

# Henry Lam: World Class Fighter

by Jonah Park

**H**enry Lam is in a league of his own. The senior placed seventh in the Points Fighting Junior World Championships in Venice, Italy last summer. He had the opportunity to represent the United States, an honor he earned through years of practice and dedication.

“When I was training for the World Championships in Italy I was training every day,” Lam said. “I tried to do two or three times a day. First time would be running on the track, second time would be doing a bunch of drills, then third time would be actually sparring.”

Lam practices at the Ameri-kick Martial Arts studio in Overland Park, Kan. He met talented training partners and coaches at the facility. Those people helped him reach the highest level in the sport.

“I have a friend who went to Spain three years ago for the same competition, the Junior World Championships,” Lam said. “My coach went to Hungary for the Seniors’ [World Championships] last year.”

To qualify for the World Championships, competitors from across the United States fight in the Kansas City challenge in March. Only the top two athletes are chosen to compete at the Junior World Championships.

“It was an unbelievable feeling [to represent the US],” Lam said. “It’s really hard to describe, but I felt a sense of pride. I wanted to prove that the United States was home to the best fighters in the world.”

Lam performed well at the World Championships, defeating fighters from Canada, Chile and Germany to make it to the fourth round against Hungary.

“In order to get points, two out of the three judges have to score your way,” Lam said. “I feel like I got screwed over in the fourth round because two of them were Hungarian.”

Lam still proudly accepted ranking seventh in the world. That result was the product of 10 years in the sport.

“I’ve learned that you can do anything if you put your mind to it,” Lam said. “Because before, I had the talent, but I didn’t have the work ethic. I feel like the World Championships forced me to pull the work ethic out of myself and put the two together.”

After the World Championships, Lam competed in Minnesota, where he gained more recognition for his performance.

“Right after the World Championships, I went to Minnesota and I did really well,” Lam said. “I was offered a sponsorship by this company but they can’t pay me yet to compete because I’m still under 18. They can still pay for gear and some expenses so that’s opened up some opportunities.”

Lam hopes to continue competing after he graduates and take his talent to the adult level. However, he is unsure if that will happen.

“I want to [continue fighting], but mixing in school and training and work - it’s going to be really hard,” Lam said. “I’m going to try to keep doing it.”

If Lam continues in the sport, he might be able to reach the ultimate athletic prize. Points fighting is not an Olympic sport, yet the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is taking steps to include it. Point fighting gained recognition by the IOC on Nov. 30 and could be included in the 2024 Olympics in Paris, France.

“It is this close to being an Olympic sport,” Lam said. “I definitely would want to be a part of the team.”

The 2024 Olympics are more than five years away, but Lam has not ruled out the possibility of competing. He placed in the top two of all 18 and under fighters in the country in 2017. The potential for Lam to be an Olympian is real.

He has set big goals for himself.

“[I am focused on] winning more national tournaments and making sure I qualify for the US National team if they put point fighting in the Olympics.” Lam said.

Lam will fight in Chicago, Ill. next month, then Atlantic City, NY. Whether he is fighting domestically or internationally, Lam will be striving toward his goals.