



Episode 16 – Hanshi Jim Smith | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello everyone and thanks for tuning in to episode 16 of [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com). I'm your host Jeremy Lesniak and I'm also the founder of whistlekick, makers of the best sparring gear on earth as well as apparel and accessories for traditional martial artists. If you're new to the show you can learn more about our products like our sparring gear that last far longer than the competition at whistlekick.com and you can learn more about the podcasts including all of our past episodes show notes for this one and a whole lot more over at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. While you're there don't forget to sign up for our newsletter full of information about us, discounts and useful martial arts content. Today's episode is with Hanshi Jim Smith in New York. He's the founder of the Goju Te karate and a frequent competitor at tournaments in the North East we had a great conversation and I enjoyed learning more about Hanshi Smith and his history with the arts. He's a passionate and insightful man and I'm sure you'll enjoy this episode and with that Hanshi Smith welcome to [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com).

Jim Smith:

Oh, thank you very much for having me on.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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It's a pleasure to have you, I'm looking forward to this and you know as we've already talked about, I don't really know you so let's jump in and I'm gonna be learning about you just as the listeners are right as we go along so that's always fun for me. Tell us how you got started with the martial arts, how old were you, where were you all that stuff.

Jim Smith:

Well I got started at the age of 5 at 1958 both my mom and dad were black belts in judo so I started all off as a judo practitioner and so that's for many years and then I stopped 01:43 as my dad passed away at a very young age so from that continue on I stopped with the art and then later on my mom met somebody else and remarried, I didn't classify him as step dad he was a great man. I started doing boxing because my grandfather used to train golden glove boxers so that was part of the family thing it's like you know you have to learn how to box, so I did that for many years boxing and then I stopped doing that and I just saw some martial arts I think it was county 02:16 I went to a show and I was really intrigued about how these are punching and kicking and breaking boards and I had this thing I guess a dream I was 11 years old I wanna learn karate cause I wanted to chop trees down which I mean don't even know why 02:33 just knocked down trees and chop them. And as I got older I realized that you know it wasn't a threat the trees 02:39 attacking so I said that you know that was enough of that but it's amazing how certain things make you wanna do something and then I got involved later on in Goju Ryu and I found that fit maybe cause my figs weren't overly that good for kicking and it was the low combat system and I think just train with that with Kuni Miyago for many, many years

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool and is that the style you still train in?

Jim Smith:

Well what I'm teaching now is called Goju Te in 03:12 and what happened I guess was which was really, really nice is I've been training for so many years that one of the higher masters passed away so from the Wen Wu council who was the governing body of you know Okinawa Japan. They just gave me my 10th dan in 19, no it was 2000 and 4, 2000 and 4 they gave me my 10th Dan and they sanctioned the system and nice part was I didn't realize I have a licensing book cause I only one of 3 core applications that was ever given this award.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh wow



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Jim Smith:

And yeah with that maybe I can get to train for free but doesn't seem to work yeah people don't understand that you know and it's very nice btw my son wants to know you know when I die can he have it it's like oh yeah okay. So, but it was now because what they do is they sanctioned the, what I wanted to do called it Goju Te cause you see so many times you got Goju Ryu you got the American Goju, the Japanese Goju, Chinese Goju and I wanted to make it that there was no conflict that if anybody wanted to train it doesn't matter what style at Goju you were that you know you can come and train there's no political end to it and that's basically how we wanted to develop the system.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's great yeah, it's interesting you bring up the political side it's something that I think is it's really unfortunate that it pervades, traditional martial arts so much but at the same time it seems that you know we get people that are really good at what they do and they're so passionate about it that that passion is gonna cause them to bump heads from time to time.

Jim Smith:

Yeah and I think a lot of times would happen 04:56 you know we start when I was starting with the Asians is that they really enjoy training and working with you and then it seems as you start to get better they feel threatened a little bit. I mean I like the idea that when I'm training my students, I want them to be better than me that's the whole idea and I was told that you know we should be on a pedestal and they should be beneath us and I found sometimes not even just that but sometimes in training you'll find so many instructors that kinda abuse the student to a point that the students are afraid of them rather than respect them and to me that's a wrong way of going about a training you know you want them to come because they like what they're learning they're enjoying what they're learning and they feel that you're confident enough to teach them.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, I'd say it's hard to learn when you're afraid.

Jim Smith:

Oh yeah cause I remember years ago I was young and I remember asking my instructors am I standing in the right position and he kicked me right between the legs that dropped me and he said no and from that point I realized well I'm standing wrong he'll correct me I'm not going to ask. you know and but back then you just did it you know if they told you to run into the wall you ran into the wall. Nowadays



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the new generation 06:09 can question and this and that and it's like it's different you know but it's still enjoyable.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely so you gave us a little bit of a glimpse into a story in your past but I'm sure you've got plenty of others and I'd like you to think about a particularly good one that you'd like to share and tell us.

