

FIRST WORLD JUDO KATA CHAMPIONSHIPS

MALTA, 17-18 OCTOBER 2009.

Victoria was the only state to have competitors at this tournament. Veteran kata competitors Janet Lambert and Jennifer Beaton were the full Australian contingent of competitors at this historical tournament. Officials were Ivor Endicott-Davies (Commission) and Judges, Robert Ivers (NSW) and Rodney Cox (Victoria).

Being in Malta is not unlike being in Australia. Very dry, lots of prickly pear, galvanised iron windmills and everyone speaks English.

The event did not start well. The Thursday seminar was cancelled – I found out about it in a casual talk with the Swedish judge. Janet and Jennifer found out when they went to register that the entry fees had not been recorded and we could not produce any sort of receipt. Ivor Endicott-Davies kindly provided the entry fees.

The actual event was held at the Cottonera Sports Complex, a forty minute bus-ride over the narrow, twisting Maltese roads



The venue had 3 full 10m mats, an interesting innovation was a 2 metre red “danger” area, obviating the need for the tapes at 6m

There were about 18 teams competing in each Kata. The tournament was run with 2 preliminary pools, with the 3 best teams from each preliminary pool being advanced to a final pool of 6.

In this event, contrary to last years World Cup in Paris, Japanese teams scooped the pool, winning every kata.

Janet and Jennifer, somewhat controversially to my mind (although I am not an IJF Ju-no-kata judge) came last in their pool, both Robert and I noticed several teams we thought did not perform as well as they did. Janet, at least, can console herself with the presentation of her Kodokan Godan certificate by Toshiro Daigo, Judan while training in Japan in preparation for the tournament.

The two days of Kata were concluded with the first World Cup of “Show Judo” where teams of up to six demonstrate judo techniques and are judged on: effectiveness/realism, variety, originality, flow (choreography), tradition (etiquette). There were 7 teams in the preliminary round and 3 in the finals which were won by the French team.

Kata now has a World Championship and it is hoped Kata will now receive the attention it deserves as a major part of Judo. It seems a pity that Australian competitors and judges had to pay the full airfare and accommodation expenses themselves.

(Rodney Cox)