

Aussies awarded Dans in Japan

Nearly 2000 Kyokushin karateka competed in the International Karate Organisation (IKO) Kyokushinkaikan's sixth World Weight Category and International Karate Friendship Tournament in Japan — but only two attendees, both Australians, received 7th Dan promotions.

Held at the Tokyo Taiikukan in April, the event included a special awards presentation, during which IKO director Kancho Shokel Matsui presented the rare 7th Dan grades to Shihan Trevor Tockar and Shihan Nik Cujic. Both men are Australian branch chiefs of the IKO, with Shihan Cujic also being the South Pacific regional representative.

Shihan Cujic has been practising karate for 50 years and was Australia's first full-contact karate champion at heavyweight, as well as the open-weight grand champion, winning both titles in 1977. Kyokushin founder Sosai Mas Oyama personally promoted Cujic to 2nd Dan in recognition of his achievement. Cujic was also selected to represent Australia at the World Tournaments in 1975, 1979 and 1984, but due to injury he only fought in the 1984 event before retiring from competition. He has since coached many of his students to state and national titles as well as international representation — including his son, Steven, who has won several Australian Open Championships and

trained in Japan for more than five years before winning the All Japan Open heavyweight title in 2014.

Sensei Steven was recently promoted to 4th Dan and Shihan Cujic's wife, Joy, also a 4th Dan, is one of the highest ranked female karateka in the IKO.

The Cujic family operates several dojos in Australia, with the main one located in Caringbah, New South Wales.

Shihan Tockar has been training in Kyokushin for 48 years and competed at national and international level in both all-styles karate and full-contact Kyokushin between 1969 and 1982 in his native South Africa. He was in the South African team at the first World Open Karate Tournament in Tokyo in 1975 and later coached the team from 1979 until his immigration to Australia in 2001. Tockar was promoted to 5th Dan by Sosai Mas Oyama in 1981 and 14 years later was awarded his 6th Dan by Kancho Matsui.

As chief instructor of North Bondi Kyokushin, Shihan Tockar has coached his two sons, Anthony and David, to Australian titles and to compete internationally.

The Aussie shihans were presented with their 7th Dans in front of family members and a large group of students who had travelled from Australia to attend the ceremony.



Shihans Cujic (left) and Tockar after being awarded their 7th Dans