

CEWKA competition - 3rd July 2011



The central England Championships was held at the Wolverhampton University Sports Centre in Walsall on Sunday 3rd July 2011. This venue is modern and up to date with good facilities and a superb sized sports hall. Eight badminton courts and a full time area dedicated to martial arts.

Competitors came from all over England to take part, as well as from Wales and Scotland. The competitors were of a good standard, many of them of national standard and some of international standard. In particular, Sale dojo who had brought down their best students to take part and they are a force to be reckoned with. We were in for a tough time.

We had been warned that the event had not had a good response from the referee's. They had been to the BKF tournament the week before and many were looking for a weekend off. I don't blame them at all, with only 60 plus referee's attending competitions week in and week out, many spending more on petrol than they receive in expenses, we cannot expect them to support every competition that comes along. Even so, on the day enough referee's were there to cover four matted area's for kata and five areas for Kumite, using the mirror refereeing format.

Once again a surprising day for Tobi Ishi Kai. I was expecting a tough day with the kata and that is exactly what we got. From junior to senior we were beaten hands down by the opposition. This came from Sale dojo, Shito Ryu, and many more Shotokan clubs and

associations. While we have the talent and technical ability to win any competition we have to be honest and admit that the degree of difficulty of Wado kata limits us in a high class open competition such as this. We have in the past attended open competitions and won gold, silver and bronze medals, but we are now competing against the best in this country and being technically equal just does not cut the mustard. We have to learn and train top open kata.

Our only medal of the day came from Kumite with Leanne Simpkins winning bronze. Leanne gave her best in two tough fights. Winning the first, after a draw, in sai shia. The two referee's deciding that she had attacked more than her opponent. In the second bout her opponent was a real toughie, being warned three times for excessive contact. The first one was a cross punch to the jaw that would have knocked a mule out. I am surprised that she did not get disqualified but all credit to Leanne for carrying on to the end even though she was visibly shaken up. After these two fights Leanne really did deserve to get that bronze medal.

We have good support from our parents for competition and we hope that it will continue. With a long road ahead preparing our students for next years BKF and EKF championships this support is vital. Training takes time and money, competitions, for mat practice and experience, cost money. We cannot avoid this expense as both are needed if we are to gain the success that our students rightly deserve for their efforts. We are now in the right ball park and it is time for Tobi Ishi Kai to step up to the plate and be recognised as a player in the big league.

Many people will be surprised to hear that I really enjoyed the day. We won nothing in the kata section and yet we gave some excellent performances. I was particularly pleased with Emily Davies, who performed Kururunfa in the second round of her category. It was good to see. Emily lost two flags to one, but I was more pleased that she had stepped out of her comfort zone and had at last performed a kata for open style competition. Tara Wilson with Gojushiho Sho showed much improvement and is beginning to get to grips with this kata and is improving with each performance. Jess Bishop did two good kata, losing in the second round. If you can get her to show you the recording, like me, you will be surprised as to how she lost. As she gets older her time in the lime light will come. The same happened to both Becky Pink and Kyle Harding. They will also gain experience and become good class competitors.

We do not as yet have a strong Kumite team, but we do have plans and with Callum Whatmore, Jordan Price and Leanne Simpkins leading the way, we can build a good team around them. They need time to mature and acquire skills but these will come. As with all we do we aim to succeed, not for ourselves, but for our students and Tobi Ishi Kai. After all their success is our success.

Many thanks for the support you give. Without it there would be nothing.

Regards

Sensei Mark.