

JKS England Christmas Course 2025

JKS England's last course of 2025 was held in Nottingham on the 7th of December and took place only a few weeks after the largest ever JKS England National Championships. The Championships, hosted in Grantham saw six tatamis used for the first time, necessitated by the record number of entries. The day ran smoothly with Geoff Dixon Sensei overseeing the event as Chief Referee. JKS England grows from strength to strength on both sides of the competitive arena, with the squad's performances throughout the year yielding brilliant performances and some excellent medal table results as well as the progress made in officiating. The Referee Development Programme now has many excellent referees who can command the centre of the tatami but as it expands, finds itself needing more judges to satisfy the ratios require to balance the officiating team as the tournament demands increase.

JKS England continues to reflect the encouragement in the same way which the Headquarters in Japan gives to those who are not competing, to become a crucial part as an official, by developing their skills. This allows tournaments to flourish and those competing the opportunity to do so in the best possible environment. JKS England's first training event of the 2026 calendar is another example of this with Squad Training and Referee Development options following the training in Long Eaton on 25th January. The JKS England Squad Selections are happening the week before as well, with the best of luck going to all those attending.

Before the training began, Alan Campbell Sensei-8th Dan, Head of JKS England suggested it would be remiss of him not to mention the recent JKS England trip to Japan. Organised around the JKS International Seminar, the trip saw a dozen instructors and students enjoy a number of incredibly special training experiences, alongside the wealth of other activities scheduled. Alan Sensei relayed his thoughts and pride on the dan grading results in particular, where JKS England had a 100% pass rate for the five students who graded (four attempting Godan and one Yondan).

The training would then begin with a warm-up by Edward Dixon, JKS England's latest 4th Dan, having been one of those grading at Teikyo University on the International Seminar. The next three hours' training would have everything, showcasing the very best tuition from the highest-grade instructors in JKS England.

Alan Sensei started the training with a look at Junro Sandan and how the recent trip to Japan highlighted just how well the Headquarters' Instructors execute stance and transitions, citing kokutsu-dachi (back stance) as a perfect example. Many videos illustrating this are available on social media, as the instructors were recruited to demonstrate the kata teaching points being explicitly addressed and standardised on the seminar.

Alan Sensei guided students into how to concentrate on the feeling of the technique and not only the final position. Dropping the hips and bodyweight into the first move as the arms

snapped into position become the starting point for a session focusing on relaxation and flow. After working through the kata, and ensuring the pace of repetition was kept high, Alan Sensei challenged students to perform the kata at a faster pace; reducing



pauses and trying to connect the sequences with the kime not held for a moment longer than necessary. The final task of the session would be an exercise to see just how quickly the kata could be done. Each and everyone in the class pushed hard to complete the kata as fast as possible, all the while with Alan Sensei's teaching points to consider. Alan Sensei had taken the time to convey how different approaches to practice are needed to help understand one's own limitations. As speed would increase, techniques would often shorten or weaken as the core, hips, body, or joints were not fully engaged. This was a vital point of education from Alan Sensei with the hall helped to appreciate where the ultimate balance in karate performance sits. Alan Sensei discussed how this can only be found by working at the extremes of speed and range of motion as it is something which is personal to each karateka.

It was a brilliant lesson for students to take into next year and how great benefits can come from forcing oneself to exit their comfort zone and operate at a speed or intensity which develops technique and resolve in their karate. Alan Sensei had used Oliver Holyoak to demonstrate the approach being sought, who presented an excellent reference for maintaining the technical aspects of the kata, even when operating at what would normally be described as excessive speed.

