



Mid-America Travels to Los Angeles For the 2017 US National Tournament

By Sonia Erfani



Mid-America US Nationals Karate-ka - Photo courtesy of Sensei Kim Weber

The 39th Annual ISKF US National Karate Championships was held November 11-12 in Los Angeles, California. The tournament weekend began for many on Friday evening with Mid-America Region Team Training, followed by a special seminar taught by Master Yakuta Yaguchi. The region was well-represented across collegiate, adult, senior, and team divisions, with many members advancing to the final rounds of their respective events:

- Yuki Kikuchi (Ohio Valley): 1st place, Senior Women (45-55) Black/Brown Belt Kata; 3rd place, Senior Women (45-55) Black/Brown Belt *Kumite*
- Laura Graham (Brown County): 3rd place, Senior Women (45-55) Black/Brown Belt Kata; 3rd place, Senior Women (45-55) Black/Brown Belt *Kumite*
- Tim Cofrancesco (Brown County): 3rd place, Senior Men (45-55) Black/Brown Belt *Kumite*
- Nina Tang (Ohio State University): 1st place, Collegiate Women Color Belt Kata; 1st place, Collegiate Women Color Belt *Kumite*; 1st place, Women (18+) Intermediate Kata; 1st place, Women (18+) Intermediate *Kumite*

- The Mid-America Senior Team took 3rd place in the Senior Team Kata division. Members included Yuki Kukichi (Anderson Shotokan Karate, Ohio Valley Karate), Laura Graham (Brown County), Tim Cofrancesco (Brown County), John Merz (Brown County).

At the close of the tournament, ISKF Chief Instructor Sensei H. Okazaki recognized participants and judges for a successful tournament, but reminded all that "(we) need more training." Competitors and judges then transformed into evening wear and joined friends and family for dinner and a reception.

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2017 US National Tournament

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Several members of the Mid-America Region were recognized:

- Marty Schrage (Ohio Valley) was selected to join the US Men's Team and will represent our organization at the 2018 Goodwill tournament in Quebec, Canada and the Pan-American tournament in Panama City, Panama.

- Laura Graham (Brown County Shotokan Karate) was the recipient of the 2017 Mid-America Meritorious Service Award.

- Adam Clouser (Ohio State University) achieved Level D Judge Certification.

- The 2017 Best Fighting Spirit Award, inspired by Sensei Golden, was awarded to competitor Andy Moore (Northwest Region).

The 40th Annual ISKF US National Karate Championships is slated to take place November 2-4, 2018 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Congratulations to all Mid-America competitors and officials who participated!

Master Masatoshi Nakayama's 33rd Memorial

By Kim Weber

Master Masatoshi Nakayama is a well-known instructor in Shotokan Karate's history. He dedicated most of his life to spreading the art of Shotokan until his death on April 15, 1987 at the age of 74. He is responsible for producing many textbooks and videos on Shotokan, increasing the popularity of the art. He is credited for books that we often refer to – the *Best Karate* 11 volume series, *Dynamic Karate*, and the *Practical Karate* 6 volume series. Master Nakayama was posthumously promoted to 10th dan. His contributions in making Shotokan a worldwide art are something that we all should be thankful for.

This year's ISKF/US National Tournament included a memorial service for this dedicated Master. Following the Buddhist religion and Japanese tradition, memorial services are held for the deceased in specific years following their death. The years are the 1st, 3rd, 7th, 13th, 17th, 23rd, 27th and 33rd. Each memorial is a significant occasion to recall fond memories of the beloved and are held as expressions of gratitude and respect to the departed. As the memorial pamphlet stated "This memorial service is not for the sake of the deceased, but is indeed, for the sake of the living. In remembering the deceased, we acknowledge the influence of our beloved ones on our lives."

You may have noticed that Master Nakayama passed away 31 years ago, not 33. However, since Los Angeles had a Buddhist Temple near the tournament venue, it was decided that this would be the best opportunity to hold the 33rd memorial. It is okay to hold a memorial at an earlier time; however, it is unacceptable to hold it after the memorial year.



