

Black and Brown Belt Course 25th January 2026

The first JKS England Black and Brown Belt Course of 2026 was hosted at The Long Eaton School, Nottingham on the 25th of January. Alan Campbell Sensei, 8th Dan and Head of JKS England welcomed the students, hoping that they had all enjoyed December's festivities and gave warm wishes for the year's training ahead. With many Honbu Dojo instructors already scheduled, it is sure to be another fantastic year for JKS England with early booking remaining crucial to safeguard a place at these coveted seminars. Keeping a close eye on the JKS England website and Facebook page is sure to help these are not missed.

As has been customary for the last few years, newly appointed Godan (5th Dan) instructors have been invited to teach the opening of courses following successful gradings. This course afforded the platform for no less than four, who all met the standard at last November's trip to Japan, passing at Teikyo University as part of the Dan gradings during the JKS International Seminar.

Taking it in turn; Neil Bukavs, Soren Nicolajsen, Rob Edwards and Simon Flint all enthusiastically lead the class through various, and often quite intense training drills after Edward Dixon (who passed his Yondan grading at the same seminar) had conducted the warm-up.

These mini sessions covered many aspects, firstly exploring the timing options of the foot and hand in kumite punching combinations. After this, a well-constructed linear flow drill with blocking, kicking and striking components was repeated with speed added quickly. No expense would be spared by any of the instructors as they utilised the time well to ensure the class would be challenged in performing the dynamic exercises demonstrated. Students would then work on mae-geri, with some of it's kata and kihon sequences stitched together as relaxation and stance transitions became paramount to the execution of the exercise. Finishing with a punching drill to engage correct hip action students delivered punches at an angle to prime the hip before thrusting it into gyaku-tsuki as students simultaneously exploded into a front stance.

The energy had certainly been injected by all four instructors with a substantial number of techniques completed in just a short space of time. After Alan Sensei gave thanks, the main class would then commence.

Alan Sensei started with the yoko-geri keage sequence which sees a uraken delivered first before a mawashi empi concludes it as front stance is made. Working up and down the dojo by alternating sides, Alan Sensei covered multiple teaching points in how to improve the movements which can be found in many kata, sometimes repeated twice or more where present. Students were encouraged to ensure the correct height was maintained as the flex in the rear leg and expansion of the hip done effectively mean energy should be translated into the direction of the technique and not lost upwards. The relaxation needed to snap the kick into position was crucial as students concentrated on elevating their delivery. Alan Sensei also directed the class in how the ankle needed to be tensioned to occupy the correct plane, with the edge leading in preparation for impact when the application of the kick is practiced. Coordinating all of the lower body together with the expansion of the shoulder and chest meant a strong combination could be done fluidly but powerfully, with each student appreciating the finer points of which elements to focus on for a higher level of performance.

Students then continued to be further challenged with a kumite footwork drill. The class would cover distance to deliver gyaku-tsuki attacks as directional changes were used to alternate sides. Alan Sensei highlighted the most efficient approach to ensure no delay was present in either the footwork or the punching action. Again, students were encouraged to maintain the same height to prevent the stance from losing its potential as the intensity grew with the count shortening as students progressed to full speed. A short break was then given before students returned to the line.



When the class resumed, it was the kata Ji'in which would be given full attention from start to finish. As is often the case with kata, the content easily surpasses what can be covered in a single class but Alan Sensei meticulously identified and educated the class on the principal elements and spent time detailing the signature moves in particular.

Sequences were broken down with the opening move setting the tone for

the degree of focus demanded by Alan Sensei. Alan Sensei underlined how even at the very highest-level, improvement should still be actively sought, exemplifying the lifelong pursuit of karate-do.



The last section of the main class would be devoted to Jiyu Ippon kumite. Students were paired up with a higher grade there to guide and support as they worked through the arranged attacks and practiced the designated blocks and counters. Alan Sensei reiterated much of the advice covered previously in the session to illustrate the relevance in all the components of karate practice.

Alan Sensei brought the first part of the course to a close before the group was divided. With students either attending the Open Squad Training or the Referee Development sections led by Matt Price Sensei 7th Dan and Geoff Dixon Sensei 6th Dan respectively. Geoff Sensei covered the recent updates to the rules, alongside relevant practice and information for all those involved in the various roles needed to officiate and administrate competition. This programme continues to grow from strength to strength echoing the desire from the Headquarters that if not competing then this aspect of competition is something that students should be participating in.

Concurrent to Geoff Sensei's class, Matt Sensei would hold the busy Open Squad Training. Matt Sensei would cover a number of kumite skills which allowed students to recognise how a methodical approach can yield such excellent results. Students began in pairs and changed frequently to experience different opponents and help identify the idiosyncrasies. This awareness of their partner remained key in order to vary their distance and subtleties of their technique successfully. Matt Sensei would first get the students moving by responding to the stance changes and footwork of their partner, maintaining the distance whilst keeping light on the balls of their feet and the guard steady and measured.

As students rotated partners, they then cycled through several skills, beginning with a kizami-tsuki delivered efficiently and intentionally without retracting the hand and without hesitation after the “trigger” was pulled. This would then develop as the receiving students was challenged to try to escape the punch by moving backwards to increase the demand on the attacker to generate a swift delivery which could not be avoided.

Matt Sensei then moved on to his central theme of the session which addressed the defensive structure which can make all the difference in preventing an opponent from scoring as well as not compromising the ability to respond with a counter. Matt Sensei presented to the class a way to remain protected and efficient with any body and arm movements made deliberately and minimally to deal with the incoming attack. Matt Sensei encouraged students to avoid unnecessary exaggerated movements and any twitchiness in their responses.



The guard structure was covered in detail as Matt Sensei illustrated how this can prepare for double kicks and deal with any other attacking strategies which try to manipulate the guard. Students then proceeded to protect themselves with just one of their hands available, sitting themselves between the wall and an attacking partner. This was practiced on both sides and helped students appreciate when reverting to both hands how deliberate and practiced form can raise their kumite ability.

Matt Sensei would finish with a number of defensive options to deal with the end of bout situation when up in the match and with the opponent likely to charge to try to make up the deficit in the remaining seconds. Demonstrating how to set the stance and keep distance through a well timed and protective side kick, Matt Sensei helped students to understand that thoughtfulness and experience are key insights which can be drawn on in these situations.

Overall, it had been another excellent course from start to finish and a great way to kick off the 2026 calendar. The next course is at the start of March with Arimoto Sensei and is sure to continue to uphold the very highest standards of teaching which JKS England always provides.