage.

Through these early years as an international competitor I had many jobs, from night clubs, banks to cafes and making curtains!!! I did everything to make money so I could travel the world. I was never ever scared of hard work, I just hated working hard at things I did not enjoy. It was a waste of time.

Also I worked at the Edinburgh airport for 6 years.

I worked for a ground handling agent, where I was a dispatcher. Meaning I was in charge of the aircraft from just before it landed to when it left. It was my job to make sure it left on time with all the correct passengers, bags, was fuelled and safe to leave. I loved it, but I started at 4 a.m. and then went to the gym, then slept for a few hours, then teaching and then training. It was just too much for me, so I left in 2007. I loved working and meeting so many different people from all walks of life and countries, and I was very good at my job. You had to be calm in bad situations and be able to tell all the different people who worked with you what to do in a good manner. Be very organized and disciplined.

When did you become a TKD instructor? What is most valuable in this job for you? Tell us a few words about your TKD school and about your job as an instructor.

I helped my instructor Master Sheena Sutherland VIII for many years in her gyms before I started a ladies class in around 1996. In 1998, I opened my own TKD school in South Queensferry, near Edinburgh, which I started with 6 students



on the first night. On the 1st of November, 2010, I opened my full time Do-Jang, and now I have 170 students with 18 black belts training each week.

My School is amazing, I have wonderful students who have helped me with many, many things. I make them train very hard as this is the way I like.

I love to teach but sometimes it can be frustrating, if you can't get across things that you want to achieve, and I have to try and understand that not every TKD student is like me and wants to be a world champion. Everyone has different goals.

My role as an instructor is to teach, listen, learn, help, guide and much more. You also become a role model and a parent figure for many.

When did you start to compete? For how many years you were competing? How many titles do you have?

I started in 1987 as a green belt, I retired in 2009 in Argentina

I have 15 European titles and 6 World titles and 100's of Scottish, British and national and International titles.

When did you get your black belt, 2nd, 3rd, 4th , 5th deg?

I got 1st deg in 1989, 2nd deg in 1990, 3rd deg in 1997, 4th deg in 2007 and 5th deg in 2011.

I chose to have so long to compete with 2nd and 3rd deg as I was successful at each grade with competitions, and I wanted to win as much as I could at Euros and Worlds. My choice, but I guess I could have sat 4th sooner, I wish I had.

When did you stop competing and why? Tell us a few words about the operation. Would you continue competing, if there were no injuries?

I retired in 2009. Well, really it was 2010 after I had taken 6 months after Argentina to think about my choices.

In 2009, I competed with a cracked femur head, and in May 2010 I had a full hip replacement. Worst time of my life.

Yes, I guess no one really wants to retire, and I most certainly did not want to, but my body, hip especially, was in bits. So



Some trophies



Julia Cross got her Overall European Title in Slovakia, 2007

really I didn't have a choice, but I didn't want to stop, I was still hungry for it.

What were your plans after retiring from competition? Open a new gym? Tell us about that period.

After retiring I really was in a bad, bad place. I felt lost, alone and was waiting for this massive operation that would change my life and make me different. I was really scared, and I didn't know what the future held. I had done the same thing for over 20 years,



Julia (right) with her students

and the thought of not competing nearly killed me. I fell into a really bad depression, which I hid from the world. I thought when I had my new hip then that would make everything better, but rehab was soul destroying, I worked so hard to get back to where I am now.

Hobbies and Interests

What are your hobbies? Do you like to read, what's the best book you have read? Do you like cinema, arts, theatre? Do you like going for a walk or you would choose lazing at home?

TKD, weight training, gym work, helping others, cooking, cinema, comedy shows, seeing friends and family and shopping.

I love to read everything from magazine to bio books about people I am interested in. Easy reading, nothing too deep and depressing.

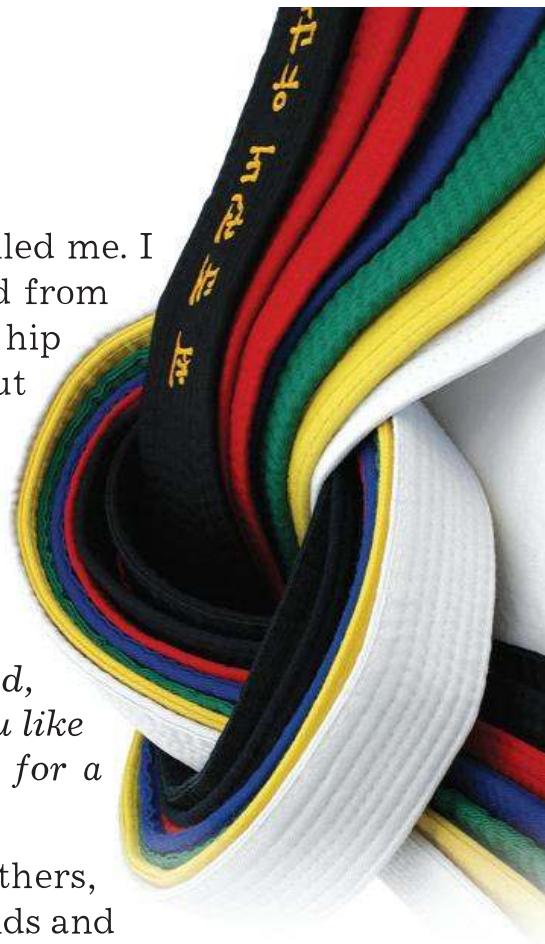
I really like the cinema and watching movies, romp comedies, easy films and also films with a twist that make you think to see the ending. Favorite film was Leon. I have many films I like to watch, but I never really watch a film twice.

I love art but don't really understand it. I just know what I like to look at, modern art is best for me. I am not really keen on the theatre but would never say never. But I would not choose to go. I would rather go to sporting events.

I love to walk now, after many years when I could not walk for more than 5 minutes when my hip was really bad, but now I can it is great. I love to walk in the snow and the freezing weather, or along the beach in the water and sand. I love these 2 types of weather - fresh cold air makes you feel alive and refreshed. Love to walk and talk or walk and think.

What music do you like and what's your favorite film?

I love lots of different types of music, my favorite is R&B.



It depends on how I feel that day, but I love music with a passion. I love to listen to the words and make meaning from it. Music is my solstice, my escapism and a huge part of my life right now.

It can make me very happy and keep me going when times are tough.

I love films, but they must catch my attention within 10 minutes, or I am not interested and switch it off! I like films that stretch my mind and make me think. Also a great way to escape real life and take you into some other life.

Also cartoon movies are fun. Easy to watch. Big kid at heart, but I have a big heart.

Do you like cooking? Tell us about your favorite dish.

I love to cook.

I used to bake a lot when I was younger and love to eat too.

I love cooking spicy food from curry to stir fries. I like to make soup, and I really like to cook for others, but it also very nice to get cooked for.

If I were to go out for dinner, I like Tai food, Indian, any food from around the World. I like to try food from different cultures and sample all things.

A good steak is always nice. The best I ever had was in Argentina in 1999. I'll never forget my first World title and the best steak ever.

I don't really like sweet food, I like savoury much better.

Maybe I am not a sweet person!!

Who Inspires Julia Cross?

Who inspires you in your life? It can be a real person or a hero from a film, or you just do what you love doing and probably you don't need any inspiration?

My family and my students always inspire me to be a better person.

I really do have a soft heart and give to people I care about. But if you cross me or do me wrong, then that's it.

My mother is like my angel, she is the most loving and caring person I have ever known. She has shown me so very much in life, and she is so very clever. She knows nearly everything.

My parents worked so hard to give my sister and me the life we had and the life we have now. We are very fortunate with our upbringing.

My sister and I had discipline installed in us from a very young age, and we had to work for everything we had.

My parents installed morals and to work hard into us from the very young. They always encouraged us to follow our dreams and always supported us in our choices in life, sometimes they maybe did not like them, but they wanted us to make our own mistakes and learn from them. For this I am forever grateful.



3 generations: Julia (left), her mother, sister and grandmother

My grandmother is 91, and she is such an inspirational woman, she is incredible. To live so long, and be so healthy, and always work hard, every day.

I do not see myself as my inspiration, most definitely not. I always try to be better, at TKD and be a better person for myself and others.

People less fortunate than me are also my inspiration as they work so hard sometimes to achieve so little. This always makes me work harder. I love to work hard and see the results at the



Julia Cross (right) and her instructor

end, but I guess I am never satisfied and always strive for more.

I like to look at people from all different walks of life, you can learn so much from other cultures.

Very few people in TKD are my inspiration. Apart from my instructor of 27 years Master Sheena Sutherland, who, as a woman, has made some really great changes in TKD for women. She is incredible in so many different ways and is a really special person to me. We didn't always see eye to eye, when I was growing up, but now I respect her so much

more now that I am more mature.

Obviously General Choi is a huge influence on the way I live my life, and I always think of him and his philosophies. I try to pass on his teachings the best I know how.

I was lucky enough to meet General Choi on several occasions and attended IIC with him.

I remember after Argentina 1999, I received my medal and came off, he was there and said to me: "Congratulations, you have done so well. You came from Scotland as one, and you won." He shook my hand, and I will never forget that.

My sister is really amazing. She was very ill for many years, and I watched her struggle very much. In the end she made herself well with learning, understanding and retraining as a nutritionist. She has always worked so hard to achieve and never tired of learning and studying.



Julia (left) with her sister Anne



Julia with her niece Sophia

She had to fight her way back to health for 8 years until she was nearly 100% well.

She is married now and has a daughter who we thought she may never have.

I have always found inspiration easy to find within myself. I guess I have always wanted to be better and never thought I was too good.

Life Principles

What's your life principle or credo?

When I was competing, it was always to train hard and never think I was too good as there would always be someone who was better than you.

I guess that is why I won so many times, I never tired of learning, listening or getting better.

I never have had or will ever have an ego. I think people who do are not nice. I like to think that I am humble and appreciate everything that I have.

When I retired, it was really awful as I didn't want to stop, but I needed a new hip and this was terrible for me.

I was in so much pain, but my mind wanted to keep fighting.

I went into a really bad depression after I retired, and I thought that when I had a new hip that everything would be OK. It wasn't.

The void in my life from not competing was terrible. I was lost, and I didn't know who I was anymore. I had done the same thing for over 20 years and really didn't know what way to turn or where to go.

Now after a lot of pain, depression and soul searching I feel that I am coming out the other side as a better person and one who wants to live a life now and realizes that there is more to life than just competitions. The world of TKD is a massive one with so many opportunities.



I want to help others to achieve their dreams, and if I can do this to the extent of half of what I did then I guess I would be very happy.

I always try to be nice to others, and I try to smile, when I feel bad.

I want to live my life and never look back, only forward. Life is a journey, one which is not always easy, but one that makes us grow everyday if we let it.

I have learnt that when times are tough you must go to those who want to help. Never be scared of asking for help, it is not a weakness it is the stronger person who realizes that everyone needs help at some time in their life.

I guess I am very spiritual to an extent and like to look into other aspects of life. I have tried to take out the people or things in my life, who bring nothing positive to it. It sounds harsh, but to grow myself I must do this. You get to a point that some people drain you and for that reason they have to go.

I only want people in my life to enhance it, not to hold me back. This way I think you can be fulfilled.



Julia Cross during the training

Dreams and Future Plans

What is your dream? Or probably you have already achieved it?

I just want to be happy and fulfilled. That's all. Maybe with a husband and children, I would very much like this. I love children and would really love to have my own. I am really soft on the inside and hard on the outside. I only let a few people know the real me. I have to feel comfortable to let you in.

I guess I would like someone to share my life with and who loves me for me and does not try to change me.

My dream of being world champion over and over has finished, I had done this, so now I need to find another dream to work towards.

I wish to be happy, successful and content with my life.



Julia Cross (blue gloves) during the World championship in Poland, 2003



Julia Cross (red gloves) during sparring at the World Championship in Canada, 2007



Stretching



What are your plans for future?

To help others and make my TKD school one of the most successful ever. And help those who want my help. No point in giving help to those who don't listen!

If I give someone advice once and they don't listen, then I don't give them it again.

It would be wonderful, if I could create a world champion of my own from my students, we will see.

Some say I am crazy,
Some say I am mental,
Some say I am loving and giving,
Some say I am selfish,

But I guess to be a World Champion you have to be all of these things and more.

You have to be different and a little crazy to be able to hit people and get hit back!!!

I like to call it focused.

Life is a goal, I always have one. Without goals and desires we die.

First Steps in TKD

We already know that you started TKD at the age of 11. So, now looking back, can you say why it was Taekwon-do ITF you chose? Was it so popular in the place you lived? Why didn't you take dancing lessons, track and field athletics, tennis and so on? Could it be any other martial art? Probably your local TKD club was next to your house? Tell us why you chose TKD ITF?

