

Meet Our Star!

Steven Currie, Australia, Champion of 2010 WTF World Para-Taekwondo Championships



1. Can you give us a short self- introduction?

Hi, I am Steven Currie. I am 32 years old and really enjoying my life. I was born in a small country town two hours outside of Melbourne where I grew up with my parents and my two younger sisters. As a young boy I enjoyed the country life; my weekends were full of exciting things to do. We would often go fishing, motorbike riding, camping or play sports such as Australian Rules football, basketball and cricket.

I moved to Melbourne when I was 21 and started a career as an electrician. Now I am employed as an Electrical Technician/Engineer in a small company where I have been working for the past 4 years.

When I'm not working or training, I am busy spending time with my friends out for dinner or planning my next big holiday overseas to explore a new part of the world which I have not seen before!

2. When did you start taekwondo and what motivated you?

I first started Taekwondo when I was 12 years old, though I gave up after a year to try some different sports. Then it wasn't till I moved to Melbourne at the age of 21 that I started again.

There were two defining events around that time which motivated me to start again. The first was I felt unfulfilled with my life at that stage. I worked and I saw my friends but I felt that something was missing and I had thought for some time that I needed to find an activity or sport to entertain me. The second event was certain people that had bullied me when I was younger, and had begun to bully my family. Once I started Taekwondo training, I never looked back and without a doubt my journey with Taekwondo over the past 10 years has been the most rewarding experience in my life.



2. What are your major achievements as a taekwondo athlete?

Well my greatest and most amazing achievement was to win the gold medal at the 2nd World Para Championships held in Saint Petersburg. To have the honor to represent my country was something that I had never imagined possible before or even after my accident. Then to be standing on the podium listening to our National Anthem was an incredibly moving experience.

Before that I also came third in the 1st World Para Championships held in Baku, Azerbaijan, in 2009. As for here in Australia, just this very year I completed another one of my goals and that was to win an open (Gold Coast Open, in Queensland). This was very special for me as it is a NON Para event, as Australian Taekwondo does not have enough competitors to warrant a specific Para Competition, though hopefully this will change in the forth coming years.



3. Can you tell us about the motorbike accident in 2005 which caused a permanent paralysis on your left arm and how it changed your life?

I have always been a very active person and some of my hobbies (other than taekwondo) were snowboarding and to ride motor bikes. I grew up riding dirt bikes (motor cross) in the bush when I was younger. I really loved doing this as a child so shortly after I moved to Melbourne I chose to get my motor bike license and buy a road bike. It was a Yamaha FZR 250cc. It was great fun until one day I made a mistake and in a matter of seconds I hit a street sign.

From this point on my life changed dramatically. I instantly lost the use of my left arm which meant I was completely paralyzed from the shoulder down. This was the only real injury I sustained from the accident though I was extremely lucky that I did not break my neck.

The following two years were some of the hardest in my life. I needed to prepare for life without the use of two arms. The first thing that I was faced with was the realization that I could no longer work as an electrician. This meant I needed to prepare for a different career so I returned to school to study engineering.

Another defining moment after my accident was I made a list of all the things I wanted to experience in my life. On top of that list was to earn my black belt as I was due to grade for it next. I believe it took me a further two years but finally I achieved this goal!

5. What taekwondo means to you?

It is a way of life for me. It brings the best out of me, keeps me focused, fit and strong. I love going to training so much so that when I have an injury I miss it every day and can't wait to be back.

I love the rewards from Taekwondo such as self discipline, motivation and the community of friends I have met through the sport, both here in Australia and throughout the world.

I am also blessed to have a wonderful support team around me. By this I mean my club and coaches, especially my head instructor (Dual Olympian) Carlo Massimino. He is a great role model and offers so much insight as to what it takes to bring out the best in yourself.



We have a great club and this extends to other Victorian clubs that we train with. We are all working together as a whole to further develop ourselves and Taekwondo throughout our state.

6. What is your goal for taekwondo and life?

My next immediate Taekwondo goal is to prepare the best I can to try to win the 3rd World Para Championships to be held in Aruba next year.

The other Taekwondo goal I have is to try to medal at our Australian National Tournament. This will be extremely difficult but a goal that I believe I can achieve.

My general goal in life is to be the best that I can be and to hopefully inspire anyone who is facing difficult circumstances like I did, to realize that anything is possible if you believe in yourself and are prepared to work hard for it.

9. Any words to share people having physical or mental disabilities?

As difficult as life can be sometimes, never lose sight of your goals because you never know when your circumstances may change.

**Vote for Steven in the “Toast of a Nation” competition on the link,
[http://toan.vegemite.com.au/toast-of-a-nation-nominate.aspx!](http://toan.vegemite.com.au/toast-of-a-nation-nominate.aspx)**

**If he wins, it will help finance him in travelling to overseas taekwondo events.
The deadline for voting is October 31st, 2011.**