

JFA Inc. / AIS Combat Centre Junior Asian Tour 27 June – 21 July 2014 – Rob Katz

Budokan athletes Josh Katz and Conor Edwards along with National Coach Rob Katz have recently returned from a successful international tour as part of a development initiative between the JFA and the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Combat Centre program. This exciting new phase for Australian Judo sees the AIS Combat Centre providing significant funding and resources in sports science and research/support for elite seniors and a holistic athlete development program for junior elite athletes including opportunities to complement those from the NTID program.

These additional opportunities include participation in local camps and overseas training and competition. There is now a dedicated facility at the AIS to support these training camps. The NTID/Combat Centre/Senior training camp in April was used to select cadet and junior athletes for the Asian tour in June/July.

11 athletes, 3 coaches and 1 physiotherapist participated in international tournaments in New Zealand, Hong Kong & Macau as well as in pre-staging training camps at the AIS with the senior Commonwealth Games team, and with Judo NSW athletes at the new SOP training facility in Sydney, as well as training with Hong Kong and Korean Junior teams. The team consisted of Josh, Conor and Rob plus from NSW Ben Broadhead (Coach), Jordan, Anthony and Kosta Kouros, from VIC Bryan Jolly, Hayden Nilon, and Maeve Coughlan, from WA Calvin Knoester and from QLD Toshi Nakamura (National Coach, for the first 5 days), Ellen Wright, Noah McDonald and Physio Lauren Dixon.

First stop of the tour was New Zealand for the Auckland International Open. This was a good level competition with a handy Japanese team competing as well as some strong Kiwis and other countries in the Oceania region. Results for this tournament for all NSW athletes who competed are detailed below with Josh Katz and Anthony Kouros (as part of the touring team) claiming gold in their respective divisions. Other Australian NTID (and Budokan) athletes who competed in Auckland were Cameron Leishman winning Cadets and placing 2nd in both Junior and Senior Men and Kyle McIndoe also winning Cadets and placing 3rd in Junior Men. Budokan juniors Diadre Te Rauna placed 2nd in Junior Boys and also 3rd in the Junior Boys Open and Bjorn Tandean placed 2nd in Senior Boys.

We flew directly to the AIS from Auckland where we lived and trained for 2 weeks including one-on-one nutrition, career/study guidance counseling, strength and conditioning support services, and a weekend training camp over 5-6 July with NSW-based athletes at the Armory. Thanks to the many Budokan athletes and other NSW athletes who supported this camp. Toshi Nakamura (National Junior/NTID Coach) was at the camp from NZ through to 2nd July after which he left with the Commonwealth Games team leaving myself and Ben to manage all activities.

On the 10th July we then flew to Hong Kong for the Hong Kong International Junior Judo Tournament. 11 Nations contested this tournament including teams from Korea, Mongolia and Chinese Taipei with the 4 competing NSW athletes all finishing on the podium with Jordan Kouros winning the U/73kg category. We then spent a number of days training with some Hong Kong athletes and visiting athletes from Korea.

The final part of the tour was the Macau International Cadet and Junior Tournament which doubled up as an IJF points ranking tournament. Strong teams from Korea and Japan were amongst the 12 nations participating in this competition. Results from the table below for all 3 competitions indicate a very high success rate in reaching the podium for the Australian athletes. Comparisons between athletes should not be made as each division in each event varied in the number and standard of opponents quite significantly. Notably, of the 12 countries contesting the Macau competition, only Australia's 6 cadet entries also competed in Junior Men and Women with all other countries fielding separate teams for junior men and women. This presented its own unique problems for the organisers as well as the Australian coaches, given that the weigh-in for the junior M/W age category was planned to start whilst the medal presentations for cadets (a long process with flags and anthems) progressed. After some negotiation, we were able to secure an extension to the close of weigh-in but not the order of medal presentations so some of our athletes had to don sweat suits and train/run whilst all other recipients of medals were corralled waiting for their presentation. No doubt, without these activities, some of our athletes would not have made weight.

This was a fantastic development opportunity for Judo in Australia and a unique approach initiated by the AIS Combat Centre and planned in conjunction with the JFA. It was an amazing experience to be part of such a tour and the lessons learned will be of great benefit to the athletes and coaches as well as in developing our ability to produce internationally successful Judo athletes in the future. Special thanks must go to the AIS Combat Centre and the JFA for such a unique and wonderful opportunity.

RESULTS OF COMPETITIONS

Athlete Competition	Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hong Kong	Macau	Macau
Date	28/06/2014	28/06/2014	28/06/2014	12/7/14 (Noah 13/7/14)	19/07/2014	20/07/2014
Division	Cadet	J/M or J/W	S/M or S/W	J/M or J/W	Cadet	J/M or J/W
Bryan Jolly	1st	1st	3rd	3rd	Not entered	Not entered
Josh Katz	Elected not to play	1st	2nd	3rd	2nd	3rd
Conor Edwards	3rd	5th	Not Eligible	3rd	2nd	2nd
Hayden Nilon	Not eligible	5th	Unplaced	Withdrew	Withdrew	Withdrew
Calvin Knoester	Not eligible	3rd	5th	Withdrew	Not entered	Not entered
Jordan Kouros	2nd	5th	3rd	1st	2nd	2nd
Anthony Kouros	1st	3rd	1st	Not entered	2nd	2nd
Kosta Kouros	Not eligible	2nd	3rd	2nd	Not eligible	1st
Noah McDonald	Not eligible	1st	2nd	1st	Not eligible	1st
Ellen Wright	1st	1st	Not eligible	3rd	1st	3rd
Maeve Coughlan	Elected not to play	3rd	Not eligible	3rd	2nd	1st
Other NTID athletes in Auckland						
Kyle McIndoe	1st	3rd	Not eligible			
Cameron Leishman	1st	2nd	2nd			

	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	5TH	MEDALS	DIVISIONS	PERCENT
AUCKLAND CADETS	5	1	1	0	7	7	100%
AUCKLAND JM/W	4	2	4	3	10	13	77%
AUCKLAND SM/W	1	3	3	1	7	9	78%
AUCKLAND TOTAL	10	6	8	4	24	29	83%
HONG KONG JM/W	2	1	5	0	8	8	100%
MACAU CADETS	1	5	0	0	6	6	100%
MACAU JM/W	3	3	2	0	8	8	100%
MACAU TOTAL	4	8	2	0	14	14	100%
TOTAL	16	15	15	4	46	51	90%

Some photos from Macau have been included on the next page

