



# Interview for SFUK with Steve Haydock and Dave Lucas of Applied Fighting Systems

By Richard Killick

For the last couple of months I have been training at a great BJJ class near my home in Caterham, Surrey. I finally got to sit down to chat to the great instructors.

*RK: OK guys let's start with some background*

**Steve Haydock:** I am 28 years old and have been training in BJJ since 1999, so six years. I started off with Dean Taylor, a Rickson Gracie representative in Kent. I trained with him for about a year. I went to LA to train non-stop for 3 days in 2000. I trained solidly doing privates and group classes and got my blue belt after a hellish belt test involving sparring with over 30 people ranging from whites all the way through to blacks. When I came back I moved to the south west and I set up my own club down there at the Self Defence and Combat Sports Academy with Andy Barker, which was the first place teaching BJJ in Devon. Whilst in Devon I took the opportunity to train with Andy and picked up some training in Combat Submission Wrestling and Kickboxing/Muay Thai from him. During my time in Devon I travelled out to LA a couple more times to train at Rickson's academy and I was lucky enough to be invited up to his house to meet him and his family. After 2 years in Devon the classes had really grown but I moved back to Surrey in 2002 to take up my current "day job" position as a head teacher and start AFS with Dave. Since then I have competed in the London Open in 2003 winning the Blue Belt Heavyweight division submitting all my opponents and I received the purple belt from Roberto Atalla in November last year.

**Dave Lucas:** I'm 28 years old and started training martial arts at the age of eight at a local karate club. My background since then is varied, having continued to train karate for many years and then moving into kickboxing, judo, JKD, kali, submission grappling and BJJ – I suppose I went through the same journey that many people have gone through over the past ten years i.e. looking and what is truly functional and can be applied against a fully resisting opponent. I began teaching in 1999 to a small group of friends and when Steve returned from Exeter in 2002 we set up AFS (this was something we had talked about since 1995/6). My BJJ training began three years ago and I received my blue belt from Roberto Atalla in November 2003.

*RK: You seem to have a lot of blue belts in the club, how many at the moment?*

**Steve:** We currently have seven blue belts all graded by Roberto Atalla.

*RK: So how long for the "average person" to get to blue belt level?*

**Steve:** I would say that the average beginner coming in off the street will do it in two years. If you have done something before and you are athletic and coordinated, you could do it in a year, if you train three times a week.

*RK: I know you have a great up and coming club here, what are your goals for the future?*

**Dave:** From my point of view this club is about catering for different people's needs whilst providing quality instruction in a hardworking but fun environment. Our club is many things to its members. People train with us for different reasons ranging from training for competition, fitness, recreation, sport, self-defence or just for fun; it's got to be enjoyable and that's why people keep coming back. I want this club to continue to cater for all of its members needs whilst also ensuring that they are pushed in terms of experience and development.

**Steve:** I have seen a lot of rubbish around, so for me it's about offering something which is of a high quality and making sure that all of our students are of high standard. There are no quick fixes at this club, it takes a lot of work and the warm up in its self is something that you get through it then you have done very well! You have to have that kind of attitude and you have to work hard to progress.

*RK: What classes do you offer at the moment? You offer a great Saturday BJJ class, which is the class I go to, what else do you teach?*



**Steve:** We have a submission wrestling class on Thursday's; we do stand-up work as well, which is striking for MMA. We do stand up and grappling on a Tuesday, which includes a lot of clinch work and takedowns etc.

*RK: Steve, do you use any of the techniques you use when teaching primary kids in your day job, in your martial arts coaching?*

**Steve:** I always like to teach with a touch of humour, because for me the important thing is everyone has to feel relaxed to learn and you can't learn in an environment if you're worried about being bellowed at by the teacher. Also I like to break things down for people into simple parts and make sure the guys have really got an understanding of the principles of BJJ.

**Dave:** It's good to use humour as it breaks the ice when you've got new people that come in. Even when you're an experienced martial artist going to another club can be intimidating – you've got a gang of people there who already know each other and sometimes it's easy to feel like the new kid. Humour is important as it breaks down these walls and gets people involved in the group very quickly. As to the kid's classes, we basically teach the same things we teach the adults to the kids i.e. mixed martial arts, there's no difference – except they (the kids) pick it up quicker!!!

*RK: How do you see the club going in the future?*

**Steve:** I'd like to see the club keep growing; I'd like to fill the hall we've got at the moment, not pack people in, but still have a lot of different people here.

**Dave:** The plan, we've always said, is that we'd like to have our own dedicated gym where people can train when they like. This is our three year goal – although it may happen sooner!!!

**Steve:** We've never been interested in making money, we've been doing this since our early 20's and it's nice to be going on a path towards that opening our own full time academy.

**Dave:** As Steve says, any money we make we put back into the club, we don't do it as a business venture, we buy kit and new mats any money left over goes into saving towards a new gym / providing better training equipment for our members.

*RK: Any tips for beginners.*

**Steve:** The key is to learn how to relax, you've got to relax and if you try and use your strength and your speed early on it will get you into bad habits. You've got to try to relax, you've got to be happy to let people move around and dominate you and learn to not panic in that situation. Your body learns to defend itself and it's not long before you learn to keep your neck and arms defended!

**Dave:** And don't worry about getting tapped! Learn from your mistakes and asked why and how you got tapped then try not to be caught the same way again – although that is not always that easy. I think I can say I've learnt more from being tapped than from tapping others. Oh and keep a notebook and stick to the basics!!!

*RK: Thanks very much for the chat and the great training.*

Any one wanting to contact Dave and Steve can contact them on: 07957492384 or visit the web site at: [www.appliedfightingsystems.co.uk](http://www.appliedfightingsystems.co.uk)