

Brief History of Kendo, Iaido and Jodo in South Africa

The SAKF was founded in 1990 and granted European kendo Federation (EKF) and International kendo Federation (FIK) membership status in 1994.

The SAKF first participated at a European Kendo Championship (EKC) in 1995 and the World Kendo Championship (WKC) in 1994

South African kendo Federation first participation at a European Iaido Championship (EIC) was in 2000.

SAKF history extends over three decades with the following people having the greatest influence on the development of South African kendo and its community.

Malcolm Dorfman, Shihan 9th Dan Karate, learned kendo in Japan, under Kubo Akira Sensei in 1985 & 1986.

Buster Sefor Kendo Renshi 7th Dan, Iaido 4th Dan and Jodo 1st Dan, began learning kendo in 1989 and for over thirty years he became the most influential person in the development of kendo in South Africa.

Buster Sefor's dedication to kendo led to the official founding of the SAKF in 1990. Buster Sefor invited a Japanese delegation to lead a South African Seminar in 1991. This was the first kendo seminar to be held in South Africa, led by foreign visiting teachers.

In 1998 after years of service as SAKF Secretary, Buster Sefor was elected as president of the SAKF and went on to serve for 17 years, until early 2015 when he retired from office. Buster Sefor was the recipient of the highly prestigious 'Order of the Rising Sun - Gold and Silver Rays' in recognition for his tireless promoting of Japan - South African cultural relations. This honourable award was bestowed to Buster Sefor by H.E the Ambassador of Japan to South Africa.

Buster Sefor Sensei passed the Kendo 7th Dan examination at the Nippon Budokan in Tokyo in 2015, becoming the first South African to achieve this rank. Buster Sefor, Kendo Renshi 7th Dan, Iaido 4th Dan and Jodo 1st Dan, has served and contributed to South African kendo since 1989, representing South Africa many times as a competitor and as an official of the SAKF delegation at EKC/WKC/EIC events.

Ishimaru Teruaki Kyoshi Kendo 7th Dan, was assigned to South Africa for a five-year period from 1995 to 2000. Teruaki Ishimaru had the opportunity to fulfil an influential role in the development of kendo in South Africa. Teruaki Ishimaru taught kendo in South Africa for five years and introduced other high level Japanese Sensei to the South African kendo community. After returning to Japan in 2000, he would continue to visit South Africa on many occasions from 2002 to 2018, teaching and supporting SA kendo. Teruaki Ishimaru has been instrumental in the development of kendo in South Africa and in recognition of his selfless commitment was awarded a certificate of honour and appointed lifetime Honorary President of the SAKF.

Tony Hughes Renshi 6th Dan and **Ray Fleming** 5th Dan - started kendo in the early nineties and were instrumental in the development of South African kendo. Tony Hughes achieved kendo 6th Dan becoming the second SAKF member to achieve this rank. Ray Fleming achieved kendo 5th Dan being the third SAKF member to achieve this rank. Tony Hughes and Ray Fleming represented SA, as competitors and officials, at EKC and WKC events. Tony and Ray together with Buster Sefor were the backbone of South African kendo community for three decades.

SAKF Seminars

Teaching seminars are the greatest opportunity to connect with and receive kendo instruction from international teachers. The first seminar held in South Africa was in 1991. The SAKF has remained committed to annual seminars, hosting visiting international sensei. During the previous two decades the SAKF has invited kendo sensei from Japan, with the most notable being Nomasa Toyotoshi 8th Dan Hanshi, Ajiro Tadahiro 8th Dan Hanshi, Watanabe Tetsuya 8th Dan Hanshi, Irii Tokuaki 8th Dan Kyoshi, Ishimaru Teruaki 7th Dan Kyoshi and Chiba Tanemichi 8th Dan Kyoshi. The SAKF has also welcomed European sensei,

including Alaine Ducarme 7th Dan Kyoshi, Jean-Claude Wolfs 7th Dan Kyoshi, Dieter Hauck 6th Dan Renshi, Gerhard Tscherter 7th Dan Kyoshi, Thibault Brunel de Bonneville 7th Dan, Markus Frey 7th Dan Kyoshi and Uwe Kumpf 7th Dan Kyoshi.

SA National Championships

The National Open Individual Championship is South Africa's highest level of competition and a platform to grow kendo and prepare competitors for international competition. The first national open individual kendo championship was held in 2006 and remains an annual event on the SAKF calendar. In 2017 the National Championship was renamed to the Sefor Cup Championship, in honour of Buster Sefor Sensei. The SA open championship has had winners from South Africa and from abroad. Brendan Dateling holds the record for the most SA National Championship titles, having won five times. Brendan is gold medal winner in the years 2014, 2015, 2019, 2020 and 2022, and runner up silver medallist in 2012, 2017 & 2018. Brendan has also won over twenty gold medals at local club events and participated at multiple WKC and EKC events.