

RING ETIQUETTE

By Sensei Neil Prime

(re-printed from Niagara North Newsletter 17)

Whenever I write an article, no matter what the topic is, I find myself referring to the essence of karate and why we study karate. It is all a part of bettering ourselves and showing respect to other people. It is such a simple concept, yet in life dealings it is so important.

When competing in karate tournaments we as competitors want to show conviction and confidence. When performing kata this is very important because we want the judges to get the impression that what we are doing is for real. When sparring, quite often the aggressor with a sharp kiai (shout) can draw the attention of the judges to their technique.

Being able to turn on intensity and turn it off again is something that we need to strive for. At the end of any match, win or lose, you should be able to look your opponent and the judges directly into the eyes and bow out of respect knowing that you have done your best.

When performing kata you must also show this type of emotion to the judges. Your job is to convince them that you are in control of your actions. This starts by bowing into the ring, announcing your kata with clarity and confidence in your voice (without yelling), performing the kata with total certainty, and waiting for your marks to be presented showing absolute humility.

I don't even look at the scores myself. Let the scorekeepers keep track and if you are fortunate enough at the end of the competition to receive the recognition of placing, then receive that award graciously. If you don't place, then accept it as a positive way of saying the competitors who did place had the right combination of technique and attitude, and you can strive harder for the next tournament.

When sparring you must be in control. Control can mean many different things.

You must control your technique. Most obvious, is so that nobody gets hurt but you must control where it is going. So often I have seen an aggressive karateka throw flurry after flurry of combinations all failing to clearly score. I say clearly because the judges have to see your technique. If it is smothered or short, you're not going to get credit. You must deliberately place your techniques in the scoring zone before your opponent has a chance to stop them.

Instead of getting frustrated at yourself or the judges, just work on getting your technique inside the scoring zone.

You must also control your emotions when you have been scored on. Don't look around and wonder what the heck is going on. The judges aren't going to give points away for free so tighten your defence and pick up your offence and get that point back.

One of the hardest things to control is your reaction if you have been hit, even if it is a hit that could disqualify your opponent (eg. a hit to the head).

It is not done on purpose by your sparring partner so to react without reacting, although this may be difficult, is something you must learn to do.

I remember former World Champion Joe Lewis state an analogy... "You don't see a dog whimper during a fight, he'll simply lick his wounds once it is over". Mr. Lewis isn't really comparing people to dogs, but what he is saying is that if you show that you have been hurt, you have been beat.

Obviously nobody wants to get hurt, but it takes courage to be hurt and not show it.

If you ever get hit and try to make it apparent to the judges that you have been hit just to win the match, then you will learn nothing from karate.

I think most of us know the difference between right and wrong, and the true karate way is to follow the right path.

When approaching a tournament keep in mind what we practice in class. Ask yourself if what you are doing is the best you can do. Not everyone is going to win tournament trophies, but everyone has the potential to feel good about what they are doing.

REFLECTION ON MY FIRST YEAR OF KARATE

By Nestor Komar, St.Catharines Ontario.

(re-printed from Niagara North Newsletter 21)

Sometimes it is difficult to believe that I've completed a year of Karate study and that I've progressed so far. Here are some of my thoughts about the past year in Wado Kai.

I initially joined the dojo strictly as a form of exercise. I had been exercising most of my life in fitness clubs and at home in order to stay in shape. As of late it became more and more difficult to maintain a regular workout schedule at home and Sensei Neil was persistently suggesting that I try karate as an alternative form of workout.

Reluctantly, I showed up at the Niagara St. dojo with sweats on, thoroughly unprepared for what I was about to face. My normal workouts were generally one hour in length, here we began with one hour of rather serious stretching before actually getting down to karate routines! The stretches were nothing similar to what I was used to doing, so they were painful at first. As I watched the veteran senseis stretching to their maximums I thought that I would never be able to come close to achieving that level of extension.

Intimidation is the word that comes to mind when I remember first putting on my sparring pads and facing off against one of the other students. My only consolation was that other new members must have certainly been feeling the same consternation and fear as me. I thought that my pace and reaction time was always too slow and that I was like the dance partner with two left feet you always dreaded dancing with.

Tournament participation is mandatory and I openly feared facing a series of judges who would, in my own paranoid mind, be ridiculing me for my lack of knowledge, experience and finesse. To my surprise, I came away from my first tournament with a couple of certificates and a small level of confidence.

Through the year, I learned to count in Japanese, and to understand many of the countless commands such as zenkutsu-dache, gedan-barai and others, but more importantly, I have come to learn more of the philosophy of Karate.

