

## 7<sup>th</sup> World SKI Championships – Bali

Kerrie Flynn (Coach)

The 7<sup>th</sup> World SKI Championships was held in the Convention Centre of the Sheraton Nusa Indah. The Australian Team took up residence at the Sheraton so just a short walk across the courtyard and we were at the tournament.

The Team spent their second night in Bali getting together for a Team dinner. Looking smart in their dress uniforms they were driven in small tarago-type buses down crowded back streets to the beach where they got a chance to indulge in the local cuisine, sitting on chairs that sunk deeper into the sand as the night went on and drinking green fanta that tasted somewhat like cough mixture. The downpour of rain although dampening our Team Manager, was not enough to dampen our spirits as the food arrived and was quickly devoured by the hungry Aussies. Our men's Team Kata, always diligent, took the time to get a quick practice session in before departing back for our Hotel.

The tournament was held in a very large carpeted, air-conditioned room with gallery boxes at either end and a stage on one side for the dignitaries of the Championship. Stands were erected under the two gallery boxes and on the side opposite the stage and four courts were laid out in the middle. The mats that were put down were brand new but unfortunately were laid upside down with the slippery side surface up. This was not noticed by officials until most of the kata had been completed and then competitors and officials alike scurried around the floor changing the mats, much to the competitors relief.

The first day saw the Australian juniors start us off on a high, and what a high! Karryn Jenkins grabbed Australia's first medal taking Silver in the 14-15yrs girls kata with Kanku-Sho and then, totally psyched up, she convincingly won each of her fights to take the Gold in kumite. Samantha Short also performed very strongly in the 14-15yrs division placing 4<sup>th</sup> in kata and 5<sup>th</sup> in kumite.

Our Junior boys – David Neal, Mark Delevski and David Delevski although putting in strong performances did not strike the same fortune as our girls.

Zivko Delevski took Australia's medal count to three with another Silver medal, this time in the Mens 45-49yrs kata with a great Unsu – yes, Unsu. Zivko told me he hadn't actually been practising Unsu but that it was scoring better so he thought that was the way to go – and wasn't he right. He then backed up his kata performance by getting into the finals of his age division kumite. I have to note here that Zivko's achievements in these events was all the more impressive as he was quite sick during the tournament, having to spend the next two days in Bali in bed and then returning home with a temperature of 39 degrees and more bed-rest.

Jeff McCauley pulled out all stops against a very strong field to place 4<sup>th</sup> in the 50-54yrs kata with a great display of Meikyo and then fought very strongly to take 5<sup>th</sup> in kumite.

Day two started with the Opening Ceremony. The Indonesians had managed to get Megawati to attend and hence all the athletes going into the room were scanned for metal objects and their bags were searched. The athletes kept themselves amused, while waiting for the start of the ceremony, with the Mexican wave and displays from different individuals of their unique skills. Speeches were given by Mr Tando from Indonesia, Kanazawa Kancho and Megawati. A traditional Indonesian dance was then performed followed by a very impressive demonstration by two blind male martial artists.

Katherine Krilov won her elimination bouts and put Australia into the Womens finals in Kata. Performing Gojushiho Dai Katherine placed a very credible 6<sup>th</sup>.

Our men in Individual kata did not make it through to the finals but all of them – Jai, Hovik, Gery and Richard put in solid performances that ended in close decisions.

Steven, Richard and Kevin - our Men's Team Kata - performed Gojushiho Dai in an incredible performance of precision and timing to finish a very respectable 10th place.

An incredible display of inner strength and commitment was shown by both Fiona Rynne, who took three stitches (pretty blue ones curtesy of Dr Mansberg) to a gash in her forehead and returned to the ring to take home Silver in the Women's +60kg kumite, and Patricia Diaz-Harada who took out 4<sup>th</sup> place in the same division after copping a hit that resulted in a broken nose.

Tiffany and Katherine fought well in their bouts in the Under 60kg division but were beaten by more experienced fighters.

After two byes and a lifetime wait to compete Darren Brailey was narrowly defeated by his opponent. Jai Coker won his first bout but was likewise narrowly defeated by his 2<sup>nd</sup> round opponent. Steven Meek, Kevin Brady and Hovik Keshishian came up against some very experienced fighters that put a stop to their Individual kumite at this Worlds. Richard Chang drew Tanaka from Japan first up. Unfortunate, Richard fought well however with several World Championships under his belt (excuse the pun) Tanaka had the experience to win the fight.

Craig Wheele had the best performance of our men in individual kumite. Craig started off his first fight a little hesitantly but his confidence grew and after his 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive win he had made it into the finals. And that was how we ended day two, with Craig in the finals and our Women's and Men's Team Kumite to be contested the next day.

Day three and Craig was first cab off the rank. His opponent non other than Tanaka who Richard had faced in his first round. Craig looked confident and fast out there but Tanaka had his measure and won the match. Tanaka kept on his winning way and eventually took out the Gold medal in the 65-75kg Men's division.

Our Women's Team kumite came up against a very strong Venezuela. Katherine, Fiona and Patricia all fought well but the bout ended with a 2-0 victory to our opponents. I must say too that it was a surprise (if not a shock) to see Venezuela up 2-0 and sending on their last fighter with the instructions to run around and not fight.

They went on to play this tactic with other Teams, much to everyone's frustration and disbelief and then when they were on the receiving end of a 2-0 loss they did not fight their last fighter at all. So much for 'fighting spirit' and good sportsmanship.

Our Men's Team started off well with Darren making short work of his Mexican opponent. Richard fought well but Mexico took the next win. Jai breezed through the next fight – another win to Australia. Craig couldn't halt the next Mexican win and so it was down to the last two competitors – Hovik and his opponent. This was an exciting last match. Both Hovik and his competitor were the same size and took a bit of time to suss each other out. The Mexican scored first but Hovik quickly took the point back. The last few seconds of the bout and Hovik attacked, the Mexican countered and the score went 2-1 Mexico's way.

All in all Australia finished 7<sup>th</sup> out of 42 countries (taking into account of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> which was presented as equal 3<sup>rd</sup> placings). The countries that took out the top six positions – from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> - were: Japan, Venezuela, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Italy and Iran.

A wonderful achievement!

I must make mention here too of our three Referees, Zivko, Memduh and Les. Australia should not only be proud of its athletes but its Referees as well because these guys did a heck of a job. Not only was their Refereeing of the highest standard throughout the tournament but they remained cool and calm in sometimes trying circumstances and always found some spare time to visit the Australian group and give them encouragement.

I cannot finish this without mentioning what a pleasure it was to have such strong support from all the Aussies in the stands. Many relatives and friends had come to support the Australian Team and support they really did. Every time an Australian stepped onto the mat you could hear the chant of 'Aussie, Aussie, Aussie'. It was a real boost to have that kind of support.

Every member of the Team I spoke with after the Championships indicated that they have every intention of making it into the SKI Australian Team that will compete at the next World Championships in 2003. If this year's results are anything to go on – Australia's future is looking very bright!!