



Kyoku**SHIN** Karate

Shihan Taylor's Branch - Australian Newsletter

August 2004

From Shihan's desk



The **100 man kumite** has always been regarded as the ultimate test of fighting ability and the spirit of Osu. For that reason there have only been 9 men successful over a period of 45 years. So it was with great interest that I heard that Naomi Ali (Wood) was going to attempt the test and thereby become the first female in the World to do so. Initially I was skeptical but the more I thought about it the more I came to realize that if any woman could do it, it was Naomi.

Having known her for some years and having watched her fight on many occasions it was obvious that she has that indefinable quality that makes her a champion.

Fighting ability, a touch of the mongrel (killer instinct) and the "never give in" attitude. Put it all together and then add that little bit extra of the "x" factor and you have Naomi Ali.

Her fighting record speaks for itself. Over the last 7 years she has been Australian Middleweight Knockdown Women's Champion 6 times and runner-up once. She has taken 2 World Championship titles and if she is successful at the World Championships later this year she will become the only fighter, Male or Female, to take World titles in 3 successive World tournaments in any Kyokushin group. So to say that she is a good fighter is to make the understatement of the year.

Having said all of that the 100 man is a totally different proposition. At her insistence the test was to comprise only adult male black belts so that there could be no doubting the quality of her opponents.

The big day arrived (July 4th, Castellozorian Club, Anzac Parade, Kingsford, Sydney) and from the moment you walked in the air was just electric. Consider the quality of the fighters present: Shihan John Taylor, 8th Dan, Sensei Ritchie Saunders, 4th Dan, Sensei Glenn Gibbons, 4th Dan, Sensei Jim Sklavos 3rd Dan and Sensei Robert Lauretti, 3rd Dan as well as 15 other black belts.

Naomi weighs just 60kg and 17 of the 20 fighters weighed much more than that.

After I arrived I was honored to be asked to be the official adjudicator and my job description was to:

- ensure that all fighters were conducted under I.K.O. rules
- that the rounds were 1 and ½ minutes each
- that the fighting was spirited
- that there were no undue or excessive breaks from fighting
- that the next fighter was ready and waiting and
- that Naomi had adequate opportunity for hydration.

1.02pm and the fighting commenced. From the outset it was obvious that this was going to be a very hard day at the office for Naomi. Initially the crowd was not vocal and for about the first 30 fights things were fairly quiet. Naomi was giving a good account of her and was continually pushed to the edge by her opponents.

The crowd started to come to life from 30 fights in and the shouts and screams of encouragement were becoming more frequent and higher on the decibel scale.

Naomi reached the 50 marks and I gave her 2 minutes to change her gi. She had previously completed the 50 man kumite so this position was not new to her. However, as I announced to the crowd, whatever happened from this point forward was a new frontier where no woman had gone before.

For the next 10 fights Naomi seemed a bit flat and was pushed very hard and some of us had doubts about whether she could go the distance. However, all of a sudden she seemed to get her second wind and she went into the "zone". Those of us who have been in the zone will know what I am talking about. It is that place where you are on your own and you know in your heart you can do it because everything bad has already happened to you and you can take it and get through it. You become unaware of your surrounding, even of the people supporting you and your opponent. You just know all you want to do is keep fighting.

All of a sudden we were at fight number 80 and it seemed that there came upon the crown and everyone present a realization that she was going to get there. The emotion started to come out, the noise level went up considerably and all the black belts were there urging her on. It reminded me of Kieren Perkins famous swim in Mexico where everyone knew they were witnessing something special and even the supporters of the other swimmers were cheering for Perkins.

Naomi was off in a World of her own and everytime she hit someone (yes she was still hitting hard) the crowd screamed for more.

And then we were at 90 fights and everything lifted. The tempo of the fights, Naomi's attacks, the noise level of the crowd. She was injured and hurting severely (later it was confirmed she had broken fingers and toes) but she was not going to be denied. And then all of a sudden Shihan Taylor was standing in front of her for the 100 fight. He gave her the rounds of the dojo but she continued to attack and actually hit him with a couple of good shots.

At 4.10pm it was over and pandemonium broke loose. The noise level was just indescribable. I looked around and here were all the big, tough black belts with tears in their eyes.

Naomi was almost unconscious on her feet; she could hardly talk and was severely disoriented. Apart from the broken bones, she was passing blood (however, it was later confirmed that everything was OK).

Everyone I spoke to that day (after the event) was just so proud to have seen it and been a part of it.

July 4, 2004 the day Naomi Ali became immortal (everlasting, not able to fall into oblivion). It is doubtful we will ever see anyone else attempt this in our lifetimes and anyone who does will be following the path that Naomi blazed.

