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Nathan Blockley | @nathan.blockley73 



THE AUSSIE UPDATE

Upcoming Events

30 June | U21 & Senior Oceania
Championships,
Christchurch (New Zealand)

25 August | Australian National
Championships,
Perth (Western Australia)

9 September | Premier League
Dublin (Ireland)

A U S T R A L I A N O P E N



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Affiliations



Keep an eye out on YouTube:
World Karate Federation

Presented by





Hello friends,

This is Mitchell, Jon and Nathan writing to you to share what Kaizen Culture is and how we want to impact the Australian karate community through efforts such as this update covering the 2023 Australian Open Karate Championships.

You may be already following us on socials but it is time for the full launch of our non-for-profit organisation.

Kaizen Culture is committed to working collaboratively with clubs and associations in order to provide athletes with the best opportunities to achieve their potential.

Our mission is as follows:

To empower and inspire the Australian karate community through support and information.

How do we plan on working towards this?

- Through being the #1 media platform for competitions within Australia
- By providing reliable news & information about all things Sports Karate
- Nurturing a supportive culture within the Australian Karate Community

This is just the beginning... To join us on this journey, visit our website, join our email list to keep updated and follow our socials as below.

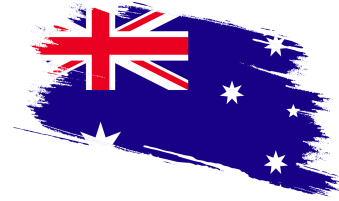
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SYDNEY



The annual Australian Open karate Championships welcomed 495 athletes from eight different countries from across the globe. In order of representation, teams were sent by Australia, Nepal, New Zealand, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, India, Indonesia and the United States of America.

This shows a significant increase in the popularity of the tournament from last year where 331 athletes from only three countries competed.

The tournament was held across three days in the familiar Whitlam Leisure Centre in Sydney's south west.



Twin Towers back on top at the Aus Open!



Pictured: Marijana Dimoska

Gold Medal Final

The 2023 Female Senior Kata had a massive total of 39 competitors compared to only 26 in 2022. Despite the large number of athletes, only two represented countries other than Australia (NZ-1, NCL-1).

Twins Mishela and Marijana Dimoska have not competed at the Australian Open since 2018 where Mishela took out Marijana in the gold medal final.

These two are always neck and neck, however this time around, Marijana managed to win the gold over her sister, 24.0 - 23.3. It is always a spectacle to see these two go head to head.

Pictured: Mishela Dimoska

Pictured: Emily Nguyen

Bronze Medal Finals

The former Junior Female Kata champion, Stephanie Dimovska (VIC), was after revenge against current Senior Female National Kata champion, Meezaan Dickinson (VIC), who defeated her to get into the gold medal final in the 2022 Australian Open. This time around, the young gun outperformed Dickinson by a narrow margin of 0.2, claiming her second Senior Kata bronze medal in a row.

The second bronze medal matchup featured two promising young Kata athletes in Tara Boyd and Emily Nguyen. Boyd has missed out on medalling in the Senior Kata for the last two years, losing in the bronze medal final both times.

Unfortunately for Boyd, this year was no different as she went down to the 16-year-old Nguyen. Initially scored as a draw, Nguyen took the match 30.7 - 31.1 once the lowest score was re-included.

This is the first year Nguyen has been eligible to compete in the division and what a way to start by taking out a bronze medal.

F KATA



Pictured: Stephanie Dimovska



Marijana Dimoska (WA)



Mishela Dimoska (WA)



Stephanie Dimovska (VIC)



Emily Nguyen (VIC)



M KATA

Another year, another showdown!

Despite having only five senior male kata competitors, New Zealand showcased their dominance by not only claiming the top spot on the podium but also securing four out of the top seven places. This remarkable achievement marks a significant improvement compared to the previous year when they had only one athlete in the top seven.

Bronze Medal Finals

In the first of the bronze medal matches, Andy Htaik from Victoria was looking to prove himself after only winning one round at the Australian Open last year. Standing in his way was WA's top male kata athlete in 18-year-old Dylan Fisher (Pictured on left).



Although scores were close (23.2-23.8), the young former Junior Kata champion, Dylan Fisher, performed an electric Ohan Dai that was too strong for Htaik and secured him one of two bronze medals.

The other bronze was claimed by New Zealand's Nicholas Rowsby who overcame teammate Josiah Ling, 24.0 - 23.2. Both competitors train at the same club in Auckland and did not feature in the 2022 Australian Open Championships. We look forward to seeing what these high-level athletes can achieve in the coming years.

