

National Titles 2010

Not the official Manager's Report

The 2010 National Titles in Brisbane were held for the first time over two days in a very large venue that held four full competition areas. The hall looked magnificent, but most spectators said that they had a hard time following fights on so many mats at once! The organising committee went to a lot of expense to provide tiered seating for spectators, but the most common thing that was said over the public address system was "would the spectators standing in front of the tiered seating please sit down so that the spectators that have paid for their seats can see!"

One innovation from the organisers was having the hall decorated with pineapples. They presented pineapples to all of the Gold medallists. The organisers also introduced a healthy eating policy providing very low calorie food for the referees and officials so that we could all lose weight. I have to admit that I was hungry and ate one of the pineapples after the tournament finished on the Sunday. Next time we hold the nationals in Melbourne we could present the winners with milk, or apples or potatoes instead of flowers. We are open to suggestions.

Our Victorian team was very well organised and supported by our long term manager Sandy Hollingsworth, and our excellent team of coaches. A highlight for Victorian Judo was Greg Bensted winning a National Volunteers Award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the sport of Judo. Knowing Greg I think that he was more proud of the fact that his children did so well including Jack winning his final in the Young Men's with one of the best throws of the tournament.

Maria Pekli had her birthday over the long weekend of the championships, but not her 40th birthday as her husband Daniel was telling everyone! Happy Birthday Maria. She did a great job as the state coach and the feedback from the players was fantastic.

Maria was supported as the State coach by Brent Iverson, Eddie Leoni and Greg Bensted. They all worked very well together and did a great job.

I can't help but wonder if this is the first time that a current State coach won a senior national title in the same championships! Well done Brent. The other amazing result was the national NTID coach Daniel Kelly winning what must be his 21st senior national title? He is surely the most dominant senior male player of the last decade.

It was great to see seven of our Judo Victoria Inc. Committee members attending the nationals to support our team. Michael McMahon and Gil Tidhar drew the short straws and represented JVI at a very, very long JFA meeting on the Saturday night. By the time they finished all of the restaurants had closed.

For older retired competitors like me who remember when NSW won nearly all of the senior divisions it was fantastic to see Victoria winning six of the fourteen senior divisions including five of the Senior Men's divisions! We are proud of all of them. What is especially pleasing is that all of our senior stars were actively encouraging and supporting our younger, and up and coming players.

Ivo Dos Santos won the under 66 Kg final in spectacular style. The Silver Medalist protested after the final and at least one spectator thought that he protesting because Ivo threw him too hard on his

back! It was the sort of ippon that even the old timers like Nikky Whitcamp would have said was an ippon!

Dennis Iverson continued his domination of the Under 73Kg division. He looked awesome. His brother Brent won the Under 81 Kg division reversing the result of the 2009 final and making it look easy.

Mark Anthony defeated Tom Hill, one of the greats of the last decade in the final of the under 90Kg division. He has the knack of pulling off great throws from impossible positions and making them look easy.

Daniel Kelly foxed his opponents by pretending to puff and blow in his early fights, lulling them into a false sense of security. All jokes aside, he must be amongst the greatest Victorian Judo players of all time.

In the Senior Women's divisions Victoria only experienced Gold medal success with a remarkable comeback from Sharon Taylor. Sharon came to the championships straight from disciplining naughty Year 9 boys to stamp her authority on the Senior Women's under 52Kg division.

Across all of the Age and Weight divisions there were many great success stories. With four mats operating at once it was impossible to see them all. I know that the coaches and managers are proud of all of our Victorian players.

One special success story involves one of our juniors from Portland who had to get special permission from the JVI committee to join the Victorian team because of his youth and lack of experience. Brandon Kitt won a Bronze medal in his first National Championships! What a great effort.

In the Kata events Victoria was dominant winning the Gold in the Ju No kata, Goshin Jitsu and Katame No Kata divisions. We did experience an uncharacteristic lapse when our top seeded Nage No Kata team of Peter White and Andrew Coatsworth slipped an extra Hari Goshi in to see if the judges were awake. Unfortunately for Andrew and Peter the judges were awake, and they were disqualified. All Peter and Andrew could do was to laugh and vow to do better next time.

Rodney Cox will be getting a bill from the organisers for breaking a chair while he was the corner judge on mat 4! I haven't seen this happen since the Australia Games in the 1980's.

Poor Jessica Dafter was unlucky to be disqualified for having a slightly short Gi. While this was embarrassing for Jessica it should be an object lesson all team members getting ready for next year's nationals in Perth.

If anyone has any good photographs or anecdotes from the national titles please send them in. We would love to publish them on the JVI website.

Neville Sharpe

