

Walderslade Judo Club compete in France

Event; Dunkerque European Championships, France

Date; 16th and 17th May 2009

Venue; Stades de Flandres, Dunkerque, France

Walderslade Judo Club took a group of 8 junior fighters and a senior 5-man team to compete in the Dunkerque Littoral Championships at the weekend and the juniors really excelled themselves in such a strong competition.

It was an early start for the clubs members as the juniors were competing on the Saturday along with fighters from Britain, France and Holland, including a very strong contingent of Dutch juniors from one of Walderslade's partner clubs', Mahorakan.

This was the first international championships any of the young Walderslade fighters had taken part in and all of them fought really hard against some class opposition from some of Europe's top clubs.

However, this did not mean the club was without success and the youngsters came away with a gold a silver and three bronze medals after an excellent day's judo.

Bronze medals were won by Regan Bournier who started his international debut throwing his first opponent with a superb uchi mata for Ippon and Alan Maxwell who had to compete in the Cadets U81kg group and so was giving away quite a few kilos in weight as he had been due to compete in the U73kg category.

Meanwhile, twin sisters Charley and Molly Harvey fought in the same group with Molly taking the silver after a hard fought final with a tough young French girl and Charley taking the bronze.

Walderslade's gold medal was won by Yellow Belt Chantal Kitchener in a tough pool which saw her defeating French green and orange belt opposition in style.

The other Walderslade fighters who took part were Thomas Courtier, Liam Banbury and Kieran Maxwell, who all fought hard in very large groups but who were unable to make it through to the medals.

On Sunday it was the turn of Walderslade's men to compete in what is a very high standard men's team competition. There were twelve teams in total taking part including three other British teams, consisting of top Kent club Dartford, Team BJC and a BJC team representing their South London clubs but, like Walderslade, all were eliminated at various stages leaving the finals to be an all Dutch and French affair.

However, all of the Walderslade team fought hard and with a two members having to compete outside their normal weight categories, it was always going to be hard for them to make progress in such a strong competition. The team lost both their opening rounds to strong French clubs including one of the favourites for the event, which later went through to the semi-finals and were just narrowly beaten by top

Dutch club Mahorakan. The 5 man Walderslade team consisted of Dean Pocock, Eddie Orgee, Steve Stacy, Ralph Hamblett and Ranj Atwal.

Before the finals took place on Sunday afternoon there was a special training session held for the juniors which was led by current ladies World Champion and Beijing Olympic Silver medalist from France, Lucie DeCosse. It was a real treat for those youngsters who had competed during the weekend and Lucie charmed the mat full of juniors who were eager to rub shoulders with such a judo celebrity.

A number of Walderslade club members were very lucky to be chosen to practice with Lucie and later had photographs taken with the World Champion.

The following photos show her with some of the Walderslade youngsters and a lineup of the juniors who went on the trip.



Kieran Maxwell trying to turn over current World Champion and Beijing Olympic Silver medalist Lucie DeCosse.



Ten year old Charley Harvey stares up at current World Champion and Olympic Silver medallist Lucie DeCosse after being chosen to practice with her at the weekend with a look that says “one day that will be me”.



Walderslade junior members who took part in the tournament.

Back row; Regan Bournier, Kieran Maxwell, Liam Banbury, Thomas Courtier, Alan Maxwell

Front row; Charley Harvey, Molly Harvey, Chantal Kitchener

Eddie Orgee

Walderslade Judo Club

<http://www.walderslade.co.uk>



