



NIAGARA *this* WEEK
.COM

Hensen ready to KO opponents at world championships

Grimsby native heading to Austria for world kickboxing tournament

Scott Rosts

Published on Oct 16, 2009



Grimsby native Adam Hensen prepares to launch a punch at sparring partner Isaac Ingrao at the Phoenix Fight Club in Hamilton. This weekend Hensen is leaving with the Canadian national team for a world kickboxing championship in Austria.

Adam Hensen is only 25-years old, but he's already a pioneer of sorts in Canadian kickboxing circles.

The Grimsby native, who is headed to Austria this weekend for a world championship, was recently one of nine athletes who received a carding status as a national team member from the Council of Amateur Sport Kickboxing (CASK) — an achievement no other kickboxing body, association, or group has reached in the history of the sport in Canada.

The news, which means Hensen will receive funding to cover expenses at the World Association of Kickboxing Organizations (WAKO) championships this month, is just the latest in what has been a tumultuous year for Hensen, who over the past few years has been kicking and slashing his way to the top of the martial arts scene.

In September, coming off ankle surgery earlier in the year, Hensen lost a big fight in Alberta. The Phoenix Fight Club member had to endure the major setback after winning a Canadian national title in January.

Last June Hensen won a unanimous decision over more experienced Muay Thai fighter Keijiro Noda in Noda's hometown of Edmonton, but it came with a price as he battled with a broken tibia in his right leg.

The national team status, however, has given Hensen a bright outlook heading overseas this weekend.

"The national team came together (recently) for a two-day training camp, with athletes coming from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and all across Ontario. They did this once a month for the past four months to build us as a team and educate us on all the aspects of the fight game," said Hensen, who lives in Hamilton, but grew up in Grimsby. "CASK is really putting together a great program for us National Team athletes, and I think the best is yet to come. They have brought in top level people to help with everything from nutrition to sport psychology. I truly feel privileged and honoured to be part of something like this."

Three disciplines will be heading to the WAKO World Championships, which are being held in Villach, Austria, including Tatami sports, low kick and K1 rules, which Hensen competes in.

"K1 rules allows legs kicks and knees to the body and head. Similar to Thaiboxing, but without the elbows and clinch," Hensen explained.

The event is a single-elimination tournament, and Hensen leaves Oct. 18, returning back to home soil on Oct. 26. He said it's expected that up to 60 countries will be sending delegations to the WAKO championships, and there will be more than 1,500 competitors from across the globe.

Hensen is coming off what some may consider a negative experience. He, however, has overcome the challenge mentally and used it to better prepare for the worlds, where he says "the talent pool should be very high." He recently suffered a loss, just his second ever, at the hands of Sean McKinnon in Calgary on Sept. 12.

"It was a tough fight against a very tough and experienced fighter," he said. "This loss has sparked a flame under me that will burn until my goal in Austria has been accomplished — a gold medal. Nobody likes to lose, but all I can do is pick up the pieces, move on and chalk this up as a learning experience."

Hensen's training has been intense, both before and after the September fight. He runs the stairs and integrates plyometrics and explosive training, such as flipping tractor tires, into his training. He also works on technical styles at the Phoenix Fight Club, all under the watchful eye of coach Adam Higson.