Gold Medal Final

The final of the Men's Senior Kata was always going to be a showdown. Isaac Hoshi (NZL) and Shaun Yuen (AUS-NSW) have been competing against each other for years and it was time for yet another final featuring two of Oceania's best. Last year, under the flag scoring system, Yuen was able to defeat Hoshi and win the title of Australian Open Champion.

This time under the points scoring system, both athletes finished with the same score of 24.4 a piece. In this case scenario, the lowest score that was taken out of the total is added back in. This pushed the result to 32.4 - 32.1 in favour of Hoshi. With such a slim win this time around, we cannot wait until we undoubtedly see these two face off again.



Isaac Hoshi (NZL)



Shaun Yuen (NSW)



Dylan Fisher (WA)



Nicholas Rowsby (NZL)

The lightweight rematch!

The gold medal final of the Male Senior Kumite -60kg was a repeat of the 2022 AKF National Championships showcasing the experienced Trevor Kan (NSW) up against Teo Cvetkovski (VIC). Last year, Trevor was able to take out the gold in a close matchup that ended 1-0.

Cvetkovski started the match applying continuous pressure to Kan who seemed comfortable in the corner, waiting for Cvetkovski to make the first move. Kan's patience paid off halfway through the match as he landed a solid counter *jodan gyaku zuki* (head-reverse punch) to take a familiar 1-0 lead and *senshu* (first-point advantage).

Cvetkovski was not about to back down though - continuing his pressure, he quickly forced a reaction out of Kan in the corner and managed to counter with his own *jodan gyaku zuki* to equalise the score.



Pictured: Trevor Kan

With only 15 seconds left on the clock, Cvetkovski felt the need to launch an attack straight into the path of a perfectly timed, *mae geri* (front kick) from Kan and was unable to chase down Kan's 3-1 lead.

Kan's defence is extremely difficult to overcome as he has a near flawless record over the last three national competitions. This is the first point Kan has conceded across his last eight matches in his weight class.



Pictured: Teo Cvetkovski

M

-60kg



Trevor Kan (NSW)



Teo Cvetkovski (VIC)



Sonam Lama (NPL)



Jacob Attard (VIC)

Nothing but class from one of the smallest!



F
-50kg

Being defeated by Jamie Kelly-Hoare (QLD) in both the Australian Open and the AKF National championships last year, Celia Tran (VIC) had her work cut out for her from the get-go facing Kelly-Hoare once again in the semi-finals. This time around, Celia showcased her skill defeating Kelly-Hoare 3-1 in order to make it to her first national senior female gold medal bout.

Pictured: Celia Tran

On the other side of the draw Elizabeth McBain (NSW) was also making waves as she claimed a hard-fought 5-3 victory over Cindy Truong (VIC) who had recently placed 5th at the US Open in Las Vegas, USA.

Despite an impressive semi-final win, McBain had no answer to Tran's superior speed and technique which was used to finish the fight before time ran out 9-1. Training and competing overseas has obviously given Tran confidence to take the next step as she attempts to solidify herself in the -50kg division.



Pictured: Elizabeth McBain



Celia Tran (VIC)



Elizabeth McBain (NSW)



Cindy Truong (VIC)



Jamie Kelly-Hoare (QLD)

The famous lion battle continues!



Pictured: Rory Attridge

The -67kg weight class contains arguably the biggest rivalry in Male Senior Kumite between Declan Squire (NSW) and Rory Attridge (NSW). Both incredibly fit, young athletes have been going win for win for years and this final lived up to all expectations. Going into this tournament, the record sat at 4-2 fight wins for Squire over the last three national competitions, the last two of which went to Attridge. Throughout the preliminary rounds, Squire scored 17 points to Attridge's 18, both across two fights each - this was always going to be a high scoring affair.



M

-67kg

With both athletes' World Championship selection on the line, Attridge's superior take-down offence proved too much for Squire as he took a close 8-6 point win closing the gap in the fight record to 4-3 in favour of Squire.

As Attridge has claimed the last three victories, it looks good for the young 22-year-old when the AKF considers selection for the Australian team heading to the World Championships in Hungary later this year.

Regardless of who does get selected, Australia has a fearless representative in the Male Kumite -67kg category and we look forward to seeing these two go head to head for years to come.

Pictured: Declan Squire



Rory Attridge (NSW)



Declan Squire (NSW)



Rajiv Pudasaini (NSW)



Nabin Rasaili (NPL)

17 year old shows up the seniors!

