

Nine Years Old & An International Karate Champion

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Press Release: Seido Karate Wellington



Raymond Llorico is a bright student at Lower Hutt's Sacred Heart Primary School who like his friends enjoys racing around a sports hall during an end of year "Country and Western" themed Christmas Party.

He's probably more interested in the loosely defined rough and tumble games the pre-teens are involved in than he is in talking about his achievements but Raymond is a little bit different.

Raymond is an international karate champion and he's only nine years old.

Two years ago at the ripe old age of seven Raymond added Seido Karate to his growing list of activities. In that time he's completed several gradings and has shown a natural flair for the martial art. In 2002 he picked up a gold medal at the Wellington Seido Karate Benefit Tournament.





In November 2003, Raymond and his entire family made the commitment to go to the Seido Australia International Festival and Benefit Tournament in Sydney. He returned home with gold medals for the two categories he competed in – kata which is a free-form event and kumite – or sparring.

Raymond is obviously chuffed with how he went. And despite the tournament having 450 competitors and huge crowds he was unphased.

“I concentrated on what I was doing, it was very close and at first I wasn’t sure if I’d won,” he said.

“But it was very good and I could hear people shouting their support for me.

The mainstay of Raymond’s support is from his parents Emilio and Raquel. They say they are very proud of their son’s achievements.

“Raymond also plays basketball and takes guitar lessons so with that, karate, his sister’s commitments and school everyone is very busy,” they said.

With such a busy schedule It was a popular decision by Mr and Mrs Llorico to take a well-earned family holiday on Australia’s Gold Coast after the Sydney tournament, on the way back there was a funny encounter with Australian Customs.

“The metal detectors picked up Raymond’s medals in his backpack and we had to explain what they were – the officers were most impressed!” they said.

As for Raymond does he see himself as a black belt in Seido Karate in the future? A resounding “Yes!” is the reply.

Background on the 2003 Seido Australia International Festival and Benefit Tournament.

There were around 450 competitors from Australia, South Africa, USA, Japan, India and New Zealand at the event. Seido Wellington took 15 competitors to Sydney ranging in age from eight years to fifty – the team brought back nine medals in total. The proceeds from the Sydney tournament are going to three Australian charities. In 2002 Seido Wellington hosted the international benefit tournament here in the capital and raised funds for the Wellington Women's Refuge and Te Whare Rokiroki. In 2004 the Seido International benefit tournament will be hosted by South Africa and it is hoped that Wellington Seido will be able to send a team. Seido is one of the largest styles of marital arts in New Zealand - there are 18 schools in this country with around two thousand students. Internationally there are more than 40 thousand Seido students in 16 countries with nearly 100 branches worldwide. In the Capital there are around 200 members, of these 40% are women and more than 30 of members are children.

2003 Seido Australia International Festival and Benefit Tournament

Results:

Raymond Llorico - Gold in junior kata and kumite (boys)

Ben Otang - Silver masters kata (men's)

Kim Sawers - Silver masters kata (women's)

Avis Macadam - Silver in senior (veterans) black belt kumite (women's)

Bridget Thomson - Silver in green belt kumite (women's)

Peter Flowers - Bronze in senior (veterans) black belt kumite (men's)

Chris Rice - Bronze in black belt kata (women's)

Sid Jones - Bronze in green belt kumite (men's)

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