



# WINNING WORKOUT

## Willie "The Bam" Johnson

Age: 27

Height: 5'2"

Weight: 138 lbs.

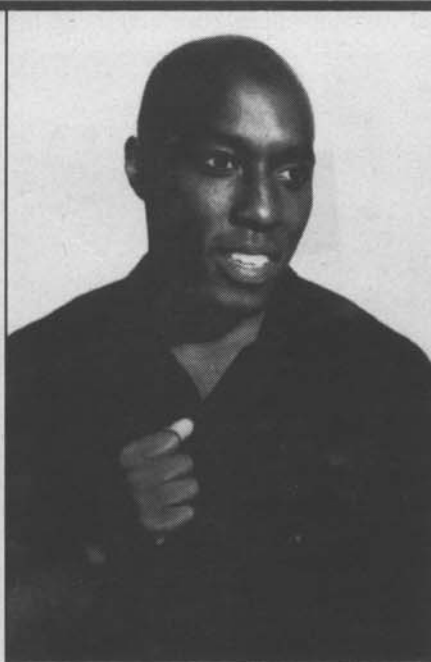
Style: Wushu-do

Hometown: Baltimore, MD

*Despite his small stature, Willie "The Bam" Johnson is standing tall among his competitors on the NASKA circuit. Beginning his competition victories in 1983 with a kata first place at the Empire State Nationals, he continues to strive toward the goal of the complete martial artist, training in forms, weapons, and fighting. Currently ranking fifth in soft-style forms and soft-style weapons, and sixth in lightweight fighting and super-lightweight fighting, he is NASKA's first male wushu stylist to wear a triple crown. In the following winning workout, as told to Nancy Musick, Johnson tells how he develops what he sees as the six qualities of the total competitor. —Editor*

**T**o rank in three different divisions on America's top sport karate circuit, NASKA, takes six things: technique, fluidity, endurance, rhythm, speed and "warrior" spirit.

I develop technique through *wushu* basics practice in front of a mirror. I develop fluidity by not holding back on my techniques. I develop endurance by breaking my form down into sections and working each section, back to back, with less than a one-minute break in between. I develop rhythm by working out to music. I develop speed by working my form at full speed, back to back, with a one-minute break in between. And finally, I develop the "warrior" spirit through praying, meditating, and disciplining myself to keep up the drive of a rigorous training schedule; this helps me to build mental confidence.



### Training for the Circuit

Traditional wushu's main goal is to build strong character through mental and physical challenges and to place strong emphasis on competitiveness and dramatic expression. In today's karate world, however, the wushu artist's main goal is to peak for national tournaments. And on the NASKA circuit's national level, the main goal is to peak for 11 out of a possible 12 tournaments a year. Accomplishing this requires two training sessions a day with each session focusing on three different areas of competition.

When I was in mainland China in 1985, training with the national wushu champions there, each of the two training sessions lasted for about three hours

with no break. But I believe it's better to train for shorter periods of time—one hour in the morning and two hours in the afternoon or evening. Focus on your weak points first, working them to the point of exhaustion. This way they are less likely to fail you in competition. Naturally your strong points are going to work very well for you, giving you the confidence you need to succeed.

### Workout One

My typical morning workout begins at 6:00 a.m. with a spiritual reading, prayer, and five minutes of shadow footwork done to the beat of my favorite music. The focus here is on point fighting, so the shadow footwork helps me grow accustomed to moving in a circle while fighting. Next comes 15 minutes of stretching, placing the emphasis of the workout on the legs, hips, back, and shoulders.

Now it's time to zero in on technique and endurance. Place one foot behind a piece of tape and "blitz" or lunge over another piece of tape about six feet away, developing forward motion.

Move into 110 push-ups, coming half-way down for muscle endurance and then go right into lead leg faking, practicing over-

