

剣 Kenyu 友

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DATEBOOK

1. The next WSKF Practice is Friday, March 18, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at Northwest Center.
2. The next WSKF Board meeting is Sunday, March 20, 6:00 p.m., at Imperial Lanes.
3. Cherry Blossom Festival is April 15, 16, and 17.

TOURNAMENT ETIQUETTE

The hall was echoing with excitement, electrified with shouting, screaming of profanities. Two weary combatants were slugging away at each other.

"Hit him one more, Joe!"

"Don't back away, don't back away, damn it!"

"Ooooooh, hey ref, can't you see anything?"

One would think that this animalistic behavior can be found at only boxing or hockey games. Unfortunately, we were at the Fourth U.S. Kendo Championship Tournament.

What was happening here should have been corrected a decade ago. So, let me take you back a few hundred years where all of this began.

There, within the castle's walls, one can see a barrier of cloth sectioning off a ground because people of lesser status are forbidden to witness. Within the barriers are the daimyo and his vassals seated on a platform while their warriors seiza on the ground. Behind the daimyo stand several archers ready to shoot by order of the daimyo if any unethical conduct is made by the combatants. Between the daimyo and the combatants sits an over-seer who will give the command to begin. There will be no need to give a command to stop as you shall see.

When the names of the two combatants are called, they will appear quietly and bow towards the daimyo, each carrying the weapon of his own choice. This is not a two out of three match. There is an air of solemnity. No noise can be heard but the crunching of pebbles under the feet of these combatants as they brace for an attack. Weapons are drawn and a signal is given; the deadly duel begins.

There is no emotional or vocal outcry from the spectators. Only the clashing of blades and the scuffling of feet can be heard. Then, it is over.

As the blood spurts from his mouth, one of the combatants falls writhing as he gasps for life. The victor quietly returns his blade to its scabbard, bows to the officials and makes his exit. No applauding. One has won; the other has died.

Now, back to the hall where the yelling and the booing were taking place. What has happened to Kendo? Has it changed to a modern sport? The respect from the spectators to the participants, judges and referees is eroding.

Certainly I am glad that the one who loses does not need to die or suffer any injuries, except for his feelings. What I am referring to is the spirit of Kendo: cordiality and respect. This area of importance is not taught to the general public or even to the students of Kendo. There is a need to edify the spectators as well as Kendoists. Here are some basic rules to follow:

When the two opponents approach the shiai-jo (area of the match), the spectators can clap with vigor. Even a vocal encouragement may be tolerated. (In the case where the two are the captains of each team, it is proper for the team members to sit at seiza).

(continued overleaf)

TOURNAMENT ETIQUETTE, continued.

When the signal for the match is given, all vocal encouragements must cease. The clapping of the hands is permissible.

For any strike which you think is valid, you can clap your hands as your personal decision but no verbal expressions are allowed.

There shall be no coaching from the side. This includes everyone, even the coaches.

Even if unethical conduct is committed by one of the combatants, there should be no "booing" from the spectators. Only an authorized person may request an audience from the court judge.

Absolutely no insulting remark or gesture may be made towards the referees or court judge.

Although these rules may be simple, many spectators are unaware of them. Perhaps, because of over zealousness. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the head instructor of each dojo to teach the cultural aspects of Kendo.

In Kendo, one begins with a bow and ends with a bow. "Thank you for the practice," is what one is saying when one bows. Remember the solemn days of yore. This article by no means wishes to dampen the enthusiasm of the spectators. But remember, YOU ARE NOT AT A BOXING MATCH. --Yoshitsugu Murosako, WSKF Advisor and KFUSA Treasurer. (Reprinted with gratitude and thanks from Sempō Vanguard, the Midwest Kendo Newsletter, January 1988, number 7, page 6.)

CONGRATULATIONS

Ken and Dori Ogami welcomed the arrival of their new son, Kyle Yuichi, on Friday, January 8, at 11:00 a.m. Kyle was seven pounds, eleven ounces, and twenty inches long. A smiling, easy-going personality already seems to be well established. Congratulations, Dori and Ken!

NORTHWEST KENDO CLUB NEWS

Asaoka Sensei of Sunrise Dojo in Vancouver will be resuming his monthly Friday night visits to the Northwest keiko as of March. Asaoka Sensei usually brings several of his students with him when he comes, for a really great evening of kendo. Please call Koike Sensei (365-5653) to find out the exact date of Asaoka Sensei's visit.

Asaoka Sensei also sends word that again this summer his teacher, Haga Tadatoshi, will be coming for a seminar sometime in the middle of August, bringing with him a large group of his students. As in the past, Asaoka Sensei kindly extends an invitation to WSKF kenshi to benefit from Haga Sensei's visit. Details will appear in KENYU as they are received.

THE LAST WORD

"When the enemy opens a door even a crack you must move, anticipate him by seizing the thing he would love to do, and arrive in position first by exact timing." --Sonshi, Heiho.