*Master Nakayama's Memorial Service
Photo courtesy of Sensei Kim Weber*

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Master Masatoshi Nakayama's 33rd Memorial

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Master Nakayama's 33rd Memorial service was held at Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. The scent of incense filled the air as we filed into the temple. We watched as the minister prepared the altar. This was my first memorial service, so I appreciated the minister telling us what to expect before it began. After the opening address, and adoration, there was Sutra Chanting. Sutra Chanting is a formal practice that can be done to prepare the mind for meditation or can also have a ritualistic purpose. Next was the incense offering. Everyone was invited to participate in the offering and were given the following instructions to perform it properly:

1. Begin about 2 steps away from the burner and bow slightly.
2. With the left foot step forward, then right and then together.
3. Take a pinch of incense and place inside the burner.

4. Put your hands together (recite *Namu Amida Butsu* as many times as needed) and bow with both palms together. *Namu Amida Butsu* is a Buddhist expression of trust, however, it goes much deeper than that.

5. Step back with the right foot, then left, and then together again.

Once everyone was finished with the incense offering, the minister gave a Dharma Message. Then the ceremony concluded with two brief speeches. Master Yaguchi spoke first and expressed his appreciation to everyone for attending the memorial. Sensei Cline followed and her speech included a story about a special memory she had going to see the movie *E.T.* with Master Nakayama during a visit to the United States.

Attending this memorial was a very rewarding experience and I am so glad that I was able to attend this special event. It was a way for me to connect to Master Nakayama and show my gratitude for continuing Master Funakoshi's legacy to spread the art of Shotokan that reached our little corner of the world.



Master Nakayama (left) next to Master T. Okazaki (right)

Photo courtesy of ISKF

Fall Camp 2017

By Steve Robbins

Mid-America Fall Camp was held at Creekside Karate Club on October 14th and 15th with approximately 50 Karate-ka in attendance. During the weekend, there were a total of three trainings and a large number of *Kyu* exams.

The October training focused on preparation for the upcoming 2017 US National Tournament in November in Los Angeles, CA

The first two trainings consisted of partner work to help develop a number of aspects of *kumite*. These trainings focused on the delivery of effective *waza* with correct timing. The second training focused on distance, mainly how to maintain distance and the foot work needed to close distance for a successful attack. We should aspire to be aware of an opponent's intention for attack and reaching *sen* (meaning: initiative; to anticipate an attack).

Another key to being successful in a tournament is kata preparation. Toward the end of the second training, the karate-ka broke off into their respective groups for personalized kata training. This is always a pleasure to do, as it help with the finer points required to improve one's self and kata. The kata training was carried over into the Sunday's training. Sensei Vaughan gave a brilliant break down of Bassai Dai. His presentation not only included the correct movements, but all of the details that judges will be looking for in competition. This gave a new way to look at kata and how it should be performed, practiced, and executed properly. Even though Bassai Dai was chosen, the level of personal fine tuning and self-awareness presented in this demonstration can be extrapolated and utilized in any kata being performed.

On behalf of Tim Gay Sr. and Creekside Karate Club, we want to thank everyone for another successful Fall Camp. Special thanks go out to Sensei Vaughan, Sensei Oberschlake, Sensei Jeff Weber, and Sensei Kim Weber for their extraordinary instruction.



*Mid-America Karate-ka attended Fall Camp at Creekside Karate (Above)
Creekside Karate Club presents Sensei Vaughan with a handmade gift (left)
Photo courtesy of Creekside Karate Club*

The Japanese haiku Master Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) wrote, “Learn about pines from the pine, and about bamboo from the bamboo.” This sounds like good advice for the martial artist. In this spirit, I offer a winter poem by Wallace Stevens (American, 1879-1955):



*Statue of Matsuo Basho in Japan
Photo courtesy of japan-photo.de*

The Snow Man

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

Submitted by Wendy McVicker

Mid-America December Clinic and *Dan* Exam

By Jerry Baker

During the Regional Training held at the Dayton club in December, 2017, Sensei Vaughan emphasized foundational aspects of *kihon*, *kata*, and *kumite*. It is clear that in all aspects of karate training, large-scale movements are built upon the proper execution of small movements. As in all aspects of life, it can be the little things that mean the most. If our training is built upon the subcomponents of proper form, the resulting larger, fully complete moves will be correct and in line with the standards of performance we should all seek to achieve. As individuals, we are each unique in our levels of mental understanding and physical ability. What can enable each of us to reach higher, more standardized levels of performance will be the blending of what we learn and how we use what our bodies will allow us to perform. All along the way, we must strive to meet the standards of correctness that are the hallmarks of ISKF karate. What follows is a brief summary of the key points of this philosophy as demonstrated by Sensei Vaughan.

