

ELY SCHOOL OF TAEKWONDO AT THE WELSH OPEN

Welsh Institute of Sport, Sophia Gardens, Cardiff

This year saw Master John Taylor's Ely School enter a team of 23 competitors into the Welsh Open, with no fewer than ten of them in their first ever national tournament. They all did well not to let nerves get to them and all gained valuable experience at a higher competitive level. Having won the Welsh in 2004 and lost out by one point in 2005 they were hoping to reclaim the title this year and everyone put in good performances on the day to help achieve this aim. With 270+ competitors from over 50 schools, coming from all over the UK, as well as Ireland and Slovenia, it was a long hard day for all concerned but everyone stuck with it.

The day started off with the black belt patterns, with Dave Lund and Neville Thompson in the 1 dan male patterns, where both made it through to the semi finals, despite good rounds neither progressed any further but it meant they picked up 2 bronze medals to start the schools points rolling. In the adult female patterns Victoria Phillips made it into the semi final of the female 1 dan patterns and narrowly lost out, settling for bronze. In 13-17 male 1 dan Tom Harris moved through his rounds with relative ease and picked up a well deserved gold for his efforts and finally in 13-17 female 1 and 2 dan patterns, Cassie Lund made her way into the semi final but was unable to raise the level enough to make it through to the final and also picked up bronze.

Moving into the colour belts at under 13 yellow belt we had 7 entries Jade Cronick, Jamie Dare, Rhys Thomas, Lewis Brooks, Joe Powell, Megan Jones and Amy Jones, most of whom were in their first big tournament, all did well to progress through to their second rounds but were unable to go any further on the day. In u13 blue belt Ethan Davies made it through to the quarter final but stopped there. Stepping up to the 13-17 category we saw Sally Powell and Sarah Jones enter the yellow belt group and win a bronze and silver respectively. Then in green belt Ben Hull took gold with a good display. In blue belt Lanny James and Ryan Davies worked their way through the rounds to face each other in the final, where Lanny narrowly snatched gold and left Ryan with silver. Finally in this division, Conah Prosser and Gareth Francis both uncharacteristically went out in the quarter finals of patterns. The last patterns events for Ely School were +18 yellow belts, where Daniel Neale made it through to the second round but no further and last but not least in the red group, Adam Gromaszek won a bronze for his good pattern work.

Next up was the sparring and starting off with the black belts again we saw Dave Lund fight well in his semi final but he couldn't overcome his opponent and had to settle for bronze. Neville Thompson fought well right through to his

final but was narrowly beaten and left with silver for his hard work. In the female sparring Victoria Phillips went up against an Irish Opponent in the semi final who was able to just edge her out and leave her with the bronze medal. In the 13-17 division Tom Harris made it to the final again but was unable to break his opponent down and had to settle for silver at the end of a frantic couple of rounds. The black belt sparring ended with Cassie Lund who fought a scound semi final but lost out on points so had to take home the bronze on the day.

In the under 13 we saw a lot of action with seven students in the group. In the +146 Rhys Thomas and Amy Jones made their way into the final but it was Rhys who picked up gold leaving Amy with silver at the end of the bout. In the -145 Megan Jones and Joe Powell both put on a good show of sparring at their first nationals but were unable to overcome a quicker opponents and advance beyond the 1/4s. In the -135 the Ely school was pleased to see Lewis Brooks, Jade Cronick and Jamie Dare all do well and pick up gold, bronze and bronze respectively.

In the blue belt group Ethan Davies was beaten in the semi final ending his run for the day with a bronze medal. In the +146 category Tristan Notley was very unfortunate not to progress past the quarter final. In the 13-17 division first up we saw Sally Powell and Sarah Jones in the yellow belt female sparring which saw Sally take gold and Sarah make it to the quarter final. In the green belt division Ben Hull picked up his second gold of the day, as he performed strongly in the group. In blue/red females Lanny James had to settle for silver on the day. In the blue/red boys Conah Prosser went out on points in the quarter final, Gareth Francis



lost to Ryan in the semi final in extra time leaving him with a bronze medal. Ryan progressed to the final but was unable to find that little bit more to finish his opposite number off but can be proud of his well deserved silver. Our last two sparrers were in +18 division, where Daniel Neale showed how he is improving bowing out in the quarter final to a higher grade opponent and finally Adam Gromaszek fought a fast paced quarter final but lost out very narrowly on the decision.

That left the school with 7 gold, 7 silver and 13 bronze medals and on 48 points which meant that Ely School won the Welsh Open this year, after losing out on first place last year by one point, it was good to see a comfortable win this year.

1st	Ely School	48 points
2nd	RTA Didcot School	41 points
3rd	Carrick School	33 points

A final note is we were pleased to reciprocate the hospitality shown to us in the Slovenian Presidential Cup last year as Mr Eljko Gvozdi V (president ITF Slovenia) brought two of his national team members over to Wales to compete for the first time, Miss Nika Plenik (silver and gold) and Miss Eva Ba (1/4 final and silver) stayed with one of the Ely students and despite language difficulties managed to communicate through the universal girl languages of fashion, music, shopping and TV. On the Sunday before their return home we were happy to show them around our city with Mr Gvozdi enjoying the history and scenery of the Castle, the Bay and Welsh pubs among other things, as the girls made a beeline to the shops and Pizza Hut for more important matters.

Further details on Ely school can be found at www.elytkd.co.uk or by e-mailing master.taylor@elytkd.co.uk

