

The Shinai Express

Issue 2 - February 2025

Editorial

By Board Member of the NZKF Board of Directors, Alan Stephenson

What does the NZKF actually do?

Over the last three decades, I have heard many times people say, “what does the New Zealand Kendo Federation (NZKF) do for me?”

On a personal level, I find people’s attitude interesting, as I have always held the view, what can I do to help or assist the New Zealand Kendo Federation? After all, the state of the NZKF is a reflection of the people who make up the organisation. I believe that this also applies to the Dojos that belong to the NZKF, in so far, the greater the effort put into a Dojo by its members, the stronger it will be. This, however, is just my personal view.

What does the NZKF do for its members?

The Board of Directors are the elected officials who run the NZKF, as part of their role, they undertake the following tasks on behalf of the federation membership to ensure:

- The organising and the making the annual subscription payment to the Federation of International Kendo (FIK), which in turn allows the NZKF membership to participate in promotional exams domestically or overseas.
- Affiliated membership to the FIK also enables us to participate in various World (Kendo and naginata) Championships around the world.
- The management of the NZKF finances.
- The allocation of funds to support Budo events around the country and at internationally recognized events.
- The setting of and progress towards the strategic goals for the NZKF.
- The formulation of national policies.
- Liaison with the Technical Advisory Group to standardise gradings and other technical matters
- Oversight of the national Coaching programme
- Initiating, funding and managing the Hello Club portal for membership.
- The organization and running of the NZKF Annual General Meeting.
- The oversight of the NZKF Website and Facebook page
- The formulating and actioning of appropriate systems that underpin the aims and strategic goals of the NZKF.
- Where appropriate, the allocation of tasks relevant to the running of the federation to suitable personnel.
- The board also is required to hold regular meetings to ensure the federation is achieving its strategic goals.

In conclusion, I would like to add that, like most voluntary organizations, the people who contribute their time and energies to assisting the NZKF in whatever role they play, they have my gratitude.

Wolf Pack Coaching Team and P2P Updates

Head Coach, Sensei Blake Bennett

The NZ National Coaching Team hosted its first meeting with the Coach and Talent Development Group (CTD) in early February, marking a key step in strengthening the NZKF's high-performance pathway. This gathering brought together dojo leaders with the Wolf Pack Coaches, aiming to build stronger connections across New Zealand's kendo community. The goal is to improve communication, streamline messaging, and provide better support for all Wolf Pack members.

Online Information Session

To keep this momentum going, we hosted an online information session on Sunday, February 23rd. Anyone in the NZKF interested in the Wolf Pack is encouraged to watch the recording of the session (contact Blake for details for access). The coaching team is committed to an inclusive approach in 2025, welcoming anyone keen to learn more about high-performance kendo. Whether you aspire to compete internationally or simply want to experience an elite training environment, this session will outline our plans moving forward. We've also launched a private Facebook group for Wolf Pack members, supporters, and those interested in high-performance kendo in NZ. This will be a central hub for updates, discussions, and shared training insights.

Pathway to Podium (P2P) Seminar

The first major event in our Tokyo '27 campaign is the Pathway to Podium (P2P) training camp in Christchurch on Saturday, March 22nd. Registrations are open on the Wolf Pack Facebook page, and we encourage those looking to challenge themselves in a high-intensity training setting to participate. While the event is open to all, we are introducing a fitness standard based on the aerobic requirements of the Army Required Fitness Level (RFL)—especially the 2.4km run—to ensure participants are prepared for the demands of high-performance training. The RFL has different benchmarks based on age and gender, and those aiming for international competition should strive to meet or exceed these standards. More details on the RFL are available in the recorded February online session.

University Partnerships & Future Developments

Beyond strengthening our internal coaching structure, we are also making progress in partnering with two NZ universities to enhance our preparation. In short, we are exploring ways to integrate sports science, performance analysis, and mental skills into our training framework, and while these collaborations are still in the early stages, exciting developments are on the horizon. We are committed to building a sustainable high-performance pathway—not just for the 2027 World Kendo Championships, but for long-term competitive success as we aim to 'disrupt the force' in international kendo competition. This is an ambitious vision, and we are making progress step by step! Stay tuned for more updates, and in the meantime, mark your calendars for these upcoming events.

For any questions or to express interest in upcoming events, contact us at: nzkendowolfpack@gmail.com

Wolf Pack Key Dates & Details

- March 22nd – Pathway to Podium (P2P) Seminar, Templeton Community Centre, Christchurch
- April 26th-27th – Pathway to Podium Seminar, P23 and P27 Seminar, Logan Park High School Gym, Dunedin

49th International Foreign Kendo Leaders Seminar 18–24th March 2025

Many years ago, the ‘Kitamoto’ camp held in the heart of Saitama, Japan, was two weeks long. It was a Kendo marathon, and it provided many of the 5-7th dan Sensei who have founded the NZKF and many dojos in New Zealand, a boost in their learning, and in their international networking. Nowadays, the Kendo Leadership camp is held over a week and attracts around 30 people from all over the world. Our successful representative for the 2025 Seminar is *Rina Kobayashi*, 5th dan, who is also our National Women’s Coach. We wish her well and are assured she will bring back a lot of knowledge and enthusiasm after attending this event. 2026 will be the 50th Seminar. If you are sandan and above with a strong leadership role in your dojo, consider applying when we call out for applications in the new year.

2025: Auckland Kendo Club Summer international seminar

Rina Kobayashi

History of the Auckland Summer Kendo Seminar

The Auckland Summer Kendo Seminar has its origins in the years well before 2015, when Japanese kendo sensei regularly visited New Zealand during February (our summer). These visits gradually took on a more structured form, leading to the establishment of what became informally known as the *Auckland Kendo Summer Seminar*.

