

KYOKUSHIN CRUNCH NEWS

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THE DOJO**

Training Tips



Elias, Chris, & Donald
[ER Fighters Excel](#)

Five Eagle Rock karateka spent much of September & October running up & down steep stairs, punching & kicking bags, practicing blocks & counters, and sparring with fierce, pitiless Japanese men.

Elias Manning, Ruby Morales, Chris Tokita, & Amanda Morales were preparing for their first major tournament experience: *Little Tokyo Tournament*. The best fighters from 10 Southern California dojos would be there.

Only one ER competitor, 2-time *Little Tokyo* champion Donald Kaplan, had ever fought in such a prestigious tournament.

In addition to regular classes, fighters met on Saturdays @ Occidental to run stairs and practice strategy. At regular class, fighters sparred with senpais Koji & Kiyoshi.

The day before the tournament, Senpai Jeremy received the tournament brackets from event organizer, Sensei Taku. Unfortunately, Sensei elected to forego girls' divisions, so Amanda & Ruby had no one to fight. They can still take pride in their hard work, improved skills, & increased knowledge.

Elias, Donald, & Chris would each need to win 3 fights to get 1st place. Elias had to overcome inexperience. Donald could potentially face an opponent 30-40 pounds heavier than himself. Chris, a blue belt, was in a bracket with 6 brown belts, including the champion and 3 medalists from February's U.S. Open tournament. Nevertheless, Senpai was (ahem) supremely confident that his fighters could win.

Senpai Phelan helped warm up the fighters. Elias competed first against Travis, a tall Manhattan Beach orange belt. *The Eliminator* immediately established his rhythm, tearing into Travis with combinations #2 and #1. Unable to compete with

Elias' punches, and taking a beating on the legs, Travis countered with knee kicks. Unfortunately for Elias, most of them landed on his groin. Showing a mysterious capacity for enduring groin shots, Elias' combinations led him to a unanimous decision in overtime.

Donald's first opponent was Kyosuke, an orange belt from West L.A. *The KO Kid* fought aggressively, hurting his opponent with punches, and scoring wazari (half-point victory) with low kicks. Chris's 1st round opponent, a Manhattan Beach brown belt, failed to show up, so *Taiko* won by forfeit.

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[Protecting Your Face](#)

When two fighters of equal power and speed throw punches at the face, the fighter with the better defense will have a huge advantage. Below are several tips on protecting your pretty face.

- *Stance*: Hands should be held high to guard your jaw and temple. Tuck your chin in so that it is hidden behind your shoulders.
- *Movement*: Move side-to-side around your opponent, & rotate the shoulders so your head moves. A moving target is harder to hit.
- *Focus*: Always keep your eyes on your opponent. The punch you don't see will be the one that hurts you.

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HALLOWEEN PARTY

Eagle Rock Dojo will hold their 1st Annual Halloween Party immediately following class on Friday, October 28th. Adventurous students, who don't fear excessive sweating, are invited—nay! Dared!—to wear their costumes to class. Others may prefer to come to class dressed as a martial artist—say, a white gi and a belt?—and then change into another costume following class.

The festivities shall take place in the adjoining building of the American Legion. Please bring either food, beverage, or desert to share. Family & friends are also invited, and encouraged to dress oddly.

Entertainment shall be provided by Senpai: bonfire, parade, games, and video of previous tournaments. You won't want to miss this. Or maybe you will. In any case, I won't want you to miss this.

Tournament

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In the semi-finals, Elias fought Taisei, a blue belt from Torrance. Though his opponent wore higher rank & fought hard, Elias enjoyed a significant size advantage. He was able to match Taisei's speed, but

Taisei could not contend with Elias' power. The terminator won a 5-0 decision.

Donald's next match was against Showta, a green belt from L.A. For once, Donald had a shorter opponent, but one with a lot of tournament experience (Showta placed 2nd @ *U.S. Open*, 3rd @ *Vancouver Cup*). He charged into *KO*, who responded with punch combinations & low kicks. After sweeping Showta three times, Donald secured a 3-0 decision.

Chris entered his fight against Jack, a Manhattan Beach brown belt, with a fight plan: present his larger rival with a moving target, and then strike with quick combos ending on the legs. Jack, who placed 4th @ the *U.S. Open*, threw many high kicks, but Chris blocked & countered, carrying the fight into overtime. Chris' superior conditioning, and 2 excellent mae geri kicks to the face, guided him to a 4-1 decision in the 2nd overtime. It was the biggest upset of the tournament.

In his final fight, Elias exercised a great deal of self-control so as to not hit his tiny foe, Shoichiro of West L.A., in the face. Utilizing a quick series of love taps & light kicks, *The Eliminator* mercifully cruised through a 5-0 decision, and won his first championship. His focus was a revelation.

In a rematch of last year's final, Donald battled Justin, a brown belt from L.A. Though *KO* had won the previous encounter, he knew that Justin, with a 30-40 pound weight advantage, is a dangerous fighter.

Rather than relying on speed and skill, Donald elected to engage him in a toe-to-toe fight, pitting his punches against Justin's kicks. After 1 round, the judges voted 1-1. The 1st overtime appeared to follow the same pattern, two contestants standing in one spot & hammering away. Though the crowd seemed to expect a 2nd overtime to decide the match, 2 judges voted for Justin, and the ref cast the 3rd vote. Donald was awarded 2nd Place.

In another exciting final, Chris faced Alec, another Manhattan Beach brown belt. This one was nearer to *Taiko's* size, so our guy was able to impose his strength. Gradually moving forward, he utilized low kicks to slow down Alec, and then went to work in overtime. Beating a steady tattoo of punches upon the chest and ribs, Chris was declared champion by 5-0 decision.



Eagle Rock & Reseda fighters celebrate with ice cream.