A short break would then be given before Nick Heald Sensei-7th Dan took the class for the second hour. Nick Sensei started a very methodical and progressive session by isolating the forearm at the elbow. Students repeated a down and up blocking action with no tension or input from the body. As this built, Nick Sensei added the optimal hip action, speed and kime so students were able to comprehend the way in which to identify and build on any areas of their karate which did not yet meet the level of control which Nick Sensei ushered students to adopt. The sequence then advanced to a drill which involved timing the practiced blocks with stance, moving forwards and backwards to support the block. Nick Sensei's considered approach was never without the reminder to the students with what elements should be front and centre in their mind. The drill had offered the vehicle for students to recognise the teaching points which Nick Sensei had covered, with many reinforced from Alan Sensei's instruction earlier as well.

Nick Sensei then turned his attention to the seldom taught Tekki Sandan. Leading students through the kata slowly first, Nick Sensei would then build it after first breaking it down into sections. Covering the relationship of the movements to the start of his session, Nick Sensei explained the importance of the elbow position in the hand techniques within the kata. As students stitched the kata together to complete it in its entirety, speed and kime were encouraged, emulating the same approach which had been used earlier in the session.

Students were then paired up to practice selected applications of the kata. This section would underline the consequence of not performing the techniques as directed by Nick Sensei as if they were not done correctly, students were unable to successfully control the exchange in the manner Nick Sensei had so clinically demonstrated immediately before.





Nick Sensei would end his Christmas Course lesson with a demanding request of the higher grades. Performing himself first and delivering the techniques as practiced, all three of the Tekki katas would be completed with no break, moving from Tekki Shodan, straight into Nidan before ending with Sandan. A tough ask with many similarities between the katas meant the students had to maintain their awareness, all the while attempting to improve the aspects which Nick Sensei had clearly defined.

The final session of the course saw Matt Price Sensei-7th Dan look at many aspects of kumite. The fast pace of the course did not abate as students were always on their toes to establish their position in watching Matt Sensei demonstrate or speed back to their positions to practice the exercises shown.

Matt Sensei would start by looking at extending techniques to their maximum range with a deep, lunging gyaku-tsuki. The striking hand was then snapped back to a hikite position as the focus turned to the hip action needing to follow the attack. Students would then have to find their balance to capitalise on the hip action practiced in order to throw a front leg mawashi-geri. Matt Sensei made students acutely aware of the range which techniques are appropriate for but also how minor changes may need modification in the footwork, height, or delivery to ensure they work as intended. This was essential when concentrating on the kick, which had the potential to be stifled if the student stepped up with their rear leg first, rather than pivoting and using the hip as advised.



Matt Sensei covered the vital components needing to be practiced, ensuring the sequence he had constructed minimised any vulnerabilities. As students returned to stance following the kick, Matt Sensei showed how the stance established had to be done such to avoid a position where sweeping both legs would have been an easy target for the opponent.

Starting from burpee position, students would leap vertically as Matt Sensei explained how the energy on landing could either be constructive or destructive to the next technique. Preventing the heels from contacting the floor would allow the energy to be transferred into an explosive movement forwards, something that grounding the heels would have eliminated.



All the exercises covered were then combined and tested against a partner. Responding with a positive gyaku-tsuki counter to an incoming kizami-tsuki would allow the students to setup for the mawashi-geri attack, provided their postured matched that which Matt Sensei had communicated. The hip action was then used to change the line and place the student in a more commanding position to the outside of the

instigator's guard. A swift and dynamic attack was needed to exploit this alignment before the opponent had any chance to respond. After closing the distance, a sweep and strike would end the exchange, although the placement of the hands had to be controlled to prevent the opponent attacking as the sweep was initiated. Matt Sensei, in his energetic and

comprehensive style had given students a combination which allowed them to improve many elements of their kumite, all while learning how these skills translate into other moves or eventualities.

Three hours of training had flown by and with the atmosphere as electric as ever, had capped a remarkable year with a truly brilliant course. A big thank you to the invaluable instruction team, all in attendance and also congratulations to those successful in the dan grading which followed.

JKS England wishes everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year and is looking forward to an action-packed 2026. Be sure to visit the JKS England website to see the events and visiting instructors planned and always book early to avoid any disappointment. Happy training!