

THE MALTA INDEPENDENT ONLINE



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SEARCH



Japanese Karate master in Malta

The local branch of the Educational and Technical Institute of Karate (www.instituteofkarate.com) led by Franco Azzopardi, has for the 25th time since 1994, hosted top Japanese karate coaches and instructors locally for the benefit of local karate students. Last weekend, Mr Takeshi Naito was back in Malta sharing his karate methods that over his competitive days and those of the many athletes he prepared for the highest levels of competition, brought him a lot of satisfaction. He always managed to differentiate his athletes' style of sparring by building on agility and precision timing. Mr Naito is a Japanese graduate of karate holding five black belts with different top karate organisations, all from 7th dan (degree) or better. He has been instructing and coaching in Italy for almost three decades and although he is now almost 60 years old, his ability is still always a few notches ahead of the rest. Mr Naito has been capable of adapting Budo (ancient martial arts of Japan) principles to the competition mat. He says that one must study hard the limitations on the mat in the form of rules, and find a way of applying Budo techniques and attitude to the contest. Mr Naito explained that the game has changed as all coaches and athletes strive to be always at the confines and limits of the rules. Mr Naito is renowned for his capability of adapting to different rule systems. He attributes his capability to simply understanding deeply Budo principles and then studying what gives a point and what loses a point in competition. The rest, he says, is hard practice of correct timing and responsive agility through displacement of one's centre of gravity. Mr Naito is a graduate of Komazawa University Karate team and is in charge today of the national kumite (sparring) teams of Italy's FIKTA and JKA organisations. The weekend course was attended by both local and foreign black belts.

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The Educational and Technical Institute of Karate (ETIK) was founded 20 years ago by Mr Franco Azzopardi, and has since then kept its focus on studying the Japanese karate with Japanese instructors. Mr Azzopardi's objective was always that of importing the talent of the Japanese originators and owners of karate to the Maltese islands so as to give the opportunity to Maltese students to gain an insight into their mindset, attitude and technical movements. 'Who can best inspire one to learn Japanese if not the Japanese! The same applies for karate.' Mr Azzopardi said. Since its beginning, ETIK generated over 110 black belts all graduates of Japanese top world class examiners with undisputable lineage in karate.

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