

The English Karate Federation

Annual General Meeting 15th March 2009

President's Report

This report comes at the end of what effectively been the first official year of the existence of the EKF. Certainly it is the completion of the first year that we have been a company as we were formally incorporated on 7th March 2008. It has been a very difficult year with many hurdles to overcome, with innumerable hours of work carried out by Board members and other supporters, in most cases without any financial reward. We are now in a position to visualise a National Governing Body able to ensure the highest possible standards of instruction and safety, as well as competitors that make England rightly at the forefront of competitive performance.

Let me share with you my vision for English Karate. I want to ensure that any member of the public walking into a dojo or parent or guardian taking a child or young person into a club, does so in the knowledge that the instructor is trained in safe practices, first aid, is fully insured, has received instruction in child protection issues, is checked against police databases, and has the ability to deliver quality instruction proportionate to his or her grade. I want coaching qualifications that are nationally recognised, yet bespoke to Karate. For those that want to take part in competitions, I want our competitors to have access to the best quality training and opposition, in the safest possible environment, able to nurture their talents and help them achieve their potential. All this is possible, but it will take hard work and support from all levels in English Karate.

I will run through what we have done so far for 'grass roots' Karate. We have run first aid courses, safeguarding children workshops and the EKF is authorised to carry out CRB checks on our members' behalf. We have a Data Protection Registrar. We have set up a system of coaching that mirrors the standards required for NVQ recognition. We have a Dan grade recognition system and for those associations that do not have access to suitably qualified senior instructors to grade their black belts, we now have a regional system where they can be graded. A Technical Committee has been set up to establish the highest standards of instruction and to enable association heads to validate the quality of their own teachers and we are registered through the Central Council of Recreative Physical Training (CCPR). We are also now registered with the British Society for Sport and Law.

The EKF has been re-establishing England's reputation for competitive achievement that was so damaged by the demise of Karate England 2005. We were able to send a team to the World Championships in Japan and though we did not achieve better than a 4th place, we learned a great deal about what was necessary to win medals. I would like to express my gratitude to Terry Wingrove for his generosity in sponsoring the team, and to all the supporters who travelled with the team. The depth of our young talent was shown at the Junior and Cadet European Championships in Paris, where

England achieved 7th place on the medals table, out of 47 countries taking part! I would like to thank all those that also helped sponsor these events, particularly Chikara Ltd. The Paris tournament was truly a testament to the potential we have for the future as well as the team spirit and massive support from clubs all over the country.

The EKF have held very successful domestic tournaments as well, and I would like to thank Peter Allen for a well-organised British Championships, for which we received many plaudits. We saw the retirement as National Coach and Karate legend, Ticky Donovan OBE, who still helps the Board with his experience and wise counsel. I welcome our new Coach, Wayne Otto OBE, and I am encouraged by his ambitious ideas of providing a regional system of training and selection. Wayne is helped by a number of assistants that lend great enthusiasm, experience and expertise. I also look forward to closer working with our Chief Referee, Terry Pottage, who will also bring his vast knowledge to helping the Team improve in the future.

I am sorry to announce that our Company Secretary, John Gilliland, has decided not to stand for re-election. John has been a real driving force behind setting up the EKF as a company and his energy will be sorely missed. I would like to thank John for all the work he has done. John De Bono has agreed to step in as Company Secretary and I wish him luck with that onerous job.

I would also like to thank the other Board members for their efforts over the past year. Andy Genery has worked hard to develop the coaching programme, with help from Ticky and others. Les Cutting has taken charge of child protection issues and has produced some very useful policies for the guidance of all. John De Bono has given such support as first aid courses and undertakes large amounts of administrative tasks. Chris Thompson has helped drive the Technical Committee with help from Ticky and Mike Billman, and Mike has also completed some of our risk assessments and an essential piece of work, namely a system of Karate competition for disabled persons that will greatly assist the case for our recognition as a participative Olympic sport. I must give special thanks to our Vice President, Mike Dinsdale, without whose knowledge, experience and massive work ethic, we would not have achieved a fraction of our success.

There are two others that I must thank: firstly Debbie Sell, who has worked tirelessly with the necessary administration that is an inevitable part of running the national governing body. Secondly, 'Jelinet' our website provider has set up what I think is the best site of any sports governing body. To date we have had 676,000 hits! The site is the source of information both for clubs and for those following our competitors, and continues to grow and develop.

The future of the EKF and consequently the future of English Karate look very promising. There are still obstacles to be overcome. Sport England (SE) steadfastly refuses to formally recognise us in spite of WKF and IOC recognition, as well as indisputable proof that the associations that formed Karate England 2005, with very few exceptions, now form the EKF. This is now at a higher level of dialogue. We also have a concern about funding. It is imperative that all karateka are licensed by their associations, otherwise we cannot verify our exact numbers in our negotiations with SE and we are starved of the funding necessary to provide all the services we are

trying to deliver to our members. I would like all associations to consider ways of finding sponsorship or of generating income, as our continuing work is undoubtedly for the betterment of English Karate.

Finally, I would like to thank all our members for their support for me and for the Board over the past year. The workload has been huge, but I am immensely proud to see what we have achieved in such a short time. With that continued support, we can look forward to English Karate improving and achieving consistently high standards everywhere. When I first stepped into a dojo 33 years ago I started in an art that I truly believe helps the health, character and development of practitioners of all ages. The English Karate Federation is committed to enabling all our members gain the most from their practise of Karate and together, we can turn that vision into reality.

My very best wishes to all of you.

Carl Lindley
President
English Karate Federation