

3rd South East Asian Open WKC Championships

The 3rd South East Asian Open WKC Championships took place from 25th to 27th December 2015 in Chennai (formerly Madras) in India. The local organisation of the event was in the expert hands of the *All India Karate & Kobudo Promotion Foundation (AIKKPF)* with *Dr. Swakky Rethinam* (President), and *Mr. S. Rajamani* (Vice-President) and their very proficient team. Especially AIKKPF Secretary *Benjamin Sekar* and Treasurer *Faustin Samson* did most of the work behind the curtain and spend three nights to make the tournament so successful. Our appreciation and thanks go to these friendly and hard working organisers.

The tournament had major problems proceeding due to the terrible heavy rainfalls at the beginning of December and the following floods which put whole Chennai including the international airport being under water. The original chosen government owned sport hall JJ Indoor Basket Ball Stadium, Kilpauk Garden, was no longer available because members of rescue teams were accommodated there. Within two weeks the local organisers managed to hire another sport hall, the *Monfort Indoor Stadium* in *Mylapore, Chennai*. The organisers proved reacted very quickly and delivered a perfect equipped venue. In most cases this would not normally go ahead so all credit to the AIKKPF. Once again on my behalf I would like to congratulate the AIKKPF for their tremendous efforts and I really appreciate everything that was done for me.

On 25th December a full day referee course was conducted by the WKC Senior Referees *Radomir Prošić* (Serbia) and *Dr. Alman Timofeev* (Russia). Over 30 applicants took part in the seminar. The course ended with a theoretical and practical test. The final decision on the grading of the participants of the course was taken at the end of the Championships, in which all taking part had to show their knowledge under real competition conditions. – In the evening about 25 karateka from various styles and federations attended a WKC dan grading. All applicants passed within the standards of the WKC criteria for the respective grades from Shodan to Godan. The standard of the mainly *Shorin Ryu* and *Uechi Ryu* karateka was above standard! Congratulations to all new dan grades.

The registration ran very smoothly because the system used in Chennai was different from that used so far at WKC Championships in *Sabon Kumite*. All participants had to register online like at all tournaments and also had to specify their categories, styles, etc. and in *sanbon kumite* their weight. If their weight at the weigh-in was different from that of the online registration they were automatically put in the respective weight category. So any reweighing or any discussion with coaches or team managers was not required. In this regard the registration was very fast and the draw was done right after the closing of the weigh in.

The 26th December, the first day of the competition was reserved for kata and the following day to the *kumite*. Like the dan grading most of the competitors were from Okinawan styles *Shorin Ryu*, *Uechi Ryu* and *Goju Ryu* (Okinawa). In India there is a good connection to the Japanese islands and most of the senior karateka attend regularly seminars and Championships in Okinawa and Okinaan masters come to India for teaching and grading.

There were nearly 600 participants in the kata and kumite events. Like at the dan grading the standard of the competitors was above average. One could see very clearly the Okinawan influence. The training methods in Okinawa are different from those of Japan or Europe. The discipline of all engaged in the tournament was outstanding. Not a single coach was shouting, protesting or instructing his students to fake injuries. The stadium was absolutely clean, no water bottles lay around or were brought to the tatami, no one was running around. Again, we only can congratulate all participants and the organisers of the *AIKKPF* for their attitude,

discipline, strength, and behaviour. In my humble opinion they are an example to the sport karate world.

Those who did not manage or afford to attend this tournament I can only say that they missed a very special event. For me this Championships has been one of the best, maybe the best, so far I think in the history of the WKC!

Dr. Fritz Wendland