

INDEPENDENT ASSOCIATION OF PREP SCHOOLS or IAPS.

NATIONAL JUDO CHAMPIONSHIPS, 2023.

Just a brief report on this event, attended by Hazlegrove Prep School with Gleeson Judo.



This event has run annually for many years now. Previously, it had three events, one for the girls in January, older boys, 10-13 in March and finally, the under 10s in May. All held at High Wycombe Judo Centre. This year under new management, it has moved to a new venue, ACS International School Egham. And quite a difference in format too. All, boy, small, big and the girls, all on the same day. The sports hall had four contest areas. The plan was to get everything done in the day. Medals to go out as soon as each age group was finished.

There certainly was an atmosphere of intent as the day started. As a coach the contrast to previous IAPS was "harsh". Continually running from one area to another, players fighting at the same time on different mats. How to give advice and encouragement to all? A difficult answer to find.

The boys from Hazlegrove started well. It was the first time for all of them and although some performed much better at school, the nerves and stress of the event, needed overcoming. Sam came in first with a Silver, then Hamish with the same, Charlie, Henry and Edward all followed with bronzes. Contests at this level are very hit and miss. Minds tend to go blank, things we'd trained and practised, just disappear. So its a great achievement for these young boys. Things will be better with experience.

As was proved by the second age group. Beau and Magnus have both fought at this level before and did it show. Beau with great professionalism, went out, a decided plan formed and followed it, Gold. Magnus had a small upset equalling a Silver. Louie, new to it all and against a big opponent fought again and again with great courage! Never giving in, disregarding the pain of continual kicks in the shin. An outstanding effort, leading to a Silver medal. Wilbur, also fought well to get a bronze.

So came the girls. We have some feisty little ones coming up. I was hopefully that this could translate into success for all of them. And it pretty much did, Jemima got a Silver and Iris a bronze, not as good as I'd hoped but a good job and certainly should be improved on for next year.

The last group of the day, the older girls. Polly, smashed it out of the park, wrong country wrong sport but the idea is right. A great job by a solid judo player, Gold. Livia, had some difficult opposition to overcome and therefore struggled, but kept at it, never giving in, Bronze. Finally, after a long wait, Isla. Her last outing at this event before leaving for senior school. Many years has Isla done these competitions. Despite a small amount of nerves fluttering in her stomach, out she went and with great efficiency, disposed of the opposition in quick time, and assured Gold.

A good day out for all! I'm very proud of all the children. They really did the very best they could which is all you can ask. Plus the results were outstanding! Well done all and a big thank you to the parents for their support and of course lastly but by no means least, Mr. Bartlett for driving the boarders up & back.

