

Club News,

KarateFest in Calgary:

Submitted by Sensei Blaine Beemer.

On the weekend of November 7, the Calgary Wado Kai held a significant event. It was significant because it marked the tenth anniversary of the Calgary Wado Kai, and also because it employed a unique format.

Senseis Pam and Dudley Driscoll, with the indispensable organizing efforts of Sensei Danny McKee and a host of other club members, decided to experiment with the standard tournament format to increase the learning value of the event and maximize the amount of participation of the guests. To do this, they ran a coached tournament where participants get feedback, advice and encouragement both during and at the immediate end of their events. All competitors were guaranteed four sparring matches and two performances of kata. There were no medals awarded but gifts were given out to all participants.

The kumite ran like this:

The participants sparred continuously for 30 seconds then were sent to their coach for advice for 15 seconds. They then sparred for another 30 second and received advice again. Then after a final thirty seconds they were given some closing remarks. No points were awarded.

In the kata competition, there were a couple of different formats depending on size of the group, but the most common on was this:

Participants did their kata solo, then were taken aside by a senior judge for advice. They then did their kata again, trying to incorporate those changes. Then they received feedback on more time. The more junior the category, the more kata was done as a group.

As a coach and judge, it was a very satisfying experience to see students get better as they continued in their different matches. Also, because of the relaxed atmosphere, participants could use the advice to try different strategies between “rounds” of sparring – so everyone became better. The coaches had to watch more carefully than in a conventional tournament because they had to pay attention to both competitors in kumite, or the way the student was performing their kata, in order to give advice. Improving the ability to observe and give feedback is a very important skill. The outcome is that everybody participated more thoroughly.

Some key elements present in Calgary and Alberta that weekend helped make this format work. There was a strong pool of enthusiastic coaches. Also, the decision to provide four sparring matches worked out just about right, since the sparring is more continuous than in point fighting, even with the breaks for coaching, it is more tiring. More than four matches might be okay for adults but it was enough for the kids.

The response from participants was very positive. Of 100 surveys returned (148 youth and 65 adults participated) all respondents supported the format. Approximately 75 people said they preferred the format better than a conventional tournament. Everybody thought that it was a very positive learning experience.

Congratulations to the Calgary Wado Kai for having the courage to experiment with a novel format. Although coached karate is not new, especially in western Canada, I have never heard of it being used on this scale before. I understand that there are approximately six tournaments per year in Alberta, so there remains plenty opportunity for students to test their skill without benefit of coaching at those events.

Thanks to the Calgary Wado Kai for hosting such an enjoyable event. May their next ten years be as successful as the first ten!

A note from Sensei Pam and Dudley Driscoll:

We would like to thank Sensei Blaine for his contribution to the 10-year celebration in Calgary. The students found his excellent seminars conducted on Friday and Sunday to be both practical and inspiring. Our relationship with Sensei Blaine continues to be a source of support and friendship in and out of the dojo.

Delhi/Simcoe North News
Submitted by Emily Purchase
On behalf of Sensei Jim Atkinson and Sensei Steve Taylor.

The Delhi-Simcoe North Karate Clinic and 18th annual Tournament, held November 19th through 22nd 1998 were well attended by participants from all over North America.

Head instructors for the clinic sessions were Rokudan Sensei Brad Cosby from Grimsby, Godan Sensei Danny McCoy from Sprucegrove Alberta, Yodan Sensei Norm Volk from St. Albert Alberta. The Senseis worked basic and advanced techniques, challenging students to refine their stances, shotos and kicks and to improve and expand upon their sparring techniques. Having these three highly respected Senseis together as an instruction team, and the attendance of a large number of black belts, including the members of the Shintani Wado Kai Canadian National Team, was a once in a lifetime event.

Kyu belts who attended one or more of the four clinic sessions had the opportunity to train with their own Senseis, who enjoyed being students and sparring with their peers. Local Senseis were especially proud to see some of their youngest students attending the clinic, working with the black belts and keeping up with the advanced techniques.

The best bruise award goes to Sensei Doug Scabar of Alberta, who took a few hard shots to the head with good humour!

While there was no charge to attend the clinic sessions, we appreciated the generous donations received that helped offset the cost, e.g. flying Senseis Danny McCoy and Norm Volk in from Alberta.

We were honoured that Sensei Shintani could attend the 18th Annual Tournament. Young karateka eager to speak with him and get their belts autographed had Sensei surrounded for most of the day. Never on to disappoint, Sensei came well prepared with markers and no less than 3 tubes of fabric paint.

Karateka who attended the clinic sessions got the chance to try out their newly learned techniques at the tournament. Their excitement was contagious. Controlled techniques and honourable behavior resulted in a fun, high-energy tournament and no bloody noses! Sensei Ton Mattie praised the adult brown belt division (plus 1 lone blue belt woman who took first place in kumite) for the high quality of technique and control performed during competition.

There were many new kyu belts competing for the very first time. While not all of them took home medals, they gave their best effort and made their Sensei's proud.

Thanks to Sensei Denis Labbe for coordinating the fast-paced scorekeeping tables and score sheet trouble shooting.

The entire four-day event was captured on video by dedicated karate dad, Mike Lee. This is an excellent visual record of what Senseis Brad, Danny and Norm taught, and how this instruction was incorporated at the tournament.

Special thanks to ALL the karateka and their families whose assistance during the clinic and tournament kept things running smoothly. Your enthusiasm for Wado Kai is greatly appreciated.

We hope that everyone at the clinic shares what they have learned with club members who were unable to attend. The Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation remains strong and grows when we learn new techniques for our instructors and peers, and share our knowledge with others.

Most of all, we hope that everyone had fun. The clinics and Tournament reunited old friends, some from thousands of miles away. Wado Kai is more than just a group of karate clubs; we like to think of ourselves as family, like-minded people with a collective passion for karate.

Please come back again next year!