

2011 Northern Open, Newcastle

Yugenkai sent two team to the Northern Open Taikai on 30th July.

The "Fearless Foxes" made up of Derek Whitson, Drew Muir & Andy Wright and also the "Hungry Foxes", Robert Kime, Connor Mc Cleary & Velda Mc Cune. Dojo leader Kristian was also fielded in a mixed team with Stephen Bishop (Edinburgh Kendo Club) & Andre Le Roux (Wales Kendo Club).

After an early rise for all, we met at the station to set off at 07:30 from Edinburgh with lots of talk of what was to happen on the way down. And a few cups of tea to keep awake.

The event was pretty well attend but had scope for more teams to be entered. Due to the umbers, two Shiai-jo ran a round robin system whereby each team of three had to fight each other teams within that pool. This system saw our pool, on Shiai-jo A have 6 fights each. Some fight ranged from 'easy' to pretty hard. Eventually, the first four from the pool would go through to the knock out rounds following.

Our 'junior' team, the Hungry Foxes did extremely well and didn't come last in the group. Connor, in his first ever Taikai actually won a match and Robert won a point also. Bringing up the lead position of Taisho (Captain) Velda had the hardest fights to contend with. She did exceptionally well fielding this difficult position and didn't let other, more experienced Kendoka push her around too much.

The senior team, the Fearless Foxes, did a great job and got through the pool without losing a match. Thus, ending up in first place from the pool.

As all Yugenkai members were fighting on the same Shiai-jo, we all fought each other, knowing what each was capable of and potentially, how to defend from too. Some hard and concentrated fights came when the Fearless Foxes met Kristian's team, Shireaku.

Kristian went out as Sempo, Andre as Chuken and Steve as Taisho. That meant that Kristián fought Dez, Andre fought drew and Steve fought Andy. Each match at this level was intense with each player not wanting to give up a point but still trying to gain one.

The first fight saw Kristián & Dez achieve a draw after the three minutes had gone. The second fight saw Andre loose by one Kote with Andre battling hard to try and get it back to no avail and Steve drew his match with Andy. A tough last fight with Andy going out like a bullet with fast paced multiple cuts against his Sensei, Steve. Maybe a point to prove match but in the end a good match to watch.

After the pools had finished, the draw came for the knock-out round which saw Shireaku be put out by Taiseidokai and, unfortunately, the Fearless Foxes got defeated by team GB.

All in all a great day and we're all looking forward to doing it again next year.

A HUGE thanks to the Northern Open organisation crew for another year of a well run event. May the event get bigger and better in the coming years!

See you all next year. Ganbatte!

Dojo leader - Kristián