

In The Picture

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Jelle Vlaeminck

Silver and Bronze BC Wushu

Silver Open Dutch Championship



Vlaams Wushu Instituut



Jelle Vlaeminck is a 22-year-old Wushu athlete of the Vlaams Wushu Instituut (VWI). Despite the fact that he started practising Wushu late in life, he wasn't less motivated to make the best of it. That became apparent when he became vice Champion of Belgium in his first year of competition. Jelle combines his sport with studies at the university, a position as a board member of the VWI and all kinds of other things. A jack of all trades. We interviewed him today about his Wushu career.

When did you start with Wushu?

I practice Wushu for six years now. In the beginning it was purely recreational, but after three years I moved up a gear. Since then I started training together with Sifu Patrick, at semi-professional level. After two years of hard work it started to pay off when I took seven medals in my first competition year, including a silver and bronze at the Belgian Championship. The climax of that first year came when I was nominated to become Sportsman of the Year of Dendermonde. It was a big honour for me. I lost, understandably, from Greg Van Avermaet, but it crowns all the work.

How did you come up to start practising Wushu?

That's actually a nice anecdote. Before I started with Wushu, I practised four years badminton but my club had stopped by a lack of trainers. So I was looking for something new. At that time there was a series on Nickelodeon called "Avatar: The Legend of Aang" and I was a big fan. One day I was sitting on the Wikipedia page of Avatar and I read that the fighting styles of the series were based on four styles of Wushu. My interest was piqued, and after some research I found that Wushu was actually kung-fu. As a child I had always been fascinated by the martial arts films of Jet Li, Jacki Chan and Steven Seagal. I did some research to find out if there were any Wushu Clubs in East Flanders and ended on the website of the VWI. After an email with the secretary, I went to the club on a Saturday for a trial lesson and the rest is history.

How many hours per week do you train for your favourite sport?

If I purely count Wushu then I practise 5 hours per week. That's only Wushu training, the condition training (bicycling) excluded. If I include the condition training I practise around 8 hours per week. When I am preparing for a tournament you can count some additional hours as well.

Which advice would you like to give to other practitioners?

Do what you love to do! That's the best advice I can give. If you do something without enthusiasm, why would you do it? And if you found that what you wanted to do, give it your all. Go there for the full 100%, it's the only way to reach your goals. I have to make quite a few sacrifices to get to the level where I am today. And if I still want to aim higher, they will only get stricter.

To which sports man are you looking up to?

If I have to stay within the Wushu then I say Jet Li definitely. If you read what he has achieved; as becoming Chinese champion at 12 years, then I can only show admiration. It is in fact a dream to meet him once. Outside the Wushu I'm also a great bicycling fan.

Thank you for the interview Jelle.

We wish you good luck.

Kevin Simons