

Review of JCCC Junior Tournament – May 24, 2009

As reported by MKC on-the-spot reporter David Hayashida

We had the largest turn out for the Junior tournament in (I think) our club's history! 11 up and coming Kendoka were at the tournament to show everyone else their skills and how well they can do. There was about 65 Juniors from 8 different Kendo dojo's including one from Manitoba and another from Ottawa.

For most, it was the very first tournament. Paul Chung, Takeo Hirasawa, Sean Kim, John Shin, Alex Vjestica and Mark Yung made their first appearance on the Kendo stage. The first of many I'm sure. Also our more experienced members of Brennen Hayashida, Rowyn Hayashida, Michelle Kwon, Peter Ro and last but not least Owen Yamada were there to cheer and show our new guys what to do.

I, as the self appointed Junior coach (only because at one point my sons made up ½ our Junior team) was very please and most impressed by our players. They may not have won many trophies, but I think they all dug down and did their best kendo that I've ever seen them do. So watch out at practice I'm going to expect much more from you now, ha ha ha...

I apologize in advance if I make any score errors or spelling etc. It is hard to track all of you and then at times I have do decide on if I'm playing the parent or the coach. (I do the best I can with this old, bad memory of mine.)

As usual, the first competition was the Non Bogu category. In this division we had Paul Chung and John Shin. For both it was their first competition. There was a lot of competition as there was over twenty Kendoka in this category.

Paul and John were on different courts at almost the same time. I missed John's match, as Paul appeared to be very nervous. I believe John did not make it past his first round, but he did have a bye, which in my books counts as a victory.

Paul had a bye in the first round as well. Then he did some of the best kendo I've ever seen him do. His Kei was amazing. Unfortunately, he did not advance past that round and he shouldn't feel bad as his opponent won the category.

Well done Paul and John. Hopefully the first of many more tournaments.

Next was the "B" division or 10yrs and younger. Here we had to veterans competing with Rowyn and Michelle. This category was fought in a round robin. Both Michelle and Rowyn had at least 2 matches. There were 3 groups of 3. Each group fought everyone in their group and the best moved on. There was no overtime for these competitors.

Michelle was first up in court "A". She fought in the second and third matches, which was pretty tough as she fought twice in a row. Michelle's first opponent was from JCCC and she won this match with two beautiful Mens and a score of 2 - 0. Her next opponent was from Manitoba. Again Michelle won hands down with 2 more Mens, just as good as her first two. She was on her way to the finals. Well-done Michelle.

Rowyn was in the third group of this division and fought in Court "B". He got luckier and fought in the

first and third matches of his group. His first opponent was also from JCCC. Their match was pretty close and Rowyn tried very hard but unfortunately his opponent scored a Men. The match ended 0-1. Rowyn's next opponent was from Ottawa. Again Rowyn tried his best and I thought he scored a couple of time but the match ended in a tie and he did not advance to the finals.

I was so excited Michelle was in the finals I forgot to write down the scores, but I think it went like this, She fought in the first and third matches of the round robin. Both of her opponents I believe were from JCCC. She took her first match with a 1-0 score. Another Men I believe. Her opponent also lost to the next JCCC player and now it was down to Michelle and the other player from JCCC. I hate to say it but I think the judges favored the JCCC player as he was very small. The small guy from JCCC managed to score a Men, which I didn't think was that good and then he stuck to Michelle like glue. If this was a senior tournament I'm sure there would have been a penalty. Unfortunately time ran out and several of the Men and Kote I though Michelle scored as not seen in the judges eyes.

Still Michelle did a fantastic job, she fought hard and well and took 2nd place in the category.

In the "C" division we had Sean and Alex (at their first ever tournament) along with our veterans Brennen, Peter and Owen.

I found it hard to keep track of all of our players and I apologize if I've gotten your scores wrong. I even missed my own son's match.

First off in Court "A" we had Brennen and Alex. Brennen was first off against a Kendoka from Jung Ko. Brennen scored (as usual) Do first off. Unfortunately the other player managed to battle back and scored 2 points on Brennen to take the match.

Alex was up next in Court "A". He faced a boy from Manitoba. Alex did an amazing job in his first ever match and scored a Do and an Men to take the match 2 - 0. Well-done Alex! Alex's next opponent was also from Jung Ko. Again Alex fought very well and hard but the Jung Ko player took the match with 2 Men.

On the other side of the hall, Sean was first up in Court "B". I didn't see this match but I heard Sean fought well but unfortunately stepped out of bounds twice and the opponent from JCCC won the match.

Next up in Court "B" was Peter. Peter had another tough opponent from Jung Ko. Peter scored a Men on him, but then he unfortunately lost as the Jung Ko player came back with 2 Kote to take the match.

Last but not least was Owen. He managed to get a bye in the first round. He then had a very long and hard fight with a Kendoka from Etobicoke (I think). It was a very long match, which went into encho. Owen was victorious as he took the match with a beautiful Kote.

Owen then faced an opponent from JCCC. Again it was pretty evenly matched. Owen's opponent scored a Men, but then stepped out of bounds twice so the score was tied. Again into encho and it must have been at least 15 minutes later Owen unfortunately lost to a pretty light Men.

Next up we had the team matches. We had 3 full teams. I matched them up as follows:
Michelle, Peter and Owen in one team.
Rowyn, Alex and Brennen in another team.

Sean, Takeo and Mark as the final team.

I tried to match up our teams against teams I hoped they could win against.

First up on court "A" we had Michelle, Peter and Owen. They were up against the JCCC "C" team. Michelle fought first. It was a good match which time ran out and ended in a tie. Peter was next. He fought very well but his opponent, managed to score 2 Men on him and took the match. It was now up to Owen. I think he was exhausted from his other 2 very long matches. Still he fought very well and tied his opponent.

Next in the same court we had Rowyn, Alex and Brennen. They fought Junko's "A" team. They were all 14 and 15 yrs old. Rowyn fought first and did a great job. He constantly attacked but lost to 1 Men. Alex was second. He too fought very hard and did his best, but also lost to 1 Men. Brennen as the last one up. Brennen also fought better than I've seen him fight in a long time. His opponent scored a Do on him, but he didn't quit or give up an managed to score a Men and tie his match. Well-done boys! You took on and did well against older more advanced Kendoka.

Finally we had Sean, Takeo and Mark. Our least experienced team, but they fought well. They were against Jung Ko "B" team. Sean was up first and fought pretty well. He unfortunately lost by just one point a Do. Next was Takeo. Again he fought very well, but I think he lost out to a Men. Finally Mark was up. He too lost out to a Do. Not too bad for the first time out to lose by just one point each.

It was my fault with the team match-up as JCCC "C" took the championships and had I match it differently I'm sure Michelle, Peter and Owen would have met this team in the finals. Sorry about that guys.

All in all I think our Junior Kendoka did a fantastic job. They put their best foot forward and tried their hardest. You all did a fantastic job and made our club proud. Congratulations again to Michelle for winning 2nd place in the "B" division.

There are many, many tournaments to come so don't worry about winning trophies or medals. Those are nice to have, but as long as all of you learn something and can take that experience away with you and build on it, You are always going to be a winner. (Which I think you all are.)

See you all at keiko

David