

15 Years of Legacy: James Sheedy's Enduring Bond with Sensei Benny "The Jet" Urquidez



James at Sunrise. Early morning sessions are always the best!

With a martial arts journey spanning over five decades, James Sheedy has become a cornerstone of the Australasian martial arts community. From founding national academies to mentoring students across universities, military bases, and dojos, his impact is both deep and wide-reaching. Yet among his many contributions, one relationship stands out for its longevity, and influence: the bond he has developed with Sensei Benny "The Jet" Urquidez.

James first met Sensei Benny in 1988, co-hosting an Australian tour alongside Sensei Glenn Coxon and Sumbody Promotions. What began as a bold initiative evolved into a formalised 15-year annual tradition—an ongoing seminar tour that brings together students, instructors, and martial arts communities across New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Western Australia.

"I bring him to Australia each year for me personally, my blackbelts and students, and for his Australian Ukidokan School," James shares. "He's had an incredible impact on my dojo over the years in the most positive way—as he has with all the gyms and dojos that are part of the Australian tour."

The tour is more than a series of seminars. It's a living tribute to the kind of training that shapes martial artists well beyond the mats—whether in cars, airports, or long walks between sessions. James's reflections reveal a relationship built not on ceremony, but on shared experience and mutual growth.

"He has become my mentor and advisor on all things that represent life, both personally and in the martial arts world—not because I was looking for one, just because it's the way things became."



Sensei Benny at the Melbourne Seminar, 2024



Sensei Benny at the Adelaide seminar 2024

Who Is Benny “The Jet” Urquidez?

A pioneer of full-contact kickboxing in the United States, Benny Urquidez is widely regarded as one of the greatest martial artists of his generation. Nicknamed “The Jet” for his explosive speed and precision, he held six world titles across five weight divisions and remained virtually undefeated over a 27-year career. His style, Ukidokan Kickboxing, blends traditional martial arts with modern combat principles, and his influence spans generations of fighters and instructors. Benny also made his mark in Hollywood, appearing in films alongside Jackie Chan and John Cusack, and was inducted into the International Sports Hall of Fame in 2019.

James’s commitment to martial arts education began in the mid-1970s with Rhee Tae Kwon Do. He went on to co-found the Australian Freestyle Taekwondo Academy (AFTA), which grew to over 90 training centres along Australia’s east coast. He personally established and taught programs at Sydney, Macquarie, and ANU universities for over 18 years, and led training at NSW Police Citizen Youth Clubs, military barracks, and naval bases. His first centre was headquartered at the Glebe Police Citizens Youth Club—a fitting symbol of his dedication to accessible, community-based instruction.

As the 2025 tour kicks off on October 8th, spanning until the 25th, James continues to champion the values that define AMAHOF: excellence, humility, and community. His unwavering commitment to bringing Sensei Benny to Australia year after year has enriched countless lives and deepened the cultural fabric of martial arts in Australasia. Stay tuned to the Benny “The Jet” Urquidez Australian Tour 2025 via social media, and join us in celebrating James Sheedy’s remarkable journey—one that continues to inspire, uplift, and unite martial artists across the region.

Photos courtesy of James Sheedy Personal Defence Studio



Outside James' Dojo on their private beach

Bio: Inducted into both the Australasian Martial Arts Hall of Fame (AMAHOF) and the World Karate Union Hall of Fame in 2023, James Sheedy has dedicated over five decades to the advancement of martial arts across Australasia. Beginning his journey with Rhee Tae Kwon Do in the mid-1970s, James went on to co-found the Australian Freestyle Taekwondo Academy (AFTA), which grew to over 90 training centres nationwide. He has taught at major universities, military bases, and Police Citizen Youth Clubs, and currently operates his full-time dojo in Taren Point, Sydney. James holds a 7th Degree Blackbelt and continues to mentor students through his Personal Defence Studio and the annual Benny “The Jet” Urquidez Australian Tour. For more info see: <https://www.jamesheedy.com.au/>