Jim Smith:

About me or about a student? Well I'll give you two

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay that's fine

Jim Smith:

I have this little guy which was like 4 and a half and we're going to a competition you know and we're trying to train him 06:38 -wise because it's important that they know how to present themselves cause you know I said one day when you become you know a referee or a black belt you want the students to come up and show you respect because you know how you how to do it so we were saying you know when you get to the competition floor you're gonna see a ring and there's gonna be a line. I want you to walk all the way down that line and then you turn and bow so we're practicing and practicing in the studio so when we went to the tournament was in a gymnasium and you know how they have the line it runs all the way down the gymnasium.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah

Jim Smith:

It happened to be the same line they used as out of bounds so when he went on that line he was starting to walk down the whole gym and I'm trying to catch him and as I'm saying stop everybody in the bleachers are laughing cause he got such a 07:20 cause he was little 07:21 a little peanut. you know that he had his hand in this side and his head was up and he was walking and walking and walking and we finally got him back where he's supposed to be but it was interesting but and may I think the best point made was I was competing at one of the world games and I was doing bo and for some reason I did a



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technique, the bow went down inside my gi and right down my pant leg. It didn't spear anything thank god you know but and the whole time stood there I was like trying to figure how the heck am I going to get this out so I just kinda bowed and I called out flagpole kata and the center ref knew me he taken a spit of water he spits the water out I started laughing he started laughing and the 2 end judge gave me like a 9 point something and he looks at them was like what's wrong with you and that's like turn around they understand the kata you need to research a little bit more sir as I kinda walked with one leg stiff trying to get the bo out you know like we always say that if you would had that on the video we could've sent it to you know funniest videos and probably would have won some money.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely oh what I wouldn't have given to see that

Jim Smith:

I don't I feel 08:35 I don't even know how it even got in there let alone get it out but you know interesting things do happen and like I said I pick the lighter side I get since I've been competing at such a young age now you get to know 08:48 you see so many time win lose or draw on any given day anybody can win you know and to see these guys that win and then they don't win they throw their equipment and then they're hot headed and you know I always try to teach the students you know what you have a bad umpire in baseball have you quit the game no you continue playing and you make it better and that's what we do with students you know and you don't win that day I don't wanna you know go and blame on the refs, go and blame on everybody else you gotta make that much better, get back to the dojo floor and work it out you know cause that's where the answers are on the floor and most times they do you know I always tell them you never start on top unless you're digging a hole you know but you gotta get there and again we know sometimes the political 09:34 can play that thing 09:35 it the better off you are you know what that's 09:40

Jeremy Lesniak:

We just kinda steered a little bit so I'm gonna

Jim Smith:

Yeah, we went all over

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Shift these questions a bit from the order that I had given you and if I hadn't if I wasn't saying this as I am right now probably it would have flowed better I should have just gone it to it.

Jim Smith:

No yeah, I don't know you got me talking. I'm usually like they always tell me I'm like I'm the mystery man I compete shake hands and go home.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well that's the whole goal to get you to talk.

Jim Smith:

Well there you go you're doing good.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's the whole format well thank you yeah, the whole I don't know if I've shared this would you and I probably haven't even shared it on the air before but my goal in setting up these questions and setting up this podcast was to try to mimic the stories that tend to get told around the campfire or over a few beers after a tournament or at the end of camp. That's always been my favorite part, those when the masters are telling those great stories and you're just you know I remember as a kid just sitting there happy to be a fly on the wall listening to them.

Jim Smith:

Yeah no you're right you're very right I gotta

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, you mentioned go ahead

Jim Smith:

I got one story if you wanna make it crazy

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Yeah please.

Jim Smith:

Well I was sitting on a tournament floor and I usually put my headphones on and the reason I do that is you know I listen to music a little bit and sometimes you know a lot of people you know which is nice they come over and they want to shake your hand they want to ask you questions and how are you doing and I usually I'll talk to anybody but sometimes when I wanna get in the zone I'll put the headphones on just while I'm on stretching and people look and they're kinda like well I'll talk to him later. So one of my good friends that who competes all the time at a circuit he's a great martial artist and I forgot I had my headphones so he's saying what do you think of these refs I don't know the scores are off and I looked at him and meanwhile I guess the whole place was quiet at that point cause they're waiting for the competitor to come up and I had he said at the top of my voice I can't believe these refs, these refs really suck today and he looked at me and he said the refs 11:34 and he kinda like took his ass and slid it across the floor 11:35 like he didn't know and I'm like what's going on and I realized oh my god I had headphones on.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I think we've all done that though maybe not at such a moment

Jim Smith:

Yeah, I didn't do that well in that rank so...

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, that's too funny so competition's come up a few times already

Jim Smith:

Oh okay

Jeremy Lesniak:

And I know from following you on Facebook that you're quite the competitor I don't know too many people that compete as often as you do I mean it seems like quite a few weekends you're competing not one day but both days at different events.



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Jim Smith:

Right, right

Jeremy Lesniak:

So clearly competition is something that means a lot to you and I'd like to hear more about that you know why you compete what do you get out of it?

Jim Smith:

Well I could 12:24 you way back I back in 1981 I was in 12:30 and you know I was I won New York state champion and I won the National Championship back then and I was featured in a lot of the different magazines, karate illustrated who's who and at all international magazines too is really, really nice and then I was appointed the official chairman for the metropolitan youth group. So, it was nice I start as an athlete and then I was appointed to commissioner I 12:56 moved up the rank which was nice and then I got to see both ends of it and then they appointed me the chairman of the junior Olympic karate program which was really nice and cause I had kids there that were competing also. I was the regional head coach for the United States Karate team and 2002 I guided Us team to the World cup in Venezuela, I was appointed on the board of directors of the world congress of martial arts and then also on the International Chinese Boxing Association and I believe it was 2003 and 4 I took the US team to the Global Games in Mexico and also in the world cup in Jamaica and which was really nice as in the world cup when you compete there they give the cup to the country that had the most wins and they give them and after that they usually give it to the school that had the most wins and that was us our kids are so very well that we got a cup at our studio which was nice to have.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool

Jim Smith:

Yeah and then I was in 13:56 to the USA hall of fame and then I was coaching the US team in Great Britain which was really nice that was fun when we went to Britain, that was exciting. I went to Nottingham you know I'm waiting to see Robin Hood and everybody else 14:09 but they want her but they did have a couple of nice restaurants and then I got involved competing with crane you know I always liked it to me is like everybody say you know what's your hobby you know I was like you know I don't really have one you know some people golf some I said no my hobby's my hobby's competing I love being in the ring you know from the days of boxing and everything I just you know I feel like I'm



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alive I always tell my students you know when I pass away you're gonna find me in the ring some place you know because that's what I always did and I like helping the students and even if they're not my students you know I had a young man the other day I was 14:50 and he did it really nice he came up and you know his mother was talking to him and I went over and made a point I said you know I just had to tell you, you came in, you present yourself so strong but yet you sat here like a gentleman you didn't have that cocky attitude and you weren't like pushing people you were a real gentleman and that's rare to see sometimes and very nice very nice young man and it's nice to be able to talk to people and I always say look you know hope 15:16 I'm not trying to tell you what to do because you know you wanna not step on anybody's toes too cause some people 15:22 that way but and then as the time went on you know like we said we got competing training and our school got names New York school for a year and then got 15:32 into their hall of fame and I decided that I had, I've had 29 surgeries you know

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh.

Jim Smith:

Well you figured I started at 5 and you know you start to get brittle when you start to hit my age yeah and I tell them that too don't hit me I'm brittle and sometimes that works you know. That's why I've been winning the ones that I don't win is because they don't listen but so when we're competing I just after the surgeries I had both my knees replaced two years ago and I thought that was it I was done and the doctors said well you know it's up to you what you wanna do and I said well he said no more kicking no more locking. So, the sparring is out so I'm like I'm able to get myself back to doing the forms and weapons, excuse me so I decided let me try to hit the circuit again and it was a long hard road and it was trying to learn how to walk again and one of the surgeries what happened was I got a major infection and I ended up in renal failure and they held me dialysis, I was in a coma for 9 days.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh man.

Jim Smith:

And you know then they told my daughter I wasn't gonna make it and they 16:37 and when I came to and you know 16:40 said you know if you work your whole life like everybody else to 2 or 3 jobs and then knock on wood you know I'm I had a major accident where I had 16:50 in my feet. I tore three ligaments 16:55 they put this thing on where I'm constantly on fire it's like somebody put gasoline on and then threw a match at you and I just had to hook up to a 17:02 in order to walk. I was in a



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wheelchair for many years and then I got out of that and that's one of the major things that the martial arts has done for me is that it gave me the will to wanna keep doing it you know and pushing me and I honestly believe if I didn't have the students and I didn't have the school I probably committed suicide you know and it's a hard thing to say but when you're always in pain and everybody's looking at you cause they can't see it you know and then it's very hard to detect and by the time they detect it, it went to the fourth stage where it's incurable and then when I 17:38 that was in both legs so with mirrors so I'm always burning either one or two which maybe now is everybody's 5 or 6 because I'm so used to burning but there's never a day where I'm not out of pain but when I'm in that ring for that 2 or 3 minutes I feel like I'm free you know it's like you're focused on something else and it's just that's it and I guess that's what it is it's like all of a sudden you just you're floating you're doing your thing and your mind is just going and that's a beautiful thing about the art you know you wanna train enough where you have muscle memory and everything else but I always tell my students when you could sit back down and say hmm 18:17 did I block you know it's like where you drive down the road the same road everyday for years and you just it's like

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah

Jim Smith:

18:23 stop sign no I stopped you know it was the light green and that's pretty much it you know and just from the years and that's been my passion you know just competing and the camaraderie is phenomenal you know it doesn't have to do anything with race or religion it doesn't matter you go there and everybody supports you because you've all done the same thing, your putting your faith on the line and you know people respect you for that least I do you know and I'll find equal to little 18:50 parents the one to scream in the bleachers I'll say you know what why don't you come in the ring and show us you know because it's true they always wanna be you know through their children and which is fine but not to the point where you're being abused you know and I always find even the refs the ones who try to give you the lowest low scores and have the attitude either they've never competed or they're brand new black belts and they trying to look like they're important.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right.

Jim Smith:

That's part of the game too.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

It absolutely is.

Jim Smith:

Everybody's gotta learn you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So that's I mean that's quite the answer and you took something I've said about that that time in the ring and then you know that's your time I mean you do with it as you choose and represent yourself as well as you want to and you answered it far better than I I've ever answered that question.

Jim Smith:

Yeah

Jeremy Lesniak:

But it makes me wonder what would it take to get you to stop competing?

Jim Smith:

I don't know you know it's funny they're starting to call me the machine on the circuit and I was like oh excuse me you know and one of the guys said maybe he should be called the AARP machine and I was like ah uh I said you know but you know when you I gotta compliment the other day I think. A young guy come by and he was man for an old man you rock and I was like damn I guess I am getting old you know what I was like that was kind like one of those back handed flat compliments yeah okay but

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Jim Smith:

You know but it was like it was nice cause it was coming from a younger generation which you know 20:19 and where all the acrobats you know I give them so much credit in talent what they're doing and I just say I hope someone's teaching them tradition because if they can do with all they have now and the