When I was 11, my father asked if I wanted to go to the local TKD school as a neighbor of ours was a red belt. My father had trained in TKD before in Edinburgh, so he was looking to get

back into TKD, and he thought it would be a good idea for us to do something together. I played many sports before TKD and after. I was very good at swimming, I did many competitions and also tennis, badminton and squash. All were fast and took energy, and kept your mind active. I hated slow things and was never really into dance lessons, and I hated running from a young age, just sprinting was OK.

I didn't even know what TKD was the first time I went along, had never even heard of it, so I was in for a real shock at my first session. So I guess it was luck or fate that took me there with my father.

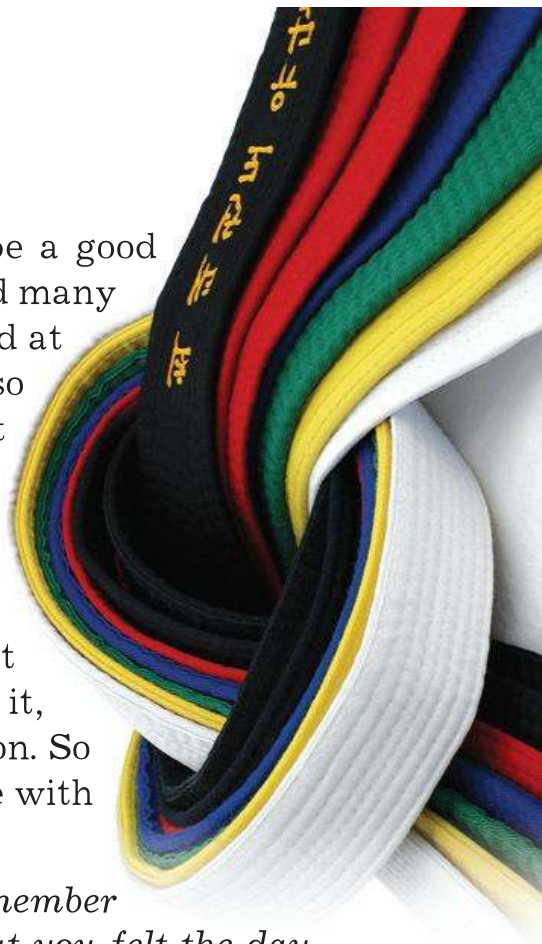
Many years have passed, but do you remember your first training? You have told us what you felt the day after the first session, but what did you feel in the gym? What were you most delighted with?

I think I will always remember my first training, it seems only a short while ago, but it was 27 years. I felt very strange

and shy as I knew very few people and did not know what I was doing and what to expect, it was like being the new girl at school. I guess I was really happy with doing something new and making my father happy that I had gone along and really enjoyed the class.



Julia Cross (red gloves) at the World Championship in Argentina, 2009 . The picture was taken by Master Jerzy Jedut.





Julia (right) with her Instructor

Tell us about your instructor, who she was and how long you were training under the supervision of this first instructor. In the long run, how many instructors did you have during your competition life?

I have always had 1 instructor, served only one master!!! Master Sheena Sutherland VIII deg who was my instructor that first day, and she still is 27 years later. She has watched me grow from an overweight 11 year old into

a 6 times world champion I think this must be really satisfying for her.

I have only ever had one instructor and 1 coach, who have been there with me for years. Sometimes I had to have a different coach at competitions, if my coach could not be there. Heath Denholn VI deg has been my coach and training partner for more than 11 years. Without him I guess it would have been so much harder to win. He was always the thinking mastermind of ways we could change and make things better when I had injuries, and always to keep the other guessing what I would do.

Master Willy Van de Mortel was my coach in Argentina 1999, when I won my first world title. My instructor had asked if he would coach me as I was the only one competing from Scotland, and it was a life changing experience. I trained with him several times before I went, and I remember he said to me after training: “Julia, do you know how good you really are?” I said: “No, not really.” I thought I was quite good but wasn’t sure how good. He said to me: “Julia, you are the best girl I have ever seen in the world, you can do anything I ask you to do. If you want to be a



Julia with her coach



*Julia Cross
with Master Willy van de Mortel*

world champion, you can be but first you must believe in yourself, how good you are and that you can win.” This conversation was the turning point in my career. I came home believing I could win and for the first time in my life really believed it.

Tell us about the relationship with your instructor.

As I said Master Sheena Sutherland VIII deg had been my instructor since day one. We have been through everything together, good and bad times. Me growing up through the teenage years and being a nightmare to be around and being disrespectful on many occasions!!! I would never dare to do that again. Sometimes I don’t know how she put up with me. I have so much respect for her as I have to watch on the sidelines for years as she singlehandedly got Scotland as a nation by itself in 1997. She is such a strong woman, and I admire the way she brought us up as females in the TKD world. As then it was really all males, and you had to work hard to get respect. We have had our fair share of ups and downs over the years, but she has always been there for me. Now more so than ever. Since 2005, we have been much closer, and I think that is because I finally grew up!!!

How many times a week did you train at the beginning of your sports career?

In the beginning it was 2 times a week, and I had other sports I did alongside TKD. After I think 2 years in TKD I had to choose, which sport I wanted to do as I was doing too much, and my parents were driving me everywhere, so I choose TKD and then started to train 3 nights a week.



Youth

Did you have a feeling of belonging at that time? Did you want to get a black belt?

I guess so. I remember being a green belt and thinking: “Yes, I will get a black belt one day.” I had just started competing and never really knew about World or European Championships. I just liked training.

Can you say that with the first TKD trainings you felt that you could be a success? Were you hardworking during training at that period?

I always remember working hard, this was something I really loved to put my whole heart and soul into, no question. I was

always a hard worker in TKD, and I still am to this day.

I don't think I thought about success at all at this stage. Just getting different grades and winning local competitions, not really beyond that.

Do you remember your first grading? Describe your feelings after you have got your kup.

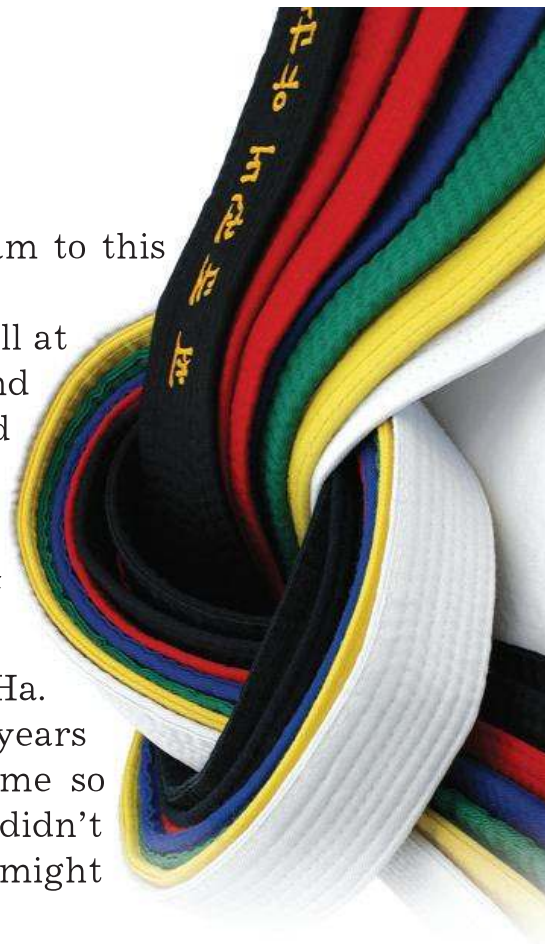
My first grading was under GM Ree Kee Ha.

I was so scared it was incredible. I was 11 years old, and this man was huge!!! He scared me so much, I didn't want to look at him. And I didn't understand what he was saying. I thought I might cry!

I don't remember much of the grading itself, but after getting my 9th kup the feeling was great.

Please tell us how you felt about different TKD disciplines (pattern, sparring, special techniques and power test) at a young age and how it was changing during your life? What discipline did you like more, why and when it began to change and did it ever change? You are a world champion in sparring and in pattern, so what discipline you believe to be most important for you? Or do they make no difference to you? What do you think of traditional sparring?

When I first started, I loved anything to do with punching and kicking. I was more natural at sparring as I had the want and was not scared. I always had a temper and was strong from a young age. I was not so good at patterns and had to work very hard to get better at them. I was very stiff also and had to work so hard to become flexible. When I was a red belt, my instructor told me that I had to improve on my patterns, or I would not be able to sit my black belt!!! This was enough for me to work really hard, and I think I only started to enjoy patterns, when I started to become better at them and understand the concept of them. So the more you practice the better you become, thus





Julia Cross (blue gloves) during sparring in Canada, 2007

you start to feel more confident in yourself and your ability, so then you become even better. Like everything in life, the more you put in the more you get back. I always won sparring medals from a young age, and when I started winning patterns as well it became very difficult to choose between the 2, so I didn't. I think if I am honest I was more confident with patterns to start with on the European and World circuit. For some reason I doubted myself on many occasions, always thinking this girl is better than me. I was never scared of getting hurt, never, but for some reason self doubt always played a big part, and I lost confidence in my own ability. For some reason also I seemed to perform better at sparring on the world stage than the Europeans, again I have no answer for this.

I love power breaking and was also very good at this, but as sparring and patterns took over, if the power test was before these 2 disciplines, then I would not take part in case I got injured.

So other girls took my place in this event. I was always in team power, which I loved. I was junior European Champion at power test in 1991!!!

I always trained patterns and sparring the same. They both help each other in so many ways. I like to be different and not so many people can win world titles at both.

I love to watch traditional sparring, it can be very spectacular to watch and takes many hours of practice.

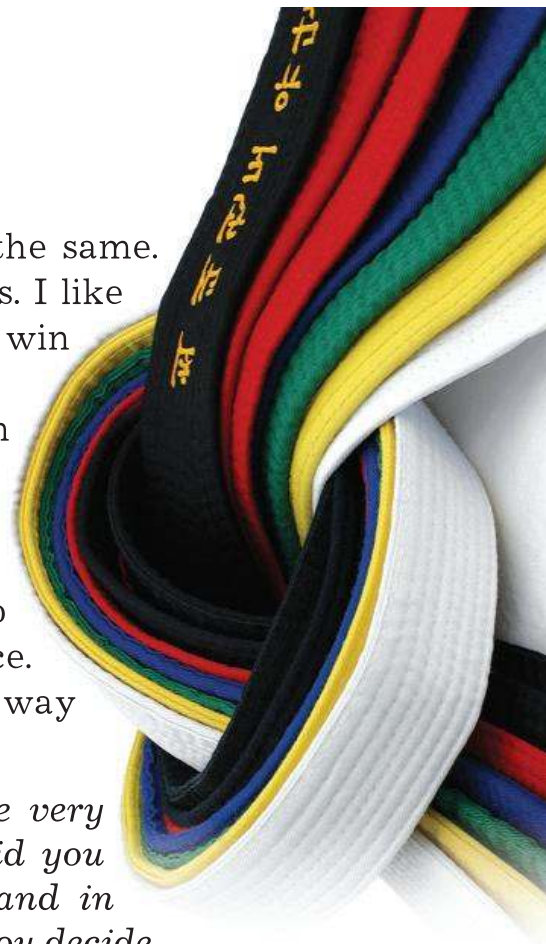
For me, I think I am better to teach this. I have a good eye, but I don't like to do it so much as I do not have the desire to practice. And I think you need gymnastics skills and way more flexibility than I have now.

Tell us about your first competition (the very first), when you were little. What belt did you have? Did you participate in sparring and in patterns? What was the result? What did you decide at that moment – to continue training and competition or to give up everything?

My first competition was when I was a green belt, and I don't remember doing my patterns, but I do remember sparring. It was against a black belt from my club, and he was a boy!!! I fought boys until I was 15. He beat me so bad, it was awful. Not as in hurting me, just winning very well. It was my first competition,



Julia Cross won her gold medal in patterns in 2003 at the World championship in Poland



and from that day I knew I would win and just wanted to keep competing all the time. And I wanted to train and train to beat him! I have always been really determined in things I like and want to achieve.

The Heroic Way to the Top

When did you compete internationally for the first time? What was your belt and result? What did you feel before the tournament, during and after? What did you decide after that? To continue competing?

My first international was in 1991, when I was 17. It was the junior Europeans in Vienna.

My instructor, Master Sheena Sutherland 8th deg, decided that some of her students, including me, were ready to compete abroad.

We were so very excited and trained very hard.

I remember going to stay in a youth hostel and was going to have to share a room with 2 Hungarian girls who never spoke a word of English! So Master Sutherland took me with her to stay somewhere else as I was the only girl from Scotland.

When we arrived at the competition, it was amazing!!! There were so many black belt girls. I have never seen this many girls in one competition, ever.



