

Kendo Exchange with the Mexican Kendo Federation

For 10 days between August 8th to August 18th I was invited by the Mexican Kendo Federation to practice with the local kendoists. During my stay, I visited different dojos in the vicinity of Mexico City.

Similar to any dojo in Canada, there was a mix in levels from beginners all the way up to senseis that have spent some time in Japan. However, the main difference between kendo in Canada and kendo in Mexico was almost all of the kendoists were not of Japanese origin.



From what I understood, kendo in Mexico started about 40 years ago when two Japanese people came to visit and performed some kendo in front of the local people. Some of the Mexican people were amazed by this and started to take up kendo. During my stay, I was very fortunate to meet some of the founders of Kendo in Mexico. 40 years later today, hundreds of people practice kendo all throughout Mexico and their national team made it into best 8 at the 16th World Kendo Championships that took place in Tokyo, earlier this year.



During my stay, I was also fortunate to be able to observe the Mexican National Kendo Championships. Unlike the Canadian National Championships which takes place every 3 years, they do this tournament every year at different locations in Mexico. There were over 70 participants, 12 men's teams and 9 woman's teams. The amount of energy and fighting spirit that was displayed at this tournament was extremely inspirational. The two day tournament ended with grading of 1-3 dan. I was moved by the wonderful "kihon" that all of the kenshis displayed. If people in Mexico would like to grade higher than 4 dan, they need to go to other countries or wait for the next Latin American Taikai. Currently, their highest ranked sensei is 6 dan.

The Mexican Kendo Federation is committed to improving the level of kendo in Mexico by inviting kendoists from across the globe every year. The aim is to expose the local kendoists to different kinds of kendo, as well as to establish lasting relationships with other kendo practicing countries. Every year, they host senseis from Japan, Korea, Brazil, US and now also Canada. It is evident that this has provided a tremendous positive impact on kendo in Mexico.



I hope that my visit will help strengthen future relationships with the Mexican Kendo Federation, so that we can all work to build good, strong kendo.

I would like to end off by thanking the Mexican Kendo Federation and the Mexican Government for inviting me to participate in this wonderful opportunity. Also, thank you to the Canadian Kendo Federation for granting me permission to go on this trip on behalf of Kendo Canada.

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