



AUCKLAND PLAYERS COMPETE AT 2009 ACT OPEN

With temperatures in the 40's outside the venue (and significantly hotter inside the non-air conditioned venue), a small group of Auckland players overcame the conditions to perform creditably at the ACT International Open in Canberra on 7-8 February.

Shanice Wiki (Howick Academy of Judo) placed 5th in both the Young Women and Senior Women -63kg categories, after some strong performances against much more experienced players, breaking an opponents arm along the way!

Alex Bishop (Nippon Judo Club) placed 3rd in the -16 Boys U66kg category, and battled through a golden score to lose on flags in the bronze medal match of the Young Mens U66kg. Finishing 5th in a field of 14 and having to hang on for 8 minutes in his 9th fight in 45 degrees was not easy!

Natasha Downing (Nippon Judo Club) finished 3rd in the Junior Womens -57kg, and the following day lost the final in the Senior Womens category in a field of 12 players. On the way to silver, she beat the Young Women's champion from the previous day by Ippon in 12 seconds.

Hannah Downing (Nippon Judo Club) completed the Auckland group. On a very successful first day, Hannah was undefeated in her 7 matches, winning gold in both the Under 16 Girls -48kg and the Junior Womens -48kg categories. On the second day, she was leading the final by waza-ari and made a fatal mistake 12 seconds from the 5 minute mark, to finish second in the Senior Womens -48kg.

Fields for this year's event were strong, with most of the top Australians chasing selection points. Most fields were large enough to run knock-out draws, and the event ran smoothly with minimal stoppages. The refereeing standard was lifted by the two New Zealand referees, Debbie Downing (Auckland), and Kiki Velloza (East Coast).