Ally Lourensz (AUS-VIC), an exciting young gun who has had great success in the junior divisions is now showing her ability to hold her own in the seniors. Clearly not shying away from the big moments, the 2022 Junior World Championship representative took a convincing 5-0 win in the -55kg final against an experienced competitor from New Zealand in Britney Aldridge.

Lourensz demonstrated that she has more than just great hands, scoring a well-timed anticipation *ura mawashi geri* (hook kick) in the last 10 seconds on the desperate to score Aldridge.



Pictured: Ally Lourensz



Pictured: Britney Aldridge



Unfortunately the #1 senior representative, Georgie Lawrence, had to withdraw from all competition across the weekend due to a knee injury earlier this year. After her amazing 5th place performance in the Series A event in Vancouver, we can't wait to see her back soon, stronger than ever.

F
-55kg



Ally Lourensz (VIC)



Britney Aldridge (NZL)



Malika Thapa (NSW)



Jenna Smith (NSW)



M

-75kg

Despite Australia's Mitchell Durham (WA) coming off a recent bronze medal at the Series A in Turkey, 2022, he was always facing a tough challenge in the young phenom, Raukawa Jefferies of New Zealand.

For the -75kg division, Jefferies is significantly taller and is elite at using his reach to his advantage as showcased in his 10-0 semi-final win against current U21 Champion, Ben Harvey (VIC).



Pictured: Mitchell Durham

The young gorilla comes for the reigning champ!

Using this reach, Raukawa opened the scoring with a long *kizami zuki* (jab punch) to take a 1-0 lead and *senshu* advantage halfway through the match. Almost immediately, Durham learnt from his mistake and turned it into an advantage by anticipating Raukawa's next attack to equalise the score 1-1. Finding strength in his *chudan gyaku zuki* (body-reverse punch), Durham pressured Raukawa into a corner and launched the same technique once again to take a 2-1 lead with one minute left on the clock. Knowing Durham would counter another long jab, Raukawa pressured Durham into a corner until he was too close not to score, using his trusted *kizami zuki* to earn back the lead 2-2 with *senshu* advantage. The clock now reading 15 seconds, Durham had to go but was picked off not once, but twice, giving Raukawa a 4-2 lead into the last 5 seconds - a score Durham was not able to pull back.



Pictured: Raukawa Jefferies

These two athletes are proudly Oceania's best -75kg athletes and with Durham's recent success on the K1 circuit as well as Raukawa's young age of 20, the future looks bright for both Australia and New Zealand.



Raukawa Jefferies (NZL)



Mitchell Durham (WA)



Ben Harvey (VIC)



Thomas Olsen (VIC)



Experience holds off the youth

With all other senior female weight divisions containing less than 10 competitors each, the -61kg stood out with almost double the number of entries at 16.



Pictured: Kristina Mah

Amongst these athletes stood the young 2022 Australian Open -55kg champion Iris Webb and 2010 World Champion Kristina Mah. Both these athletes did not concede a single point leading up to their final which promised to deliver.



Pictured: Iris Webb

F

-61kg

This gold medal final was fiercely competitive and despite taking the only point off of Mah, Webb fell short to the highly experienced veteran of the game 4-1.

Defying age, Mah continues to demonstrate she is still the best athlete in this weight division as she fights for one more shot at the world championships.

Even more impressive, she has just returned from an ACL injury last year. It seems like there is nothing that can stop the former World Champion



Kristina Mah (NSW)



Iris Webb (VIC)



Jelena Kalajdjic (VIC)



Alexandria Amour (QLD)

M

-84kg

The fight that needed popcorn!

The gold medal final of the Male Senior Kumite -84kg category featured a highly anticipated clash between Max Noble (VIC), the reigning champion of the 2022 Australian Open, and Yonatan Freund (NSW), the 2022 AKF National Champion.

To kick things off, Freund launched a long *jodan mawashi geri* (head-roundhouse kick), clipping Noble to score three points and the *senshu* advantage in the first 30 seconds. It took Noble the better part of the first half of the fight to find his footing, but surely enough, he put himself on the scoreboard with a well timed counter *jodan gyaku zuki* (head-reverse punch). Despite this, Freund used his distance to almost immediately score another kick, this time to the body taking his lead to a difficult to overcome, 5-1.

Noble knew to mount such a comeback, he needed to use his trusted head kicks to quickly get him back into the fight. Shortly after Noble was penalised for grabbing during a failed kick, he anticipated Freund's attack with a perfectly executed *jodan ura mawashi geri* (head-hook kick) bringing the score back to 5-4, still in favour of Freund.

