

JKS England Summer Course 2026

The JKS England Summer Course was held in Long Eaton, Nottingham on Sunday 14th June and the highly subscribed course showed testament to the excitement brought by the visiting instructor, Daisuke Watanabe Sensei 5th Dan, visiting from Japan. Watanabe Sensei has an extensive and very impressive catalogue of achievements on the competitive stage, yielding great success at international level in kumite.

After a warmup had taken place Watanabe Sensei would begin with basics and took time to explore the intricacies of the footwork being practiced. Students trained to deliver punching attacks as they co-ordinated these with either the rear or front leg movements. This was all carefully constructed as later in the class these same timings would be done when in a free stance and moving vigorously.



Before students were able to put on the kumite mitts, Watanabe Sensei detailed a number of crucial footwork drills, aimed at providing the class with the necessary understanding to establish the most desirable distance and also protect themselves from moving into a vulnerable position with their legs exposed for a sweep.

Students would mirror movements of their partner as Watanabe Sensei showed how managing this distance is imperative to safely escaping oncoming attacks of timing

the counter of them just right. Students took this in turns before the drills from the start of the seminar were integrated.

Whilst ensuring the rear leg was not “left behind”, students were challenged to drive from the standing leg before thrusting their hip to the side as Watanabe Sensei illustrated this key concept ideally present in free flowing kumite.

Students were also always encouraged to maintain their guard in training as the light pulsing movements practiced next allowed a balanced and well managed position to be found. This structure was something Watanabe Sensei illuminated with whichever combination was covered. Watanabe Sensei also demonstrated the relaxation needing to be shown so no cues are given to the opponent or energy wasted.



The early footwork drills were then easily adapted into attacking kumite combinations as Watanabe Sensei showcased his extraordinary ability to finish any technique in less than the blink of an eye! Remaining natural and training the timing of when the attack should be delivered meant managing the hands and footwork, something which Watanabe Sensei showed an impressive ability in deconstructing so that the

students could level up their ability to pressure their opponent with a swift and difficult to recognise attack.

The distance element was never far from Watanabe Sensei's teaching as it allowed students to begin to realise how simple strategies start to be built. Mitts were then used to begin to mimic competitions and gradings as the combination and footwork speed increased. Still closely managing the hand position and direct nature of any punching attacks, Watanabe Sensei demonstrated how to connect the timing to ensure nothing was without reason and conviction.

Kizami-tsuki and gyaku-tsuki attacks and counters were all practiced in isolation and then together with Watanabe Sensei explaining when these can be used to maximum benefit.



Students found that the familiarity with the footwork was something that needed them to concentrate on especially. Watanabe Sensei is a master of not doing more than is needed as his lightning fast moves were executed at full speed to the delight of the class.

Towards the end of the seminar Watanabe Sensei would also introduce how to utilise a mawashi-geri attack and also an inside leg takedown, after dodging and rotating to position the leg for the sweep. These combinations shared the same

clinical look which Watanabe Sensei had done for all of the kumite techniques throughout the session and were a very enjoyable way to cap a course filled with a lot of excitement, a little bit of awe and some electrifying new ways to score points and dominate any kumite bout.

The spectacular course was followed by some senior dan gradings as well as examinations for instructor and examiner qualifications.