What a day, what an event and what a fighter. We truly saw the best at her best and we were privileged to be there.

Gary Viccars, 6th Dan

Shihan's travels:

I we had the AKKA National camp in Queensland on the weekend of the 25th – 27th June. It was a great weekend with some great training and even better company. For all those that stayed down south in the cold, we had great weather and it was

A black belt is a white belt that never gave up.

nice to get away to sunny Queensland even if it was only for a weekend

100 man Kumite test:

I understand that if you are not in Kyokushin karate, it may be difficult to understand why any one would subject themselves to this test, in fact I received an email from a very well respected karate teacher, who could not understand this either, so perhaps there are many more wondering the same thing. So for those who are, this was my answer to him, I hope those that do not understand can relate to what I had to say.

Dear Sensei,

I am not sure how to answer your e-mail, but I will do my best. I acknowledge that your email is not meant to be critical but for me, it does show a lack of understanding of the ethos of Kyokushin Karate and, as you say, you are not a member of Kyokushin so your confusion is understandable.

The 100 Man Kumite test is a challenge in Kyokushin which is there for the well trained athlete in karate to try. As Kyokushin karateka, we believe that our training is not just about self defence, it is about many things. It is about expanding one's horizons, having faith in one's own ability, doing things thought impossible. We hope to develop in our students an unyielding spirit, a never say die attitude, facing one's own fears and defeating them, know one's limitations, showing determination in refusing to always accept them and lifting the bar. This, as I am sure you will agree, is the challenge for many athletes no matter what the sport.

As an instructor, I am aware of what my students can achieve and commonsensical enough to stop someone whom I thought was unprepared for such a challenge as the 100 Man Kumite. It is not for everyone. Naomi Wood is one of my best Black Belt instructors and long time student. She could be placed in the "elite" category as an athlete in any sport, not just karate. She is unique in her physical strength, skill in karate and personal determination. She saw the 100 Man Kumite as a challenge and took it. We all gave her our support. I liken it to climbing the tallest mountain, going to the moon, breaking the sound barrier etc. These people are set apart. Naomi is the 5 times Australian National Full Contact Champion and she is defending her Kyokushin Full Contact World Title for the third time in Japan in November this year. In this, she felt that that the pinnacle in the competitive component of her karate training had been reached.

I am sorry that you were troubled by her "injuries". Obviously, with 100 fights, she was going to suffer some injuries but these were minor and a testament to her physical strength and ability.

The 100 Man Kumite is the ultimate test of one's endurance, training and ability and to be successful certainly, to us, is worthy of great admiration.

With kind regards,
John Taylor

Apologies:

In the July issue, in the New South Wales Non Contact Championships results, it gave Elise Fenwick in the 10-12 year girls as being from Charnwood, she is actually from the Parkes

Dojo.

This month's bad joke:

Doctor, Doctor My little boy has just swallowed a roll of film!
HmMMM.Let's hope nothing develops.

This month's quote:

"Necessity never made a good friendship"

KIDS IN CHURCH:

A Sunday school class was studying the Ten Commandments. They were ready to discuss the last one. The teacher asked if anyone could tell her what it was. Susie raised her hand, stood tall, and quoted, "Thou shall not take the covers off the neighbour's wife."

Upcoming events:

GRADINGS & SPRING CAMP:

10th – 12th September - Spring camp: - Green Belt & Over grading and John Taylor Branch dojo operators meeting. The Camp is a great weekend, the program allows all grades to come and learn heaps of karate stuff.

13th September: Bondi Junction under Green belt grading.

14th September: Bondi Beach under green belt grading.

New members to the Bondi Dojo:

I would like to welcome the new members to the Bondi dojo:
Buster Wilson – Rob Page – Morgan O'Toole –Artur Burzynishi
Rhavin Bandaranayake

Time is not of the essence:

It is so often the case, that when a student gets to Shodan or even higher, they seem to feel that all they now need to do is learn a few extra kata, wait for the minimum time to expire and stick their hand up to attempt the next grade. It seems to me that so many do not read the grading syllabus, which states, giving Nidan as an example: -

"Applications for Nidan must be made in writing, giving the full history of what has happened, or changed since the last grading to render such an application successful. The applicant should bear in mind that the applicant's character and general ability as an instructor (i.e. standard of student produced if an instructor) will be taken into account. If the student is not running a dojo, then the students should demonstrate a general contribution to Kyokushin"

Just to give every one some guidelines as to the kind of thing we expect.

1. Participating in most if not all of the AKKA activities if not as a fighter, by officiating or assisting in the running of the event.
2. By attending camps, and not just when they grading is being attempted.
3. By attending and supporting the AKKA formal functions.
4. Running a dojo or taking classes.

Shihan Taylor

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