I believe that, above all, the cornerstone of this philosophy is humility and that it is displayed in everything that we do, from bowing in to the dojo, to posing questions respectfully to our senseis, and to our senseis bowing in respect to their class. It truly goes full circle. They let us know that they are still learning as students and this gives encouragement to continue with our learning.

My proudest moment was the day I received my yellow belt because I realized that all the work that was done during that year was recognized and that I had indeed progressed, even if only incrementally.

Workouts are still strenuous, as karate is not for the faint of heart, and I regularly come home with pains and bruises. My wife often muses as to why her forty-one year-old kid

continues to go week after week, work out like crazy and occasionally get hurt. Little does she know that each battle scar is worn proudly as a badge of honour.

What a year this has been!

4TH ANNUAL NORTHWEST ONTARIO WADO KAI KARATE TOURNAMENT
(Ken Brown Memorial)
by Sensei Duane Wenmann.

On Saturday the 17th of April 1999, 153 competitors from Wawa, White River, Manitowadge, Ft.Frances, Hearst, Timmins, Grimsby, St. Catherines, Welland, and Rouyn-Noranda Que converged on the Michipicoten High School gymnasium for the 4th Annual Northwest Ontario Wado Kai Karate Tournament. Held in memory of the late Ken Brown Jr. of Michipicoten Wado Kai, this year's tournament was overseen by Rokudan (6th degree Black Belt) Sensei Richard Leveille of White River. Also present for the day's competition were Sensei Willy Lebrun (6th Dan -Timmins) and Sensei Roger St.Arneault (6th Dan - Rouyn-Noranda). As expected the men's Sandan and up division proved quite educational and entertaining. Sensei Roger St Arneault and Sensei Neil Prime delivered an excellent show for both participants and spectators in the final round of kumite competition. In the end, Sensei St Arneault's defence and powerful counters neutralized Sensei Prime's lightning fast kicks.

Awards were presented for twenty-three (23) divisions from 5 yr old white belts to Adult Men's and Lady's Black Belts.

During the day Sensei Jack Gingras of Welland and Sensei Darren Marshall of Lindsay (both formerly of Wawa) performed a brief demonstration with the "shindo" baton. Sensei Gingras promises to bring more shindo to the north next year.

On the Friday night prior to the tournament Sensei Leveille held a short workout at the high school. We were amazed by this group from Southern Ontario who walked right into the dojo after arriving only minutes earlier. Many thanks to all those persons that traveled so far to make this tournament such a success. Special mention to Sensei Peter Leitch (St. Catherines) who we understand took a leave from work somewhere in Texas and flew up to join us for the weekend.

Results of the tournament are as follows;

Boy's & Girl's Toddler white/yellow:

Kata; 1st- Pierre Whissell, 2nd- Brendan Sutherland, 3rd- Dillon Chouinard
Kumite; 1st- Pierre Whissell, 2nd- Dillon Chouinard, 3rd- Jesse Berube

Boy's Midget white/yellow:

Kata; 1st- Patrick Shortt, 2nd- David Lamoureux, 3rd- Dustin Shultz
Kumite; 1st-Dustin Shultz, 2nd- Patrick Shortt, 3rd- Darrin McLeod

Girl's Midget white/yellow:

Kata; 1st-Veronyk Wilson, 2nd-Natashia Parmar, 3rd- Stephanie Lebrun
Kumite; 1st- Veronyk Wilson, 2nd- Natashia Parmar, 3rd- Stephanie Lebrun

Boy's & Girl's Mini Pee-Wee white/yellow:

Combined Kata; 1st- Josee Whissell, 2nd- Maurice Lapage, 3rd- Krysteena Gadzala
Boy's Kumite; 1st-Mathew Duton, 2nd- Eric Morin, 3rd- Maurice Lepage
Girl's Kumite; 1st- Caitlin Cooke, 2nd- Sara Dumoulin, 3rd- Shannon Hannan

Mini Pee-Wee Boy's org/grn:

Kata; 1st- Josten Tardif, 2nd- Nicholas Proulx-Begin, 3rd- Daniel McCoy
Kumite: 1st- Josten Tardif, 2nd- Nicholas Proulx-Begin, 3rd- Yash Parmar

Mini Pee-Wee Girl's org/grn:

Kata; 1st- Jessica Denommee , 2nd- Kayla Cresswell, 3rd- Elizabeth Maze
Kumite; 1st- Jessica Denommee , 2nd- Kayla Cresswell, 3rd- Elizabeth Maze

Pee-Wee Girl's white/ylw:

