

THE FIRST ENGLISH KARATE COUNCIL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS SUNDAY 17 MAY 2015

The English Karate Council is a little over two years old now, and any doubts about its legitimacy as a representative of karate in this country would surely be dispelled upon witnessing the inaugural Championships and Showcase, held at the world renowned Ponds Forge International Centre on May 17th 2015.

The five member-bodies that comprise the EKC are: AMA, FEKO, KE, KUGB, and most recently the EUKF. Their Presidents and Boards include some of the most eminent names in English karate, dating back to its introduction in the fifties, plus national and international stars of more recent decades. Such luminaries as Andy Sherry and Bob Poynton were joined by former World Champions, Vic Charles, Abdu Shaher and Frank Brennan, and International figures such as Peter Allen, Terry Pottage, Ian Cuthbert and Noel Mantock and recent additions Joe Anderson and Simon Kidd.

The first EKC National Championships was planned to be both a bringing together of these groups in a unified celebration of karate, and an opportunity for the best exponents of each group to meet in competition to find true National Champions in each discipline and division. Member bodies were permitted to field up to four competitors in individual categories in Kata and Kumite, from cadet to veteran age range. Almost 200 karateka participated, many of them association squad members and national and International champions.

Referee Co-ordinator for the day was Terry Pottage, working with a team of 42 officials from the five member federations, all of whom gave their time for free. The event was run on six tatami for the elimination rounds from 10:30am to around 3pm. Just before 4pm the hall was cleared, allowing all the finalists and officials to assemble for their march in to the auditorium, where they and the spectators were addressed by EKC Chairman John Bell.

John welcomed all present and thanked everyone involved for their tireless efforts in bringing the dream of a unified national championships to fruition. He noted that the Lord Mayor of Sheffield had been invited as a VIP, but was unable to attend due to his wife's illness, and he asked all those assembled to join him in wishing her well.

The finals were opened by a demonstration led by KUGB star John Bruce. The dramatic routine was met by warm applause and presaged an exciting finish to the day's competition.

All the final matches were fiercely contested, and medals were presented by members of the EKC Board. Many of the competitors commented very positively on the high quality of the medals, which carried the EKC logo. All the competitors and officials received a commemorative certificate of participation.

Honours were remarkably even amongst the member bodies and the day was characterised by good humour and good sportsmanship, with a great spirit of camaraderie commented on by Chairman John Bell and all Board members.

MC for the day was FEKO's Jim Reece. Table Officials were led by Paul Holmes, and front of house

team was Anne Allen and Glennis Larum. Results and tatami management were handled by Jeff Grace, a veteran and consummate professional in the role.

There were very few injuries on the day and these were handled promptly and efficiently by Darryl Bagley and his medical team.

The Championships concluded just after 7pm.

The EKC views this as another large step on our journey towards National Governing Body (NGB) recognition and look forward to many future National Championships.