

JVI Presidents Report June 2011.

With this year at the halfway mark it is pleasing to listen to the JVI Registrar, Greg Bensted, announce membership in Victoria has reached a significant milestone, recently topping the one thousand mark. This equates to over a 50% increase since 2007. Our thanks and appreciation goes out to the many Club coaches and administrators who work tirelessly, mostly in the evenings, to develop this sport we all love.

The all important OJU Championships have been run since the last report with a number of Victorians now in a strong position for Olympic selection. Congratulations to Victorian winners, Hannah Trotter, Carli Renzi, Ivo dos Santos, Mark Anthony and Daniel Kelly. Young People and Cadets winners were Tom Bensted, Eoin Coughlan and Aoife Coughlan.

With the mention of milestones earlier it is also particularly pleasing to announce the slightly unexpected victory of Ben Donegan who blistered through the 73kgs class in the senior men's Nationals a couple of weeks ago to take out his first senior championship. For those of you who have known Ben, as I have, and watched him develop into the player, and now coach, it must be said this win is well deserved.

Other winners in their respective classes were Caine Stuart, Jordan Nabulsi, the unstoppable Bryan Jolly, Kim Jolly, Maeve Coughlan, Jake Bensted, senior women Sharon Taylor and Carli Renzi. A special mention to Aoife Coughlan who, took out the Cadets and Young women's categories just as she did in the OJU Champs. Well done Aoife and all the team who gave it their best I'm sure. Winners in the Kata Champs were, standard bearers, the pairs of Jenny Beaton/ Janet Lambert and Peter White/Andrew Coatsworth.

In relation to state team matters, JVI is again indebted to senior coach Maria Pekli, junior coaches Eddie Leoni and David Nabulsi, plus Managers Sandy Hollingsworth and assistant Caroline Curren who all worked feverishly in the lead up and at the event. This year must have been particularly difficult as the Nats were held in Perth which was heavily affected by flight cancellations due to the volcanic plume.

With all the difficulties and extra expenses incurred for this year's Nationals JVI is particularly grateful to our sponsor, the martial arts supplier Jols Pty Ltd, for their support to the state team. We look forward to a long relationship with this company as judo in Victoria continues to grow.

Other announcements of significance are the NTID team members this year. Obviously, Aoife Coughlan, along with Jake and Tom Bensted and another high achiever in Noam Tidhar. Congrats to them. This also reflects in the new National Cadets Team who will represent the country at the upcoming Cadets World Championships later this year in Kiev. The first time Australia has sent a team to my knowledge. The Vic team members are Noam Tidhar and Aoife Coughlan. Exciting times for them.

As many of you know, JVI recently finalized the long awaited Strategic Plan. A primary element of this strategic plan is a schools program driven by the soon to be appointed Sports Development Officer.

Judo in schools programs have been discussed for many years now, but alas there has been very little in the way of a coordinated concerted efforts put in to this point. With the advent of the SDO it is the committee's hope that educators outside of the judo world will see the benefits judo can bring to young people in the greater community. JVI is committed to implementing this program in five schools in 2011, with the number increasing as the program becomes established.

Keep your eyes open for another new competition mat that is heading our way this year. Due to the good management of JVI's funds (thanks to the Treasurer) we find ourselves able to replace the other dated competition area. This replacement is also necessary due to the new IJF guidelines which require a solid colour in the middle of the competition area. The current older mat now fails to meet density specifications and has compressed ever so slightly making it impossible to match newer mats to this area. We are currently in negotiations and expecting a change over for the State Championships in December.

Finishing on a sad note, Victoria lost a long standing member of our community two weeks ago in Michael Callaghan who commenced his judo life with Peter Alway and the Preston Judo Club. Michael was actually on the mat two weeks ago when he took ill. He passed away a few days later. Condolences to his family and friends.

Yours in Judo,

Michael Picken