*The final match at the World Championship in Poland, 2003.
Julia in blue gloves*

I was really nervous as I had never sparred abroad.
I was a 2nd deg at this time.

I won bronze for sparring after getting disqualified for contact, then got brought back in to fight for bronze. Not sure how that happened, but it did.

I also won gold for power breaking!!! It was only a sidekick at the time, I am not sure why. They just kept on putting up the amount of boards, and I broke 4. But I do remember the crowd of girls waiting to break went out the door.

I think I did not really know I was a European champion, it was strange, I guess surreal to an extent. Obviously I was very happy, but also it was such a new experience, and I didn't know many people who had been abroad to compete before.



After this competition I knew that this was the life I wanted. I came home wanting the next one, then the next. It opened my eyes to a whole new world, an amazing one that I wanted so very much to be part of. It showed me the bigger picture as in Scotland and England I had competed only against a few girls.

I realized then that I wanted to train full time.

Until 1996, you participated as a competitor representing UK, not Scotland. Why was it so?

Until 1997, we were competing as Great Britain. We used to have to travel to London and other places in England for squad training. It was crazy. But then after years of trying, Master Sutherland and others from Scotland managed to get Scotland seen to be a country as its own. So in Russia 1997 we competed as Scotland for the first time. With a lot of thanks to Master Sutherland for.

Now please think of your first world championship. How old were you, and what was the result? Did you feel any difference participating at Euros and at Worlds?

My first World was in 1992 in North Korea. It was the craziest

and most life changing experience I think I have ever had. I was 18 but still quite young and immature.

I always trained hard, still do, it's in my blood. But I do remember doing lots of fundraising, and we were on the TV as we had 6 people in the British team from the school I trained at, Master Sutherland, and we were going to North Korea!!!

I couldn't believe where we were going, and the journey of getting there was very interesting.

We got to Moscow and had to wait there 24 hours until we paid all the ticket money and got through passport control with no visa!!! Very dangerous. Then, when I saw the plane, it had cracks on the outside, and I nearly never got on. It was the worst flight of my life.

It was so different from the Euros as it was huge and so many different countries. This is where I found my love for all countries and cultures. I love to learn about these different countries. I won a bronze for sparring, and I think I did pretty well. But it was a crazy competition, competing until midnight then coming back the next day to finish off.

You had so many competitions in your life. Have you ever been tired of competing? Did you ever think of stopping everything, giving up training and just starting a “normal”, “ordinary” life without endless trips? If you had such a moment, can you please tell us how you recovered from it.

Never ... I loved competing so much.

I just wanted more and more. I always needed a goal, and I always strived to be better, I am still the same now. To be a great competitor you can never tire, and you can never rest on your laurels. Always aim to be better.

Someone said to me not long ago that you have to be a little crazy and a little different to be a great fighter. Well, that is me for sure.

What is ordinary? For me this was training, working and competing. That was my normal life.

I have always been a busy person, I would hate not to have a challenge, and challenge myself in whatever way I wish. That makes life interesting. I hate being bored.

The only time I felt really tired and emotional was when my body was sore with injuries, but I would never let this beat me and always pushed through the pain. Maybe not the best thing to do, but I did. Six operations in 6 years, and I still wanted to compete. It was my hip that was the worst. That was soul destroying.

Describe yourself winning the first time at Euros and at Worlds. Is it a different feeling to be a European champion and a World champion for you?

When I won my first European title, of course, it was amazing, but to be honest I don't really remember it well. It was for patterns 2nd deg. I can remember feeling relieved and really happy after years of work. Becoming a world champion was very different as it was my first major international sparring title after years of competing. I guess being a world champion for me was the ultimate goal, and I achieved it.

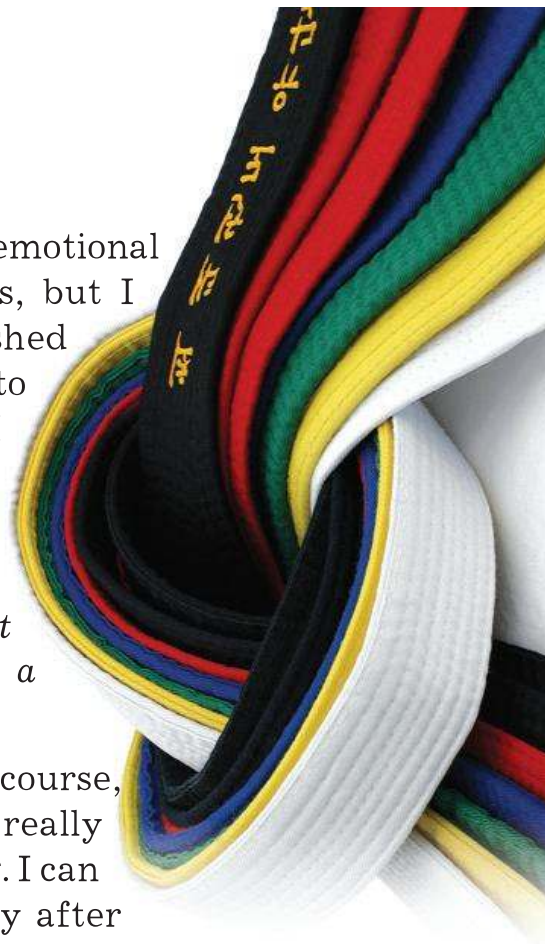
In Argentina 1999, it was a truly amazing time. I was the only Scottish competitor, and I was lucky enough that my instructor got me Master Willy van de Mortel as my coach. I had gone to train with him a few times in Holland before we went, so he could find out the way I sparred.

It was amazing to train with him, and he changed the way I thought about sparring, the way I thought about training and most of all the way I thought about myself.

When we went to Argentina, I was coached by Master Willy van de Mortel and was working with the Slovenian team. I remember the opening ceremony, where again I walked rounds for Scotland myself, I was very proud to be there. I had trained so very hard.

Someone said to me: "Ah, Scottish girl, what a shame you are here by yourself, never mind at least you came." I said to them: "I came here alone, but I came here to win." And I did.

I was put out in the first round of patterns by a girl whom I



had beaten in many Europeans, it was strange, but I had another sight.

In sparring I had Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, Argentina and then North Korea in the final. Every round I was so focused, and there was no way anyone was going to beat me. I dominated every fight for the first 3 fights. Everything we had practiced and the hours and hours of training were paying off. In the semifinal against Argentina it was a little more difficult, she was on home ground, and the whole crowd was behind her, but I just focused and shut everything else out, and I won.

In the final the next day against North Korea again there was no way I was losing. I had come this far, and I was going to go all the way. I stayed focused and when my hand was put in the air, it was like everything drained from my body in a second, and I didn't really know what to do. So I started crying and hugged Willy so hard.

I think I was in shock for a few hours. My dream that I had dreamt of for so very long was finally here, and I was finding it hard to take it all on board.

I remember waking up the next day after I won in Argentina, and the first thing I felt was pain!!! Really bad. I had torn my hamstring the day before I fought and carried on, so now I was walking like John Wayne!!!

It was a very strange feeling. A little flat as I had worked for months and months, and now it was over. I was so very happy and proud, but it was a strange feeling.

When I returned home, there I was in a lot of papers, and everyone was so very happy for me. It was really great. But something was missing. It was strange.

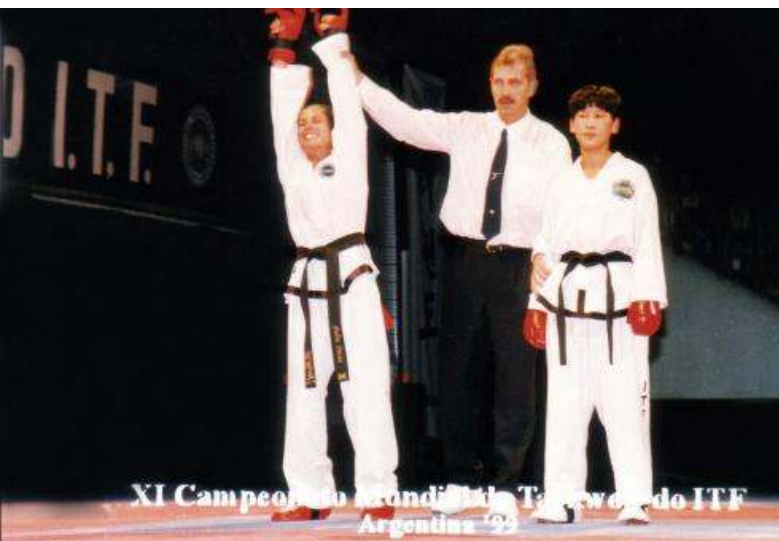
I think all my titles are very special, but I see that my first world in 1999 is a feeling that can never be replaced. Each title is so special. I think one way I focused to win was pretending that each title I went for was my first. That way you work harder.

What medal do you consider to be the main one? Tell us about it.

My first world title for sure. That always comes with me, and I always have it on display. I love it, apart from it being beautiful



Julia Cross got bronze at the World Championship in North Korea, 1992



Julia Cross won her first World Title at the World Championship in Argentina, 1999



The symbols of the World Championship in Argentina, 1999



*Scottish senior female team at the World Championship in Canada, 2007.
Julia Cross (in the middle) is the captain*

it has such special memories. Also the first time I won 2 golds in Poland in 2003. That was my next goal after Argentina, and in 2001, when I wanted to retain my title in Italy, I got really ill and ended up in hospital....

What exactly happened in Italy at Worlds in 2001?

Here was my big moment to retain my world title, and I was determined to do so.

After Argentina some person from another school in Scotland had said: "Well done!" to me. Then said: "It is easy to win once, anyone can do that. But let's see if you can win twice."

This was such a terrible thing to say, and I was determined to win again to prove my level.

So as soon as I was home from Argentina, I was back into training for Italy.

I trained so hard, way too hard, and I suffered the biggest loss.

In Italy, I was feeling good but tired. The day before the competition started, I woke in the night with food poisoning being violently sick everywhere. I couldn't walk or see properly. It was awful. My coach had to carry me to hospital, where I was kept in for a day. The worst thing was that my mother, father and sister had all come to see my win again. Then they had to come to the hospital and see me. I was such a state. It was the day of my patterns, and I was in hospital unable to move.

I got out of hospital and made the choice to spar the next day. Maybe I was wrong, but it was my choice, and I had trained very hard.

I weighed in at 54kg as I had not eaten for 3 days.

So I went, won the first round, then the second, and I felt OK, not great but fine. In the 3rd round, I had Germany, Lopez, and after 4 mins it went to a draw. I remember standing there thinking I have nothing left, my body gave up, not my mind. I remember my dad shouting from the crowds, and I really couldn't move. Lopez was all over me in the extra time. I had nothing to give. She won, my dream was over. I was devastated.

Returning home I was very ill. I had lost my stomach lining and now had IBS! And I was finding it hard to eat many things.

I had burnt out my body with way too much training, and my immune system was shattered.

It took around 2 to 3 years for my stomach and body to recover.

I learnt a very big lesson about overtraining there. If I hadn't been so tired with training, the food poisoning would not have affected me as bad. Lesson learnt.

How many times did you win the overall trophy at Euros and at Worlds? What were your feelings winning it for the first time and for the second?

I have 2 overalls for Euros and one joint overall from Czech. Two overalls from the Worlds.

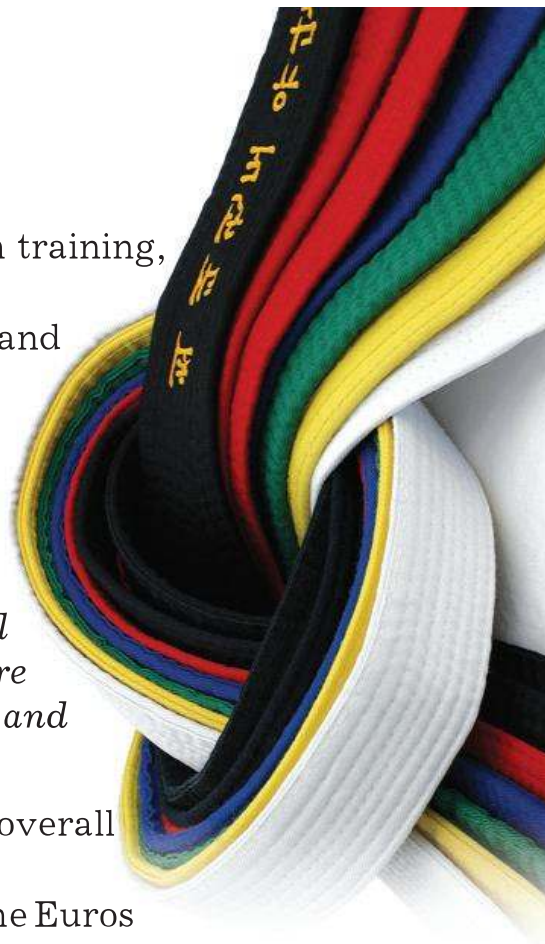
It was amazing to win my first overall for the Euros as it was on home ground and also it was the first time I had won sparring gold in Euros. Very special. Winning overall at the Worlds was amazing. It had always been my dream since I saw Noemi Peron from Argentina winning an overall in North Korea 1992. I said: "One day I want to be like her."

