

## **Kendo Varsity 2004**

By Hyo Won Kim  
and Frank Stajano

This year, both Oxford and Cambridge had a shortage of armoured kendoka “in statu pupillari”, with many of last year's veterans having now earned their degrees. The possibility of admitting non-student competitors in the Varsity teams was considered but then bravely dropped, opting instead to train new recruits to the rigours of competition. Following the release of *The Last Samurai*, kendo clubs have been enjoying prosperity in growing memberships. The 7th annual Kendo Varsity Match therefore saw both sides fielding new talents. The Cambridge squad had conducted a special training weekend prior to the Varsity match lead by the former (and now honorary) instructor Sergio Boffa (5th Dan), visiting us all the way from Belgium! Light blues were eager to keep the title but the dark blues won't let it slip so easily.

The team match, consisting of 5 fighters, saw varsity veteran Charles McLachlan (Queens') take on a newbie, Jin-Taek Lee, in the first match. Lack of experience threw Lee out of the arena not once but twice resulting in a penalty point. The clock ran out and McLachlan secured the first victory. Second up was Emily Kay (Darwin), new to the kendo attire but extremely determined; she lost an early point by receiving a men-cut (on the head) from Nathan Broomhead in his second varsity appearance. She fought back hard but could not come level and allowed the opposition victory. Next up was Chando Jung (Trinity), new to Cambridge but certainly not new to kendo, facing Oxford captain Lana Sheridan. Jung executed his trademark kote-cut (to the wrist) to win the fight. Another debutant, Timothy Simpson (Churchill), was equally matched against Malte Willer. His attempts to seal the Cambridge victory did not avail but instead received a do-cut (to the waist) during the last 10 seconds of the fight. With both sides now having acquired 2 wins each, it was down to the captain Hyowon Kim (Churchill). No pressure!! Opposition Peter Pugh put up a good fight matching Kim blow for blow. With little time left, Kim succeeded a kote-cut to bring the saga to an end.

The team fight was followed by individual matches arranged in a direct elimination tree. Each side contributed 8 kendoka, this time giving non-students a chance to fight. In a result that exactly mirrored last year's, after having lost the team match Oxford regained face by winning both the individuals, with Oxford kyusha Andy Haynes bravely defeating two Cambridge yudansha on his way to the top, and the fighting spirit award, conquered by captain Lana Sheridan.

We thank Sergio Boffa for his undying dedication to the club and also to Oxford and British Kendo Association who made the smooth running of the day possible. The Cambridge squad continues training as they prepare for the upcoming University Championship later this month.

## Scoreboard

Oxford				Cambridge	
Lee			H		McLachlan
Broomhead		M			Kay
Sheridan			K		Jung
Willer		D			Simpson
Pugh			K		Kim

Final Score: Oxford 2 – 3 Cambridge

## Photos