- In basic movements, the center line of attack is critical. In *sanban zuki*, for example, the 3 punches must not vary from that center vertical line of attack.
- In a front stance downward block, note the position of the blocking hand in line and just above the front knee. This speaks to the alignment of stance and upper body and arms to maximize the effectiveness of the technique.
- In a side thrust kick, target the mid-level of the opponent so as to maximize the impact of the kick. Remember to bring the kicking leg's knee up before changing to the horizontal thrusting movement of the kick.
- In a back thrust kick, attack with the heel and not the toes.
- Kicking drills included:
 - Combination kicks of front snap, side snap or thrust, and backward thrust with the same leg from a natural stance. Practice looking in the direction of the kick and not putting the foot down between kicks.
 - Wave kick from *kiba dachi* stance followed by front snap kicks from the same stance. The goal was to find the same feel and stance for both types of kicks from the *kiba dachi* position.
 - Sensei Vaughan admonished us to remember that "For practice, always practice the hardest form." We improve

only when we push ourselves to seek the best possible performance.

- In a back stance knife hand block, the belt must be parallel to the floor, and the elbow must be "a fist and a thumb" off the side of the body.
- During a transition to a front stance, the supporting leg switches from the rear leg to the front leg.
- In a transition from a front stance to a back stance, maintain support on the rear leg until the transition reaches the mid-point. The support leg then switches to the new rear leg.
- In a back stance/knife hand/spear hand combination, hands are to remain in the knife hand/draw hand configuration. Do not drop the hands. The body moves first followed by the transition to front stance and the spear hand.
- An effective drill should include stepping into a back stance (forward or backward), snapping the front kick, shifting stance and the center of gravity into a front stance with a reverse punch, and then quickly shifting back to the back stance position. "Make moves correctly and with good timing. Use your personal speed and power."

Sensei Vaughan then transitioned from the training of *kihon* to semi-free sparring, *jiyu ippon kumite*. The basic forms we had been studying now form the foundation of how we move to attack, block, and counter an opponent. Any level of sparring includes some judging of distance on the part of both the attacker's and the defender's side. The new component in semi-free sparring is the addition of movement on both sides prior to the attack. Distance and timing come together in a more fluid setting, one that teaches the participants how to move their bodies and execute effective techniques while gauging both distance and timing. There is much here to learn for everyone involved. "The attacker needs to know what distance is right, and the defender has to know the distance to defend or move. Referees have to be aware of when an attack is about to take place."

The training ended with *kata*, including Bassai Dai and Empi, in which the concepts taught throughout the class find their final expression.

December Exam Results

Name	Result	Club Affiliation
Hannah Heavener	Shodan	Creekside Karate Club
Matthew Tyler	Shodan	Creekside Karate Club
Kate Mason	Shodan	Athens Karate Club
Gerard Faust	Shodan	Brown County
Dakota Baker	Shodan	Brown County
Camden Morgan	Nidan	Brown County
Vinson Lewis	Nidan	Ohio Valley Karate



Photo courtesy of kickassuec.blogspot.com

Sensei Vaughan



Chief Instructor, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei Martin Vaughan trained under Sensei Golden and Master Okazaki for over 40 years and is our Regional Director. He is also the Chief Instructor of Indiana ISKF and Vice President of ISKF.

Sensei Oberschlake



President and Assistant Instructor, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei James Oberschlake trained under Sensei Golden and Master Okazaki starting in 1974. He is also the Chief Instructor of Brown County Shotokan Karate Club.

Sensei Golden



Instructor Emeritus, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei Greer Golden graduated from the Instructor Trainee Program in 1969 and was sent to Ohio University in Athens to begin sharing his knowledge with Mid-America karate students.

Calendar

January 13-14 - Kangeiko

Hosted by Indiana ISKF in Indianapolis, IN

February 10 - Youth Tournament

Hosted by Shotokan Karate of Anderson in Cincinnati, OH

March 17 - Regional Training & Kyu Exam

Hosted by Dayton Shotokan Karate in Union, OH

April 14-15 - Spring Camp/Collegiate Regional Tournament with special guest instructor Sensei David Jones of ISKF Canada

Hosted by The Ohio State University Karate Club in Columbus, OH

Contributors

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