But when I won in 2003 Poland, I decided there that I would win the same again in Germany, and I did. I was very proud. But still wanted more. I was never satisfied with what I had achieved and always thought I could be better.

Euros 2000 took place in your native country, Scotland. How was it to participate and moreover – to win in your country? You were a great success that year, so tell us how it was and if it was different to win Euros in other countries and to win in your own?

Winning on home ground was amazing, my family and friends there, and we had all 4 teams from Scotland taking part, so it was a wonderful experience. Really special.

Winning here was like a huge relief that I had managed to win on home ground. I didn't really feel pressure from anyone else. Just myself. I always put so much on myself winning.



It was different winning on home ground and very special, but every title is very special.

Did you have a victory after which you told yourself: “Yes, I have achieved everything I wanted in TKD, and now I am only competing for the fun of it regardless of the result?”



International trophies

Never!!!

I always strived to be better, faster, stronger, fitter, better than another TKD competitor ever. That was my aim, but I don't think I could ever have competed just for the sake of it, I think that would have been detrimental to everything else I had achieved. I competed for one reason only and that was to win. Nothing else.

What special trophy did you get in Canada in 2007 at the Worlds? What did you feel?

I got a wonder trophy from the Hall of Fame. It was a wonderful evening, and I was chosen as best female competitor and presented with my trophy from GM Tran, he was a wonderful person, who I admired very much.

This was the day before I won sparring in Canada, so this trophy and medal stand side by side wherever I put them.

This was also special as my instructor was sat beside me, when I was awarded the trophies.



Julia Cross during pattern competition in Canada, 2007

What made you compete for so many years? You have won everything in TKD, and even more. What was your motivation in the long run? Can you say that you are a competitive person?

Wow, good question. It was my mindset for so long, I loved the buzz and thrill of competing, but I guess I loved the discipline of training to a schedule and always having something to work towards. I need a goal, everyone does, or life is very dull, in my opinion.

Every year I just went to another and competing was the biggest part of my life. I never got bored, always striving to be better, and change.

So I could keep winning. I also believe it was because I didn't want to work 9 to 5 in an office. Tried it, hated it. I was like a caged animal. I love traveling the world and seeing such beautiful countries and meeting people from all over the world and making lifelong friends.

My motivation was always me, I pushed myself really hard, and I was very tough on myself.

I never thought I was too good, sometimes I thought I was not good enough, so I have to prove it. I think that this is why I won so much, because I was never lazy, I always knew and was fully aware that people would want to beat me, so my coach and I always worked to make me better.

I never rested on my laurels. I wanted to be a true champion with no question.

I think a champion has to be gracious and humble. I do not like arrogant people.

Yes, I am a very, very competitive person.



Julia Cross (right) and her special trophy in Canada, 2007

What did you like most in a competition? What did it mean to you?

The training, preparation, the nerves, the whole thing. Meeting old friends and making new ones. Being away from normal life back home.

Stepping on to the ring, getting focused and believing you could win. Hoping and praying that all the hard training would come together at the right moment. Competitions meant the world to me, everything. It was my life month in, month out for over 20 years, it became a way of life for me. One that I loved so very much that I never wanted to stop.

Did you feel nervous when competing at Euros and Worlds? How did you cope with that feeling?

I always felt nervous, especially in the beginning. I did not know how to control the nerves very well. But over the years I began to be able to control them, with help from visibility coaches, self belief and NLP. Neurolinguistic Programming, which helps you to retrain the way you think into positive affirmations. These techniques really helped me. Self belief is the most important one. You still have to be nervous, but be able to control it and use it in the correct way. If you are not nervous at all, then it means the competition does not mean enough to you.

You have to learn to channel the nerves into adrenalin that will aid your performance and make you stronger in body and mind.

I would lay down before I went on and close my eyes, practice my visualization of how I would perform and picture me winning and how it would feel.

If you want to succeed as much as you want to breathe, then you will succeed.

I also read lots of positive sayings from lots of different people - from sports people to others to give me hope and get me positive.

No one likes to lose, especially when you have so many medals. What did you feel when you lost? What did you tell yourself to

convince to be back to training? How did you overcome such negative emotions during the competitions?

I really hate losing, in anything, especially in TKD. Of course, when you lose, you lose part of you and your soul for a short time. It does pass, when you have the next competition to work for, and it makes me even more determined to win. I would analyze why I lost and try to make sense of it in my brain, then talk with my coach Heath to see what we would do differently to win the next time. It can be soul destroying, but only true champions can pick themselves up and start again. You have to realize your mistakes and learn from them. They can only make you stronger and better. You can never be afraid of change. It is always good to change for the next time so that people never know what you are going to do.

You have to pick yourself up and try again. Stronger, faster than the last time. If you want to be the best, you have to take the negative emotions and turn them into determination. It can take time to get over a loss, but if you want to you can.

In sparring you always fought 58 kg. Did you have a special diet and what was your normal

The Heroic Way to the Top



The awarding ceremony in Canada, 2007. Julia has gold in sparring



Julia Cross with Grand Masters



Julia with her friends at the World championship in Poland, 2003

weight? Tell us about your diet, what food did you prefer when competing?

My normal weight has always been 57kg since I was 17.

I have been lucky enough that I never really had to watch my weight to keep under 58kg, sometimes it was the other way and when I was training really hard I had to make sure I ate enough to keep weight on.

I always went away to a competition at 57kg so that I could eat normally and be able to fuel my body correctly.

With food I have always had a good diet. Lots of chicken, fish, vegs, soups, oats, rice, and the like. I have always cooked for myself and like homemade food.

But sometimes like everyone else I like Chinese food and spicy food, my favorite.

I love going out for dinner with friends, and I love a good Chilean red wine.

Good proteins to help your muscles stay strong and good carbohydrates to fuel the body and mind.

I always entered the ring knowing I was the strongest I could possibly, physically and mentally.



*Scottish senior female team at the World Championship in Argentina, 2009.
Julia Cross is the second from the left*

Your medal list is amazing. Did you train much to get ready for the competitions? Describe your day if you are getting ready for a serious competition.

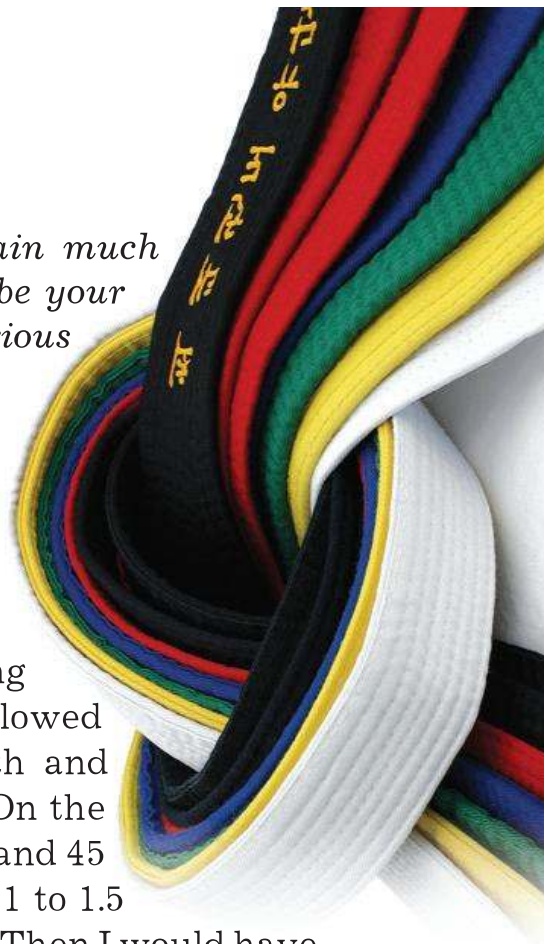
I trained very hard for years. Maybe too hard, when I look back, but that is why I had success, I guess.

Every day I would do different training. 5 to 6 days a week.

I would do 1 hour of TKD in the morning followed by 30 minutes of CV work followed by 45 minutes of weight training. Strength and endurance. I would do this 3 times a week. On the days in between I would do 1 hour CV work and 45 minutes weight training. I would then train 1 to 1.5 hours of TKD every night Monday to Friday. Then I would have squad training one day at the weekend for 2 to 3 hours. Each week I would have either 1 or 2 days of rest. This was along with teaching and working.

In times when you already had Euros and Worlds trophies and were still competing, did you feel more responsible for your performance? When you are a champion everyone is expecting only a victory from you. In these circumstances, was it more difficult to compete and to win?

I didn't feel under pressure from anyone else to win. Only from myself. But I guess with me I never felt I was that good, I always knew I could be better. I always competed like I had not won World or Euro titles, that way I was hungry to win like the first time. I always knew everyone wanted to beat me, so we had to realize this, but not worry about it and find ways to make sure this did not happen. I am always ready to change things and make it harder for anyone to beat me. I always listened to my coach, Heath, and took his advice on what to do. Sometimes when I was going on the ring, I would go blank and be asking: "Am I good enough to win? Can I beat her?" And he would just say: "Yes, of course, you can." That was enough for me, and I



would just hope and pray that my body would take over as I had drilled everything so much it would be automatic.



Julia Cross has just won her sixth World Title

pleasant, when her daughter takes to martial arts, because the girl can be hurt there. So did your mother and other members of the family try to prevent you from doing TKD?

Never, my mother always was behind me 100%. I have trained since 11 years old, so she was used to me hitting and getting hit. My whole family has always been so proud of me and always supported my choices.

I guess my mother, and the rest of my family and friends were



Julia's performance in power test at the World Championship in Canada, 2007

The biggest pressure was always me. But I knew I was always ready, conditioned and ready. No girl ever hurt me physically as I trained with men a lot, so I was physically strong and able to handle it.

Did your family like your TKD activities?

For mother it's not so

never worried about me getting hurt, but were worried, if I did not win and what effect that would have on me mentally. They were always there to pick up the pieces, if things did not go to plan. But I always managed to pick myself up and look to the next one.

Only after Argentina 2009 I found it really difficult. That was the worst time ever in my TKD life.

Very often we hear from other people (not from the martial arts world) that women are not created for martial arts, it's not ethically good, when girls beat each other. They can get hurt, spoil their appearance, they become rigid, while their role is to create a family, bear children and cook. Is it necessary to argue with such people and how can we explain a female place in martial arts?

I think in this day and age these views are very unrealistic and so old-fashioned.

Equal opportunities for all!!!

When I first started TKD, there were not so many females in the sport, but my instructor was female. Now she is one of very few female 8th degrees in the world. I have always followed her lead in the way that yes, women may have to work harder to get respect in martial arts in the beginning, but with people like her and more females participating worldwide times have changed very much.

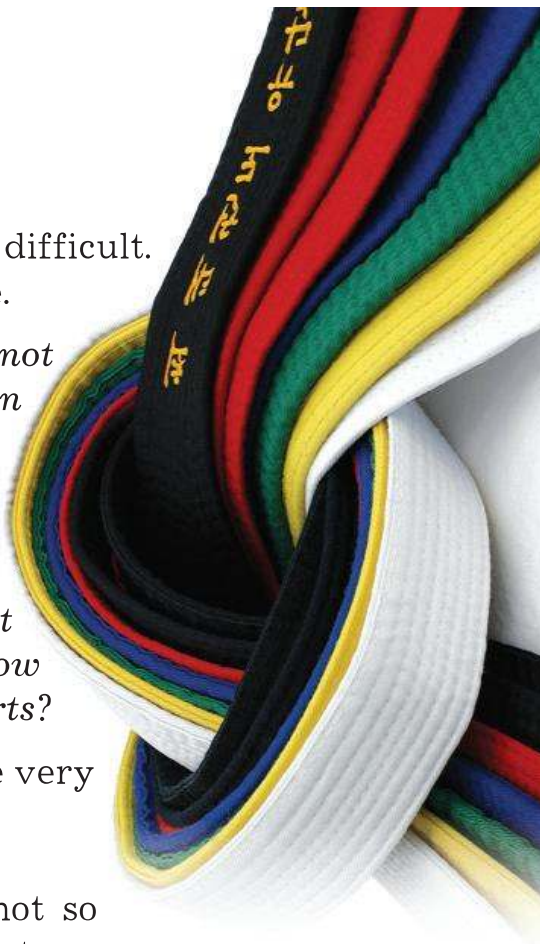
Look at me. I have 6 world titles, and I'm female!!! In the beginning you may have to work harder to get respect, but once you have it then I think you keep it forever.

