



Ballinasloe IKKI Karate

In spite of these difficult pandemic times, karate in Ballinasloe has kept active. The club holds zoom classes four nights a week catering for various skill levels. Chief Instructor, Leo Mulvany says classes are well attended and urges students to keep up their specific fitness, stretching, technical karate drills and most importantly keeping in touch socially albeit over the internet.



A milestone in a student's karate career is attaining black belt status. Sensei Colin O'Connell received his 3rd Dan degree black belt in 2020 from the IKIF headquarters in Yokohama, Japan having passed his ranking exam in Ballinasloe. Sensei Colin began his karate career in 1988 and ranked to 1st Dan in Toronto in 1994 under the Chief Instructor of Itosu-kai Canada, Shihan Kei Tsumura. He also competed in the Canadian Itosu-kai karate championships while in Toronto. Colin returned to Toronto in 2000 to rank to 2nd Dan and compete again in the Canadian Championships and received the Outstanding International Sensei award.

The IKKI association established in Ballinasloe in 1976 has a strong national and international competitive history with great success. The pandemic has made this aspect of karate practically impossible, however there was the opportunity of competing in an International Karate Kata competition in Japan last year. The Japan headquarters held a virtual tournament which was a first. There were 4 categories broken into age and gender. The IKKI entered 21 competitors competing in 28 events. The tournament had 400 entries in total with at least 50% of entries from Japan itself. From the Ballinasloe club competing were Nik Aimal Andik Najib, Caoimhe, Conor and Siofra Naughton, Oisín and Sean Keighery, Matthew and Nathan Blair, Ciaran O'Hara, Roisin McCauley, Ava and Mia Shanley, Ciaran and Liam Egan, Aaron Fortune and Leo Mulvany. IKKI clubs Kiltormer and Eyrecourt were represented by Sean Power, Eimear Porter, David Feury, Pamela Nee, Una Flynn and Marie Dolphin. Well done to all for competing and congratulations to medal winners (Gold x 4, Silver x 5 and Bronze x 1). Full article on the new IKKI website: www.ikki.ie
Ballinasloe karate classes continue on Zoom and there will be further virtual competitions in 2021.