

Karate Flashback #3: Andy Hug vs. Nobuaki Kakuda

Written by Chad Sanderson
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Among kickboxing fans, no name will ever be more associated with Kyokushin Karate than Andy Hug's.

Hug had a truly legendary career in K-1, scoring victories over Jerome Le Banner, Peter Aerts, Ernesto Hoost, and Mike Bernardo to name just a few of his high profile wins. He is one of the most famous Kyokushin practitioners of all time, and for good reason.

Before entering the K-1 ring, Andy Hug was already a popular karate fighter in his own right. He had several famous battles with Shokei Matsui, World Tournament winner Kenji Midori, World tournament winner Francisco Filho, Maasaki Satake, and others. A well known name in Japan long before 1993 and his K-1 debut on the world stage, Hug was reknowned for his technical skills, surprisingly devastating ax kick, and his unique spinning hook kick to the leg dubbed the "Hug tornado."

There's not much I can say about Andy Hug that hasn't already been said. He was one of the founding fighters of K-1, and a big part of the reason this sport became what it is today.

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Nobuaki Kakuda will probably best be remembered as the only kickboxer to lose to sumo wrestler Akebono. This is sad, because at the time of that fight he was nearly 45 years old and had already been around the block. In his match with Hug, Kakuda was much closer to his prime and in far better athletic shape. While he was never the most talented kickboxer, Kakuda was always very game to fight (typically against much larger opponents) and packed some serious power in his hands. ([Highlight](#)) He is currently the Vice-Chairman of the Seidokaikan Karate Association, founded by Kazuyoshi Ishii.

This fight takes place in 1993 during the second ever K-1 event, and the first ever Grand Prix won by Branko Cikatic. Take note that this is a special Kyokushin match that served as Hug's introduction to the international kickboxing audience. It's a testament to how invested Kazuyoshi Ishii was in Kyokushin, Seidokaikan, and the warrior spirit of karate fighters.