

ATHLETES OF THE WORLD GAMES

THE WORLD GAMES GAMES WORLD GAME

HOME **GAMES** FOR SOME!

The majority of athletes competing in The World Games 2005 will travel to Duisburg for the first time in July 2004. For a few, however, it will be a return visit to the city at the junction of Rhine and Ruhr.

Water skiers, rhythmic gymnasts and athletes in some of the other sports will have competed there already. A series of international test events preparing the ground for 2005 have been staged by the World Games organizers already. More events are scheduled between now and November, when the 2004 World Youth Korfball Championships at the Sports Complex Kreefelder Strasse wrap up the testing of venues and procedures ranging from accreditation to awards ceremonies.

Above all the athletes in the German World Games delegation will know Duisburg and the other host cities well. The Sports Academy, National Training Centers and the superb facilities for 30+ sports make them regular destinations on the itinerary of those constantly on the move across the Republic to train and compete in optimal conditions.

FOCUS talks with two of these athletes about The World Games and 2005 Duisburg:



KARATE: "A Sporting Challenge And A Goal!"



Kora Knühmann – reigning (senior) world champion in karate – continues to compete at the junior level (for a few more months), lives and trains in Duisburg, and she has only just seen the first "On Your Marks!" billboards announcing The World Games 2005. Kora is determined to take part!

THOMAS SCHEU 42 YEARS **BODY BUILDING**



The 12-year-old Thomas Scheu was overweight. Concerned parents suggested sports to combat the beginnings of obesity and gave him the choice: "Judo or gymnastics?" Thomas picked judo. He added karate a while later and started – for good measure – to lift weights as well. Training on a weekly schedule of two days judo, two days karate and pumping iron every day, an 18-year-old Thomas stood 1,73 m tall and weighed in at 67 kg. His biceps had gone from 32 to 39 cm in diameter. His body fat had melted away.

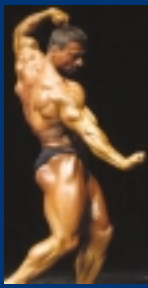


He started to look like Bruce Lee – whose muscular body he had admired in high-flying karate action at the movies – and he kept at it: not one single day without training from 1980 until 1993. Thomas did, however, change sports. Body building seemed to be an even better fit for someone thriving on the rigors of daily workouts and keen on shaping perfectly defined muscles. The extrovert he is, the posing during the competitions came natural.

Thomas Scheu, at age 34, was crowned 1996 Amateur World BodyBuilding Champion in the Light Heavyweight class. "This should motivate those who tend to give up easily," he writes about his exploit. "Anything is possible!"

Thomas Scheu – 2001 Akita silver medalist and reigning world champion in body building – is a veteran of World Games competition, lives reasonably close to Duisburg, and he has taken part in a test event there last November. Thomas has not yet firmed up on his decision to get on stage in 2005!

**BODY BUILDING:
"Anything Is Possible!"**



But turning professional was out of the question. "By staying amateur I have chosen the healthier approach. I intend to stay at the top of my sport for a long time to come," says Scheu.

In 2003 Thomas Scheu, 41 years old, 1,74 cm, 90 kg, became IBBF World BodyBuilding Champion again – for the third time – in Mumbai, India. The best year of his ongoing career: 2001, when Scheu won the light heavyweight and overall titles at the IBBF World Championships. And the silver medal in The World Games 2001 Akita!

FORUM: What do you remember most of 2001 Akita?

Scheu: That would have to be atmosphere at The World Games: their international spirit and the fact that athletes from many different sports join each other at the same party. The Olympic Games I don't know – sorry to say – but I can well imagine that there are similarities when it comes to that.

FORUM: Did you parade in the Opening Ceremony?

Scheu: Unfortunately not! Competitive body building does have some particularities. One is that when the rules require 90 kg, it better be 90 kg. And every time I enter a competition, I do so with the full intent to win. Since I weighed in at 90 kg, exactly, I decided to stay back at the hotel. Would I have gone out in the high temperatures and the blazing sun during the Opening Ceremony, I could have easily lost a few kilograms ... and my chances for a win.

FORUM: The 2005 Duisburg Opening Ceremony is scheduled in the evening, from 8 to 10 p.m., and the organizers plan on number of other changes as well. Will you be there?

Scheu: Germany has already hosted The World Games 1989 in Karlsruhe. I remember them well. The Karlsruhe Games were all over the media. The press really picked up on them; they were covered extensively on television.

If there was anything wrong in the way The World Games 2001 came across, it was the fact that there were hardly any reports filtering out of Japan. Sure, a few images were seen on television here – I saw some myself on the skydiving events – but overall there was no coherent coverage coming back to Germany. Body



building – like many of the other sports on the program – is not high-profile when it comes to the mass media. Or, sometimes even worse, the media dissect us in a terribly superficial way, with false clichés and innuendos. The World Games represent an excellent opportunity for all these sports to build up momentum and to collectively generate positive headlines. I expect the 2005 Duisburg organizers to take this assignment seriously and to provide the event with extensive national as well as international exposure. Neuwied – where I live – is only 150 km away from Duisburg, a few bends down the Rhine. It could be a home game of sorts. But I have not decided whether I will enter the competition. Additional training would need to get scheduled in – and I should redally start spending more time with my family!

FORUM: Your last statement could confirm a cliché. Body building: hard work and no play. True or false?

Scheu: I have been doing this for many years already. More importantly, I am determined to be the best old body builder I can possibly be. There must be an ambition to win, always, but I am perfectly content to call on that at intervals. I won the world championships in 2001, held out for all of 2002, and won again last year. Would I have lost, I could well be preparing for the 2004 World Championships in Moscow right now. Who knows?

At my 'advanced body building age' I spend an average of 1 1/2 hours training per day. I can even afford to take two days off per week – occasionally.

I had my doctor look at my knees recently. He confirmed that they show no more wear and tear than those of people who have not worked out as much as I did. The aim: doing it steadily; never overdoing it!



FORUM: That leads to the innuendos, those concerning the origins of the massive muscular build-up in some athletes. Is doping more of an issue in competitive body building than in other sports?

Scheu: Body building has had its share of problems. Particularly in the professional scene where, as one can imagine, the stakes appeared even higher to a few cheats opting to put health and reputation – theirs as well as that of the sport – at risk! There were three or even more international federations claiming to govern the sport – only one actually did. The International BodyBuilding Federation (IBBF) adheres strictly to the World Anti-Doping Code, enforces doping controls at competitions, out-of-competition controls, and seeks to establish body building as a fair and clean sport.

Building up muscles is by no means unique to our sport; one only needs to look at top gymnasts performing on high bars and rings. The volume, tone and definition of their muscles – primarily on shoulders, biceps and forearms – compare to those of a body builder. Why? They have to work out with weights too.

Building up muscles in a swimmer's arms or a cyclist's legs – even if he or she gets up at 5 a.m. to put in a few laps or kilometres before breakfast – gets questioned a lot less than in a body builder working out at the same hour. It does not have to be obsessive. Certainly not more than in other athletes wanting to excel!

FORUM: You took part in last year's Muscle Fest, a body building exhibition and World Games pre-event at the Marientor Theater in Duisburg. It is an ideal setting for an opera singer or a musical performer – but for an athlete?

The Marientor Theater is a few notches above the standard venue for our competitions. These are usually held in large multi-purpose halls with a lot less comfort. Everything – from the plush seats for the spectators to our dressing rooms – was high class. Stage and lighting were perfect for body building! Someone told me afterwards that the Muscle Fest represented the house's first 100% sell-out since its musical heydays were over, quite a few years back.