Over the years, the event has been privileged to host esteemed kendo instructors, including:

- Inoue Yoshihiko Hanshi, 8 visits
- Sumi Masatake Hanshi, 2 visits
- Mochizuki Teruo Kyoshi 8th Dan, 2 visits
- Koyama Masahiro Kyoshi 8th Dan, 1 visit

In 2016, the seminar was formally positioned under the leadership of Alex Bennett Kyoshi 7th Dan, marking the beginning of an annual tradition focused on high-level kendo training and international exchange. The seminar has continued to grow in both scale and reputation, with the only interruption occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, the Auckland Summer Kendo Seminar remains a key event in the Oceania area, attracting practitioners from across the Asia-Pacific and beyond. A total of 10 countries have been represented at summer seminars over the years.

A Lineup of top Sensei & A Growing Global Presence

The upcoming 2025 seminar is shaping up to be an amazing event, with 17 Australian kenshi already confirmed! This year's event features four sensei from Japan:

- Takahashi Hideaki Kyoshi 8th Dan
- Fujiwara Hironobu Kyoshi 8th Dan
- Alex Bennett Kyoshi 7th Dan (Seminar Leader)
- Graham Sayer Kyoshi 7th Dan (Assisting Takahashi Sensei)

Adding to the prestige, we will also have four Renshi 7th dan instructors in attendance:

- Greg Nicholas (AKR)
- Alan Stephenson (NZKF)
- Jason Oh (NZKF)
- Martin Lee (NZKF)

Theme for 2025: “En” The Power of Connection

This year's seminar embraces the theme “En” (縁) symbolizing the deep bonds forged through kendo as well how this power of En is applied in Keiko.

A grading up to 5th dan will take place at the conclusion of the event.

This is more than just a seminar—it's an unmissable kendo experience. It's just

A Matter of Intent

Calls for Host of 2026 NZKF National Championships

The last Kendo Nationals were held in Canterbury in 2024 and before you know it, the next one will be upon us. Held every three years, the Nationals are planned for the year prior to the World Kendo Championship and are alternated between the north and south islands. It is North Island's turn to hold them. It is preferred that it is held between May and July. Costs are mainly covered by the entry fees, but the Federation covers costs of medals, and koha towards Shimpan and effectively underwrites the championships. We want a keen dojo or collection of dojos keen on hosting the event, please send an expression of interest to secretary@kendo.org.nz before June if possible.

National Iaido Kaneda Sensei 8th Dan Seminar: April 2025

Sensei Brent Hansen

The Iaido section of the NZKF will be holding its annual Seminar over the weekend of the 25th April, at the Auckland Kendo Club.

The seminar will start at 9am Saturday morning and finish at 4pm Sunday. Overseeing the seminar and back after a 2-year break is Kaneda Sensei Iaido 8th Dan. Sensei is the only person to win the “All Japan Iaido Championships” 8 times.

Sensei is 64 years old and is based in Tokyo, he travels extensively around the World teaching Iaido to a range of people and sharing his knowledge. Sensei's Father was also an 8th Dan in Iaido (tough Family)

The seminar will primarily be aiming to focus on the 'current changes' to the Seitei Kata (AJKF Standard 12 Kata); In Iaido as time moves so do changes within the forms, sometimes very minor and at times more challenging so it is good to keep up.

The seminar will cater for 23 Members of the Federation coming from Wellington / New Plymouth / Whangarei and Auckland ages 20–70 years of age. The Sensei will also be sharing more insight to the Koryu Kata which we study being Muso Shinden Ryu. These are a traditional set of forms and very popular in Japan. Unlike Kendo which has all the noise / blood sweat and tears Iaido looks quite easy – but that's a lie. Iaido will challenge anyone who seeks to study it. Iaido is a great Martial Art for anyone of any age / gender to start and we encourage anyone to give it a try.

If anyone is interested in learning more about Iaido then you are more than welcome to visit and watch this Seminar. If you live in other regions of NZ and maybe interested in Iaido and seek more information, then please feel free to contact me directly - brent@proquipnz.co.nz

Eiga and Morioka Sensei visit to Waikato for Seminar in August

Join Waikato Kendo Club for the August Kendo Seminar with Eiga Sensei & Morioka Sensei!

The Waikato Kendo Club is honoured to host an exciting Kendo Seminar this August in Hamilton, New Zealand! This is a rare opportunity to learn from two highly esteemed Kendo instructors:

- Eiga Hideyuki Sensei (栄花英幸 教士八段) – Renowned worldwide for his exceptional skill and deep understanding of Kendo.
- Morioka Hiromitsu Sensei (森岡弘光 教士七段) – A respected teacher with vast experience in Kendo training and instruction.



Seminar Dates:



16th & 17th August – Official Seminar

15th August (Friday evening) – Goodwill Keiko (Open Training)

Location: Hillcrest Area, Hamilton City

Contact: Marleen Charng – either by emailing waikatokendo@gmail.com or text message on 027 6429 689.

This seminar is open to all Kendo practitioners eager to improve their technique and deepen their understanding of Kendo. A grading event will also be held, with more details to be announced soon along with the registration form.

Stay tuned for updates, and don't miss this incredible opportunity to train under two legendary sensei! Mark your calendars and spread the word!

[#KendoSeminar](#) [#WaikatoKendo](#) [#EigaSensei](#) [#MoriokaSensei](#) [#KendoTraining](#)
[#KendoNZ](#) [#WaikatoKendoClub](#)

If you have anything for the next edition of the Shinai Express, please email Tasha Derrett secretary@kendo.org.nz.

