

Wasquehal - Jan 2012- French International Open

By Willie Thomas EKF National Coach

Coaches in attendance: Willie Thomas / Paul Newby (asst. national coach)

Athletes in attendance and results:

Natalie Williams	GOLD	Alton Brown	2 nd Round
Michael Burke	3 rd Round	Carla Burkitt	2 nd Round
Jordan Thomas	3 rd Round	Meenaz Janar	1 st Round
Sonny Roberts	3 rd Round	Aaron Swales	1 st Round
Siobhan Hayes	3 rd Round	Melissa Lewis	1 st Round

The introduction of the new Kumite rules attracted some of England's top competitors in an effort to accustom themselves to their impact and evolution of the sport. As national coach I feel it is important for all coaches who wish to be international coaches to regularly coach at international level (once or twice a year is not enough) under these new rules. Having studied the rules it caused me to review strategies which in turn effect my coaching.

Anyway, enough about me! We had some good performances, sporadic, unlucky and some under performers but a very useful performance indicator (P.I) for all who fought. Great to see Natalie Williams on top of the podium once more and although clearly not at her best a solid gritty, tenacious effort demonstrating exactly the level of commitment needed to win an event like this. Bang on course for the Europeans and the World championships.

The squad included two under 21's Jordan and Michael whose performance was outstanding. In the first two fights both had convincing wins against good opposition scoring 18 and 11 points respectively. Both lost in the third round to fighters from the Ukraine, Jordan on flags and Michael 1-0 to the eventual winner.

Sonny and Siobhan gave solid, gritty performances. Both smelt the opportunity for a medal position and fought right to the buzzer to make it so, and although lost in their endeavours, 'they were going forward'. As far as a P.I is concerned again a very positive start to the year.

Alton, Carla and Meenaz all demonstrated their capabilities with clear, confident performances. Scoring with good points and advanced strategic skills however consistency is the key here as they were unable to sustain this performance in the subsequent bout. The positive from this is they are more than capable of medal winning performances but maintain your mental focus as clearly the issue is not physical.

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Aaron and Melissa did not get their motor running for this event and by their own admission under performed on this occasion.

These open internationals are unforgiving at best and anybody considering entering events of this calibre must be mentally and physically prepared to perform.