Kata; 1st- Domonique Dumoulin, 2nd- Tiffanie Wilson, 3rd- Alexandra Freeman
Kumite; 1st- Domonique Dumoulin, 2nd- Leslie Howat, 3rd- Tiffanie Wilson

Pee-Wee Boy's org/green:

Kata; 1st- Benoit Gosselin, 2nd- Paul Henri Proulx-Begin, 3rd- Blain Hopper
Kumite; 1st- Jamie Grondin, 2nd- Brian Leclerc, 3rd- Martin Maze

Pee-Wee Girl's org/green:

Kata; 1st- Melina Mallette, 2nd- Angele Belanger, 3rd- Sarah Wever
Kumite; 1st- Andrea Myers, 2nd- Sarah Wever, 3rd- Angele Belanger

Pee-Wee/Junior Girl's blue/brn:

Kata; 1st- Renee Desgagne, 2nd- Shawna Barrett
Kumite; 1st- Shawna Barrett, 2nd- Renee Desgagne

Pee-Wee Boy's blue/brn/red:

Kata; 1st- Tim Harvey, 2nd- Patrick Levesque, 3rd- Ted Greenwood
Kumite; 1st- Ted Greenwood, 2nd- Patrick Levesque, 3rd- Tyler Lively

Junior Girl's white/yellow:

Kata; 1st- Jodie Grondin, 2nd- Cassandra Robert, 3rd- Dayna Palsen
Kumite; 1st- Dayna Palsen, 2nd- Jodie Grondin, 3rd- Cassandra Robert

Junior Boy's org/green:

Kata; 1st- Rene Tardif, 2nd- Michael Maze, 3rd- Simon Martin
Kumite; 1st- Rene Tardif, 2nd- Simon Martin, 3rd- Michael Maze

Junior Boy's blue/brn/red:

Kata; 1st- Adam Wenmann, 2nd - Daniel Lapointe, 3rd- Joel Charlebois
Kumite; 1st-Joel Charlebois, 2nd- Darryl Lapierre ,3rd- David Cheff

Adult Women white/ylw:

Kata: 1st- Cheryl Hettman, 2nd- Mary Ellen Wenmann, 3rd- Linda MacNeil

Kumite; 1st-Sylvia Shortt, 2nd- Cheryl Hettman, 3rd- Mary Ellen Wenmann

Adult Men white/yellow:

Kata; 1st- Michael Williams, 2nd- Rick Greenwood, 3rd- Daniel Klassen

Kumite; 1st Michael Williams, 2nd- Jim Wilson, 3rd- Dan Klassen

Adult Women org/grn:

Kata; 1st- Aline Lafrance, 2nd- Suyin Maze

Kumite; 1st- Suyin Maze, 2nd- Aline Lafrance

Adult Men org/grn:

Kata; 1st- Art Lyszak, 2nd- Darcy Shelton, 3rd- Nelson Ouellette

Kumite; 1st- Marcel Tardif, 2nd- Mario Chouinard, 3rd- Nelson Ouellette

Adult Women blue/brn/red:

Kata; 1st- Julie Tegel, 2nd- Danielle Tardif, 3rd- Kristine Hales

Kumite; 1st- Joel Forget, 2nd- Nil, 3rd- Danielle Tardif

Adult Men blue/brn/red:

Kata; 1st- Eugene Contant, 2nd- Jonathan Lacombe, 3rd- Gilles Bernier

Kumite; 1st- Eugene Contant, 2nd- Michael Camden, 3rd- Gilles Bernier

Women's Shodan/Nidan:

Mandatory Kata; 1st- Monique Lebrun, 2nd- Julie Gagnon, 3rd- Rachel Deschamps

Optional Kata; 1st- Monique Lebrun, 2nd- Julie Gagnon, 3rd- Solange Skeoch

Kumite; 1st- Erin Frazier, 2nd- Julie Gagnon, 3rd- Monique Lebrun

Men's Shodan/Nidan:

Mandatory Kata; 1st- Darren Marshall, 2nd- Sanford Dewitt, 3rd- Duane Wenmann

Optional Kata; 1st- Michel Gosselin, 2nd- Darren Marshall, 3rd- Claude Grondin

Kumite; 1st- Michel Gosselin, 2nd- Claude Boucher, 3rd- Scott Robinson

Men's Sandan -up :

Mandatory Kata; 1st- Billy Lebrun, 2nd- Roger St Arneault, 3rd- Randy Quarrell

Optional Kata; 1st- Roger St Arneault, 2nd- Billy Lebrun, 3rd- Roger Deschamps

Kumite; 1st- Roger St Arneault, 2nd- Neil Prime, 3rd- Ron White

South Calgary Karate Tournament A Media Frenzy
By Sensei Heather Fidyk and Samantha Thrift, Calgary.

