



As National Coach for Belgium, his achievements are more than impressive:

8 medals at four Olympic Games 1992 - 2004

15 medals at World Championships 1991-2001

50 medals at European Championships, including 20 gold. He has worked with almost all of Belgium's top players including:



Photo: David Finch

Ulla Welbruck (Olympic Champion and 4-times World medallist),

Gella Vandecaveye (2-times Olympic medallist and World Champion)

Heidi Rakels, Johan Laats, Cedric Taymans, Harry Van Barneveld, Mariesabelle Lomba, Ilse Heilen, Ann Simons.

Yatskevich Workshop

Top international judo coach Alexander Yatskevich will visit the UK in November 2008 as part of the BJA's programme of Coaching Workshops. Yatskevich is one of the biggest coaching personalities in the world of judo today, reknowned for inventing new technical and tactical solutions. Don't miss this opportunity and book your place now!

Olympic medallist and 3-times European Champion Alexander Yatskevich (USSR) and National Coach for Belgium for the last 15 years is probably one of the biggest coaching personalities in the world of judo today.

"There are no secrets in judo which I wish to hold. I wish to display and teach all the most efficient up-to-date techniques, which I have been collecting for a good number of years as a coach. Judo is permanently evolving which is natural. Life is an evolution and we must be ready to accept and comprehend the changes. After all this is the only way forward. There is time to be taught – there is a time to pass what you have been taught," says Yatskevich on how he describes his shift from being a high performance athlete to becoming a coach.

As a coach he is known to be an inventor of specific tactics and technical solutions particularly against the proponents of the Georgian style of judo which based on their national wrestling known as Chi-da-oba. As a result of his creativity, many of the players who used to rely on the Georgian judo style techniques can no longer be assured of its effectiveness (see pickup photo sequence on opposite page).

Yatskevich is considered to be one of the top Ne-waza experts; much of it learned while participating in Russian Sambo wrestling his first sport (see Juji-gatame escape).

Narrowly missing the USSR's physical benchmarks for judo at the age of 12, he admits that it was not an easy path into judo (see table). At the age of 12 he tried to join the local Sambo club in Riga (there was no judo in Soviet Union at that time) but, ironically he was rejected, as he could not pass the entry test (failing the squat test).

Yatskevich explains "My trouble was that I failed at performing in certain exercises as I was overweight. I was diagnosed with asthma and my parents kept feeding me with the very best food they could get. At that time, Sambo wrestling was extremely popular in the Soviet Union and the numbers of kids trying to join the Riga club was massive".

"The coach in charge of selecting kids took the names from only successful candidates and I so I kept coming back to take the entry test several times until finally managed to sneak in. During my first year in Sambo wrestling I lost about 8 kilos down to 50 kg. After that went all the way through up from 48 kg as cadet to 86 kg as a senior to my first European Champion title."

Yatskevich is in great demand and as a guest coach and most of his weekends are booked well in advance. His itinerary includes visits to Brazil, Canada, Germany, Italy, Israel, Russia and Ukraine.

Physical Benchmarks

Testing Programme for Judo/Sambo Sport Schools and Clubs in USSR (1968-1972)

	Ability	Test	11-12 yrs olds		
			Under 50 kg	Under 60 kg	Over 60 kg
1	Quickness	30 meters sprint (timed in seconds)	5.2	5.2	5.6
2	Endurance	400 meters run (timed in minutes & seconds)	1.13	1.13	1.13
3	Strength	Chin-ups	8	8	8
4	Strength	Press-ups	45	48	30
5	Strength	Sit-ups	18	20	14
6	Explosive power	4 meters rope climbing without legs assistance (timed in seconds)	10	10	12
7	Explosive power	Maximal number of chin-ups in 20 second	6	6	4
8	Explosive power	Maximal number of press-ups in 20 seconds	16	12	12
9	Explosive power	Squats with the same weight partner on the shoulders	6	8	4
10	Agility	Shuttle run 3 x 10 meters (timed in seconds)	7.5	7.5	7.5

Yatskevich invented this pick up to unsettle opponent's relying on this typical Georgian style belt grip. Note how the leg is folded, using the forearm against the shin.



Photo: Andrew Moshanov

Escaping from Juji Gatame - leg push

This escape centres on attacking the controlling leg in juji-gatame. Once shifted, your opponent loses balance, power and control. It is possible to escape by turning inwards once the leg is trapped behind the head.



Photo: Andrew Moshanov