

Chairman's Report.

What a year for the East. We hosted the English senior and Junior Open at Thetford for yet another year. Niamh Southgate became the youngest Eastern area player ever to be selected for the European Cadet Championships and was rewarded with a trip to Japan with the British futures squad finally ending her year regaining her status as British Champion. Ryan King Oliver Purllant Ben Caldwell Niamh and Eden Southgate took a batch of medals at the Commonwealth Tournament in Walsall, Ryan becoming Commonwealth Champion and not to be outdone John Ellis also became Commonwealth Masters Champion with Steve Preece taking a bronze.

We have continued to support our players with subsidised trips to Europe and a team returned from Bredene in October with another horde of medals, we are grateful for the British Judo Trust for their grant towards this trip. In fact Area clubs and players have been so busy with travelling abroad we have found little time to promote squad sessions but quality master classes have been hosted by Happidojo throughout the year.

Our officials have shown a dramatic, much needed, increase in numbers and clubs have continued to run quality development competition promoting both new players and referees. The area events have been well supported save for a down turn on the Senior Team League which drew a disappointing entry but the committee has agreed to go ahead and give it another shot in August 2020. Our Area Gradings, like the lottery are hit and miss so far as numbers are concerned.

Sadly our registered numbers have dropped a little, nothing too dramatic, but there is the need to promote our sport still further. Area clubs should make every effort to report competitions to their local press in an effort to attract attention to the great work our coaches are doing for the community. We should continue to use social media as a tool to promote our sport and not to criticise our efforts, negative publicity in any form will only weaken the great work you are all doing.

The East now boasts a 4 mat competition area with all the mod cons necessary to run National events on behalf of British Judo and this is down to your efforts and support. We have now disposed of those tatty 2x1 mats and our hall is the envy of many. Yes, we could still do with more support, but for the moment our future looks secure and the setting up of every event is now so much easier and not just left to us dinosaurs.

Massive thanks to the East and apologies if I have missed anything or anybody.

Denise Oates

Chairman