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modern technology for stretching and everything they have where I mean somebody exercise at least a way back then they tell you never to do again but now with the knowledge they have and the flexibility and they do 20:43 if they really trained, traditionally they'd be phenomenal you know cause to me it's I like it to a certain point but to me it's not martial arts I mean it's got a place but even I find like I said this weekend I was competing and I gotta be by one of the people that do doing use weapons with the 21:03 and she was dynamite I mean she was clean she was fast she had the high jumps you know and like I said I enjoyed watching them but to me it's like you can't put the tradition 21:13 together. I would always tell 21:16 cause I'll say sometimes what do you think we should do and I say honestly you know rather than give that 500 dollars or 600 dollars why don't you give that 200 dollars and do a traditional gran do another 2 do it an open gran and then put them both together 21:30 give another hundred so now you're in the same ball park, giving you 500 hundred dollars. Now even if you feel like you won in your division and she wins and then have some fun put it together and then it doesn't affect you that much you know and I see that what the kids are all trying to do they get very frustrated because it's like how do I beat this you know I'm doing this weapon or I'm doing this form and because I'm not quite well in flipping it's like well you know it's just different tournaments you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's a discussion that's coming up more and more

Jim Smith:

Oh yes oh yes

Jeremy Lesniak:

I've had this talk with quite a few people over the last couple of years and you know there are certainly there's no perfect way to handle it but I think your suggestion of splitting the rings I remember when I was coming up to tournaments in the 90s it was quite common to have those split or that the only time you could use music was in the grands and you know some of the bigger tournaments would have separate musical divisions I mean lots of different stuff.

Jim Smith:

Yeah cause when I competed back I think it was John Chong was it John or his brother and he's the one who started doing you know the standing with the music and the 22:44 kicks and stuff like that and I remember back then it looked like you know I was interested and I was like okay that's not crying and it started to move a little bit you know and I guess people were interested which is you know something different you know cause even me you know I've been teaching 42 years and then sometimes you get



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into the dojo and it's my school and it's like oh men I don't wanna be here today because I'm it's like I wanna get a parrot says you know thumbs in thumbs in you know where's your chamber you know cause if I go 23:09 cause I was teasing 23:11 I wanna get a dog and every time you drop your hands and sparring the dogs gonna run in and bite you on the wrist and he was like really? But you know you got something to do you know but it's amazing but even 23:24 to you know we do the music I said you know if you wanna do that it's up to you as I don't teach it you know I'm not gonna have a gymnast coach come in and work in my dojo and I know it's gonna 23:37 someday and I hope people will all call me or write me but to me I look at I tell the kids 23:42 you can tell the circus is in town when the clowns are around you know and I'm not putting anybody down for what they're doing please take that but to me it's like it's great but that's like me going with gymnastics tournament and doing an open hand form, they'd be looking at me like what you have done here?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, I think there's is certainly something to be said for that, I'm an advocate of keeping martial arts to offensive and defensive maneuvers

Jim Smith:

Thank you

Jeremy Lesniak:

And that's spoken to someone who is a gymnastics coach, I coach gymnastics and I see the value in it but there's you know there's maybe room for a little bit of overlap but I think quite often you're right that the overlap is a bit too much.

Jim Smith:

Yeah I mean like I said you can have it and do it but keep it separate cause you know what I find it depends on your judges you'll be getting a little bit older generation they know if you're tradition, you get a little younger they'll gonna know a few others you know and it's and then it's not fit for either one because they're putting unbelievable hours in you know they have to be I mean I said I wanna learn how to do a back flip just like in sea boom see I can do them but I choose not to you know but yeah I think 24:52 back flip it'll probably you know give me extra money or put me in a nuthouse but I made that comment the other day on Facebook. I've explained about how this girl is phenomenal and she know different flips I said I guess then I have to put all cartwheels and flips back in and then it started. Well Jim maybe you should just throw your top 25:09 so I wrote back while up there in the air because it's the big hoops you know and then someone just start doing those back flips in there and the one hand 25:19 or



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something I don't know what they were talking about and I was like well I don't know if I can do that run away from a home as I said to them finally at the end cause I was getting all these letters I said how about we do show and tell and all you people come to my studio and teach me and then all of a sudden it stopped it's like oh yeah okay guys. Yeah, yeah, I got you but it's fun like I said I enjoy you know I mean I think it's amazing what they do you know I tell them it's like TV karate you know they're flipping and they're turning sideways and wow, wow but

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah

Jim Smith:

I mean I know NASKA cause I did NASKA for many years too and I know they have a separate division for it and where they call, I think it was called tricking or whatever and it's you know it's nice to watch but it's separate but even though I had fun with them I went to the I guess it was Philadelphia there Amerikick tournament there you go like your and those guys are great but what I did is Larry Carnahan is the head of NASKA and I started giving him a hard time it was if I went my division which is the older ones it's 300 dollars but if you're 18 it was a thousand dollars so I hop on within the ring with the 18 year olds and he was like what are you doing I said well I'm worth a thousand dollars and I said I've gotten just as much time if not more time than them and I said it's nice that's age discrimination I could sue you Larry and he's like Jim what are you talking about 26:46 you wanna go in there go ahead go in there with them, they blackballed me big time they said no way. you know quest but you know it was just the idea I went on stage you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You made a point.

Jim Smith:

Yeah and knowing and everybody and that say 27:01 I had a lot of people there and I said why don't you guys do the same thing and I was like well you know we're gonna do the 60 and up, I said why, I said do you need another trophy and even though I said we can start pushing this you can get the same money hopefully well you know so they're all supporting me but from a distance you know so it's like I'm the little rebel but and then the younger guys I had such a brawl with them cause the first year was like what are you doing up here and I said you don't realize that you're getting a thousand I get 300 and they said what? I said yeah, I said why would you look I said but one day you're gonna be my age and then you're gonna be in the corner where nobody cares I said you guys are on stage and whoever wins makes some



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money and I said it's not even the money it's the principle. So, they were really gr I had such fun time with them we were laughing and going back I mean they were good cause some of these guys are unbelievable you know but it's like I think they put me out first and then I came in last. Yeah, I know it's like okay thank you thank you but you know you make your point and the it's a shame that you can't get a lot more people to do it cause I think if they did that maybe the older generation would come out and maybe do a little bit more.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah you know I remember when I was coming up that it was the older instructors that you know the kyoshis, renshis, hanshis that they were the ones I wanted to watch.

