

KYOKUSHIN CRUNCH NEWS

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"The Tournament Issue"

4th Annual North L.A. Tournament

Legend of the G-Man

Upcoming Events



Tournament

The 4th Annual North L.A. Tournament held 9/15 at Eagle Rock Dojo, was a momentous event, and once again dominated by ER dojo.

Six of our eight fighters reached the finals. In competition against dojos from Burbank, Reseda, & West L.A., we posted an 11-1 record. In four fighting divisions, we captured six of the top eight positions. There is obvious room for improvement: our fighters need to learn how to share!

Lest the reader think that the competition was easy for us, be assured that there were many difficult, challenging matches. Ultimately, ER fighters came through due to superior technique, conditioning, & mental fortitude.

In the youngest boys division, Steven *Crusher* Kap-

lan & Elias *Eliminator* Manning fought their way to the finals.

After coasting to a win in the preliminaries, Elias met a wall in Nate from Reseda. Pushed to the limit by Nate's fists, Elias used a jolting low kick and a fighter's toughness to secure a 4-1 decision in OT. In the semi-finals, Elias walked through Marc's (Burbank) high kicks, and broke down his opponent with body kicks.

On the other side of the bracket, Steven had to contend with big boys from Reseda. Giving up 40 pounds to Alan, Steven gamely received two face punches, & then answered with a kick to the nose that ended the fight. In the semis, Steven utilized sharp technique to win a 5-0 decision in OT over a game Kristian.

In a rematch of last year's final, Elias looked much improved, using his strength to move Steven around the ring. Steven's footwork & defense kept the match even into the 2nd overtime. Ultimately, all the stairs Steven ran in practice paid off, as he had a little more energy than Elias. A spinning back kick to the ribs at the end of the fight clinched the win for *The Crusher*.

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Legend of a G-Man

Eagle Rock's Geghard *G-Man* Arakelian competed in the 10th Little Tokyo tournament on October 7th. This was G-Man's first competition. Though he is a lightweight, he was placed in a light/middleweight division.

In his first match, G-Man decided on a Little Tokyo fighter 3-0. Utilizing strong punch combinations, he hurt his opponent's body, and often drove him off the mat.

Due to vagaries in the scheduling, G-Man had to fight his semi-final match three minutes after the end of his previous match. His opponent, a higher ranking middleweight from Little Tokyo, had received a bye.

Despite these challenges, G-Man proved the stronger fighter, once again tattooing his opponent with hard punches, often resulting in the larger man falling to the ground. After 1 overtime, the judges voted 2-0 in G-Man's favor. The center referee, forgetting that the rules called for only 1 OT, chose to call a 2nd OT. G-Man pulled through with a 4-1 decision in double OT.

With only several minutes rest, G-Man went into the finals against Daniel of Little Tokyo. The fight was tight through 2 overtimes, pitting the G-Man's fists against Daniel's legs. 2 flags went up for G-Man, 2 for Daniel, but the head ref chose Daniel. In a display of grace and class, G-Man raised his exhausted opponent's hand, and exited the mat a winner.

Calendar

- Saturday 10/27
Black Belt Test
Burbank Dojo @ 2:00
- Saturday 11/3
Promotion
Reseda YMCA
- Saturday 12/1
Winter Demonstration
Burbank Dojo @ 6:30

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Tournament

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Christen Cannonball Pena made her tournament debut with but a summer of training under her belt. Like Steven, she spent countless hours running stairs under the hot sun. In the semis, she was pushed into overtime by Burbank's Carmela, where her stamina, and the patented "Christen Pivot" move, led her to a 4-1 win.

In the finals, Cannonball faced Lyrienne, a Reseda yellow belt fighting in her 3rd tournament. Christen was fearless, driving her taller opponent back with fists, landing low & high kicks, and winning a unanimous 5-0 decision.

Andrew was our other white belt making his tournament debut. His opponent, Luis of Reseda, is a puncher. Andrew followed his game plan, circling Luis, and ending punch combinations with heavy low kicks, to earn a 4-1 OT decision.

Donald faced Joel of Reseda in a rematch of last year's final. A competitive match turned in KO's favor when he countered a snap kick with a left hook to the belly, resulting in waza-ari (1/2 point). Soon afterward, Donald ended the match with a thudding left high kick.

The semi-finals saw our two fighters meet in a battle of opposites. Donald: A 95 pound brown belt and 3-time defending champ. Andrew: A 150 pound white belt in his first tournament. Experience won this time, Donald taking a 4-1 deci-

sion, and earning a 4th consecutive trip to the finals.

Giving up some 7 inches & 30 pounds to West L.A.'s Zuhri, Donald would need to use his footwork and low kicks to control the distance. The first round ended in a draw, as he was able to evade Zuhri's attacks. In OT, Zuhri's superior aggression resulted in a well-placed body punch that ended the fight, as well as Donald's 3-year title reign.

ER Dojo had three boys fighting in the eldest division. Joe, who has been working hard at the weekend adult class, faced Reseda's brown belt, Kyle. As they traded punches in the middle of the ring, Joe flashed a lightning high kick to Kyle's face, scoring waza-ari. Moments later, he repeated the act, and the fight was over.

Joe's victory gave him the dubious honor of facing our defending champ, Phelan, in the semis. Joe surprised with several quick head kicks, but Phelan proved implacable with a superb barrage of power punches & kicks to the body.

Chris, fighting in his first tournament since winning Little Tokyo in 2005, met Burbank's Jerome in the semis. Chris side-stepped his larger opponent's rushes and attacked the lead leg, before devastating him with body punches. He won a 5-0 decision.

The final between Phelan & Chris was perhaps the best match in this tournament's history. The crowd witnessed a sublime show of footwork, speed, power,

heart, and extemporaneous boxing. Phelan's non-stop attack proved the difference in a close fight.

Phelan & Steven join Donald as 3-time champions of this tournament. Joe, Andrew, & Christen earned their first tournament victories and trophies. Elias found a warrior inside himself. Donald & Chris continue to impress all with a technical brilliance that frequently overcomes size.

Students-of-Month

- Summer 2007
Christen "Cannonball" & Jeffrey "Punisher" Pena

The Pena siblings have taken Kyokushin by storm. Sporting a perfect attendance record, and a fondness for running up & down stairs, they have made startling progress in a mere 3 months of training. Christen shocked unsuspecting spectators by winning the North L.A. tournament as a white belt. But we in Eagle Rock knew about the destructive skills of the fighting Penas.

Results:

9-10 Age Division

- 1st: **Steven Kaplan (ER)**
- 2nd: **Elias Manning (ER)**
- 3rd: Kristian Stewart (R)
Marc Raphael (B)

10-11 Girls

- 1st: **Christen Pena (ER)**
- 2nd: Lyrienne Gonzalez (R)
- 3rd: Carmela Lim (B)

12-13 Boys

- 1st: Zuhri Guest (WLA)
- 2nd: **Donald Kaplan (ER)**
- 3rd: **Andrew Ibarra (ER)**
Henry Dardon (R)

14-15 Boys

- 1st: **Phelan Jackson (ER)**
- 2nd: **Chris Tokita (ER)**
- 3rd: **Joe Guerrero (ER)**