



Dear WAKO family,

2013 - A special year for WAKO

Christmas is close and 2013 is coming to an end. I was supposed to produce a Christmas card, but this year has been so full of emotions and contrasts, so I needed to end the year differently.

WAKO has survived a hard year. The result has been a real team effort. The strength of our team has become even stronger. We have shown that challenges can be overcome and this is a good sign of a solid organization. By suffering, we develop; by resistance, we take care of each other and everybody takes their responsibility. I am proud of what we, as a team have achieved; thank you for being a part of WAKO.

In March our leader for 30 years, Ennio Falsoni, became ill and was "taken out of business". It created a vacuum and we entered a very unfamiliar situation. Immediately we mobilised all our dedication, energy and wishes to Ennio and the family. Besides that the only thing we could do was to continue to build and to develop WAKO and its quality. We must carry on the legacy and do what we do best – develop kickboxing, creating activities for our shareholders, our members. Nobody can question what Ennio has done for our sport and nobody can question the influence Ennio has had to our sport and to martial arts in general. Thank you Ennio!



The activities have been extensive and the qualities of our Games and Championships have been at a top level. Despite the absence of our leader we needed to prove that we "can do it", and we did;

- The quality in the Asian Indoor Championships was awesome. Thank you Nasser!
- The numbers in the European Cadets and Juniors Championship in Poland had record numbers. Thank you Kate!
- The Sportaccord Combat Games became a fantastic event. Thank you Roy and Barbara!
- The quality and the enthusiasm in Brazil were great. Thank you Paulo!
- The numbers and quality in Turkey was just fantastic. Thank you Salim!

The team we have is so professional and dedicated, the organizing committee, all other committees, all the referees and this year in particular the medical staff. They were on duty to serve, all in all, 3200 athletes in the above tournaments from all over the world. The reason why we work – The Athletes.



But again, with our President's illness in mind, we experienced once more that life is so fragile. For the first time ever in WAKO history we witnessed an accident with the worst possible outcome. Our proud colleague from South Africa, Albert Wessels collapsed at the end of a fight in a championship. This was a huge chock for the whole sport and such incident overshadowed the normal celebration of success. This tragedy is of course a huge blow to the family, losing a fine young man and for the South African team losing a great colleague. But the aftermath of such an accident brings the best out of people and it showed us a great leadership from Pat Carney and his South African team.

2013 has been a busy year of travelling for many of us. However, my last assignment this year is to go to a city outside Johannesburg called Lichtenburg, to honour and to show my last respect to our fine colleague, Albert Wessels. This is the least what I can do.

Let us dedicate the 2013 in memory of Albertus Johannes Wessels. Let us continue to hope and pray for Ennio Falsoni and his family. Let 2013 be the year everybody remember as a year that tied the WAKO family together. And let 2014 be the year where we reach further goals for our proud sport, as a team.

With these words I wish you all a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year. Take care of each other, celebrate life and be who you are.



Espen Lund
WAKO Acting President