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### **Coach and Athlete Return From Olympic-Level Training**

*Garner residents take part in intensive training with US National coaches and team members*

GARNER, North Carolina (June 14, 2010) – Nearly ninety athletes and coaches from all over the United States made the trip to Sewickley, PA for a long, hard weekend of Olympic-level intensive training – two of them from Garner. Ed Craft, senior instructor at JKO Karate in Garner, and his student Ford Bowden traveled to the small town outside of Pittsburgh to learn from and work with US National coaches and team members at the USA Karate Elite Training Camp.

National coaches Dustin Baldis and Tommy Hood worked participants relentlessly with drills and programs to enhance their performance and broaden their skill sets. The coaches also helped athletes in fostering a proper competitive mindset. Both former National team members and international medalists, Coach Baldis and Coach Hood were able to provide insight and experience for participants that few possess. National team members Cheryl Murphy and Dr. Clay Morton also taught courses helping athletes to develop better techniques and training methods. “As if the instructors weren’t good enough, the majority of the participants were former or current members of the US Teams,” Craft said. “Being able to train alongside and work with them was really exciting and truly an honor.” Calling it an educational and exhausting experience, Bowden said “some of the things we covered we’ve been practicing at home, so it’s great to know I’m already on the right track. The new drills and training methods will really help.”

In addition to the training, Craft also participated in the Coaching Certification Course. In an effort to better prepare athletes at the local level, USA Karate has implemented a program to help member instructors learn how to give their students world-class, Olympic-level training at home. “As I work to improve my athletes, the Coaching Program helps to improve me. This experience was invaluable,” Craft shared.

The only Olympic-affiliated Karate club in central North Carolina, JKO Karate in Garner will field three athletes to the USA Karate National Championships and Team Trials this July in Greenville, SC. To learn more about USA Karate, visit them online at [www.USANKF.org](http://www.USANKF.org)