On Sunday 30th November, CUKC embarked on an adventure to Birmingham to attend the University of Birmingham Karate Open competition. Despite having left Cambridge at 5:30am, everybody was excited to compete and eager to get the day started.

Kata

Men's novice

The competition started off at 9am, with the men's novice kata being on of the first categories. Dean kicked off the competition with a strong Gekisai Dai Ichi, the first basic kata in Goju-ryu, against a very tough opponent. Despite losing the match, he qualified for repechage, as he was against the gold medalist in this category; he performed heian shodan against a shito-ryu heian kata and came in a very respectable fourth place. A strong start from CUKC!

Women's senior

In the first round, Angela and Feri both performed gojushiho sho, with them both winning their respective rounds. However, in the second round, they both faced off against difficult opponents, with Feri competing against one of the future bronze medalists and Angela going against one of the finalists. They both did incredible performances of jion and kanku sho respectively, however they narrowly missed out on the win, with the final result being 1-2 for both. Talin, who had a by in the first round, went on to win both her next matches 3-0, first performing kanku dai and then jion. In the semi-finals, Talin just missed out on winning with her gojushiho sho with a close call of 1-2. As a result of going against the finalists, Angela and Talin both competed in the repechage rounds. Angela had a clean 3-0 sweep in both her first and second repechage rounds with gankaku and gojushiho sho respectively. This resulted in a very tense Cambridge vs Cambridge match between Talin and Angela for the bronze. Angela made an unfortunate mistake on kanku dai, resulting in Talin taking the medal with a very strong kanku dai of her own.

Men's senior

Lukas started off the men's senior kata category strongly, winning 3-0 with enpi. Unfortunately, Li Sen and Dani, who both perfomed jion, both lost in the first round to some very strong sochins, with Li Sen losing to the future silver medalist (qualifying him for repecharge). Lukas proceeded to the second round, once again winning 3-0 with gojushiho sho. However, the semi-finals proved to be very tough, with Lukas' bassai dai losing to the silver medalists enpi. In the first round of repecharge, Li Sen performed a strong bassai dai, winning 3-0 and advancing to the final round of repecharge. This resulted in another, very intense, Cambridge vs Cambridge match with Lukas taking the bronze with his jion against Li Sen's bassai sho.

Kumite

Women's Lightweights

Angela was the first to represent Cambridge in the kumite rounds. A jodan zuki was scored against her early on, so she quickly adapted to her opponent, perfectly blocking their next attacks. While there were many techniques on Angela's part which were very close to scoring, the match ended due to time running out, with Angela losing a nail-biting match 0-1.

Men's Lightweights

Next to compete was Dani, fighting against someone from Loughborough. The match was very intense, with lots of jodan zuki to the face, which just missed out on scoring on both sides. However, thanks to a few well timed gyaku zuki, Dani ended up winning the round and proceeding to the quarter finals. His next opponent, the future silver medalist, would prove to be a tough adversary. He learned that his opponent was very quick, easily closing the gap from halfway across the tatami, and had very precise techniques. While Dani tried to adapt to this opponent by maintaining his distance and attempting to score on counter techniques, the point difference was already too large and he ended up losing this match, slightly dizzier than before due to a few too many kicks to the head. However, this loss resulted in Dani being entered into repechage rounds, where he faced off against another opponent from Loughborough. Although the match was quite close, ultimately, Dani lost this match.

Women's Middleweights

In the first round, Nuha's opponent did not show up, likely out of fear of having to go against such a skilled fighter, thus awarding her an automatic victory. Her next opponent, last year's BUCS bronze medalist, would prove difficult. Her opponent gained control of the match early on with some strong jodan kizami zuki, resulting in a loss for Nuha. Next, she competed in a repechage match for the bronze medal; the fight was initially tough, with her opponent building up an early lead. However, the referee stopped the bout after she received a punch to the nose which caused nosebleed. Once the match restarted, there were some techniques which just narrowly missed out on scoring, but as no further points were scored, this resulted in an unfortunate loss for Nuha.

Men's Middleweights

In Li Sen's first match, he scored a perfectly executed kizami zuki early on, resulting in a yuko. With some great defence by Li Sen, his opponent did not manage score against him until the final few seconds. Although the final result was 1-1, Li Sen won the match due to first point advantage. His quarter final match started soon after the first, leaving little time for recovery. Due to this, and the long day, the match would prove to be tough, with a few points getting scored against Li Sen early on. This resulted in an unfortunate loss, but still a very strong performance from Li Sen.

Next up on the matts was Lukas, representing CUKC in the quarter finals. Although initially his opponent quickly scored a few points against Lukas in the first half of the match, he managed to

prevent this from happening in the second half. However, the gap was already too large, causing the Lukas to lose this match. As he was against a finalist, he qualified for the repechage round. This was an intense fight, with his opponent scoring the first yuko with a jodan gyaku zuki. Lukas then brought it back with a clean mawashi geri, chudan gyaku zuki chudan combination, scoring a yuko on the punch. This resulted in the final score being 1-1, with Lukas unfortunately losing due to senshu.

Final Statements

After a long and intense day of competition, the team unwinded by going out for a cheeky nandos together. It was a very tough day but we are incredibly proud of everyone who competed and participated. Congratulations again to Lukas and Talin for winning the bronze medal in the senior kata categories. Also, a huge thank you to Talin and Dean for driving everyone to the competition.