

Shaolin kickboxer Ron Piklas preparing for World Junior Wushu Sanda Championships in Tianjin, China



Ron Piklas had many reasons to celebrate on Saturday afternoon when we met at Shaolin Martial Arts with his coaching staff

The Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School pre-IB student was not only celebrating his 16th trip around the sun, but he was looking forward to representing Canada and competing in Wushu Sanda at the 10th World Junior Wushu Championships in March in Tianjin, China.

Piklas's instructor, Sport Aurora's 2025 Coach of the Year Rocco Colarossi, believes that Shaolin's most decorated student-athlete has the right stuff to succeed on the big stage in Tianjin.

?He's got a good head on his shoulders. Ron thinks under pressure really well. His ability to pivot under pressure is his best attribute as an athlete.?

Coach Colarossi also noted that Piklas will have ample opportunities to compete in this hemisphere as well in 2026 after he returns to Canada after the World Championships in March.

?We're looking at the Pan-Am Games in Argentina in October and the Bermuda Open in November.?

When asked about his goals at the World Championships and all competitions this year, Piklas was succinct and confident in his response: ?Win.?

It's evident that Piklas has made it his habit to win, based on his considerable accomplishments over the last three years. At the 2025 Ontario Championships held in Aurora at SARC's Desjardins Gym, Piklas captured the Gold Medal in Sanda?a fusion of Kung Fu from China and North American kickboxing. Prior to his triumph on home turf, Piklas had become a multi-time Canadian Champion and Pan-Am Gold Medalist.

Shaolin's Grand Master and 9th degree Black Belt Tim Wakefield reflected on Piklas's modest beginnings at the Martial Arts Centre on Mary Street: ?He started as an eight-year-old in the after-school program and this is what has happened.?

Shifu Tim emphasized that Piklas's impressive development as a kickboxer has coincided with the student-athlete's connection to the

three pillars of Shaolin.

It's about the unity of Zen Philosophy and the Martial Arts, the alignment of mind and body. It's also about Martial Virtue of Wude where martial skills must be used for protection, not aggression; compassion and non-violence are emphasized. Lastly, it's about self-perfection through rigorous practice. Continuous, hard training leads to perseverance.

Piklas's perseverance and kickboxing talents emerged as the most decorated Shaolin athlete at the 2023 Ontario Winter Games in Renfrew when he won two U12 gold medals in Sanda. In the same year, Piklas also won the Gold Medal in Traditional Form, Hand and Weapon at the Pan-Am Centre in Markham.

In Tianjin, which is located in the southwest corner of Beijing, Wakefield explained that Piklas will be competing in the 15-17 Age Group in the 60 KG-and-under category. He'll be at the top of the category in weight. We try to keep him at the top of the weight class. The event is regulated by the IWF which is recognized by the IOC.

In light of this string of successes and his upcoming date with destiny in China, the articulate kickboxer noted that, "The training's getting real. We're training every day and it's more of a tailored program. While everybody in our class is doing their activities, I'm doing my own thing including three rounds of five-minute skipping, three rounds of weighted shadow boxing with 2-3 pound weights, and I get a one-minute break between rounds. Then I join the rest of the class to do pad work."

Coach Colarossi added, "We do some extra skills work. We make sure he's good and sweaty at the end of the workout."

It's evident that perspiration and inspiration are in a fine balance for Piklas, and his dedication to the workout of body and mind has led him to the pinnacle of international competition.

"This will be my first out-of-country competition. For it to be an international championship is amazing. It feels unreal. It's been great to see the progress I've made. Looking back, many don't stay in. Now that I'm preparing for international competition, it's been satisfying to make the jumps in levels every year."

Piklas credited his jumps in levels to the coaching he has received from Wakefield and Colarossi.

"It's top tier. They get into depth in everything. They provide examples and, during our drills on the bag, we go over the possibilities during competition. They ask me "What if he does this?" and they show me how to avoid being trapped. We go over the pros and cons of techniques and mitigate the risks of getting into the pocket--they teach me about staying out of the Danger Zone."

Piklas and Colarossi have GoFundMe pages to help defray the considerable costs of competing in the World Junior Wushu Championships in China. The top international event takes place over nine days. If you'd like to help this dynamic local student-athlete and his award-winning coach with their substantial international travel expenses, go to these links:

Ron Piklas: gofund.me/e808fc6c9

Coach Rocco Colarossi: gofund.me/bdaca04d5 By **Jim Stewart**