It is each individual's choice if they wish to spar and get physically hit and possibly hurt. But if you are conditioned enough to take it, then you should not really get hurt.

A good fighter is the one who leaves the ring with no marks.

The thought of a woman's place as being at home, etc. is just ridiculous nowadays. Very old-fashioned.

My parents never had a problem with me doing martial arts. But I do think it takes a different type of female to be good at martial arts. They have to have that side in them that is not scared of getting hurt and not scared of putting themselves out on the stage. They have to be very disciplined and willing to train as hard, if not harder than men.



Each person makes choices with his life. We don't live in the past, we are living for an equal future in all walks of life. These people who say such things are welcome with their opinion, but it doesn't mean they are right.

My instructor was such an inspiration for women, I followed her lead and realized that women could do whatever they wanted, if they worked hard enough to get it. I have always been a fighter in body and spirit, and I guess I always will be. That makes me the person I am.

Did you ever try to compete in other martial arts? (kickboxing, box, WTF)? Can you describe your experience there, did it help you in TKD ITF?

Yes, I did many different competitions from different styles of kickboxing and WTF.

I felt the kickboxing competitions really helped, as you need different styles to compete against. Some were not such good standard, and sometimes I got disqualified for too much contact!!! And it was very strange as they wore head guards, and there were classes of full contact. We did many of these over



Training

the years, and they helped with confidence and trying out different techniques before our big events.

With the WTF competitions I did not like these so much. I hated wearing body armour as I felt enclosed, and I always ended up punching to the face!!! Then getting disqualified.

I am not keen on the style of WTF for me, there are some great WTF practitioners, but I don't think it helps ITF. That is my personal opinion.

You have so many titles. You really did it so well, that I think no one will repeat this success. With your willpower (and your results to prove it) you could become, for example, the winner of the Olympic games (in WTF), or you could turn to professional sport and get money for your victories and never worry about money any more. So, have you ever thought of turning to a sport which can bring real money and glory? (K-1, box, MMA)

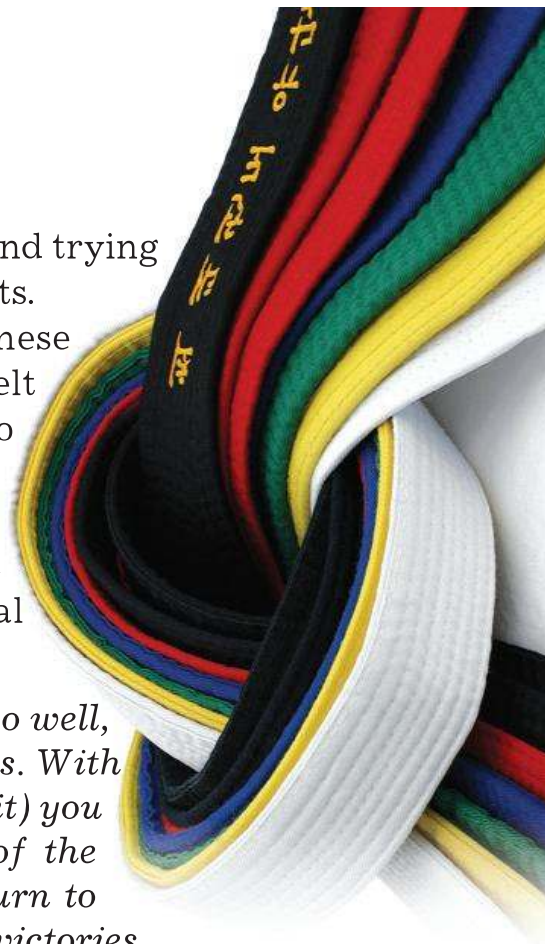
A good question. One I get asked very much.

I guess when you love what you do, money is not the most important thing, and I really think that money can change a person, make him greedy and then he'd not compete for the real reason, passion, love, dedication and the want to win.

Yes, don't get me wrong, I would love to have made money from my titles, but I didn't. Sometimes it really hurt when I could not get sponsorship as a world champion, and then I started to think I wasn't good enough. Then it made me more determined to win without financial help. I guess that makes the victory even sweeter, knowing you have done it by yourself with your instructor and coach and that you are not doing it for the money.

I really don't know how different things would have been if money was involved, as it has never been an option.

I have thought about MMA. My friend in America said to me I should. I still might. But I guess with as many operations as I have had it may not be a great idea. We will see.



Are you satisfied with what you have achieved? You seem to be a person who never stops and wants to have more and more goals. “The trophies are never enough for those who like competing” – is this saying about you?

Well... I guess I will never be satisfied. Maybe one day, but I'm not at that stage yet. I love competing and miss it every single day. I think because the choice of retiring was not mine, it was really hard. I struggled very much mentally as that is all I had known for 20 years. And for it to suddenly stop was really terrible.

I know competition in other ways, I always like a challenge. Life is a challenge, everyday is different, and I always have to have a goal to aim for.

I never stop striving to be better and to make my life better.
Once a competitor always a competitor.

The Hall of Fame of Julia Cross

In this chapter I would describe to you each great victory Miss Cross achieved.

All Euros Medals:

Euros	pattern	sparring	power
1991 Austria junior		+ 55 bronze	gold
1993 Holland senior	II deg silver		
1994 Poland	II deg gold		
1995 Germany	II deg silver	-58 silver	
1996 Italy	II deg gold		
1997 Slovenia	II deg gold		
1999 Italy	III deg gold	-58 silver	
2000 Scotland	III deg gold	-58 gold	Best Competitor
2001 Spain	III deg gold	-58 silver	
2002 Czech	III deg gold	-58 silver	Best Competitor
2004 Finland	III deg gold		
2005 Italy	III deg gold		
2006 Romania	III deg gold	-58 bronze	
2007 Slovakia	III deg gold	-58 gold	Best Competitor
2008 Poland	IV deg silver	-58 gold	
2009 Spain		-58 bronze	

So, Julia has 15 European Titles: 1 in power test, 3 in sparring and 11 in patterns.²

It's time now to get acquainted with the short descriptions of each of the medal from the legendary champion:

2. In Czech Julia also got the jointed title (with another girl) of the best competitor, but she let the girl to take it home..



1991, Austria

Gold in power test, bronze in sparring

“My first international. I think I did not really understand how well I had done. It was really strange. I remember being disappointed I did not win sparring.”



1993, Holland

Silver in patterns

“First senior Euros. I remember being so happy with my silver for patterns and doing well in sparring and thinking, I can really win next time.”



1994, Poland

Gold in patterns

“My first European gold, it was amazing, I was so happy with this one”.



1996, Italy.
Gold in patterns

"Gold again for patterns, but what was happening with my sparring. I was starting thinking I would never win".



1997, Slovenia

Gold in patterns

"Gold in patterns. I fought well, but not well enough.

I wasn't to win sparring so much and didn't know what to do."



1999, Italy

Gold in patterns

Silver in sparring

"Gold 3rd deg patterns. I was so very happy with this as it was my first in a new division and my sparring was getting better, but again my confidence and self belief let me down."



2000, Scotland

Gold in patterns

Gold in sparring

Best Competitor

“Scotland was the year after I won my first worlds and on home ground my confidence and self believe was great, I was going to win and that was what I did in patterns and sparring. Very special.”



*The Overall Trophy in Scotland,
2000*



2001, Spain.

Gold in patterns

Silver in sparring

“Again gold in patterns, which was always great. I was beaten in the final of sparring. I was devastated”.



2002, Czech.

Gold in patterns

Silver in
sparring

“Same as before, I did not understand why I always did better at world than in Euros in sparring. I had to go back and think what I was doing and what I needed to change”.



2004, Finland.

Gold in patterns

“Gold in patterns and nothing in sparring!! What was happening to me...”.



2005, Italy.

Gold in patterns

“Another year – another hold in patterns. I was so upset with sparring. I had to get back to world level”.



2006 Romania

Gold in patterns

Bronze in sparring

“Gold in patterns. I was unbeatable here and for that I was so proud, but not happy with sparring.”



2007, Slovakia.

Gold in patterns

Gold in sparring

Best Competitor

“I had my confidence and self believe back, thank goodness. I sparred so well, like I was at the worlds and was ready for Canada”.



Julia with her Instructor at the Euros in Slovakia, 2007



2008, Poland

Gold in sparring
Silver in patterns

"I was now a 4th degree and my hip was getting really bad. My flexibility was a struggle and it was just 8 weeks since I had surgery on my hip. I knew I could spar, but doing the high kicks was now a real problem. But I had chosen that I would have more chance to win sparring than patterns so I was ok with losing here in patterns. I sparred well and was happy with the way I coped after the operation and we had changed many things so I could have a chance of winning. I was so proud to win."



The awarding ceremony at Euros in Poland, 2008.



2009, Spain

Bronze in sparring

"I was devastated to lose. My hip was so bad and my mind set was not good. Not a good feeling..."

All Worlds Medals:

Worlds	pattern	sparring	
1997 Russia	II deg silver		
1999 Argentina		-58 gold	
2001 Italy			
2003 Poland	III deg gold	-58 gold	Best Competitor
2005 Germany	III deg gold	-58 gold	Best Competitor
2007 Canada		-58 gold	
2009 Argentina	IV deg bronze	-58 gold	

*World medals*

Julia has 6 World Titles: 4 in sparring and 2 in patterns.
 Few words about world medals from the champion:



1992, North Korea
Bronze in
sparring

“An amazing experience that changed my life. I was lucky enough to gain a bronze medal for sparring, but it opened my eyes to a whole new world. I am forever grateful to Master Sutherland for taking us there”.



1997, Russia

Silver in patterns

“Gaining a silver against North Korea was a thrilling experience”.



1999, Argentina
Gold in sparring

“My dream came true! This was the most special moment of my life so far. I think the only thing that could compare would be getting married or having a child. This was like a huge relief. I had achieved my goal, but what was next?”



2003, Poland

Gold in patterns
Gold in sparring
Best Competitor

“The next step of my dream was to get the overall at a world, after seeing Neomi Perron in 1992. When I won both golds and overall it was surreal, like it was not actually happening to me. But I still was not satisfied”.



The Overall Trophy at the World Championship in Poland, 2008

2005, Germany.

Gold in patterns
Gold in sparring
Best Competitor



“Once again the hard work had paid off. I was so thankful to achieve this overall again. All the people who had helped me, supported me and those who said I could never do it twice, this was for them.”

*The Overall Trophy at the
World Championship in
Germany, 2005*



2007, Canada.

Gold in sparring

"This was my task now to win 3 overalls at worlds, no one had ever before, but not to be. Out of the first round of patterns which was a really big shock and disappointment. But I had to pick myself up to win the following day. And I did. I really was so happy with my win in Canada as I thought that maybe that would be my last one".



The special trophy, which Julia got for being one of the most successful competitors in Canada, 2007.



2009, Argentina

Silver in sparring

Bronze in patterns

“The disappointment and sadness I felt here was something I never want to feel again. I was devastated to say the least. My dream was over.”

Concerning her career Julia says: “Now looking back I have been so very lucky and thankful that I have had the most amazing career. That I was able to compete for so long and still had the want and desire to do so. That was and still is the biggest passion in my life. Now I just need something to replace it.”

“End of an Era”

When did you feel that something was wrong with your hip?

It was at the beginning of 2007, when I was training for Canada. I knew something was not right as I knew my body and always got over injuries fast.

What did you do? Did you continue training? Did you think of stopping training and giving some rest to your body?

I just kept training. I have always been this way, and I am not saying it's the correct way, but I always just kept fighting through pain, hoping it would go away. I never thought to stop training. To me that was giving in. I could handle it, and I had the Worlds coming up, so, no, I couldn't stop.

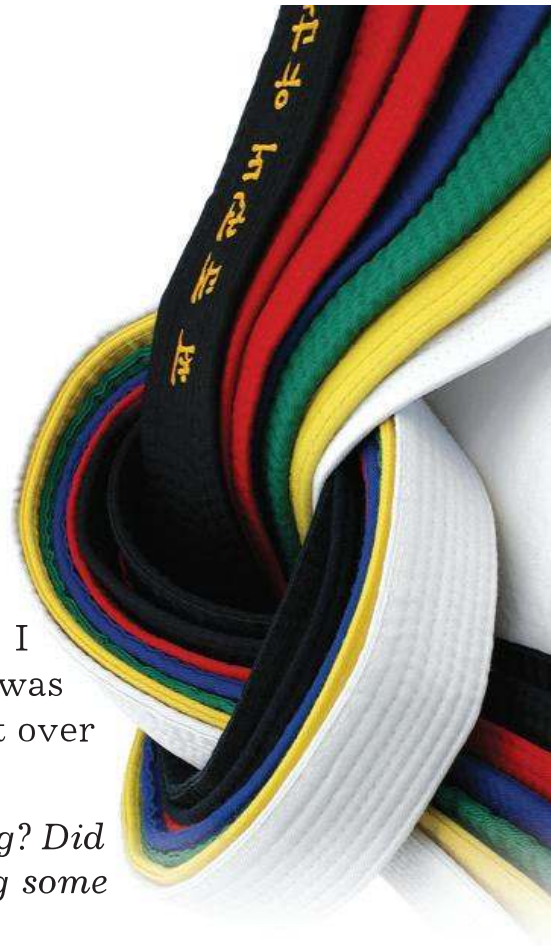
Did you have any other problems with your health during your sports career? If yes, how did you overcome them?