Jim Smith:

Yeah

Jeremy Lesniak:

Because forget you know forget how well you can jump over here or do this I remember seeing high ranking black belts do the most basic of forms and just leave me in awe at the power at the quality of the technique and that's what I wanna see more on the circuit. If I was to go back and compete again I'm 36 now so I had taken a lot tournaments I'm considered you know your new division which personally I have a little bit of an issue with that but I would much rather be up against the 18 20 year olds than up against someone your age because I can't hold the 29:03 someone that's been training 50 years can do.

Jim Smith:

Oh, I think what they think now they say the 35 year olds are seniors so I say 29:12 my age I got one foot in the grave and the other one a banana peel but I think what motivates me the most too is that I'm trying to prove that tradition still exists and if you train traditionally you can compete in the sports world and that's what I've always believed. I don't have to do any kind of sports training to compete, if I train traditional I train hard what can't I? And I punch fine to keep traditional alive and that's really one of the reasons why I'm still out there. I love what I'm doing, I love the art and the art's been great to me and I just wanna show this is it and if it wasn't for us these young guys wouldn't be doing what they're done

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right



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Jim Smith:

But it's sad 29:53 say sad I mean everything changes but I'm kinda hoping in the old days it's like you start with the black belt my belt is going back excuse me start with the white belt I should say jeez that was good start with the white belt and it turns you get black and then all of sudden the black belts start turn away from 30:07 so it's like it's based on a complete circle I have 30:11

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely

Jim Smith:

So, I'm hoping maybe the traditional sport earning its way back in you know but you can't blame it's just exciting when they're flipping and cartwheeling and it's like wow you know and the younger generation that's what they wanna do.

Jeremy Lesniak:

There is a place for all of it to be sure.

Jim Smith:

Yes, yes there is. Yes, there is, the next time I compete I'm going with 30:33 in my mouth and I'm gonna make my own song as I go along.

Jeremy Lesniak:

If you do please just get that recorded because I would love to 30:45 that on to everything that we do because that would be brilliant with the back flip at the end, right?

Jim Smith:

Oh god yeah if I swallow the 30:52 with the bow down my pant leg again the odds jeez.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, you've been training for I mean practically your entire life functionally you're whole life and we've heard a lot about how passionate you are about the arts and I'm sure listeners are getting a pretty good



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picture of who you are clearly you've got a great sense of humor and a very respectful person but other than that, well you're welcome. Other than that, if you were to try to imagine who you might have been without the martial arts compared to who you are now how did the martial arts really benefit you, how is Hanshi Smith a better person physically, emotionally, spiritually, mentally however you wanna answer that question.

Jim Smith:

Okay well I, I'm dyslexic a very big time dyslexic you know when I was younger I went to a Catholic school and nobody knew about that back then so everybody was like oh he's just lazy there's nothing wrong with him and you know it was tough going through life like that where you know people take for granted you know where they can read to me to read it's 32:13 everything is backwards you know and then you try to remember and then I 32:17 all your aspects in life and I even to me the greatest thing that I have right now is a GPS because now I don't get lost. I mean I used to end up all over so to me the martial arts gave me I always say the strength to stand up for myself and not be embarrassed for what I had and actually 32:41 to tell people hang on I'm dyslexic and I'm having a hard time could you help me? and I know if it wasn't for that and the teachers you know saying hey you just as good as everybody else 32:51 bad elbow and he looked at me and he say I got other extremities he says you work around them and that always stuck in my head that it wasn't that you know I couldn't get the high kicks up, you couldn't do this so you can't train it was like you know you can train and you work around it and that's what the art does it molds you, you know it takes a person and like I believe in the school like you have many techniques you'll learn you know but if you're fighting and you're protecting yourself you're only gonna use a few but just learn them all to see which one fits you and then that's yours you own it and I honestly believe if it wasn't for that I would have probably been one of these adults that would kinda 33:31 inward a little bit where I wasn't going to too much because I can't drive here you look at the map you know by the time you figure out 684 it's 486 you know or you can just look at the park and you say back in it and it looks like black because now as I've learned in the dyslexic is you're in the right filing counter but your just pulling up the wrong file I would say you know forest instead of tree and you know and people laugh at you and you feel stupid growing up you know and it's you always feel like you've being picked on and then like you said you're embarrassed 34:03 had done is just mainly believe in myself that I can be just as good as anybody else and I think it's an important thing that even especially nowadays that everyone should train, they really should I mean you learn how to swim so you don't drown, you learn how to do math, you learn but nobody's teaching you how to survive and protect yourself and in this modern world I think it's our responsibility as teachers to teach these children you know how to stand up how to control a situation walk away with pride and anybody get into a fight but if you're gonna walk away and feel good about that's what it's about and when you have that confidence that you get through the art and it doesn't matter which 34:45 it is I always tell people you know it could be anything taekwondo, Korean, kung fu if it fits you, you go you look if that's what you like you train cause 34:54 and we're all trying to do the same thing you know we're trying to teach and



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to me it just it opened my horizons tremendously you know and I think I'm a better teacher for it because when I do get these children I mean I have so many kids and they were you know problem I had a couple of down syndrome I had 35:12 and you know and to me anybody should learn you know I don't push them away I always say sometimes I get 35:18 cause I'll take anybody you know and I rather have this kid that's gonna give me his 100% than athlete that's you know thinks he's so great because anybody can have talent but you if you don't have the desire and the passion the talent's wasted and to me and that's what it is it's like I'm living a whole new life you know I feel confident I don't care where the tournament is I put my GPS on I can find where I'm going I don't end up in these bad areas like I used to all the time and it was like man I've gotta do something but it's great, it's just done wonders for me and I even as a parent you know I you have your children you have the better understanding you know you can feel their issues or what's going on I'm not saying that you know everybody's having a problem but to me it opens so many different doors and the respect and you know people they bow the courtesy they talk to you it's there's no hostile attitudes in the dojo and if there you are most times they don't last because they think they're too good and they don't wanna be there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

True.

