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## Bopha Kong targets perfect season

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French fighter wants to build off recent World Championships success



France's Bopha Kong, left, is No. 1 in the men's up to 61kg K43 division © - World Taekwondo Federation



By Lee Reaney | For the IPC

France's Bopha Kong wants to win every competition he competes in 2018.

So far, he is on the right track.

Kong, three-time world champion in the men's up to 61kg K44, is coming off a victory from the US Open held in late January in Las Vegas. It was the first tournament for rankings points.

Last year he defeated Canada's Anthony Cappello in the US Open final.

This time around was no different for the No. 1 ranked fighter, as he again beat Cappello 12-0.

His drive to competing is simple: "I want to be the most beautiful competitor in the world of taekwondo," Kong said.

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The 36-year-old fighter also has two European crowns and an [International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation](#) (IWAS) World Games Championship under his belt.

young athletes that are disabled. I want to train young athletes in difficult situations too.”

Just do not label him a “[Para taekwondo](#) fighter.” Kong distinguished that he is a fighter first. [Para taekwondo](#) is his craft.

“Too often I feel that people want to put me in the ‘disabled’ box,” he said. “I don’t want to train only young athletes that are disabled. I want to train young athletes in difficult situations too.”

Forced to switch from boxing to [Para taekwondo](#) after losing his hands in an accident at the age of 18, Kong turned to martial arts philosophy to help cope with the loss.

“Martial arts develops your self-esteem,” he said. “It develops a respect for the word in you, a sense of community, and a feeling of empathy.”

So he headed back to the gym and has since become one of France’s best hopes for a medal at Tokyo 2020, where the sport will make its Paralympic debut.

**Best of the best**

After becoming [Para taekwondo](#) ’s first world champion, his next goal is to become its first Paralympic champion.

“The one that wins is the best of the best. This achievement is my dream – to be the best in the world,” Kong said.

“The best players make me feel more than alive,” he said. “Like I can go beyond my limits.”

To that end, he has made a significant commitment to training.

He focuses on technical improvements and video analysis at three club trainings each week and works on physical training nearly every day.

“[Para taekwondo](#) competition is growing and becoming much stronger technically”, he points out. “To the point that some fighters could probably compete with [able-bodied] ones!”

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