Wow ... I have had very many problems.

When I was younger, it was all just muscle pulls, lower back problems, which I overcame with strength and conditioned training. From 2004 until 2010, I have had 6 operations and 5 rehabs.

I have had 3 knee surgeries, 2 hip surgeries and 1 on my nose, when it was broken in training with an elbow.

Each operation was different, so I had different rehabs, and I was always seeking to get back stronger than before. I could not let these operations beat me. At the time I did not really care. I just wanted to win, get back to training and prove to myself that I could recover and I would. It was very difficult, and I think now I have really had enough of operations and rehabs.



Was the pain in your hip progressing? Did it become worse during training?

After Canada my hip got worse fast. At the end of 2007, I knew something was wrong and went to see Mr. Gray, who was my hip surgeon. I thought it was just a few tears and a bone growth. Not to be. He was taking such a long time to come back to me after my X-rays were taken. I remember thinking this was strange.



Julia's seminar

When he returned to the room where I was, he sat down and said: "Well, Julia, yes, you have tears, bone growths, cysts, along with other problems, but most of all you need a new hip!" I was in shock. No way did I need a new hip, he must be wrong. Then he showed me the X-ray and pointed to everything that was wrong with it. I was devastated. It was a mess with arthritis everywhere.

After training my hip was always sore, but not just the hip, my pelvis, my back, my other knee as I was not balanced, and the arthritic pain was incredible. Bone on bone in my hip is one of the sorest things I have ever had. Before Argentina I was in tears after every training session, and now I look back and think: "How did I do that?"

I was stupid to do so, but me being me was not giving in to anything.

What tournaments did you participate in with this injury? How was it to compete with pain inside?

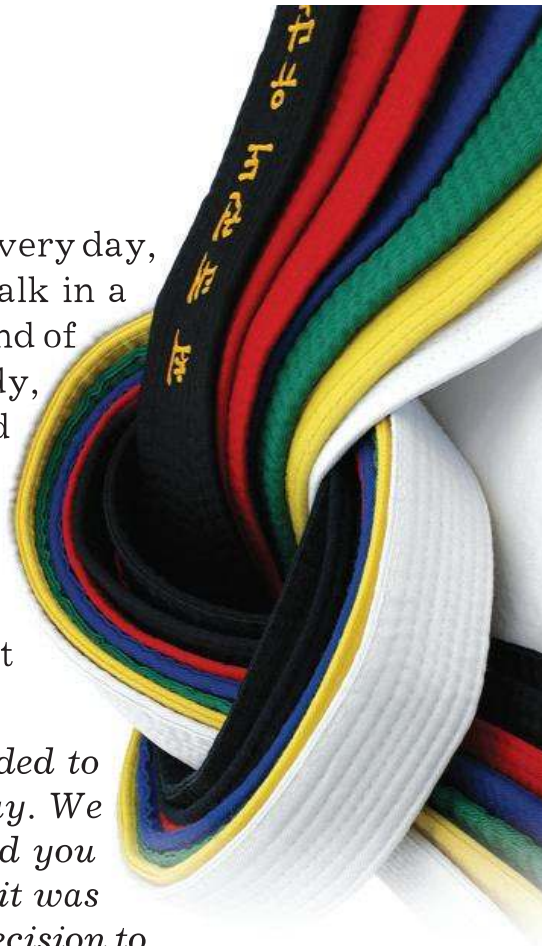
I did Canada, it wasn't so bad. Several others in Scotland and Britain, I did much less competition as I knew I had to be selective now, if I wanted to do the Euros and Worlds. Euros 2008 and 2009 World Argentina.

Mentally dealing with the pain was hard. Every day, 24 hours a day, I was in pain. I could not walk in a straight line for more than 5 minutes by the end of 2009. It was like after Argentina my hip, body, and mind just gave in. I was so very tired and drained mentally.

While competing, I just kept going, you had to. It was my choice to compete, so it was my job to get on with it. And also my coach, my instructor, my teammates. If I didn't compete, they had no team.

You were still in much pain, but you decided to come to Argentina and to compete anyway. We knew it was your last time competing. Did you know when going to Argentina 2009, that it was your last time as a competitor? Was your decision to retire made before that World championship?

When I was training for Argentina, the pain was incredible, constantly. When I look back now, I don't know how I did it, but



Julia at the opening ceremony at the World Championship in Germany, 2005

I guess I was in denial and didn't want to believe that I needed a new hip, so I just tried to carry on as before.

I had talked with my coach and others about retiring, but I did not want to fully decide until after Argentina as I felt that for my mind it was not a good thing. I put it to the back of my head and just carried on training.

It was a really hard time emotionally. I was a team manager, a team captain and also competing as a 6 times world champion. It was really hard, but again I made the choice to compete, so I had to suck it up and get on without. To make things worse, my femur head was cracked, and in the first fight I tore my planta facia, the muscle which runs along the sole of your foot. I had had a problem for a few months, but after my first jumping punch I felt like someone had shot me in the foot.

I had to say nothing to my coach, keep the pain in. I remember standing at the side of the ring for my second round and Heath asking me what was wrong, I said: "I can't tell you, or it will make it real." I made the choice, what do I do - continue or pull out. I would never do that now. I didn't say anything until the final was to be the next day. I so wished it had been straight away. Way too much pain.



Julia Cross during sparring competition in Argentina, 2009

Tell us about the time after the world championship of 2009. So you came, what did you feel? Did you have a feeling that it was the time to make a decision about your future career? How long did it take you to make the final decision?

After Argentina, it was probably one of the worst times of my life. I was devastated to have lost, especially, when I felt I won. I am not like that usually, but when your opponent has 10 warnings and you have one. I remember standing there being confident I had won, and when they put her hand up, my world around me fell.

It was to be my last and a 10-year span from winning my first Worlds in 1999 Argentina and winning my last in 2009 in Argentina. A nice way to end, but my plan didn't work.

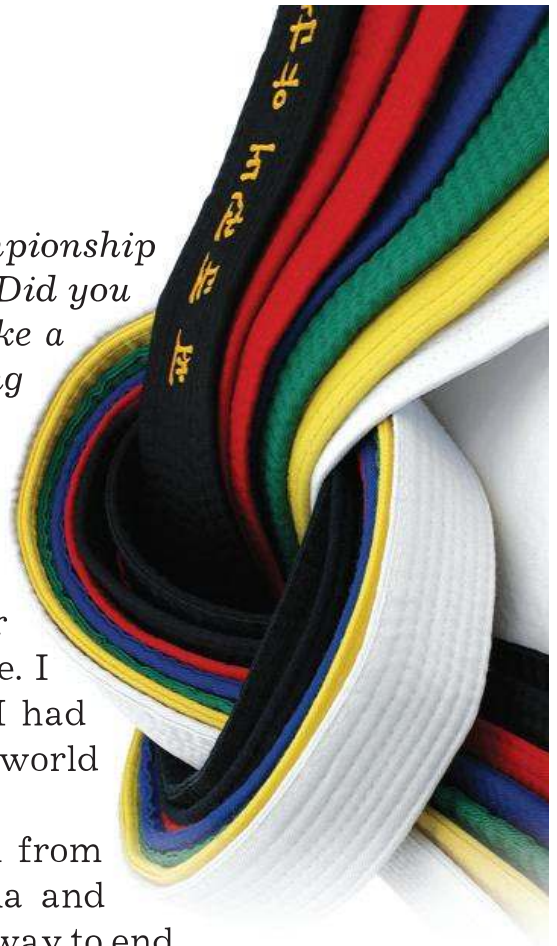
I didn't know what to do when I came home, I was a mess inside, but tried to hide it from everyone else. I started to sink into a really bad depression, but at the time I did not know what was happening to me, and I knew I had to go see my surgeon again now, there was no waiting.

So I went to see Mr. Gray who re X-rayed me and told me that I needed my hip replaced now, or it could collapse and push through my pelvis.

Reality hit home that I had to get it done right now. Everything was bone on bone and my hip was stuck.

I remember being so upset and crying in front of Mr. Gray. He said: "Julia, why are you so upset? You are not dying." I turned to him and said: "I know that, but part of me is dying, and you're removing part of me." I wasn't ready to stop competing. If I had wanted to that would have been different. It was now out of my hands.

Six months after surgery, I made the final choice after talking to Mr. Gray. He said: "If you want to compete again, you will. Not to stop you, but this is your choice. Do you want 10 years with this hip or 20?"



I think it is the right choice for my body, but I am slowly learning that it is the right choice for me. I need to start living other aspects of my life as I have been competing for over 20 years. I want to live a life in different ways now.

I think it was only 1 year ago that I realized I would not compete again, but I guess at the back of my mind I still might compete again. I am so competitive that I cannot fully comprehend it yet. I need something else to fill that void.

You finally had the operation in May 2010 – the hip replacement. Was it really necessary or was it enough just to stop doing sports? Tell us about it? How long did it take you to walk again without pain? What did your surgeon tell you? Where did you take strength and energy to handle it?

Yes, it was 100% necessary, as before my hip was ready to fall apart, and I had not a good quality of life. I was very down with the pain and not sleeping. I could not walk far and was taking so many painkillers.

After the operation I was in hospital for 3 days, and felt like I had been hit by a bus, but was determined to get home as fast as I could. As soon as I saw the X-rays, I was shocked at how big the new hip was. Mr. Gray had given me what he called the Ferrari of the hip world. He wanted me to get back what he said would be 90% of what I had before the hip was bad.

As soon as I could walk on crutches and wash myself sitting on a seat in the shower, I could go home. The pain was incredible, but it was all surgical pain. Well, they cut the femur head off, drilled down the femur and removed part of my pelvis, but the arthritic pain was gone. And that was amazing.

I was on crutches for 6 weeks and had to learn to walk again. That was bad. After 3 months of hard physio and training myself I could walk with a limp and was able to punch, but with not twist. I was in the swimming pool and gym most days working on stance, strength, etc. The swimming pool was my life savior. I would do everything in the baby pool, and this really helped my progress. After 5.5 months, at my Open day of my Do-Jang I was back sparring, kicking, doing patterns, moving very well, but walking was still hard. After 1 year I guess I was back to normal,

even better than before, kicking high and moving very well.

I am still a little apprehensive of kicking a side kick with big heavy guys in case they kick under and lift the hip up. But apart from that I can do most things.

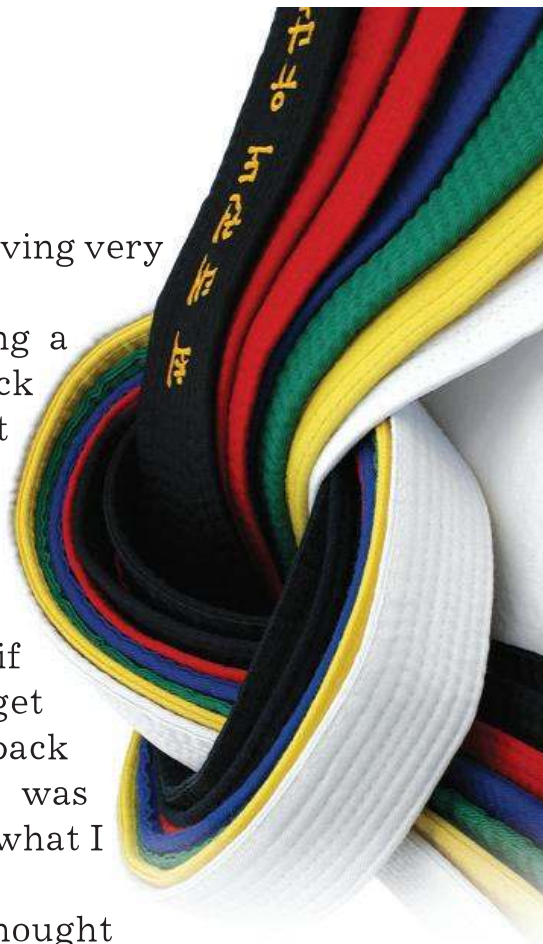
I don't really know where I got the strength from, I think most TKD people are like this. I never ever give up especially, if it is something I want to achieve, and I knew, if I didn't work my ass off then I would not get where I wanted to, and I wanted to get back better than before. And I would. Nothing was going to stop me getting back to my life and what I loved doing.