Jim Smith:

So you get the 36:23 person I mean and most people don't wanna fight you know and again to me like I say this it might be wrong but this is only my opinion, nobody else's I think the school system is the biggest bullies of all because they're telling you if you finally stand up for yourself being picked on you're gonna be just in trouble and 36:41 and to me the kid that's the bully doesn't care and that's why he's a bully so why is the kid that's always getting pushed around you tell somebody nothing's done all of a sudden he stands up, handles himself, he's in trouble and now what we're teaching the society and the kids is that you know don't stand up be timid and now that kid goes to a boss and the boss is abusive and he gets to marry and it could be a wife or the husband's abusive and it carries out through life and then the next thing you know you're gonna be somebody in government and raising and you're gonna be afraid to stand up you know and they have to learn to stand up and that what this what means to stand up for myself and then believe in myself and I have very strong feelings about that and I think it's so so important that hey we all learn respect and encourage you through the art but what the art is teaching is survival you know how the to get the job and stand tall and I told the kids that when you're going to the ring you have to have to have a game plan you just don't go in so it's the same thing when you go talk to the boss you have to have a game plan and if I introduce myself to the boss and he tells me well you're not my type why? That's his 37:48 you know because I want them to be leaders not followers you know I'll find another job I don't need you, you know and with that kind of attitude you know to saying no to drugs doesn't work but if you give them the skills to believe in them self they won't



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need anything because they feel that or they don't believe in them self I mean how many kids are committing suicide you hear it's such a shame and I think if they had the guidance and you know been taught that you know what you're just as good as anybody else and you know and ignore that I think it would make a big difference. I think it should be in the school systems you know part of the gym class they do baseball, they do volleyball they should have a self-defense class but with qualified people.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I agree I may hear so many times that you have the gym teacher teaching 38:34 in the book you know but it should be part of the curriculum you know and I think it's great to learn history and everything else but you know what they gotta start learning what's going on now you know they should learn how to do a check book, they should learn how to invest their money. I mean these are important skills and they're not really taught that you know. In Math class when 38:56 how to do checkbook of balancing they're not you know it's to learn through the parents who are just their own education and on swimming like I said you wanna be able to have your child be able to get the water 39:07 you know and I usually do a self-defense program for graduating senior girls for free and you know what I tell them that's only fuel but it gives you the fortitude and the understanding that look out. If you're gonna go outside and it's dark and you feel uncomfortable then go with your feelings it is uncomfortable. Don't sit there and say oh I'm being a baby I should do this you know go with somebody who'll walk you to the car you know and this is the things that you get from the martial arts because otherwise you would sit there and say oh I'm acting stupid I'll go and the next thing you know you should have followed your instinct you know and.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah instincts are important absolutely I you know this is a subject that's actually really, really sensitive for me, I'm right there on the same side of the fence with you so we could probably head down this rabbit whole for quite a while so I'm gonna reel it back a little bit just so we don't because I'm feeling myself getting a little amped up and I wanna...

Jim Smith:

It's good as long as 40:03

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, yeah.

Jim Smith:



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And then one of my biggest things I tell the kids be nice to nerds cause probably gonna be your boss one day so you know but you had

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, yeah, I think there are some kids I have at the school that see what I'm doing now and maybe would they have acted a little differently if they had known.

Jim Smith:

Exactly.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But that's okay, so I'd like you to think about all the people that you've been fortunate enough to train with over the years I mean with the amount of time you've been training I'm sure you've trained with dozens or maybe even more than dozens of people that were exceptional that you really enjoyed training with and I'd but I'd like to open it up to more than just training. I'd like you to think about somebody that was influential on your martial arts upbringings but someone that was not any of your core instructors.

Jim Smith:

I think what there was two basically that really got me going it was Thomas Lapuppet and Master Chuck Merriman. Thomas Lapuppet well he was involved with competitions and there was something about him, he took an interest in me and it was nice because at way back then you know schools gonna share anything, everybody was like hush hush you know this is my art not yours and they did not 41:28 they were people who talk more that learn the gift and he was always good to me he always treated me with respect like anybody else and I appreciated that and he kinda guide me to a point that you know if this is what you wanna do then you're gonna stay true to yourself and strong and I did and then I met Master Chuck Merriman and he was a Goju practitioner and he was the coach of the United States Karate team and I just this man I was in awe when I watched him perform his 42:00 ancient kata and I think that was his kata everybody has one they love and he always sit down and it was just like you can see his movements so graceful but yet you knew they were so deadly and when you talk to him he was such a gentleman and then you wouldn't even know just a pleasure and I wanted to really get involved cause back when I was training they didn't believe in competitions or anything and then I was fascinated so he said he would work with me so every night cause I'm in Westchester New York and I should say when I every Thursday night I 42:32 from the one job before I would drive three hours Niantic Connecticut, he would work with me till eleven o'clock at night and I drive three hours back and I did that every



