

SUPERKOMBAT President Eduard Irimia Announces Official Split with K-1

Written by Chad Sanderson

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For some time now, a lot of us have wondered about the exact relationship between SUPERKOMBAT and K-1. Last year the two companies announced a joint partnership moving forward into 2013. However, it seemed that K-1's deals were potentially fated to go south, when we heard of rumblings within both organizations prior to the K-1 WGP 2013 in Croatia.

Today, Superkombat President, Eduard Irimia, sent out a [press release](#) officially announcing that the two companies were no longer working today. What this means for K-1 is ominous at best. The Heavyweight WGP was made up of mostly Superkombat fighters, and it seems as though SK had been K-1's biggest backers until a series of unfortunate yet (probably) foreseen circumstances occurred during and afterwords the big show.

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We'll have an in-depth interview with Eduard Irimia on the particulars coming later this week, but for now check out his press release for full details leading up to the split.

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Dear fans of combat sports,

In quality of SUPERKOMBAT® President, I have to make a clear statement regarding the partnership of our promotion with the new K-1 owners and their plans.

As we announced in August of last year, SUPERKOMBAT® had the chance to support with all efforts, that K-1 will rise back as all of us expected to happen. At that moment we made our agreement with Mr. Douglas Kaplan who was in charge for all operation around K-1 activity. He respected all the agreements and we had a good change of experience in Los Angeles and prepared a plan for the K-1 World GP 2012 Final 16 event where there fought mostly of SUPERKOMBAT® champions.

Meanwhile, Mr. Douglas Kaplan was replaced from this position before the Tokyo event and we started to communicate with Mr. Gunil Kim who made a good impression to us that he would do all to touch the target of bringing back the brand as old days. In Tokyo, I proposed to Mr. Gunil Kim to have the K-1 World GP 2012 Final in Abu Dhabi where I had the connection with top businessmen ready to bring the event in December, presented in association with SUPERKOMBAT® as we had the date live on Eurosport.

My idea was to have a good exposure on free TV that could attract the attention of the media and not to use the Pay-Per-View system as the main priority. There the local companies were ready to support the event but Mr. Gunil Kim asked the full budget and he did not want to support financial and he expected to get everything from the local market. That way my connection refused the project and as I knew that New York event was cancelled, I supposed to do something as we promised to help them.

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So, the only thing I could do it was to use our SUPERKOMBAT® World GP 2012 Final on December 22 as a joint venture event where I expected to get some support as all the fighters from K-1 got a 3 fights deal until the end of the year and K-1 provided only one. And fighters as Ismael Londt, Catalin Morosan, Raul Catinas, Sergei Lascenko, Hesdy Gerges, Zabit Zamedov, Benjamin Adegbuyi, Ben Edwards or Paul Slowinsky complained for that and I tried to bring all of them in our Final Elimination and Final events, and for the most of them we did.

As nothing happened beside that we could use the K-1 logo, I invited Mr. Gunil Kim in January in Bucharest to propose him a plan of making the K-1 at least to be exposed on TV with a good production standard as long as he supposed to support financial involvement some big names in our card.

Next day after we met, he proposed me to make a deal with K-1 and to be named as the Executive Producer of the K-1 Heavyweight Division and also all my team from SUPERKOMBAT®, including our Public Relations Manager and our Visual Communications Manager to be involved in the new project.

I accepted the part of the proposal and I told him that I prefer to be SUPERKOMBAT® leader and we could make a deal for long term but also to protect our brand where we worked hard in the last years. At the end, we signed a deal where SUPERKOMBAT® was supposed to make the World Tryouts series for the Heavyweight Division and also that all our World Grand Prix events will become selection for the Final 16 heavyweight event. Next days we started our project and even announced in a press conference, but since nothing happened from K-1 and even they canceled many things that we agreed.

As I tried to ask Mr. Gunil Kim what is happening, the only answer I got it was that his people specialized in marketing advice him to cancel the connection in touch with the SUPERKOMBAT® brand as we looked better in the media and we could cannibalize the brand!

What is true is that many fans made the confusion between our brands and as we move fast, our fans promoted our action worldwide and in the same time K-1 made a lot of mistakes.

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We decided not to make anything public as the K-1 World GP 2012 Final promoted in Zagreb with Fight Channel was close and we did not want to affect the fighters before that, but now we are forced to announce that SUPERKOMBAT® has nothing to do as promotion in any way with K-1 and the only collaboration is between some fighters and their managers as they are engaged in some fight agreements.

Also as a very loyal to the K-1 brand in the last years, I did not want to make noise around, but unfortunately in the last month there were many visible mistakes and we don't want to be associated with the failure of others.

We are sure that the last year collaboration helped us too but we don't accept that our evolution is because of K-1 as long as we supported them in the last year.

For me, the dream that K-1 will be back as old times is not any more trough the K-1 logo, we will do the best slowly and responsible work to happen trough our work or to cooperate with other promotion with the same goal.

With the respect to all the worldwide media and fans we will continue our young project to create new heroes and to provide good events in direct proportion with the budget, if we will be lucky to get investors as others got, for sure we could touch the target.

Sincerely yours,

Eduard Irimia
SUPERKOMBAT® President