Some days were so very hard when you thought there was no progress, as it was slow, but you just keep going, you have to. There are people far worse off than me, and I just kept thinking I'm not dying, I am about to start living my life again.

What did you start with after your operation? On the 1st of November 2010 you opened your full-time Do-Jang. Was it your plan to open it regardless of your retirement? I mean if you still competed, would you have opened it?

After my hip operation for 3 months I concentrated on my recovery. After 2 weeks I went back to teaching my classes, sitting down on crutches. It was really hard but seeing my students was great. I have a wonderful group of assistants and seniors, without them it would have been terrible. Also the parents of my students were a great support.

I always wanted my own gym, I had been trying to get this place for over a year. I think fate played a big part in making me wait until I retired to give me the gym. I would have still opened it, if I was still competing. I would have managed both for sure. But I started work on the gym 3 months after surgery. My students did most of the work, knocking walls down and building, etc. I just stood and shouted!!! They were amazing.



*The gym is in progress*

I am very thankful to them.

Did your new gym help you to come out from the depression you had after the retirement? What emotions did you have when opening it?

Yes, a little. I just threw myself into getting the gym ready. So that and rehab were my focus. But there was always a huge void in my life that I just kept putting to the back of my head. It was like a

death in some ways. I just could not seem to realize that it was over, the next chapter was starting, and I wasn't ready for it.

People always say to me: "Look at what you have achieved, it's amazing. You should be thankful for what you have." And yes, I am very thankful. But it didn't take the pain away. Only time and myself could do that. So I didn't talk to anyone about it as I didn't want to come across as ungrateful.

When I was opening the gym, we had a big Open day with all my black belts and some students doing demonstrations, along with me.

Mr. Gray, my surgeon, opened the gym. I was so nervous to show him what my hip could do. He was amazed, and when he

*The Open day*

was watching beside my mum, he was saying: “Omg... I knew she was going to kick, but I didn’t know she would do all this stuff!!!” I think he was impressed and very scared at the same time. He is my hero. He gave me my life back.

When I was saying my speech, I broke down and cried. I didn’t think I would, but it just happened. My black belts were crying, my parents and friends as they all knew how much this meant to me and how sad I had been. It was really emotional. Mr. Gray said a wonderful speech about me that made me realize what I had done and what I had come through. It was very special to me, and so is he. It was a wonderful day.



Which town is your gym situated in, and is it far from the place you live now?

My gym is in a town called South Queensferry. It is a beautiful place. Looks over the Forth Road and rail bridges over the river Forth. Sometimes I just look out the windows and feel lucky.



Mr. Gray’s speech

It is now a 15 minute drive from my house.

You have said you have 170 students in your school. Do you teach every day? Can you tell us how many sessions per week do you have? Do you teach kids, adults, men and women?

I teach Monday to Friday with an extra training once a month on a Saturday. I do not teach or do any TKD on a Sunday. Well, I try not to. Need time away from the gym as well.

I teach from 4-years old, with classes from 6-8-year beginners and advanced, 9-13-year beginners and advanced, and seniors. White to red tags and a class formed from black belts. I have 16 black belts training with me at the moment.

Also I have sparring classes that any grade can come to.

I also run boot camp circuit training, there is Babyballet, Zumba, hip hop and other dance classes. Next year I am looking to get MMA and other classes in.

I teach all kids, men and women. It is finding space in the timetable to do separate classes as every night there are 3 TKD classes.

I have 5 wonderful assistants who help me. Without them it would be impossible.

After that difficult operation you have got 5th deg, opened a new full-time Do-Jang, take international seminars. Can you say that now you have fully recovered mentally from the retirement?

Yes, it has been very hard, but my hip is now 100% OK, and I am pain free. I am so thankful to have had the support and all these ventures to keep me going and realize that I have a wonderful life outside competing. I love taking seminars, passing on my knowledge. I guess I feel like I am back in the ring. I feel I have a lot to give others now, and I don't want to keep all my experience and knowledge to myself anymore.

Getting my 5th deg was amazing. I felt so good, and it was a test to see what I could do less than a year after operation. Very happy to now be 5th deg.

How did your students, family, your instructor and friends support you during that difficult period? Probably you want

to thank some people, who helped you cope with that serious test, you can do it here.

Everyone was very supportive, it was a really hard time, but my family was there every step of the way. It was also very difficult for my parents and sister to see me suffering, as I have always been so very independent. I had to rely on others for everything, from making tea to showering, it was a crazy time. Everyone has busy lives, and I knew this. My students and assistants were amazing. They took the strain of teaching and helping me out. Making sure I was OK and looking after me. It was very humbling to realize how many people care about you.

My instructor phoned and visited to talk, which was good. Master Dunbar, master Denis and Heath Denholm were always on the phone checking up on me, and Heath, my coach, coming to visit. Other teammates, Samantha Merritt and Michelle Redmond, were always there to help me with paper work and give me lifts to and from classes. You really do find out at times

like these who your true friends are.

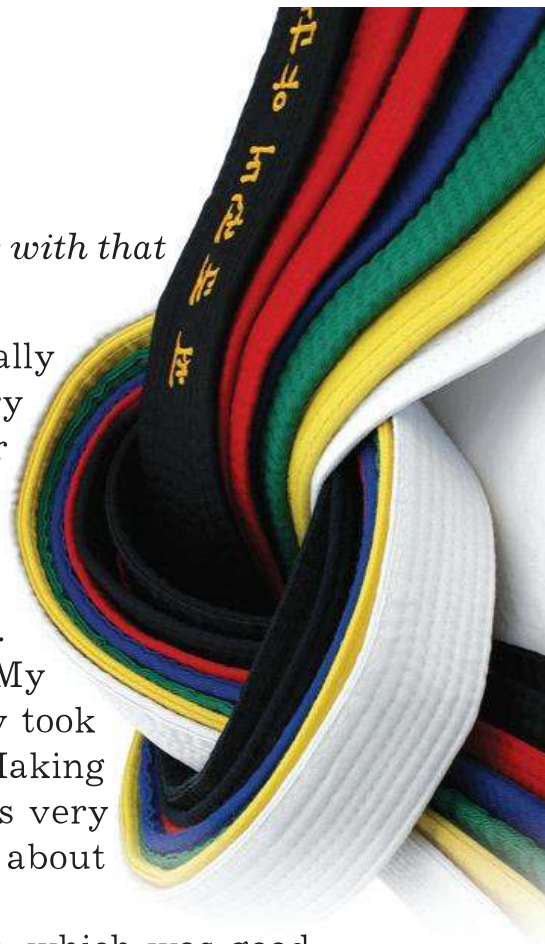
I have a group of girlfriends who I have been friends with for 20 years, they do not do TKD, and they were amazing, taking me out and helping whenever I needed, and they all have families and husbands too.

I just want to thank everyone who helped me in any way for their support.

I also want to dedicate the book to my mum, Muriel,



Julia (in the middle) with her friends



my dad, Clark, and sister Anne, grandmother Margaret, who have supported me through thick and thin and have always been there through the good and bad times. For that I am forever grateful.

Also my instructor of 27 years, Master Sheena Sutherland who has always been my inspiration and without her I would never have achieved what I have today. My coach Heath Denholm for his coaching for the last 13 years. He was my rock, and always will be. And to master Willy van de Mortel for changing my life and making me realize I could be a world champion. He changed the way I trained and the way I looked at myself.

There are many others too.

Bratislava 2011 was a real challenge for you. You came for the Euros for the first time not as a competitor, but a coach. How was it, not to compete? What did you feel?

Yes, Bratislava was a huge challenge for me, but one that I was ready to take on. I felt ready to start to the next chapter of my TKD life. Before then I was not ready. It was too hard.



Julia as a coach in Bratislava, 2011

I did not watch the finals, that was a step too far, but next time I will, for sure.

I was full of many different emotions. Happy to be there and seeing so many friends from so many years and realizing that I had so much to offer others with my guidance and also that people had not forgotten me.

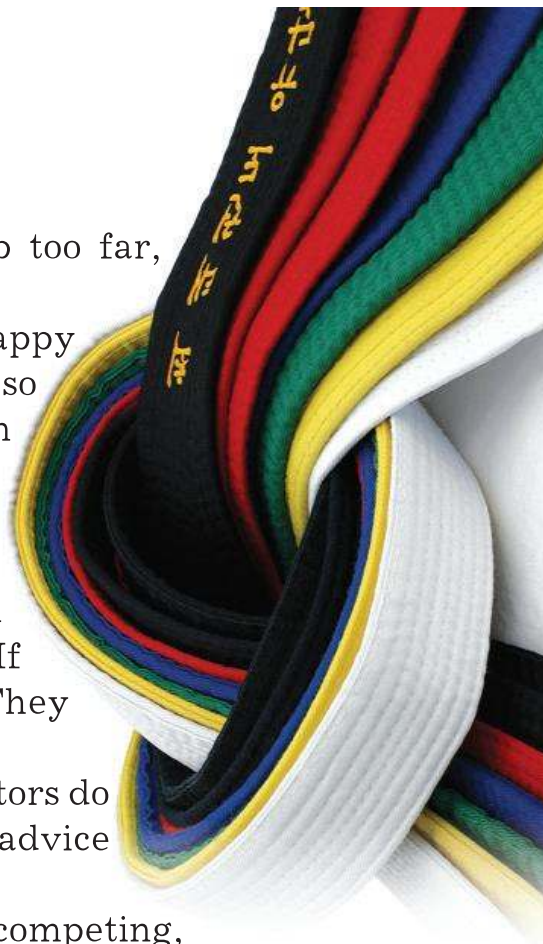
I really loved coaching and feel I am very good at it. I love to pass on my knowledge and experience to others, but only if they listen. If they do not listen, then I do not help them. They have to do as I say!!!

I have a good eye for seeing what competitors do right and wrong, and I love it when I see my advice being taken.

In Bratislava, I had 3 of my own students competing, so it was great to be there for them and guide them. Very special to see the next generation coming through.

Are you planning to continue your career as a national coach and are you going to come as a coach to future big championships?

Yes, there is nothing more I want than to be a national coach, wherever that may be. I want to work with people who I know, who know what it is to work hard, sacrifice, and want to win. For me that is so very important for my future. I will definitely be at the next big competition and all over the world for others.



Final Pieces of Advice from the Champion

Can you say that there is any universal formula for winning and being the best? Or does the chance rule everything? What factors can influence the result during competitions?

Hard work, want to win and believing you can.

So many things can influence a win, but self belief is so very important. Not thinking that you are great or good, never do that, but believing that you can and will win. That is different. If you really believe that you can be the best sparrer or in patterns, or whatever aspect of TKD, but if you do not truly believe you can win, then you will not. I had been there many times before, when I did not believe. I lost on these occasions.

Referees and judges can for sure influence the decision.

I think it always helps if you are humble and always curious about the judges and referees. I always was, and I hate when I see arrogant people who think they are better than they actually are.

A good fighter is the one who leaves steering with no mark.

Also be humble in winning and losing.

What statement do you think is more truthful: “to be born a champion” (to be strong, skillful by nature) or “to become a champion” (to train hard under the supervision of a talented instructor)?

I think you have to become a champion. You are not born a



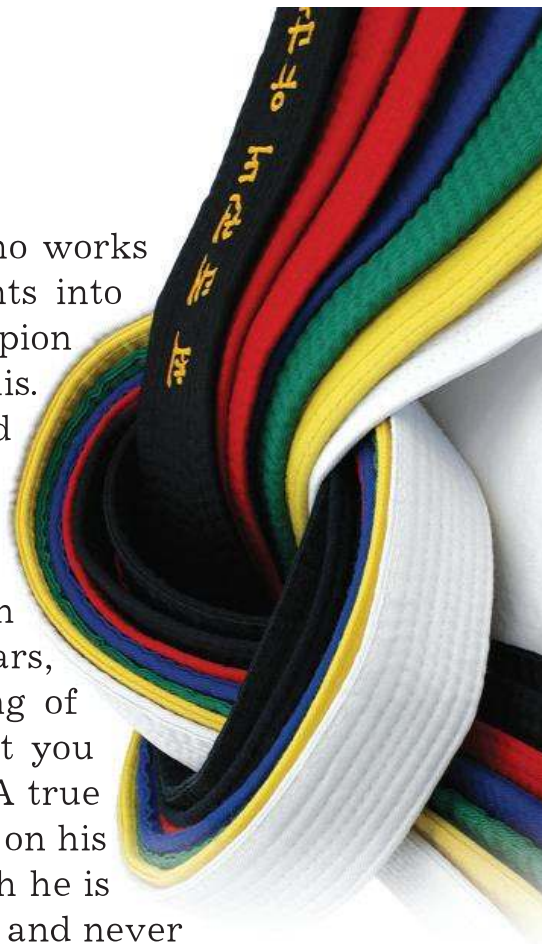
The awarding ceremony at the European championship in Poland, 2008

Julia has gold in sparring.

