

## **Irish kendo team defy odds and come third at European tournament in Barcelona.**

This weekend the Irish National Kendo team defied all the odds and took third place at the recent Kurasawa Cup, European Kendo Tournament in Barcelona Spain (15-17th Jan 2010). Robin Deegan, Jason Clousten (both from Cork Budokai Kendo Club) and Martin Kiosew (from Dublin Kendo Kobukai) had to fight their way through 16 sword wielding samurai to achieve a place in the final four for the second year in a row.

Well done to the Irish squad for coming joint third again at the Kurasawa Cup in Barcelona, Spain. This is only the second time ever that an Irish kendo team have come in the final 4 of any international competition. This is also the second time that this particular team have been placed in the top 4 teams at this specific tournament (there were also teams from UK, Spain, Germany, Italy, Andorra etc. and more), next year they will be a seeded team again!

The competition was much harder this year, but the team did great and were highly respected and praised by all the teachers, referees and spectators. The Irish squad fought 5 teams (including the German team, one of the favourites) and had 15 fights (3 on each team) and 1 encho (play off, due to a tied fight). They won 11, drew 3 and lost 2. Each fight was 4 minutes long and sanbon shobu (best of 3 ippons (points); first to score 2 ippons wins). They scored 23 ippons and had 7 scored against them. The Irish had great attitude, strong kiai and perfect etiquette during the whole tournament.

During the tournament Martin awed the audience and stole the show with his kiai (scream) and spirit and received the fighting spirit award.

In special note Jason fought a breathtaking encho (playoff due to tied result) in the quarter finals where he overcame severe pressure and fought off his challenger with an amazing Kote-men strike (an initial cut to the wrist, to distract, followed quickly by a cut to the head).

The Irish national team is a voluntarily run squad with not support or financial aid at all. The members of the team train 3 or more times a week in their local club, usually teaching (which is again voluntarily), then they meet every 6 weeks in Abbeyleigh for national team training. On top of this they all travel internationally at least 4 times per year (some greater than 12 times) to tournaments to compete and seminars to learn. By acting as an envoy of Irish kendo they are putting Irish kendo on the map at their own expense and effort.

Well done to the guys of the Irish team, we are all proud of you.

Kendo is the ancient art of Japanese fencing made famous by the samurai warriors of Japanese history.

Kendo is serene yet seemingly violent martial art that requires incredible mental fortitude and physical speed in balance.

When you are young you have physical speed and agility but little maturity. As you age your speed and agility decreases but your maturity and experience increase meaning that kendoka (kendo practitioners) of all ages can compete equally.

Kendo is a great form of physical exercise that can be practised by children as young as 6 and adults well into their 80's.

For more information on Irish kendo please visit [www.irishkendofederation.org](http://www.irishkendofederation.org)



Winning team at Kurasawa. Africa Monton, Martin Kiosew, Robin Deegan, Jason Clouten



Robin in action fighting the captain of the Hungarian team