

To fight or not to fight

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Jardena "Tiger" Green received the award
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Jardena "Tiger" Green of St. Louis, Missouri is only 21-years old. She has already won the national **Tai Chi** Push Hands championships twice in the U.S. She continues to train with **Sifu Justin Meeham** to improve her skills. In November, she joined a St. Louis delegation led by Sifu Meehan to attend the Third Hun Yuan International Tai Chi Exchange Conference in Beijing, China.



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The event was held in the famous Jiuhua Resort and Convention Center. More than 1000 [Martial Arts](#) practitioners from China and about a dozen foreign countries attended the event, which included lectures, workshops and competitions for bare-hand forms and Push Hands. Grandmaster Feng Zhiqian, founder of the Chen Style Hun Yuan Tai Chi, was not feeling well enough to personally host the event. But he did make brief appearances. Jardena has studied Tai Chi since she was 15. It was her dream to visit the birthplace of the Hun Yuan system and to meet the founder, not to mention the event provided an opportunity for her to demonstrate her skills and compete at an international level.

But to her shock, the Push-Hands competition was not sanctioned in a traditional protocol. First of all, the competition rules were not finalized and announced until the night before the competition. In a letter to St. Louis Chinese American News, Sifu Meehan called the competition “savage beyond belief”. The competition rules allowed dangerous techniques such as neck attacks, double arm grabs, sudden arm bars, grabbing around the waist, tripping, throwing, sweeping, disengagement and sudden strikes. And the actual competition appeared to have no rules at all, according to Sifu Meehan and one contestant was taken to hospital due to serious neck injury. Jardena contemplated withdrawing but she was not a quitter.

In the semifinal, Jardena (Tiger) Green was matched with a competitor who outweighed her in both weight and experience. She quickly fell behind a point after being thrown to the ground and body slammed by her opponent. She stood up and refused to be pushed, dragged or forced out of the ring without a fight. With her determination and fighting techniques, she turned the tide and the battle went on back and forth. During the fight, her opponent drew 3 or 4 warnings for illegal headlocks, throat strikes, arm snaps, etc, but no point was deducted. Toward the end, the opponent said something

insulting to Jardena that brought Jardena's inner strength out and she came from behind to win the match (see a photo on the left-hand-side). Audience fell in love with her and nicknamed her "tiger".

Prior to the final match, Jardena met her competitor, a champion from Russia. With the encouragement of both their teachers, they decided to forgo their opportunity to win a gold medal but protest. Jardena and her opponent started their match by doing double hands Push Hands for 3 revolutions, which immediately won a big applause from the audience, then following with a non-competitive free style Push Hands display to keep the score 0-0. According to Sifu Justin, this brought the great delight of the crowd and even the judges. Grandmaster Feng's daughter was smiling from the dias along with all the other Hun Yuan dignitaries. In a peaceful manner, Jardena and her opponent actually protested against the uncivilized competition rules and expressed their commitment to martial virtue (Wu De). During the one-minute break, they practiced Gathering Qi and Standing [Meditation](#) and once again they won the approval from the audience. Ultimately, they gave up their gold medal opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty and commitment to the true Tai Chi principles and respect for Grandmaster Feng and Hun Yuan Tai Chi. The crowd went wild and many old school teachers came up, some with tears in their eyes observed by Sifu Justin, to share their congratulations and appreciation. Jardena was later honored with a special award of "merit" before Grandmaster Feng. When asked whether she regretted her decision not fighting for a gold medal, Jardena said that seeing Grandmaster Feng's smile and nod of recognition was worth all the gold in China.

Jardena "Tiger" Green and the Russian champion certainly exhibited the integrity of a true heroine. They overcame their own ego to be the possible winner of such an important international competition and gave up the fame and wealth this new title could potentially bring to them. Hopefully, their sacrifice will bring the awareness of Wu De and true arts to the global martial art community.

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