The picture was taken by Master Jerzy Jedyt

champion, to me a real champion is one who works so hard, has a dream, puts all the elements into place that are needed to become a champion and work so very hard until they achieve this. Never giving up through any adversities and fighting until the end.

That's a true champion. Not the one who finds it easy and does not have to work hard. Then it means nothing. You have to go through heartache, disappointment, blood sweat, tears, pain, to eventually feel the amazing feeling of success, the relief of finally achieving what you have dreamt of and worked so hard to get. A true champion is also someone who does not rest on his laurels and keeps working hard even though he is a champion. They always strive to be better and never think they are too good.



Can you tell us what from your point of view is the best way to train patterns? (probably, endless repetitions, or working



*Julia (red gloves) during sparring
The picture was taken by Maser Jerzy Jedyt*

on separate elements?) Tell us how you did it! Do you think that it is necessary to have mirrors in the gym, while training patterns? What is your favorite pattern (if you have) and why?

With patterns it takes a lot of work over years and years.

You need guidance from others, and yes, you need mirrors in my opinion.

Lots and lots of repetition and going over and over each pattern, stances, individual moves. All the kicks with the tools correctly positioned....

I did and still do a lot of strength training, body weights and weight training, also very much flexibility.

You have to be strong, very strong.



Julia is ready to perform a pattern at the World Championship in Argentina, 2009. The picture was taken by Master Jerzy Jedyt

I see patterns like a story, one that you have to tell with passion, heart and soul and enjoy showing the patterns to others. If someone performs patterns well, it can look amazing.

I love watching Suska from Poland. He is my favorite in patterns. Truly amazing to watch. His kicking ability is amazing.

I love all of the patterns. I don't really have a favorite, but when I was 2nd and 3rd deg, I loved performing Juche. I loved that I was able to kick well and loved doing it in competition as not many girls could perform it well.

Now if we turn to sparring, can you tell us what tactics from your view point seems to be the most effective? To be active? Aggressive? Moving only forward or to be sly, trying to outmaneuver the opponent?

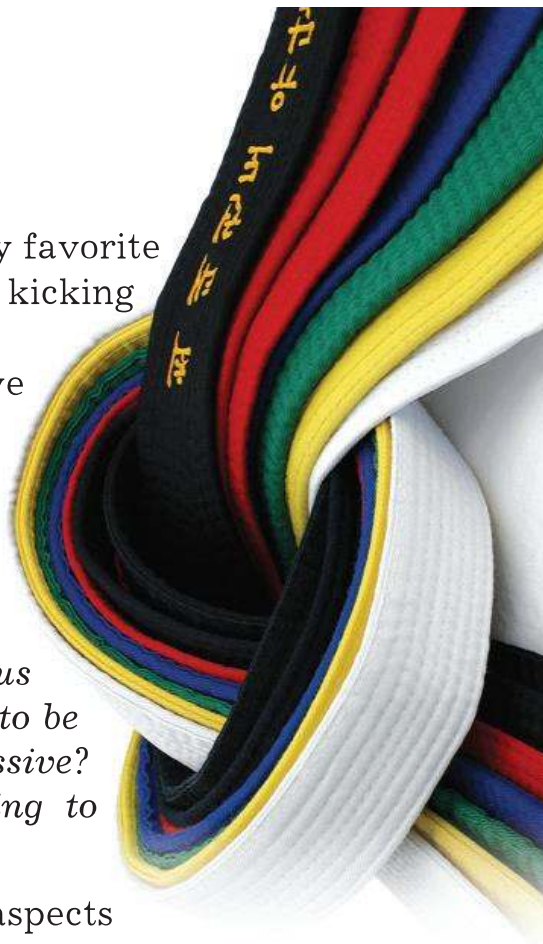
With sparring there are so many different aspects you must apply.

First, you have gone tough, clever, able to change your sparring style towards who your opponent is.

It is a game, one that you must be able to read, and calculate how you will spare and how you will win, a thinking game as well as a physical game.



Julia in Norway



There cannot be one set rule, you have to be able to mix it up and change. But each fighter has a style to a certain extent with add on extras for each fight.

With sparring you have to hope that all the drills and training that you have done so much will just happen on automatic, as it



The awarding ceremony at the World Championship in Canada, 2007.

Julia (left) has gold in sparring.

The picture was taken by Master Jerzy Jedyt
is a natural reaction if you have practiced enough, your body takes over.

Same with patterns, sometimes I would finish a pattern and think how did I get here??? My body always took over.

Describe the way you fought when competing, what tactics did you prefer? What is the most effective tactics in sparring in your opinion?

There are so many different ways. When I was sparring, my coach Heath and I would talk 5 minutes before I went on, and he would tell me what was the best for each opponent. But my basics were the same. A side kick, always!!! My favorite, forward or backward, always followed by either a reverse punch or punches.

Always combinations with my legs. A side kick is always effective, no matter what size your opponent is. You always have to hit hard or you will get hurt.

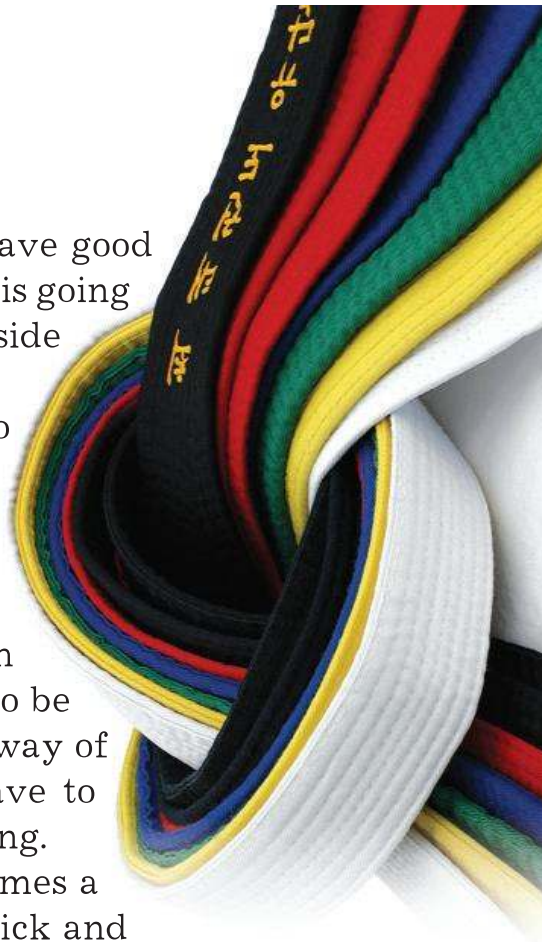
Body movement and ring craft are so very important. Without these you cannot spar. You need to be able to get the points,

but not get points taken off you. I think I have good movement, I can read usually what someone is going to do. I love a reverse punch, followed by a side kick or a high hook off the back leg.

Ring craft in moving the opponent into the position you want them to be. It is good to be forceful in your movement as this is confidence as well.

There are people who I sparred that I was more of the attacker, then others with whom I was more of a counter attacker. You have to be able to do everything in sparring, with the way of changing depending on the fighter, you have to read it and change, if something is not working.

For attack it is always a side kick, sometimes a middle, then a high followed by a turning kick and punches. Defense - either a reverse turning kick, a back kick, a side kick, a reverse punch and jumping punches. It is always followed by another kick, again depending on the situation.



*Julia (red gloves) performs a sidekick
The picture was taken by Master Jerzy Jedyt*

Always try to keep hold of the centre of the ring, so you are in control. And try to keep your opponent at the side. But you must not be careless. Always have a good guard and faking is also good. It's not something I did all the time, but when I did, it usually worked.

What would you like to tell your students to inspire them? Or probably you think that your own example is better than any words?

I think you have to have a dream and never give up. Be driven and want to succeed. I think you are right - my own example is good for my students and others to look at. Never try to be someone else, but use them as a stepping stone to your own goals and dreams.

I think we all need someone to look up to.

What advice can you give to children, junior, seniors who are at the very beginning of their way in Taekwon-do? What can say to them to inspire and to cope with failures?

You must have a failure to succeed in anything in life.

You learn from failures better than you do from the ups. These make you a stronger person.

Just always follow your dream, work hard and never give up. Learn and listen to others who have been there.

Most of all enjoy what you do. Love TKD as it can make you a better, stronger and wiser person.

Be happy in what you want to achieve and what you can achieve.

The ITF organization was split into two organizations after General Choi left us. How was it participating in the Worlds knowing that many countries are represented in another ITF, e.g. North Korea, which was always successful? Can you say that the level of world championship became lower after 2002?

When General Choi died, I think part of the art died with him. My instructor has always followed the true teachings of General Choi, and I stand by that and follow her lead.

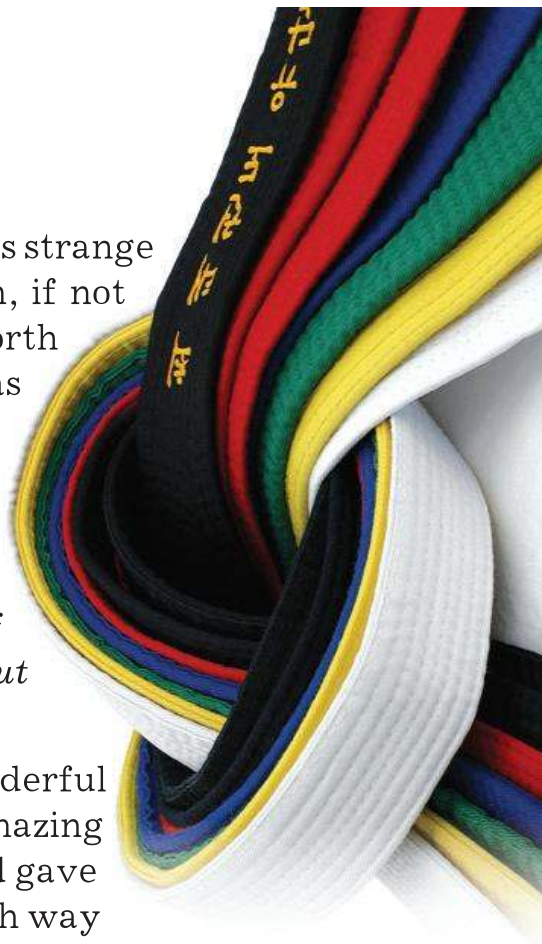
Competing without the other countries was strange at first, but the level is most definitely high, if not higher than then. I would say that the North Koreans were amazing at patterns. It was very hard to beat them. I never bet a North Korean at patterns, but I did in sparring. You cannot think what countries are there, you have to beat everyone to win.

What would you like to say by way of conclusion? What you would like to say about the role of Taekwon-do in your life?

TKD gave me my life and gave me a wonderful time traveling the world and meeting amazing people. It made me the person I am today and gave me a path to follow, when I was not sure which way I wanted to go. I found what I was good at and was driven to be the best I could ever be.

TKD has given me so many things – confidence, ability, strength of the body and mind. It has helped me to overcome some very big challenges, it has made me a strong character. You have to be, if you want to win. It has given me knowledge and understanding. It has also given me heartache and sadness along the way. It has made me want to succeed in everything that I do, determination.

I have no idea what I would have done, if I did not do TKD. I think I would be in the military or services of some sort. Never an office job. I did this and was like a caged animal.



*Julia as a coach
The picture was taken by Master
Jerzy Jedyt*

I am a kid of a free spirit and a home bird at the same time.

My family and friends mean everything to me, and I guess without them things could have been very different.

The life of a competitor can be a very lonely one at times, but that is the choice you make.



Julia as a member of the UK national team in 1994

I am not sure what place in TKD I have. Maybe the best female competitor of all time, and I hope that I inspire others, and they look to me for guidance and inspiration.

Me and TKD ... That is what people know of me and when you say “Julia Cross” people say TKD. I am very proud of this, and I am so very happy that I chose the right path. It is, was and always will be my life. I cannot imagine life without it. It has given me everything. And thank you to my father who took me along that very first day.

Afterword

We have had a very exciting journey through the sports career of one of the most successful ITF competitors – Julia Cross.

I can't stop admiring her and her achievements. While working on this project, I had a wonderful chance to become closer to the World Champion, to try to understand the thoughts and feelings she had when building her splendid career. I hope this brochure will give a good insight into Julia Cross' character to everyone. I hope that her experience and advice will be useful for all practitioners, and will inspire them to follow her suit to the heights of this wonderful sport – Taekwon-do.





The author of the book with Julia
in Argentina, 2009