

Ozark Mountain Judo Fighters Compete in Tulsa Tournament

Three fighters from the Ozark Mountain Judo Club in Calico Rock fought in the 25th Annual Oil Capitol Judo Tournament in Tulsa, Oklahoma Saturday May 17. Fighters from Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas competed in this tournament. The Ozark Mountain Judo Club fighters attended the tournament as a preliminary tournament to the Dallas Invitational Judo Tournament that will be held in November. The Dallas tournament is a large tournament that attracts competitors from the United States and Mexico and usually includes several Olympians.

Clay Maple from Northfork, John Nichols from Wideman and David Wolford from Calico Rock represented the Ozark Mountain Judo Club at Tulsa. Clay, a senior brown belt fought in the Masters Competition, a special division for fighters over 35 years of age, winning a silver medal. His first match was with a judoka from



1: Clay Maple securing arm lock.

the Tulsa Judo Club. Clay executed an inner thigh throw, off balancing his opponent. The Tulsa player countered, regained his balance

and scored a ¼ point against Clay. The fight continued on the ground, where Clay secured a straight arm lock, forcing the Tulsa fighter to submit, giving Clay a full point and the win. His second match was against a fighter from the Ada Judo Club in Ada, Oklahoma. This fight ended when the Ada fighter caught Clay with a drop knee shoulder throw scoring a full point and the win. “Clay is beginning to fight well” said Bill Beebe the head instructor for the Ozark Mountain Judo Club, “he has always been a little passive in his attacks which has allowed his opponents to score first, however in his first fight at Tulsa he executed an aggressive attack early in the match allowing him to gain a dominant position and apply a arm lock and secure the win”. Beebe went on to say that “Clay is fighting well for his rank, the opponent that he beat was ranked one rank below him, the opponent he lost to was ranked two ranks above his rank so he performed as expected at this tournament.” Clay is the assistant coach for the Ozark Mountain Judo Club in Calico Rock.

The Tulsa tournament was the first competition for John Nichols of Wideman. John has been practicing Kodokan Judo for less than three months and competed in the Senior Novice Lightweight Division, a division designed for judo fighters over 17 years of age with less than one year of training. This was a small division at the Tulsa tournament this year, but one that was filled with active fighters. John had two matches, losing both. While he lost both matches by pins he successfully defended several throwing attacks until his opponents got him on the ground and on his back. “John did well in his first tournament considering this opponents had more training than he has had” said Beebe. “I have high expectations for him as he continues his training and we add more

opportunities for John to fight locally in practice. He now has the basic skills to build on, and the two matches at the Tulsa tournament will give him experience he needs to better his judo.”

David Woford competed in Memphis a couple of months ago, making this his second judo competition experience. David fought in the junior boys 13-14 year old lightweight division Saturday at Tulsa. David had two matches, losing both by pins. “The division that David was in is normally one of the tougher divisions at any tournament” according to Beebe, “it contains boys that have been practicing Kodokan Judo since they were six and have competed in numerous tournaments. Their experience, training and conditioning makes this a very competitive and extremely active division.” This is the first division that players are allowed to choke their opponents as a tactic of the match. David successfully avoided being thrown and choked, but got caught by some very strong pins from which he could not escape. “David has been practicing only a few months while his opponents had been training a lot longer. Considering the differences in experience levels, David did well in avoiding their throws and not giving them an opportunity to choke him. I expect him to do much better in future tournaments as he gains experience and continues to train” Beebe said.

Kodokan Judo is an Olympic Sport and an effective self defense system. It was developed from the old martial arts of Japan and has been practiced throughout the world for over one hundred twenty five years. Kodokan Judo is a very physically demanding sport that includes throwing, grappling, choking and joint locks. The Ozark Mountain Judo Club in Calico Rock practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30

PM to 8:30 PM at 115 Main Street. Practice is available for both male and female players from six years old and up.