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Thursday and that man never said to me well if you wanna be good you gotta put 42:47 and say I'm your instructor never ever he let me be who I was run my school and he just trained me for who I was and to me that was unbelievable cause a lot of people always wanted to hey why don't you join our organization you know and he never did that and there was one more gentleman too his name is Terry Maccarrone out of Long Island an Ichi Ryu practitioner great, great man he used to call me and say look your name's in the magazine check this out see what you think and he took a big interest and it was nice and he came down like I had black belt 43:21 he came up and he set up the panel at us and he was just prim knowledgeable man, those three people had so much knowledge and they weren't scared about 43:31 either and that's what I admired about them, they would they're willing to give and they didn't ask for anything in return you know they just love the art that much that they would say yeah sure I got somebody interested sure I'll show you and I was blessed that way which was really good.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah wow those are some great names for sure so now if we open that up even more if you could train with anyone that you haven't be they alive now or not who would that be?

Jim Smith:

Whom I haven't let me see I'm not sure you know like I said if I could and I had the time I would spend a lot of time with Master Chuck Merriman and I always talked about him but I think that's the only one I could think of at the top of my head.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay

Jim Smith:

Jet Li fascinates me because I understand that Jet Li and what's his name the other gentleman oh god

Jeremy Lesniak:

Jackie Chan

Jim Smith:

Thank you there you go those old days, they both studied in the same system but Jackie Chan went towards the acrobatic end of Wushu where Jet Li did more of the combat end and I like that combat end



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when he moves he's very fluid and clean and you could see it's like no wasted time. Now you're not taking your arm flipping them out 50 times and then hitting you, you know it's 45:03 get to the point over and done practical you know and tactical that's the best way I could say, maybe someone like him that would be interesting.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, he would be fun I enjoy his movies and you know there are certain martial artists that you can when they do their fight scenes in movies that there is a real martial arts skill behind them and then

Jim Smith:

Exactly

Jeremy Lesniak:

You know you got some of the others where you've got all these really quick tight shots that cut back and froths and their head isn't even in most of them and you know oh okay they took 3 hours of slow movement and sped it up and chopped it up and they made a fight scene out of it whereas I mean you could stick Jet Li and Jackie Chan together and say you guys just go sparring and we're gonna film it.

Jim Smith:

Yeah exactly, and they know what they could do and having fun with it and they don't have the wires tied in where they'd kick and they float in the air

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right

Jim Smith:

But their special effects are special that's what it is.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely, so you've been through a lot, you've accomplished a lot I mean it's you've got one of those martial arts career is that anybody would be thrilled to have gone through but I'm guessing that there is still more that you're out there looking foresee you got any goals you'd be willing to share?



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Jim Smith:

Yeah you know I just my I think one of my aspirations is this one is gonna sound crazy I wanna get in that night time show on the 46:34 like the young kids do you know and I think that's what it is you know cause you can win and I've had 4, 5 world titles. I got some rings they gave me and watches and you know and I won some of the major competitions but never seen to get on stage at this age and the answer if it was to me is well everybody likes the younger people, they like to see the flips and cartwheels and it's like yeah but I think they would also enjoy maybe seeing some tradition too you know and even I know 47:05 when they say tradition and you look and you say that's not tradition what he's done that tradition form should not have a split in a row and then when you question it they say well it's traditional based, there's your answer traditional based but I wanna get on that stage I wanna get recognized as you know what here on the right they grow up here because what I find in a lot of the tournaments you know the 60+ they don't even have that division which is okay so I mean I laugh I'm going with the 18 year olds or the 35 year olds and the fun part is that a lot of times I'll win in divisions over them and you know and there's times I get beat too you know and that's what it's about you know and there was a time where I won and I know I shouldn't and I gave the trophy to the young man I thought should have won because don't judge me because I'm usually odd if I'm off that day I'm off you know and that's how I feel cause some judges will do that, it's like they know 47:59 he's gonna win and that's why I don't like the seeded people you know what I mean I've been seeded where I was the last person out and it's a nice feeling but you know wants the cream comes to the top and that's what I always say to the kids and everybody and a lot of times they'll sit and say who wants to go first I'll go first always my answer I'll go in I don't care and they look at me and they say hey you know what if I'm good 48:21 you know and I try to set the point that you know hey we all have a better advantage towards the end because sometimes you see the scores throughout low and they go high because they don't wanna give too high because if someone's better we 48:33 give it out 15 but you know so it's a tough thing to be a judge too it's not easy you know and but I wanna get that stage I wanna get up there and I wanna start having people recognize the tradition you know and I guess that's what's always been you know I of course I wanted to get on in the US team that was I wanted that jacket so bad and I was like you know that jacket I gotta have it you know and eventually I got it you know but it's like you know I tell people you know excuses are for people that don't really want it bad enough that's what an excuse is to me you know and if you want something bad enough you'll figure out how to get it you know and you then it might take a lot of work and most times it does but are you willing to sacrifice for it and I am I mean I've been through I've been in a wheelchair I've been on pumps my head both my Achilles tendon is ruptured so I had to had them fixed I have had both my kneed totally replaced, I had 49:34 I had 39 blocks 49:36 back so I can move yeah so you know and to me it's like if I had both my thumbs repaired cause I shattered the joints you know and to me it's like you know what I rehab it and what I do to rehab what I'm done rehabbing with them I go to the studio and rehab another 5 6 hours myself you know and I got to the point one day I was trying to stretch that leg so bad cause I said I wanna get back in till the thing was so severe the next thing I know one of my program 50:03 like why are you on foam are you