After equalising the score but still being down the *senshu* advantage, Noble managed to surprise Freund with a double *jodan mawashi geri* (head-roundhouse kick), scoring on the second attempt which gave him a clear 8-5 lead. Although this difference is more than possible to close in 30 seconds, Noble was able to use his defence flawlessly and Freund was not able to make another score.



Pictured: Max Noble

This competitive rivalry between these two young athletes is only just beginning and we look forward to seeing who will represent Australia at this year's Senior World Championships. Either way we are excited to see how far these two athletes can go.



Pictured: Yonatan Freund (AO)



Max Noble (VIC)



Yonatan Freund (NSW)



Mathieu Annonier (NCL)



Justin Lenkovic (NSW)

L

-68kg

New Caledonia's golden girl!

It was the first gold medal final in the Senior Female -68kg category at national level for both Lara Lemestre of New Caledonia and Krystal Boyce of Australia (NSW). Krystal had just missed out on a bronze medal at the 2022 Australian Open whereas this is Lemestre's first time competing in this weight class after winning the 2022 Senior Oceania Championship in the -61kg category.

Both of these two young athletes had something to prove, especially Boyce coming off a 6-3 loss to Lemestre in the U21 weight category earlier the same day.



After a tense first half of the bout where both competitors tested each other's distance, Lemestre secured the senshu advantage with a 1,2 combination to the head that caught Boyce off-guard as she misjudged her distance. Having the lead, Lemestre was able to play to her strength in anticipation for the remainder of the fight and take a decisive 4-0 victory and take home the only gold medal for New Caledonia in the Senior categories.



Pictured: Lara Lemestre



Lara Lemestre (NCL)



Krystal Boyce (NSW)



Laura Golding (WA)



Mandy Yap (VIC)

The favourite doesn't always win



M
+84kg

After defeating favourite to win and 2022 Australian Open champion Daniel Tielen (AUS-VIC) in the second round 5-4, Rene Hmana Iwe (NCL) was going into the gold medal final for the first time more than confident.

Diwas Shrestha (AUS-NSW), in his first national competition to date, would be his opponent and after defeating 2022 Oceania Champion Liam Singer of New Zealand, the fight could go either way.



Shrestha took an early lead of 2-0, with a perfectly timed *chudan mawashi geri* (body-roundhouse kick) which forced Iwe to apply pressure and take advantage of a lapse in Shrestha's game. This lapse did not come and despite Iwe's impressive kicks, Shrestha used his superior countering skills to firstly increase his lead with a counter *jodan gyaku zuki* (head-reverse punch) and then secured the win 5-0 with yet another *chudan mawashi geri*.



Pictured: Diwas Shrestha

Unfortunately Shrestha will not be heading to Christchurch in June for the 2023 Senior and U21 Oceania Championships as this is only the first time he has appeared and performed at national level.

We do however, look forward to the battle himself and Daniel Tielen will have at this years AKF National Championships in Perth, Western Australia later this year.



Diwas Shrestha (NSW)



Rene Hmana (NCL)



Liam Singer (NZL)



Daniel Tielen (VIC)



Pictured: Rene Hmana

F

+68kg

The West Aussie Nail-Biter!

For Hannah Sullivan's (WA) first Female Senior Kumite event, she flawlessly swept through the preliminary rounds winning both before the time was up, 8-0 and 10-0. Going into the gold medal final however, she faced Olivia Clifford; 2019, 2021 and 2022 Australian Open Champion as well as 2019 and 2022 AKF National Champion. Even after many battles on the interstate level, this final clearly had some weight behind it, and was guaranteed to have spectators on their feet.



Pictured: Hannah Sullivan



Pictured: Olivia Clifford

Both athletes didn't dare risk launching an attack for the first half of the fight, fully aware of each other's counter-attacking capabilities. At times they would even stand completely still, just out of distance in order to tempt their opponent into committing to an attack.

The silence had to end at some point however and it was Sullivan who managed to achieve senshu advantage and extend the lead into the dying seconds 4-1. To make things interesting, Clifford surprised Sullivan with a well-executed *jodan geri* (head kick), levelling the scores 4-4 with barely any time on the clock. Despite this attempt, Sullivan was able to hold her senshu advantage despite serious incoming pressure and take her first senior win in the +68kg division

Both of these women seem a step above the rest of the competition at the moment. As selection for the WKF Senior World Championships looms over the year, we look forward to seeing many more clashes between these two titans of the female heavyweight division.



Hannah Sullivan (WA)



Olivia Clifford (WA)



Teagan Stewart (VIC)



Rianne El-Zein (NSW)