Well, all right ... perhaps the tournament was not media frenzy. However, the local television station, the A-Channel, did arrive to film and interview the young participants. The children's footage enhanced the station's promotion of their Saturday morning cartoon line-up. The experience added to the kids' enjoyment of the tournament, especially later on, when they saw themselves on television in their Gis, talking to local celebrities.

On Saturday March 13th, 1999, Sensei Heather Fidyk directed the third annual spring Karate tournament at West Island College. Hosted by the South Calgary Wado Kai Karate Club, the events commenced at ten a.m. with the usual line-up of participants and introductions of senseis. With enthusiasm and strong spirits, white and yellow belt competitors performed in the morning. The proficiency of these well-populated ranks never ceases to rise and judging their rings was a pleasurable experience for the higher ranks.

After a full morning of judging and a small break for lunch, the always-entertaining black belt division delighted spectators and students alike. At the start, the numerous competitors were divided into four teams. (A pleasant change, the impressive number of female black belt contenders enabled an equal representation within each squad.) First, the team kata event was run. Two competitors simultaneously performed a kata, which had been announced to them by a judge. At the end of the kata, a panel of three judges voted, thus indicating a winner. Points were then awarded to the winning individual's team. Next, the kumite event took place. Due to injuries, kyu belts Conner Ferster (brown belt), Rick Persad (brown belt), and Samantha Thrift (Shodan Ho) were invited to round out the teams (and with a healthy dose of karate spirit, they happily obliged). The team kumite event featured similarly ranked black belts sparring for two full minutes, accumulating points for their team. Ultimately, Sensei Chris Ashby (from Okotoks) led her team to victory. Senseis Dan McKee, John Burnell, Ron Malaka, and Kyle Lund completed this gold medal crew.

For the rest of the afternoon, orange through brown belt competition took place. The kyu belts could take part in three different events: kata, kumite and pad kumite. One of the most noticeable effects of having three categories, instead of two, was the opportunity for more children to place in an event. A participatory ribbon was presented to those students who did not place in an event, ensuring that all students received recognition and thanks for their fantastic effort. Since there were approximately 200 participants, the judges, score- and time- keepers had their work cut out for them. The day finished with a banquet held at the Oriental Phoenix restaurant in downtown Calgary, where all attendees enjoyed tasty food and warm conversation.

The high turnout at this tournament was due, in part, to the province-wide participation of visiting clubs. In addition to the South Calgary Wado Kai Club, representatives from the University of Calgary, Okotoks, Canmore, Brooks, St. Albert, Stony Plain, and the

Bushido club from Edmonton attended. We extend our deepest thanks to these clubs for their support and wish to acknowledge their role in this tournament's success.

The next South Calgary Wado Kai Karate Club tournament will be held on Saturday March 11th, 2000. We look forward to seeing you and your students in the new millennium.

ON THE ROAD NORTH

By Sensei Jim Atkinson, Delhi Wado Kai

On the weekend of March 27, 1999 a group from Delhi Wado Kai traveled to Hearst to attend the Hearst Shai. We had the honour of travelling with Sensei Peter Ruch and Sensei Corry Ruch (Poopsie Junior). During the 12-hour journey we were in search of a giant buffalo that Sensei Peter told us about.

After passing town after town and finding a bear, cow, fish, and a flying saucer, we finally found the giant buffalo by mistake on a different road than Sensei Peter told us it was on.

After the tournament we took a challenge from the North in a bowling game. Little did we know they brought in some bowling champs and were able to beat the South by a close margin.

The tournament hosted by Sensei Roger and Rachel Deshamps was very well run, and was attended by more than 250 competitors. Supporters came from all over: Port Francis, Rouyn-Noranda, Timmins, Wawa, Kapaskasing, Delhi, Simcoe and Fort Erie.

Our hosts were able to create a very warm and friendly atmosphere amidst the exciting competition. It was a great experience and good time for myself and the students who traveled with me and I look forward to doing it again.

Students who traveled north were:

Delhi:

Sensei Jim Roloson
Sensei Spring Kaye
Bruce Lee
Melissa Beaulieu
Mikaela Atkinson
Brian Saunders
Angela Saunders
Brad Matachek
Chantel DeCloet

Fort Erie:

Sensei Peter Ruch

Simcoe:

Sensei Corry Ruch