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sleeping 50:05 knock myself out you know passed out. The thing that was somebody there what's this guy laying on the floor I was like oh my god I must have just like put my 50:12 and got dizzy and went boom. thank god, I had mats. But it's like it's desire you know it's like in the art you wanna learn, you wanna learn, you wanna learn and it to me it's like if this push and I don't know why I had it but it's like I just love it, it's you know some people love baseball, it's like baseball never sit with me I was always the kid on the bench you know and I remember 50:39 you want a story I've never hit a ball and dyslexic let alone in the first or in the third days I was so happy nobody tagged me and they were looking at me and like oh man I felt like such an ass but it was like but I made it to the third and but that's why I want that was the end of my baseball career. So, I didn't know more of that but I tell you the art it fits anybody you know and too many people quit too quick you know what and you're gonna have difficulties in the world your whole life you know whether it's the boss or you're gonna have these bumps and you gotta learn to face them and if you stick with it and you work it you can face anything in life and that's what the art is. I mean 51:20 look at people sometimes well I don't know if I can do this I said here I give them my medical resume here read it tell me what you can do and then they get a little embarrassed looks like I said I'm not saying you have to, said but I'm just letting you know, it's cause you don't want it don't tell me because you're not 51:34 I have more respect if you tell me the truth you know and I'll even tell the parents sometimes you know you'll see the young man in the class and they're training and it's like well we're gonna cancel him because he doesn't feel like coming and I'll say 51:49 I say look he's here is he having fun do you see a major improvement oh yeah we see all I said so when do you let a 5 year old tell you what's best for him?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right

Jim Smith:

And then she looks at me I said look if he's crying at home and he's kicking that's different cause you don't wanna put in more stress on but if he's doesn't wanna come once in a while I said even adults don't wanna come we get lazy too but I said it's okay for adults to be lazy if they don't wanna come but once a child says it's like okay we'll quit you know they gotta learn commitment and that's what it teaches you, it teaches you commitment and that's not what they're learning anymore you know they learn and they fail or you know like to some of the school systems, you know yourself there is no more failing there is no more cutting up football teams. I've had to have them cut why have a kid on my team and have them sit on a bench all time he does the exercise, run up the hill but he never plays cut him you know and to me I would rather do that but nowadays you don't fail but that's not the real world you go to a boss and that's what you keep doing it wrong and pay you. So, and they're not learning this

Jeremy Lesniak:



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It's true

Jim Smith:

You know and this is what they learn in the martial arts, it's not just about kicking or punching, it's a lot more to it and that's what needs to be taught and that's what needs to educate these people.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That perseverance is an important thing to learn and it's something that I think we learn in martial arts that you don't learn quite so much in other things at least now so yeah

Jim Smith:

Yeah in the code of ethics not all of the sports have that you go you play 53:18 there's a code of ethics with the martial arts you know and you don't do this and you don't do that and this is what you do and that's what makes us different.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah well this has been great and I really appreciate it but now it's a chance for you to tell us what you've got going on you know if someone wanted to reach out to you how would they get a hold of you or anything like that.

Jim Smith:

Well what they can do if they wanna get a hold of me I have a website, if they just go on jimsmithkarate, www.jimsmithkarate.com They can go on my website they can see me they can contact me that way or if they hit Facebook I'll be more than glad to friend them if they're on martial arts and help them with any questions if they do have any you know or they have any 54:01 I'm always learning too so you know I'm always open for anything ans that's the biggest thing on me you know I'm an open book you know you have something I like it hey we'll work together you know. I'm and it could be a young young man too but yeah my Facebook page or you can go on that or in my line or you maybe google Jim smith you know I know there's a lot of smiths in the phonebook but if you google Jim smith, just look for the guy that doesn't have much hair on top and that's from teaching kids for 42 years your hair falls out you know but it's been a great journey for me and I mean I love it and I just hope I can continue doing this you know for the rest of my life and it's nice like you say that you love that much that you wanna do and you know what I can't see myself retiring and just doing nothing I can see myself maybe retiring and



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doing more tournaments you know but yes they can reach me from Facebook on or my page and I'll take questions that's fine.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure and of course we'll have links to that stuff in the show notes like we always do so Hanshi Smith I really really

Jim Smith:

Is this recorded or is this live?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh yeah, no this re we're still recording

Jim Smith:

Oh okay I'm just saying cause if I was live I might stop stuttering you know be one of those 55:20 people on the corner but now this is I wanna thank you so much you know this has been a real highlight in my life you know it's cause most times that unless you're a fighter they don't give you the same respect I mean it's like they don't respect you for doing forums or stuff and you know I've done my fight at my time you know I'm done now I don't wanna get anymore surgeries I don't wanna blow anymore knees out and but they look at you like you know the clear like a kata bomb they call yeah it's like you know give me a break but this is nice that to hear you have all the sparring equipment you do that but you have you respect for the art and the art is everything

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yes

Jim Smith:

And thank you so much

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, thank you and appreciate your time here



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Jim Smith:

Yeah in September I'm going to Argentina to compete with the US team so.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, cool well we'll make sure that we get some maybe not footage hopefully footage with the kazoo but it's not with a kazoo maybe we'll just get some photos and we can put those out in social media

Jim Smith:

56:23 up I'll give you the kazoo act but hopefully I'll see you soon in one of the competitions up there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely, thank you so much

Jim Smith:

And again, thank you so much for the respect you're giving me and the honor to be on your show and to tell my story a little bit it was really great thank you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

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