

Itosu-Kai Karate & Kobudo Association Irl.

Compete in International and World Championships in 2008/2009

Itsu-Kai Karatedo Ireland visited Toronto, Canada earlier in the year to take part in the Canadian Shito-Ryu Itosu-Kai Karate Championships. The Irish association established in 1976 in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway has over 30 years of friendship with the Canadians. This was the Irish association's third visit to Canada since May 2008.

The team was lead by Leo Mulvany, Chief Instructor of Itosu-Kai in Ireland. Competing in the ladies senior black belt kata and kumite competitions, Karen Dolphin took first place in both. An outstanding performance at international level. Karen also trains with the Irish National squad (O.N.A.K.A.I.) in Ireland under national coaches, Paul Brennan for kumite and Michael Hogan & Marie Dolphin for kata. Karen also represents Ireland in the EKF's under O.N.A.K.A.I. Jake Mulvany at age 17 years and Shane Dolphin competed in the men's senior kata and kumite competitions. Jake was placed in the top eight in kata and both men were presented with outstanding competitor awards. They also represented Ireland in the tournament demonstration with live Kobudo (nunchaku) sparring, a real treat for the Canadian audience. Jake was ranked to 2nd Dan black belt the day after the tournament by Shihan Kei Tsumura, a four hour test of nerves, skill and fitness. Marie Dolphin was presented with the Tsumura Cup, a prestigious award with only two other Irish karateka recipients in the past 33 years. The award is made for outstanding contribution to Shito-Ryu Itosu-Kai Karate Canada. Marie and John Dolphin officiated at the tournament with Leo Mulvany refereeing the men's senior black belt kumite.



L→R: Jake Mulvany, John Dolphin, Leo Mulvany (Chief Instructor, Ireland), Kei Tsumura 8th Dan (Chief Instructor Canada), Marie Dolphin, Karen Dolphin and Shane Dolphin.

Training continued throughout the summer culminating in the Itosu-Ryu World Karate Championships in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Led again by the chief instructor, Leo Mulvany, 6th Dan Karate, 4th Dan kobudo, the Irish contingent of 20 (16 competitors) represented Ireland and competed against the best from many nations from around the world including a large Japanese contingent.

Instructors representing their clubs at the world championships, included Marie Dolphin (Kiltormer), Claire Harte (Galway), John Dolphin (Eyrecourt), Tony Dolphin (New Inn) and Leo Mulvany (Ballinasloe).

The Irish team spent the last year preparing for this event. They have attended kata and kumite squad sessions held by Itosu-Kai coaches and coaches from the national governing body (ONAKAI) for karate in Ireland. They have also competed in national and international events over the last year to improve competition readiness.



Team Ireland: Standing L→R Tony Dolphin, David Feury, John Dolphin, Marie Dolphin, Claire Harte, Sadaaki Sakagami (President of Itosu-Kai Karatedo, Japan), Leo Mulvany (Chief Instructor of Itosu-Kai Ireland), Shane Dolphin, John Sullivan & Jake Mulvany. Kneeling L→R; Jean Kennedy, Eoin Dolphin, Mikayala Costello, Esther Reilly, Karen Dolphin, Pamela Nee & Rola Abbas.

Ireland won 8 medals in all, 4 silver and 4 bronze as well as many top eight finishes. Ballinasloe's Mikayala Costelloe was rewarded for her great effort with 2 silver medals in

kata and kumite, John Sullivan, silver in kumite for an outstanding performance and Jake Mulvany, bronze in kumite narrowly missing the opportunity of meeting John in the kumite final for an all Ireland world final. John and Jake were also placed 4th and 5th in kata with Leo Mulvany being placed 4th in the mens senior kata. Kiltormer's Marie Dolphin had gold in her grasp only to lose it in the dying seconds of her kumite match against a worthy opponent to take silver. Marie was also placed 5th in ladies senior kata with Karen Dolphin coming 4th in the same event. Also Kiltormer's Esther Reilly performed brilliantly to take 2 bronze medals in kata and kumite while New Inn's Tony Dolphin took bronze in the mens senior kumite and Galway's Claire Harte was placed 6th in the ladies senior kata. The mens senior kumite team consisting of John Dolphin, Leo Mulvany, Shane Dolphin, David Feury and Tony Dolphin, were unfortunate not to make the semi-finals, beaten by the Danish team in the quarter finals who were the eventual winners of the team event.

All competitors took part in the kata and kumite competitions. Kiltormer's Shane Dolphin, Pamela Nee, David Feury, New Inn's Eoin Dolphin, Mountrath's Jean Kennedy and Ballinasloe's Rola Abbas all performed to the highest level.

This was the Irish associations 3rd world championships attendance since 2002 where they were held in Tokyo, Los Angeles in 2005, Malaysia 2009 and the 2013 event will see Ireland return to Japan where they will be held in Osaka. All competitors worked very hard in preparation for this tournament Mulvany Sensei commented, and represented Ireland with pride. The team performance represents the culmination of years of training and competing at home and abroad. He added, we have a tremendous squad of juniors emerging and I look forward to seeing these students compete for Ireland again under Itosu-Kai and ONAKAI in the future.

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